



Market-driven Discourses in Global ELT Textbooks and Their Interpretations in Learners' Narrations

Mohadeseh Hasani

M. A. of English Department, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Iran.

hasanimohadeseh77@gmail.com

Afsar Rouhi (Corresponding Author)

Associate Professor of English Department, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Iran.

afsarrouhi@uma.ac.ir

Reza Abdi

Professor of English Department, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Iran.

reabdi@uma.ac.ir

ARTICLE INFO:

Received date:

2026.05.18

Accepted date:

2026.07.02

Print ISSN: 2251-7995

Online ISSN: 2676-6876

Keywords:

Critical Discourse Analysis,
ELT Textbooks,
Governmentality, Learner
Interpretation, Neoliberalism,
Speakout



Abstract

Global English language teaching (ELT) textbooks function not only as linguistic resources but also as sites where market-oriented identities and cultural imaginaries are made available to learners. Although critical ELT scholarship has examined neoliberalism in textbook materials, less attention has been paid to how discourses are realized across proficiency levels within a global series and how learners in under-researched EFL settings interpret them. This qualitative study examines neoliberal subject positions in Speakout (3rd ed., A1–B2+) as used in Iranian private institutes, alongside interviews with six male Iranian learners aged 16–19. Textbook data was sampled purposively across the proficiency levels, with attention to unit topics, dialogues, reading and listening texts, task instructions, visuals, and Future Skills sections. The analysis combined codes from neoliberalism and governmentality with coding of representational patterns. Following Fairclough's (2001) critical discourse analysis, the study moved from description of textual and visual features—lexis, modality, evaluation, agency, scenario design, and image–text relations—to interpretation of discourse practices and explanation in relation to the Iranian ELT context. The findings identify four recurrent discourse clusters: Consumer participation and branding, employability and entrepreneurial selfhood, individualized achievement, and Western-coded lifestyle/mobility as cultural capital. Interview data indicate selective uptake rather than internalization: Learners often framed English as a resource for education, mobility, and income while questioning luxury consumption and some Western-centric norms. The study contributes an empirically grounded account of how global ELT materials normalize market-oriented subject positions and argues for critical textbook literacy in teacher education and materials evaluation.

Citation: Hasani, M.; Rouhi, A. & Abdi, R. (2026). Market-driven Discourses in Global ELT Textbooks and Their Interpretations in Learners' Narrations. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 18 (37), 253-272. DOI:10.22034/elt.2026.72484.2870

Introduction

Within critical applied linguistics and critical TESOL, a substantial body of work has documented how “global” English language teaching (ELT) materials can reproduce market-oriented values and Western-centric cultural norms (e.g., Block et al., 2012; Gray, 2010; Pennycook, 2010). However, two issues remain insufficiently addressed. First, relatively little attention has been paid to how neoliberal ideologies are portrayed systematically across proficiency levels within one widely used global series in an under-researched context. Second, less is known about how learners themselves interpret, negotiate, and sometimes resist these ideological invitations in relation to their economic conditions, cultural commitments, and aspirations.

This study responds to these gaps through a critical discourse analysis of the Speakout (3rd ed.) series used in Iranian private institutes, complemented by learner interviews. The focus on neoliberal ideology is warranted simply because English in private-institute contexts is often viewed as an investment in future education, mobility, income, and professional recognition. The overall purpose is therefore to examine the presence, nature, and implications of neoliberal ideologies in global ELT textbooks taught in the Iranian context, and to explore how Iranian learners interpret and engage with these representations.

Theoretically, the study draws primarily upon critical perspectives on neoliberalism and governmentality to examine how ELT materials represent neoliberal ideologies and imaginaries of global life. Neoliberalism is styled as a political-economic and discursive formation that spread and normalize market values—competition, efficiency, self-investment, individual responsibility, and employability—in social and educational contexts (Block et al., 2012; Harvey, 2005). Governmentality operates as a lens for examining how power runs through normalized expectations and self-regulation rather than only through explicit policy mandates (Foucault, 1982, 2008).

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative, interpretive design combining (a) critical discourse analysis of selected Speakout textbook units and (b) semi-structured learner interviews. The textbooks provide access to structured discourse produced by a global publisher, while interviews offer insight into how learners engage with, resist, or reinterpret those discourses in the Iranian private-institute context; analyzing both datasets enables triangulation and a fuller account of ideology in materials and reception. Analytically, the study is guided by critical discourse analysis (CDA, Fairclough, 1995), so the analysis can connect textual, visual, and pedagogical features to discursive practice and broader social practice.

The study’s contribution is positioned at three levels. Pedagogically, it offers a critical lens for teachers as textbook mediators and argues for critical textbook literacy to avoid the unexamined transmission of market-oriented values. At the policy level, it underscores the need for textbook selection and evaluation criteria in Iran that include ideological scrutiny alongside linguistic and methodological concerns. At the level of critical applied linguistics, it provides a contextually situated account of how neoliberal discourses materialize in everyday pedagogical texts and how they are negotiated by learners rather than simply absorbed.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What neoliberal ideologies are represented in Speakout (3rd ed., A1–B2+)?

2. How do these ideologies manifest linguistically, visually, and pedagogically in the textbooks?
3. How do Iranian learners negotiate, interpret, or resist these representations in relation to their local histories-in-person?

Taken together, these questions propel the analysis from identifying the representations to their semiotic realizations to their interpretations by learners. The first question identifies the dominant neoliberal ideologies embedded in the selected textbooks. The second question examines how these ideologies are constructed through linguistic choices, visual representations, task design, and recurring pedagogical scenarios. Finally, the third question orients our attention to learners' interpretations, exploring whether the textbook representations are assimilated, negotiated, or resisted in relation to learners lived experiences, economic realities, and future aspirations.

Theoretical Framework and Background

English as a Global Commodity

English has become more than just a language; it is a global commodity that promises access to education, employment, and social mobility. However, as critical scholarship asserts, the institutional expansion of English is inseparable from late-capitalist political economy, where language is increasingly treated as an economic resource that can be accumulated, displayed, and converted into opportunity (Heller, 2010; Heller & Duchêne, 2016). In this framing, language is commodified not only as “skill” but as a marketable form of value—often purchased through the language-training industry (Gao, 2017) and legitimized through “global” regimes of language policy and standardization (Johnson, 2013; Piller, 2016; Piller & Cho, 2013).

