Initial English Language Teacher Education

International Perspectives on Research, Curriculum and Practice

Edited by
Darío Luis Banegas

Initial English Language
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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BANA   *Britain, Australia and North America*

CELTA   *Certificate in English language teaching to adults*

CHAT   *Cultural Historical Activity Theory*

CPD   *Continuous professional development*

CPR   *Cardiopulmonary resuscitation*

CS   *Curriculum studies*

EFL   *English as a foreign language*

EL   *English language*

ELT   *English language teaching*

ELTE   *English language teacher education*

ESL   *English as a second language*

IELTE   *Initial English language teacher education*

IES   Instituto de Educación Superior *(Institute of Higher Education)*

IMO   *In my opinion*

ITE   *Initial teacher education*

KNBS   *Kenya National Bureau of Statistics*

L1   *Language 1*

L2   *Language 2*

LACE   Linguagem em Atividades do Contexto Escolar

LEA   *Language experience approach*

LMS   *Learning management system*

LT   *Language teaching*

MKOS   *More knowledgeable others*

MLEA   *Modified Language Experience Approach*

MOE   *Ministry of Education*

MOOC   *Massive online open course*

MT	*Mother tongue*
NIE	*National Institute of Education*
PPP	*Presentation-practice-production*
PSLE	*Primary school leaving examination*
SBA	*Shared book approach*
SCT	*Sociocultural theory*
SD	*Standard deviation*
SES	*Socio-economic status*
SLA	*Second language acquisition*
SLTE	*Second language teacher education*
SRL	*Self-regulated learning*
ST	*Student-teacher*
STELLAR	*Strategies for English language learning and reading*
TE	*Teacher education*
TEFL	*Teaching English as a foreign language*
TEP	*Teacher education programme*
TESOL	*Teaching English to speakers of other languages*
TOTS	*Teacher of teachers*
TP	*Teaching practice*
ZPD	*Zone of proximal development*

Introduction

Darío Luis Banegas

Not long ago, I had the following conversation with my ten-year-old niece, Lourdes:

> Lourdes: 'Uncle, I want to be a teacher when I grow up.'
> Darío: 'Sounds fantastic. But what kind of teacher? A school teacher? An Art teacher?'
> Lourdes: 'I'd like to be a primary school teacher. But I think I will be a teacher of English. I like English at school.'
> Darío: 'A teacher like me? You'll inherit my books. Why a teacher of English?'
> Lourdes: 'I want to travel the world, like you do.'

The motivations to become a teacher of English seem clear to my niece. Becoming a teacher of English or any other language can take you to different territories, both metaphorically and literally. Following the unoriginal metaphor of travelling, we can envisage language teacher education as a journey through which we develop continually in different directions. Although such a journey is far from linear, it has a beginning. Where does our journey begin? Do we need a passport? Stamps? Like Lourdes, and for all of us, this journey began at school when we were primary school learners or even earlier. And there are other learners who go through non-institutional and informal language practices. In one way or another, we have all been learners, and our teaching trajectories and biographies inscribed in the *specificities* of our contexts start there: a classroom in kinder or primary school. People can spend around fifteen years as learners before entering a higher education institution to start, for example, formal initial English language teacher education (IELTE).

The aim of this edited collection is to understand some of the processes and experiences that teacher educators and teacher learners undergo in their initial teacher education journey in less researched settings. In this journey, we wish to concentrate on the voices of teacher educators and teacher learners. Thus, the book adopts a bottom-up approach and democratic stance as we seek to

examine what they think, feel and do in the different spheres that initial teacher education entails. The contributors come to share how IELTE is approached in less represented settings internationally. My colleagues come from Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Kenya, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, the UK and Uruguay.

Initial English language teacher education

Second language teacher education (SLTE) can be broadly configured into two vaguely temporalized territories: (1) pre-service/initial teacher education and (2) in-service teacher education (Edge and Mann 2013). The literature offers recent edited collections that attest to the growing, yet limited, interest in the field in both territories worldwide and the complex, sometimes tense, transitions between them (Burns and Richards 2009; Farrell 2015c; Johnson and Golombek 2011; Wright and Beaumont 2015).

