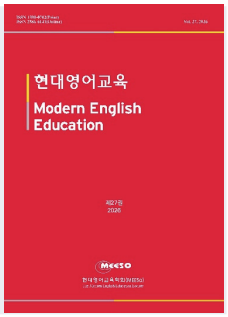
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AI-Assisted Teaching and EFL Teacher Motivation: A Comparative Qualitative Study of Professional Confidence and Instructional Agency in Korea and Myanmar

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AI 보조 교수, EFL 교사 동기, 자기결정이론, 질적 비교 연구, 한국, 미얀마

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Abstract

This qualitative comparative study explores how AI-assisted teaching affects EFL teachers' fundamental psychological needs—perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness—and how national and institutional contexts shape these motivational experiences. Using Self-Determination Theory as a framework, the study analyzes semi-structured interview data from 12 EFL teachers, comprising six from Korea and six from Myanmar, all of whom have meaningful experience with AI teaching. Data were analyzed through codebook thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). The findings indicate that while AI-assisted teaching generally enhances professional confidence and efficiency, it also leads to context-specific challenges such as confidence disruption, reliance on AI, and motivational strain. Teachers from the Korean sample reported engaging in more complex motivational negotiations, including questioning their roles and experiencing declines in competence, influenced by examination culture and administrative pressures. In contrast, teachers from the Myanmar sample described a more pragmatic and resource-oriented approach to AI use, despite facing structural constraints like limited connectivity and material shortages. This study contributes to the literature on AI and EFL teacher motivation by demonstrating how institutional and instructional factors—such as school level, learner age, and resource availability—shape the motivational impacts of AI integration in distinct EFL contexts.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed educational practices worldwide, particularly in language education. In this study, AI-assisted teaching refers specifically to the use of generative AI tools — such as ChatGPT and Gemini — in teaching-related tasks including lesson planning, material creation, assessment design,

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and administrative writing. AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Canva AI are increasingly used to support lesson planning, material development, assessment design, and personalized learning, enabling teachers to perform instructional tasks more efficiently (Kasneci et al., 2023; Miao & Holmes, 2023). Consequently, AI is no longer viewed merely as a technological innovation but as an instructional resource that is reshaping teachers' professional practice.

Previous research has highlighted numerous benefits of AI-assisted teaching, including improved instructional efficiency, enhanced teaching resources, and reduced workload (Chiu, 2024; Fütterer et al., 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023). However, researchers have also expressed concerns regarding the reliability of AI-generated information, ethical issues, academic integrity, and teachers' potential overreliance on AI (Miao & Holmes, 2023). These opportunities and challenges suggest that effective AI integration depends not only on technological competence but also on teachers' professional judgment and confidence.

Professional confidence plays a crucial role in teachers' instructional decision-making. Teachers who possess strong professional confidence are more likely to adapt teaching strategies, evaluate instructional resources critically, and respond effectively to students' learning needs. Previous research has demonstrated that teachers' motivation and professional experiences are dynamic and shaped by contextual factors rather than remaining fixed over time (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; T.-Y. Kim & Y. Kim, 2016; Song & Kim, 2016). Similarly, comparative qualitative research across Korea, Myanmar, and Uzbekistan has shown that institutional support, workload, and educational contexts significantly influence teachers' motivation, demotivation, and resilience (Naing & Kim, 2025). As generative AI becomes increasingly integrated into language education, it represents another contextual factor that may influence teachers' professional confidence and instructional practice.

Existing research on AI in education has primarily focused on AI adoption, technology acceptance, AI literacy, or students' learning outcomes. Comparatively less is known about how EFL teachers themselves experience AI-assisted teaching in their everyday professional practice, particularly across different national and institutional contexts. Examining teachers' own experiences offers a way to understand the professional meanings and adaptive strategies that adoption-focused research does not capture.

Building on this need, this study compares EFL teachers in Korea and Myanmar to examine how AI-assisted teaching shapes motivational experiences across two contrasting educational contexts: one characterized by relatively strong digital infrastructure, high-stakes examination culture, and administrative demands, and the other shaped by uneven digital access, material scarcity, and resource-dependent pedagogical adaptation. Guided by Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), this study investigates how AI-assisted teaching supports or frustrates teachers' perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and how national and institutional contexts shape these motivational experiences. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does AI-assisted teaching support or frustrate EFL teachers' perceived competence, autonomy, and relatedness?
2. How are teachers' motivational experiences of AI-assisted teaching shaped by the institutional and instructional contexts represented in the Korean and Myanmar data?

LITERATURE REVIEW

AI-Assisted Teaching in Language Education

Generative AI has become increasingly embedded in language education. Teachers now use tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini to support lesson planning, material creation, and assessment design (Miao & Holmes, 2023). Research has documented several pedagogical benefits. AI has been shown to improve instructional efficiency, facilitate differentiated instruction, and expand access to teaching resources (Chiu, 2024; Kohnke & Ulla, 2024), though Chiu's (2024) findings draw on 51 undergraduate and graduate students from an eastern cultural region rather than teachers. This learner perspective differs from the teacher-focused inquiry of the present study. Cross-national surveys have also found that teachers across diverse cultural contexts generally view AI positively (Viberg et al., 2025), though such broad attitudinal findings do not capture the specific institutional conditions — examination pressure, resource constraints, or technological access — that shape teachers' motivational experiences in practice.

However, existing research also identifies important limitations and challenges. Researchers have raised concerns about the accuracy of AI-generated content, algorithmic bias, academic integrity, and the risk of teacher overreliance (Kasneci et al., 2023). Kohnke and Ulla (2024) found that EFL teachers at Thai universities valued AI but consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining professional judgment when evaluating AI outputs — a higher education context distinct from the secondary and private-school settings in the present study. However, the emphasis on professional judgment is directly relevant to both teacher groups.

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Despite this growing body of research, most existing studies focus on technology adoption, student outcomes, or teacher attitudes at a general level. How AI integration shapes teachers' motivational experiences in everyday professional practice remains underexplored, particularly through qualitative methods. Research on non-native speaker EFL teachers has begun to identify AI as a language accuracy resource that affects linguistic self-confidence (Godwin-Jones, 2022). However, as a conceptual perspective piece spanning diverse contexts from primary through higher education, it does not directly address the specific institutional conditions represented by the two teacher groups in the present study, and the broader motivational implications of this function remain unclear.

