Critical language teacher education: A duoethnography of teacher educators'

identities and agency

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to describe the identity and agency of two teacher educators who explored critical language teacher education by following a comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) approach and a gender perspective in their English language teaching methodology modules. The study adopted a duoethnographic approach through which the two teacher educators (based in Argentina and Germany respectively) reflected on their practice by maintaining regular Zoom meetings and a shared online document for written dialogue. In the duoethnography, the teacher educators concentrated on describing and reflecting on their motivations to embrace CSE through a critical view of education and how these motivations impacted on the design and delivery of their modules. In addition, they reflected on their identity and agency to identify what aspects of their professional selves acted as conducive factors. Findings show that the teacher educators' sense of social justice and responsibility exerted a pivotal role on their agency and identity as critical language teacher educators.

Keywords

duoethnography; teacher educator; critical language teacher education; teacher agency; teacher identity

1. Introduction

English language teacher education (ELTE) programmes sometimes adopt critical pedagogy to develop context-sensitive and inclusive pedagogies that disrupt hegemonic paradigms

(Hall, 2016; Kiely, 2019; López-Gopar, 2019; Okan, 2019; Zeichner, 2009, 2011). Aligned with a social justice and inclusive educational perspective, addressing gender diversity has gained traction in ELTE (e.g., Banegas, Jacovkis, & Romiti, 2020; Evripidou, 2018; Paiz, 2019; Widodo & Elyas, 2020). Often, the notion of gender diversity through comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is employed both across the curriculum or as national policy as it is the case of Argentina (Banegas, 2020). It may suffice to conceptualise CSE as curriculum- and rights-based education that aims at providing learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will enable them to develop a positive view of their sexuality, in the context of their emotional and social development (Cossu & Brun, in press; UNESCO, 2018).

While there are studies which explore the provision of a gender perspective in CSE in ELTE (e.g., Banegas et al., 2020; Mojica & Castañeda-Peña, 2017; Pakuła, Pawelczyk, & Sunderland, 2015), there is a paucity of studies on the experiences of ELTE teacher educators who agentively include CSE elements in their modules in their orientation towards critical language education. Thus, the aim of this duoethnography is to navigate our professional experiences as ELTE teacher educators based in Argentina and Germany who combined CSE and a gender perspective with critical language teacher education for socially just language teacher education. The lens is calibrated to examine our teacher educator identity and agency in incorporating CSE.

The article follows the "natural history" (Silverman, 2017, p. 457), i.e., the chronological order, of our duoethnography. First, the concepts of critical language teacher education, teacher identity, and teacher agency are discussed. Second, duoethnography as the selected research framework is described. The findings are organised following inductive coding of our dialogue-generated data (Sections 4.1-4.3) and follow-up conversations in which we reflected on identity and agency drawing on Gao's (2017) framework for understanding language teacher educators' identity. Such a framework is briefly described in Section 4.4, as it was later in our duoethnographic journey that we decided to reflect on our practice under a framework that would help us conflate teacher educator identity and agency in critical language teacher education.

2. Conceptual background

2.1 Critical language (teacher) education

Scholars in language teaching have discussed the necessity of promoting a critical and reflective attitude about hegemonic norms and practices (de Costa & Norton, 2017; Gray, 2019; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). A critical approach to language teacher education is often discussed (and implemented) as a conceptual background to raise critical awareness of power structures, social inequality, discriminatory practices, and potentials for transformation (Akbari, 2008; Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Norton, 2005; Pennycook, 2004). Abednia (2012), for instance, integrates critical pedagogy principles into a teacher education programme. These can be based on a Freirean approach to help student-teachers develop an empowering view of language teaching and learning. Freire (2006) has had a distinct influence on critical pedagogy through his criticism of both a banking model of education and dehumanisation of teaching, and his commitment to reducing social inequality by raising critical awareness among teachers and learners.

In tandem with the implementation of critical issues (e.g., CSE, class, race, ideologies) into language teaching (Crookes, 2013), critical language teacher education must address student-teachers' biographical situatedness, their language learners' background, and their transformation from a learner identity to a teacher identity (Gerlach & Fasching-Varner, 2020; Hawkins & Norton, 2009). Critical language teacher education must therefore be based on teacher educators' discursive practice and the normative incentive to change society for the better (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Norton, 2005; Pennycook, 2004). Sharma and Phyak (2017) show how critical awareness in English language teachers can be developed through the implementation of critical materials development, interaction, and dialogue with in-service teachers. Notwithstanding, they argue that any teacher education programme must create spaces that enable both student-teachers and teacher educators to articulate "dialogic engagement with tensions between dominant and alternative ideologies"

(p. 228) first in order to critically reflect teacher knowledge, philosophies, practices, identity, and agency.

