Exploring the Landscape of Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE)

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Abstract

The paper delves into the paradigms of Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) by exploring the evolution of its conceptual frameworks and pedagogical practices. Historically, the traditional view of SLTE emphasized the mastery of teaching techniques and linguistic proficiency as core components of teacher preparation. However, recent decades have seen a significant shift in focus within SLTE, moving beyond mere theoretical knowledge towards a re-conceptualized perspective that supports holistic teacher development and critical pedagogy. This re-conceptualized view of SLTE consists of a range of new trends, including an increased emphasis on teacher cognition, reflective practice, and teacher identity construction. Moreover, practicum experiences, a fundamental component of SLTE, transform to align with these emergent paradigms, emphasizing experiential learning, critical reflection, and collaboration with mentor teachers. Additionally, the integration of teacher research into SLTE programs empowers educators as reflective practitioners and knowledge creators, bridging the gap between theory and practice while enhancing classroom effectiveness. Additionally, the integration of teacher research into SLTE programs empowers teachers as reflective practitioners and knowledge creators, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice while enhancing classroom effectiveness. By examining these dimensions of SLTE, this paper contributes to an understanding of the complexities inherent in preparing second language teachers for diverse educational contexts.

Introduction

Originally coined by Richards (1990), SLTE refers to the preparation, training and education of second language (L2) teachers. In other words, SLTE deals with the professional preparation of L2 student teachers (STs). It usually includes imparting knowledge to the teacher about the language and teaching methods. It is followed by a practical course (practicum) to apply and practice the theoretical knowledge they gained. Richard (1990) contends that the main aim of SLTE is to provide novice teachers with opportunities to gain skills, and competencies and explore the 'working rules' used by effective teachers. According to Crandall (2000), language teacher education is comprised of two components; education and training. Traditionally, the former involves developing language knowledge and language teaching and learning whereas the latter aims at developing skills to apply this knowledge in the practice of language teaching. Likewise, Freeman (2016), considers SLTE "a bridge that serves to link what is known in the field with what is done in the classroom, and it does so through the individuals whom we educate as teachers" (p.9). He extends the elaboration of the field by saying that SLTE includes an understanding of the "so-called parent academic disciplines of language teaching as well as the local and national policy environments which often articulate them" (p.9). However, as argued by Crandall (2000), traditional education and training are inadequate in preparing language teachers and there is a need for opportunities for teachers to engage in reflective practice to analyze their beliefs and practices thereby forming and reconstructing their theories of language teaching. A similar opinion has been presented by Richards (1990),

"Teaching depends upon the application of appropriate theory, the development of careful instructional designs and strategies, and the study of what actually happens in the classroom"

Traditional SLTE Perspective

The traditional view of SLTE divides language teaching into two major components; language & teaching and knowledge of the target language is considered sufficient for teaching it (Graves, 2009). In addition, the initial SLTE programmes focused on theoretical knowledge and research as a means of professional development for foreign language teachers (Borg, 2011). It was believed that teachers' familiarity with the knowledge of language learning theories and relevant research would enhance their teaching practices. The SLTE programmes barely considered the contexts in which teacher-learners would teach. It was assumed that teachers would put together what they knew about the content and the knowledge of pedagogy they learned in teaching practice and apply it on their jobs (Freeman, 1998). Hence, as evinced in Figure 1, the knowledge base of SLTE was comprised of a content component and a method/skill component. Both components were taught and evaluated separately and the whole process did not espouse actual teaching practice.

Another issue as pointed out by Britten (1985) was the lack of theoretical grounding in SLTE and suggested that teacher education pedagogy should go beyond its 'demonstration and delivery' pattern. Similarly, Johnson (2001) criticized SLTE's reliance, in terms of research and documentation, on 'parent disciplines of applied linguistics, theoretical linguistics, psychology, and peripherally, on education, anthropology and sociology. Besides, these professional development courses were not linked to a specific context. Hence, the theoretical knowledge mastered by the second language teachers was general and could not enhance their practical skills in language teaching. Much of this disciplinary knowledge remained dysfunctional to the teachers because it could not be implied in the real classroom (Clark, 1994). In other words, classrooms of teacher education programmes were considered "a site for decontextualized knowledge so that, abstracted, such knowledge may become general and hence generalizable, thus transferable to situations of use in the 'real' world" (Lave, 1997:18).