EFL Teacher Motivation, Professional Confidence, and Professional Judgment

Teacher motivation in language education is understood as a dynamic, context-dependent process. It evolves through teachers' ongoing interactions with institutional environments, professional responsibilities, and sociocultural contexts (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; T.-Y. Kim, 2018; Song & Kim, 2016). Among the Korean-based studies, Song and Kim (2016) draw specifically on secondary school EFL teachers in Korean institutional settings; Kim (2018) provides a broader thematic synthesis of existing journal articles on EFL teacher motivation. Central to this process is professional confidence — teachers' beliefs in their ability to make effective pedagogical decisions, manage classroom challenges, and support students' learning (Varghese et al., 2005). Professional confidence is not a fixed trait. It develops through accumulated professional experience and is sensitive to the conditions under which teachers work.

Closely related to professional confidence is professional judgment — teachers' capacity to make reasoned, context-sensitive pedagogical decisions. Professional judgment is a key expression of instructional agency: the ability to evaluate resources critically, adapt to student needs, and exercise ethical responsibility in practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Priestley et al., 2015). Together, professional confidence, professional judgment, and instructional agency describe a teacher who is not merely technically proficient but professionally self-directed. When these dimensions are supported, teachers tend to experience higher intrinsic motivation. When they are threatened, motivation may decline (T.-Y. Kim et al., 2014; T.-Y. Kim & Y. Kim, 2022).

Comparative qualitative research has consistently shown that these motivational dimensions are shaped by contextual factors rather than being individually determined. T.-Y. Kim et al. (2014), comparing elementary and junior high school EFL teachers in Korea and China, found that the Korean teachers reported higher levels of demotivation related to examination culture and administrative demands than their Chinese counterparts — a context pattern that aligns closely with the high-stakes examination environment represented by the Korean participants in the present study. Naing and Kim (2025) found that institutional support and workload shaped demotivation and resilience differently across Korean, Myanmar, and Uzbekistan contexts. These findings suggest that professional confidence and instructional agency are contextually negotiated rather than stable internal traits — a premise that directly informs the comparative design of the present study and its focus on how AI-assisted teaching shapes these motivational dimensions across two structurally distinct institutional contexts.

The emergence of generative AI introduces a new contextual factor with significant implications for these constructs. AI actively contributes to lesson planning, content generation, and assessment design. This requires teachers to exercise professional judgment in evaluating and contextualizing AI-generated outputs (Kasneci et al., 2023; Miao & Holmes, 2023). Whether AI strengthens or undermines teachers' professional confidence and instructional agency likely depends on how it is integrated into practice. Yet qualitative research examining how AI shapes these motivational constructs across different institutional contexts remains limited.

Self-Determination Theory and EFL Teacher Motivation

Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020) provides a productive framework for examining the motivational implications of AI-assisted teaching. SDT distinguishes between different qualities of motivation — from autonomous, internally endorsed engagement to controlled, externally pressured compliance. It identifies three basic psychological needs whose satisfaction or frustration shapes motivational quality (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Within this framework, professional confidence is treated as closely related to perceived competence because it concerns teachers' sense of capability in making instructional decisions. Instructional agency is treated as a practical expression of autonomy because both involve teachers' capacity to make self-endorsed pedagogical choices that align with their professional values. Professional judgment, in turn, refers to teachers' context-sensitive reasoning about when, how, and to what extent AI tools should be incorporated into teaching. These conceptual connections provide the analytical bridge between the constructs foregrounded in this study — professional confidence, instructional agency, and professional judgment — and the SDT framework that organizes its analysis.

In the present study, SDT's three basic psychological needs are operationalized specifically in relation to teachers'

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professional experiences. Perceived competence refers to teachers' sense of professional capability in preparing and delivering instruction. Autonomy refers to teachers' perceived capacity to make pedagogical decisions based on their own professional judgment — including decisions about when and how to use AI. Relatedness refers to the sense of meaningful connection that teachers derive from their interactions with students. This includes interpersonal trust, emotional investment, and the professional commitment that gives teaching its relational significance. Importantly, relatedness in this study does not encompass broader constructs such as teacher authority, ethical stance, or professional identity. These dimensions, while relevant to teaching, fall outside SDT's specific definition of relatedness as a basic psychological need.

It is also important to clarify how SDT terminology is applied in this study. SDT constructs are used to describe and interpret teachers' reported experiences as expressed in interview data. They are not used to make claims about underlying psychological mechanisms that cannot be directly observed through qualitative methods. For instance, when participants described self-directed AI adoption, this is not treated as direct evidence of intrinsic motivation. Rather, it is interpreted as a pattern consistent with autonomous regulation as described in SDT. Similarly, when participants described feeling less prepared or creative due to AI use, this is interpreted as a possible indicator of competence need-frustration — not as a confirmed psychological state. This interpretive caution is applied consistently throughout the analysis.

Taken together, this body of research points toward a productive but underexplored question: how do EFL teachers with meaningful AI experience negotiate the motivational implications of AI-assisted teaching across institutionally distinct contexts? Examining this question qualitatively — from the perspective of teachers themselves — offers a way to surface the professional meanings, tensions, and adaptive strategies that quantitative or adoption-focused approaches cannot fully capture. The present study addresses this opportunity. It examines how AI-assisted teaching supports or frustrates teachers' basic psychological needs — competence, autonomy, and relatedness — through a comparative qualitative analysis of EFL teachers working in two structurally different education contexts in Korea and Myanmar.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts an exploratory qualitative comparative design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach is particularly appropriate for examining how participants interpret and make sense of an emerging educational phenomenon within their everyday professional practices, rather than testing predetermined causal relationships. The comparative design enables the identification of shared and divergent patterns across distinct educational settings while considering the institutional and instructional circumstances in which teachers' experiences are situated. Guided by SDT, the study explores how teachers perceive AI-assisted teaching in relation to their basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The comparison is intended to provide a context-sensitive understanding of teachers' motivational experiences rather than establish generalizable national differences between Korea and Myanmar.