2.2 Language teacher (educator) identity

Language teacher identity (LTI) research has grown exponentially in the last twenty years (Barkhuizen, 2017; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Kayi-Aydar, 2019). Part of LTI is a sense of self and the reflection of that self against one's own biography and a normative expectation of what an ideal language teacher might be like (e.g., Farrell, 2011). The other part is its social construction as "teacher identities are also positioned within particular sociocultural contexts embedded with both explicitly and implicitly expressed values" (Golombek, 2017, p. 19) and, therefore, has transformative, agentive, and advocacy-oriented goals (Fairley, 2020).

Based on a sociocultural and in-context view of language learning (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2019), the shaping of an LTI can be achieved through written narrative inquiry (Mendieta & Barkhuizen, 2020; Tsui, 2007) or oral dialogue (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Gee, 2000). It is in this form of doing identity (Barkhuizen, 2011) that LTIs become text as a result of engaging in narrative inquiry or duoethnography. The resulting texts (as transcriptions or raw written data) might then be interpreted as part of an individual-in-context's professional development process or reconstructed as part of research (Hawkins & Norton, 2009). Studies on how LTI can be developed in a transformative and agentive way still presents a gap, although some case studies and a recent competencies-based approach by Fairley (2020) offer some first insights into principles of such an endeavour. Fairley (2020) identifies four competencies as crucial for LTI development, "critical reflexivity, emotional literacy, collaboration, and responsiveness" (p. 9), and provides examples of how to address these through teacher education programmes (e.g., narrative writing and artistic exploration activities, dialogic reflexive activities, action research, and self-study).

Teacher educators are professionals interested in monitoring and developing their student-teachers' LTI as well as their own. Teacher educators themselves have developed an LTI which may be contested by structural/institutional, curricular, and systematic

constraints and demands (Swennen, Jones, & Volman, 2010). In addition, professional development opportunities for teacher educators or their identities are still scarce (Loughran, 2014; MacPhail et al., 2019) despite them being "at the core of good teacher education" (Vloet & van Swet, 2010, p. 149; see also Loughran, 2006). Research into teacher educators' institutional responsibilities and roles often uses identity and narrative inquiry as a gateway to help reconstruct practices, knowledge, and beliefs (Izadinia, 2014; Swennen et al., 2010), especially for the transformation from "first-order teaching" working with learners in school to "second-order teaching" (Loughran, 2014) educating future first-order practitioners. Smith (2017), van der Klink et al. (2017), and MacPhail et al. (2019) emphasise the (necessary) personal motivation of teacher educators to develop and self-initiate professional development.

In a recent study, Peercy et al. (2019) explored their own TESOL teacher educators' identities based on self-reflection through shared narrative inquiry. Their insights reveal similarities regarding their interpretation of (critical) language pedagogy but only through their exchange they became aware of their (multiple) teacher educators' identities. Despite these new directions, research on teacher educators highlights the continuing gap due to diverse and changing contexts. Moreover, there is little knowledge about this group of professionals in specific subjects such as ELTE or with a specific subject matter such as CSE (Gerlach, 2020) and how their language teacher identity shapes and is shaped by agency, another potent construct in the understanding of teachers' professional trajectories.

2.3 Language teacher (educator) agency

Teacher agency is an influential factor in teacher identity and a constitutive element of teacher practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2019; Miller & Gkonou, 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016) which can orient teachers towards inclusive and socially just pedagogy (Pantić, 2015, 2017; Pantić & Florian, 2015). In language teacher education, agency may be defined as teachers' dialogical and relational sense of progression towards their professional goals, and it includes teachers' capacity to plan and direct change through regulated actions

(Gurney & Liyanage, 2016; Miller & Gkonou, 2018). Possessing and maximising agency enables teachers and teacher educators to develop a strong sense of empowerment, which impacts on their professional identity as capable and autonomous educators who act deliberately to enact change (Hökkä, Vähäsantanen, & Mahlakaarto, 2017; Vähäsantanen, 2015). Hence, teacher identity and teacher agency operate in a synergistic space of mutual influence as teachers' awareness of agency strengthens their identity as independent professionals, which in turn strengthens their capacity for further agency.

Teacher agency has been the object of several studies in the field of second language education (e.g., Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Kayi-Aydar, Gao, Miller, Varghese, & Vitanova, 2019; Vitanova, 2018). For example, Leal and Crookes (2018) investigated the agency of a queer language teacher by means of interviews. The authors conclude that conducive institutional conditions and the teacher's own awareness of her identity, tensions, and agency led her to exercise agency and raise an awareness about discriminatory practices among her students.

Two publications are of particular interest to us given their dialogic perspective to examine teacher agency. Although they employ dialogic inquiry to understand participants' agency, in the present study we employ duoethnography to examine our own agency and identity. Through narrative inquiry, Vitanova (2018) explored the personal and professional agency of three masters TESOL students with different backgrounds. Drawing on written/digital narratives and interviews, the study shows that individual aspects such as race, gender, and ethnicity play a pivotal role in the construction of teacher agency. The author adds that when teachers become aware of their own as well as others' identity and the need to develop inclusive practices, they are driven to exert their agency to develop socially just language education pedagogy.