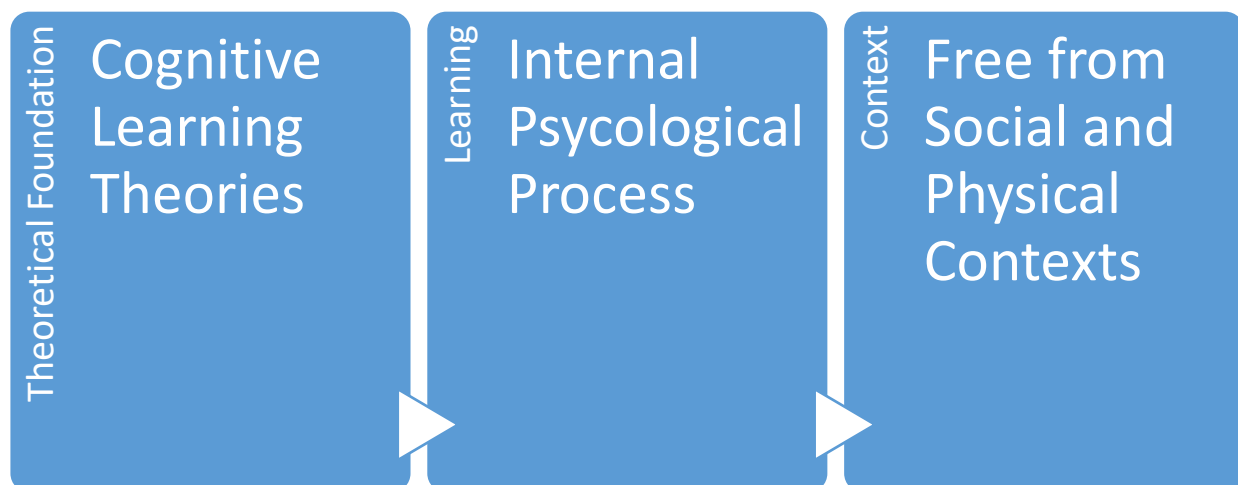| Theoretical Foundation	Cognitive Learning Theories	Learning	Internal Psycological Process	Context	Free from Social and Physical Contexts

Figure 1 Traditional Knowledge Transmission Perspective of Teacher Education

These historical and theoretical traditions defining the knowledge base of second language teacher education were criticized and challenged by researchers and practitioners; Freeman & Johnson, (1998) ; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Richards & Nunan, 1990. The main questions these studies attempted to address are:

- What does a second language teacher need to know to do the work of this profession?
- How is this knowledge best learned by individuals who wish to become members of this profession?

(Johnson & Freeman, 2001, 53)

Similarly, Ball (2000) criticized the decontextualized education programmes to prepare language teachers and referred to the situation as " the persistent divide between subject matter and pedagogy". In other words, language teachers were provided with discrete disciplinary knowledge (theories and methods) and they were expected to apply this knowledge in any context.

Another flaw in this type of teacher learning is called, interestingly, "front-loading" (Freeman, 1993): referring to the notion that what teachers learn at the beginning of their career is sufficient for the rest of their teaching lives. The split between theory and practice has been termed the 'Applied Linguistics Model' by Wright (2010) because of its roots in Applied Linguistics and therefore the core content of SLTE has been comprised of courses in Applied linguistics (Crandall, 2000). This divide in knowledge and pedagogy is seen by Johnson & Freeman (2001) as three different distinct domains:

- Learning to teach is viewed as learning about teaching in one context (the teacher education programme;
- Observing and practicing teaching in another (the practicum), and eventually
- Developing effective teaching behaviours in yet a third context (usually in the induction years of teaching).

(Johnson & Freeman, 2001:55)

This issue has been concluded well by Freeman & Johnson (1998) and Johnson (1996) stating that the actual learning of teachers takes place when they start teaching (on-the-job-initiation) and they learn less in professional teacher education programmes.

