

## The Socio-Political Dimension of English Language Teaching: Case Study from Begusarai

Raghvendra Kumar<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Jitendra Kumar Mishra<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research scholar, PG Department of English, BRABU MUZ, Bihar

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of English, L. N. T. College, Muzaffarpur, Bihar

### Abstract

This study examines the socio-political dimensions of English language teaching (ELT) in Begusarai, Bihar, situating English as both an empowering force and a mechanism of exclusion. Rooted in India's colonial legacy, English has continued to dominate the academic and professional domains despite post-independence efforts to promote regional languages. In Begusarai, aspirations for English proficiency are linked to opportunities for education, employment, and upward mobility; yet, these aspirations are constrained by inadequate infrastructure, limited availability of trained teachers, and socio-economic inequalities. Using a qualitative case study approach and relying on secondary sources such as policy documents, academic studies, and educational surveys, the paper identifies recurring themes through thematic analysis. The findings reveal sharp institutional disparities between government and private schools, ambivalence in political narratives about English, and the role of class, caste, and gender in shaping access to language learning. The analysis demonstrates that English education functions simultaneously as a gateway to empowerment and as a barrier that reinforces existing inequalities. The paper concludes that democratizing access to English requires systemic reforms in teacher training, resource allocation, and inclusive pedagogical strategies to ensure equity in language education.

**Keywords:** English language teaching, socio-political dimensions, Begusarai, government and private schools, educational inequality, class, caste, and gender, empowerment, exclusion, language policy, India.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English language has long held a leading role within Indian education system as not just the means of imparting education and giving social and economic mobility but also an instrument of power, social and economic rise. The introduction of English as the language of administration, governance, and the education sector by English among the elites during the colonial period created a stratification between English and vernacular languages so that English language can be regarded as a superior language to vernacular languages. This historical legacy made English a source of prestige and opportunity, which would allow access to jobs in administration, higher education and professional jobs. This led to English proficiency having a strong association with social status, that influences aspirations and expectation of the various socio-economic groups.

After attaining independence, India engaged in massive campaigns to enforce the use of regional languages and minimize the use of English, but English has continued to dominate especially in the academic sphere and the professional jobs category. The globalization of the

economy and growth of the industries based on technology have also substantiated the significance of the English language by making it a significant instrument in availing the global possibilities and engaging in the global knowledge system. English as a language has stopped being merely a tool of communication but it is strongly tied to cultural capital, economic growth, as well as social upward mobility, which forms a complex interaction between language skills and socio-economic upward mobility.

These dynamics are especially strong in the rural areas like Begusarai district of Bihar. The wish of families and students to achieve proficiency in English because it will help open better educational and employment opportunities is only one example of societal-wide aspirations of upward mobility. Meanwhile, these aspirations are likely to be faced with factors such as structural impediments, insufficient school infrastructure, a lack of ready supply of trained English teachers, and socio-economic drawbacks that limit access to quality English education. These restrictions cause the learning outcome differences and strengthen the existing inequalities turning English into the desirable ability and the indicator of social stratification at the same time.

Also, cultural and social identity is brought into play when it comes to the role of English in Begusarai. Although it is welcomed as the window to the modern world and international contact, it can cause conflicts in the community that cherish local languages and culture. Linguistic landscape is therefore a terrain in which modernity and culture protection are in conflict. The idea of learning the English language is not only an educational pursuit to students but a socially and politically loaded project that has its roots in questions of identity and access and belonging.

This paper, thus, attempts to explore social-political aspects of English language pedagogy in Begusarai by shedding light on the key ways in which institutional, social, and policy frameworks influence the process of learning. The analysis of the interaction between language, power and the society enables the research to gain a complex picture of English education as an empowering instrument and an instrument of exclusion within the rural Bihar environment.

