Who teaches the teachers? Analyzing identities of English language teacher educators at English Language Teaching Education Programs

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Abstract

The area of Language Teacher Education (LTE) is relatively new in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Borg, 2011). The dominant discourse in this field has been interested in aspects of identity in Teacher Educators (TEs), focusing on challenges faced by novice TEs, standards for teacher development programs or roles taken by these subjects. However, the analysis has centered in the descriptive level leaving aside epistemological aspects of identity which may provide a more thorough perspective into this topic. It is proposed that this new perspective of analysis could approach must-be discourses from the policies and TE´s characterizations in terms of how they constitute as subjects within a matrix of power relations which are of utmost relevance to understand their constitution of identities Hence, there is a need to see more aspects in this complex task that involves the constitution of a Teacher Educator as a subject and his/her struggle to claim an identity in our local Colombian context. This will involve to embrace new perspectives in the understanding of these categories that can depict both external forces, such as, policies, relations of power and resistance practices and internal forces like potentia and realizations of potentia (Deleuze, 1987) in order to provide possible answers to questions like who are the TEs that are in charge of forming the new generation of English Language Teachers in Colombia?

Keywords: Identity, Subject Constitution, Power Relations, Potentia, Language Teacher Education.

Introduction

The following chapter aims to problematize the concept of Language Teacher Identity (LTI) in Teacher Educators (TEs) from an epistemological perspective. In order to do so, I have embraced, on the one hand, Foucault's contributions (2007) (1982) (1980) in terms of the constitution of subjects, power relations and practices of resistance. On the other hand, I have used Deleuze's dissertations (1987) (2008) on Spinoza's description of the

concepts of identity and potentia, as well as, Deleuze's concept of fold[63] (2006) (1987). The reader will also find a series of questions throughout this chapter whose main objective is to start settling possible points of departure for the problematization being posed here. By asking these questions, I am not trying to provide an answer to the problematic situation of LTI but rather to contribute in the understanding of LTI with epistemological and philosophical elements which have not been used yet and will be initially discussed later in this chapter. The organization that this chapter follows is: First, there is an introduction which presents an initial set of questions related to the problematization of LTI in the field of English Language Teacher Education (ELTE). Second, I present a short personal narrative about the processes that have taken me to this idea of LTI from an epistemological perspective. Third, I present an initial reflection upon the concepts of the fold (Deleuze, 1987), the concepts of potentia and identity from Deleuzian dissertations (Deleuze, 2008), the relations between subject and power following Foucault's contributions (1982) (2007). Finally, some concluding remarks are presented along with some ideas for carrying out research in this area of LTI.

Have you ever wondered how a Teacher Educator (TE) ended up working in this field? Has he/she decided to follow this path as a personal election? In what ways do teacher educators have any influence from external forces, such as, policies or social stereotypes in their constitution as subjects? Or are there any internal forces that may weigh more in their identities as TEs? Moreover, and following Deleuze (1987) (2006) what are those folds in the identity of a teacher educator that drive his/her actions? By considering these initial questions, I would like to pinpoint that the topic of identity in Language Teacher Education still provide more areas of reflection and problematization in our local context, such as, the constitution of the subject called a Teacher educator, his/her practices of resistance against external forces, namely, policies, institutional or academic contexts (Foucault, 1982), their identities construction in terms of their potentia (Deleuze, 2008), the levels of appropriation of policies that TEs do or the features of a Colombian Language Teacher Education.

Along my years as educator at different contexts, and more recently as a teacher educator, I have seen that although we may undergo different levels of preparation, such as, doing an undergraduate career to then move to a master program and conclude carrying out a doctoral program, as well as,

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63   Deleuze used the metaphor of the fold to think about the subjectivity and its multiple forms. With the fold, Deleuze abandoned the duality (interiority and exteriority) to announce that there are multiple levels of the fold, a population of many folds. Thus, there are no fixed points of references or identities. (see more in Deleuze (2006)and Van Tuinen (2010).

taking either pedagogical or methodological updating training sessions with the clear objective of improving our teaching skills, or expand our knowledge on how the processes of learning and teaching are developed; what we take within our classrooms to be shared with those future colleagues in front of us, is a great deal of experience that up to a point has configured the professor we are at this present time.

