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'Transformative Pedagogy' in Language Teacher Education

Patrick Farren

Abstract

'Transformative language pedagogy' ('transformative pedagogy') emerged from three systemically linked, qualitative studies carried out by the author in collaboration with educators at the National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland, King's College London, and Boston College, MA, and neighbouring, post-primary schools. The context for the studies is language teacher education. 'Transformative pedagogy' enhances the social-psychological model of autonomous language teaching and learning by underpinning it with an intercultural and moral-philosophical foundation. It supports the target language teacher in developing a more encompassing, professional identity that incorporates practitioner-researcher and leader. Researching practice requires justifying pedagogical decisions by testing that they are evidence informed and based on moral values and opening them to external scrutiny. An original model for 'transformative research' is outlined.

Keywords: autonomous language teaching and learning, 'transformative pedagogy', evidence-informed, moral values, practitioner-research, beliefs and attitudes, interdependence, social-interaction, metacognition, metalanguage, target language use, socio-affective factors, 'transformative research'

1. Introduction

Traditionally, in Ireland, language teaching and learning—English, Irish, and modern foreign language teaching and learning (MFL)—have been driven mainly by external motivators, including passing summative examinations. Target language teaching and learning have been often misinterpreted as students' reciting phrases and sentences that the teacher has provided, and success as students' ability to regurgitate information in examinations. While target language awareness and cultural awareness have been key objectives of the common MFL syllabus for junior and senior cycles since 1988, in practice they have not been given the attention they warrant. Overall, the consequence has been an impoverished experience for students. With regard to teacher education, insufficient collaboration among educators has exposed student-teachers to the danger of contradictory counsels. These concerns inspired me to carry out a collaborative study with educators and student-teachers at the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI Galway), and with post-primary school mentors and students in neighbouring schools. The study led to two further systemically linked studies at King's College London and Boston College, MA.

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework for a 'transformative pedagogy' that emerged from the three studies and that enhances the social-psychological model of autonomous language teaching and learning. 'Transformative pedagogy' supports

student-teachers and students in developing the capacity to accept responsibility for language teaching and learning linked to making use of the target language to express their meanings not only in the traditional and basic literacies of reading, writing, listening, and speaking but also in a range of 'new' literacies, including intercultural, critical, digital, media, and research literacies. It is underpinned by a critical and moral-philosophical foundation that supports students in developing their identity as whole persons as critical, intercultural language users with the capacity to make sense of their world informed by moral values, for example, equality and social justice.

'Transformative pedagogy' supports teachers in developing a more encompassing professional identity than specific target language teachers, as practitioner-researchers and leaders. It necessitates competency in a range of 'new' literacies and corresponding skills necessary to integrate them into practice. Bringing about transformation requires teachers to justify their pedagogical decisions and actions by testing that they are evidence informed and based on moral values and by leaving them open to external scrutiny.

I begin by clarifying the meanings of two linked concepts, pedagogy and transformation. Then, I outline factors that the literature has identified with autonomous language teaching and learning before examining key factors for 'transformative pedagogy'. I examine what the literature has to say about 'new' literacies, and teachers' professional identity linked to practitioner-researcher and language leader for whom decisions are evidence informed and based on democratic, moral values. I offer an example for a 'transformative pedagogy' in the context of teaching English language learners. Finally, I outline key stages in an original 'transformative research' model.

2. Pedagogy

Alexander [1] defines pedagogy as:

> *the act of teaching together with attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted.*

As in this definition, 'transformative pedagogy' concerns substance and justification. It involves 'both the teaching act and its attendant discourse of ideas, values, and principles' [1]. Teaching is understood as a morally purposeful activity that is evidence informed, and autonomy is understood as a pre-requisite for morality.

'Transformative pedagogy' is set within an interpretive perspective. This perspective believes that the world can be understood only by those who are part of the ongoing action. The argument is that because of man's 'self-awareness and powers of language' he must be seen as different from any other creature or object and that what is needed, therefore, is an anthropomorphic model of people. This approach entails taking account of uniquely human attributes, for example, the capacity to monitor our performance, articulate our performances, and plan [2]. In the interpretive paradigm, theory emerges as meanings from people in particular situations and yields insights and understandings of peoples' behaviour [3].

3. Transformation

The concept of transformation linked to improvement has been referred to in the writing of several researchers. For example, Lewin [4] has referred to a

transformative cycle that includes 'action steps' aimed at bringing about change. Habermas [5] has argued that reason, in part through discourse ethics, has the potential to transform the world into a more just society. Winter [6] has argued that the alternating of theory and practice is what brings transformation in action research, and that the researcher must articulate the theoretical justification for actions and 'to question the bases for those justifications'. McNiff [7] has argued that in action research, 'theory informs practice, practice refines theory, in a continuous transformation', and has highlighted 'the need for democracy and justice' among participants to underpin the action research process.[1] Fuchs [8], arguably one of the greatest moral theologians of the twentieth century, has argued that right reason, 'recta ratio', supports human beings in making moral decisions. 'Transformative pedagogy' is aimed at bringing about improvement in language teaching and learning that is evidence informed, and based on democratic, moral values.

