

Beyond the Classroom Walls: Reimagining the Teaching and Learning of English

Language, in both its forms, oral and written, is never static. It travels across borders, adapts to policies, negotiates cultures, and carries within it the anxieties and aspirations of those who use or learn to use it. This issue of JELT brings together articles that capture the many forms of English as it is taught, learned, and lived across diverse educational and cultural landscapes, from classrooms in India, Iran, and Thailand, to the evolving demands of digital and intercultural communication.

At first glance, the articles appear to focus on different aspects of applied linguistics: pedagogy, sociolinguistics, error analysis, intercultural communication, and psycholinguistics. A close reading reveals a shared concern: how do learners and teachers navigate English not merely as a subject to be mastered, but as a tool for thought, identity, and interaction? Each article, in its own way, asks what it means to use English meaningfully, involving interpreting evidence, negotiating meaning across cultures, overcoming grammatical interference from one's first language, managing the anxiety of speaking aloud, or simply making sense of English's role in academics.

The issue opens with an article on higher education in Punjab, India, examining how undergraduate students perceive the role of English as both a medium of instruction and a global language. Drawing on interview data, the study foregrounds student voices to reveal the complex, sometimes contradictory, implications of English's dominance for access, identity, and academic practice in multilingual educational settings. The second contribution turns to the grammar of learning itself, presenting a corpus-based study of Kurdish EFL learners' interlanguage. Analysing 53 writing samples, the authors identify recurring morphosyntactic errors, tracing these patterns to L1 transfer from Sorani Kurdish. The third article moves from grammar to strategy, exploring how Thai university students negotiate intercultural encounters in English. Through qualitative interviews, the study finds a marked preference for verbal communication strategies over non-verbal and interactive ones.

The fourth article addresses the affective dimension of language learning, investigating how to reduce first-generation ESL learners' speaking anxiety through structured pedagogical interventions. Using techniques ranging from systematic desensitisation to mirror talk and record-and-review exercises, the study demonstrates a significant link between reduced anxiety and improved speaking fluency, underscoring the importance of psychological support alongside linguistic instruction. The fifth article opens with a conceptual exploration of forensic linguistics in ELT, which argues that techniques drawn from legal-linguistic analysis can be repurposed as classroom tools to cultivate critical literacy and analytical reasoning in intermediate learners.

The sixth article on teacher identity focuses on the self-perception of teachers' performance. The argument that teachers' gender affects professional development, and that age is associated with teachers' effectiveness, motivation and content knowledge is supported by the data. The seventh article is an auto-ethnographic reflection on how teachers' identity and professional legitimacy are reshaped by digital platforms. It advocates that teachers find new platforms to be recognised for their pedagogic skills in the digital age. This issue's final article revisits the paradigm of World Englishes and the native speaker construct, arguing that Kachru's and Graddol's influential models, while foundational, need to be rethought for an age of digital communication, translanguaging, and fluid linguistic identities.

Reading these articles together helps us trace a fuller portrait of the English language learner: as an analyst of evidence, a stakeholder in policy, a negotiator of grammar shaped by their mother tongue, a cultural intermediary, and a person for whom speaking itself can be an act of courage. They remind us that English language teaching cannot be reduced to the transmission of rules; rather, it is an ongoing negotiation between structure and agency, cognition and emotion, the local and the global.

We hope that this issue encourages both researchers and practitioners to look beyond conventional boundaries of pedagogy toward classrooms where language is taught as a living, evidence-based, anxious, and deeply human means of connecting with the world. Happy reading and learning time!

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