In ELT, the commodity logic becomes visible in how English is narrativized as an instrument of competitiveness and modernity. Universities and educational institutions may “rebrand” English as a symbol of internationalism and progress (Luke et al., 2007; Park & Wee, 2012), while policy discourses intensify the idea that learning English is an investment in future returns (Hadley, 2017). This investment orientation also structures learners' aspirations, positioning English as a route to mobility and “capital” (Piller & Cho, 2013; Xiong & Yuan, 2018). Importantly, critical accounts warn against simplistic causal claims that English alone produces economic change: Inequality is structural, and linguistic access often tracks existing class divisions (Manan & Hajar, 2022; Romaine, 2015). As Romaine (2015) puts it, “the poor remain poor not because they do not speak English, but due to deeply entrenched inequalities in societies”.

This study takes that political-economic terrain as its premise: Because English circulates as a commodity, then coursebooks—the most routine objects of classroom life—may function as ideological packaging for that commodity, normalizing particular desires, identities, and futures.

Neoliberal Discourses in ELT

Neoliberalism is frequently invoked to explain how market rationalities expand beyond the economy and reorganize social life, including education (Block et al., 2012; Harvey, 2005). In

this study, neoliberalism is treated not merely as economic policy but as a multi-dimensional ideological formation shaping norms of success, self-worth, and responsibility (Brown, 2015; Harvey, 2005). This aligns with work emphasizing neoliberalism as (a) political-economic restructuring, (b) institutional transformation, (c) discourse and moral rationality, and (d) a mode of governance producing entrepreneurial subjects (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009; Brenner et al., 2010; Brown, 2015; Foucault, 1980, 2008; Ganti, 2014; Ong, 2006; Rose & Miller, 2010).

Within ELT, neoliberalism approached as a discursive-pedagogical phenomenon: It travels through banal curricular topics, “global” lifestyle narratives, and the repeated alignment of English with employability, mobility, and consumer identity (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Bori, 2018, 2020, 2021; Gray, 2012; Xiong & Yuan, 2018). This strand is crucial because it shifts attention away from abstract claims (“neoliberalism is everywhere”) toward empirical signatures in materials: Consumerism, branding, market-oriented values, productivity, and forms of “safe” multiculturalism that avoid structural critique (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018).

For Iran, the analytic need is sharpened by the fact that globally marketed textbooks are widely adopted in private institutes, where English is strongly linked to migration, credentialing, and professional advancement. In such contexts, neoliberal discourse in coursebooks can be especially plausible because it resonates with already-existing social pressures around mobility and status (Kumaravadivelu, 2001; van Dijk, 2008).

Neoliberalism in Educational Contexts

Neoliberalism’s educational effects are frequently described through three interconnected processes: Marketization, responsabilization, and subject formation. Marketization recasts education as a transaction and learning as a measurable investment (Giroux, 1992; Harvey, 2005; Holborow, 2012). Responsibilization individualizes success and failure, shifting attention from structural inequality to personal effort, skill-building, and competitiveness (Brown, 2015; Piller & Cho, 2013). Subject formation then becomes the core mechanism through which learners are encouraged to understand themselves as ongoing projects of optimization—what is technically dubbed as “self-managing ‘entrepreneurs of the self’” (Brown, 2015; Foucault, 2008).

In ELT materials research, these processes are often tracked through recurring curricular emphases: English as “life skill,” workplace readiness, entrepreneurial dispositions, and consumer culture (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Bori, 2020; Gray, 2012). Textbooks can therefore be read as forms of soft governance that normalize competition, productivity, and self-investment—often while presenting these values as neutral common sense or universal modernity.

Governmentality

To explain how neoliberal discourse governs without appearing coercive, the study mobilizes Foucault’s concept of governmentality. Governmentality foregrounds the “conduct of conduct.” Power operates through shaping the field of possible action and inviting subjects to align their choices with dominant rationalities (Foucault, 2008; Rose, 1999; Rose & Miller 2008). Foucault (2008) describes neoliberalism as extending market principles as a general art

of government— “taking the formal principles of a market economy... and projecting them on to... government” (p. 131).

This perspective is analytically useful for textbook studies because it makes subject formation central: Texts can be treated as “technologies” that position readers as particular subject types and encourage self-regulation (Foucault, 1982, 2008; Rose & Miller, 2008). The study highlights that governmentality is “power without a center,” productive of meanings and practices across multiple sites (Rose & Miller, 2008), and that modern governance increasingly depends on subjects’ self-regulatory capacities rather than overt external control (Dean, 2003; Rose & Miller, 2010).

At the same time, governmentality scholarship has been critiqued for underplaying agency. Critics argue that Foucauldian studies can render subjects’ passive conduits of discourse (Caldwell, 2007; Newton, 1998) and insufficiently attentive to heterogeneity and resistance (Bevir, 2011). This critique matters methodologically for the present project because it justifies triangulating textbook analysis with learner perspectives, treating subjects not as ideological “duplications” but as interpreters who may comply, negotiate, or resist.

CDA and Ideological Inquiry

Because neoliberalism and governmentality are enacted through ordinary discourse, CDA offers a practical methodological bridge between micro textual choices and macro social rationalities. CDA treats discourse as constitutive of social reality: Texts do not simply reflect the world; they also help reproduce dominance by making particular meanings appear natural (Fairclough, 1989, 1995; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). This orientation aligns with the study’s insistence that ELT is “not a neutral nor solely linguistic endeavor,” but operates within economic, political, and cultural forces.

The study also connects CDA to broader work on ideology as “meaning in the service of power” (Thompson, 1990, 20) and to language-ideology scholarship that emphasizes how power is embedded in metapragmatic beliefs and everyday semiotic practices (Kroskrity, 2004; Woolard, 1998). CDA is particularly appropriate for textbook research because textbooks are designed to be authoritative, repeatable, and widely distributed; they can stabilize “common sense” through recurring topics, dialogues, images, and evaluation. Indeed, critical textbook scholarship has long argued that textbooks are cultural artifacts shaping learners’ worldviews (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Gray, 2010), and multimodal research shows that images and design are ideological resources as much as written text (Weninger & Kiss, 2013).

