



IMAM KHOMEINI
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY



Print ISSN: 2676-5587
Online ISSN: 2676-5985

AI-Generated Discomforting Emotions Towards Racism in TESOL Classrooms: AI-Powered Storytelling as a Space for Critical Antiracist Language Pedagogy

Akram Ramezanzadeh 

Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics, Lorestan University, Iran.

Ramezanzadeh.a@lu.ac.ir

Article info

Article type: Research article	Abstract
Received: 2025/10/24	The present study probed into the way Iranian EFL learners' experience of discomforting emotions evoked through AI-powered storytelling around the controversial topics helped to enact critical antiracist language pedagogy. The controversial topics revolved around individual, institutional, and epistemic forms of racism. Qualitative data were generated through Artificial Intelligence (AI)-storytelling products and post-intervention interviews. The analysis of the data through a hermeneutic lens led to the extraction of two themes: grounding consciousness and transcending racial inequalities. The participants mainly spoke of guilt, shame, fear, and anger reflecting their race-blindness, fragility, and lack of knowledge of the complexity and intersectionality of various identity categories leading to discriminatory practices. AI, used as a co-creator, helped to cultivate the participants' critical affective literacy and empower them to disrupt the frames that framed certain lives unlivable. Grounding consciousness formed by exposing blindness and stopping fragility underscored the possibility of de-silencing antiracism and practicing critical reflexivity in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). Transcending inequalities, which was composed of unmasking various forms of oppression and acknowledging the interrelated form of racism highlighted the value of epistemic balance in TESOL through de-simplifying and de-essentialising antiracism. Findings showed the role of human-AI interactions in decolonising TESOL and enacting the language pedagogy of discomfort.
Accepted: 2025/12/28	

Keywords: Critical antiracist language pedagogy, discomforting emotions, language pedagogy of discomfort

Cite this article: Ramezanzadeh, A. (2026). AI-generated discomforting emotions towards racism in TESOL classrooms: AI-powered storytelling as a space for critical antiracist language pedagogy. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, 13(2), 101–124.

DOI: [10.30479/jmrels.2025.22942.2576](https://doi.org/10.30479/jmrels.2025.22942.2576)

©2026 by the authors. Published by Imam Khomeini International University.

This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>



1. Introduction

One of the social justice-oriented issues in TESOL is antiracism, which has not received enough attention because the concept of racism “is often evaded” (Kubota, 2021, p. 237). Kubota asserted that English language teachers are not prepared enough for engaging learners in topics conveying various representations of racism due to their engagement in the discourse of colorblindness. Social justice-oriented topics are taboo topics in TESOL as they are considered “emotionally charged” (Şenbayrak & Ortaçtepe Hart, 2024, p. 24). However, focusing on neutral topics, as a dominant approach to English language education, led to the apolitical and ahistorical process of teaching, which overlooks local concerns of learners (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016). Addressing the growing interest in using AI in TESOL, Jiang (2024) introduced AI-generated storytelling as a novel possibility for enacting critical antiracist language pedagogy due to the affective and embodied dimensions of multimodal facilities.

Despite the recognised importance of addressing racism in TESOL and the emerging role of AI in education, there is a noticeable gap in research exploring how AI can be leveraged to facilitate critical antiracist pedagogy in English language education. Koh (2024) explored the way the incorporation of AI into critical pedagogy helps language learners to connect their daily life to the process of language learning. However, in their review study on the roles and foci of AI in language education, Liang et al. (2023) indicated that the reviewed studies mainly focused on the improvement of language skills of reading and writing or the development of vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, the cultivation of AI literacy and learning process based on students’ learning adaptability were explored (Gholami et al., 2025; Moulavinafchi, 2025). A systematic review conducted on the implementation of AI-generated storytelling in language learning indicated that the reviewed studies mainly focused on the enhancement of the four language skills (Lim et al., 2022) or delved into the psychological factors such as learner motivation and satisfaction or the sociolinguistic process of translanguaging. AI-generated storytelling around racism as a space for developing critical antiracist perspective in language classes, which is the main concern of the present study conducted in the context of Iran, has rarely received attention. Accordingly, in the present study, the current researcher specifically explored how AI-generated storytelling around the difficult issue of racism offers a space for enacting critical antiracist pedagogy, because it evokes discomfoting emotions that are “integral to questioning prevailing beliefs, societal norms, and discriminatory practices that uphold social injustices” (Jiang, 2024, p. 260).

Covering difficult issues such as racism helps to elicit language learners’ discomfoting emotions, which make them notice pains and take

actions to reduce pains. Despite the recognition of discomfort as a pedagogical tool to offer a possibility for critical antiracist language pedagogy, there is an unmet need for methodologies that integrate AI to systematically evoke and manage such discomfort in language learning environments. The current study aims to fill this gap by exploring AI-generated storytelling as a method to elicit discomforting emotions on racism in Iranian English language learners.

The present study sought to explore how pedagogy of AI-generated discomfort in language classes offers a space of critical antiracist pedagogy. To this end, a group of language learners was invited to engage in AI-generated storytelling about racism. The exploration of AI-generated discomfort as a means to engage learners with critical antiracist language pedagogy introduces a novel intersection of technology and critical antiracism in TESOL, a significantly underexplored area in the field. While Liang et al. (2023) highlighted the minimal focus on criticality within AI in TESOL, they did not provide insights into how AI can facilitate discussions on racism. This study seeks to bridge this gap by demonstrating how AI-generated content can serve as a catalyst for critical discussions on racism. The present study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are English language learners' discomforting emotional experiences of engaging in the AI-generated storytelling around practices of racism?
2. How do their discomforting emotions help to enact critical antiracist pedagogy?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Relevant Studies