Participants

Twelve EFL teachers participated: six from Korea and six from Myanmar. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling via professional networks and direct contact. The key inclusion criterion was meaningful and active AI integration in teaching practice. For this study, meaningful and active AI integration was operationally defined as regular, intentional use of AI tools — at least once per week during the current semester — in at least two of the following areas: lesson planning, material creation, assessment design, or administrative writing. Teachers whose AI engagement was limited to occasional or incidental use were excluded during an initial screening conducted with brief pre-interview questions. These questions addressed the type of institution, school level, AI tool use in teaching, approximate frequency of use, and the range of teaching tasks for which AI was used. Prospective participants were included when they reported using AI tools regularly across at least two of the task areas specified in the operational definition above. Those whose responses indicated only occasional AI use or engagement limited to a single task area were excluded. It is important to note that the Korean and Myanmar participant groups were not equivalent in terms of school level, learner age, institutional sector, curriculum demands, or technological access. The Korean participants were primarily situated in secondary-level contexts characterized by high-stakes pressure from the university entrance examination and heavy administrative demands. The Myanmar participants were primarily situated in primary-level private and international school contexts characterized by material scarcity and uneven digital access. These structural differences mean that the study cannot be understood as a straightforward national comparison between Korea and Myanmar. Rather, it is more accurately described as a comparison between two contextually distinct teacher groups whose AI-related motivational experiences were examined in relation to their differing institutional and instructional conditions. The findings should therefore

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be interpreted as reflecting these specific institutional contexts rather than as representative of Korean or Myanmar EFL teaching more broadly. Participant profiles are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Participant Profiles

ID	Country	Institution	Level	Teaching Experience	Generative AI Tools Reported	AI-Adjacent Tools
K1	Korea	Public HS	Grade 12 (CSAT)	10 years	Gemini Pro, ChatGPT, Claude, Nano Banana	-
K2	Korea	Public voc. HS	HS vocational	3 years	ChatGPT	Duolingo, ClassCard, Padlet, MiriCanvas
K3	Korea	Public HS	Grade 12 (CSAT)	8 years	ChatGPT (school-subsidized Pro)	-
K4	Korea	Private hagwon	HS CSAT prep	6 years	ChatGPT, Gemini Pro	-
K5	Korea	Public MS	Grade 8	9 years	ChatGPT	Google Docs, AutoDraw, Classroom
K6	Korea	Public MS	Grades 7–9	10 years	ChatGPT, Gemini, Clipo	-
M1	Myanmar	International	Primary 4–5	6 years	ChatGPT, Gemini, Canva AI	-
M2	Myanmar	Private/int'l	Primary	10+ years	ChatGPT, Gemini	-
M3	Myanmar	International	Primary 4–6	~5 years	ChatGPT (free version only)	-
M4	Myanmar	Private	Primary	3 years	Gemini, GPT, NotebookLM	-
M5	Myanmar	Private	Young learners	7+ years	ChatGPT, Gemini (free)	-
M6	Myanmar	Private	Multiple levels	6 years	ChatGPT, Gemini, Canva AI	-

Note. HS = High School; MS = Middle School; CSAT = College Scholastic Ability Test; Voc. = Vocational. Generative AI tools refer to large language model-based or content-generative applications. AI-adjacent tools refer to AI-enabled educational platforms and digital tools that incorporate AI features but are not primarily generative.

Data Collection

Although this study focuses primarily on generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude, participants also mentioned AI-enabled or AI-adjacent educational tools that formed part of their broader AI-assisted teaching practices. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in June 2026, each lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes. A semi-structured interview protocol was developed based on the research questions and the SDT framework. Following the initial two interviews, two additional follow-up prompts were introduced to explore teachers' autonomy regulation and relational boundary-setting in greater depth (see Appendix for sample interview questions). These additions were designed to elicit more explicit accounts of autonomy and relational boundary-setting. The added questions elaborated rather than replaced the original protocol; therefore, all participants' responses remained comparable around the same core research questions. The earlier two participants were not re-interviewed, but their data were retained and analyzed using the full coding framework, as their responses contained sufficient information relevant to all three SDT constructs. Korean participants were interviewed in Korean, and Myanmar participants were interviewed in either English or Myanmar, depending on participant preference; those who responded in English required no translation. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim. Korean interviews were transcribed using Clova Note and subsequently verified by the researcher; Myanmar-language interviews were transcribed manually. To ensure translation consistency and validity across languages, all Korean and Myanmar-language transcripts were translated exclusively by the first author, who is a native speaker of Myanmar and has professional proficiency in Korean. This ensured a consistent interpretive stance across all translated data. Translated excerpts were reviewed against the original recordings during the verification process to check for accuracy and meaning preservation. Where expressions were culturally embedded or linguistically ambiguous, the researcher consulted the original audio recording to ensure the intended meaning was accurately captured rather than literally reproduced. A single bilingual translator was used throughout the process to maintain cross-language consistency. This consistency was further supported by ongoing reflexive awareness of linguistic and cultural positionality.

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Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through codebook thematic analysis informed by Self-Determination Theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). Unlike reflexive thematic analysis, which emphasizes flexible and interpretive engagement with data without relying on a fixed coding framework, the present codebook approach employed a theory-informed set of codes that were systematically applied across the interview transcripts. This approach was selected because the study aimed to examine teachers' experiences specifically through the lens of SDT's three basic psychological needs, rather than to generate themes inductively from the data. Initial codes were developed from two sources: the three SDT constructs and the study's research questions. SDT-informed codes captured both need support and need frustration for each construct. For example, competence need-support codes addressed preparation confidence, language accuracy support, and quality improvement in teaching, while competence need-frustration codes addressed professional confidence decline, role questioning, and concerns about teacher redundancy. Additional codes derived from the research questions captured descriptive dimensions of AI use, including tool types and frequency, teaching tasks, autonomy regulation patterns, and context-specific institutional factors. Each of the 20 codes was accompanied by a definition, inclusion criteria, and exclusion criteria to guide consistent application across all 12 transcripts (Miles et al., 2014). The unit of coding was a meaning unit, ranging from a phrase to several sentences when they addressed the same teaching episode. The codebook was applied as initially developed and was not revised during the analysis. Table 2 summarizes the coding framework by SDT construct.

TABLE 2
SDT-Based Coding Framework

SDT Construct	Sample Codes	Operational Meaning
Perceived Competence	Preparation confidence, language accuracy support, competence erosion, comparison-triggered self-doubt	Teachers' sense of professional capability in preparing and delivering instruction
Autonomy	Self-directed adoption, instructional agency, institutional pressure, creative autonomy decline	Teachers' perceived capacity to make pedagogical decisions based on their own professional judgment
Relatedness	Teacher–student interaction, sincerity concern, relational boundary-setting	Teachers' perceived sense of interpersonal connection and mutual engagement with students in AI-assisted teaching.