Coloniality as a Persistent Matrix of Power

Neoliberal rationalities in ELT do not float free from history; they often intersect with colonial continuities. The study therefore treats coloniality as a necessary companion lens, especially for understanding how “the global” is frequently coded as Western modernity. Following Quijano (2000), coloniality is conceptualized as a “matrix of power” that outlives formal colonialism and continues to organize knowledge, culture, and subjectivity in ways that privilege Western norms. In language education, this manifests when English is positioned as the neutral language of progress while local languages and epistemologies are devalued (de Souza, 2017; Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

From this perspective, ELT textbooks can carry both market values and cultural hierarchies: They may present Western lifestyles as natural and aspirational, and encode prestige through Western cultural references, mobility imaginaries, and consumer worlds. Scholarship on linguistic imperialism and cultural politics has long critiqued ELT's role in reproducing global hierarchies (Pennycook, 1994, 2017; Phillipson, 1992, 2017), while more recent work highlights “unequal Englishes,” raciolinguistic hierarchies, and the persistence of native-speakerism as colonial residue (Holliday, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Tupas, 2019; Tupas & Rubdy, 2015).

Crucially, the study keeps coloniality analytically present but does not treat it as the central object; rather, it frames the broader ideological terrain in which neoliberal patterns in textbooks are interpreted.

English-medium Instruction and Neoliberal Globalization

Although the empirical focus of the article is ELT coursebooks, the wider policy environment—especially English-medium instruction (EMI)—intensifies neoliberal common sense around English-as-necessity. EMI is frequently justified through discourses of internationalization, competitiveness, and global ranking, and critics argue it can reproduce inequality by privileging elites with greater access to English (Hamid et al., 2013; Jenkins, 2014; Sah & Li, 2018). In the study, EMI is treated as part of the same ideological ecosystem that commodifies English and reinforces hierarchies, linking access to English with power and capital (Fang, 2018; Haidar & Fang, 2019; Kubota et al., 2022; Phyak & Sah, 2022).

At the same time, decolonial critiques caution that “continued critique without solutions in praxis is not desirable” (Spolsky, 2022, 4). Therefore, the study aligns EMI critique with the broader imperative for decolonizing orientations that “de-normalize” defaults and rehabilitate suppressed epistemic formations (Gallien, 2020; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020).

Recent empirical work has provided important foundations for examining neoliberalism in ELT materials. Babaii and Sheikhi (2018), for example, examined English teaching materials used in Iranian private language institutes and showed how neoliberal values may be reproduced through market orientation, consumerism, branding, individual productivity, marketability, and superficial multiculturalism. Their study is especially relevant to the present research because it explores neoliberal textbook discourse within the Iranian private-institute context and demonstrates how CDA can be used to reveal seemingly ordinary textbook content as ideologically loaded. More recently, Shah et al. (2024) analyzed neoliberal subject formation in global ELT programs through Foucauldian governmentality and showed how English can be constructed as a life skill linked to economic success, consumerism, entrepreneurship, personal responsibility, and self-management. Together, these studies indicate that neoliberalism in ELT is insidiously presented through pedagogical materials.

At the same time, this line of research points to tensions and contradictions within commodification scholarship. The commodification of English often portrays it as a resource for mobility, employability, and self-improvement; however, when mediated with the local economic, cultural, and institutional realities, these promises are not equally fulfilled for all learners. As such, the present study does not assume that learners automatically internalize the ideologies promoted in textbooks. Instead, it examines how neoliberal discourses traced in the *Speakout* (3rd ed.) series are negotiated, interpreted, appropriated, or resisted by Iranian

learners of English in relation to the particularity of the horizon each of these learners brings in. In so doing, the study addresses a gap in the literature by combining textbook-based CDA with learner interpretation in the Iranian EFL private-institute context.

Taken together, these strands show why a textbook-centered inquiry in Iran is analytically urgent. If English is commodified (Heller, 2010), and if neoliberal governance operates through subtle subject-making (Foucault, 2008; Rose & Miller, 2008), then globally marketed ELT coursebooks are plausible sites where consumerism, entrepreneurial selfhood, individualist achievement, and Western-centric “global” values are routinized (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Bori, 2020; Gray, 2012). Yet governmentality critiques also require that learner uptake not be assumed: Learners may internalize some invitations while negotiating others (Bevir, 2011; Newton, 1998).

Accordingly, the present study is positioned to address two persistent gaps identified in the literature: Although ELT textbooks are central to shaping classroom practice and learners’ worldviews, how neoliberal discourses are embedded within them and how students come to interpret the themes foregrounded in these textbooks remains under-examined.

Methodology

Design

The study was designed as a qualitative, interpretive inquiry. The design combined textbook-based critical discourse analysis of selected Speakout units with semi-structured learner interviews. The aim was not to test hypotheses or produce statistical generalizations but to gain a deeper understanding of how neoliberal discourses appear in ELT materials and how learners interact with them. A quantitative design would not have allowed the subtleties of learners’ perspectives or the layered meanings within the textbooks to be captured. Instead, qualitative research provided the flexibility to explore language as a social practice and to connect texts to wider ideological structures. At the heart of this design is CDA. It was chosen simply because it offers more than description, affording critical analysis of the materials at stake. CDA makes it possible to uncover how language constructs social realities, positions individuals, and reproduces relations of power. This was crucial for the study, since neoliberal values often appear in subtle and taken-for-granted ways, rather than through overt statements (Bori, 2021; Fairclough, 2001; Holborow, 2012; Kubota, 2014). CDA, therefore, provided the tool to examine how such values are normalized in coursebook texts, dialogues, visuals, task instructions, pedagogical scenarios, and supplementary sections. CDA was also understood in Fairclough’s sense as a way of linking textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, rather than treating discourse analysis as only thematic description (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

Data Sources

Textbook Corpus

The primary dataset was the Speakout (3rd ed.) series (A1–B2+), published by Pearson and used at the research site. The series includes themed units integrating skills work, standard grammar/vocabulary practice, authentic BBC video materials, and a recurring “Future Skills” section. These features were treated as potential ideological carriers (e.g., consumerism,

employability, mobility, and individual success). The selection of the series and units was purposive: The analysis focused on the recurrent textbook sections where lifestyle, consumption, work, travel, technology, communication, self-presentation, and future-oriented skills were foregrounded. The unit of analysis included lesson titles, reading and listening texts, dialogues, vocabulary sets, task instructions, writing tasks, images, and recurring sections related to future skills, mediation, and learner interaction.

