

## BRIDGING PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE: TEACHER AND STUDENT ROLES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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### Abstract

The roles of teachers and students in English Language Teaching (ELT) are inextricably shaped by underlying philosophical orientations. This literature review investigates how major educational philosophies, including essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, humanism, perennialism, reconstructionism, and critical pedagogy, inform the conceptualization and enactment of teacher and student roles in ELT classrooms. Drawing on a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of eight peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025, this study identifies thematic patterns that reflect the philosophical undercurrents shaping pedagogical practice.

**Keywords:** Educational Philosophy; ELT; Teacher Role; Student Role; Critical Pedagogy.

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## Introduction

Language instruction is not as much a technical process of linguistic transfer but a basically philosophical activity that is an expression of large-scale political, social, and ideological forces. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) and Adigun (2025) aptly maintain, “teaching is never a neutral act,” emphasizing that pedagogical activities always carry hidden values and power relations underneath. In ELT, in particular, these dynamics are further heightened, as the global status of English intersects with issues of cultural identity, economic opportunity, and postcolonial past (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994). Classrooms are thus not only spaces of language acquisition but also of negotiating authority, identity, and agency.

Against the background of the ideational maturity of ELT, a majority of the dominant discourse focuses on methodology and pedagogy teaching, occasionally employing dichotomized terms such as “teacher-centered” or “student-centered” without critically analyzing their philosophical bases. Overextension of this sort normally conceals the normative presuppositions behind teacher-student relationships. Biesta (2010) highlights the crucial issue that contemporary education is often dangerously disconnected from the fundamental philosophical questions regarding its purpose and the moralities entailed in pedagogical power. This disconnection, which has a direct bearing on how the positions of teaching and learning are conceived, is precisely what Biesta argues needs to be critically re-engaged.

This theoretical gap can be seen from the persisting lack of explicit mention of educational philosophies such as essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, humanism, and critical pedagogy in mainstream ELT literature. Each of these paradigms specifies its own understanding of knowledge, learning, and the teacher-student relationship. For instance, essentialism puts the teacher’s authority center stage in transmitting core knowledge (Bagley, 1939), while progressivism and constructivism advocate student-centered, inquiry-based methods (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1971). Humanism focuses on psychological and emotional development (Rogers, 1969), perennialism (Hutchins, 1953) is centered on the belief that truth and wisdom are eternal and universal, reconstructionism (Brameld, 1950) positions education as a powerful instrument for social change and reform, and critical pedagogy best articulated by Freire (1970) positions education as a political and liberatory practice resisting social injustice through dialogue and critical thinking.

But in the ELT literature, these philosophical leanings are treated implicitly or tangentially without examining how they actually influence pedagogical practice and interactive dynamics in diverse teaching environments. This theoretical shortcoming is particularly relevant at the doctoral level, where scholars are asked to move beyond methodological description and undertake conceptual critique and synthesis (Swales & Feak, 2012). While scholars like Kumaravadivelu (2006) advocate a post-method pedagogy grounded in contextual and philosophical awareness, few empirical research studies or literature reviews systematically

follow the trajectory of how philosophical ideas are enacted in actual ELT contexts. This gap is supported by the findings of Mazandarani (2022), whose literature study noted that only a small number of articles (7.5%) actually discussed the underpinning philosophical assumptions in ELT.

From the practical perspective, this lacuna is the cause of the uncritical re-enactment of teaching norms that may be culturally misaligned or out of step with the needs of learners. In multilingual and multicultural contexts, and particularly in postcolonial nations, “universal” ELT models imposed on them may ultimately serve to support linguistic imperialism and erase local epistemologies (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994). Moreover, philosophical uncertainty restricts the capacity of teachers and institutions to think critically about their own practice or to develop pedagogies that are socially transformative and context-sensitive.