A Shift in Focus

The systematic theorization of SLTE or LTE as a field is a result of research-based theoretical knowledge produced by research studies conducted around the globe. The need for empirical studies was highlighted by Richards and Nunan (1990: xi) in the following words:

> the field of teacher education is a relatively underexplored one in both second and foreign language teaching. The literature on teacher education in language teaching is slight compared with the literature on issues such as methods and techniques for classroom teaching. Few of the articles published in the last twenty years are data-based, and most consist of anecdotal wish lists of what is best for the teacher.

(Richards and Nunan 1990: xi)

Hence, the dearth of research in the field of SLTE proved to be a turning point. The views on LTE put forward by Richards and Nunan (1990) have been summarized by Borg (2011):

- a shift from a 'training' perspective to an 'education' perspective along with a recognition that higher-level cognitive processes are involved in effectual teaching which cannot be taught directly;
- the teachers and teachers-learners are required to adopt a research-oriented approach to their classrooms and their teaching practices;
- more emphasis on an inquiry-based and discovery-oriented approach to learning (bottom-up) in contrast to following prescriptions and top-down directives;
- an emphasis on creating experiences that need the teacher-learners to develop theories and hypotheses and to reflect critically on teaching;
- less dependence on applied linguistics as a source discipline for SLTE, and more of an effort to integrate sound, educationally-based approaches;
- inclusion of procedures that engage teachers in collecting and analyzing data about teaching.

(Richards and Nunan 1990: xii)

Similarly, according to Crandall (2000) the field of language teacher education, having its foundation in applied linguistics, draws on the discipline of general education for the knowledge base and opportunities to develop the dispositions and skills of prospective and experienced teachers. Thus, the strong influence of theory and practice of general education on language teacher education programmes resulted in a greater focus on:

- practical experiences such as observations, practice teaching, and opportunities for curriculum and materials development
- classroom-centered or teacher research
- teacher beliefs and teacher cognition in language teacher education

(p.34)

The studies were conducted to develop an understanding of what was required to become and develop a good language teacher. The phenomenal work that contributed to the development of a sound theoretical framework in SLTE explored different aspects of enhancing teachers' theoretical and practical knowledge and skills; teacher cognition, reflective practice and action research as modes of professional development, and alternative forms of continuous professional development.

In the same context, Crandall (2000, cited in Borg, 2011) identifies four trends in LTE:

- a shift from the transmission, product-oriented theories to constructivist, process-oriented theories of learning, teaching, and teacher learning;
- efforts … to transform teaching through a focus on situated teacher cognition and practice and the development of concrete, relevant linkages between theory and practice throughout the teacher education programme;
- a growing recognition that teachers' prior learning experiences play a powerful role in shaping their views of effective teaching and learning and their teaching practices;
- a growing concern that teaching is viewed as a profession (similar to medicine or law) with respect for the role of teachers in developing theory and directing their own professional development through collaborative observation, teacher research and inquiry, and sustained in-service programmes.

(Borg, 2011, 217)

Language Teacher Education (LTE): A Re-Conceptualized View

In response to the major shift in the theoretical underpinning of SLTE, new conceptions and perspectives began to feed into the theory, practice and research of the field. The major strands that shaped the field of SLTE we know today have been discussed below:

I. Teacher Cognition

Teacher cognition refers to the understanding of what teachers think, know and believe and how their beliefs influence what they do in the classrooms (Borg 2006b, 2011, 2020). This field of inquiry includes the study of 'hidden elements' like knowledge, attitudes, thoughts, beliefs and emotions. In the context of SLTE, it is the ability of a teacher to be aware of his or her beliefs about language teaching and learning and how these beliefs influence his or her teaching. The key early studies (Freeman & Richards, 1996; Woods 1996) highlighted teacher cognition as one of the ways to make sense of the language teacher's journey from the status of learner teacher to becoming an experienced teacher, who engages in a continual process of professional development. Borg (2020) considers teacher cognition as an 'unobservable dimension' of teaching dealing with the process of 'becoming, being, and developing as a teacher (Borg, 2020). According to the contemporary SLTE perspective, teachers are considered active, thinking decision-makers whose actions are shaped by their beliefs. Teacher cognition plays a fundamental role in teacher learning as well. Based on constructivist theories of learning, it is now acknowledged in SLTE or LTE that a great deal of influence is exerted on novice as well as experienced teachers by their prior experience, knowledge and beliefs. This is particularly in line with the socio-cultural perspective postulated by Johnson (2001). According to Johnson (2001), what language teachers do and why they do is extremely influenced by their prior experiences, beliefs about language learning and the context in which they teach.