Learner Interviews

The complementary dataset comprised six semi-structured interviews (15–20 minutes each). Interviews were conducted in Persian to reduce linguistic constraint; transcripts were later translated into English with care to preserve meaning and stance. The protocol contained 32 questions addressing learners' English-learning trajectories and their perceptions of textbook themes and representations. The interview data were used to examine how learners interpreted, negotiated, or resisted the representations identified in the textbook analysis, not to measure textbook effects statistically.

Participants

Six male learners (ages 16–19) participated. Sampling was convenience-based: Participants were recruited from the researcher's classes to facilitate access and rapport. While this limits generalizability, it is consistent with the study's goal of producing in-depth interpretive insight. Participant profiles and key characteristics are reported in the study (pseudonyms used): Rayan (18, B2), Kia (17, B1+), Arsam (18, B1+), Amir (16, B1), Ata (17, A2+), and Alisan (19, B2). Because all interviewees were male, gender balance is acknowledged as a limitation, and the findings are not reported as representative of Iranian EFL learners in general.

Data Collection

For the textbook corpus, units across A1–B2+ were compiled and organized for analysis. Data extraction attended to multimodal elements (unit topics, dialogues, reading/listening texts, visuals, and recurring skill features) to capture how neoliberal meanings may be stabilized through both wording and design choices. Interviews were conducted individually in a quiet institute setting. Participation was voluntary and unrelated to evaluation. With consent, interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated for analysis.

Analytic Procedure

Analysis followed a deductive–inductive cycle applied across both datasets:

1. Familiarization: The textbooks and interview transcripts were read iteratively to identify recurring representational patterns (e.g., brands/consumption, travel/mobility, workplace genres, success narratives) and salient moments of learner alignment or discomfort.
2. Coding: Initial coding combined theory-informed codes (e.g., consumerism, employability, individual success) with inductive codes emerging from the data (e.g., “advertising-like” lessons; pride in local identity; skepticism toward luxury). Codes were refined through recursive comparison across proficiency levels and across participant accounts. A working codebook was gradually refined to distinguish broad themes from more specific linguistic, visual, and pedagogical indicators.

3. Theme consolidation and CDA interpretation: Codes were grouped into themes and interpreted through CDA: (a) textual level (lexis, evaluation, scenario design, visual representation), (b) discursive practice (global production and local pedagogic consumption), and (c) social practice (alignment with neoliberal rationalities and the Iranian ELT economy). To make the discourse analysis less purely thematic, the analysis also examined modality, evaluative vocabulary, agency, pronoun use, grammatical patterning, task roles, visual composition, and the repeated speech acts through which learners are positioned as job applicants, consumers, travelers, reviewers, or self-managing language users.
4. Triangulation and synthesis: Themes from the textbooks were compared with themes from the interviews to identify convergence and divergence, treating learner responses as interpretive uptake rather than assuming direct ideological absorption. This synthesis yielded four clusters reported in the article: (1) consumerism/branding, (2) employability/entrepreneurship, (3) individualism vs. cooperation, and (4) Western-coded lifestyle, mobility, and global participation representations.

Operationalization of CDA

For transparency, CDA was operationalized through three connected levels of analysis: Textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 1992, 1995). At the textual level, the analysis examined lexical choices, modality, evaluation, pronoun use, agency, grammatical patterns, image-text relations, and task instructions. At the level of discursive practice, it considered the genres, roles, and communicative scenarios repeatedly rehearsed in the materials, including customer–assistant, applicant–interviewer, traveler–host, reviewer–consumer, and entrepreneur–audience interactions. At the level of social practice, these patterns were interpreted in relation to neoliberal governmentality and the Iranian private-institute context.

Fairclough's distinction between contents, relations, and subjects was also used as an analytic guide as it responds directly to the need for a more explicit linguistic and discourse-analytic procedure. This way, it is possible to demonstrate what topics are normalized, what social relations are practiced, and what kinds of learner subject positions are made available (Fairclough, 2001).

Interview Analysis

The interview data was analyzed in relation to the textbook findings. Learners' responses were first coded for patterns of acceptance, negotiation, ambivalence, and resistance. Their comments were then compared with the textbook patterns to examine whether the subject positions promoted in the materials were reproduced, questioned, or reinterpreted. This comparison was not intended to measure the effect of the textbook on learners; rather, it explored how learners made sense of the ideological representations available in the materials. In this way, the study avoided treating textbook discourse as automatically internalized by learners.

Several measures were taken to strengthen the trustworthiness of the analysis. These included repeated readings of the textbook corpus, analytic memo-writing, constant comparison across textbook levels, cross-checking between textbook patterns and interview

accounts, and the use of representative textual examples in the Results section. The codebook was refined during the analysis to separate general thematic categories from more specific linguistic-discursive features.

Results

This section reports the findings of the CDA of the *Speakout* (3rd ed.) textbook series and the semi-structured learner interviews. The findings are organized around four discourse clusters, and each cluster is examined through textual, visual, pedagogical, and interview evidence.

The four clusters are: (a) consumer participation and branding, (b) employability and market-ready selfhood, (c) individualized achievement and constrained cooperation, and (d) global mobility and Western-coded cultural capital. For each cluster, the analysis considers what contents are normalized, what relations are rehearsed, and what subject positions are offered to learners.

In order to clarify how the identified ideological patterns are discursively realized, Table 1 presents a compact set of representative examples from the *Speakout* (3rd ed.) materials. The table is not intended to provide an exhaustive inventory of the corpus; rather, it shows how selected textbook tasks make neoliberal meanings visible through recurring patterns of consumption, employability, self-presentation, and Western-coded lifestyle representation.