Government policy is more likely to exacerbate these issues. In the majority of national curricula, e.g., Southeast Asia and Indonesia, ELT policy concentrates on communicative competence and testing, and barely incorporates or stimulates philosophical exploration of pedagogy. This policy gap will result in discrepancies in implementation, as teachers must apply progressive or humanistic outcomes using essentialist structures and limited autonomy (Carlson, 2017). In the absence of an enabling policy accommodating philosophical awareness, even truly well-meaning pedagogic innovations can collapse.

With regard to these theory-based, practice-oriented, and policy-related gaps, the study applies the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology for a critical examination of how teacher and learner roles are theorized in ELT from educational philosophies. An SLR is particularly suitable for this study because it allows thorough integration of existing research, facilitates the identification of underemphasized themes, and allows for theoretical mapping across contexts (Lame, 2019). This review will focus on peer-reviewed academic journals that explicitly or implicitly address philosophical paradigms in ELT, the goal being to elicit patterns, tensions, and blind spots in the literature.

The specific objectives of this review are: (1) critically reviewing selected research texts discussing philosophical orientations in ELT; (2) deconstructing the concepts of teacher and student roles through different paradigms of education; (3) analyzing the level of conformity or incompatibility between theoretical precepts and teaching behaviors; and (4) offering practical recommendations for incorporating philosophical clarity in ELT policy, research, and classroom teaching.

This study contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it pushes the postmethod debate by situating the teacher-student relationship within broader philosophical traditions and hence beyond the technicist ELT approach (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Practically, it provides ELT practitioners, teacher educators, and policymakers with a conceptual map for making pedagogical decisions in consonance with ethical and philosophical positions. In so doing, it fosters a more reflexive and emancipatory language education

model, one that allows learners and teachers to become critical agents in their own learning processes.

### **Philosophical Foundations in English Language Teaching**

English Language Teaching (ELT) is not merely a technical undertaking of language learning, but a deeply ideological and philosophical enterprise underpinned by various worldviews of knowledge, learning, and power (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Pennycook, 1994). The field has been under the sway of various educational philosophies for long that shape how teachers and learners communicate, what is learned, and how learning is facilitated. Among them, eight grand paradigms – essentialism, progressivism, cognitive constructivism, social constructivism, humanism, critical pedagogy, perennialism, and reconstructionism – offer contrasting yet complementary visions of the teacher–student relationship and the broader purposes of education, each of which informs how ELT is conceived and carried out in different contexts.

Essentialism, as articulated by Bagley (1939), advocates for a structured, disciplined curriculum centered on basic knowledge and command of facts. This philosophy positions the teacher as an authority figure, delivering set content through direct instruction. In ELT, essentialism underpins conventional teacher-centered methods such as the Grammar-Translation Method and the Audio-Lingual Method, both of which emphasize repetition, correctness, and linguistic form over communicative function (Nguyen, 2018). The classroom dynamic here is hierarchical, and the students must consume and reproduce knowledge with minimal diversion.

On the other hand, progressivism is based on the work of Dewey (1938), constructivism (cognitive constructivism) is derived from Piaget (1971), and social constructivism is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978). Progressivism promotes experiential learning in which students engage in problem-solving and discovery, focusing on the child's interests and real-world democratic processes. Piaget's cognitive constructivism posits that knowledge is actively built by the individual when new experiences interact with and reshape their existing cognitive schemas through processes of assimilation and accommodation. Social constructivism, rooted in Vygotsky's theories, emphasizes that knowledge construction is primarily a social and cultural process. Vygotsky argued that learning occurs most effectively when individuals interact with more knowledgeable others (MKO) within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where language and collaborative dialogue are the essential tools for mediating thought and cultural transmission. In ELT, these philosophies inform Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Project-Based Learning, where learners are empowered as active participants and team workers, while the teacher is a facilitator or guide (Kaced & Kahil, 2017).

Humanism, popularized by Rogers (1969), focuses on the affective and psychological needs of learners. Humanistic language instruction facilitates a generalist pedagogy that fosters empathy, self-actualization, and learner autonomy. Humanistic language instruction seeks to build trust and respect in the classroom, often through individualized learning, reflective practice, and affective interaction (Barcelos & Coelho, 2016). The teacher here is a counselor or guide, providing a safe space where learners feel valued and enabled.

