From Language Teachers to AI-Enhanced Educators: Generative AI Self-Efficacy among Vietnamese EFL Teachers

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ABSTRACT:
The increasing adoption of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has created new opportunities for English language teachers to enhance teaching effectiveness and professional productivity. However, limited research has examined teachers' confidence in using these technologies. This study investigated the generative AI self-efficacy of Vietnamese EFL teachers in higher education. Using a quantitative descriptive survey design, data were collected from 258 in-service EFL teachers working at public and private universities across Vietnam. An adapted Vietnamese version of the Generative AI Self-Efficacy Scale (GAI-SES) was employed to measure two dimensions: GAI-assisted Teaching Self-Efficacy and GAI-assisted Professional Support Self-Efficacy. Descriptive statistics revealed that participants reported relatively high confidence in using generative AI for teaching-related purposes, particularly for translating and explaining English content, lesson planning, and instructional material development. In contrast, lower confidence levels were found in relation to prompt creation, learning new AI features, and using AI as a reflective partner for professional well-being. The findings suggest that Vietnamese EFL teachers primarily view generative AI as an instructional and productivity tool rather than a source of socio-professional support. Implications for AI-focused teacher professional development are discussed.

Keywords: generative artificial intelligence, self-efficacy, EFL teachers, higher education, Vietnam

Introduction

The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has transformed educational practices worldwide. Tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Copilot are increasingly being used to support lesson planning, material development, assessment design, feedback provision, and personalized learning experiences (Mavrych et al., 2025). Within English language education, these technologies have attracted considerable attention due to their potential to facilitate

language learning, automate routine tasks, and enhance teaching effectiveness (Torres & Kahveci, 2025). As a result, language teachers are no longer merely users of digital technologies but are increasingly expected to function as AI-enhanced educators who can effectively integrate GenAI into their professional practice.

Despite the growing availability of GenAI tools, teachers differ substantially in the extent to which they are willing and able to use these technologies. Previous research suggests that successful technology integration is influenced not only by access to technological resources but also by psychological factors, particularly individuals' beliefs about their capability to use technology effectively (Nagy & Dringó-Horváth, 2024). Drawing upon Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy, technology-related self-efficacy has consistently been identified as a significant predictor of technology adoption, acceptance, and continued use (Pan, 2020; Rosli & Saleh, 2022). Teachers who possess stronger efficacy beliefs are generally more willing to experiment with emerging technologies, overcome technological challenges, and integrate innovative tools into their instructional practices.

Recent developments in AI have prompted scholars to extend the concept of self-efficacy to AI-related contexts. Studies have examined AI self-efficacy as individuals' confidence in interacting with AI systems and utilizing AI technologies for various purposes (Alqurni, 2026; Shao et al., 2024). However, most existing measures were developed in the context of traditional forms of AI and primarily focus on technical or functional competencies. Generative AI differs substantially from conventional AI systems because it involves interactive communication, content generation, collaborative problem-solving, and increasingly social forms of human–AI interaction (Geroimenko, 2025). Consequently, existing AI self-efficacy measures may not adequately capture the unique competencies required for effective engagement with generative AI.

To address this limitation, Yu et al. (2026) recently developed the Generative AI Self-Efficacy Scale (GAI-SES), a validated instrument designed specifically to assess individuals' confidence in using generative AI technologies. The scale conceptualizes generative AI self-efficacy as comprising two dimensions: GAI-assisted Task Self-Efficacy, which reflects confidence in utilizing GenAI for learning, problem-solving, and task completion, and GAI-assisted Social Self-Efficacy, which refers to confidence in engaging with GenAI for communication, emotional support, and social interaction. This conceptualization recognizes that generative AI functions not only as a productivity tool but also as an interactive partner capable of supporting users' cognitive and socio-emotional needs.

