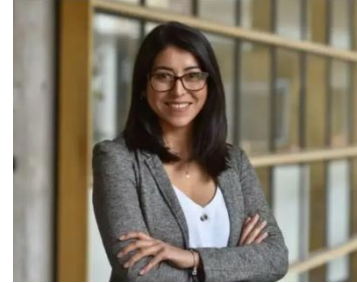


TIRF-British Council Research Mentoring Awards

Researcher

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Project Title

Knitting Understandings: Exploring Teacher Educators' Understandings of Interculturality in Chilean Initial Teacher Education for English Teachers

Dissertation Supervisor

Dr. Malba Barahona
Universidad Católica de Chile

TIRF Research Topic Investigated

Language Teacher Education

TIRF Mentor Name

Dr. Bedrettin Yazan
University of Texas at San Antonio

Final Report

Introduction

My research project, "Knitting Understandings: Exploring Teacher Educators' Understandings of Interculturality in Chilean Initial Teacher Education for English Teachers," explores how English language teacher educators understand interculturality and the human and non-human entities that mediate the (re)configuration of these understandings within teacher education programs. Despite recognizing the link between language and culture in English language teacher education, effectively integrating interculturality remains a challenge. Mainstream models, often relying on the intercultural competence framework, have struggled to address cultural essentialism and hierarchy, creating further barriers among learners (Dervin & Yuan, 2022).

Background

This project addresses two gaps in literature. First, research on teacher educators' readiness to address social justice issues like interculturality in English language teacher education programs is limited (Peercy & Sharkey, 2022). Given their crucial role in shaping future English teachers, a deeper understanding of teacher educators' knowledge and its influence on their practices is needed. Second, interculturality integration in English language education has been dominated by the Western-centric intercultural competence framework, reinforcing self/other binaries and epistemic hierarchies (Ferri, 2020). Therefore, epistemic enlargement is needed to understand interculturality differently and challenge these normative frameworks.

This project investigates the following research questions:

1. What do teacher educators understand about interculturality?
2. How does their understanding reinforce or disrupt normative discourses and pedagogical practices?
3. What human and non-human entities mediate the (re)configuration of teacher educators' understandings of interculturality?

Methods

Using the rhizome and assemblage concepts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) from a posthuman perspective, the study will map dominant understandings and examine disruptive discourses and practices. Grounded in post-qualitative inquiry (St, Pierre, 2013), five teacher educators will participate, contributing data through documentation, interviews, classroom observations, and collaborative autoethnography. Rhizo analysis (Masny, 2016) will guide data analysis to map their understandings of interculturality, examine disruptions to normative views and explore the human and non-human sources that drive the disruptions or consolidate normative understandings. Ultimately, the study seeks to broaden the understanding of interculturality from the perspective of Latin teacher educators and posthuman perspectives. This will offer new insights and evidence to promote a more holistic approach to interculturality in English language teacher education.

Through the TIRF-British Council Research Mentoring Awards (RMA) program, I've had the opportunity to meet with my mentor, Dr. Bedrettin Yazan, once or twice a month via Zoom. During these meetings, we've engaged in the following activities, which have greatly contributed to the development of my study:

1. Data discussion: We have delved into the data I've generated during my study, examining how English language teacher educators' identities influence their understanding and teaching of interculturality to future English teachers. My mentor has enriched these discussions by sharing relevant literature on identity and collaborative autoethnography.
2. Abstract proposal: Encouraged by my mentor, I submitted an abstract proposal to the Language, Culture and Curriculum special issue, "Furthering Epistemic Diversities in Language and Intercultural Education." My proposal focuses on a specific aspect of my research, that explores the mediating role of instructional materials in shaping English language teacher educators' understandings of interculturality. The proposal has been accepted by the journal editors, and I'm currently working on the full manuscript, which is due in June 2025.
3. Collaborative autoethnography: We've discussed some of the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications of collaborative autoethnography. Given the nature of my research, my mentor has encouraged me to engage in a collaborative autoethnography with two teacher educators participating in my study. I've started this process by sharing initial questions and prompts to stimulate our narrative writing, with the goal of eventually co-authoring an article with the two practitioners.
4. TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant application: We explored the possibility of applying for a TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant as a way of taking a next step in Research



Mentoring Awards program. My mentor, who is a former recipient of this grant, guided me through the application process with his valuable feedback.

To conclude the Research Mentoring Program, my mentor and I decided to apply for the TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant. While demanding and challenging, writing the application helped me refine the internal coherence of my project. The six-page report allowed me to better organize my ideas, simplify explanations of key concepts, review and adjust my methodological decisions, and plan my research activities for my program's remaining three terms.

References

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