Framed in collaborative action research for continuing professional development, Wallen and Tormey (2019) engaged a group of six language teachers in dialogic inquiry. The aim of the study was to enhance the teachers' pedagogical skills and sense of agency by helping them recognise their own professional knowledge and teaching experience. Findings

showed that the meetings enabled the teachers to reimagine their role as autonomous and agentive educators who could draw on their own professional capital to move further and exercise change.

While the studies reviewed on critical language education, teacher identity, and teacher agency provide sobering evidence of the need to recognise, monitor, and enhance educators' awareness of their selves and potentiality, little research exists on ELTE teacher educators' identity and agency framed in critical language teacher education with a focus on a gender perspective. Against this background, this duoethnography seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do teacher educators in different contexts construct CLTE employing a gender perspective/CSE in delivering their modules?

2. How do teacher educators become aware of, monitor, and expand their identity and agency by enacting ELTE from a critical pedagogy stance?

3. Methodology

Duoethnography is a qualitative research approach through which two or more individuals (usually researchers themselves) engage in dialogue to compare and contrast their lived experiences on a common phenomenon (Norris, 2008; Norris & Sawyer, 2012a, b). As a research approach, it is placed within ethnography, which could be minimally defined as someone's observation of and experience with a social phenomenon in a specific community (Mills & Morton, 2013). In duoethnographic research, the individuals are the sites of their own study, i.e., the researchers and the researched. In this study, we are those two individuals being the researchers and the researched, and as any ethnographic research, it is small in scale and bound to specific settings (Starfield, 2020). Following the tenets posited by Norris and Sawyer (2012a), duoethnography seeks to articulate dialogue-based research. Data may be presented as conversation (e.g., Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016) or extracts/narratives (e.g., Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018) where individual voices are explicit and unique to a shared phenomenon. Duoethnography allows researchers to construct

situated and thick descriptions of their lived experiences as it provides dialogue-based accounts of how they make sense of their (re)creation of experience within "enculturating discourses" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012b, p. 290).

In (language) education, the literature offers recent examples of authors utilising duoethnography to understand complex aspects such as student-teachers' trajectories in pre-service teacher education (Breault, 2017), teacher educators' understanding of professionalism (Sebok & Woods, 2016), nativespeakerism (Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016), reflective practice through art (Chien & Yang, 2019), teacher identity (Lawrence & Nagashima, 2020), English language reflective teacher education (Smart & Cook, 2020), teaching English as an international language (Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018), and content and language integrated learning (Banegas & del Pozo Beamud, 2020). These authors concur that duoethnography helps represent in-depth reflexivity and understand identity *in interaction* (Vygotsky, 1978) because new knowledge emerges as a result of an intentional conversation between two individuals who juxtapose their lived histories to create a richer third space.

In this study, dialogue became the primary source of data. Dialogue took two forms: oral and written. In total, we had eight two-hour Zoom meetings over the course of four months. At the same time, we engaged in written conversation by means of a shared Word document in which we included some initial questions (Appendix A) to trigger interaction as we responded to each other's contributions. We included follow-up questions to encourage each other to offer examples or background information. In total, we wrote 7,800 words. Following a grounded theory approach to data analysis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018), each of us first coded the written and spoken data inductively and arranged the codes into topics which described our motivations, design, and implementation of CSE in ELTE (see Section 4). Then, we discussed our codes to agree on a codebook that helped us conduct a second iteration of inductive coding and categorisation.

In the following paragraphs, we provide a brief description of ourselves written in the first person singular with the aim of helping readers contextualise our stories.

Darío: I was born and raised in Argentina. I did all my education, even initial English language teacher education at Catholic institutions in Argentina. After graduating as a teacher of English, I moved to a small city in southern Argentina where I worked between 2001 and 2019 as a teacher of English in state secondary schools, private language schools, and later become involved in initial ELTE teaching different modules. Between 2009 and 2019, I was more involved in face-to-face initial ELTE as a lecturer and programme coordinator, worked for the ministry of education as a curriculum developer and designer, and facilitator of continuing professional development courses. At the same time, I also worked as a teacher educator in an online initial ELTE programme. In the face-to-face programme, I taught the modules called *Introduction to Linguistics* and *Sociolinguistics*. In the online programme, I taught the modules called *Introduction to Linguistics* and *ELT Methodologies for Secondary Education*. I am a gay man. The stories I share with David draw from both the face-to-face and the online programmes.

David: I am German, and raised in a Catholic home in a rather rural area of Germany where every major city is at least a one-hour drive away. After graduating from the city high school, I studied the subjects English as a foreign language and biology to become a secondary school teacher and went on for a two-year teacher training in practice at a private (Protestant) school in - again - a rather underdeveloped part of Germany. Since obtaining my doctorate, I have taught in the field of school pedagogy and foreign language research both at the university where I studied myself and have also trained English teachers at two other universities. My research and teaching continues to focus on the promotion of literacy (including critical literacy) among students, but also on the professionalisation of foreign language teachers and inclusive education. I am a heterosexual man. In this context, the common interest with Darío can be seen in providing language teacher candidates with a critical perspective that helps them to address relevant issues in foreign language teaching.