Although research on generative AI in education has expanded rapidly, empirical evidence regarding teachers' generative AI self-efficacy remains limited, particularly in English language teaching contexts. Existing studies have predominantly focused on AI literacy, technology acceptance, attitudes toward AI, or teachers' intentions to use AI (Tomczyk & Majkut, 2025; Yim & Wegerif, 2024). Comparatively little attention has been paid to teachers' confidence in their ability to effectively work with generative AI technologies. Furthermore, research investigating this construct in developing educational contexts remains scarce. In Vietnam, where higher education institutions are increasingly encouraging the adoption of AI-powered technologies (Lam & Phi, 2025),

understanding teachers' confidence in using generative AI is important for informing professional development initiatives and institutional policies aimed at promoting responsible AI integration.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine generative AI self-efficacy among Vietnamese EFL teachers working in higher education. By applying the Generative AI Self-Efficacy Scale (GAI-SES) in the Vietnamese context, the study aims to provide initial evidence regarding teachers' confidence in using generative AI as part of their professional practice. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research question: To what extent are Vietnamese EFL teachers confident in using generative AI as part of their professional practice?

Methodology

Research design

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive survey design to examine Vietnamese EFL teachers' generative AI self-efficacy in higher education. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to measure a specific psychological construct using numerical data and identify overall patterns across a target population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were collected through a standardized questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Research setting and participants

The study was conducted in the Vietnamese higher education context. Participants were 258 in-service EFL teachers employed at both public and private universities across Vietnam. A convenience sampling method was adopted to recruit participants from diverse institutional settings. To be eligible for participation, teachers were required to be actively teaching English at the tertiary level and have prior experience using generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, or Copilot. In addition to the Generative AI Self-Efficacy Scale, demographic, professional, and AI-related background information was collected, including gender, age, academic qualifications, type of institution, teaching experience, frequency of generative AI use, prior AI training, and self-rated AI proficiency.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 258)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	89	34.5
	Female	169	65.5
Age	Under 30	48	18.6
	30–39	102	39.5
	40–49	73	28.3
	50 and above	35	13.6
Academic Qualification	Master's Degree	199	77.1
	Doctoral Degree	59	22.9
Institution Type	Public University	168	65.1
	Private University	90	34.9

Self-Rated AI Proficiency	Intermediate	211	81.8
	Advanced	47	18.2

Instrument

Data were collected using an adapted Vietnamese version of the Generative AI Self-Efficacy Scale (GAI-SES) developed by Yu et al. (2026). The instrument consists of 11 items organized into two dimensions: GAI-assisted Task Self-Efficacy (8 items), which assesses users' confidence in employing generative AI for knowledge acquisition, problem-solving, and professional tasks, and GAI-assisted Social Self-Efficacy (3 items), which measures confidence in using generative AI for emotional and social support. The original English questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese and subsequently reviewed by three experts in English language education to ensure linguistic accuracy and contextual appropriateness. A pilot study involving 30 Vietnamese EFL teachers was conducted to evaluate the clarity and comprehensibility of the translated instrument. Minor revisions were made based on participants' feedback before the questionnaire was administered on a larger scale. Participants responded to all items using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater generative AI self-efficacy. The original scale demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89 (Yu et al., 2026).

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The survey link was distributed through professional networks and social media platforms frequented by EFL teachers in Vietnam. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire. On average, respondents required approximately 6–8 minutes to complete the survey.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27. Prior to the main analysis, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to examine the internal consistency of the adapted scale. The results indicated excellent reliability ($\alpha = .90$). Subsequently, descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were computed to determine the extent of Vietnamese EFL teachers' generative AI self-efficacy and its two underlying dimensions.

Results

GAI-Assisted Teaching Self-Efficacy among Vietnamese EFL Teachers

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for Vietnamese EFL teachers' GAI-assisted teaching self-efficacy. Overall, participants reported a relatively high level of confidence in using generative AI for teaching-related purposes ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.73$).

The highest mean scores were found for using generative AI to assist with translating or explaining English content ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.61$) and supporting routine professional tasks such as lesson planning and material preparation ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.65$). In contrast, lower scores were reported for learning new AI features ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.86$), creating effective prompts ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.82$), and overcoming difficulties when using AI for teaching ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.79$).