I referred earlier that 'transformative pedagogy' enhances autonomous language teaching and learning. It would be appropriate therefore, that I begin by examining the latter construct.

4. Autonomous language teaching and learning

Key factors examined are as follows:

- self-awareness

- interdependence

- socio-affective factors

- social interaction

- target language use

- metacognition and metalanguage

4.1 Self-awareness: ontological and epistemological beliefs

Little [9] has argued that teachers need to become aware of 'the assumptions, values and prejudices which determine their classroom behavior.' He claims that the development of teacher autonomy is a 'prerequisite' for the development of learner autonomy' [10]. Breen and Mann [11] suggest that autonomy is 'a complex challenge' that has limits but is worth seeking as an ideal. They draw implications from this for teachers and express them in terms of key attributes for autonomous teaching:

- Self-awareness: one's beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning; the ability to reflect on action and relationships in the classroom;

- Belief in the capacity of each person to learn.

Teachers will first need to reflect on their teaching beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions before they can expect to create appropriate conditions that are likely to motivate learners. Black and Wiliam [12] have argued that more 'open moves' in

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[1] In the National University of Ireland, Galway, study I made use of an action research approach.

which learners are involved in the negotiation of classroom contracts, are determined by the epistemological, psychological, and pedagogical beliefs of the teacher. Individual teachers' interpretations of the curriculum are reflected in the type of actions and interactions that take place in the classroom. A teacher's understanding about the nature of knowledge shapes the type of learning activities he offers. Key to a 'transformative pedagogy' would be teachers' beliefs and a range of other factors, including ontological, epistemological, and moral factors.

According to Taber [13], "The two aspects of 'philosophy' considered to underpin research paradigms are beliefs (or 'commitments') about the nature of the world (what kind of things exist in the world and what is their nature?), and so the nature of the phenomena studied in research; and beliefs about the nature and status of human knowledge, and so how we might come to hold knowledge."

In education, metaphysics and ontology refer to teachers' beliefs about what they understand is the 'reality' of teaching and learning. Ontological beliefs concern how teachers perceive themselves as beings in relation to others. A teacher's ontological beliefs might be, for example, respecting the dignity of the individual and personal responsibility for learning. Having clarified his beliefs, the teacher would endeavour to live these as epistemological beliefs in his teaching practice.

Epistemological beliefs are our beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing [14]. They are 'beliefs about the origin and acquisition of knowledge' [15]. According to Bryman and Bell [16], 'an epistemological issue concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline'. Research suggests that epistemological beliefs are important as they may influence strategy use, cognitive processing, etc. A teacher's personal epistemology characterises her set of beliefs about how learners come to know and how they learn and acquire knowledge that influences her teaching. 'Transformative pedagogy' argues that in addition to ontological and epistemological beliefs, pedagogical decisions need to be evidence informed and based on democratic, moral values that enable teachers to take a stance for a more just society.

4.2 Interdependence

Boud [17] argued that the notion of interdependence was central to the development of autonomy. Today, the term, self-directed learning, is understood to involve 'collaboration and interdependence' [18]. For example, Thomson [19] and Kohonen [20] refer to self-directed learning as learning in which learners take responsibility for their learning that includes a social dimension. Little [21] offers a helpful list that dispels the myth that autonomous learning means working on one's own:

- It is not limited to self-instruction and, therefore, not learning without a teacher.

- It does not mean that the teacher abdicates his responsibility and lets the learners get on with their work as best they can without help.

- It is not another teaching method.

- It is not a single behaviour.

- It is not a steady state achieved by learners.

He adds that independence should be 'balanced' by 'dependence' because our human condition is one of 'interdependence' and suggests that autonomous learning needs to be supported 'with expert help' [9]. Allwright [22], too, includes the

notion of interdependence in his definition: it is 'a constantly changing but at any time optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-development and human interdependence'. In addition, Deci [23] dismisses the myth that 'you have to give up your autonomy ... to be related to others'.

4.3 Socio-affective factors

'*Affect* refers to the emotion or feeling' [24]. For Trim [25], autonomous learning involves 'an adaptive ability, allowing learners to develop supportive structures within themselves'. Autonomy, therefore, 'should not be associated only with external organisational structures' but should involve the relation between the student and learning [26]. Developing one's psychological relation to learning means that the student is more likely to act out of intrinsic as opposed to extrinsic motivation. Kohonen [27] has argued that becoming 'an intercultural language user emphasises the central role of the affective development in foreign and second language education'. 'Transformative pedagogy', as we shall see, emphasises the intercultural dimension and by implication, the socio-affective domain.