Day after day, teacher educators go through different experiences in their lives. One remarkable experience a TE may have at the beginning of his/her path – and may also be difficult to grasp - is to realize that all his/her previous background experience and knowledge may take a more relevant influence in his/her daily interaction with students, if it is seen from the perspective of sharing rather than lecturing to those people who are besides him/her. This is something I have gone through on my own. Being in front of other teachers, specially besides those language teachers in formation, is certainly a challenge for many but a growing experience for everyone who has lived it. Situation that demands a change in the perspectives about teaching and learning we can have up to this point leading to ask the reader and myself about: how do ELTEs re-conceptualize their pedagogies? What type of reasoning underpins this process?

Another important moment a TE may go through is the instant when he/she is asked to take roles and responsibilities that he/she may have never had before. One of these is the construction of syllabuses for subjects in which his/her expertise has not been wide, or guiding teaching practicum sessions with a population he/she recognizes he/she does not have enough experience with or taking roles as a researcher or an academic at levels he/she has not been before. This can lead us to think about how do TEs face these demands? How do these new roles affect the way they see themselves?

Reflecting upon these and other questions at a doctoral level will involve problematizing the area of English Language Teaching more specifically the topic of Language Teacher Identity (LTI) from a different perspective. So far, the field of LTI at both local and international contexts has been studied widely from authors, such as, Norton (2013), Barkhuizen (2016), Ha (2008), Fajardo (2014), Gonzalez (2003), Gonzalez and Sierra (2005) and Varghese *et al.* (2005) among others who have explored the concept of identity in LTE from different perspectives, such as, social, cognitive, the self and professional identity leading to see LTI as fluid and situated in specific contexts. This definition has been taken as a point of departure to explain professional, cultural and social identities of TEs and the way social aspects have affected them. In my personal interest, I would like to understand how Colombian TE constitute as subjects using a Foucauldian perspective to

trace the concept of identity showing fractures, discontinuities and the way discourses may affect the self-constitution. There is an aspect of LTI which has not been explored yet in the literature up to now. As it is going to be explained later in this chapter, the concept of LTI provides more aspects of analysis from those already researched so far, if those were all the aspects that can be found related to LTI, thus, the concept will not be fluid anymore and turn out to be static. I consider that problematizing this topic in this way will help us understand the multiple folds involved in an TE's identity from a more thorough framework of reference.

The story that brought me here

As a language teacher and more recently as a teacher educator, I have had the opportunity to work with other language teachers and participate in their process of formation as well as sharing workplaces at different undergraduate programs. It was during meetings, talks, coffees and sessions that I started to wonder and asked them why they have decided to become a teacher educator and work with the future language teachers of Colombia. I also asked myself some other questions, such as, how do they see themselves as TEs those who oversee preparing the next generation of language teachers? Have these colleagues thought of their roles as teachers of teachers (ToT)? What epistemological and pedagogical stances do they embrace in their teaching process?

While asking myself these questions, I initially began to talk spontaneously about these issues with a group of TEs from both public and private schools and universities at a module of a master program where I participated as a tutor. From here, I could collect some initial insights on how they perceived themselves as TEs.

At this point, I could evidence that although all of them where comfortable with the positions they had within their institutions at that moment, their main aim in taking a postgraduate course was either to increase their income or to obtain a better job position at a university. I could not perceive an interest in becoming aware of what pedagogical or epistemological stances were driving their day to day interaction with students. It was through an exercise focused on the recognition of teaching styles done in this module that we (TEs and I) could make a reflection upon what principles this group of language teachers had in terms of language teacher education. As a result of the reflexive exercise, I realized that many of these TEs have devoted little time to think about the epistemological foundations of their daily practice as language teachers in secondary schools and teacher educators at English Language

Teaching Education Programs (ELTEPs). From this starting point, I began to indagate on the curricular perspectives this group of teachers had taking into account that the concept of curriculum requires to take a pedagogical positioning towards the processes of teaching and learning Alvarez (2010) and Posner (2003) and may also imply an epistemological positioning for TEs. At this point, I could evidence that one external and influential power in the implementation of a specific curriculum, which may also have influence in the identity of TEs, comes from the policies created by the government.