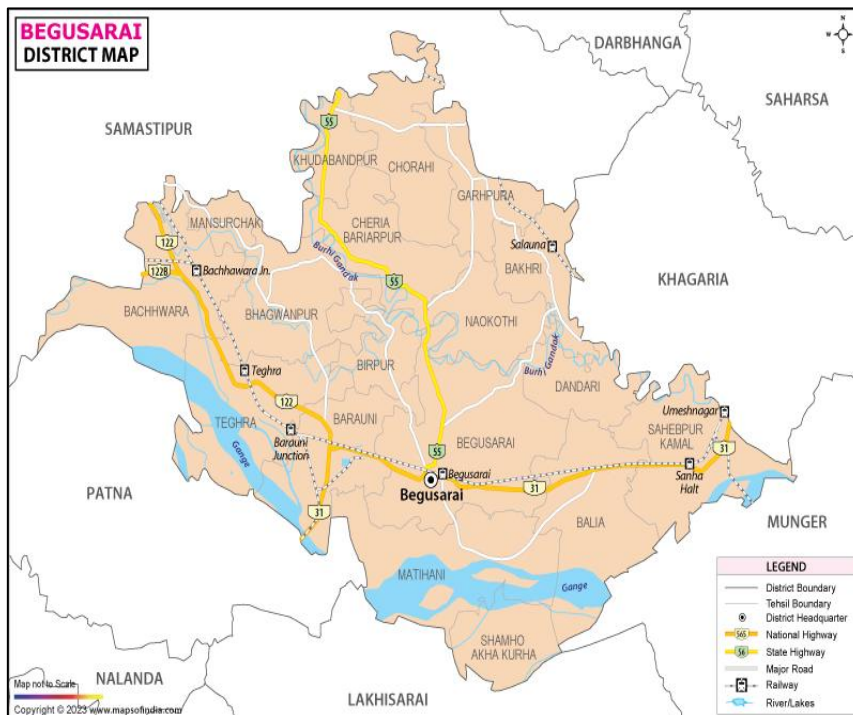
### **1.1.English in the Indian Socio-Political Context**

English in India lies in the political-class-cultural nexus. On the one hand, it is described as the language of opportunity, and it is essential to improve personal career opportunities and cross the bridge of international connections. Conversely, it entrenches disparities and favors people who have access to elite institutions. The tug of war between language and identity is very much evident in Bihar where language politics seem to favor Hindi language and regional identity, though the undercurrent point to the need of English in the modernisation and social upliftment. Such an inconsistent position develops a stratified socio-political context in which English is learned.

### **1.2.The Case of Begusarai**

Begusarai is the location of an interesting case study as the socio-political fabric is quite complicated within the area. The district has a long tradition of agrarian struggles, which are

rooted in political activism, reflecting desires of modernization as well as the need to remain close to local identity. One stark contrast that educational institutions in Begusarai present is that government schools are resource-deficient and have a low level of English pedagogy, whereas the private schools focus on offering an English-based pedagogy as a premium indicator. As a result, English competence becomes a not only a language ability but also the sign of class, gender as well as socio-political location.



**Figure1 : Begusarai District Map**

### 1.3.Objectives of the Study

The study aims to

1. To examine how English language teaching in Begusarai is shaped by socio-political dynamics.
2. To analyse institutional practices in government and private schools and their implications for inequality.
3. To understand student and community perceptions of English as a tool of empowerment and exclusion.
4. To explore the gendered dimensions of English learning in Begusarai.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Ali (2025)** one of the points presented is that the ongoing colonial legacies of colonialism in Pakistan in its school curriculum were prevalent until the present times in some aspects; especially in the use of English as a power over colonial dominance. The paper has noted the existence of both British and American influences through colonization in influencing the way

languages are perceived and practices today as evident through the formation of educational policies that favoured English as the most used language even over the local language. Indeed, Ali highlighted the problem that students and teachers would internalize such ideologies and these ideologies would influence classroom interactions, curriculum selection and overall understanding of linguistic hierarchies in the broader social spectrum. This study emphasized the fact that English was not a neutral means of communication because it acted as an indicator of power, social-political domination, and culture making, creating inherent disparity within postcolonial education systems.