Note. The Relatedness codes reflect teacher-student interaction experiences, not a broader extension of SDT's core meaning of meaningful interpersonal connection.

The 20 initial codes were first organized under the three SDT-informed domains of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Within each domain, codes were examined for co-occurrence patterns. In this study, co-occurrence refers to two or more codes repeatedly appearing within the same participant account or in closely connected excerpts concerning the same teaching episode. Codes that repeatedly co-occurred in this way were then clustered into broader thematic patterns, while individual or divergent accounts were retained as analytically important cases rather than treated as group-level findings.

After the initial coding, the first author compared patterns within and across the Korean and Myanmar datasets to identify shared and context-specific themes. The first author was responsible for all primary coding, transcript reading, and initial theme development. The corresponding author served as a critical discussant, reviewing selected coded excerpts, questioning interpretive boundaries, and proposing alternative readings during the five coding meetings. Final thematic interpretations were reached collaboratively through discussion until both authors agreed on the analytical categories. To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, a systematic coding protocol was maintained consistently across all transcripts. Although no independent second coder was formally involved, the coding process was not conducted solely as an individual interpretive exercise. The first author held approximately five coding meetings with the corresponding author, during which emerging codes, theme boundaries, representative excerpts, and cross-context interpretations were discussed and refined. In these meetings, selected coded excerpts from the Korean and Myanmar datasets were reviewed comparatively, and interpretive disagreements were resolved through discussion until the coding categories and thematic interpretations became analytically coherent. Trustworthiness was further enhanced through the use of a theory-informed coding framework, repeated reading of the transcripts, iterative comparison within and across the Korean and Myanmar datasets, reflexive memoing (Braun & Clarke, 2019), and the inclusion of both convergent and divergent cases in the presentation of findings. The first author also engaged in reflexive awareness of her dual positionality as a Myanmar doctoral student in Korea throughout the analytical process. This positionality is understood within the interpretive paradigm as shaping the analysis rather than invalidating it (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

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FINDINGS

Analysis across the 12 transcripts revealed both convergences and divergences between Korean and Myanmar participants. Participants in both contexts tended to describe AI tools as broadly beneficial for preparation and efficiency (Wang et al., 2024), maintained meaningful instructional agency regardless of reliance level, and reported language support as a meaningful benefit for non-native English teachers. However, Korean participants in this study tended to describe more significant motivational disruptions shaped by examination culture and administrative demands, while participants in the Myanmar sample tended to describe more pragmatic and resource-oriented orientations toward AI use, despite facing structural access constraints and concerns about declining creative autonomy. Although participants in the two samples described different patterns of AI use, these reports were based on different indicators and therefore do not permit direct comparisons of the degree of AI reliance. Nevertheless, some Myanmar participants explicitly described how they limited or regulated their use of AI in particular teaching tasks.

Patterns of AI Tool Use and Adoption Across Both Contexts

Table 3 presents a comparative overview of AI tool use and frequency across both participant groups. It also summarizes the tasks for which AI was used and the drivers behind its adoption.

TABLE 3

Comparative Overview of AI Tool Use: Korean and Myanmar Participants

Dimension	Korean Participants (K1–K6)	Myanmar Participants (M1–M6)
School level represented	Secondary level (high school and middle school); Grades 7–12; CSAT examination context dominant	Primarily primary level; some multilevel teaching (M6)
Institutional sector	Public high schools (K1, K3), public vocational high school (K2), private hagwon (K4), public middle schools (K5, K6)	International schools (M1, M3), private/international school (M2), private schools (M4, M5, M6)
Primary generative AI tools (reported)	ChatGPT, Gemini Pro, Claude, Nano Banana (K1); Clipo — AI video editing (K6); school-subsidized ChatGPT Pro (K3); institutionally varied generative AI repertoire overall (K1–K6)	ChatGPT and Gemini (predominantly free versions; M1–M3, M5–M6); Canva AI (M1, M6); NotebookLM (M4); Wi-Fi constraints limited tool access for some (M2)
AI-adjacent tools (reported)	Duolingo, ClassCard, Padlet, MiriCanvas (K2); Google Docs, AutoDraw, Google Classroom (K5)	None reported; structural and economic constraints limited tool diversity beyond generative AI
Main teaching tasks	Lesson preparation, material creation, assessment design; administrative writing for university admission as a significant additional driver (K1, K3, K4)	Lesson planning, material creation, grammar checking; AI fills material gap where textbooks are absent (M1, M4, M6); emergency preparation when teaching multiple classes simultaneously (M6)
Recurring benefits	Efficiency and reduced preparation burden; language accuracy support for NNS teachers; broader access to instructional materials; near-daily or habitual use reported (K1, K4, K6)	Material access and diversity in resource-constrained setting; language accuracy support for NNS teachers (M3); reduced preparation burden; some participants described AI involvement in terms of proportion of teaching tasks rather than frequency, estimated at approximately 45–50% of teaching work (M2, M3, M6)
Recurring concerns	Competence erosion through reduced independent preparation (K4, K6); student perception of AI-generated materials as insincere (K2); students deferring to AI over teacher authority (K4); AI inaccuracies including difficulty-level mismatches and content errors (K2, K4)	Declining creative independence (M5); comparison-triggered self-doubt when evaluating AI's generative capacity against one's own ideas (M5); in-class uncertainty when using AI-generated materials (M3); concerns about professional competitiveness among AI-proficient teachers (M4)
Individual or divergent cases	K5: AI-assisted writing revision appeared to increase rather than decrease teacher-student interaction; K6: real-time metacognitive realization about habitual reliance during interview	M2: learned about available AI tools from her own students; M5: acknowledged that reduced AI access might strengthen her own professional agency and independent preparation

Note. CSAT = College Scholastic Ability Test; NNS = non-native speaker.