According to Douglas [24]: 'Understanding how human beings feel and respond and believe and value is an exceedingly important aspect of a theory of second language acquisition'. Personality factors include self-esteem, which Coppersmith [28] has defined as 'the evaluation which individuals make and customarily maintain with regard to themselves'. Maslow [29] has described two kinds of self-esteem:

1. the need for respect from others that entails recognition, acceptance, status, and appreciation and

2. the need for self-respect that entails competence, confidence, mastery, achievement, independence, and freedom.

In the Irish context, *Charting our Education Future. White Paper* [30] articulates education philosophy. It highlights the importance for students to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-reliance.

4.4 Social interaction

Pedagogy's purpose, according to Bruner [31], 'is to help the child understand better, more powerfully: this is fostered through discussion and collaboration'. There are two terms in the literature that I have found helpful to describe appropriate teacher-student interaction: 'pedagogical dialogue' [10] and 'dialogic teaching' [32]. For both Little and Alexander, the pedagogic process is intended to promote the capacity of students to express their meanings. According to Alexander [32], research shows that talk of a genuinely dialogic kind is indispensable to the development of thinking and understanding. This is supported by Dickson [33] who has argued that intake cannot be guaranteed without interaction and that teacher talk as the sole source of the target language in the classroom can present a danger.

In teacher education, interdependence should characterise the relationship between educators and student-teachers. Garrison and Anderson [34] have argued that 'the purpose of [a community of practice] is more than social interaction ... The purpose of an educational community is invariably associated with intended cognitive outcomes'. Dialogue should support student-teachers in developing their psychological relation to the content and process of teaching, and by implication, the capacity to accept responsibility for making use of the target language in classroom interactions. In addition, in 'transformative pedagogy', as we shall see later,

dialogue should support student-teachers in developing their professional identity as practitioner-researchers and leaders.

4.5 Target language use

Social interaction implies language use. Target language use refers to production and reception of the target language on the part of teachers and students, that is, what they say, hear, read, write, and view. Littlewood [35] has argued that the goal of language learning is to help 'learners become independent from their teachers in their learning and use of language'. According to this argument, teaching should be geared towards students making increased use of the target language. Little [36] has argued for 'an understanding of language learner autonomy in which the development of learner autonomy and the growth of target language proficiency are not only mutually supporting but fully integrated with each other'. For this to happen, it would be essential that teachers and students make use of the target language as far as is feasible, in all aspects of teaching and learning. By implication, language teachers would need to have a high level of target language proficiency.

Hymes [37] conceptualised communicative competence as involving language use in social context, and this led the way for Canale and Swain to conceptualise competence in four stages:

1. Grammatical competence, that is, knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics, and phonology [38];

2. Socio-linguistic competence, that is, rules of language use in context;

3. Discourse competence, that is, organisation features of spoken and written texts that involve cohesion [39] and coherence [40];

4. Strategic competence, that is, the learners' capacity to communicate using (a) verbal and non-verbal strategies to compensate for any breakdown in communication or memory loss and (b) to enhance communication (e.g. slow speech) [41].

Long's interaction hypothesis holds that that 'comprehensible input' (language and concepts that are mostly understandable to the learner) 'is the result of modified interaction (modifications made by the native/proficient second language speaker to create comprehensible input)' [42, 43]. Authentic language input and social interaction are, therefore, essential. Research suggests that when learners are exposed to large amounts of comprehensible input they are engaged in meaning-making and learn to understand and retain what they hear and to use it to express their messages. Later, under 'transformative pedagogy', we shall see how intercultural competence complements communicative competence.

4.6 (Meta)cognition and metalanguage

Wenden [44] defines metacognitive knowledge as 'the stable, stateable, and sometimes fallible, knowledge learners acquire about themselves as learners and about the learning process' and as 'a rich knowledge base' that is necessary. According to Pritchard [45], it is 'the knowledge that an individual has about their own cognition, which can be used to consider and to control their cognitive processes'.

Bruner's notion of scaffolding is associated with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development [27]. Bruner [46] has described scaffolding as a 'process of "setting

up" the situation to make the child's entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he becomes skilled enough to manage it'. He has argued that when learners 'work collaboratively to solve problems they are most likely to exercise and further develop the "metalinguistic function" that Barnes [47] has argued, mediates between "school knowledge" and the "action knowledge" they bring with them to the classroom'. Barnes understands 'school knowledge' as 'the knowledge someone else presents to us' and 'action knowledge' as 'that view of the world in which our actions are based' [47]. Metalanguage enables students to make use of the target language as a thinking tool and therefore supports them in developing target language proficiency.