2.1.1. *Digital Storytelling and Antiracism in Language Classes*

Reviewing the relevant studies on the use of digital storytelling in language classes to enact antiracist or socially-just practices shows that the existing literature is confined to two studies by Jiang in 2024 and 2025. Jiang (2024) delved into language learners' emotional trajectories through digital storytelling about social justice-oriented topics. She explored how digital storytelling through Vyond empowered learners to express their emotions about practices of injustice and enhanced their critical affective literacy. According to Anwaruddin (2016), critical affective literacy involves four main principles: a) examining the reasons for which we feel what we feel, b) trying to put ourselves in the oppressed individuals' shoes and imagining what it would feel like to experience similar situations, c) analysing the role emotions play in the politics of everydayness embedded in the socio-cultural contexts, and d) highlighting the transformative potential of emotions. Data sources involved audio-recordings of semi-structured interviews, classroom observations of multimodal composition processes, and the final AI-generated

storytelling products. The analysis of the data sources resulted in the extraction of three themes: a) Sadness perceived as an emotional action, b) empathy as an emotional action, and c) hope as an emotional action. Designing facial expression such as frowning or crying in their digital story characters, using various images or colours, and making use of sad music in their AI-generated storytelling, the participants highlighted the emotion of sadness to question the practices of injustice.

Jiang (2024) maintained that the emotion of sadness showed how the storytellers sought to challenge the legitimised practices, which disparage and silence particular groups of people. Storytellers in Jiang's study showed the sense of empathy or compassion with the silenced groups such as poor children with educational problems by using the bright and warm colours or bold fonts, indicating the seriousness of their antiracist practice. To show the value of hope as an emotional action, they used colour orange, as a symbol for sun-setting, to show that tomorrow opens a possibility for new beginnings. In Jiang's (2024) study, words, images, and various multimodal codes of communication were used by learners as storytellers to reveal and reflect on their experience of emotions of sadness, empathy, and hope.

In the second relevant study, by probing into the experiences of nine students from multilingual course, Jiang (2025) explored how translingual counter-storytelling about the linguistic racism through Vyond cultivated anti-racist translingual pedagogy. Data gathered involved semi-structured interviews, reflection essays, and the AI-generated storytelling products. The participants shared their perceptions of the translingual digital storytelling and talked about their feelings towards the translingual digital storytelling projects. Their digital storytelling entailed storyboards and digital videos through which they narrated their own stories about linguistic racism. Jiang (2025) analysed the generated data using thematic analysis. Three themes were extracted: linguistic racism through AI-generated storytelling, resisting inferiority complexes, and navigating the possibilities and challenges of AI-generated storytelling.

In their AI-generated stories, the participating learners portrayed their experiences of both explicit and implicit forms of linguistic racism. For example, using visual modes of communication, including the linguistic and cultural repertoire belonging to both their native language and the target language they were learning, they showed how they were mocked by native English-speaking classmates only because of the way they used the English language. In their stories, using diverse linguistic repertoires and cultural backgrounds, they showed how they wished to become near-native speakers, although, as their stories moved on, they shifted from the sense of inferiority towards the acknowledgement of the value of their own accent. On the one hand, they spoke of technical glitches. On the other hand, they indicated that

the multimodal atmosphere of AI-generated storytelling helped them to understand the value of translanguaging since they used both the English language and their mother tongue in a dialogical way to convey the true meaning of their experiences.

To complement the findings of the above-mentioned studies, the present study, carried out in the context of Iran, probed into the way AI-generated discomforting emotions through AI-generated storytelling around individual, institutional, and epistemic racism helped Iranian English language learners to engage in anti-racist practices. Enacting Antiracist language education through AI-generated discomforting emotions in the context of Iran can be a new possibility for transcending the existing boundaries between various groups of people since in the context of Iran, being Iranian is confined to being Persian, which results in silencing language, culture, and identity of various races (Rawls & Duck, 2020). Iran is composed of various races. A large number of foreigners, including the Afghans and Iraqis, live in Iran. Accordingly, carrying out a study to cultivate anti-racist pedagogy in the context of Iran is a possibility for peace building among people from various racial groups.

2.1.2. Language Pedagogy of Discomfort

Embracing the difficult issue of racism in TESOL to evoke discomforting emotions in learners is supported by pedagogy of discomfort as a framework formulated by Boler and Zembylas (2003), which encourages all learners to challenge the cherished presumptions creating hegemony. Pedagogy of discomfort is conceptualised as the process of engaging learners with various difficult issues by inviting them to leave their emotional comfort zone and freely express their discomforting emotions regarding the existing difficult issues (Boler & Zembylas, 2003). Porto and Zembylas (2020) maintained that difficult issues are issues such as racism or genocide that are formed based on various forms of violence. They acknowledged that “discomforting emotions are important in challenging dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain stereotypes and social injustice” (p. 360). In TESOL, pedagogy of discomfort has recently attracted the attention of scholars, who have focused on the role of arts and literature in creating linguistic and artistic representations of pains (Porto & Zembylas, 2020, 2024; Sun, 2023). Given the challenges and opportunities identified in implementing critical antiracist pedagogy in TESOL, the present study explored the innovative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to facilitate these critical conversations and reflections among learners. The innovative nature of digital education powered by artificial intelligence provides a possibility for probing into pedagogy of discomfort in a digital world in which emotion and criticality are dynamic constructs (Boler, 2015).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Critical antiracist language pedagogy put forward by Kubota (2021), which underscores the value of critical reflexivity and entails de-simplification, de-essentialisation, de-silence, and de-colonisation of antiracism, is regarded as the theoretical framework of the present study. This framework addresses three forms of racism, including individual, institutional, and epistemic racism. Underscoring the value of the cultivation of critical global citizenship, as the empowerment of critical learners to challenge unjust practices and structures in English language classes, Kubota (2021) asserted that language teachers should raise their learners' awareness of various forms of racism. Before elaborating on the meaning of critical antiracist pedagogy, she referred to three forms of racism: individual racism, institutional racism, and epistemic racism. In her theoretical framework, individual racism entails insulting behaviours observed in interpersonal relations, which address an individual person based on her subjective features. Individual racism, either explicit or implicit, involves aggressive and micro-aggressive behaviours, which are mainly represented in language learning atmosphere through linguistic racism, as an intersection between language, race, and inequality.