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The Competence Paradox: Language Support and Habitual AI Reliance

Across both contexts, AI appeared to support teachers' perceived competence in several ways, most notably by reducing the preparation burden, providing language-accuracy support, and increasing access to instructional materials (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Most participants across both contexts, including K1, K2, K3, K6, M1, M3, and M6, reported that AI appeared to enhance professional confidence in at least one dimension, most commonly through improved lesson preparation, reduced cognitive burden, and greater access to varied teaching resources (Hashem et al., 2024). K1 captured this affective dimension vividly, describing AI as "*a very reliable assistant by my side*," a framing suggesting not merely tool utility but a close professional reliance — K1's choice of "by my side" and "reliable" implies an affective orientation toward AI as a supportive presence rather than a neutral instrument. For non-native speaker teachers in both contexts, including K1 and K2 in the Korean group and M3 in the Myanmar group, AI also served as a language-accuracy validator, reducing self-doubt about English expression and grammar. M3 reported that sentence correction was her primary benefit: "*I am not a native speaker, so even when I speak, I sometimes doubt myself. For English teaching, I do not want even a small mistake*" (M3).

For non-native speaker teachers, this function was more than a preparation convenience. Having reliable AI verification appeared to reduce the continuous linguistic self-monitoring that NNS teachers carry alongside their instructional responsibilities — an additional cognitive burden that native-speaker teachers do not manage in the same way. This made AI's language accuracy support closely tied to professional confidence and a sense of linguistic legitimacy: the assurance that one's English output was accurate and reliable enough to model and teach.

At the same time, AI also appeared to frustrate perceived competence when teachers felt that their independent preparation, creativity, or professional judgment was being weakened by repeated reliance on AI-generated output. Among the Korean participants, K4 and K6 described forms of AI-related confidence disruption that were closely connected to reduced independent preparation and increased reliance on AI. K4 acknowledged a gradual decline in the depth of independent preparation that had previously grounded his professional capability: "*In the past, I would truly study everything thoroughly before going into class. But now I sometimes go in less prepared, because I know I can just ask AI on the spot*" (K4).

This account suggests a possible pattern of competence erosion — interpreted here as a gradual displacement of the intellectual engagement with subject matter that once constituted a source of professional mastery — though this interpretation is based on K4's individual account rather than a recurring pattern across the dataset (Gentile et al., 2023). K6 arrived at a metacognitive realization during the interview itself, having previously been unaware of the extent of her habitual reliance on AI:

> *If I imagine having to teach without AI, I think my confidence would actually be quite diminished now. That is a thought I am having for the first time right now. I might be losing the opportunity to develop my own thinking and build my own professional know-how*. (K6)

The spontaneous nature of this realization suggests that habituated AI use may obscure its own effects on professional confidence until structured reflection makes them visible. This pattern, observed here in K6's individual account, may warrant broader attention in professional development contexts (Kasneci et al., 2023; Lan, 2024).

Among Myanmar participants, competence disruption tended to take a qualitatively different form, centered on cognitive comparison and in-class uncertainty. M5 described a comparison-triggered competence concern arising directly from AI's generative capacity:

> *When AI gives me a lot of options, I start thinking: why did I not think of those ideas as a teacher? The extent to which I can think is much less than what AI can think. And I feel less confident*. (M5)

This form of disruption — perceiving AI's generative capacity as evidence of one's own cognitive limitations — was unique to M5 in this dataset and should be understood as an individual experience rather than a shared pattern (Lan, 2024). M3 described a related concern arising during classroom delivery: when using AI-generated materials, she found herself needing to verify content during the lesson itself, creating what she experienced as reduced ownership and fluency in delivering her own lesson: "*If I create by myself, I have already memorized it all. No need to look at the screen. But if I use AI, sometimes I need to do confirmations in class*" (M3).

Several participants in both contexts, including K2, K4, M3, and M5, expressed concerns about AI-generated inaccuracies,

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such as difficulty-level mismatches, grammatical errors, and content that contradicted teachers' own explanations. These inconsistencies illustrate how AI's unreliability can challenge teachers' sense of competence in real time.

Resilient but Pressured: Instructional Agency in AI-Assisted Practice

Across both contexts, AI appeared to be associated with teachers' sense of autonomy through predominantly self-directed adoption and the active maintenance of instructional agency, even as some participants described this autonomy as narrowing under institutional or cognitive pressure. A consistent pattern across participants in both contexts was the active maintenance of instructional agency (Gentile et al., 2023), appearing most explicitly among K3, M1, M2, M4, and M6: teachers tended to make final instructional decisions themselves, filter AI output carefully, and reserve relational and evaluative tasks — emotional support, personalized assessment, and classroom management — for their own professional judgment.

This pattern held regardless of reliance level or confidence profile, suggesting that instructional agency represents a resilient dimension of professional identity that teachers actively protect even as AI becomes more deeply embedded in their practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Gentile et al., 2023; Priestley et al., 2015). Although writing behavioral-development comments for students falls outside the domain of classroom English instruction, K3's account illustrates a sophisticated form of stakeholder-based agency in student guidance work. When writing behavioral-development comments for high-achieving high school students preparing for university admission, she deliberately avoided using AI because she was concerned that AI-generated language might appear formulaic, impersonal, or insufficiently individualized and could therefore disadvantage students in competitive admissions processes. As she explained: "*By certain students, I mean students for whom university admissions are particularly critical — exceptionally high-achieving students. For those students, using ChatGPT could actually work against them. So I do not use AI for their evaluations.*"

This reflected her own professional ethical judgment about the limits of AI use in high-stakes contexts rather than any institutional requirement. Among Korean participants, autonomy regulation was largely self-directed; K3 noted plainly, "*I do not think anyone has ever told me to use it,*" reflecting a pattern consistent with autonomous, self-directed adoption. However, this self-directed pattern was not universal. K2's account suggests that her use of AI was shaped partly by departmental expectations at her school rather than by personal choice alone. In this sense, her experience suggests a more externally shaped pattern of AI adoption, consistent with what SDT describes as external regulation. However, this interpretation is based on K2's individual account and should not be generalized to the other participants.

Among Myanmar participants, autonomy was similarly protected through active instructional judgment, though it also surfaced distinct frustrations tied to creative independence. M6 articulated the relational basis of instructional agency clearly: "*Every teacher has their own teaching style, and we have to adjust based on students' needs. We, the teachers, know it very well, but AI does not know it*" (M6).