Table 1 .*Representative Textbook Examples of Neoliberal Subject Positioning in the Selected Speakout Materials*

Pattern	Representative Textbook Example
Consumerism and lifestyle display	<i>Speakout</i> A2, Unit 2C, Student's Book, pp. 22–23: food photography, restaurant ordering, and review/photo activity.
Employability and self-management	<i>Speakout</i> A2, Unit 7A, Student's Book, pp. 68–69: unusual jobs, professional sleeper, TV runner, skills, and qualities.
Branding and self-presentation	<i>Speakout</i> B2+, Unit 4B/4C, Student's Book, pp. 47 and 50: creating a brand, presenting a rebranding campaign, presenting yourself, and job-interview practice.
Western-coded lifestyles	<i>Speakout</i> B2, Unit 1C, Student's Book, pp. 14–15: city travel-guide and itinerary tasks for Lagos and Prague, including tourism landmarks, designer stores, restaurants, shopping, and leisure activities.

As Table 1 shows, the selected examples suggest that neoliberal meanings are not presented through direct ideological statements. Rather, they are embedded in ordinary textbook activities that ask learners to evaluate products and experiences, describe personal qualities, present skills, negotiate mobility, and engage with globally recognizable lifestyles. In these examples, English is positioned not only as a communicative tool, but also as a resource for consumer participation, employability, lifestyle performance, and the construction of a marketable self.

Consumer Participation and Branding

At lower levels, consumer discourse appears through apparently ordinary service encounters: Shopping for clothes, ordering meals, asking for help in shops, buying for a friend, booking hotels, and requesting services. The discourse is not presented as ideological; it is embedded in routine functional language. However, the recurrence of transactional roles constructs

participation in consumption as a normal domain of English use. Learners repeatedly practice being customers, guests, reviewers, and service users.

At higher levels, this pattern becomes more explicit. Lessons on advertising, marketing tricks, product evaluation, customer complaints, product blurbs, and branding introduce not only consumer vocabulary but also evaluative and promotional genres. The linguistic choices foreground comparison, preference, attractiveness, usefulness, price, quality, and desirability (Figure 1). In CDA terms, the consumer is not merely a topic; it is a subject position repeatedly made available to learners through task roles and evaluative language.

Figure 1 illustrates this consumer-oriented pattern by showing how the textbook connects communicative practice with lifestyle consumption, visual display, and evaluation. The figure is therefore not treated as decorative material; it functions as visual evidence for how learner roles are organized around choosing, reviewing, and presenting consumer experiences.

LESSON	GRAMMAR/FUNCTION	VOCABULARY	PRONUNCIATION	READING	
5 consumer B B C VLOGS When was the last time you had a problem with a product or service?					
5A The customer is always right? p56	Clauses of purpose: <i>to, so as to, in order to/ that, so that</i>	Personality adjectives (2)	Word stress in adjectives		
5B Too good to be true p59	Comparative and superlative structures	Advertising; money	Linking <i>r</i> in phrases	Read an article about marketing tricks	
5C Which should I buy? p62	How to ... summarise information from different sources	Describing products	Intonation in summarising phrases		
5D I do it myself p64	Causative <i>have</i> and <i>get</i> ; reflexive pronouns				

Figure 1 .Consumer-oriented Unit Framing in *Speakout*



Figure 2 .Creativity, Mobility, and Self-Presentation in the Selected Textbook Material

Learner interviews appeared to align strongly with this cluster. Several participants framed English as convertible into income, study opportunities, translation/teaching work, migration, or social status. This does not imply that learners uncritically accepted all textbook values;

rather, it shows that the employability discourse resonated with their lived aspirations and anxieties.

The following interview excerpts illustrate this convergence. Rayan directly connected English with immediate and future economic value: “When I am a student without income, I can work as a translator or teacher. It will definitely help.” Kia imagined English as both educational and entrepreneurial capital, explaining that “learning English can help me study abroad, work online, or even start something for myself.” Alisan similarly described English as a source of future distinction: “If I know English better, I can have better chances than others, maybe for university or for work.” These comments show that English was interpreted as a form of future-oriented capital, but this interpretation was shaped by concrete hopes about work, education, and social mobility rather than by simple acceptance of textbook ideology.

Individualized Achievement and Constrained Cooperation

The series contains many cooperative classroom formats, including pair work, group discussions, role-plays, and mediation tasks. However, the wider representational environment frequently privileges individualized success. Learners are asked to present themselves, describe achievements, prepare applications, perform interviews, write profiles, make recommendations, solve personal problems, and manage their own learning. The repeated emphasis on self-management and self-presentation aligns with neoliberal governmentality, where subjects are encouraged to become responsible for their own improvement and future market legibility.

This pattern is not absolute. Some tasks foreground collaboration, social responsibility, and mediation. Learner responses also complicated the individualist framing. Some participants described English as a tool for helping classmates, guiding tourists, supporting family aspirations, or communicating across cultures. Thus, the analysis suggests a tension between the individualizing logic of self-improvement and the relational values learners bring to the material.

The learner interviews make this tension especially visible. Rayan resisted a purely individualistic interpretation of English by saying, “English is not only for myself. If I know English, I can help my classmates or even tourists who come to our city.” Kia made a similar connection between English and local hospitality: “If a tourist visits our city, English helps us guide them.” Ata also interpreted English as meaningful when it was connected to wider social and economic purposes, explaining that inside Iran it mattered “unless one works in international business.” These comments suggest that learners sometimes reworked the individualizing logic of English-as-capital into more relational, local, and socially useful meanings.

Global Mobility and Western-coded Cultural Capital

A final cluster concerns the cultural geography of the series. English is repeatedly staged in cosmopolitan spaces such as hotels, airports, restaurants, cafés, international travel contexts, workplaces, digital platforms, and urban leisure environments. At B1, selected pages on Shanghai recommendations and travel writing construct mobility through recommendation

language, superlatives, and tourist evaluation. At upper levels, global mobility becomes linked to professional identity, future planning, branding, and lifestyle choice.