Sometimes, aggressive or micro-aggressive behaviours lead to the exclusion of particular groups based on the features such as language, culture, religion, or colour, resulting in institutional racism. Institutional racism is observed in the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of particular racial groups in various social and educational institutions. Epistemic racism involves biases in knowledge systems, which legitimise particular forms of knowing to give us a lens for interpreting the existing cultural and historical practices. Kubota (2020) explicated that epistemic racism in language education is observed in the production and reproduction of knowledge created by Euro-American scholars. This form of racism silences the scholars representing the Global South and marginalises non-native English speaking scholars, especially female scholars of colour.

Kubota (2021) maintained that we should de-simplify, de-essentialise, de-silence, and de-colonise antiracism to enact critical antiracist pedagogy. She indicated that we should exercise critical reflexivity. De-simplifying antiracism means going beyond respecting racial differences to deeply examine various representations of racism. Teachers and researchers should not confine racism to the aggressive or discriminatory behaviours at the individual level. As Kubota (2021) asserted, teachers and scholars should transcend "such a simplistic understanding of racism by acknowledging and problematizing multilayered manifestations of racism" (p. 241). Particularly referring to epistemic racism, Kubota (2020) argued that we should rethink our

citation practice and acknowledge the value of texts and materials produced by indigenous scholars in English language classes.

De-essentialising racism refers to the acknowledgement of this point that antiracism cannot solve all practices of injustice since various forms of inequality are related to gender, social class, religion, linguistic backgrounds, or ability/disability dichotomy. To enact critical antiracist pedagogy, language teachers should address the intersection of various factors such as gender, race, relation, and so on. Moreover, de-silencing racism entails the creation of a space of open discussion over racial issues in order to avoid reproducing the practices of injustice. The discourse of colour-blindness should be questioned by paying explicit attention to racial injustice. To de-colonise racism, as Lawrence and Dua (2005) stated, antiracist practices should transcend the experiences of the settlers of colour to deeply include the experiences of indigenous people.

Critical antiracist pedagogy is actualised through the enactment of critical reflexivity. On the one hand, exercising critical reflexivity involves the process of self-reflection through which the members of the silenced groups stop self-marginalisation and conformity to the norms and standards promoting the colonising discourse. On the other hand, critical reflexivity entails the awareness of members of the dominant group, including White Eurocentric groups, of the privilege attached to their race or other subjective features such as gender, religion, or nativeness.

3. Method

3.1. Design of the Study

The present research utilised a hermeneutic phenomenological research design. Tirumalesh (2019) introduced phenomenological studies as one of the qualitative research designs, which are carried out to describe a phenomenon that exists as a part of the world within which we live. In the present study, which mainly focused on the experience of antiracist practices, the researcher used Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology as a method for analysing the data, which moves from a whole to the individual parts and from the individual parts to the whole through a spiral process to deeply delve into the qualitative data set. Applying Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology, researchers are given the possibility to re-evaluate their misunderstanding since “misunderstandings are filtered out through the interplay of the whole and the parts in the hermeneutic circle” (Debesay et al., 2008, p. 58).

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study, selected through purposive sampling, included 11 female English language learners studying at one of the state universities in the West of Iran. All learners, participating in this project as one

of the activities considered for the course Reading Comprehension 2, were at the upper-intermediate level or B2 based on their scores (scores from 40 to 47) on an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and had participated in two workshops on AI-powered storytelling held by one of their university professors. They ranged in age from 20 to 25 and were allowed to use pseudonyms to observe confidentiality. The data were collected until saturation was reached after selecting the eleventh learner as one of the participants of this study. Moreover, as was asserted by Bartholomew et al. (2021), a sample chosen for carrying out a phenomenological study should be small enough to enable the researcher to delve into the participants' lived experiences and express their voices. Bartholomew et al. (2021) perceived saturation as a benchmark for rigor in qualitative study due to the enhancement of the validity of the findings.

3.3. Materials and Instruments

3.3.1. AI-Powered Storytelling Tasks

Data generation methods of this study included storytelling tasks and interviews conducted after learners' participation in storytelling tasks. Inspired by various stages of digital storytelling described by Nishioka in 2016, each AI-powered task involved the following stages:

- Several topics, addressing individual (e.g. hate speech against an individual), institutional (e.g. racism experienced by the religious minorities or the disabled in educational contexts), and epistemic racism (e.g. illegitimising the localised ways of knowing) conceptualised by Kubota (2021) were chosen. Then, the participants were invited to design their stories based on two sentences the current researcher gave them as prompts. Their AI-powered stories should have been narrated in English. However, they were allowed to use the native language, when they considered it as necessary.
- At the second stage, based on their story, the participants looked for multimedia devices such as images or artifacts, which could help them to convey their meanings. AI generated the relevant multimedia codes of communication, when participants entered their search input.
- Participants prepared an outline to elaborate on the sequence of their story. Storynest.ai involves a preview outline feature helping storytellers to develop their story characters by selecting character personality and choosing voice and tone relevant to the plot of their story.
- They formulated a storyboard through which they could visualise the events occurred in their story by describing the events and explicating the way different modes, such as audio information and photos, interacted.
- They revised their story.

3.3.2. *Semi-Structured Interviews*

After the process of AI-powered storytelling, each participant was interviewed. The participating learners were asked to share their experience of discomforting emotion as they engaged in the AI-generated storytelling. Each interview, carried out in the semi-structured format, lasted for about 50 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim after listening to the words on tape for three times. In the interviews, the learners were invited to narrate their discomforting emotional experiences in response to the prompts. Some of the interview prompts are presented below:

- The violence against an individual person due to her dialect.
- The violence against an individual person due to her race or religion
- The underrepresentation of some groups (such as religious minorities or the disabled) in educational and social activities.
- The positioning of the indigenous knowledge as inferior to the mainstream knowledge
- The marginalisation of the world Englishes

While prompts were formulated by using the English language, the learners had the possibility to use their native language in interviews. The current researcher undertook the back-translation procedure and used the final English version in the final report after reaching agreement with a colleague, who was an expert at translating texts from the Persian language into the English language.