This framing of professional judgment as irreducibly contextual appeared in several Myanmar participants' accounts, including M4 and M6, though the degree of emphasis varied across individuals and points to a form of professional agency grounded in knowledge of specific students that AI cannot replicate. Myanmar participants also described more consciously bounded reliance overall, with several offering specific self-estimates of around 45–50% of their teaching work (M2, M3, M6). These estimates describe AI involvement in terms of proportion of teaching tasks rather than frequency of use and therefore cannot be directly compared with the frequency-based descriptions offered by several Korean participants. At the same time, in her individual account, M5 described a sense of declining creative independence that she associated with habitual AI use: "*Because of AI, my level of creative thinking is getting lower.*" However, when asked to imagine teaching without AI, M5 did not frame this scenario only as a loss of support. Rather, she suggested that the absence of AI would require her to rely more actively on her own preparation, ideas, and pedagogical judgment: "*If there is no AI, I think lessons will be more prepared by myself. I will become more dependent on myself.*" Her response indicates that, even though AI use had begun to weaken her sense of creative independence, she still valued self-reliant teaching and recognized that reduced dependence on AI could strengthen her own professional agency.

Protecting the Relational Core: Disruptions, Boundaries, and Divergent Effects

Across both contexts, the relational dimensions of teaching appeared to be consciously protected by most participants, even as AI was associated with new sources of relational disruption — particularly among Korean participants in this study. Several Korean participants in this study, particularly K2 and K4, described AI-related relational disruption, including students bypassing teacher authority and student perception of AI-generated materials as evidence of insincerity. A relational

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disruption emerged from K2, whose student observed that the lesson slides appeared AI-generated and questioned whether she had invested sufficient personal effort. This sincerity concern — in which AI-generated materials may be perceived as evidence of reduced professional investment — suggests that AI use can, in some classroom contexts, be read by students as a withdrawal of relational and professional commitment (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). A related but more direct disruption concerned teacher authority itself: K4 described how some students increasingly deferred to AI over the teacher's own judgment, observing that "*kids now treat the teacher as wrong and ChatGPT as correct*" — a pattern suggesting that, at least in K4's context, AI may in some cases be perceived by students as a more authoritative source than the teacher — though this was an individual account rather than a shared pattern across Korean participants. This account may be better interpreted as a concern about professional authority and the teacher's epistemic role, rather than relatedness in the narrow SDT sense.

However, not all relational effects of AI were disruptive. A notable counterintuitive finding emerged from K5's account: rather than reducing teacher-student interaction, AI-assisted process writing had appeared to increase it. K5 explained that "*students who used AI for writing revision actually came to me more — they still wanted the teacher's confirmation. AI created more teacher–student interaction, not less*" (K5).

K5's account suggests that AI use does not necessarily weaken teacher-student interaction. When embedded in teacher-guided revision activities, AI may create additional opportunities for students to seek teacher confirmation and feedback — positioning the teacher as the primary evaluative authority rather than displacing that role. This finding suggests that AI's relationship with relatedness was not uniformly negative but depended on the pedagogical design and teacher enactment within which AI was used (Gentile et al., 2023).

Among Myanmar participants in this study, the relational dimensions of teaching appeared to be more consistently protected, though the degree and form of this protection varied across individuals. M1 explicitly noted that she avoids using AI "*when dealing with students' personal issues, communication, or assessing their real skills,*" while M2 stated plainly that "*for students' emotions and their behavior, we cannot ask AI — we have to manage ourselves. This is from personal experience.*" M4 similarly drew a clear boundary, explaining that he does not "*fully rely on AI for student assessment or understanding students' emotional learning needs*" because "*those areas still require human judgment and teacher experience.*" This pragmatic orientation toward professional identity was captured succinctly by M4 elsewhere in his interview: "*Teachers who use AI can substitute teachers who do not*" — a statement that suggests concern that AI-proficient teachers may be perceived as more professionally competitive than those who do not use AI, rather than directly affirming that the irreplaceable core of teaching remains human. This concern aligns more closely with professional identity and instructional agency than with relatedness in the narrow SDT sense. As reflected in the active maintenance of instructional agency discussed above, these participants reserved relational and evaluative tasks — emotional support, personalized assessment, and classroom management — for their own professional judgment, treating these dimensions as outside the scope of appropriate AI use. These accounts of conscious boundary-setting are perhaps better interpreted as expressions of instructional agency — teachers actively deciding where AI belongs and does not belong in their professional practice — rather than as evidence of relatedness in the narrow SDT sense. At the same time, they may reflect an implicit concern for maintaining meaningful teacher-student connection.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that AI-assisted teaching was associated with both support and frustration of teachers' basic psychological needs — often within the same participant. The interview data do not document longitudinal changes in motivation; rather, they show experiences that participants interpreted as consistent with need support or need frustration. The specific form and intensity of these effects appeared to be shaped by national and institutional context rather than by AI use alone.

AI's Dual Role in Competence: Support and Erosion

Across both contexts, AI tended to support the competence need through preparation confidence, efficiency, and language accuracy support, consistent with SDT's prediction that competence need-satisfaction strengthens intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, the study also suggests two distinct mechanisms through which AI appeared to frustrate competence. Among Korean participants, K4's account suggested a possible pattern of competence erosion through reduced independent preparation — interpreted here as a gradual displacement of the professional mastery that once grounded

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confidence and may have sustained intrinsic motivation. K4's account suggests that as teachers rely more heavily on AI in place of careful preparation, their reported professional experience may become less grounded in self-endorsed mastery — though the present data capture reported experiences rather than documented changes in motivational orientation over time. This interpretation, however, is based on a small number of accounts and should be understood as a possible pattern rather than an established finding. Among Myanmar participants, comparison-triggered self-doubt (M5) — perceiving AI's generative capacity as evidence of one's own cognitive limitations — may represent an underexplored form of competence frustration in AI-assisted teaching contexts. K6's real-time realization during the interview illustrates a further dimension: habituated AI use may remain unnoticed in its effects on professional confidence until teachers are prompted to reflect explicitly on how AI has changed their preparation, judgment, and confidence. This finding suggests that professional development should not focus only on how teachers can use AI more efficiently. It should also include structured reflection on when AI use supports teachers' competence and when it begins to weaken the independent preparation, pedagogical reasoning, and professional confidence that sustain their motivation, consistent with prior work showing the value of reflective motivational activities for novice English teachers (H. S. Kim & T.-Y. Kim, 2021). In this sense, reflective AI-use training may be associated with reduced risk of AI-assisted efficiency gradually becoming a source of motivational strain, a concern that resonates with prior work on Korean EFL teachers' motivational vulnerability under institutional and workload pressures (T.-Y. Kim & Y. Kim, 2022).