4. Findings and Discussion

Our data analysis led to categories that were conflated into four key themes: (1) our motivations as teacher educators, (2) the design of our teaching, (3) the actual teaching which included critical incidents between us as teacher educators and our students, and (4) our reflections on the first three themes. Although the raw data was obtained through dialogic interaction, we present our duoethnography as excerpts or personal narratives constructed on the basis of our written and spoken interaction to summarise our main insights and experiences around the four themes identified.

4.1 Motivations to include a gender perspective

As discussed in the literature (van der Klink et al., 2017; Smith, 2017), understanding our motivation in interaction revealed that our teacher educator identity was influenced by our personal and professional motivations since these responded to the constant construction of our selves. The following dialogue synthesises our interest in infusing critical language teacher education through the adoption of a gender perspective:

> Darío: Since 2006 there's been a national law in Argentina that states that CSE needs to be present across the curriculum. However, it was not until 2015 that the province where I come from included a mandatory module with two courses called *Comprehensive Sexuality Education* to be delivered. However, student-teachers still felt that CSE was not truly present across the programme and that they struggled with embedding CSE in the teaching of English. Teacher educators didn't receive CPD opportunities that would help us narrow the distance between CSE rhetoric and practice. In 2018, I started reading articles and experiences about CSE in order to give the ELT methods module a gender perspective (see Banegas et al., 2020). What drove me to become interested was the need to respond to the challenge. Student-teachers but also students in high schools were demanding that we EFL teachers were up to the challenge and that translated into teacher education. Also, I felt that we had to make ELT more critical, embedded in Freirean critical pedagogy (Freire, 2006), social justice and local realities, and use L2 learning as another opportunity for building a socially just environment. In particular, I was interested in addressing gender diversity, equality, and gender violence. As I've always been interested in content and language integrated learning (CLIL), I saw this as an opportunity to combine curricular content, in this case CSE, with L2 learning employing CLIL as a pedagogical framework (Banegas & Lauze, 2020; Cossu & Brun, in press).
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> David: I grew up in a rural and conservative part of Germany, an hour away from any major city. So as a learner, I was not "exposed" to the ideas and concepts of CSE - or any other progressive pedagogy for that matter. It was only when I started studying to become an English and biology teacher that I became more aware of the politics and power relations of education. My alma mater is known for a very left and Marxist tradition, which draws many like-minded students into a rather small city. So only through that experience in my biography I was made aware of critical issues such as race, social class, gender, sex, (dis)ability … I have worked in the area of inclusive education for some time now where I focus on a broad understanding of inclusion (so not only focussing on disability). Yet, I had not found a real "solution" for how to restructure and change my own teaching to raise a critical awareness in my students. It wasn't until I started working together with a colleague from the US who is a critical theorist and pedagogue that I discovered more critical approaches for my own teaching. His constant critical stance (in

general) and observing his teaching (in particular) have taught me many principles that I have tried to integrate into my teaching over the years.

In the case of Darío, his context already provides a policy-based platform as there is a national law (Consejo Federal de Educación, 2009) which orients such motivations and their realisation in his professional practice. In addition, Darío's motivation is also connected to his interest in integrating curriculum content and L2 learning through CLIL (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). CSE is not only an authentic topic to address but also a demand that learners and student-teachers have and, therefore, that demand, which in turn reflects a societal need, acts as a drive. Hence, in his identity as a teacher educator who wishes to work for social justice, he started to develop agency in preparation for action by becoming aware of the literature on gender perspective and CSE in education inscribed in a critical pedagogy paradigm. In this regard, his teacher educator identity was signalled by a sense of social responsibility for future action (Vitanova, 2018).

While Darío's motivations seem to respond to policy and learners' identified needs, David's interest in a gender perspective is driven by his personal, professional background and trajectory in which inclusive education and critical pedagogy have exerted a powerful influence. In this case, his point of departure was critical pedagogy as a transformative force in education (Abdenia, 2012), but this interest was the channel through which he could actualise his identity as a committed teacher educator. A point in common we both share is our interest in addressing critical issues in ELT, which necessitates that ELTE is framed under notions of critical theory and social justice in language education (Hall, 2016; Zeichner, 2011). More importantly, our motivations emerging from dialogical and critical self-reflection (Fairley, 2020; Peercy et al., 2019) show that we recognise that critical pedagogy allows us to exercise our identity constructed in a particular social environment in which we acknowledge the necessity to become involved in socially just initiatives. In this sense, our identity had a strong responsive and social component contextually situated since we developed the urge to prepare future teachers based on the principles of education for social justice (Fairley, 2020; Golombek, 2017).