Having done this, my first attempt was to focus on the study of those Colombian policies recently created to stimulate and regulate foreign language teaching. At the same time, I tried to identify what curricular perspectives were embedded in those policies and how they were adopted and/or rejected by TEs at different universities. However, it was through the reflections, sessions and guidance at the doctorate program that this perspective widened in terms of bringing into a more complex perspective which incorporated more elements of analysis and problematization to the situation narrated above.

Tracing identity in teacher education

In the next section of this chapter, I will go through an examination of the work done related to the concept of Language Teacher Identity in the field of ELT. I would like to warn the reader that although it is a comprehensive revision of the most important research production on the area of LTI, it is by no means conclusive. Hence, I carry on by revising the most recent research on the topic LTI trying to find insights in both international and local contexts. In terms of research from overseas, I have found that the main trend on this area has been on trying to explain the concepts of identity and self in TEs from a descriptive position rather than from an epistemological perspective. As it was explained earlier in this chapter, there have been several important research papers from both local and international authors that have captured the LTI from different angles. Thus, a first example of this is the rigorous and exhaustive revision of Izadinia (2014) who made a literature review on the concepts of teacher educator's identity. She revised fifty-two research papers from different regions of the world with the objective of identifying challenges and tensions that novice teachers go through in their first years as teacher educators. One of the most remarkable results is related to the definition of identity and its development. She argues that one of the most influential roles for novice teacher educators is the one as researchers and academics. She found that the identity of these professors is influenced by those labels in terms of what is expected from them, such as academic production, as well as, lectures with high standards. The tensions raise when teacher educators do

not have enough experience or training in these areas making them doubtful. Up to here, one can wonder if these tensions can be the same for language teacher educators in our context. Do novice language professors at Colombian universities face similar challenges? If so, how do they handle them?

According to Izadinia (2014), the identity of teachers is developed through the support given by communities of practice, as well as, self-support. In terms of the former, community support is seen through groups in which novice teacher educators participate in the discourse of work organization. As for the latter, it has a more influential role in the development of teacher educator's identity when they start to think about different aspects of their practice, such as their methodology or a reconstruction of their positions towards teaching and learning. This revision concludes by stating that the identity of novice teacher educator's is at high levels of tensions while doubting about their skills and different assigned roles preventing them from self-categorizing as teacher educators.

Izadinia's (2014) remarkable revision of literature took the concept of identity as a self-contained concept which is mainly characterized by external factors, such as, tensions novice TEs have in relation to their roles inside the academic communities where they are immersed or tensions when coming to recognize themselves as TEs. At this point, one might reflect upon the epistemological reflection towards the concept of LTI that is absent in Izadinia's research (2014). Although this may have occurred due to the nature of her research aim, the lack of references to the LTI from an epistemological perspective is seen in some other research works. Thus, a gap in the concept of LTI can be appreciated and explored with the aim to contribute to problematize thoroughly this concept. It is also important to remark that this view of identity connected to teaching and environmental issues is found on other important works, such as (Borg, 2011) who makes a complete account on the field of language teacher education going through its history to its current development. In terms of identity, he pinpoints the role of reflective practice to recognize beliefs and practices of teacher educators and how this may contribute to build an identity. He also acknowledges the great value that reflection can have on teacher's attitudes while preventing on its real impact on better language teaching.

As with Izadinia's (2014)work, the revision made by Borg (2011) does not present a discussion of the concepts of identity or subject or self in teacher educators assuming them as concepts already given that are defined in terms of what happens to teacher educators without taking them to an epistemological and profound discussion. This situation opens a gap between what identity may really mean for these TEs and the actual image portrayed so far.