Deci [48] has argued that striving for competence and autonomy together leads towards ongoing learning and that interpersonal contexts are important in order that autonomy can develop. With the ingredients of:

a. understanding how to go about achieving goals,

b. feeling competent at the activities and tasks,

c. having support of social interaction, and

d. people will be able to set their own goals, develop their own standards, monitor their own progress, and attain goals.

Ridley [49] has defined reflection as 'cognitive processes of which the speaker/writer is potentially aware'. Involvement by student-teachers and students in reflection would support them in developing the capacity to accept responsibility for teaching and learning.

O'Malley and Chamot [50] offer three categories of strategies that support autonomous learning, which are as follows:

1. Cognitive strategies (e.g. analysing, ordering and classifying material, note-taking, deducing, inferring, and summarising);

2. Metacognitive strategies, understood as reflecting on the learning process (e.g. planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning);

3. Socio-affective strategies relate to how learners interact with one another and control themselves in order to improve their learning.

5. 'Transformative pedagogy' and 'new' literacies

In this section, I examine factors for 'transformative pedagogy' that enhance autonomous language teaching and learning. They include a range of 'new' literacies, for example, intercultural, and factors that support language teachers in developing a more encompassing identity as practitioner-researchers and leaders. According to Mustakova-Possardt [51], moral consciousness includes taking action against the oppressive elements in one's life that are illuminated by that understanding. I argue that teacher education, through the socio-cultural context of the 'practicum', course content, and 'transformative pedagogy', should aim to support student teachers in developing a more encompassing professional identity as practitioner-researchers and leaders with moral consciousness.

Autonomy is understood as a pre-requisite for morality. 'Transformative pedagogy' builds on autonomous teaching by having it evidence informed and underpinned by moral values. In addition, it builds on autonomous language learning. For, not only does it support students in making use of the traditional and basic literacies of reading, writing, listening, and speaking to express their meanings but also it supports them in developing as critical, intercultural target language users whose interactions are based on moral values.

Next, I examine what the literature has to say about 'new' literacies. Then, I discuss factors that support teachers in developing a more encompassing professional identity than specific language teacher. After that, I offer an example for a 'transformative pedagogy' in the context of addressing English language learners' needs.

5.1 'New' literacies

Literacy development has traditionally focused on the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These are fundamental skills in language learning, and indeed in all learning. Modern definitions of literacy, however, include additional skills, including intercultural, digital, and media literacies.

There are two major frameworks for learning, teaching, and assessing foreign language skills: the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) [52], and the US defined scales of proficiency, that is, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines/Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Skill Development Descriptions [53]. Both these European and US frameworks form the basis of major assessing and certification systems. ACTFL has developed five goal areas in language learning: (a) Communication, (b) Cultures, (c) Connections, (d) Comparisons, and (e) Communities. These areas connect the development of the basic linguistic skills with socio-cultural contexts, (meta)cognitive processes, and content that lead to learning activities that fulfil the following six elements of literacy offered by the National Council for Teaching English in the USA [54]:

1. Manage, analyse, and synthesise multiple streams of information.

2. Design and share information for global communities.

3. Build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others.

4. Develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology.

5. Create, critique, analyse, and evaluate multimedia texts.

6. Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by complex environments.

The goal of language education in the modern era is 'to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place' [52]. In a plurilingualism approach,

> *…a person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the language of other peoples, he/she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact.* [52]

This suggests that language and literacy skills and strategies learnt in one language and area of the curriculum can be transferred to other languages and areas of the curriculum.

5.2 Intercultural literacy and socio-cultural context

Here, I clarify meanings of key concepts about culture, cultural identity, cultural diversity, interculturalism, and competence and make connections between these in the Irish context.

Geertz, cited in Boylan [55], has argued that culture is not a set of material manifestations (behaviour, literature, etc.) but rather the mindset shared within some community that produces these manifestations and weaves them into a recognisable whole. UNESCO [56, 57] offers examples of these manifestations: 'that set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group, encompassing all the ways of being in that society; at a minimum, including art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs'.

Mindset comes about as a result of interacting in one's community, for example, family, home language, and cultural community and one's other communities, including ethnic, religious, and professional communities. Cultural identity is the will we exert to resolve the 'contradiction and ambiguities' [58] that 'the inter-related sets of beliefs and values people have acquired through interacting with various communities…inevitably contain.' [55]. It should not be seen as static but as a dynamic way of being in the world that involves being open to other cultures and cultural identities. According to Hall, a particular mindset or cultural identity comes about as a result of 'where and how one positions oneself in some ever-expanding relational network' [59]. This suggests that students would first need to develop an understanding about how knowledge is constructed in their native, socio-cultural context. Understanding this narrative would support them in developing an openness to how meanings are constructed in other socio-cultural contexts, and in respecting the 'other'. On the other hand, it suggests that in addition to the traditional literacies, 'new' literacies should form part of any mandatory, integration programmes for new immigrants in order that they develop the capacity to communicate in the official language(s), to integrate, to develop appropriate socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness, and to learn more about democratic, moral values.