3.4. Data Analysis

This study applied Gadamerian hermeneutics, following the two stages proposed by Fleming et al. (2003): gaining understanding through the dialogue with participants and gaining understanding through dialogue with texts. Gaining understanding through dialogue with participants involved the processes of generating data and revolved around storytelling tasks and post-implementation interviews. After completing storytelling tasks, the learners participated in post-implementation interviews through which they shared their emotional experiences of telling stories about racism.

Gaining understanding through dialogue with texts involved the process of the analysis of the generated data, which pursued the following four stages.

- 1) All interview transcripts and AI-powered storytelling products were examined as a whole. This stage entailed the process of immersion as the current researcher read through the interview transcripts and storyboards prepared by learners during their AI-powered storytelling tasks.
- 2) The next stage entailed the sentence-by-sentence thematic analysis of each interview transcript. With regard to the AI-powered storytelling products, the existing multimedia codes in each scene of the story were analysed.

The current researcher used a phrase or a concept as a code to represent the meaning of each interview sentence or each scene in the storytelling tasks. The participating learners' emotional experiences reflected in their interviews and stories were examined through the lens of critical antiracist pedagogy proposed by Kubota (2021). That is, a larger number of codes were identified. These codes were used to label segments of the data, which seemed to be relevant to the topic of enquiry. The coding process was carried out at the latent level, while codes were deductively chosen based on the theoretical framework of the study. The generated codes were then analysed based on their similarities and differences to be replaced by larger and more abstract categories. The identified categories, known as sub-themes, were analysed once more and were replaced by more abstract themes. The current researcher shared her interpretations and findings with the participants through the member-checking process, which was carried out through face-to-face interaction. The participants were invited to reflect on the accuracy of findings. After a month, the current researcher re-analysed the data once more. She calculated intra-rater reliability Cohen's kappa measure of agreement and the result was substantial (74%).

- 3) The identified themes and sub-themes were re-examined considering the meaning of the whole texts and storytelling products identified in the first stage. This stage, known as the hermeneutic circle, involved a movement from the parts to the whole story and helped the current researcher to elaborate on the themes and relate them to the core meaning of the whole interview transcripts or storytelling products.
- 4) In this stage, the current researcher identified extracts from the data set to be reported in the final version of her manuscript.

As was suggested by Shenton (2004), factors of trustworthiness, including confirmability, dependability, and credibility were established as follows: Triangulation or the use of two methods of data generation, including AI-generated storytelling tasks and semi-structured interviews, aimed to enhance confirmability or the degree of unbiasedness. Dependability was strengthened using triangulation and detailed description of the research process. Member checking process and peer scrutiny of the research were used to improve credibility.

3.5. The Positionality of the Researcher

The ambivalent insider positionality was formed by the current researcher's identity as a teacher and the stance she took as a female, studying and working in the context of Iran. As a teacher, she preferred to engage in the discourse of colour evasion to treat all learners equally by being blind to their differences based on various identity categories such as race, gender, colour,

or religion. However, as a female, she engaged in forming counter-discourses, shaping women as independent agents. Furthermore, living in the sanctioned war-ridden context of Iran, she practiced self-reflection on her previous self as a teacher being blind towards practices of injustice.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The analysis of the qualitative data resulted in the extraction of the two main themes: a) grounding consciousness, and b) transcending the racial inequalities. These two themes and their corresponding sub-themes (Table 1) are explicated further below:

Table 1

The Main Themes and Corresponding Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-theme 1	Sub-theme 2
Grounding consciousness	Exposing blindness	Stop being fragile
Transcending racial inequalities	Unmasking various forms of oppression	Acknowledging the interrelated form of oppression

4.1.1. Grounding Consciousness

The majority of the participants spoke of the discomforting emotions of shame and guilt. These two emotions offered them the possibility of becoming conscious of racist practices embedded in ignoring differences. Both shame and guilt are self-conscious emotions, enabling individuals to appraise their responses to the social practices (Tracy & Robins, 2011).

4.1.1.1. Exposing Blindness. The majority of participants spoke of the two emotions of shame and guilt. These two discomforting emotions mainly reflected their awareness of their race blindness. Before performing AI-powered storytelling tasks, they preferred to ignore differences. But AI-powered storytelling made them aware of the value of acknowledging differences to resist and transform practices of injustice. Mary, in her storytelling task, narrated the story of a girl named Zhaleh from a racial minority group, who was mocked by her classmates because of her accent and way of dressing. While in the narrated story, Zhaleh's teacher ignored Zhaleh's differences in the class to treat all students as equal persons, as the story moved on, she got aware of how Zhaleh was mocked because of her differences. Thus, Zhaleh's teacher tried to change her view and address differences as matters of

diversities among students. She decided to show Zhaleh's classmates how acknowledging differences can make the world more beautiful. In her interview, Mary shared her experience of discomfoting emotions evoked by the AI-powered storytelling task about Zhaleh as follows:

Zhaleh was mocked while her teacher overlooked her differences. Telling this story, I showed I am ashamed of the way I manage differences. I also tried to ignore differences to treat all individuals, including my friends, as equally as possible. But this is not the way we can establish equality. We need to talk about differences.

As the above-mentioned extract indicates, Mary felt shame over her blindness towards discriminatory behaviours rooted in ignoring differences. She stated that her blindness was an attempt made to treat all different persons as equal, although, in her AI-powered storytelling, she confessed that overlooking differences perpetuates discrimination. Accordingly, she portrayed other parts of her story as follows:

I created a change in the story. Zhaleh's teacher understood the situation and became courageous enough to talk about differences. AI helped me to express my emotions clearly. To show shame over neutrality towards racial differences, I utilised colour red or used this sentence as the subtitle, indicating how Zhaleh's teacher thought "*I regret decisions I've made in the past, ashamed of myself in the present*".