**Belmonte (2024)** concentrated on three different dimensions, namely, cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. The researcher found out that educators tended to lay emphasis on cognitive areas of language measurement namely grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension whereas the affective and behavioural areas were not much regarded. This gap carried consequences in terms of motivation, involvement, and overall development in language aspects by learners. As Belmonte propounded, language assessment practices was not only a gauge of proficiency, but also an indication of teacher attitudes, institutional concerns and cultural demands about language learning. The research also emphasized that evaluation models had to be extended to include both socio-emotional and intercultural skills which proved to be very instrumental in building communicative competence among ESL learners.

**Oboko and Egemba (2024)** considered the socio-linguistic aspect of teaching of the English language in Nigeria, covering the three dimensions of socio-cultural, intercultural and technological. It turned out that English teaching was highly socially embedded in local social mores and cultures, and teachers often had to contend with conflicts between the concerns to facilitate international English standards and local language varieties. Several aspects of technology that the study expressed as influencing the English teaching include the fact that digital technology offered first-time opportunities to cross-cultural contact application and learner participation, especially in establishing an effective urban and semi-urban environment. The conclusion of Oboko and Egemba was that a complex insight into socio-cultural and teacher as well as learner backgrounds was critical to successful English language teaching implying that it could not be taken out of context of the world where it was applied, pedagogy was contextualised.

**Song (2025)** drew attention to the significance of critical emotional reflexivity of a teacher in his or her growth process. The research thesis was that the emotions, beliefs and lived experiences of the teachers were very significant as to how they make classroom decisions and relational interactions. The critical reflection of patients on their emotional reactions helped the language teachers identify implicit biases, find solutions to working in multicultural classes, and develop their professional image. The work by Song indicated that the affective component was a core component of efficient instructional delivery and it influenced the partnership between the teacher and the student, classroom atmosphere, and eventually, student achievement. It was proposed, in the study, that emotional reflexivity could be incorporated into teacher education programs, and possibly result into more reflexive, adaptive and contextually sensitive English language teaching practices.

**Jalaluddin (2025)** paid attention to digital tools and their influence on linguistic competence which represents a new aspect of English language teaching methodology. The research concluded that the application of technology e.g. language learning applications, online collaborative assignments and multimedia support to facilitate the process of learning increased the engagement of learners, their pronunciation and mastering of vocabulary. The digital tools made possible the individualized learning technology and interactive pedagogies that previously were challenging to realize in the classical classroom. Technology was a key concept, and Jalaluddin focused that it assisted in cognitive learning as well as ensured that socio-cultural consciousness and intercultural communication skills were enhanced using the same. The study both implied and demonstrated that a well thought pedagogical planning, (re) training of teachers and matching with curriculum aims came across as effective implementation of digital tools in modern English language pedagogy which effective implementation of technology in English language learning holds a transformation in the subject of teaching English language.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The socio-political aspects of English language teaching in Begusarai have to be understood through a formula of sort, which incorporates non-conceptual frameworks with data sources. Language is learned as a cultural, institutional, and political phenomenon, which is why it would be more appropriate to capture such complexities with the qualitative design. In this section, the research design, data sources, the analysis method, and ethical considerations were outlined. Although the research makes uses of secondary sources as the main source of data, its practical impossibility, it also offers a perfect paradigm of primary data collection demonstrating how the research could be followed in other empirical works:

#### **3.1. Research Design**

In this research, a qualitative case study was used with Begusarai district, in Bihar as the case. Case study method was chosen because it will give an in-depth analysis of socio-political balances that are associated with teaching English language to the local context. Considering the limitation of the direct field study, the research is to rely mainly on secondary sources of information represented by government reports, educational surveys, policy documentation, academic literature, and media report, as well as provide a conceptual model that could be used in a primary study.

#### **3.2. Sources of Data**

The research is based on two categories of data:

##### **3.2.1. Primary Data**

- The interviews to be conducted with students, teachers, and parents in Begusarai about lived experiences and perceptions of learning English in semi-structured format.
- The classroom observation in state and non-state schools to analyse teaching style and English usage in teaching situations.