In an extensive review of SLTE in BANA countries (Britain, Australia and North America), Wright (2010) refers to those programmes and activities that occur before we gain our first experiences as teachers. In this edited book, IELTE is used to refer to those programmes with different lengths and curricula offered by the state and private higher education sectors to produce qualified teachers of English primarily for state-run educational systems. I personally avoid the use of *pre-service*, as in my experience as a teacher educator in Argentina IELTE programmes are taken by people who have recently graduated from secondary school as well as others who have other (teaching) degrees, for example in Biology, or have taught English in formal education for some time without a teaching qualification (see also Dick 2013).

IELTE encompasses a wide range of undergraduate programmes at both tertiary and university institutions. In terms of time we can find, at one end, those that last a few weeks such as Cambridge CELTA or Trinity CertTESOL (see Anderson 2015) and, at the other end, those that usually last between three and four years (see Banegas 2014; Barahona 2016; Debreli 2012). In terms of delivery mode, face-to-face seems to be the norm; nevertheless, online distance and blended programmes can also be found worldwide as illustrated in Banegas and Manzur Busleimán (2014) or England (2012).

IELTE actors receive a wide range of names. Those who teach future teachers are called teacher trainers, lecturers, teachers of teachers (ToTs) and teacher

educators among other terms. Conversely, those who are in the process of becoming teachers are usually referred to as trainees, teacher trainees, teacher-learners, future teachers and student-teachers, to name a few. Regarding terminology and underpinning concepts, Richards (3002015: 697–8) makes a helpful distinction between *teacher training* and *teacher development*. The former 'involves providing novice teachers with the practical skills and knowledge needed to prepare them for their initial teaching experience', while the latter 'serves a longer-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of the teacher's general understanding of teaching'. Burns and Richards (2009) have suggested that SLTE has shifted from teacher training to teacher development as the theorization of context-situated practice. It is the aim of this edited book to show that shift and encourage institutions to move from training to development in the quest for sustainability and vision in teacher education.

Theoretical perspectives in IELTE

As mentioned above, IELTE is materialized through concrete preparation programmes. The delineation of an IELTE programme and curriculum entails agreement on the theoretical foundations and resulting knowledge base, which guides the decisions and shapes that each particular programme features. At a theoretical level, the current IELTE territory is characterized by three broad interrelated perspectives: sociocultural theory (SCT), cognitivism and criticality. The chapters in this book are mostly based on the first perspective given the current interest in the social turn in language education. However, readers will find traces of the other two views discussed to a lesser extent.

Based on a Vygotskian view of SCT, different authors adhere to the spread of this perspective in language education (Lantolf and Poehner 2014), IELTE (Burns and Richards 2009; Johnson 2009; Johnson and Golombek 2011, 1782016) and beyond. Although SCT is widely discussed in the literature, it still captivates researchers and educators in general. According to Swain, Kinnear and Steinman (2015), SCT is both new and old, and they define it as a theory 'about how humans think through the creation and use of mediating tools'. To these authors, Vygotskian SCT, essentially a theory of mind with connections between internal and external processes, has been enriched by the work of scholars who explore pedagogical contexts as ecosystems, that is, an ecological approach to language learning and teaching (Kramsch 2008).

Furthermore, Swain, Kinnear and Steinman (2015) observe that SCT is undergoing a narrative turn in education as teachers keep track of their stories and lived experiences through journals and participation in focus group interviews. In this regard, the authors add

> SCT seeks to understand mental development and learning by considering not only the contextual specifics but also the process over time, rather than focusing only on a particular moment of spoken or written production.

Thus, there is an interest within SCT in IELTE in the power of narrative inquiry to understand the transformation and development of the identities of future teachers as well as novice teachers (Sarasa 2013). In addition, it is observed that we should examine the teaching-learning relationships that unfold in practice and the practicum, and the mediation and interactions explored by teacher educators in supporting teaching (Diaz Maggioli 2013, 2014; Golombek and Klager 2015; Johnson 2015; Johnson and Golombek 2011). It is because of this narrative turn in SCT and the opportunities it affords that we endorse SCT in this book.