For all the above reasons, understanding teacher cognition is now recognized as a central part of understanding what it means to be, become and develop as a teacher. Though finding the precise relationship between language teachers' beliefs and their teaching is quite complex (Borg, 2018b) in his recent publication, Borg (2020), has asserted that a strong relationship lies between teacher cognition and good language teachers. He goes on to argue that good teachers are those who are aware of their cognitive processes and that their practices are aligned with their beliefs. In case of misalignment between their beliefs and teaching practices in real classroom settings, they know the cause/s. Borg (2020) supports his argument by presenting two cases of experienced EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers. The teachers were recognized as good teachers based on how they were considered competent in their respective institutes and the information (lesson plans and instructional material). Using a set of questions based on the above-mentioned information, a professional conversation was conducted with the participants and they were encouraged to talk about their lessons, their beliefs and their teaching practices in general. The analysis of both cases ascertained that 'good teachers', as maintained earlier, were aware of their beliefs and their teaching practices were quite in line with their cognitions. Moreover, they knew if their work deviated from what they believed in as language teachers and the reason for this inconsistency. Hence, Borg (2020) contends that a good language teacher is a professional 'who possesses a high level of self-awareness, including of the beliefs they hold and of their influence on their work and of examining situations where their beliefs and practices are not aligned.

It is significant to know that the connection between teacher cognition and teaching practices is not always in perfect alignment. There may be contextual constraints (institutional policy, learners 'language proficiency, and available resources, to name a few) that restrain a language teacher from practicing his or her beliefs in a classroom (Borg, 2020). For example, a language

teacher believes integrating technology in teaching can enhance learning as students are quite familiar with it (Abdelrady & Akram, 2022; Akram & Abdelrady, 2023). However, this cannot be implemented because of the unavailability of technological resources in the classroom or the institute (Akram et al., 2021; 2022). Hence, the inability to practice the teacher's beliefs; use of technology to enhance learning, should not be considered a lack of competence on the teacher's part. Therefore, teacher cognition is neither the only criteria to evaluate teacher quality nor the only prominent factor in contemporary discussions of teacher quality. As discussed by Borg (2020) 'teacher quality tends to be evaluated regarding what teachers know and are able to do.' This is why teachers 'quality in language teaching is evaluated using a comprehensive framework, (e.g., the teacher competence frameworks by Cambridge Assessment English and the British Council). This focus on teacher performance is comprehendible because student learning is immediately more affected by what teachers do than what they believe.

A, somewhat, different dimension of teacher cognition is seen in the literature on teacher evaluation (Akram et al., 2022; Darling, Hammond, 2013) where teacher quality is not restricted to the teacher's performance in the classroom. It constitutes other aspects of a teacher's work as well, e.g. capacity to reflect. In other words, competent teachers are capable of thinking about their teaching and are aware of the extent to which they practically do what they believe (Li & Akram, 2023). Moreover, the reflective practice enables them to figure out ways to grow as professionals (Ramzan et al., 2023).

As discussed earlier, the attainment of ideal alignment between teacher beliefs and practice should not be the only yard to measure a teacher's competence. However, as Borg (2020) puts it, teachers should be supported in 'becoming aware of their beliefs and of how these relate to their teaching.' It is acknowledged that teacher education programmes (pre-service and in-service) will be more effective if these are based on or consider teachers' cognitions (Ramzan et al., 2023). These programmes can integrate many reflective strategies to foster teacher cognition. Borg (2020) suggests that self-observation and reflective writing can help teachers 'become aware of their beliefs and of how these beliefs relate to their teaching.' The procedure for such activities is simple. A teacher can record his or her lesson and then review the recordings followed by writing about their reflections on the recorded lessons. This exercise enables the teacher to critically analyse their lessons to know how their beliefs are integrated into their teaching.