Intercultural describes what happens when members of different cultural groups interact with one another, in person or through mediated forms. Competence refers to having knowledge, ability, or skill, to permit appropriate behaviour in context. According to UNESCO [57],

Competence includes cognitive (knowledge), functional (application of knowledge), personal (behaviour) and ethical (principles guiding behaviour) components, thus the capacity to know must be matched to the capacity to speak and act appropriately in context; ethics and consideration of human rights influence both speech and actions'.

Byram [60] offers a framework for intercultural competence that 'transformative pedagogy' draws on. The framework consists of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Knowledge is organised into two categories:

1. knowledge of others and of social processes of social group (savoirs)

2. knowledge of self and of critical cultural awareness, which involves an ability to evaluate practices and products of one's own and others' cultures (savoirs' engager).

Skills are organised into two categories:

1. Skills to interpret and related (savoir comprendre)

2. Skills to discover and/or to interact (savoir apprendre/faire).

Intercultural attitudes are defined as relativizing self (one's values, beliefs, and behaviours within a larger perspective) and valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviours ('savoir être').

These categories are helpful in clarifying the meanings of communicative competence and intercultural competence, and in highlighting the close relationship that exists between them. In 'transformative pedagogy', the teacher creates conditions that integrate these competences as appropriate.

According to Byram et al. [60],

> *developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching involves recognizing that the aims are: to give learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviours; and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience. Thus, the 'intercultural dimension' in language teaching supports learners in avoiding stereotyping. Communication includes nonverbal behaviour, 'everything from use of sounds (paralanguage), movements (kinesics), space (proxemics), and time (chronemics), to many aspects of material culture (food, clothing, objects, visual design, architecture) and can be understood as the active aspect of culture.*

Kaikkonen [61] has argued that the 'most important goal … is to help learners grow out of the shell of their mother tongue and their own culture'. Intercultural learning supports learners in achieving this goal because it 'focuses on the language user's personal and social identities and abilities. It emphasises the student's orientation to discourse as a language user relating meaningfully to other persons in different contexts'. Boylan [55] argues that the most effective way to create conditions that support cultural diversity is not to teach learners a list of typical features for any particular foreign countries, but rather to expose them to the experience of language and culture. This suggests that students should have ample opportunities to communicate with members of the target community, for example, in the context of school exchanges and online. Importantly, it suggests also that there is a need to encourage students in school to interact with persons who happen to come from different ethno-linguistic backgrounds as this supports intercultural learning. Intercultural dialogue reflects mutual respect, respect implies negotiating meanings, and negotiating meanings supports intercultural understanding, and by implication, target language learning. Equality and respect are examples of moral values on which 'transformative pedagogy' is based.

Language learning should be integrated with intercultural learning because,

> *Language teaching with an intercultural dimension continues to help learners acquire linguistic competence...But it also develops intercultural competence, i.e. their ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities. [57]*

'Intercultural competences complement human rights as a catalyst for promoting a culture of peaceful and harmonious coexistence' [57]. This is because,

> *Cultural diversity permits, and intercultural competences require, understanding one's own culture but also recognizing that each culture provides only one option among many possibilities. Cultural diversity requires, and intercultural competences permit, the ability to convey information to others about one's own culture through communication with them, as well as to interpret information about the other and his or her culture. [57]*

In the Irish context, The Education Act [62] states that students should experience an education that 'respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages, and traditions', The Equal Status Act [63], and Equality Act [64] promote equality of opportunity and prohibit discrimination. The Intercultural Education Strategy 2010–2015 [65] highlights key goals for interculturalism:

1. Enable the adoption of a whole institution approach to create an intercultural learning environment.

2. Build the capacity of education providers to develop an intercultural learning environment.

3. Support students to become proficient in the language of instruction.

Sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness form an integral part of the new junior cycle MFL Specification (2017) [66] in Ireland. The European Language Portfolio [67] is referenced to the CEFR [52] and therefore offers an appropriate way to plan for and assess target language competence and intercultural competence. In addition, it supports formative assessment. In the NUI Galway study, I examined the impact of a version of the ELP, validated by CoE on teaching and learning.[2]

Like De Jong and Harper [68], I believe that knowledge and awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity should be made 'explicit goals' in teacher education programmes. I agree with Villegas and Lucas [69], who in presenting a conception of linguistically responsive teachers, highlight 'socio-cultural consciousness, affirming views of diversity, commitment, and skills for promoting change in schools; understanding of how learners construct knowledge; skills for learning about their learners; and the ability to use appropriate instructional approaches for diverse learners'. Dragićević Šešić & Dragojević [70] have suggested that intercultural literacy is an essential tool for modern life, parallel to the development of information literacy, or media literacy. Next, I examine key aspects of critical literacy and identify any significant links between it and media and digital literacies.