Critical pedagogy, as theorized by Freire (1970), introduces a political dimension to learning. It criticizes usual power relations within the class and in society and encourages dialogic learning that allows students to interrogate, criticize, and act upon their worlds. In ELT, it encourages learners to interrogate issues of identity, inequality, and representation through language. Students and teachers build knowledge through dialogue, departing from the “banking concept” of teaching, in which the teacher knows and places the knowledge into passive learners (Freire, 1970; Norton & Toohey, 2004).

Perennialism and Reconstructionism stand as fundamentally opposing educational philosophies, differing sharply on the purpose of schooling and the content of the curriculum. Perennialism, championed by figures like Hutchins (1953) and Adler (1982), is rooted in the belief that human nature is constant and that education must therefore focus on developing the rational intellect by transmitting timeless, universal truths contained within the “Great Books” of Western civilization. This approach views education as a liberal activity intended to cultivate the intellect through a non-vocational curriculum focused on enduring ideas, and the teacher acts as a central figure, guiding students toward rationality and intellectual maturity. (Darwanto, 2025). In contrast, Reconstructionism, primarily associated with Brameld (1950), rejects cultural preservation in favor of viewing education as a direct instrument for radical social and cultural reform. Reconstructionists argue that schools are not merely responsible for preserving and transmitting culture, but must actively create new social and cultural patterns through curricula to solve existing social problems and thereby achieve a better societal structure (Bahmaee, 2016). The Reconstructionist classroom emphasizes experiential and community-based learning where the teacher serves as a social activist, guiding students to critically analyze social injustices and take democratic action to build a more equitable world. Thus, the divergence lies between Perennialism’s dedication to intellectual tradition and Reconstructionism’s commitment to radical social change.

Despite the solid philosophical foundation of ELT, much of its practice and research has, nonetheless, remained method-centred, and its focus has been more on teaching how than questioning deeper into why certain approaches are chosen (Biesta, 2010; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). This technical preoccupation often reduces the teacher’s role to a mere technician implementing prescriptive steps, consequently hindering the critical self-reflection needed to assess if a method truly aligns with the learners’ specific context and broader educational goals. As a result, fundamental ethical and political questions underlying pedagogical

decisions, such as “whose interests are served by the method or which power dynamics are reinforced”, are frequently overlooked, leading to uncritical adoption and potential misalignment in diverse teaching environments. The necessity for moving beyond this technicism view is critical, as researchers indicate that arguments are typically dominated by surface dualities such as “teacher-centered” and “student-centered,” which tend to simplify complex education ideologies into tidy binaries and obscure from sight the underlying philosophical commitments behind decisions about instruction. Therefore, the most important concepts are typically operationalized uncritically, limiting teachers’ understanding of the complete goals and implications of their practice. More reflective consideration of philosophical perspectives such as essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, humanism, and critical pedagogy can yield richer understandings of teacher–student relationships and improve pedagogical decision-making by facilitating more thoughtful, intentional, and context-sensitive practices. It is highly relevant to mention that the learning process could even mix two or more of these perspectives, such as Kumaravadivelu suggests in the post-method condition. Therefore, one must know these philosophical perspectives in depth in order to understand them, critically select relevant tenets, and ultimately develop their own localized, context-aware teaching methodology.

## **Method**

### *Research Design*

This study employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine how philosophies of education in specific essentialism, progressivism, constructivism, humanism, perennialism, reconstructionism, and critical pedagogy impact the conceptualization of student and teacher roles in English Language Teaching (ELT). SLR is a methodological study that uses database searches to retrieve results of research (Rother, 2007).

### *Data Sources and Selection Criteria*

Purposive sampling of appropriate documents was done from databases like ERIC, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The inclusion criteria were:

- Published between 2000 and 2025;
- English language;
- Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, or book chapters;
- On ELT and mentioned educational philosophy and the roles of teachers or learners explicitly or implicitly.