Peer observation (Cosh, 1999) is a strategy for collaborative reflection that involves teachers working in pairs. The teacher being observed informs the observer (another teacher) on what to focus on during the observed lesson. This provides an opportunity for the teachers to reflect collaboratively and while doing so, they review the beliefs underlying their teaching practices.

II.   Reflective Practice

Reflective practice has been recognized as a critical component of professional development in various fields, including Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE). In SLTE, reflective practice involves thinking about and critically evaluating one's own experiences, actions, and beliefs to improve professional practice.

The review of the literature reveals that reflective practice has a positive impact on language teachers' professional development. Studies conducted by Farrell (2008), Akbari (2007 showed that reflective practice helped teachers to become more aware of their teaching practice, develop a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning process, and make necessary changes to their teaching approach. The teachers reported that reflecting on their teaching practice helped them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to become more effective teachers.

Moreover, reflective practice has also been found to play an important role in the development and negotiation of teacher identity. Studies conducted by Johnson (2009) and Tsui (2007) showed that reflective practice helped teachers to develop a stronger sense of teacher identity and to negotiate their professional roles as language teachers. The teachers reported that reflective practice helped them to become more aware of their own teaching beliefs and values, and to develop a more coherent and consistent professional identity. Thus, reflective practice is a valuable tool for language teachers' professional development in SLTE. Similarly, the review of the literature showed that reflective practice can help teachers to become more effective in their teaching practice, to develop a deeper understanding of the teaching and learning process, and to negotiate their professional roles as language teachers. It is recommended that SLTE programmes incorporate reflective practice as an integral component of professional development to enhance language teachers' teaching skills, knowledge, and understanding.

III.   Language Teacher Identity (LTI):

Based on the sociocultural perspective of teacher learning, one of the central aspects of learning is reshaping the identities of learner-teachers within the social interaction of the classroom. The significance of LTI lies in the fact that ' perceptions of teachers as technicians who implement methods assigned by others have changed to one of the teachers being viewed as thinking individuals who play a significant role in what happens in the classroom, (Varghese, et. al 2005). As for the scope of LTE is concerned, according to Barkhuizein (2019), the theorization of LTI involves its construction and negotiation in contexts of teaching and teacher education, and how it is related to teaching practice and the work of teachers beyond the classrooms. Similarly, Richards & Burns (2009) define identity in the context of SLTE as various social and cultural roles that are enacted by student teachers while they interact with their peers and lecturers (teacher educators) during the learning process. In other words, the complex concept of LTE deals with how second language teachers perceive and construct themselves professionally.

As claimed by Barkhuizen (2019), LTE is a broad concept and can be analyzed from multiple dimensions and due to its multifaceted nature, it is quite challenging to define it conclusively. These dimensions, for instance, may deal with a variety of roles and related functions that teachers perform, teachers' beliefs and their theories of language teaching, teacher's moral stance, teachers emotions, teachers' former experiences and language learning histories and actual practice of teaching. Likewise, Varghese (2017) states two theoretical positions of LTE: *identity-in-practice,* referring to the close relation between who teachers are and the work they do as members of a particular group. Considering the aforementioned aspects of LTE and various other theoretical conceptions in the fields of psychology, education and applied linguistics, Burkhuizen (2017c) attempts to define LTE comprehensively:

Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical – they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social, material and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. They are core and peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple, and hybrid, and they are foregrounded and backgrounded. And LTIs change, short-term and over time – discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in classrooms, institutions, and online.

(p. 4)

However, it is noteworthy that these roles are not fixed and keep evolving through the social processes in the classroom. Many factors play a crucial role in shaping a teacher's identity, for example, personal biography, age, gender, culture, working conditions and school and classroom culture. It is obvious that teachers, whether novice or experienced, do not enter the learning contexts as empty vessels and bring with them a set of beliefs and attitudes that have long been developing in their respective social and cultural settings. Thus, a learner-teachers identity is remade when they acquire new modes of discourse and through the learning context in an SLTE programme. Therefore, teacher learning is not just about learning new skills and knowledge, it involves knowing what it means to be a language teacher. Moreover, as the development of a teacher's identity is a continual process, it includes teachers negotiating their identities after they step into real classrooms as professionals through social interactions in situated communities concerning particular activities and relationships (Richards, 2009).