- Conduct focus group discussions with learners in order to investigate shared attitude to English learning.

### **3.2.2. Secondary Data**

- Leading policy documents and government reports or guidelines, including National Education Policy (NEP 2020), Bihar Education Project Council reports, and NCERT curriculum framework.
- Professionally, published scholarly research into English education, socio-political inequalities and language policy, in India and Bihar.
- Literacy surveys and statistical information on ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) and U-DISE (Unified District Information System for Education).
- Reports of the media and NGO publications that record difficulties of English teaching in Bihar.

### **3.3.Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to examine the collected secondary data to identify patterns and themes. As such, the repetition of the same patterns and similarities were recognized in various sources. Pivotal elements that came up were the issue of institutional differences between government schools and private schools, the politics that underlie the discussion about English education and the extent to which English has been tied to class, caste, and gender disparities. As well, a contrasting and rather contradicting perception of the English language was pointed out in the analysis: English was not only regarded as a source of empowerment, as a means of gaining access to mobility and opportunities, but it was also identified as the means of exclusion, which supports the existing socio-economic divide. The researcher was able to synthesize findings of various secondary sources and triangulated them to increase the validity of its conclusions.

## **4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

This study reveals important findings with regard to how English education in Begusarai can be viewed in socio-political terms, through the secondary study material. Through a methodical review of policy reports, research findings, and available studies, the findings show the intersections between institutional frameworks, cultural representations, and social divisions/disadvantages, which circumstances access and experiences of English education. The theme-based argumentation is structured and presents the trends of the difference in government and non-government schools, the political platform of English as a developmental language, and its impersion on classes, caste, and gender. In this section, the interpretation of the themes is deduced with the help of tables and graphs in order to give a complete picture of the extent to which English is both a tool of empowerment and exclusion in the area.

### **4.1.Institutional Disparities between Government and Private Schools**

The secondary data were analyzed, which showed a sharp disparity regarding the infrastructure, the supply of teachers, and teaching approaches in English. Schools in Bihar, government they

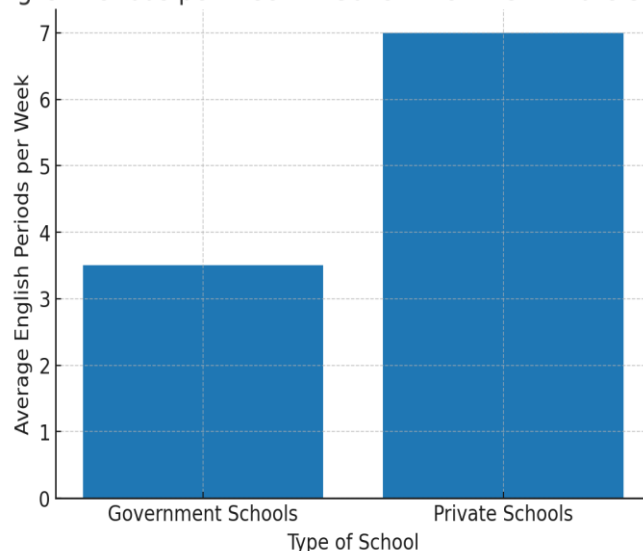


in particular and rural areas like Begusarai in particular continue to suffer shortage of teachers, bad infrastructures and least exposure to English outside the syllabus. In contrast, the better teacher-student ratios, exposure to extra-curricular activities and stress on acquiring spoken English can be found in the private schools.