A total of eight papers were selected to be studied in depth. Omitted from the studies were language proficiency outcome research papers devoid of theoretical or philosophical analysis.

### *Data Collection Procedure*

The data collection process took three steps:

1. Step of identification of keywords: (“English Language Teaching” OR “ELT”) AND (“teacher role” OR “student role”) AND (“educational philosophy” OR “essentialism” OR “progressivism” OR “constructivism” OR “humanism” OR “critical pedagogy”);
2. Step of database searching and filtering through titles and abstracts;
3. Step of full-text retrieval and selection based on inclusion/exclusion criteria;

Each selected document was recorded on a data extraction sheet with the title, author, year of publication, educational philosophy covered, and major findings related to teacher and student roles.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis was conducted through thematic coding, which entailed: open coding for identifying recurring concepts and categories; axial coding to link codes to philosophical paradigms; and selective coding to construct broad themes related to the teacher and student roles. Themes were constructed inductively using theoretical frameworks aligned with each philosophy (e.g., Bagley for essentialism, Dewey for progressivism, Piaget for constructivism, Rogers for humanism, and Freire for critical pedagogy).

### *Trustworthiness and Rigor*

To enhance the reliability of the outcome, the study embraced Anney et al. (2015):

- Credibility: by sources triangulation between different databases and theory frameworks;
- Transferability: by providing vivid descriptions of the learning environments and philosophical positions;
- Reliability: through utilizing a properly documented audit trail for the selection and coding process;
- Confirmability: by having coding logs and analytic memos so the findings are grounded in data.

## Result

This part presents the thematic results of a qualitative document analysis of peer-reviewed journal articles that meet the pre-stated inclusion and exclusion criteria. Eight peer-reviewed journal articles between 2020 and 2025 were purposively selected from Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases. These documents were analyzed to determine how different philosophical orientations affect the conceptualization of teacher and student roles in English Language Teaching (ELT).

### *Overview of Documents Analyzed*

The documents to be examined are drawn from different geographical and educational contexts, including Indonesia, Turkey, and China, and consider ELT in a range of different educational contexts, such as university-level education, teacher education courses, and adult education. Table 1 is a summary of notable features of the selected documents and forms the foundation for the thematic coding and interpretation exercise.

Table 1 - Summary of Document Analysis

| No. | Author(s)                 | Country   | Philosophical Orientation(s)                                 | ELT Context                       | Teacher-Student Role   | Key Findings   |
|-----|---------------------------|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1.  | (Szabó & Csépes, 2023)    | Hungary   | Constructivism   | Digital language pedagogy         | Teachers as facilitators; students as active constructors of knowledge                         | Emphasizes learner autonomy and digital-mediated constructivist practices                          |
| 2.  | (Tatar, 2024)             | Turkey    | Critical Reflective (Progressivism-Informed)                 | Preservice EFL teacher education  | Teachers as reflective practitioners; students as emotionally and cognitively engaged learners | Preservice teachers showed idealistic but maturing views influenced by philosophical reflection    |
| 3.  | (Quoc & Van, 2023)        | Vietnam   | Social Constructivism  | Undergraduate vocabulary learning | Teachers scaffold collaborative tasks; students co-construct meaning                           | Constructivist method improved vocabulary retention and learner attitudes                          |
| 4.  | (L. Q. Nguyen & Le, 2024) | Vietnam   | Social Constructivism (Challenges-Oriented)                  | University-level EFL classes      | Teachers as guides facing contextual constraints; students expected to collaborate             | Teachers struggled with applying constructivism due to conceptual and systemic barriers            |
| 5.  | (Jasrial, 2024)           | Indonesia | Constructivism (Adapted)                                     | ELT in multicultural classrooms   | Teachers as learning designers; students as culturally rooted learners                         | Contextualized constructivism supports diverse learners through technology and project-based tasks |
| 6.  | (Hassani, 2021)           | Iran      | Essentialism, Perennialism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism | General ELT framework             | Ranges from teacher-centered (Essentialist) to learner-centered (Progressivist)                | Highlights how different philosophies redefine roles; calls for blended approaches in modern ELT   |