5.3 Critical literacy, media and digital literacies

Critical literacy means having the capacity to interpret texts, for example, in literature and the media, in a way that uncovers social constructs, such as power and injustice in human relationships. It assists persons in understanding and in adopting a moral stance to these concepts by questioning the attitudes, values, and beliefs embedded in written texts, visual applications, and spoken words. It is concerned with 'decoding the ideological dimensions of texts, institutions, social practices, and cultural forms... in order to reveal their selective interests' [71]. According to Anderson and Irvine [72], critical literacy is 'learning to read and write as part of

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the process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations.'

The development of critical literacy skills involves the ability to understand, contextualise, analyse, and evaluate not only what one reads in a text but also what one reads in the world. 'Transformative pedagogy' supports teachers and students in making critical decisions that are evidence informed and based on moral values about how to transform the 'status quo'. Teachers are faced with questions about who constructs knowledge? What counts as knowledge? What is the context? On what basis did I come to make my decision? What is my responsibility? Human beings are understood as interdependent, moral beings with an 'innate' human right for dignity and respect.

Media literacy refers to different forms of media culture, ICT, and new media. For example:

> *Media representations allow viewers to see the world in some particular ways and not others. Audiences also compare media with their own experiences and make judgements about how realistic they are. Media representations can be seen as real in some ways but not in others: viewers may understand that what they are seeing is only imaginary and yet they still know it can explain reality. [73]*

Media literacy skills not only involve critical thinking but also skills in how to handle and communicate messages.

Regarding digital literacy, The American Library Association's digital-literacy force defines digital literacy as 'the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills' [74].

Critical, media, and digital literacies enable teachers and students to understand, contextualise, and evaluate information, and to create content and communicate information using a range of digital media platforms in a variety of appropriate contexts. In the Irish context, media literacy forms part of a short course in the new junior cycle programme. It would be expected that as students develop media and digital literacies, they would learn to integrate them into their language learning. In 'transformative pedagogy', moral values are understood as key in evaluating materials and relationships.

Next, I discuss factors that support teachers in developing their professional identity as practitioner-researchers and leaders. These factors include socio-cultural knowledge, social interaction/collaboration, and reason and moral values.

6. 'Transformative pedagogy' and language teacher professional identity

6.1 Teacher education

Singh and Richards [75] question the efficacy of language teacher education that has much to say about developing 'critical reflective practitioners' [76], and that is often designed in ways that are assumed will 'transform' student-teachers into what courses envisage. They claim that these assume that student-teachers are 'autonomous agents, able to take a reflexive stance towards their teaching, to look at their own practice critically', and they argue that from a socio-cultural and critical perspective, change in teacher identity is socially constructed. They call for more research to be carried out into 'the lived experiences of teachers' [75] in language teacher education. The three studies I carried out, examine 'the lived experiences'

of teachers and the impact of their interactions with educators in their particular socio-cultural contexts. Findings suggest that context, critical reflection, and interaction with educators and students, mediated student-teachers' socio-cultural beliefs and understandings about language teaching and learning, and supported them in developing their professional identity.

6.2 Social interaction/collaboration

Earlier, I examined social interaction as a factor in autonomous language teaching and learning. Discourses of professional identity draw upon social interaction at school where identity is negotiated and constructed and where 'learning [and by implication, teaching] is always in the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation' [77]. Vygotsky [78] considers the social environment to be critical for learning. 'Transformative pedagogy' involves critical dialogue/collaboration between educators and student-teachers aimed at supporting them in developing the capacity to accept responsibility for their teaching linked to target language use and in making evidence-informed decisions based on moral values. According to Singh and Richards [75], language teacher education should be 'developmental oriented' and collaborative. Kogler [79] has argued that only 'radically dialogic processes' have the potential to free the interpreter from their 'own pre-determined, pre-understanding through an understanding of the other disclosed in the dialogic way... we learn to see ourselves with the eyes of the concrete other'. Identity construction highlights the dynamic and social nature of learning to teach, allowing teacher educators to focus student teachers' attention on how their practicum experiences inform their understandings of teaching [80]. Wenger [81] discusses identity construction as 'an experience' in terms of three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination and alignment. Engagement allows teachers to develop a 'lived sense of who they are' as they invest in their work and in their relations with others; imagination refers to how they see the world and their place in the world beyond their particular experience. Alignment allows them to connect with broader structures and allows the identity of a larger group to become part of the identity of the individual participants.