The claim here is not that every text is simply “Western” or that learners passively adopt Western values. Rather, the series constructs a communicative world that is mobile, middle-class, consumer-oriented, and often Western-coded. Iranian/local cultural worlds are less visible. Learners responded by valuing English as a tool for opportunity while resisting cultural imitation. Kia’s comment captures this boundary-making: “We must learn English, but not copy everything from foreigners. We have our own culture that we should respect.”

Other learners expressed similar forms of cultural negotiation. Rayan stated, “English is important, but we must also keep our culture. If we only think about their culture, we will forget ours.” Arsam also warned that “if people only follow Western life, they will forget Iranian traditions.” Amir proposed selective cultural borrowing, explaining, “We can take good things from their culture, but not everything. Some things do not fit our values.” Ata separated language learning from cultural assimilation by saying, “We can learn English for business or migration, but that does not mean we must change our culture.” Alisan likewise accepted travel and intercultural learning, but not permanent detachment from his local context: “Not permanently. I would like to travel the world, visit capital cities, and learn about different cultures.” Together, these responses show that learners valued English as a practical resource while also drawing cultural boundaries around imitation, assimilation, and the loss of Iranian identity.

Taken together, the results show that neoliberal discourse in *Speakout* operates less as isolated “themes” and more as a recurring representational environment. Consumer participation, employability, individualized achievement, and global mobility are repeatedly naturalized through the combination of topics, language forms, visual framing, genres, and tasks. Interview data indicate pragmatic alignment with English-as-capital, but also selective resistance around consumerist excess and cultural assimilation.

The interview data suggests that learners’ responses were not uniform. While some participants associated English with mobility, employability, and access to broader opportunities, others interpreted these representations more cautiously in relation to local economic conditions, cultural expectations, and the limits of real access. This variation is important because it shows that textbook discourses are not automatically internalized. Learners may recognize the value of English as capital while also questioning the consumerist, individualist, or Western-coded assumptions through which that value is often represented.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the selected *Speakout* materials present neoliberalism not as an explicit political doctrine, but as an ordinary pedagogical common sense. Across the textbook data, English is repeatedly connected with consumption, employability, mobility, self-presentation, personal development, and access to desirable global lifestyles. This finding is consistent with critical ELT research which has shown that global English materials often package language learning through marketable identities, consumer practices, and future-oriented aspirations (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Bori, 2021; Gray, 2010; Shah et al., 2024). In the present study, however, these patterns were not treated only as broad themes. They were traced

through the representational choices, task designs, communicative roles, and subject positions made available in the textbook series.

The first research question concerned the neoliberal ideologies embedded in the selected materials. The findings indicate that the most recurrent ideological patterns were consumerism, employability, entrepreneurial selfhood, individualized responsibility, global mobility, and Western-coded middle-class lifestyles. These patterns support Fairclough's view that discourse is involved in producing contents, relations, and subjects. In *Speakout*, the contents that become normalized are shopping, travel, work, branding, service encounters, digital visibility, and self-improvement. The relations that are rehearsed are often market-oriented relations, such as customer and service provider, job applicant and interviewer, traveller and host, reviewer and consumer, or presenter and audience. The subjects that are made available are self-managing, mobile, employable, and consumption-oriented learners. In this sense, neoliberalism is represented not through direct statements, but through repeated pedagogical scenarios in which desirable personhood is linked to flexibility, choice, productivity, and mobility.

These findings are close to Babaii and Sheikhi's (2018) analysis of neoliberal traces in ELT materials used in Iranian private language institutes. Their study showed how textbook discourse may reproduce market orientation, branding, individualism, and superficial forms of multiculturalism. The present study extends this line of work by showing how similar neoliberal representations are also visible in the *Speakout* (3rd ed.) series and by connecting these textbook patterns to learners' interpretations. The findings also correspond with Shah et al.'s (2024) study of global ELT programs, where English is constructed as a life skill associated with economic success, self-management, and future opportunity. What is important in the present study is that these values appear within routine classroom activities rather than in explicitly ideological passages. This supports the argument that neoliberal meanings in ELT often work through normality: They become visible in what textbooks repeatedly ask learners to imagine, practise, evaluate, and desire.

The second research question addressed how these ideologies are realized linguistically, visually, and pedagogically. The findings show that the ideological work of the textbooks depends on the interaction of several semiotic layers. Linguistically, the materials use lexical fields of choice, skill, success, improvement, travel, work, service, and consumption. Grammatically and interactionally, learners are frequently placed in positions where they describe preferences, solve consumer problems, present themselves, evaluate experiences, or prepare for future work. Visually, images of restaurants, travel, cities, professional settings, branded identities, and digitally visible lifestyles contribute to the construction of a mobile and market-oriented communicative world. Pedagogically, tasks do not simply practise language forms; they rehearse particular social roles and forms of participation.

This point is important because it responds directly to the need for a more linguistic and discourse-oriented reading of the data. From a Faircloughian perspective, the significance of the materials lies not only in their topics but also in the way they organize discourse practices. The textbook constrains what can be spoken about, what kinds of relations are enacted, and what forms of learner identity become naturalized. For example, when learners practise ordering, reviewing, branding, interviewing, recommending, or presenting themselves, they are

not only practicing communicative functions. They are also rehearsing recognizable social positions within a broader economy of consumption, employability, and self-display. Thus, the textbook discourse operates simultaneously at the level of language, classroom interaction, and social imagination.

At the same time, the findings should not be read as evidence of a simple process of ideological assimilation. The third research question showed that learners' interpretations were more complex than direct acceptance or rejection. Some learners welcomed the textbook representations of mobility, freedom, work, and self-development because these images resonated with their own aspirations and with the restrictions they perceived in their local context. Others treated the same representations with caution, especially when they seemed economically distant, culturally selective, or disconnected from everyday realities in Iran. This pattern suggests that learners do not merely receive textbook ideology; they interpret it through the social and experiential resources they already possess.

Fairclough's (2001) notion of members' resources is useful here. Texts are interpreted through socially formed knowledge, assumptions, values, and expectations. In this sense, learners' cognition is not separate from society; it is shaped by the histories, institutions, economic pressures, and cultural experiences through which learners have learned to understand the world. Their positive responses to some neoliberal representations should therefore not be attributed simply to the persuasive power of the textbook or to the authority of the coursebook writer. Rather, these responses emerge from the encounter between textbook discourse and learners' own lived experience. For some Iranian learners, images of mobility, self-expression, professional confidence, and individual choice are attractive precisely because they contrast with feelings of limitation, uncertainty, and restricted opportunity in their own context.