IV.   Practicum

One of the aims of a teacher education programme is to familiarize teacher-learners with the realities of real classrooms and this is achieved by engaging them in school-based teaching experiences or supervised teaching. It is also an essential part of the SLTE programme and has been included in many ELT, TESOL and English Education curricula (Gebhard, 2009). Hence, practicum refers to supervised teaching, experiences with systematic observation and getting familiar with a specific teaching context. Different terms are used to refer to the practicum, for example, 'practice teaching, field experience, apprenticeship, practical experience and internship' (Gebhard, 2009). However, as pointed out by Gebhard (2009) teacher-learners may have different experiences in different types of practicum programme in terms of intensity and their responsibility. For instance, as an internee, a learner-teacher is required to work as an assistant whereas in practice teaching, he or she may have a full teaching load.

Richard & Crookes (1988) (cited in Gebhard, 2009) identify that a practicum provides opportunities for teachers to (i) gain practical classroom teaching experience; (ii) put the theoretical knowledge gained from coursework into practice; (iii) learn from observing experienced teachers; (iv) develop lesson-planning skills; (v) become skilled in selection, adaption and development of course material. In addition, practicum enables the teacher-learners to set their own goals to enhance their teaching skills (Crookes, 2003). It also allows them to question and reflect on their teaching and learning philosophies, beliefs, assumptions, education and life experiences. To achieve these goals, a variety of development activities can be used, for instance, teaching a class, systematic classroom observation, observing experienced teachers and keeping a teaching journal. Likewise, other activities that are closely connected to practicum are mentoring, teacher supervision, teacher portfolios and action research.

In contrast with the traditional view of practicum experience, rooted in a *training* framework (Burns & Richards, 2009), the contemporary perspective considers it a developmental activity. Furthermore, the practicum with an emphasis on development allows teachers to make informed decisions related to teaching, enabling them to reflect and explore their teaching beliefs and practices. Hence, as asserted by Gebhards (2009), as a result of practicum experiences, teacher-learners become life-long learners and continue to grow and adapt throughout their teaching careers.

V.   Mentoring

Mentoring refers to one-to-one support of a novice or less experienced teacher (mentee) by a more experienced teacher (mentor), designed essentially to aid the development of the mentee's

expertise and to facilitate their induction into the culture of the teaching profession and the specific local context (educational institute) (Aydin & Arsalan, 2022). According to Malderez (2009), mentoring is a process of 'one-to-one, work-based, contingent and personally appropriate support for the person (here teacher) during their professional acclimatization (or integration), learning growth and development'. Similarly, Nguyen (2017) defines a 'mentor' as a more capable teacher who provides professional or emotional support to a novice or less experienced teacher (a mentee). However, as argued by Brooks and Sikes (1997), being an experienced or a good teacher is not sufficient to be a mentor and therefore mentoring is not a simple process as it encompasses a wide range of abilities, skills, attitudes, and perspectives (Aydin & Arsalan, 2022).

Adams (2012) presented three models of mentoring which are : (1) co-learning, involving two colleagues taking on the roles of reflective practitioners; (2) professional partnership, which refers to a process in which two experienced teachers share and have in-depth discussions; (3) lead teacher model encompasses a group of teachers who collaborate and guide each other. The significance of mentoring as a form of professional learning and development is embedded in the roles a mentor performs and the type of support he or she provides to the mentee. According to Malderez (2009), mentors may take the role of a model, a sponsor, or an educator and provide support for the mentee's acculturation in the professional context. Moreover, mentoring can be conducted at any phase of teaching, from pre-service training for the teacher-learners or supporting teachers at the initial stage of their teaching career and much later stages of development. In the first type, during pre-service training, a trainee is assigned to a cooperating/experienced teacher in a practicum whereas, the second type takes the form of in-service training for novice teachers who are given a mentor, usually an experienced colleague, in order to support their initiation into the profession. The studies (Hobson and Malderez, 2013: 92) have proved that attrition is reduced significantly in both cases and it is suggested that school-based mentoring is 'perhaps the single most effective means of supporting the professional learning and development of beginning teachers'. Besides these benefits for the mentees, the best aspect of a mentoring relationship is that it is reciprocal and mentors may choose this role for their professional growth and development as it creates opportunities for them to reflect upon their teaching practices while facilitating mentee's professional learning (Gakonga, 2019; Malderez, 2009).