**Table 1: Comparison of Government vs. Private Schools in English Education**

Indicator	Government Schools	Private Schools
Student–Teacher Ratio (Average)	45:1	30:1
English Periods per Week	3–4	6–8
Teacher Qualification (English)	50% trained	85% trained
Availability of English Textbooks	Moderate	High
Emphasis on Spoken English	Low	High
Classroom Infrastructure	Poor–Moderate	Good–Excellent

English Periods per Week in Government vs. Private Schools



**Figure 1: English Periods per Week in Government vs. Private Schools**

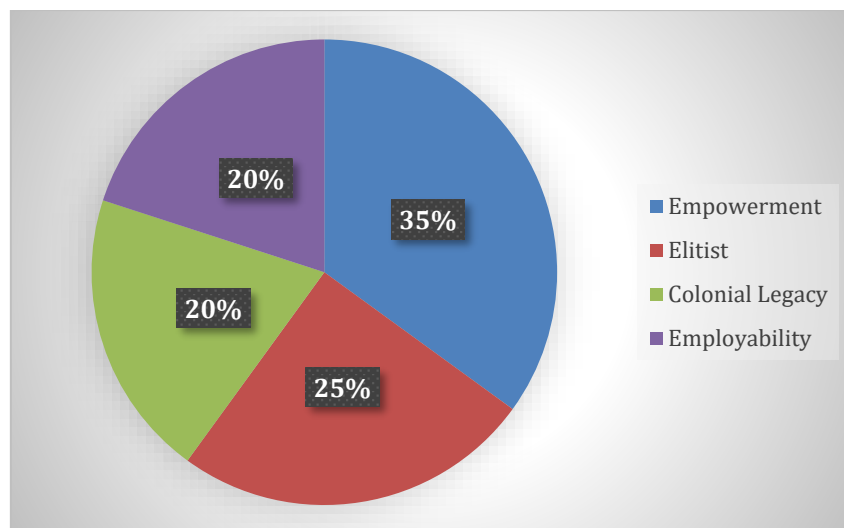
#### 4.2. Political Narratives Shaping English Education

There has been a strong politicization of English in Bihar. Policy usually emphasises vernacular medium schooling in the name of equity but the market still needs English because it is associated with gaining a job and a rise in class. Discussions about politics tend to shift English as elitist and English as the essential skill to compete in the world market.

**Table 2: Political Stance on English in Bihar**

Political Narrative	Policy Implications
---------------------	---------------------

English as elitist, privileging urban/rich	Strengthening regional language focus
English as empowerment for rural youth	Calls for English-medium schools
English as colonial legacy	Restriction of English in early grades
English as key to employability/globalization	Expansion in higher education



**Figure 2:** Frequency of Political Narratives in Secondary Sources

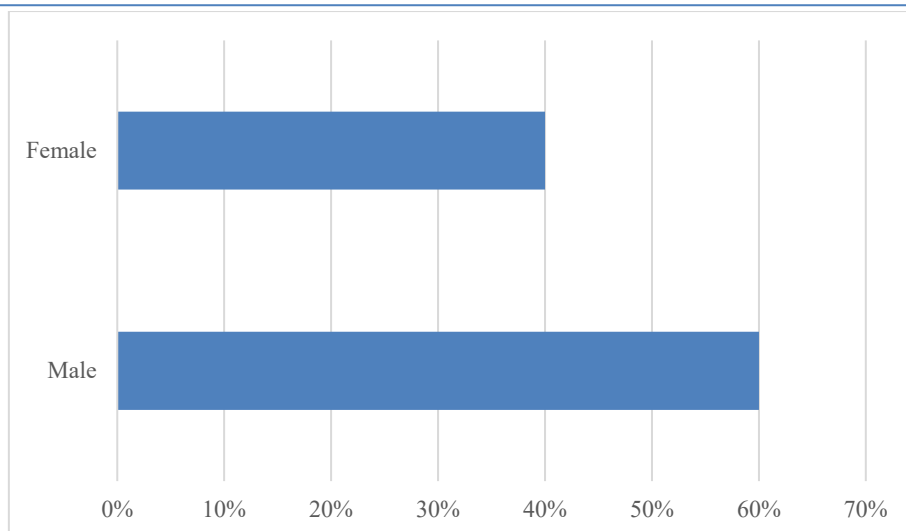
#### 4.3.English in Class, Caste, and Gender Inequalities

There is a very strong relationship between class and caste and English proficiency. Urban families with high castes easily get access to English-based inexpensive education provided by privately owned schools whereas poor and marginalized groups are to be found in government schools with low government funding. There is still a gap in gender access with fewer female students enrolled in the private English-medium schools because of socio-economic constraints.