6.3 Reason and moral values

'Transformative pedagogy' supports teachers in developing their identity linked to bringing about transformation that is evidence informed and based on moral values. A pre-requisite for transformation is teachers' self-awareness that enables them to self-direct. We referred earlier that morality depends on autonomy. Habermas [5] has argued that reason, in part through discourse ethics, has the potential to transform the world into a more just society. Fuchs [82] too has argued that reason supports human beings in making moral decisions. For Fuchs, the moral law is understood as an agency for authentic freedom that protects and supports freedom and 'human flourishing'. He has argued that human beings are capable of 'recta ratio' (right reason), and that there exists a natural law, understood as an absolute law that underpins human nature, in that it is discernible by everyone through use of reason. In other words, there are certain moral truths that apply to all people. For Buzzelli and Johnston [83], 'morality constitutes that set of a person's beliefs and understanding which are evaluative in nature: that is, which distinguish, whether consciously or unconsciously, between what is right or wrong, good and bad'.

Freire defines praxis as 'reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed' [84]. He believed that praxis enabled oppressed people to acquire a critical awareness of their condition and struggle to bring about freedom. 'Transformative pedagogy' involves praxis that involves practitioner-researchers

and leaders in their particular socio-cultural context, working to develop self- and socio-cultural awareness, and collaborating to transform any teaching and learning inequalities, any social inequalities, and/or any organisation or system inequalities they identify, in ways that are evidence informed and based on moral values.

6.4 Professional identity: language practitioner-researcher, and language leader

There are several terms in the literature used to describe the identity of language teacher, for example, critical practitioner, critical inquirer, and practitioner-researcher. According to these, the teacher's voice speaks from practice about practice, and builds knowledge of practice from the bottom up. Cochran-Smith and Lytle [85] have argued that practitioner-researchers 'work in inquiry communities to examine their assumptions, develop local knowledge, by posing questions and gathering data and work for social justice by using inquiry to ensure educational opportunity, access, and equity for all learners'. For them, inquiry as stance has four central dimensions:

1. a perspective on knowledge that rejects the formal knowledge-practical knowledge dualism and puts forward a conception of local knowledge in global contexts;

2. an expanded view of practice as the interplay of teaching, learning, and leading, as well as an expanded view of who counts as a practitioner;

3. an understanding of practitioner communities as the primary medium or mechanism for enacting inquiry as stance as a theory of action;

4. the position that the overarching purpose of practitioner inquiry is to provide education for a more just and democratic society' [85].

They argue that generating knowledge is a 'pedagogic act that is constructed in the context of use, intimately connected to the knower, and, although relevant to immediate situations, inevitably a process of theorising' [85].

Below, I briefly discuss what the literature has to say in the context of transformative language leader that are relevant to 'transformative pedagogy' and 'transformative research'.

6.5 Transformative language leader

The literature suggests that there is a relationship between moral values and leadership. For example, with regard to social justice, it identifies three complementary aspects: distributive, participative [85, 86], and relational [87]. The distributive aspect concerns equity in the distribution and accessing of education regarding its benefits and outcomes. The participative aspect concerns the capacity and opportunity to participate in making decisions, both at macro and micro levels. The relational aspect refers to recognition of and respect for social and cultural difference. Leadership, by implication, would involve taking cognizance of these interlinked aspects in the context of taking decisions.

Below, I outline a few examples for what leadership based on social justice can look like. Attention must be given not only to the social and organisational, but also to the personal, as social justice issues are enacted in 'embodied relationships' [88]. By implication, school leadership would involve creating conditions that support staff members as well as students in developing an attitude of openness towards one another, and a respect for one another's languages and cultures. According to Raffo

et al. [89], the strength of the 'embodied relationships' argument becomes clear when we consider that 'the relationship between poverty and education is unlikely to be disturbed unless fundamental issues of power and interest, advantage and disadvantage, are addressed'. Maguire [90] has argued that a way for schools to address poverty in the context of the school community is for them to take steps to ensure that children who suffer poverty are not disadvantaged by in-school practices and policies.

McGregor Burns [91] defined a transformational leader as one who 'looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs and engages the full person of the follower'. According to Bass [92], transformational leaders are judged by their impact on followers in the areas of trust, admiration and respect. Leithwood [93] developed seven dimensions to transformational leaders:

- building school vision and establishing goals;

- creating a productive school culture;

- providing intellectual stimulation;

- offering individualised support;

- modelling best practices and important organisational values;

- demonstrating high-performance expectations; and

- developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

These dimensions align to the *Advanced Standards for Quality* [94] in the UK: and are regarded as research and practitioner-based quality practices essential to achieving improved student performance and organisational effectiveness.

There are several implications that emerge from the above. Leaders need to have critical and moral consciousness with the capacity and courage to critique existing social, political, and power relations that influence school life. Villegas and Lucas [95] present a conception of linguistically responsive teachers that is relevant to language leaders. Qualities include 'socio-cultural consciousness, affirming views of diversity, commitment and skills for promoting change in schools, understanding of how learners construct knowledge, skills for learning about their learners and the ability to use appropriate instructional approaches for diverse learners'.