Mary maintained that AI helped her to express her emotions more clearly as she could use subtitles or captions, images, or various colours to create her storyboard, which mainly reflected the emotion of shame over the process of blindness. As Ullucci and Battey (2011) asserted, "undergraduates or graduates, practicing teachers or not, individual refrains remain of "I am color-blind" blend into a troubling chorus of "we don't see race" (p. 1196). Likewise, Noshin in her interview talked about the discomfoting emotions of shame and guilt she experienced through AI-powered storytelling. In her digital storytelling task, Noshin narrated a story of a girl named Rashil from a village who had problems in learning the English language because of her unfamiliarity with the concepts covered by the authentic materials used in the class. The girl was isolated as a person from the inferior position, who is not familiar with the cultural and even linguistic points (she had many problems in pronouncing English words because of mother tongue interference) covered in the class. Noshin indicated:

The topics chosen for storytelling made me search. I used the options offered by Storynest. The AI atmosphere gave me information about people from racial minorities. Previously, I preferred to be neutral

towards such situations because I believed all persons should work to improve regardless of their differences or limitations.

While Noshin spoke of the facilities provided by AI, she reflected on the stance she previously took towards the learners from minorities, who are silenced or isolated since their differences are regarded as points of weakness rather than being accepted. She talked about the two emotions of shame and guilt that changed her positionality towards marginalised groups of learners:

While in the real world, I ignored differences to observe equality or meritocracy, in my story I highlighted Rashil's differences for which she was marginalised. I realised the importance of respecting differences. I felt ashamed and guilty over my darkness. Emotions made me narrate the depth of her pains since I wanted to change my perspective.

Noshin believed that the two emotions of shame and guilt helped her to change her perspective. She regarded her blindness towards discriminations rooted in overlooking differences as the world of darkness and maintained that Storynest.ai offered new options about characters, settings, and plots that enhanced her knowledge of the marginalised people.

4.1.1.2. Stop Being Fragile. The second sub-theme was named *stop being fragile*, which reflects the participants' feeling of discomfort in discussing race-related issues. The majority of the participants talked about experiencing the emotions of guilt and fear, when engaged in AI-powered storytelling about race-related issues. In her interview, Sedigheh pointed out:

I felt guilty because, for a long time, I have avoided discussing topics related to the gender differences, race differences, or religious differences. I preferred to be silent because such topics are highly challenging and show us, we are responsible to others and we should act.

Sedigheh indicated that she felt guilty as she avoided discussing controversial topics addressing differences. She knew that argumentation over such topics necessitates the sense of accountability forcing her to leave her comfort zone of silence and indifference. With regard to the novel opportunity created by AI-powered storytelling, she stated:

AI-powered storytelling tasks helped me to speak about differences that cause discrimination. I designed sad and dark scenes when showing children from religious or racial minorities are deprived of education. The AI-based storytelling, integrating colours, designs, and words,

helped me to deal with my fear of facing controversial issues by designing stories.

As the extract mentioned above reveals, Sedigheh made use of the multimedia codes of communication offered by AI-powered storytelling process to deal with her fear of arguing over antiracial issues. She talked not only about the emotion of guilt but also the discomfoting emotion of fear. In a similar vein, Mahin referred to the emotion of fear that made her fragile. She preferred not to talk about racist issues as arguing over such issues forced her to leave the comfort zone, which she defined as a prison formed by the emotion of fear:

In storytelling through AI, I could talk about groups of people who are treated unfairly. I talked about Kurds as members of a particular racial group who are deprived of job opportunities. I prefer not to talk about such groups since I do not like to challenge my neutral world. In neutrality, I am a prisoner in a comfort prison of fear.

Elaborating on the role of AI-powered storytelling in enhancing her awareness of her inaction and empowering her to leave the comfort zone of silence and indifference rooted in fragility, Mahin argued:

Here, information offered by AI, the photos, and the ability to use music and colours helped me to leave the secure world of silence to challenge myself and narrate the story of oppression to get rid of my emotions of guilt and fear.

The multimedia codes of communication assisted Mahin to go beyond her fear and narrate stories of oppression and discrimination by creating a storyboard and imaginary characters.

4.1.2. Transcending Racial Inequalities

The participants stated that AI-powered storytelling offered them information and options for characters, settings, and plots. Interactive storytelling with AI made them aware of various forms of oppression as well as the intersectionality of multiple forms of racism.

4.1.2.1. Unmasking Various Forms of Oppression. AI-powered storytelling created a novel possibility for participating learners to get aware of various forms of oppression. In her interview, Samaneh indicated that she narrated the story of a girl named Sara learning English in an English speaking country. In her story, Sara was mocked by her classmates in that English speaking country because of the way she perceived the world or the way she tried to learn the English language. Those persons who mocked Sara considered Sara's standpoint as inferior. Samaneh explained that she was angry

and felt guilty after narrating such a story using information and options offered by AI, since she was not aware of such a form of racism and played a role in sustaining such a form of oppression by forcing other people to think, act, and behave based on standards or clichés. She made mention of her past self and pointed out:

The topic chosen by our teacher and the options presented by Storynest for characters and settings showed me that I was not aware of various forms of racism. I feel guilty and am angry at my past self because of my ignorance. I had a role in sustaining inequalities because I was not aware of various forms of racism.

Samanah talked about her understanding of the form of racism rooted in marginalising indigenous knowledge, known as epistemic racism. She stated that she felt ashamed of herself because of her ignorance and storytelling with the help of AI made her aware of various forms of racist practices:

In English language classes in Iran, we read books written by native speakers and forget ourselves to be like Westerners. We belittle how we think, how we dress, and how we perceive the world. I didn't know that this is a form of racism. I learned this point from AI and I am ashamed of my ignorance.

Likewise, Marzieh talked about the marginalisation of the non-standard form of knowing, which results in silencing people, who do not conform to the mainstream ways of knowing. She indicated:

I narrated the story of a girl who was forced by others to pronounce words like native speakers. She was ridiculed for her accent. She was gradually silenced. This story was my bitter story. Now, based on the information and options offered by AI, I know that this is a form of racism and I am ashamed and angry because of my lack of knowledge.

Similar to Samaneh and Marzieh, Homeyra shared her experience of the discomforting emotion of shame. She felt ashamed of her lack of knowledge of various forms of racism through which particular groups of people are belittled. In her interview, she maintained:

I feel ashamed of my ignorance of the way belittling other people's ways of knowing the world through their customs and values can cause discrimination.