|    |                           |         |                                   |                              |  |  |
|----|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| 7. | (Wyatt, 2024)             | Oman    | Cognitive & Social Constructivism | In-service teacher education | Teachers as reflective co-learners; students as autonomous professionals | SLTE program gradually shifted from transmission to constructivist engagement                          |
| 8. | (Granger & Gerlach, 2024) | Germany | Critical Feminist Pedagogy        | Secondary ELT classroom      | Teachers as critical facilitators; students as agents of social change   | Critical feminist pedagogy increased awareness of gender and social issues, fostering learner autonomy |

Source: Author (2026)

A critical analysis of eight studies in multiple geographical contexts identifies a diverse range of philosophies that underpin English Language Teaching (ELT) practice. The prevailing trend is the growing embracement of constructivist and socially based philosophies that place emphasis on learner autonomy, reflective practice, and contextualized instruction.

Constructivist Approaches (Hungary, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc.) prioritize the teacher as learning designer or facilitator, promoting active, student-led learning. Such studies of research (Jasrial, 2024; Quoc & Van, 2023; Szabóp & Csépes, 2023) report increased learner interest and vocabulary acquisition, especially when multimedia and collaborative learning are used.

Social Constructivism in Vietnam, particularly (Nguyen & Le, 2024), reveals potentiality and pitfalls in deploying collaborative learning. Educators typically struggle with systemic constraints and conceptual fallacies despite theoretical benefits. Concisely, the biggest challenge is that systemic constraints (such as rigid curriculum demands and examination pressure) frequently force teachers to abandon constructivist principles focused on learner autonomy, leading them to revert to more teacher-centered (essentialist) teaching practices. Furthermore, conceptual fallacies or a shallow understanding of theories like Social Constructivism further widen this divide, making the adoption of transformative practices non-cohesive and ineffective in the classroom.

Critical and Reflective Pedagogies are gaining momentum in Turkey and Germany (Granger & Gerlach, 2024; Tatar, 2024), with a focus on emotional engagement, social justice, and identity. Critical Feminist Pedagogy (CFP) is a transformative educational framework that integrates feminist social critique with critical pedagogy to actively challenge power structures, gender bias, and intersecting forms of oppression within the classroom and broader society (Freire, 1970). These perspectives place teachers as reflective practitioners or critical facilitators and students as emotionally invested and socially active learners to bring transformative awareness.

Philosophical Blending (Hassani, 2021) has a broader view of how Essentialism, Progressivism, Perennialism, and Reconstructionism coexist within ELT and argues that blended approaches can better address diverse classroom needs and ideological tendencies.

In in-service teacher education (Wyatt, 2024), a gradual shift from transmissive to constructivist paradigms captures the way in which learning in philosophy evolves through professional development so that teachers can themselves be co-learners and independent facilitators.

Overall, the findings identify the complex, dynamic nature of teacher-student role conceptualization in ELT, where philosophical underpinnings clearly predominate. While constructivist and critical orientations exercise increasing influence, their enactment often remains constrained by teacher beliefs, situational conditions, and the institutional climate. This inherent tension highlights that the mere acceptance of progressive ideas is insufficient for true change. Therefore, transformative pedagogical change requires a systemic investigation, not just superficial revisions to curriculum guidelines, but fundamental shifts in the belief systems of educators, the reduction of the practical constraints in the classroom, and a direct confrontation with the overarching political and economic pressures exerted by the education system itself.

## Discussion

This qualitative document analysis provides insight into fundamental philosophical tensions and practical realities that shape English Language Teaching (ELT) globally. Three overarching themes intersect the synthesis of eight peer-reviewed articles: the affective-cognitive duality in pedagogy, variations in teachers' espoused versus enacted classroom practices, and negotiations between authority and autonomy in teacher-student dynamics. These themes illustrate how philosophical dispositions are translated, remade, and challenged within various educational and cultural settings.