Table 2. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of GAI-Assisted Teaching Self-Efficacy

No	Statement	M	SD
1	I can use generative AI to support my English language teaching activities.	4.21	0.67
2	I can use generative AI to assist with translating or explaining English language content.	4.36	0.61
3	I can use generative AI to obtain suggestions for solving teaching-related problems.	4.12	0.73
4	I can create effective prompts to obtain useful teaching materials or information from generative AI.	3.78	0.82
5	I can learn and utilize new features when updated versions of generative AI tools are released.	3.69	0.86
6	I can use generative AI to support routine professional tasks (e.g., lesson planning, material preparation, or administrative work).	4.25	0.65
7	I can use generative AI to generate teaching materials, classroom activities, or assessment tasks.	4.18	0.71
8	I can overcome difficulties encountered when using generative AI for teaching purposes.	3.81	0.79

GAI-Assisted Professional Support Self-Efficacy among Vietnamese EFL Teachers

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for Vietnamese EFL teachers' GAI-assisted socio-professional self-efficacy. Overall, participants reported a moderate level of confidence in using generative AI for socio-professional support purposes (M = 3.54, SD = 0.91).

Among the three items, the highest mean score was recorded for interacting with generative AI to discuss teaching-related concerns and professional challenges (M = 3.74, SD = 0.84). Participants also reported a relatively similar level of confidence in using generative AI to obtain support or advice when facing difficulties in their teaching career (M = 3.68, SD = 0.88). However, the lowest mean score was observed for using generative AI as a reflective partner to reduce stress or feelings of professional isolation (M = 3.21, SD = 1.02).

Table 3. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of GAI-Assisted Socio-Professional Self-Efficacy

No	Statement	M	SD
1	I can interact with generative AI to discuss teaching-related concerns and professional challenges.	3.74	0.84
2	I can use generative AI to obtain support or advice when facing difficulties in my teaching career.	3.68	0.88
3	I can use generative AI as a reflective partner to reduce stress or feelings of professional isolation.	3.21	1.02

Discussion

This study examined the extent to which Vietnamese EFL teachers were confident in using generative AI as part of their professional practice. The findings revealed that participants generally reported a high level of GAI-assisted teaching self-efficacy (M = 4.05), while their GAI-assisted professional support self-efficacy was comparatively lower (M = 3.54). These results suggest that Vietnamese EFL teachers are more confident in employing generative AI for instructional and professional tasks than for reflective, emotional, or socio-professional purposes.

The relatively high level of teaching self-efficacy may be explained by the increasing integration of generative AI tools into teachers' daily professional activities. Among the items, the highest scores were reported for using AI to translate or explain English language content and to support routine professional tasks such as lesson planning and material preparation. These findings are unsurprising given that such functions represent some of the most accessible and immediately useful applications of generative AI in language education. Recent studies have similarly reported that teachers primarily utilize generative AI to enhance productivity, generate instructional materials, and support classroom preparation (Tomczyk & Majkut, 2025; Torres & Kahveci, 2025). The findings therefore support the view that generative AI is becoming an increasingly practical component of English language teachers' professional toolkit. At the same time, lower confidence levels were observed in relation to prompt creation, learning newly released AI features, and overcoming AI-related difficulties. These findings indicate that while teachers are comfortable using existing AI functionalities, they may not yet possess the advanced competencies required to maximize the pedagogical potential of generative AI. This observation aligns with previous studies suggesting that effective AI integration requires more than basic operational knowledge; it also involves strategic prompting, critical evaluation, and continuous adaptation to rapidly evolving technologies (Nagy & Dringó-Horváth, 2024). The results thus highlight the need for targeted professional development programs that move beyond basic AI awareness and focus on advanced AI literacy and pedagogical applications.