4.1.2.2. Acknowledging the Interrelated Form of Oppression. Some of the participants made mention of the intersectionality of various forms of racism. Noshin shared her discomforting emotion of guilt elicited due to her lack of knowledge of the intersectionality of multiple forms of racism:

AI offered me images and information about the disabled people from minorities and their educational problems. I used the new data to tell a story of a blind girl from a racial minority. I felt guilty as one of the persons being ignorant to the discrimination faced by persons who are not only disabled but also from racial or religious minorities.

In the above-mentioned extract, Noshin spoke of the intersectionality of various forms of injustice and discrimination such as racism and disablism. As Kubota (2020) argues, antiracism requires the acknowledgement of the way various forms of identity categories intersect with each other. In a similar vein, Nasim described a story about a girl, who was mocked not only for her pronunciation but also for her different behaviour as a girl from one of the traditional provinces in Iran. Her story reflected the intersectionality of gender bias and racial discrimination. She explicated:

I told a story about a girl from Sistan and Baluchestan. This girl was mocked because of her pronunciation. She was harassed as a girl from a racial minority with particular rules about girls. I had such friends. But I always treated them like others and was silent about their differences. So, my story made me feel ashamed of myself and feel guilty of my inaction.

Nasim shared the discomfoting emotions of guilt and shame she felt because of her inaction towards the discrimination females from racial minorities experienced. In her story, she made mention of the intersectionality of the two identity categories of gender and race, which exacerbated the situation for the character she portrayed in her digital storytelling.

4.2. Discussion

While sadness was one of the discomfoting emotions mentioned in Jiang's (2024) study, in the present study, the majority of participants referred to the experience of shame, guilt, fear, and anger. However, similar to the findings reported in Jiang's studies in 2024 and 2025, the findings of the current study indicated that the possibility of using various communication codes such as texts, images, and audio-visual materials to express the discomfoting emotions empowered the participants to reflect on and question discriminatory practices. Some of the participants made mention of the emotion of fear, which resulted in the lived experience of being fragile as they avoided arguing over race-related issues. As Zembylas (2012) asserted, "fear produces fearful subjects in relation to fearsome others and secures the very boundaries between us and them" (p. 197). Fear was a boundary between our participants and those faced with racist behaviours. But, AI-powered storytelling helped them to embrace and reflect on their fear by designing

imaginary characters and settings. The majority of participants spoke of the two emotions of shame and guilt. As Zembylas (2019) pointed out, shame entails the process of witnessing a discriminatory practice, when the witness is unable to change the situation. Nonetheless, Zembylas (2019) argued that witnessing is “an act of seeing and perceiving that produces a responsibility to an event” (p. 304). Reflecting on their positioning as witnesses to racist practices, as the possibility created through the interactive storytelling with the help of AI, the participating learners could critically examine their taken-for-granted assumptions of themselves and others. They became conscious of being wrong and experienced the affective effect of shame, which “holds potential for transformation” (Costandius & Alexander, 2019, p. 3). Costandius and Alexander (2019) maintained that becoming conscious of being wrong through the experience of shame cultivates critical citizenship in learners because they are allowed to critically reflect on their past and transform the existing situation by changing their positioning from being a witness to being an agent. Shame and guilt are paired together and “in the course of moral development shame should yield to guilt” (Zembylas, 2008, p. 266). Anger is defined as an emotional possibility, which empowers the oppressed groups to acknowledge and express the reasons of their anger in a courageous way to make the oppressors aware of their sufferings (Zembylas, 2023).

Critically reflecting on discomforting emotions, instead of suppressing such emotions, enables individuals to leave their comfort zone to face the discomforting realities (Song, 2025). And, the AI-powered storytelling empowered participants to face the discomforting practice of oppression and injustice. In line with the findings of the study by Jiang (2024), AI-powered storytelling cultivated participants’ critical affective literacy since they were allowed to examine why they feel what they feel (guilt, shame, fear, and anger), could stand in others’ shoes by creating imaginary characters and designing storyboards, and found the space to enact emotional acts as transformative acts to resist the practices of injustice. AI-powered storytelling promoted the enactment of critical antiracist language pedagogy through de-silencing racism and practicing critical reflexivity.

Analysing learners’ discomforting emotions through the lens of critical antiracist practices led to the identification of two themes. The first key theme was grounding consciousness formed by ‘exposing blindness’ and ‘stop being fragile’. In line with the participants of the study by Jiang (2025), the participants of the current study talked about the experience with mockery, the experience with linguistic stereotyping, and the experience with the sense of inferiority. In Jiang’s (2025) study, the narrators of counter-storytelling tasks moved from the sense of inferiority towards the acknowledgement of differences.

In the current study, the participants moved from blindness and fragility as their past responses to the sense of inferiority or experience of racism felt by the oppressed towards self-reflexivity and the improvement of their knowledge of racist practices. Blindness may be practiced to minimise racism. But, in reality, “blindness contributes to a collective ignorance and relieves individuals from fighting against the impact of racism” (Ullucci & Battey, 2011, p. 1196). Practicing blindness, those belonging to the dominant groups seek to preserve their supremacy, which hinders the process of unlearning racism (Pirtle, 2025). In TESOL, challenging the oppressive discourse of white supremacy represented in native-speakerism, linguisticism, and monoculturalism requires disrupting the process of blindness (Viesca & Gray, 2021). White supremacy is a process used to “eliminate negatively racialised and language-minoritised communities, through mechanisms of Western settler-colonial hegemony and English language teaching” (Stinson & Migliarini, 2023, p. 201). However, disrupting the oppressive discourse of racism requires enacting decolonising teaching practices revolving around the deep examination of racialised language practices.