Linked to SCT, cognitivism finds its way in IELTE through teacher cognition, defined as what teachers think, know and believe (Borg 2006b). Those under a teacher cognition perspective suggest that IELTE programmes should be further informed by teacher cognition research of teacher-learners. It is believed that a higher presence of teacher cognition findings can help understand teacher-learners' biographies and how they conceptualize and enact their teaching practices. In this line, Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) propose that teachers' inner lives and ecologies of practice be studied through the concept of intentionality without disregarding the context in which SLTE occurs. In a similar vein, Golombek (2015) embraces SCT but believes that SLTE should also scrutinize language teacher educators' emotions, cognitions and activity. Through self-inquiry and journal writing, the author reveals how cognitions are examined between a teacher educator and a group of teacher-learners. The author (Golombek 2015: 481) concludes by saying that 'it is not just consistency between our rhetoric and practice as teacher educators which can promote teacher learner professional development, but what we do in response to inconsistencies in our rhetoric and practice as well'.

Last, following Hawkins and Norton (2009), criticality in IELTE aims to challenge dominant ideologies and the perpetuation of inequality. In this respect, critical IELTE takes a Freiran stance and seeks to empower teacher educators

and future teachers as agents of change by promoting pedagogies that respond to their local contexts and cultures (Banegas and Velázquez 2014; Rixon 2015). The ultimate aim of such pedagogies is educational and social change. Through liberatory education, people will be in a position to transform their reality and challenge oppression. Under this perspective, we can include the presence of interculturality, inclusive education and action research in IELTE programmes (Amez 2015; Coady, Harper and De Jong 2015; Mugford 2015; Porto 2010; Villacañas de Castro 2014a, 2015) as they are deeply rooted in context and aim at creating spaces for reflection underpinned by autonomy, social justice (see Esau 2013) and equality.

The knowledge base and main themes

Coherent with a sociocultural perspective, Johnson (2009) proposes a revised knowledge base of IELTE consisting of three broad interrelated areas:

1. What L2 teachers need to know in terms of the content of L2 teacher education.
2. The pedagogies that are taught in IELTE programmes.
3. The practices enacted by teacher educators to deliver areas 1 and 2 above.

As a response for change in the knowledge base, Zhang and Zhan (2014: 569) define it as 'the repertoire of knowledge, expertise, skills and understanding that teachers need to possess in order to become effective in their profession'. The authors propose six categories: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, contextual knowledge, continuity with past experiences and support knowledge. Such categories may remind us of Shulman's (1987) seminal work, but they show a sociocultural angle that includes student-teachers' biographies conceptualized as *continuity with past experiences* and the need to mentor them, termed as *support knowledge*, as they move into teaching as novice teachers (see also Mann and Tang 2012).

  The second and third areas listed above reveal two major concerns. On the one hand, there is a need to engage in congruent practices in IELTE so that theory and practice are experienced as a complex unit by teacher-learners. In other words, those pedagogies, approaches and methods, such as communicative language teaching or task-based learning (Richards 2015), that are taught in programmes to be then transpolated to learners need to be experienced by

future teachers in IELTE classrooms. On the other hand, this calls for IELTE programmes that are not solely based on knowledge from other disciplines or authors located in dominant markets. It is high time that IELTE programmes drew on what teachers do and observe, theorized practices, teacher cognitions, action research and reflective teaching as it happens in IELTE and language teaching contexts with all kinds of learners.

A look at teacher educators' practices in IELTE could be systematized through research paradigms that help us investigate how teacher educators enact and engage in those approaches that are hoped to be found in classrooms populated by children, teenagers and adults. With this opportunity to analyse, reflect and act upon practices in IELTE, special attention should be given to action research in pre-service teacher education. Following Güngör (2016), action research can help bridge the gap between 'theoretical considerations and classroom realities' (p. 137) and 'reveal more insights from local teaching contexts to learn from divergent experiences and to embrace contextual differences more gently in various language teacher education programmes' (p. 149).

I shall refer to three recent studies in particular, hoping that they can help us see the role of action/teacher research in the formal initial education of future teachers. Action research in IELTE can promote reflections and collaboration mediated by technology. For example, in an action research project carried out with pre-service teachers in Poland and Romania, Wach (2015) concludes that collaborative learning, reflection on EFL teaching and learning can be attained through action research projects across universities. The author highlights that

> the main didactic implication derived from this study is that involving students in cross-cultural collaboration online, and not only in EFL didactics courses, appears to be a relevant teaching procedure. (p. 42)

In a study carried out with pre-service teachers at an elementary education programme in the United States, Crawford-Garrett et al. (2015) examined the process behind an action research project carried out by three pre-service teachers as part of the capstone assignment for the programme. Based on the positive outcome of the experience and data analysis, the authors assert that action research allowed the pre-service teachers to draw on their lived experiences. Furthermore, they (Crawford-Garrett et al. 2015: 493) state that

> the action research process fostered a deep engagement with certain ideas and allowed the pre-service teachers a space to develop these ideas fully and test nascent theories about teaching and learning. Moreover, these in-depth

explorations positioned the pre-service teachers as knowledgeable practitioners and agentive actors able to design and reflect on specific practices and justify their use in various contexts.