Another notable finding concerns the comparatively lower scores for GAI-assisted professional support self-efficacy. Although participants expressed moderate confidence in discussing teaching-related concerns and obtaining professional advice from AI systems, they were less confident in using AI as a reflective partner to reduce stress or feelings of professional isolation. This pattern suggests that Vietnamese EFL teachers continue to perceive generative AI primarily as a productivity-enhancing tool rather than a source of emotional or reflective support. Such a finding may be influenced by cultural and professional norms in which professional reflection and emotional support are traditionally sought through human colleagues, mentors, or professional communities rather than technological systems. This finding is particularly noteworthy because it both supports and extends the conceptualization proposed by Yu et al. (2026). While Yu et al. argued that generative AI self-efficacy encompasses both task-oriented and social dimensions, the present study demonstrates that these dimensions are not equally salient in an educational context. For Vietnamese EFL teachers, confidence in task-related applications appears substantially stronger

than confidence in socio-professional uses. The study therefore refines the original framework by suggesting that the social dimension of generative AI self-efficacy may manifest differently across user groups and professional contexts. More broadly, the findings confirm previous theoretical arguments that self-efficacy plays an important role in technology engagement and adoption (Bandura, 1977; Pan, 2020; Rosli & Saleh, 2022). The relatively high levels of confidence reported by participants suggest that many Vietnamese EFL teachers are prepared to engage with generative AI in their teaching practices. Furthermore, the study extends existing research on AI in education, which has largely focused on AI literacy, attitudes, acceptance, and usage intentions (Tomczyk & Majkut, 2025; Yim & Wegerif, 2024), by providing empirical evidence regarding teachers' confidence in their ability to work with generative AI technologies. In doing so, the study contributes one of the first examinations of generative AI self-efficacy among EFL teachers in the Vietnamese higher education context. Taken together, the findings suggest that Vietnamese EFL teachers are transitioning from being traditional language educators to becoming AI-enhanced educators. However, this transition remains uneven, with stronger confidence in instructional applications than in reflective or socio-professional uses of AI. Future professional development initiatives should therefore not only strengthen teachers' technical competencies but also help them explore broader ways of engaging with generative AI as a collaborative professional resource.

Conclusion

This study investigated generative AI self-efficacy among Vietnamese EFL teachers in higher education using an adapted version of the Generative AI Self-Efficacy Scale (GAI-SES). The findings revealed that participants generally reported a high level of confidence in using generative AI for teaching-related purposes, particularly for translation, lesson preparation, material development, and instructional support. In contrast, teachers demonstrated comparatively lower confidence in using generative AI for reflective and socio-professional purposes, such as managing professional challenges or reducing feelings of professional isolation.

These findings carry several practical implications. First, higher education institutions should provide professional development opportunities that move beyond introducing AI tools and instead focus on developing advanced competencies such as prompt engineering, evaluating AI-generated outputs, and troubleshooting AI-related challenges. For example, workshops can train teachers to design effective prompts for creating classroom activities, assessments, and differentiated learning materials. Second, teacher education programs should incorporate AI-related competencies into professional development curricula to help educators use generative AI more strategically and responsibly. Finally, universities may consider establishing communities of practice where teachers can share successful AI-supported teaching experiences, thereby fostering both technological confidence and pedagogical innovation.

The study is not without limitations. First, the use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings to all Vietnamese EFL teachers. Future studies could employ larger and more representative samples drawn from different regions and educational sectors. Second, the study relied exclusively on self-reported data, which may be influenced by social desirability bias or

participants' subjective perceptions. Future research could complement questionnaire data with interviews, classroom observations, or actual records of AI use. Third, the study adopted a descriptive approach and therefore did not examine factors that may influence generative AI self-efficacy, such as AI literacy, prior training, teaching experience, or institutional support. Future studies may employ correlational or explanatory designs to investigate predictors of teachers' generative AI self-efficacy. Finally, because generative AI technologies continue to evolve rapidly, teachers' confidence and usage patterns may change over time. Longitudinal research is therefore needed to examine how generative AI self-efficacy develops as educators gain greater experience with emerging AI tools.

Author Declaration

The authors confirm that this manuscript is original, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. The authors also declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this study. ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used solely for language refinement, including grammar, spelling, and stylistic improvements. No AI tool was used to generate, analyze, or interpret research data. The authors carefully reviewed all AI-assisted edits and assume full responsibility for the final content of the manuscript.

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