4.2 Design

We designed our modules drawing on, as mentioned earlier in Section 4.1, social justice and critical pedagogy. In the discussion of how we designed our ELTE initiatives from a gender perspective, our teacher educator identity stressed our agency as we moved from understanding and awareness to planning specifically calibrated actions (Hökkä, Vähäsantanen, & Mahlakaarto, 2017; Miller & Gnokou, 2018).

> Darío: After reading Zeichner's (2011) chapter on social justice teacher education (SJTE), I couldn't agree more with him when he states: "The goals of Social Justice Teacher Education SJTE places the recruiting of a more diverse teaching force and the preparation of all teachers to teach all students at the center of attention. It goes beyond a celebration of diversity to attempt to prepare teachers who are willing and able to work within and outside of their classrooms to change the inequities that exist in both schooling and the wider society" (p. 10). I felt the compelling need to contribute to preparing EFL teachers to change injustices based on gender. I wanted them to experience CSE through a gender perspective first-hand, in their own preparation for teaching.

> David: For me (in 2017/2018), the shift came along with a professional change of place because I took up a position as an interim professor in Bavaria and had to restructure my courses in general. Right before that, I had travelled to Finland a lot, observed Finnish teachers, their schools and school system, their ideas of inclusion, participation, and a welfare state. And every aspect and every teacher or headteacher I talked to gave me the idea that this way of teaching and living to them is very natural and self-evident. So, my concept was to - rather implicitly - integrate critical issues into my courses and not to present them very explicitly for fear of creating resistance.

This exchange shows responsiveness as an element of our professional identity (Fairley, 2020). Through our professional practice, we drew on our identity and agency to infuse a gender perspective to promote critical language teacher education around the relationship between gender diversity, inclusion, and social justice (Gray, 2019; Hawkins & Norton, 2009). We concurred in adopting an implicit and normalising approach where the focus would not polarise between, in crude terms, heteronormativity and LGBTQ+ or continue

lecturing on CSE instead of enacting a gender perspective by exploring it not only in relation to school learners but primarily on our student-teachers' formative trajectories.

Situated at the intersection of social justice, critical pedagogy, and queer theories in language education (Gray, 2019; Vitanova, 2018), the pedagogical architecture of our modules exhibited a combination of a normalising approach and a disruptive pedagogy to contribute to deconstructing deep-seated cultural practices and ideologies:

> Darío: I taught a module called *Introduction to Linguistics* and in that module I included language and gender identity as a topic by introducing what's been called lavender linguistics. It was an eye-opener for the students to realise that gender issues could be academically addressed from a linguistics perspective. In another module I taught for two years, *Sociolinguistics*, I broadened the scope of language change. I specifically focused on inclusive language both in Spanish and English and we discussed language change in relation to gender and identity. This module is in the 3rd year of the programme and by then the students have already had some practicum experience and, therefore, they found this a lot more meaningful as they could build bridges with learners' questions about language and diversity.

> David: My experiences are rather mixed. I tried to implement some experiments along the lines of critical literacy, critical pedagogy and sex/gender issues. The imminent reactions I observed were mixed, although feedback sheets always came back very positive. When I returned to the other university in 2019 having observed and discussed more with my US friend and colleague, I changed my teaching more dramatically. One reason for this was also because I had been involved in a research project where I reconstructed professional orientations (beliefs) of teacher educators. The reconstructive methodology I used for that is based on the assumption that it is rather implicit knowledge that guides our actions. And - as another theoretical foil - that, on the other hand, (future) teachers need to go through "crises" and experience critical incidents in order to develop professionally. Therefore, based on these theoretical constructs, my own research, and the experiences I had with other colleagues, I made the critical aspects much more explicit in my teaching. As a male teacher, I do not wear a dress (which my male US colleague does sometimes to irritate students in order to discuss the role of gender/sex and identity), but I do create more experiments and experiences where students are exposed very explicitly to, for example, gender-related discriminatory texts (e.g., ads). And I try to create a seminar atmosphere that allows for critical and very open discussions.

The dialogue above reflects that despite our intentions to include a gender perspective through a normalising approach, we did engage in designing our modules around topics

(e.g., lavender linguistics) or activities (e.g., discussing a discriminatory text) with an explicit orientation in order to raise student-teachers' awareness of such issues and how they can inform language education pedagogy. Guided by awareness raising as an aim, our modules featured a strong interactional and participatory element mainly channelled through group discussions. Through a focus on student interaction, we exhibited an interest in a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978) which guided us in practice to include collaborative tasks situated in the students' contexts. A sociocultural perspective places student-teachers as co-constructors of knowledge where concepts are elaborated and (re)framed in interaction (Esteve, Fernández, & Bes, 2018; Shabani, 2016). In addition, our inclusion of activities which promoted dialogic collaboration to design CSE-oriented language learning tasks was aligned with the view that dialogue and cooperation can encourage teachers' agency development (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016; Wallen & Tormey, 2019) for critical pedagogy.