As for the types of support a mentee receives from the mentor, Gokango (2019) discusses three major forms. The first is emotional support; arguably the foundation on which the other forms rest and involves the demonstration of care and empathy by the mentor to a mentee in a challenging situation. The second type is technical support in which an experienced teacher, a 'knowledgeable professional' provides mentees with suggestions, advice and practical tips. In the third type, a mentor acts as a facilitator of reflection; 'a person who can encourage and enrich the mentee's reflective practice'. These elements of mentoring have been considered as competing or alternative models. Besides outlining and elucidating the major considerations related to teacher mentoring, mentors and mentees, various studies have also been conducted to assess the effectiveness of mentoring experiences in the field. The studies by Bird & Hudson (2015); Brown (2001); Hobson et al.(2009) and Nguyen (2017) attest to the significance of its practical application and positive impact on the enhancement of pedagogical skills of trainee teachers. In the same vein, a recent study by Aydin & Arsalan (2022) explores pre- and in-service EFL teachers' concepts, expectations, and experiences related to teacher mentoring. The

findings of the study reveal that the majority of the participants found their mentoring experiences positive.

VI.   Teacher Research

According to Borg (2015), teacher research is a 'systematic self-study by teachers (individually or collaboratively) which seeks to achieve the real-world impact of some kind and is made public'. This definition sheds light on the main characteristics of teacher research. Firstly, it is 'systematic' which means like any other form of research, it follows a certain set of principles. Secondly, it involves 'self-study, therefore, the focus of the investigation is on teachers and their work. Thirdly, it aims at making a 'real-world impact' i.e. it does not generate knowledge for its own sake and potentially influences teachers' beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and classroom practices. Likewise, it can have an impact on students' beliefs, knowledge and performance, or on some facets of an institution (Borg, 2015). Lastly, the findings of teacher research are made public in contrast to teaching being considered a private activity. Teacher research is known by many other names and with a slight variation in its scope and functions; action research, practitioner research and classroom research. Teacher research is initiated with the identification of a problem by the teacher/es, and then relevant data is collected followed by examination and interpretation of the information collected as data and finally reaching some conclusions. However, Borg (2015) states that 'the conclusions reached through teacher research are always provisional' because the findings can be revised after further investigation.

Another fundamental feature of teacher research is its flexibility in terms of methodology. Several strategies can be used to collect and analyze data and to share the findings based on the questions being investigated. However, the most significant factors to consider while choosing a strategy are feasibility (Borg, 2015) and sustainability (Allwright, 2003). Teacher research should be designed in a way that teachers can manage within the limitations and constraints of their knowledge, skills, and working conditions. The studies by Borg (2013) and Sharp (2007) report a positive impact of teacher research on teachers' confidence, self-esteem, classroom practices, autonomy, motivation, collegiality, and enthusiasm and on learners and the institution. Despite its significant role in the professional development of teachers or more specifically, English language teachers, teacher research is not a common activity in the field of ELT because teachers' backgrounds and the contexts in which language teachers work are often not conducive to teacher research as a PD activity (Borg, 2010). However, a carefully planned support system can facilitate teacher research as a productive activity in the professional lives of language teachers (Borg, 2015).

Conclusion

The comprehensive review of the literature highlights the complexity inherent in preparing second language teachers for diverse educational contexts. Hence, in response to evolving pedagogical paradigms and the changing needs of language learners, the SLTE programmes stand in need to adapt and innovate. Teachers, educators and researchers can continue to advance the dscipline by engaging with the multifaceted components of SLTE, ultimately fostering the development of skilled and contextually responsive language teachers equipped to meet the challenges of today's globalized world. Moving forward, further research and collaboration within the SLTE community is crucial to continue progress and to ensure the continual relevance and efficacy of language teacher education.

Acknowledgment:

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