Up to this point, the idea of how teachers become who they are in the present time in terms of identity has been characterized in aspects, such as, reflective practice Borg (2011), communities of practice and self-support Izadinia (2014). However, the work of Robinson & McMillan (2006) presented new elements on how teacher educators build their identities. Their work is of great value since they stablished a nexus between identity and change that would initially provide a framework to understand the building process of identity in teacher educators. According to Welmond (2002) as cited in Robinson & McMillan (2006) identity of teacher educators is directly linked to changes in policy stablished by the government.

At a local level, the focus of the LTI research has taken a similar direction. I have searched the seminal work of Gonzalez (2001, 2002, 2003, 2005) who has explored the area of language teacher education in Colombia in the last decade. She has guided her interest towards identifying those external forces or aspects that influence language teacher educators in our local context. Gonzalez (2002) identified the needs from EFL teachers to be supplied by teacher development programs classifying them into the categories of workers, instructors and learners where the second category has been usually overestimated. In Gonzalez (2003), this author explored the differences between teacher training and teacher education evidencing that although EFL teachers may undergo different training and development courses, they may not experience the real benefits of these professional options. Last but not least, Gonzalez in 2005 conducted a research project whose aim was to describe the professional alternatives that language teacher educators must achieve higher standards. As it can be seen, research in the area of language teacher education in our local context has been driven towards external factors that influence the actions of teacher educators. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Foucault (2007) would provide the elements to explain this perspective from its framework of relations of power and resistance practice. Thus, Gonzalez's work has been valuable since it has been one of the first attempts to describe and talk about language teacher education in Colombia. Also, this author has provided a line of work to understand the different aspects that language teacher educators at our local context may undergo in their daily work. However, this author does not discuss the categories of identity construction nor subject constitution in the field of language teacher education. This does not mean that Gonzalez has overlooked these two aspects but rather the scope of her research was well-defined from the beginning.

Another important contribution to the area of LTI was the doctoral dissertation presented by Barletta (2007) who discussed the struggles non-native teachers have in Colombia to find their place in an academic, social and cultural context where the native speaker is seen as someone with a higher status.

Barletta analyzed the dichotomy between non-native English teachers and native speakers who are teachers taking her discussion to the concepts of ideologies and identities. This author takes a poststructuralist position towards the concept of identity defining it from authors such as Norton (2013). Barletta (2007) suggested that identity can be studied from different social perspectives, namely, institutional and community practices.

So far and as it was explained earlier in this section, the LTI in our local context has followed an interesting path in its research but the epistemological reflection upon them is still missing. I consider that there are many other aspects of language teacher education that deserve attention, such as, how do language teacher educators perceive themselves in these roles? What are their epistemological stances to guide their actions? Are there only external forces that constitute their identities as teacher educators?

Following this idea, there is the attempt of Escobar (2013) who following Norton (1997) and Foucault (2007) made a remarkable work on explaining structures of power and means of control underneath bilingual policies in Colombia and the consequences of this dominant discourse, such as, widening gaps among socio-economic groups. For this author, identity is "a matter of choice that is governed by our understandings and perceptions of the world's supply" Escobar (2013). Following his argument, I can evidence that the positioning towards identity and possibly towards subject constitution as well, is situated from an external perspective in which the external factors namely policies, institutions, interactions with other subjects and discourses are the ones influencing identity construction in the subject called language teacher educator. At this point, it is important to remark that although Escobar's work (2013) illuminates some of the concepts pursued in this chapter, there are some others still missing such as the internal and external forces of language teacher educators' identity and subject constitution within an epistemological framework which is the direction that this chapter will follow onwards.

Towards an epistemology of teacher educator's identity and subject constitution

In this section, I would like to analyze what constitutes a teacher educator, more precisely how a Teacher Educator is constituted as a subject in our Colombian context of LTE. As an initial step towards this analysis, it would be necessary to carry out a reflection about the relations in which a TE is involved.