4.3 Doing

Based on our shared concept that critical language teacher education needs to be interpellating and dialogic (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Pennycook, 2004), we each shared, within our duoethnographic writing, two critical incidents that reveal the way we interacted with our student teachers and address their beliefs and identities in our classes:

> Darío: The last assignment in the module consisted of asking the student-teachers to develop a CLIL-oriented lesson plan in which the topic was related to CSE (e.g., sexual abuse, movements such as Ni Una Menos, Me Too, gay parenting, abortion - you name it), they could choose what language items they wanted to introduce through the topic etc., but they have to provide a brief rationale & reflection about how they felt about designing this lesson. One student-teacher developed a powerful lesson plan about gender violence. When I read her rationale, she found that the assignment had enabled her to confront her own story by using a language she felt less attached to, and therefore she decided to plan a lesson on gender violence as a way to imagine that she could help others avoid the horrid experience she went through herself. She wrote that the module had become a harsh but liberating experience, and that as she developed the activities she inevitably kept going back to her own situation. The following year, I had one student in particular who was quite vocal about her uneasiness to read the material, participate in the forums, or

complete the assignments as the CSE/gender perspective was totally against her beliefs (she was an Evangelical). The issue was that in the beginning I had to fail her because her assignments did not reflect the readings assigned. We had a chat and I assured her that I didn't want to change her beliefs, but in this case we had to develop an inclusive professional identity and that working under the frame of the CSE law was just part of our professionalism. While she never chose topics topics that were in sharp contrast with her beliefs (e.g., abortion), she developed nice lesson plans on topics such as gender equality, albeit binary, and access to education and the professions.

David: In a course that was explicitly on *Critical Issues in Language Teaching* that focused on language education for social justice I had a very mixed group of students (more women than men, although that's normal for language teacher seminars in Germany) but also with very different cultural and migration backgrounds. Two students stood out from the beginning because both seemed to be very open and critical. One could be considered rather "alternative" and leftist. In the course of the seminar, she became a role model for deconstructing my (and everyone else's) views and giving them a different perspective. She basically helped me as a teacher educator and everyone else to broaden our perspective. It became obvious that she was used to thinking through multiple perspectives fairly quickly. Another student was - in certain ways - the exact opposite. Although very outspoken, too, in the beginning, she became calmer and calmer. She presented herself as the conservative daughter of parents with a migration background who grew up in a rather rural area. There, because of her Turkish appearance, other (white, German) citizens in this rather rural-conservative area didn't necessarily suspect that she could speak German properly.. Despite these experiences, though, she did not really grasp the idea of what it means to have a critical discourse and e.g. identify aspects of language that represent and execute power (and discrimination). The fact that she started being less involved in the course is, of course, my interpretation of her not being able to follow the discourse, examples, and practices that we tried to deconstruct.

David was confronted with two students who seemed to be open to critical theories in the beginning but they had different motifs or backgrounds to act in this way. Similar to Darío's experiences, the individual biographies of students, their beliefs and how these are shaped through their identity seem to be highly influential especially in the context of courses on critical issues such as CSE. The first of Darío's critical incidents might also raise the question of how a teacher educator, unaware of potentially traumatic biographies of their students, unintentionally tears open wounds. While the first incident illustrates how CSE in ELTE helped the student confront her past, the second example shows the need for starting dialogues to learn to understand student's resistance and to make transparent the goals of

one's own teaching. This might even have broader implications for David's teaching since he designs his courses on critical issues rather implicitly, which then might run the risk of elucidating imminent feedback or debates on a meta-level. A commonality in both cases is that our professional identity, agency, and goals were challenged by our student-teachers' identities and lived experiences. The tension between their and our identities led to instances of reflection and growth on us as teacher educators as we assessed through dialogue the impact of our agenda.