Decolonising teaching practices entails a critical dialogue between the global knowledge and local knowledge, culture, and ways of being through which whiteness is dissociated from English and local ways of knowing and being are legitimised (Ali & Salam-Salmaoui, 2024). Fragility or being afraid to talk about race-related issues reflects language teachers’ and learners’ tendency to be represented as members of the group of good individuals, which is founded on the wrong assumption, indicating that just bad individuals talk about race and good individuals are silent since they are not racist (DiAngelo, 2018). However, race is one of the important categories shaping language teachers’ and learners’ identity and should be discussed in TESOL classes. Enhancing consciousness of race in TESOL classes requires open discussions about race, the improvement of learners’ knowledge of race-related issues, and the use of instructional practices that address racial issues (Milner, 2003). In the present study, the AI-powered storytelling offered a novel space to freely talk about race-related issues, which is defined by Kubota (2020) as desilencing racism. Participants could critically reflect on their blindness and fragility.

The second theme was named transcending racial inequalities and consisted of the two sub-themes: a) unmasking various forms of oppression, and b) acknowledging the interrelated form of oppression. The participants indicated that Storynest.ai provided them with new information about various forms of racism, including the epistemic racism, or what they defined as the marginalisation of the indigenous knowledge. In agreement with the findings reported in the study by Jiang (2025), our participants spoke of the sense of inferiority and the experience of being mocked reflected in their stories about

characters outside the circle of native speakers representing Eurocentric knowledge. That is, besides individual and linguistic forms of racism, they talked about epistemic racism. According to Ntloedibe (2025), the dominance of the global knowledge through the de-legitimisation of the indigenous cultures, identities, histories, or ways of knowing results in “systematic marginalisation of non-Western epistemologies” (p. 2). Ntloedibe maintained that decolonising education necessitates the epistemic balance to be formed through the dialogue between global knowledge revolving around Eurocentric knowledge and local or indigenous knowledge. AI-powered storytelling offered a space for simplifying anti-racism by empowering storytellers to narrate and examine various forms of racism. Storynest.ai created an atmosphere for interactive stories and helped storytellers to portray richer characters by choosing from the suggested options. Using Storynest.ai, learners could narrate interactive stories based on their preferences as they entered into dialogues with AI. The participants referred to the intersectionality of identity categories such as race, disability, and gender, which underscores the value of de-essentialising racism and reveals the complexity of oppression caused by various identity factors. This point is highly important in the current discourse of neoliberal higher education systems, affecting English language education, which is structured by hegemonic Whiteness, racialised gendered inequities, and coloniality of Eurocentric knowledge (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2016).

5. Conclusion and Implications

The present study probed into the role AI-powered storytelling could play in enacting the critical antiracist pedagogy in language classes. Findings showed the value of discomforting emotions in enhancing learners’ critical affective literacy, through de-simplifying, de-silencing, and de-essentialising anti-racism. Findings called for an affective turn as a necessity to enact critical antiracist language pedagogy. Participants believed that AI-powered storytelling empowered them to analyse why they feel what they feel, enabled them to put themselves in another’s shoes, and helped them to acknowledge the transformative power of emotions. Reflecting on their discomforting emotions evoked through digital storytelling, they deeply delved into “the importance of disrupting the frames that frame certain lives as livable and their loss as grievable, while rendering other lives as nonlivable and thus nongrievable” (Anwaruddin, 2016, p. 395).

In the present study, AI-generated storytelling tasks made language learners aware of human sufferings and practices of injustice. In their stories, they sought to challenge the practice of inequalities and act for justice. As Porto and Zembylas (2020) acknowledged, sensitising language learners about human pains empowers them to act as accountable global citizens since a

discourse of solidarity, empathy, and inclusion is created. Porto and Zembylas (2020) believed that such a discourse of empathy and inclusion reconceptualises English language education as the process of the cultivation of intercultural citizenship and offers spaces for “fostering political, ethical, and social justice responsibilities for changing socially unjust societies” (p.356).

The present study was conducted in the context of Iran, as a country in the Middle East. Iran is one of the countries that accept a large group of refugee populations, including Afghans and Iraqi Kurds (Tober, 2007). Accordingly, the intersectionality of various identity categories in shaping practices of oppression needs to be acknowledged in such a context. However, conducting a similar study in other socio-cultural contexts seems to be insightful. As the current study addressed English language education in which the dominant discourse of native-speakerism, mono-culturalism, and linguisticism is formed by the superiority of Eurocentric knowledge, carrying out a similar study comparing various disciplines can deepen our understanding of various forms of racism. The scope of the present study was delimited to a group of female learners. Further studies on a diverse group of participants, including both female and male learners, are suggested to transcend the identity category of gender. Researchers can also address AI-generated counter-storytelling as a new possibility for sharing counter-discourses or alternative narratives, cultivating social justice awareness, and building peace in and through English language education.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the valuable contributions of the learners in the present study, whose presence helped me to enrich my understanding of antiracist critical pedagogy, as a shift towards the enactment of sustainable peace.

References

- Ali, R., & Salam-Salmaoui, R. (2024). Whiteness as currency: Exploring racial ideologies in Pakistan's English language teaching sphere. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 128, Article e102483. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2024.102483>
- Anwaruddin, S. M. (2016). Why critical literacy should turn to 'the affective turn': Making a case for critical affective literacy. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 37(3), 381–396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1042429>
- Bartholomew, T. T., Joy, E. E., Kang, E., & Brown, J. (2021). A choir or cacophony? Sample sizes and quality of conveying participants' voices in phenomenological research. *Methodological Innovations*, 14(2), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/205979912111040063>
- Boler, M. (2015). Feminist politics of emotions and critical digital pedagogies: A call to action. *PMLA*, 130(5), 1489-1496. <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2015.130.5.1489>
- Boler, M., & Zembylas, M. (2003). Discomforting truths: The emotional terrain of understanding difference. In P. P. Trifonas (Eds.), *Pedagogies of difference* (pp. 107-130). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203465547-9>
- Costandius, E., & Alexander, N. (2019). Exploring shame and pedagogies of discomfort in critical citizenship education. *Transformation in Higher Education*, 4(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/the.v4i0.73>
- Debesay, J., Nåden, D., & Slettebø, Å. (2008). How do we close the hermeneutic circle? A Gadamerian approach to justification in interpretation in qualitative studies. *Nursing Inquiry*, 15(1), 57-66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1800.2008.00390.x>
- DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it is so hard for White people to talk about racism*. Beacon Press.
- Fleming, V., Gaidys, U., & Robb, Y. (2003). Hermeneutic research in nursing: Developing a Gadamerian-based research method. *Nursing Inquiry*, 10(2), 113-120. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1046/j.1440-18002003.00163.x>
- Gholami, A., Ahmadi, S., & Taheri, H. (2025). Chatbots and speaking performance of EFL learners with high and low levels of learning adaptability: Effects and percepts. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, 12(3), 179-212. <https://doi.org/10.30479/jmrels.2025.21495.2475>
- Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, E. (2016). Sensing dispossession: Women and gender studies between institutional racism and migration control policies in the neoliberal university. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 54, 167-177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2015.06.013>