Firstly, language professors are immersed in a matrix of relational ways with students, institutions where they work, knowledges acquired through time and

policies among other relations which constitute the subjects they are at the present time. One of the most recognized relations is the connection English language teacher educators (ELTEs) have with policies from international contexts, such as, the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (2001) and national policies created and promoted by Ministry of Education and its program "Colombia Bilingue" (2014). These are must-be or dominant discourses whose main aim is to reach every teacher, teacher educator, student and institution carrying the idea of how a foreign language should be taught. Related to the international policies, I have observed that language teacher educators have been influenced by those regulations in the way that their teaching practices, in terms of the foreign language proficiency of their students, have been focused on the preparation of the future language teachers for the presentation of an international examination. Although it is accepted as a good tool for the profile of the English Language Pre-service Teachers (ELPTs), in our local context having an international certification has been given the same weigh as the academic diploma. This could imply that a good language teacher is the one who has obtained an excellent score in those exams. Furthermore, adopting this dominant discourse may have an impact on the constitution as subjects in TEs in terms of pushing subjects to pay more attention to techniques of teaching a foreign language, training students for specific types of exams and tasks or to give more relevance to formal aspects of the language rather than the social, political, cultural and pedagogical aspects of the process of education.

Moreover, the relation TEs have with policies has been explored by local authors, such as, Martinez (2010), Mendez (2014) and Jimenez (2011) to mention some of the most remarkable studies on this topic. In relation to policies, teachers many times display resistance by means of public demonstrations of their discomfort, by means of approaching the government with proposals to find meeting points or by means of either adopting or not these new regulations inside their pedagogical practices. Considering teacher educators´ resistance practices, I can say from personal experience that in our local context, English language teachers face nowadays the problematic situation of taking an international certification in order to demonstrate that their proficiency level is suitable to be a language teacher.

This situation poses the question of what weighs more, a university diploma or a language certificate for an entry job. I have had the firsthand experience when applying for an English language teacher position, I was asked first about any international certification rather than my academic preparation. I have also discussed with colleagues about the influence of having this type of certification on their teaching practices and I have seen that in some cases they focus on the training for these exams which would mean to leave aside

the development of their methodological and pedagogical skills for the span of time required to be prepared for the international examinations. What seems to be here is an instrumental and technical idea of teacher development which translates into a crystal-clear relation of power where teachers are subjugated to constantly demonstrate their command of the language, which is important in terms of providing students a good source of input; but they leave aside more relevant aspects of their pedagogical practices.

Furthermore, in the sector of undergraduate education programs, we can appreciate another and recent example of this relation between TEs and policies. In February, 2016, one of the most relevant policies aimed at the field of teacher education was made by the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) through the expedition of the resolution 2041 where new, more direct and, what some sectors have called, more restrictive guidelines of quality were established for the education of future teachers. Notwithstanding its clear and valid criteria, every policy must be analyzed from a perspective of the impact it may have on the real practices and experiences that teacher educators go through every day.

One aspect that calls my attention to this new reform is the adoption without questioning of an international standard of proficiency for both pre-service teachers and students of other degrees, such as, engineering, accountability or technicians among others, who are about to finish their undergraduate programs at university. They are required to reach a pre-established level of proficiency which must be certified with an international certification as a requirement for graduation. This is to say, the new policy establishes as mandatory a scheme for any level of proficiency in any foreign or second language, the standards from the Common European Framework of References for Languages (2001). This would entail a monolithic vision of both assessment and teaching a foreign language without any reflection upon our local context and its implications and feasible ways of implementation. In addition, the adoption of such standards may push schools of education to change their curricula to think whether to include the preparation for those international exams in their programs or leave this duty in charge of the students. At this point we can observe a clear practice of how a dominant discourse exercises its power and influence at a specific context.