4.4 Reflection based on a framework for language teacher educator identity research

The findings and the organisation of this article represent the "natural history" (Silverman, 2017, p. 457), i.e., the analysis of our conversations in the time and form as they happened. Therefore, only after collecting and analysing the data presented in Sections 4.1-4.3 did we discuss our identity and agency drawing on Gao's (2017) framework on researching language teacher educator identity (Figure 1) in particular as the framework integrates agency and identity in relation to institutional circumstances and broader factors such as ideology and cultural practices. Although we were aware of Pantić's (2015, 2017) model of teacher agency, we prioritised Gao's (2017) framework as it specifically represented our roles as language teacher educators.
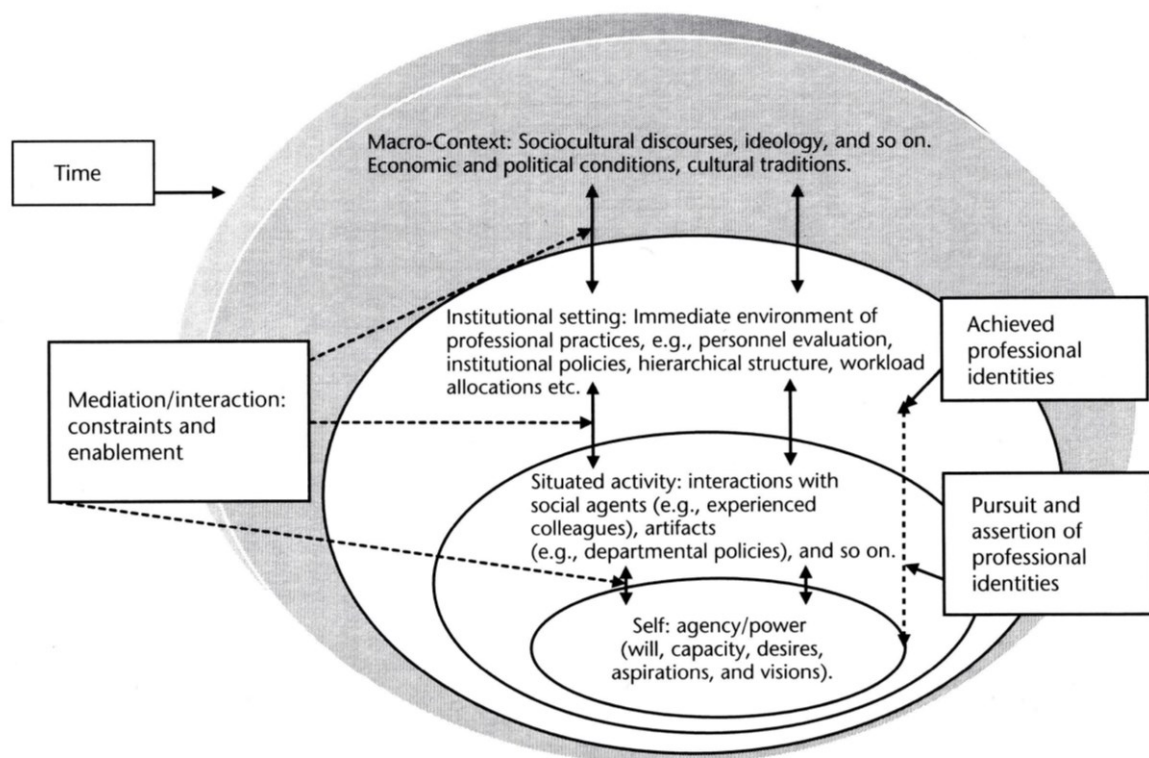
Figure 1. A broadened framework for language teacher (educator) identity research (Gao, 2017, p. 194).

What ensued in the course of writing this article was a discussion of the data based on this framework:

Darío: What we do see in our data is a sense of self, agency, and power. When we shared our motivations (Section 4.1) to include CSE and a gender perspective in our teaching, we were clear about our identity and agency as committed and critical teacher educators with a strong sense of social justice, social responsibility and transformation. That is, we want to make sure that education embraces diversity and inclusion and, therefore, we believe that teacher education is a great place to start. As we talked about our motivations, there is also a lot about situated activity, particularly at the level of interaction with student-teachers, teaching and learning artefacts and norms. In my case, there is this law that might be part of the macro-context and cultural conditions that I work in, in your case it's more about norms and expectations from a biographical perspective. However, I can't help but note that we don't talk about our colleagues. It's either because we are loners or because we are so sure of our self, identity, and agency (will, capacity, aspirations, vision), that it seems that we don't need support or approval from, for example, experienced teacher educators. Then, I'd link the section on planning (Section 4.2) and doing (Section 4.3) to situated activity as we described how we pursued and achieved our

goals, identity, and agency. In the planning, we also talked about the macro-context as we acknowledged the need to deconstruct hegemonic and heteronormative ideologies and discourses. In this case, the critical language pedagogy lens supported us in achieving our identity and agency. Last, the two critical incidents illustrate the macro-context in which our practice is situated as they reveal the conditions and broader cultural practices and discourses present inside and beyond the classroom. This may remind us of the Douglas Fir Group Framework (2016) in which agency and investment are part of our social identities developed in sociocultural institutions (meso level), which in turn responds to the macro level of ideological structures, systems, values, and beliefs. In our case, the macro refers to social justice, criticality, and gender diversity and equality.

David: What we don't see in our data, though, is this circle addressing the institutional setting in Gao's (2017) framework. Our teaching happens in this setting but most aspects on design or doing happens in the intersection of self, i.e. us as educators, and situated activity, us interacting with our students. But our institutions, luckily, do not restrict our teaching or how we use our selves to interact with student-teachers and help them gain that critical awareness through our implicit or explicit interventions. At the centre of our identity-agency (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016) lies critical pedagogy, which is about engaging in discourse to dismantle naturalised ideologies such as heteronormativity. In this sense, I'd say that our identity-agency is primarily realised through our exchanges with the students.

Darío: Something else we don't see is a discussion of our own sexual and gender identities. It may be ironic since our drive is CSE. But, in my case, it doesn't define me professionally, nor has it bothered me. I'm interested in our thoughts and practices as critical teacher educators.