This interpretation is also compatible with Shah et al.'s (2024) findings in Pakistan, where learners connected English with economic success and future possibility, but where this connection was shaped by local histories and unequal conditions of access. In both contexts, English is imagined as a form of opportunity, but that opportunity is not neutral or equally available. The present study therefore suggests that learner uptake is better understood as selective negotiation. Learners may embrace particular textbook meanings, not because they are passively assimilated into the discourse, but because those meanings intersect with their own aspirations, frustrations, and imagined futures.

The idea of hybridity further helps to explain this process. This interpretive space may be understood as a hybrid space in which learners' habitus, shaped through lived experience, encounters the symbolic world of the textbook and produces meanings that are neither fully imposed by the materials nor entirely independent of them (Bhabha, 1994; Bourdieu, 1977). Learners' interpretations are formed in a space where local habitus and global textbook representations meet. Their responses are neither fully determined by the textbook nor fully independent from it. Instead, meaning is produced in a third interpretive space in which learners adapt, question, desire, and sometimes resist the subject positions made available to them. This hybrid process complicates any claim that global ELT materials simply impose neoliberal

identities on learners. The materials provide discursive invitations, but learners interpret those invitations through the social worlds they inhabit.

Taken together, the findings contribute to critical ELT scholarship by showing both the presence and the limits of neoliberal textbook discourse. The study confirms previous research which has identified the commodification of English and the normalization of market-oriented identities in ELT materials. However, it also shows that the effects of such discourse cannot be understood by textbook analysis alone. Learners' voices reveal the tension between ideological representation and situated interpretation. This tension is central to the study: Speakout offers images of the desirable neoliberal subject, but Iranian learners engage with those images through their own social conditions, cultural expectations, and lived experiences. The result is not straightforward assimilation, but a negotiated relation between textbook discourse, learner agency, and the broader social context in which English is learned.

Conclusion and Implications

This study examined how neoliberal themes are represented in the selected Speakout materials and how Iranian learners interpret these representations in relation to their own lived experiences. The findings show that neoliberalism is not presented in the textbooks as an explicit ideology. Rather, it appears through recurring representations of consumption, mobility, employability, self-presentation, Western-coded lifestyles, and the idea of the self as a project of continuous improvement. These representations position English as more than a communicative tool; it becomes associated with access, aspiration, visibility, and imagined participation in global social and economic spaces.

At the same time, the learner interviews suggest that textbook discourse does not simply assimilate learners into its worldview. Learners do not passively absorb the values made available in the materials. Instead, they read them through their own social histories, economic conditions, cultural expectations, and personal aspirations. Their responses show negotiation rather than simple acceptance. For some learners, the textbook images of mobility, freedom, and self-development are attractive because they contrast strongly with the restrictions and pressures they experience in their own context. For others, these same representations remain distant, selective, or only partially believable. Therefore, the relationship between textbook discourse and learner interpretation is best understood as a hybrid process. Learners' habitus, shaped by their lived experiences, encounters the symbolic world of the textbook and produces a third interpretive space in which meanings are neither fully imposed by the material nor entirely independent of it. The study therefore concludes that global ELT textbooks may circulate neoliberal subject positions, but learners actively reinterpret these positions through the realities of their own lives.

The findings suggest that teachers should be understood as important mediators between textbook discourse and learner interpretation. Rather than treating global ELT materials as neutral language resources, teachers need to recognize the social values, identities, and aspirations embedded in them and help learners become conscious of these meanings. This does not require rejecting the textbook, but it does require creating classroom space for critical questioning: What are represented? What kind of life is made desirable? What forms of success, mobility, or identity are normalized? By bringing these questions into classroom discussion,

teachers can help learners engage with textbook content more reflectively and connect it to their own social realities.

References

- Apple, M., & Christian-Smith, L. (1991). *The politics of the textbook*. Routledge.
- Babaii, E., & Sheikhi, M. (2018). Traces of neoliberalism in English teaching materials: A critical discourse analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 15(3), 247–264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2017.1398671>
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge
- Bevir, M. (2011). Governance and governmentality after neoliberalism. *Policy & Politics*, 39(4), 457–471. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557311X574216>
- Block, D., Gray, J., & Holborow, M. (2012). *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*. Routledge.
- Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Boas, T. C., & Gans-Morse, J. (2009). Neoliberalism: From new liberal philosophy to anti-liberal slogan. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 44(2), 137–161. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-009-9040-5>
- Bori, P. (2018). *Language textbooks in the era of neoliberalism*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315405544>
- Bori, P. (2020). Neoliberal governmentality in global English textbooks. *TESL-EJ*, 24(2), 1–15. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1260830>
- Bori, P. (2021). Neoliberalism and global textbooks: A critical ethnography of English language classrooms in Serbia. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, 34(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2020.1797082>
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511812507>
- Brenner, N., Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2010). Variegated neoliberalization: Geographies, modalities, pathways. *Global Networks*, 10(2), 182–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2009.00277.x>
- Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the demos: Neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. Zone Books.
- Caldwell, R. (2007). Agency and change: Re-evaluating Foucault's legacy. *Organization*, 14, 769–791.
- de Souza, L. M. T. M. (2017). Glocal languages, coloniality and decoloniality. In A. Canagarajah (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of migration and language* (pp. 491–506). Routledge.
- Dean, M. (2003). Culture governance as individualisation. In H. Bang (Ed.), *Governance as social and political communication* (pp. 117–139). Manchester University Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Fang, F. (2018). Review of English as a medium of instruction in Chinese universities today: Current trends and future directions. *English Today*, 34(1), 32–37.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge*. Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777–795. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448181>
- Foucault, M. (1997). In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth*. The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics*. Palgrave.