As this policy establishes new regulations, I wonder about the possible risks in the implementation of a new policy where teacher educators and schools of education had little, if any, participation. Does this policy recognize professor's expertise knowledge and or opinions? Following Giroux (1988) and his valuable depiction of how teachers are being disempowered and deskilled, I can appreciate a side of a technocratic approach, in terms of demanding a

language proficiency certificate that does not challenge teacher educators, language teachers and pre-service teachers to take a critical stance towards their role. This in terms of language teacher educators has an impact on the way they guide their sessions with students as well as the whole process of educating new language teachers. TEs will need to think about whether to include focused preparation for the exams that fulfill the requirements of the new policy which could take time and place from other important pedagogical aspects. One may ask, what is the position of schools of education towards this new set of requirements? If, as Giroux (1988) said, teachers in general, and in the case of this chapter teacher educators, "should be seen as free men and women", will the implementation of a new policy become in a mechanism of control for professors? If so, in what ways?

Secondly, another relation TEs are immersed is the competition with those professionals of other areas, who do not have any pedagogical nor methodological knowledge on language teaching, or even with native speakers of the foreign language who lack any teaching preparation and experience. According to Mariño (2011), there is a trend in Colombia to see native speakers as the perfect model of an English language teacher. This author challenges this assumption by asking if the native speakers have had the same conditions for the process of learning and/or acquiring the English language as a non-native teacher had. Mariño (2011) also points that the tendency of choosing native speakers as language teachers is seen in job advertisements or social networks requiring people from English-speaking countries regardless their academic qualifications. This situation was also identified by Cook (cited in Mariño, 2011) in countries such as The United Kingdom and France. This a situation that provides a beneficial position to native speakers in Colombia which in many cases has a negative effect on non-native teachers, who may see their position as academic and pedagogical expert demeaned when compared to a native speaker. Finally, Mariño (2011) asks a brilliant question: what kind of education and ideologies can a student learn from a native speaker?

A third relation in which professors are immersed can be defined as an introspective and reflective one. To this respect, language teacher educators construct their identity while constituting themselves as subjects as well, with every experience and practice they have in their everyday activities. It is mainly through a reflection upon themselves and their daily performance that TEs constitute, transform and illuminate different aspects of their work as teacher educators. By looking to their inner aspects as subjects (Deleuze, 1987), it is that TEs may see aspects of their identity as educators that have not been realized before. However, I consider that this aspect can be one of the, if not the most, influential aspect in the process of subject constitution

of language teacher educators considering that it is in the subject that TEs are, where all the different relations converge.

From this last relation, it becomes necessary to adopt an epistemological positioning which can give an account of how these relations are intertwined in what is called the subject called language teacher educator. I would follow Deleuze's dissertations in (1987) and (2008) about both Foucault and Spinoza's versions of subject and individual respectively paying special attention to the notions of power relations and potentia and how they contribute to the analysis of the constitution of teacher educators as subjects and their identities.

The first framework I am going to use is the Foucauldian notion of subject. This means to analyze power-knowledge relations and reflective and introspective practices of self-constitution. This framework will help me to understand correlated notions of subject constitution to try to understand how subject themselves refer to it. Complementing Foucault's perspective, I would use Deleuze´s (1987) discussion about thinking and its two faces, exterior and interior, to provide an initial reflection on the concept of identity from an epistemological positioning. Deleuze (1987) says that the origin of thought comes from that outer section which up to a point shapes and provides almost everything to be considered in the thinking but it is the interior face of thought, where there is a void space, where unseen things that are not present in the exterior section emerge or are revealed. I wonder what kind of knowledge could be produced if I invited myself to exercise introspection to try to explain who the teacher is that I am today.

Identity can be constructed from an exterior motivation that will influence the subject in both explicit and implicit ways (Deleuze, 1987). It is important to bear in mind that it is from a reflection upon the interior of the subject that the identity can unveil characteristics previously overlooked.

One explicit way in which identity can be influenced is by the aspects of power and knowledge coming from the exterior (Foucault, 1982). If we translated this to the field of language teacher education, we would find that language teacher educators are influenced by several relations of power and knowledge, as it was previously explained earlier in this chapter. It is through these relations that the concept of identity starts to adopt a plural sense.