**Table 3: Socio-Cultural Disparities in Access to English Education**

Group	Access to Private English Schools	English Proficiency Outcomes
Upper-class / Upper-caste	High	Strong
OBCs	Moderate	Moderate
Dalits / Marginalized	Low	Weak
Male Students	Higher	Stronger
Female Students	Lower	Weaker





**Figure 3: Gendered Participation in English Learning**

#### 4.4.English as Empowerment vs. Exclusion

English is a means of empowerment as well as being a sign of exclusion. English opens the door to further learning and international professional opportunities to aspiring young people. Inequalities to reduce social stratification however; lack of English comes with lack of access to jobs, mobility, and cultural capital.

**Table 4: Dual Role of English in Bihar**

Role of English	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Empowerment	Better job opportunities, higher education, global exposure	Social mobility for privileged groups only
Exclusion	Creates barriers for rural/marginalized students	Reinforces class, caste, and gender divides

#### 4.5. Synthesis Of Findings

The findings synthesis combines the most important trends obtained with the help of the thematic analysis, full comprehension of the socio-political aspects of teaching English language in Begusarai has been gained. The study defers to several points about how English is used as an instrument of power and instrument of exclusion across the institutional structure, political discourse and the social orders of power and privilege by drawing lines into the structure. The key points summarize as the following themes:

##### 4.5.1 Government vs. Private Divide

The analysis presented a continuous gap between the government and the private schools in Begusarai. The challenges encountered by the government schools include: lack of trained English teachers, inadequate resources in the classes and little focus on spoken English. In comparison, the private schooling systems improve English-medium teaching and their teacher

pupil ratio is better, and support English activities outside the classrooms. Such an institutional divide reproduces socio-economic differences through which students in more affluent households have an upper hand, whereas those in less fortunate situations have structural impediments to learning and mastering English as a second language through the government school's system.

#### **4.5.2 Politics of English**

In Begusarai, politics has a strong presence in the education of English. Although the policies provided by regions and state governments may focus on the implementation of Hindi and local languages in order to facilitate cultural identity and equity, there is also an acknowledgment of the necessity of English to be valued as providing an employable and competitive position in the world. This political ambivalence is also represented in language discourse in the sense that there seems to be an opposition between the maintenance of local lingual identity and the need to open modern opportunities. As a result, English turns into a space of ideological contention and to an effective tool of economic accessibility.

#### **4.5.3 Class, Caste, and Gender**

In Begusarai, representation to the English educational system is very much stratified in terms of caste, class and gender. Those of upper-castes and well-off families are more likely to choose sending their children to the English-medium of schools, which will guarantee their better level of proficiency and social mobility. The economically disadvantaged castes and sections, and those denied institutional access, use the under-resourced government schools and subsequently have less access to good English classes.

#### **4.5.4 Empowerment vs. Exclusion**

English proves to be a two- edged weapon in Begusarai. To those students who have access to it, it is a source of empowerment, which opens the gateway to higher education, gainful employment and exposure to the world. Nevertheless, inequality also contributes to the fact that not everyone can avail high-quality English education, thus legitimize social stratification and further exclude individuals. This ambivalence emphasises the greater socio-political meaning of English as a language of both liberation and restriction based on structural, and socio-economic circumstances.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The study of the socio-political dimensions of English language teaching in Begusarai revealed that English functions not only as a medium of education but also as a marker of class, power, and identity, shaping opportunities and perpetuating inequalities within the region. Rooted in India's colonial legacy and reinforced by globalization, English continues to be both a desirable skill and a divisive force, opening doors to higher education, employment, and mobility for some, while excluding those who lack access to quality instruction. The findings highlighted stark institutional disparities between government and private schools, where resource-poor public institutions fail to provide adequate exposure to English, while private schools cultivate English proficiency as a marker of prestige, thereby reinforcing socio-economic divides. Political narratives in Bihar further complicate the issue by simultaneously promoting