- Gallien, C. (2020). A decolonial turn in the humanities. *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 40, 28–58. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26924865>
- Ganti, T. (2014). Neoliberalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 43, 89–104.
- Gao, X. (2017). *Language learner agency: Policy, curriculum, classroom*. Routledge.
- Giroux, H. A. (1992). *Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education*. Routledge.
- Gray, J. (2010). *The construction of English: Culture, consumerism, and promotion in the ELT global coursebook*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gray, J. (2012). Neoliberalism, celebrity and “aspirational content” in English language teaching textbooks for the global market. In D. Block, J. Gray, & M. Holborow (Eds.), *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*. Routledge.
- Hadley, G. (2017). *English for academic purposes in neoliberal universities: A critical grounded theory*. Springer.
- Haidar, S., & Fang, F. (2019). Access to English in Pakistan: A source of prestige or a hindrance to success. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 39(4), 485–500.
- Hamid, M. O., Nguyen, H. T. M., & Baldauf, R. B. (2013). Medium of instruction in Asia: Context, processes, and outcomes. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 14(1), 1–15.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Heller, M. (2010). The commodification of language. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39, 101–114. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104951>
- Heller, M., & Duchêne, A. (2016). Treating language as an economic resource: Discourse, data, debates. In N. Coupland (Ed.), *Sociolinguistics: Theoretical debates* (pp. 139–156). Cambridge University Press.
- Holborow, M. (2012). What is neoliberalism? Discourse, ideology and the real world. In D. Block, J. Gray, & M. Holborow (Eds.), *Neoliberalism and applied linguistics*. (pp. 14–32). Routledge.
- Holliday, A. (2006). Native speakerism. *ELT Journal*, 60(4), 385–387. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccl030>
- Jenkins, J. (2014). *English as a lingua franca in the international university: The politics of academic English language policy*. Routledge.
- Johnson, D. C. (2013). *Language policy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kroskrity, P. (2004). Language ideologies. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 496–517). Blackwell.
- Kubota, R. (2014). The multi/plural turn, postcolonial theory, and neoliberal multiculturalism: Complicities and implications for applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 35(3), 225–246. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu045>
- Kubota, R., Aoyama, R., Kajigaya, K., & Deschambault, R. (2022). Decolonizing language, race, and education: Toward a pluriversal politics of love. *Language Teaching*, 55(3), 293–307. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444821000033>
- Kubota, R., Aoyama, R., Kajigaya, T., & Deschambault, R. (2022). Illuminating language users in the discourse of linguistic diversity: Toward justice-informed language education. *Educational Linguistics*, 1(2), 290–308. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eduling-2022-0011>
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(4), 537–560.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2016). The decolonial option in English teaching: Can the subaltern act? *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(1), 66–85. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.202>

- Luke, A., Luke, C., & Graham, P. (2007). Globalization, corporatism, and critical language education. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 1(1), 1–13.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On the colonality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2–3), 240–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162548>
- Manan, S. A., & Hajar, A. (2022). “Disinvestment” in learners’ multilingual identities: English learning, imagined identities, and neoliberal subjecthood in Pakistan. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2022.2030874>
- Newton, T. (1998). Theorizing subjectivity in organizations: The failure of Foucauldian studies? *Organization Studies*, 19(3), 415–447.
- Ong, A. (2006). *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*. Duke University Press.
- Park, J. S.-Y., & Wee, L. (2012). *Markets of English: Linguistic capital and language policy in a globalizing world*. Routledge.
- Pennycook, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. Longman.
- Pennycook, A. (2010). *Language as a local practice*. Routledge.
- Pennycook, A. (2017). *The cultural politics of English as an international language*. Routledge.
- Pennycook, A., & Makoni, S. (2020). *Innovations and challenges in applied linguistics from the Global South*. Routledge.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (2017). Myths and realities of “global” English. *Language Policy*, 16(3), 313–331. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-016-9409-z>
- Phyak, P., & Sah, P. K. (2022). Epistemic injustice and neoliberal imaginations in English as a medium of instruction (EMI) policy. *Applied Linguistics Review*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2022-0070>
- Piller, I. (2016). Monolingual ways of seeing multilingualism. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 11(1), 25–33.
- Piller, I., & Cho, J. (2013). Neoliberalism as language policy. *Language in Society*, 42(1), 23–44.
- Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1(3), 533–580.
- Romaine, S. (2015). Linguistic diversity and global English: The pushmi–pullyu of language policy and political economy. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *Language policy and political economy: English in a global context* (pp. 252–276). Oxford University Press.
- Rosa, J., & Flores, N. (2017). Unsettling race and language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective. *Language in Society*, 46(5), 621–647. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404517000562>
- Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of freedom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, N., & Miller, P. (2008). *Governing the present*. Polity Press.
- Rose, N., & Miller, P. (2010). Political power beyond the state: Problematics of government. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61(1), 271–303.
- Sah, P. K., & Li, G. (2018). English medium instruction (EMI) as linguistic capital in Nepal: Promises and realities. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 12(2), 109–123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2017.1401448>
- Shah, W. A., Pardesi, H. Y., & Memon, T. (2024). Neoliberalizing subjects through global ELT programs. *TESOL Quarterly*, 58(2), 693–725. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3242>
- Spolsky, B. (2022). Do we need critical educational linguistics? *Educational Linguistics*, 1(1), 4–24.

- Thompson, J. B. (1990). *Ideology and modern culture: Critical social theory in the era of mass communication*. Stanford University Press.
- Tupas, R. (2019). Entanglements of colonialism, social class, and unequal Englishes. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 23(5), 529–542. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12384>
- Tupas, R. (2022). The coloniality of native speakerism. *Asian Englishes*, 24(2), 147–159.
- Tupas, R., & Rubdy, R. (2015). Introduction: From world Englishes to unequal Englishes. In R. Tupas (Ed.), *Unequal Englishes: The politics of Englishes today* (pp. 1–21). Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and power*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Weninger, C., & Kiss, T. (2013). Culture in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook: A semiotic approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47(4), 694–716. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.87>
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Woolard, K. (1998). Language ideology as a field of inquiry. In B. Schieffelin, K. Woolard, & P. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 3–47). Oxford University Press.
- Xiong, T., & Yuan, Z. (2018). “It was because I could speak English that I got the job:” Neoliberal discourse in a Chinese English textbook series. *Journal of Language, Identity, & Education*, 17(2), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2017.1407655>