Following Foucault (1980) and Delueze (1987), the manifolds of relations of power in which subjects are immersed permeate and constitute the subjects they are but at the same time those relations also require a discourse to be established and the objective of that discourse is to seek the production of truth. On this respect, it is important to consider that Foucault's vision of power (1982) is centered on the exercise of power rather than in its holding

or possession by a person or group of people. I consider that this pursuing of truth shapes both the ethics and laws that subjects follow in their lives and those actions give birth to the plurality of identities in the subjects. Their identities may be influenced or not by external forces, such as, policies either governmental or institutional, evaluation systems, colleagueship or curriculum perspectives among others.

Identity can also be influenced in implicit ways. One implicit manner will be appreciated in those hidden messages or ideas that the discourse carries. For TEs, this would mean that their identities can be shaped or not at will. This means that although there could be external forces trying to shape teacher educators, it would not be until the moment when TEs take the decision of what aspects they will allow to access their identities that those external forces will have a real influence on them.

The second framework of reference I am going to use is Deleuze's dissertations about the Spinozian version of power and potentia (Delueze, 2008). To my mind, Foucault's version of power is "stronger" than Spinoza's view in terms that the former takes this concept out of the subject inserting it in the complex matrix of relations he/she is immersed in their daily life where resistance practices are the most remarkable ways of exercising that power. As for Spinoza, I consider his version of power as "soft" considering that power in this philosopher is seen as a property of the individual and as such it is in the interior of the person rather than in the outside. I would use Deleuze (2008) in order to grasp Spinoza's views on potentia, existence and affection. For Spinoza (in Deleuze, 2008), man has as main objective to reach his essence and go beyond his potentia taking the latter to act. However, Spinoza (in Deleuze, 2008) warns us that the essence of man is a confusing idea. For him, the essence is more related to the existence of human beings which means that this concept is not universal but more attached to each one of the beings where it develops.

Taking into account that the main objective of this chapter is to problematize the concept of Language Teacher Identity (LTI) in Teacher Educators (TEs) from an epistemological perspective, I consider that Spinoza's view will contribute to grasp the inner face or fold[64] of these categories since it allows me to go within the subject itself identifying their capabilities and how they are performed in the real context of education. It complements Foucault's framework since Deleuze's view of Spinoza provides more elements to understand the subject constitution, such as, the perspective to see the language teacher educator as a subject with packages of potentia ready to be performed according to the situation but that could be enacted or not. Deleuze's view of Spinoza also

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64   For an earlier reference on the concept of fold see page 2 of the present chapter.

provides a possible explanation of why subjects do what they do by explaining this origin of action from two feelings (sadness and happiness) which later were taken up by (Santos, 2009) as cold and warm currents.

According to Deleuze (2008), what Spinoza is trying to work is not the essence of human beings but rather their existence, their potentia to do things which is inside every person taking this to the world of the immanence. I want to take a position towards this latter concept. Following Blondel in (Mankeliunas, 1961) there are three types of immanence: absolute immanence, mitigated immanence and negated immanence. I would briefly explain the first two since I consider them the closest to this research. The first one is what Deleuze (1987) called pure immanence and it is defined as the negation of any transcendence in which there are not contingencies neither any relation with the exterior. The second type of immanence is called mitigated and it is described as an intermediate position where there is a clear communication with the exterior from the interior. Blondel cited in (Mankeliunas, 1961) details this immanence as the capacity that the person has to communicate with the exterior giving a dynamic aspect to the immanence defining it as everything that comes from the inside of the individual, as expression of its essence, itself, and at the same time everything that is incorporated from the exterior. In terms of language teacher education this dynamic immanence can be observed when we ask ourselves about the effect that the introduction of a new policy may have on professors, just to mention an example. In what moment and how do policies permeate identities and subject's constitutions of teacher educators? How does a new policy affect me as a teacher educator?