### *The Cognitive–Affective Duality in Teaching Approaches*

One of the most striking findings is the shift toward unifying cognitive and affective domains in language learning. The traditional method of language acquisition emphasized cognitive processes such as the mastery of grammar, vocabulary acquisition, and linguistic structure analysis. Crucially, this cognitive emphasis did not mean that affective features were absent. They were not explicitly managed or theorized as essential elements of the methodology, often resulting in unmanaged negative consequences like high language anxiety. However, more recent approaches, especially those based on constructivism, progressivism, and critical pedagogy, accept that effective language acquisition must actively involve the affective domain, including emotions, motivation, identity, and values. It is important to note that these approaches cannot guarantee positive affective outcomes, as emotional responses are inherently subjective and often constrained by institutional pressures, such as high-stakes testing, which induce stress and extrinsic motivation (Fatma & Sujito, 2025). Therefore, rather than viewing this

as a simple cognitive-affective duality, it is more valuable to conceptualize their relationship as interdependent. Modern pedagogy seeks to strategically optimize the affective climate, minimizing barriers like anxiety and maximizing intrinsic motivation. It serves as a necessary precondition that facilitates robust cognitive processing and long-term language acquisition. For instance, Tatar (2024) demonstrates how Turkish preservice teachers, in a progressivist and reflective approach, are encouraged to view teaching as not just a technical action, but as a moral and affective practice. Teachers are reflective practitioners, whereas students are emotionally and intellectually engaged learners. Further, Granger & Gerlach (2024), employing critical feminist pedagogy in Germany, emphasize students' affective understanding of social justice and gender issues, ensuring tighter links between student experience and course content. Such cognitive-affective complementarity is in line with broader changes in education promoting whole-person learning, which not only illuminates knowledge but also learners' emotional and psychological development. Adopting this perspective, the ideal of successful learning occurs when rational thought is merged with feeling, a principle that ought to guide language instruction and acquisition, given that communication is deeply personal, social, and cultural.

### *Discrepancies Between Teachers' Espoused Beliefs and Their Classroom Practices*

These findings identify a crucial truth in ELT. Philosophical orientation does not naturally guarantee pedagogical transformation on its own, but it must be complemented with capacity building, policy commitment, and reflective spaces. This core insight stems from the underlying tension found across multiple studies regarding the persistent mismatch between teachers' professed pedagogical ideology and classroom reality, a common source of documented problems in ELT. Research, particularly by Nguyen & Le (2024) and Wyatt (2024), establishes that even when teachers intellectually profess constructivist or learner-centered ideology, their classroom practice remains constrained by external agencies, such as rigid curricula, large student numbers, lack of resources, or institutional resistance. Furthermore, Quoc & Van (2023), for example, note that Vietnamese EFL university teachers, despite advocating for student-centered and collaborative learning, frequently resort to more conventional methods due to conceptual confusion, limited training, and systemic constraints. This aligns precisely with the "belief-practice mismatch" (Gall et al., 2003), and emphasizes the necessity not only of educating teachers in educational philosophies but also of providing the enabling circumstances under which those philosophies can be applied in actual terms. Moreover, Wyatt's (2024) study in Oman further supports this, showing that while in-service teachers slowly shift towards more constructivist models through professional development, this change is incremental, contextual, and requires constant mentorship, reflection, and institutional buy-in. Therefore, the central challenge is not a lack of theory, but a systemic failure to bridge the

gap between aspirational philosophy and constrained practice, highlighting that effective pedagogical transformation must be conceived as a comprehensive institutional project.