vernacular languages for cultural identity while acknowledging the necessity of English for employability, creating a climate of ambivalence around its role in education. Moreover, the intersection of class, caste, and gender exacerbates inequality, as privileged groups and male students benefit more readily from English education, while marginalized communities and female students often face systemic barriers. Yet, English also embodies aspirations, as many learners in Begusarai view it as a pathway to empowerment, independence, and global connectivity. This dual character of English—as both empowering and exclusionary—underscores its socio-political significance in shaping educational and social trajectories. The paper concludes that without deliberate reforms such as improved teacher training, equitable resource allocation, inclusive pedagogical strategies, and gender-sensitive policies, English will remain a contested space, reproducing hierarchies rather than dismantling them, and its promise of democratization in education will remain unfulfilled.

## REFERENCES

1. Yang, S., & Yin, H. (2024). Feeling paradoxes and teaching in struggles: A socio-political analysis of language teachers' motivation and emotion labor. *System*, 125, 103426.
2. Sögüt, S. (2024). Disrupted English Language Teacher Identities: A Social Justice Perspective. *TESL-EJ*, 28(1), n1.
3. Banegas, D. L., Sacchi, F., San Martín, M. G., & Porto, M. (2024). Teachers' and student teachers' conceptualisations and enactment of social justice in English language teaching: A case in Argentinian secondary schools. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1-19.
4. Rodriguez, S., Monreal, T., & Howard, J. (2024). "It's about hearing and understanding their stories": Teacher empathy and socio-political awareness toward newcomer undocumented students in the New Latino South. In *Advocacy and Policy Change for Undocumented Student Success* (pp. 164-184). Routledge.
5. Tafazoli, D. (2024). Exploring the potential of generative AI in democratizing English language education. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 7, 100275.
6. Sjöström, J. (2024). Vision III of scientific literacy and science education: an alternative vision for science education emphasising the ethico-socio-political and relational-existential. *Studies in Science Education*, 1-36.
7. Cahyono, J. P., & Mukin, K. K. (2025). *Language education, politics and technology in South Asia shaping inclusive societies, identities, and futures: by Uma Pradhan and Mohini Gupta*, London, Routledge, 2025, 278 pp., £ 123.25, (hardback), ISBN 978-1-032-79272-9.
8. Javahery, P. (2024). Prescribed pedagogy: An autoethnographic analysis of coursebook constraints, teacher identity, and power dynamics in Iran through Foucault's lens. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(3), 2104-2104.

9. Ali, R. (2025). 'We are still British or American colony, we are still a colony, we are not free': language ideologies, policies in education in Pakistan. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 1-24.
10. Belmonte, C. J. (2024). A Descriptive Study on the Three Dimensions of Language Assessment among ESL Teachers. *chance*, 7(02).
11. Oboko, U., & Egemba, C. (2024). Exploring the socio-cultural, intercultural, and technological dimensions of English language teaching in Nigeria: A socio-linguistic study. *ResearchGate*.
12. Song, J. (2025). Pedagogizing the affective dimension of language teacher identity through critical emotional reflexivity. *RELC Journal*, 56(1), 138-150.
13. Jalaluddin, M. (2025). Exploring the Impact of Digital Tools on Linguistic Competence: A New Dimension in English Language Teaching Methodologies. *British Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 29-34.
14. Kuusalu, S. R., Laine, P., Maijala, M., Mutta, M., & Patzelt, M. (2024). University language students' evaluations of ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainability and their importance in language teaching. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 25(9), 1-18.
15. Lasagabaster, D., Fernández-Costales, A., & de Lis González-Mujico, F. (Eds.). (2024). *The affective dimension in English-medium instruction in higher education* (Vol. 148). Channel View Publications.