Although Deleuze (2008) does not make this distinction explicit in his study of Spinoza, I could perceive that it is the second version of the immanence the one which is present through his dissertation. On one hand, when both Spinoza and Deleuze talk about a quantitative scale of potentia for human beings, they are implying the presence and existence of the other as point of comparison. On the other hand, they identified a qualitative difference among different modes of existence which implies a dual polarity of existence modes. From here, I can say that one face of this duality can be the relation between exterior and interior in which there is a need for a balance between forces in life for the subject. They explain that one of the forces that mobilizes human beings is to overcome their potentia. If I were to translate this into the context of subject constitution of language teacher educators, I could see that a way TEs handle this duality or polarity from the exterior could be by means of identifying their adaptations when trying to fulfill roles or identities, for example, being an academic or scholar with a wide production of articles and research. However, I also wonder what happens when the interior of that

teacher educator and the roles he/she is asked to perform does not fulfill the idea of teacher educator he/she is pursuing?

Going back to Deleuze's view of Spinoza and the field of language teacher education, I can see that in addition to relations of power, the TE is also influenced by what Deleuze (2008) called "potentia realizations". It is to say that as a teacher educator, I may have some potentia or a package of potentia within me that will only take form when I act it. However, that actuation will only be performed when the affection fills the potentia and stimulates my actuation. These realizations can be or come from a vast array of sources, such as, perceptions, feelings or concepts. Thus, the TE has a package of potentia in order to become in many different identities as well as constitute themselves as subjects.

Contemporary views and works on identity, as for example Hall (1997), tell us about the construction of identity through language in which the latter is a vehicle of communication, confirmation, negotiation and construction of the former. I can infer that language acts are one primordial tool of identity construction considering that identity is embedded in both cultural values and communication in each culture. From this perspective and in order to talk about identity it is important to recognize that there are multiple stances from where a subject can constitute multiple identities through the construction of meaning. For Hall (1997), identity is constructed by means of meaning construction, that is to say, every person through his/her experiences in life try to make sense of the question, who am I?

This in terms of language teacher education can lead us to think about the differences between the categories of practices and experiences from an epistemological point of view and about how they can inform us on the subject constitution and construction of identity of TEs. At this point, I ask myself what does it mean to be a language teacher educator in Colombia? How does society perceive and can define a language teacher educator? Is there a fixed vision of this professional from institutions, society and government? How do language teacher educators face the different roles demanded from them? My intention in this chapter is not to provide a new version of identity but to shed light on what characterizes a language teacher educator in Colombia, what influences are there in their subject constitution as such? How his/her identities are performed or acted in different contexts? How do policies influence, restrain, empower or disempower these subjects?

So far, I wondered what experiences have influenced either positively or not my path as a teacher educator, I have explored epistemological stances that guided my initial but not definite positioning towards the construction

of knowledge in this current historical moment and I have made an initial exploration of the concepts of identity construction and subject constitution from an epistemological perspective following Deleuze's contributions to grasp both Foucault's framework of power relations, and subject's constitution, and Spinoza's understanding of potentia and identity. I have also tried to stablish connections to the area of LTI. This might not be a task I have done on my own there should be more TEs asking themselves how they have become the professors they are today, as those valuable contributions made by all the authors of this book in their chapters. Identity and subject are concepts that require a more elaborated definition in order to establish a clear epistemological positioning towards the future analysis. This does not mean that initial research objectives and questions cannot be formulated since they are needed to start establishing and refining the field of research and action for the topic presented in this chapter and throughout this book. Thus, I would now present the research question and objectives that have guided this initial statement of the problem.

Research questions:

How do Colombian English language teachers' educators empower themselves as subjects of their pedagogical practice?

What are the folds that influence their identity construction?

Objectives:

Main objective

To analyse and describe the different folds involved in the English language teacher educators' subject constitution to understand how their identity is constructed.

Specific objectives

- To identify the influence of external forces that affect the subject. constitution of language teacher educators.
- To explore the type of decisions taken by teacher educators to exercise his/her profession.
- To characterise the inner forces that guide the language teacher educators' identities.

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