A further contribution of this study concerns the distinctive role of language accuracy support for non-native speaker EFL teachers. For NNS (non-native speaker) EFL teachers in both contexts, AI's function as a language accuracy resource was not merely a general efficiency benefit. It was closely tied to perceived competence, linguistic self-confidence, and professional legitimacy (Godwin-Jones, 2022). NNS EFL teachers manage a dual professional burden: they are responsible for modeling the target language while simultaneously delivering instruction. AI's ability to verify grammar and generate natural-sounding English appeared to reduce the linguistic self-monitoring load that NNS teachers carry during materials preparation and classroom delivery — a burden that native-speaker teachers do not face in the same way. This is distinct from the preparation-efficiency benefits AI offered across all participants. It directly addressed a form of competence vulnerability specific to NNS EFL teachers — uncertainty about one's own target-language proficiency — and translated this into a source of professional confidence, linguistic self-assurance, and professional identity support. This finding extends Godwin-Jones's (2022) observation that AI may serve as a language support resource for NNS teachers and suggests that, in the EFL context specifically, this function deserves recognition as a substantive motivational resource rather than a peripheral technological benefit. For EFL teacher educators and professional development designers, this implies that AI tools may be particularly well-positioned to strengthen the confidence and professional identity of NNS teachers — a dimension of AI integration that existing teacher training frameworks do not yet systematically address.

Preserving Motivational Meaning: Agency, Relatedness, and Pedagogical Design

The finding that most participants across both contexts appeared to maintain meaningful instructional agency despite varying reliance levels suggests that the autonomy need in teaching may be more resilient than AI-threat narratives predict — though this interpretation should be understood in the context of a small, purposively selected sample of experienced AI users. Teachers tended to actively draw boundaries around AI use, reserving relational and evaluative tasks for their own professional judgment — a pattern consistent with what SDT describes as identified or integrated regulation, though the present data do not allow direct confirmation of motivational regulation type (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Most participants described their AI adoption as self-directed. This pattern complicates narratives of externally driven AI uptake and suggests that, at least among teachers with meaningful AI experience, genuine personal investment in AI as a professional resource may be common — though the extent to which this reflects intrinsic motivation in the SDT sense cannot be confirmed from interview data alone.

On relatedness, Korean participants in this study tended to report more AI-related disruption in the relational dimensions of their teaching. Students' perception of AI-generated materials as evidence of insincerity, and AI substituting for human emotional support, may reflect relatedness need-frustration in the SDT sense. Concern about students bypassing teacher authority, however, is perhaps better interpreted as professional authority disruption rather than relatedness in the narrow SDT sense. These patterns are consistent with what SDT describes as relatedness need-frustration, though the interview data capture reported experiences rather than documented changes in motivational engagement over time. Myanmar participants tended more consistently to protect the relational dimensions of their practice, consciously limiting AI use in emotionally and interpersonally significant tasks. K5's account — that AI appeared to increase rather than reduce teacher-student interaction in her specific context — represents one of the most theoretically significant divergent cases in this dataset. It

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suggests that the educational impact of AI on relatedness depends more on instructional design and teacher enactment than on the tool itself. When AI is embedded in teacher-guided revision activities, it may create additional opportunities for students to seek teacher confirmation and feedback, rather than bypassing the teacher as a relational authority. From an SDT perspective, this pattern may represent a possible opportunity for supporting the relatedness need within AI-integrated teaching — one that depends on whether the teacher's pedagogical design positions them as an active relational presence in the learning process, rather than on AI use per se. This interpretation is based on a single participant's account and warrants further investigation, particularly through design-focused research examining how specific pedagogical choices shape the relational consequences of AI use.

Institutional Conditions as Motivational Shapers

The findings suggest that national and institutional conditions shaped how participants experienced the motivational consequences of AI-assisted teaching. In the Korean data, the CSAT-driven curriculum and heavy administrative demands appeared to be associated with conditions in which some teachers turned to AI more readily, particularly in administrative writing and examination-oriented preparation (Hong & Kim, 2025; T.-Y. Kim et al., 2014; T.-Y. Kim & Y. Kim, 2022). These institutional conditions also appeared to place the professional role under pressure. This was associated with motivational strain related to competence and professional meaning among some participants. It is also worth noting that motivational patterns within the Korean group were not uniform. Participants teaching in CSAT-focused contexts (K1, K3, K4) described more acute pressures related to examination preparation and administrative workload, while middle-school participants (K5, K6) described somewhat different patterns — most notably, K5's account that AI increased rather than reduced teacher-student interaction. These within-group differences suggest that school level and learner age may shape motivational experiences alongside — and sometimes independently from — the broader institutional conditions described above. Where these influences overlap, they cannot always be fully separated. Among Myanmar participants in this study, AI appeared to function primarily as a practical resource for filling instructional gaps. Participants in the Myanmar sample tended to describe AI use as addressing genuine professional and material needs, alongside conscious protection of relational teaching dimensions. This pattern suggests that when AI is used to address authentic professional needs rather than institutional expectations, its motivational consequences may be more positive — though this interpretation should be treated cautiously, as the data do not provide directly comparable evidence of reliance levels across the two groups. This interpretation, however, is based on a small sample from private and international school contexts and should not be generalized to Myanmar EFL teaching more broadly. These patterns are consistent with prior findings that teacher motivation is shaped by specific cultural and institutional environments (T.-Y. Kim & Y.-K. Kim, 2015; Naing & Kim, 2025). The present study extends this understanding to the domain of AI-integrated practice.