- Jeyaraj, J., & Harland, T. (2016). Teaching with critical pedagogy in ELT: The problems of indoctrination and risk. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 24(4), 587-598. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2016.1196722>
- Jiang, J. (2024). Emotions are what will draw people in: A study of critical affective literacy through digital storytelling. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 67(4), 253-263. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1322>
- Jiang, J. (2025). Reimagining anti-racist translingual pedagogy through multilingual international students' digital counter-storytelling practices. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 28(2), 150-166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2024.2412169>
- Koh, J. (2024). Critical digital pedagogy: A collaborative teaching approach. In M. M. Asad, P. P. Churi, F. Sherwani, & R. B. Hassan (Eds.), *Innovative pedagogical practices for higher education 4.0* (pp. 320-332). CRC Press. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003400691>
- Kubota, R. (2020). Confronting epistemological racism, decolonizing scholarly knowledge: Race and gender in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 41(5), 712-732. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amz033>
- Kubota, R. (2021). Critical antiracist pedagogy in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 75(3), 237-246. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccab015>
- Lawrence, B., & Dua, E. (2005). Decolonizing antiracism. *Social Justice*, 32(4), 120-143. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768340>
- Liang, J. C., Hwang, G. J., Chen, M. R. A., & Darmawansah, D. (2023). Roles and research foci of artificial intelligence in language education: An integrated bibliographic analysis and systematic review approach. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 31(7), 4270-4296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2021.1958348>
- Lim, N. Z. L., Zakaria, A., & Aryadoust, V. (2022). A systematic review of digital storytelling in language learning in adolescents and adults. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(5), 6125-6155. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10861-0>
- Milner, H. R. (2003). Reflection, racial competence, and critical pedagogy: How do we prepare pre-service teachers to pose tough questions? *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 6(2), 193-208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320308200>
- Moulavinafchi, A. (2025). Exploring AI literacy and perception: Insights from Iranian EFL researchers. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, 12(4), 19-52. <https://doi.org/10.30479/jmrels.2025.21412.2465>

- Nishioka, H. (2016). Analysing language development in a collaborative digital storytelling project: Sociocultural perspectives. *System*, 62, 39-52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2016.07.001>
- Ntloedibe, F. N. (2025). Unmasking the Western canon: Decolonization of the curriculum as an epistemological balance of knowledge systems. *African Identities*, 23(4), 1485–1501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2024.2444992>
- Pirtle, W. (2025). Perpetuating racism through claims of unlearning—A “colorblind tool”. *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*, 54(2), 105-108. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00943061241311409b>
- Porto, M., & Zembylas, M. (2020). Pedagogies of discomfort in foreign language education: Cultivating empathy and solidarity using art and literature. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 20(4), 356-374. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2020.1740244>
- Porto, M., & Zembylas, M. (2024). Pedagogies of discomfort in the world language classroom: Ethical tensions and considerations for educators. *The Modern Language Journal*, 108(2), 412-429. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12919>
- Rawls, A.W. & Duck, W. (2020). *Tacit racism*. University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226703725/html>
- Şenbayrak, M., & Ortaçtepe Hart, D. (2024). Exploring social justice dialogues in EFL conversation clubs: Discursive moves and affordances. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 37(3), 327-342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2024.2339316>
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63-75. <https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201>
- Song, J. (2025). Pedagogizing the affective dimension of language teacher identity through critical emotional reflexivity. *RELC Journal*, 56(1), 138-150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882251318469>
- Stinson, C., & Migliarini, V. (2023). Race had never been an issue: Examining white supremacy in English language teaching. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 44(2), 201-219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2022.2145933>
- Sun, L. (2023). Pedagogies of discomfort and empathy in foreign language education: Fostering EFL learners' critical global thinking through literature and art. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 50, Article e101411. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101411>
- Tirumalesh, M. (2019). Conceptual framework on qualitative research design. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(2), 621-624. <https://doi.org/10.25215/0702.075>

- Tober, D. (2007). "My body is broken like my country": Identity, nation, and repatriation among Afghan Refugees in Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 40(2), 263-285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210860701269584>
- Tracy, J. L., & Robins, R. W. (2011). Self-conscious emotions: Where self and emotion meet. In C. Sedikides & S. J. Spencer (Eds.), *The self* (pp. 187-209). Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203818572>
- Ullucci, K., & Battey, D. (2011). Exposing color blindness/grounding color consciousness: Challenges for teacher education. *Urban Education*, 46(6), 1195-1225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085911413150>
- Viesca, K. M., & Gray, T. (2021). Disrupting evasion pedagogies. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 20(3), 213-220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2021.1893173>
- Zembylas, M. (2008). The politics of shame in intercultural education. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 3(3), 263-280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197908095135>
- Zembylas, M. (2012). The politics of fear and empathy: Emotional ambivalence in 'host' children and youth discourses about migrants in Cyprus. *Intercultural Education*, 23(3), 195-208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2012.701426>
- Zembylas, M. (2019). "Shame at being human" as a transformative political concept and praxis: Pedagogical possibilities. *Feminism & Psychology*, 29(2), 303-321. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353518754592>
- Zembylas, M. (2023). Political anger, affective injustice, and civic education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 57(6), 1176-1192. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopedu/qhad073>