

Editorial

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What happens when teachers and students are not simply expected to follow the rules and deliver lessons but are instead seen as thoughtful, creative, and critical participants in the learning process? The articles featured in this issue of GiST suggest a meaningful shift in this direction—one that reimagines classrooms as spaces for exploration, dialogue, and transformation.

This issue brings together a rich collection of studies that focus on three key areas: the role of teachers in shaping their classrooms, the mental and emotional processes involved in language learning, and the deeper messages contained in the materials used for teaching.

Several articles emphasize the importance of teachers' professional judgment and creativity. Abebe Tewachew's research looks at how English teachers in Ethiopian secondary schools design their classroom tests. The study reveals that, although many teachers prepare carefully and communicate clearly, their tests frequently overlook key principles of effective assessment. In a related study, Wakgari Deressa Aemero and Alemayehu Getachew Revere examine how speaking skills are taught in the same region. They find that teachers often use interactive activities such as group discussions and pair work, but a strong focus on getting things exactly right sometimes prevents students from speaking freely. Together, these studies raise an essential question: how can we offer teachers better training while still respecting and supporting their local knowledge and experience?

This issue also delves into the inner world of language learners—their thoughts, feelings, and personal learning strategies. Serap Ataserver Belli examines how Turkish students comprehend and employ complex verb structures, demonstrating that vocabulary knowledge facilitates the use of grammar. Parisa Farrokh and Gholamreza Hamta investigate how students' motivation relates to their ability to speak English. They find that even a slight increase in motivation can have a positive impact. Meanwhile, Zelalem Ayalew Abate, Abiy Yigezaw, and Yinager Teklesellassie examine how students' strategies for planning, monitoring, and reflecting on their writing can lead to significant improvements.

Lastly, two contributions invite us to think critically about the teaching materials themselves. Anteneh K. Lakew examines how everyday spoken English is presented in textbooks used in Ethiopia, questioning whether these conversations accurately reflect how people talk in real life. On a more personal note, I offer a review of the book *Decolonizing Educational Knowledge*, edited by Ann E. López and Herveen Singh. My intention is not to provide a final word on the topic, but rather to respond to the invitation of this book to question the deeper structures behind education—what we choose to teach, how we teach it, and whose knowledge we value.

These contributions point to a common theme: the need to build more open, inclusive, and thoughtful language classrooms. This involves seeing teachers as knowledgeable professionals, recognizing students as active learners with thoughts and emotions, and examining how our teaching tools reflect (or fail to reflect) the real world.

We hope this issue contributes to ongoing conversations about how to teach and learn languages in ways that are not only effective but also just, human, and reflective.