For Korean EFL contexts, these findings suggest that professional development should include structured reflection on AI reliance. Institutional policies that allow genuine teacher autonomy in AI adoption — rather than mandating use — may be more likely to support positive motivational orientations among teachers. For Myanmar EFL contexts represented in this study, investment in reliable technological infrastructure may help teachers experience AI as a competence-supportive resource rather than an additional source of professional strain.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has examined how twelve EFL teachers in Korea and Myanmar experience AI-assisted teaching through the lens of Self-Determination Theory, with particular attention to the motivational implications of AI integration across two structurally contrasting national contexts. The findings suggest that AI-assisted teaching was associated with both support and frustration of teachers' basic psychological needs. These effects appeared to vary in form and intensity across participants and institutional contexts. Korean participants in this study tended to describe more complex motivational tensions — including what appeared to be competence erosion, identity-related concerns, and habitual AI reliance — while participants in the Myanmar sample tended to describe more pragmatic and resource-oriented professional orientations alongside structural constraints shaping their access to AI. A consistent pattern across both contexts was the active maintenance of instructional agency, suggesting that even under significant AI reliance, teachers tended to preserve self-directed professional orientations. This pattern, however, should be interpreted cautiously given the small and purposively selected sample. These findings extend prior comparative work on EFL teacher demotivation and resilience across Korean and Myanmar contexts (Naing & Kim, 2025) by situating the analysis within the specific dynamics of AI integration.

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The findings carry several implications for EFL teacher professional development and institutional policy. For Korean EFL contexts represented in this study, where examination-driven culture and heavy administrative demands appear to be associated with more habitual AI use — identified in prior research as a key source of demotivation (T.-Y. Kim & Y. Kim, 2022) — professional development should incorporate structured reflective practices prompting teachers to examine how habitual AI use may be displacing independent professional judgment. Institutional policies allowing teachers genuine autonomy in deciding when and how to use AI may be more likely to support positive motivational engagement than mandated adoption. For Myanmar EFL contexts represented in this study, investment in reliable technological infrastructure and targeted professional development may help more teachers experience AI as a supportive resource. These recommendations, however, are provisional and specific to the private and international school contexts represented in the sample. The absence of government schoolteachers from the present dataset also suggests the need for future research and policy discussion on how uneven AI access may shape English teachers' professional development opportunities across different sectors in Myanmar. More broadly, teacher education programs should help teachers develop principled, values-based approaches to AI use grounded in clear professional judgment about when AI serves students' learning and when it does not (Gentile et al., 2023).

This study is subject to several limitations. The sample is small and purposively selected, and the two participant groups were not fully equivalent in terms of school level or institutional context. Whereas the Korean participants were mainly situated in secondary-level contexts, including middle school, public high school, vocational high school, and CSAT-oriented private instruction, the Myanmar participants were drawn largely from primary-level private or international school contexts. Thus, some of the cross-context differences identified in this study may reflect not only national and institutional conditions but also differences in learner age, school level, curriculum demands, and teachers' guidance responsibilities, which have been shown to shape English teachers' motivational experiences in early childhood and young learner contexts (Gong & Kim, 2023). In addition, the Myanmar sample did not include government schoolteachers, meaning that teachers facing the most significant resource constraints are absent from the dataset. The findings are therefore not intended to generalize to all EFL teachers in either national context. In particular, the absence of government schoolteachers from the Myanmar sample means that the findings reflect the experiences of teachers in relatively resource-rich private and international school contexts, which may differ substantially from those of teachers in government schools facing more severe resource constraints. Rather, the study aims to offer theoretically grounded insight into the motivational dimensions of AI-assisted teaching among teachers with meaningful experience with AI (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, the study relies on self-reported interview data reflecting participants' subjective perceptions rather than directly observable behavior, and the cross-sectional design captures experience at a single point in a rapidly evolving technological context.

These limitations point toward productive directions for future research. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine how teachers' motivational orientations toward AI evolve as reliance patterns deepen or are reversed through professional development — particularly given the patterns of habitual AI reliance identified in this study (Lan, 2024). Future research should also examine how policy environments shape teachers' motivational experiences of AI integration. The counter-intuitive finding that AI increased rather than reduced teacher-student interaction in one participant's classroom also warrants further investigation, as it suggests that AI's effects on the relational dimensions of teaching depend on pedagogical design choices that existing research has not yet systematically examined. Finally, the distinctive experience of non-native speaker EFL teachers — for whom AI appears to serve as a language-accuracy resource that affects not only efficiency but also professional confidence and linguistic self-perception — represents a specific, undertheorized dimension of AI integration that deserves dedicated scholarly attention (Godwin-Jones, 2022).

Beyond these specific directions, the present study points to several broader considerations for future inquiry. Expanding the sample to include teachers with varying levels of teaching experience, AI literacy, school levels, and institutional backgrounds would provide more representative perspectives on how AI integration intersects with teachers' motivational orientations. The cross-national scope could similarly be widened beyond Korea and Myanmar to encompass a broader range of educational and sociocultural contexts, enabling more robust conclusions about the generalizability of the patterns identified here. Rather than treating AI as a uniform technology, future studies would also benefit from examining specific tools in relation to particular pedagogical functions — a refinement that would make visible how differences in tool capability, accuracy, and affordance translate into distinct experiences of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. A structured pre- and post-intervention design, in which participants receive orientation to selected AI tools before use, would allow for more controlled assessment of how motivational experiences shift through actual engagement. Finally, interview protocols incorporating more targeted questions — addressing AI dependence, ethical concerns, teachers' evolving professional roles, and their evaluation of AI-generated content — would yield richer and more theory-aligned data for SDT-based analysis.

Theoretically, this study contributes to SDT-based research on teacher motivation by tentatively identifying three possible

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patterns through which basic psychological needs may be supported or frustrated in AI-assisted teaching: language accuracy support as a possible competence-enhancing function specific to non-native speaker EFL teachers; habitual AI reliance as a possible gradual displacement of the independent preparation that sustains professional mastery; and pedagogical design as a possible mediating condition shaping whether AI use frustrates or strengthens the relational dimensions of teaching. These patterns are offered as tentative interpretations grounded in a small qualitative dataset, and their theoretical implications for SDT — including whether they might extend its framework to incorporate the role of institutional context and instructional design — should be explored and tested in future research.

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Appendix

Sample Interview Questions from 12-Question Protocol

1. Can you describe how you currently use AI tools in your teaching-related work?
2. Can you walk me through a specific recent example of using AI for a teaching task — from the moment you decided to use it to what happened in class?
3. In what ways, if any, has using AI tools affected your confidence as a teacher?
4. How do you decide when to use AI and when not to use it in your teaching?
5. To what extent do you feel you rely on AI tools in your teaching-related work?
6. If you imagine yourself teaching without any AI tools from tomorrow, what would that feel like — professionally and personally?

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