In a similar vein, Ulvik and Riese (2016) investigated the impact of doing action research with a group of pre-service teachers in Norway. According to the results obtained through focus groups, interviews and questionnaires (op. cit.: 450),

> the experience offered a possibility to challenge themselves and to try something out that expanded their horizon and made them reflect in depth and become more critical. They broadened their knowledge regarding specific problems, and they learned about themselves.

It was not only student-teachers who assessed the experience as positive; their teacher educators too noted that doing action research was seen as a professional development opportunity, a chance to take risks and a possibility to initiate collaboration between them and their student-teachers (see also Castro Garcés and Martínez Granada 2016).

Nonetheless, the authors discuss the limitations and threats of introducing action research in pre-service teacher education. They suggest that there should be enough time built into the programme to facilitate reflection and discussion of the links between theory and practice in teaching. They also assert that inquiry should be integrated as a 'natural part of teacher education'. In other words, research should become part of the knowledge base itself and be linked to the context of those who engage with it.

Such a call for a revitalized and contextualized knowledge base in IELTE, which is also research-informed, goes hand in hand with an interest in issues such as change, process, context and interculturality in SLTE (Wright and Beaumont 2015). However, other themes are also important in the current IELTE territory. I particularly refer to teacher-learners' beliefs, novice teaching transition, identity, motivation and curriculum innovation.

Several studies focus on teacher-learners' beliefs in language teaching and learning prior and after exposure to courses on ELT methodologies and the practicum during their IELTE programmes (Borg et al. 2015; Çapan 2014; Debreli 2012; Lee 2015). Studies concur that future teachers' beliefs are shaped by their biographies as learners and, to a lesser extent, by IELTE programmes, but these enter a conflicting zone when they compare the pedagogies taught in the programme with lessons observed at schools. This tension remains after they graduate, and therefore the passage from teacher-learners to novice

teachers has received attention by authors who suggest that the practicum and the institutions should offer novice teachers support during their first teaching experiences (Farrell 2012).

Notions around novice teaching and the perceived disjuncture between IELTE preparation and practice in real classrooms are firmly tied to the practicum in IELTE and the motivational dynamics that illuminate teachers' trajectories and *under-construction* identities. In this regard, IELTE programmes need to offer additional spaces to discuss and reflect on teacher motivation and identity with the aim of helping teacher-learners create a sustainable teacher vision of themselves (Kubanyiova 2014; Kumazawa 2013).

Last, more recent publications such as Edge and Mann (2013) and Johnson (2013) examine in-context innovation in IELTE and encourage the development of revised teacher educator practices that help build congruence within IELTE programmes. Along these lines, the incorporation of online platforms and applications (Bonadeo 2013; Massi et al. 2012), the updatedness and localization of reading materials (Banegas 2015) and the revision of IELTE curricula from a critical perspective (Gimenez et al. 2016) to support teacher learning are envisaged as innovative undertakings. However, we should remind ourselves that innovation is context-bound and it requires systematization, reflection and evaluation.

As I have concluded elsewhere (Banegas 2016),

> Innovation and change in teacher education curriculum development are vital, dynamic, and necessary processes. These, it seems, need to occur progressively and with the full endorsement of all actors involved. Participation and ongoing programme evaluation are necessary to examine the extent to which such changes are implemented, challenged, created and re-created in practice depending on a whole array of contextual factors.

Structure of the book

Drawing on other perspectives such as criticality, but primarily on SCT, the twelve chapters in this book address the following issues through the eyes of future teachers and teacher educators: future teachers' beliefs, the practicum and the tensions between theory and practice, the role of feedback, teacher development and identity, critical pedagogies, online teacher education and intercultural awareness. Such topics are discussed through research, changes in curriculum development and, above all, practice.