David: Perhaps this is because it's not our own sexual identity that drives us to integrate critical aspects into our teaching but rather our conviction that this adds to social justice in general. Maybe social justice teacher education is one of the foundations of our professional teacher educator identity that developed over the course of the last few years, regardless of our sexual identity.

What emerged from using Gao's (2017) framework was that only through our teaching, our roles as educators, and our own beliefs about critical pedagogy, we recognised the absence of institutional and macro-contextual constraints. Regardless of our gender and sexual identities, we are two educated males who work in liberal, Western, higher education contexts in which university teachers can exercise their autonomy, which is similar to the teaching context in which Leal and Crookes (2018)'s participant honed her teacher agency. Our disregard for discussing our own gender and sexual identities intersects (Shields, 2008)

with us being two educated males possibly protected by a patriarchal structure that values male scholarship and efficacy over other identity features.

The findings of our duoethnography provide answers to our guiding research questions: (1) how we integrate CSE and critical language teacher education in different contexts and (2) how we, as teacher educators, monitor, and extend our language teacher educator identity and agency. Although we share the same conceptions of language, language teaching, and a critical approach of language teacher education, the biographical sources for our conviction are different: While Darío was challenged with the introduction of CSE policies in his country and the question of how to integrate these into a language teacher curriculum, David was influenced rather indirectly through his own teacher education and political views of fellow teacher educators. It should be noted that our own sexual identities are not a driving force; our commitment to critical pedagogy and social justice are what drives us to promote CSE in language teacher education. We both use critical pedagogy principles as foundations for course design (Abednia, 2012; Sharma & Phyak, 2017). The knowledge of these concepts as a critical reflective competence (Fairley, 2020) and critical identities (Peercy et al., 2019) led to deeper understandings of the integration of CSE elements in language teacher education as part of our identity.

What surfaces through a retrospective analysis of our teaching from a gender perspective is the extent to which our own teacher educator identities shaped the contextually bound design and doing of our courses (Loughran, 2014). The scarcity of professional development opportunities for teacher educators sparked our agentive need to develop (MacPhail et al., 2019) and employ our identity-agency (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016) in the process of constructing shared interests, revealing aspects of each other's, but especially our own practice(s). The fact that these shared interests were CSE and critical language teacher education which both necessitate dialogue and engagement helped us establish the connection since openness and curiosity were already part of our LTI and helped become aware of our drive for fostering social justice (Vitanova, 2018).

5. Conclusion and implications

The aim of this duoethnography was to explore our teacher educator identity and agency in the pursuit of incorporating CSE as a form of enriching ELTE with a critical language teacher education perspective. In line with Vitanova (2018), this article demonstrates that teacher educators' identity and agency are context-dependent. Our interest in critical issues in ELT and ability to develop a teacher educator identity informed by notions of critical pedagogy and social justice led us to exercise our agency by employing such notions to incorporate CSE and a gender perspective systematically in our practice. This agentive move was possible given our clear interest in critical pedagogy, social justice, students' rights, as well as the autonomy and lack of institutional and macro-contextual barriers we experienced in our settings. Nevertheless, these findings should be approached with caution. Our duoethnography is based on the dialogue between two male lecturers based in two universities and contexts in which critical language teacher education and gender diversity are valued, policy-responsive, or at least not discouraged. Hence, the macro-context (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Gao, 2017) acts as a facilitator of the practices discussed above.

Our findings highlight three implications. First, depending on sociocultural circumstances, teacher educators and ELTE programmes can systemically incorporate CSE and a gender/critical perspective in ELT through a normalising or implicit approach that is discussed with other teacher educators. What is important is that CSE should not be included as an add-on element; it should be a constitutive part of ELTE so that critical pedagogy and social justice become a paradigm in which ELTE teacher educators operate. Second, it is imperative to engage student-teachers through dialogic and collaborative activities for the co-construction of professional knowledge, identity, and agency while remaining sensitive to their wellbeing. Last, it is crucial that institutions support teacher educators and allow them to exercise their autonomy since they may enable them to become engaged in articulated activities that seek to transform education through inclusive practice.

Future studies on teacher educators' identity and agency could include student-teachers' perspectives and also investigate teacher educators' situated practice and discourse. In this regard, studies that collect data through classroom observation may offer fine insights into how teacher educators construe their identity and agency in conversation as they teach.

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Appendix A: Initial questions to trigger interaction

- Do you remember when and how you became interested in exploring gender/sex issues at the level of pre-service ELTE? What drove you?

- When did you start being more systematic about these issues as a teacher educator?

- What experiences have you had?

- What lessons have you learnt? Challenges? Successes?

- Do you feel that you have made an impact on your student-teachers? Have you had any "critical incidents" as you included a CSE dimension in the TESOL module?

- Have you developed professionally?

- What do you feel is the way forward? What do you think you still need to do?

- Why should this way of conceptualizing language teaching or teacher education be a "better way" of doing things?

- What implications do we see in terms of language teaching?