#### Negotiation of Authority and Autonomy in Teacher-Student Dynamics

The third overarching theme is the redefinition of power dynamics in the ELT classroom, specifically the negotiation between teacher authority and learner autonomy. Philosophic approaches strongly mediate authority enactment and learner positioning. In more traditional paradigms such as Essentialism and Perennialism, teachers are regarded as the main knowledge-bearers and students as recipients to reproduce knowledge. This teacher-centered model is still dominant in many contexts, as seen with Hassani's (2021) multi-philosophical review, whereby Essentialist and Perennialist orientations still dominate over some ELT models in Iran. Constructivist and critical paradigms, on the other hand, advocate for distributed authority and increased learner autonomy. Certain evidence from Szabó & Csépes (2023) and Quoc & Van (2023) provides excellent illustrations of the ways in which teachers function as facilitators and learners actively co-construct knowledge through collaborative and technological learning activities. Further, Jasrial (2024) implements constructivism into Indonesian multicultural classrooms with the knowledge that learner autonomy must also be matched with sensitivity and appropriateness to culture. However, negotiation of autonomy and authority is not necessarily straightforward. It is obvious from the explanation that it is influenced by teacher identity, institutional norms, and cultural values. In collectivist cultures, for instance, students will fight off autonomous roles if they conflict with deeply held norms of respect for authority. Even teachers themselves will struggle to relinquish control if they perceive learner autonomy as risking classroom order or academic norms. Thus, learner-centeredness has to be negotiated contextually and carefully, with the recognition that power and autonomy are on a continuum rather than a dichotomy. For example, when teachers attempt to implement open-ended project work (a hallmark of autonomy), students may become passive or demand explicit step-by-step instructions, viewing the teacher's ambiguity as a failure to fulfill their authoritative duty. Similarly, students may avoid directly critiquing peers' work during collaborative tasks, prioritizing group harmony and "saving face" over the critical feedback necessary for true autonomous development. Therefore, effective pedagogical implementation requires educators to gradually introduce controlled choices and clearly articulate the cultural value of autonomy in professional life, ensuring that new practices align with, rather than directly confront, established social norms.

All of these themes together indicate that ELT is undergoing a philosophical transformation, away from rigid, one-size-fits-all paradigms towards more adaptive, humanistic, and reflective practice. But the application of philosophical practices to ELT is not an issue of supporting specific ideas; it is an issue of deep negotiation between belief, context, practice, and culture. Teachers must negotiate this tricky terrain constantly, juggling idealism and pragmatism, authority

and empathy, and structure and flexibility. For these shifts to be meaningfully taken up, education systems must build in support for teachers intellectually, structurally, and emotionally.

## Conclusion

This article presents an in-depth analysis of the impact of educational philosophies on teacher and learner role ideation in English Language Teaching (ELT) in different cultural and institutional contexts. Drawing on qualitative document analysis of eight peer-reviewed journals between 2020 and 2025, findings are presented as rich tensions between pedagogical needs and philosophical ideals.

The review underscores that constructivist, social constructivist, and critical paradigms are increasingly shaping ELT practice, encouraging learner autonomy, reflective pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching. These inclinations rewrite the teacher's role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator, guide, or co-learner, placing learners as active users, collaborators, and even agents of change. However, actualization of such philosophies is skewed and context-sensitive, commonly kept in abeyance by systemic obstacles, cultural norms, and institutional constraints.

Three core problems were identified: (1) the need to integrate cognitive and affective dimensions in language teaching, (2) inconsistencies between professed teacher beliefs and classroom practice, and (3) ongoing negotiation between authority and autonomy in teacher-pupil relationships. These problems accentuate that effective ELT goes beyond philosophical compatibility; it requires structural support, staff development, and reflective teaching in order to accomplish theory-practice consistency.

Lastly, this study suggests that philosophical awareness in ELT is not theoretical; it is an educational necessity for creating classrooms as inclusive, productive, and equitable sites for language learning. Subsequent research should investigate how local cultures mediate the adoption of philosophical concepts, and how teacher preparation programs can better prepare teachers to negotiate these tricky pedagogical landscapes with intention, adaptability, and expressiveness.

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