It is important that all teachers accept responsibility for addressing special educational needs, including those of English language learners (ELLs). It is a moral issue. Below, I examine a 'transformative pedagogy' in the context of ELL.

7. 'Transformative pedagogy' and teaching English language learners

The Eurydice Report [96] identified three issues that need addressing in European teacher education: the critical importance of teaching the language of instruction, recognition of mother tongues of learners from diverse language backgrounds as a potential resource, and the promotion of interculturalism. Moore has argued that:

> We understand and experience our world through the symbols of language and so our understandings of that world and, perhaps, our sense of possibilities within it, are permanently and unavoidably filtered through those discourses. [97]

There are three types of literacy: functional, cultural, and critical. Villegas and Lucas [95] have argued that teacher education needs to create conditions that support the development of socio-cultural consciousness, and critical literacy informed by moral consciousness. It is important that in addition, functional and cultural literacies are understood and integrated into mainstream teaching and learning. McLaren [71] defines functional literacy as decoding and encoding skills, and cultural literacy as being about 'educating [teacher] and learners to be …the bearers of certain meanings, values, and views' (e.g. writing a response to a question set by a history teacher). Lucas and Grinberg [98] have argued that 'The connection between language and schooling has special significance for English language learners (ELLs) who are often marginalised and underestimated'. 'Transformative pedagogy' has a key part in supporting teachers and students in developing as critical, intercultural citizens with the capacity to interact and express their meanings in English and by implication, to gain appropriate employment, and to contribute to the common good based on democratic, moral values.

Teachers need to value all students, linguistic diversity, and social justice in school and wider society [99], develop an awareness of the connection between language, culture, and identity, and of the socio-political dimension of language use and language education [100]. In addition, teachers need to be aware of their language use [101, 102]. In order that teachers can offer support students, particularly ELLs, they will need to have sufficient knowledge of the structure of English and of what is involved in second language learning, and to understand differences between conversational and academic English language use, for, as Cummins [103] tells us, ELLs take several years longer to develop academic English than conversational English.

One of the three studies, referred to in the Introduction, was one I carried out at the Lynch School of Education, Boston, MA. In that context, I widened my research beyond MFL to include Secondary English teaching methodology, and the Teaching English Language Learners (TELL) programme. While carrying out the study I learnt that a ban had been placed on bilingual education in Massachusetts as a result of a referendum held there in 2002. To support ELLs, Professor Maria Brisk made an evidence-informed decision based on the moral value of social justice, to establish the Teaching English Language Learners (TELL) certificate programme. The programme has now become a mandatory qualification for teacher recognition across Massachusetts.

7.1 'Transformative pedagogy' and 'transformative research'

From the studies I carried out, I suggest the following original, 'transformative research' model for use by practitioner-researchers, including those in mainstream subject areas. Key stages are as follows:

- Identify a focus for study based on an issue, preferably in collaboration with colleagues.

- Reflect individually, and then, in turn, articulate your ontological and epistemological beliefs to one another.

- Test one another's beliefs against universal, democratic, and moral values and make any necessary adjustments to your stated beliefs.

- Draw out implications of this 'testing' discussion for future decisions.

- Make collaborative decisions and implement an action plan aimed at transforming the situation, for example, integrating 'new' literacies into teaching and learning, addressing needs of ELLs, supporting equity.

- Collect data as appropriate.

- Analyse data.

- Interpret data and critically evaluate the impact of pedagogical and/other educational decisions and actions in a collaborative way, using (a) critical reasoning, (b) evidence informed, and (c) moral values, as key criteria.

- Demonstrate how the study has contributed in a positive way to transforming pedagogy/other educational process(es) in the classroom and/or school communities, and/or contributed to developing students' capacity to understand what being in the world means.

- Verify claims to any new knowledge by opening the study to external scrutiny.

8. Conclusion

'Transformative pedagogy' supports target language teachers in developing a more encompassing professional identity as practitioner-researchers and leaders in the school and wider community. It enhances the social-psychological model of autonomous language teaching and learning by underpinning it with a critical, intercultural and moral-philosophical basis. I examined factors for autonomous language teaching and learning and those for a 'transformative pedagogy' that involve a range of 'new' literacies in addition to reading, writing, listening, speaking, and oral-aural communication.

'Transformative pedagogy' gears teaching towards learners and learning. Learners are understood as whole persons with an identity as critical and intercultural target language users for whom interactions are informed by moral values.

An original model for 'transformative research' is shown and is aimed at supporting practitioner-researchers and leaders in general and not only language teachers in becoming more self-aware, critical, collaborative, and morally conscious educators. Doing this implies having the capacity and courage to take a moral stance for all students, not least those who are marginalised, and helping them to improve their life chances and their understandings about what being in the world means.

Author details

Patrick Farren
School of Education, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland

*Address all correspondence to: patrick.farren@nuigalway.ie

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