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The Proof of the Pudding Is in the Making: Reflections on Social Justice Teacher Education in English Language Teaching

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Abstract: This contribution proposes five fundamental elements of social justice teaching as applied in language teacher education. It does so by taking into consideration already existing university formats – a seminar and a student-conference – which were built on the foundation of critical literacy pedagogies. By defining these elements, our goal is not only to prompt a discussion about social justice in language teacher education, but to center our students' authentic voices and opinions about their own learning experiences.

Keywords: social justice; language teacher education; guidelines; critical literacy; inclusion; English language teaching; soziale Gerechtigkeit; Sprachlehrer*innenausbildung; Inklusion; Englischunterricht

1 Introduction[1]

Following the societal upheaval of the last decade, understandings of literacy and language education are slowly moving from solely addressing cognition to a more holistic conception. This includes that learners understand both their own position in the world and their active role in changing it (cf. Gerlach, 2020; Pennycook, 2021).

In this quest, however, teacher education, and its significant role in shaping classroom practice, have been notably underrepresented, even though most recent publications highlight its importance in "preparing teachers to be advocates in a 'world full of shifts'" (Kirkland, 2010, qtd. in Asmus & Gonzales, 2020, p. 3). Seeing advocating as part of teacher education places understandings of social justice at its core. Even though this seems to be a straightforward perspective, social justice itself is a multifaceted concept, tying its definition to the situatedness and contextual circumstances of each educational milieu (Louloudi, 2023).

In this contribution, we understand social justice as a radical act of redistribution, recognition, and representation (Fraser, 2009) which is bound to the inclusion of minoritized communities. In that, the concept of a social justice teacher education (hereafter SJTE) (Zeichner, 2020), in our understanding, is not only about preparing teachers to teach about diversity, but also about supporting them in identifying their role in dismantling injustice together with their students. This perspective sees critical literacies (Luke, 2014; Pandya et al., 2022) as a major component of SJTE both theoretically and methodologically, in the ways and forms social justice and inclusion can find traction in the language classroom practice.

Even though a lot has been written about the necessity of seeing SJTE as part of a critical continuum of practice (e.g. Hsieh & Cridland-Hughes, 2022), there is still considerable ambiguity in the concrete steps (university) teachers, as well as teacher educators in pre-service education, can take together with their students to work towards the goal of critical language education. This contribution aims to take a step toward proposing empirically informed elements of SJTE, with a particular focus on English language teaching (hereafter ELT). Our core question is, therefore: What are potential aspects teacher educators should consider when embarking on SJTE with their (prospective) English teachers?

We pursue this question on the basis of two connected university-based formats of teacher education: The first author of this contribution designed and taught an undergraduate seminar under the title "Critical Digital Literacies in English Language Teaching" (König & Louloudi, 2024; Louloudi, 2023; Louloudi & Schildhauer, 2023; Louloudi et al., 2021). After several student cohorts had participated in the seminar, both authors of this contribution organized the student-teacher conference "Teachers for Social Justice", which provided a forum for both students and in-service teachers to connect, network, and exchange their thoughts on social justice topics. After outlining these formats in more detail (Section 2), we bring the qualitative data collected in both formats into a dialogue with theory from SJTE and related fields (Section 3). This allows us to derive some preliminary felicity conditions and guidelines for SJTE in the specific context of English language teaching in Germany (Section 4).

[1] Research for this article was conducted as part of the project *Biprofessional – Bielefelder Lehrerbildung: praxisorientiert – forschungsbasiert – inklusionssensibel – phasenübergreifend.* This project is part of the "Qualitätsoffensive Lehrerbildung", a joint initiative of the Federal Government and the *Länder* which aims to improve the quality of teacher training. The program is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (01JA 1908). The authors are responsible for the content of this publication.

2 Social justice teacher education in Bielefeld: Two formats

The seminar designed and taught by the first author was developed as part of the project *Cultural and Digital Literacy in ELT*. The aim of the seminar was to develop an understanding of "inclusion" that goes far beyond the 'challenge' of enabling students to reach learning goals in highly diverse learner groups (see Schildhauer & Zehne, 2022, for a summary of the related discourse in Germany-based ELT). The concept of inclusion underlying the seminar was informed by Fraser's (1998) idea of social justice as "parity of participation", which entails the resources for everyone to participate with their own 'voice' as well as "equal opportunity for achieving social esteem"[2].

As a means to work towards this goal, students were introduced to critical literacies and their implications for ELT environments in order to enable the students to identify, understand, deconstruct, and transform their existing perceptions of sociocultural categories, power structures, and biases existing in the English classroom. In order to do so, the seminar focused on sociocultural and sociopolitical issues (racism, sexism, climate change etc.) as relevant to the students' own lives and experiences.

The seminar was offered to undergraduate English teachers-to-be for middle and high school. Figure 1 depicts the three central modules of the seminar structure: a) theoretical foundations of sociocultural and critical literacies; b) practical implications for the English classroom; and c) development of critical lesson units by the students:

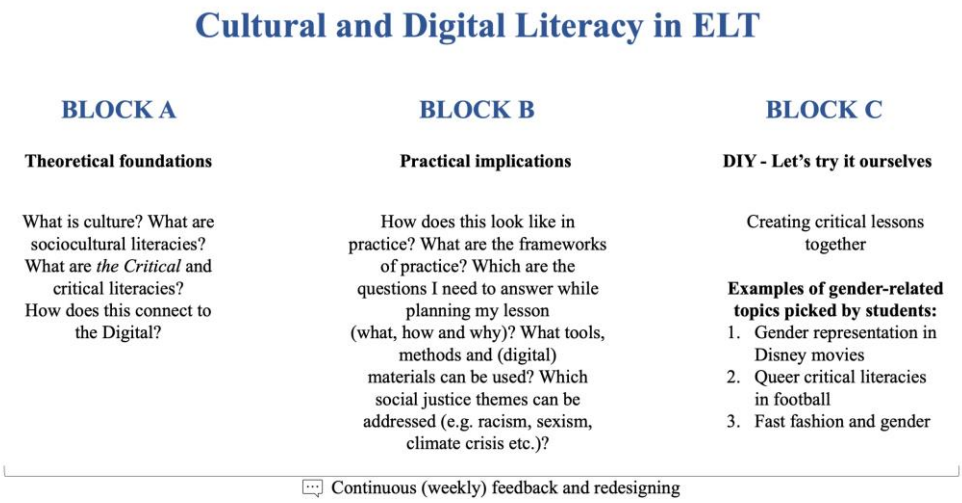

Figure 1: Course Concept, Bielefeld University (cf. König & Louloudi, 2024; reproduced from Louloudi & Schildhauer, 2023)

At the core of the seminar was the intention to help students build critical literacy teaching units on sociopolitical themes[3] (see also König & Louloudi, 2024; Louloudi et al., 2021) that could be implemented in ELT classrooms. Thus, students were guided to view inclusion-as-social-justice as a crucial topic for the ELT classroom. Frameworks inspired

[2] We understand the concept of social justice as indispensably grounded in participatory parity, after Nancy Fraser (1998, 2009). Participatory parity describes the goal of creating a society where all individuals can participate equitably in social interactions and environments and, hence, are provided with the specific tools they need to do so. This also includes the deconstruction and reconstruction of systemic structures that did not allow for their inclusion hitherto.

[3] With sociopolitical themes we mean social issues of injustice that oftentimes affect minoritized populations; these include but are not limited to racism, sexism, homo/transphobia, classism, climate emergencies, gun violence, immigration, language hierarchies and discrimination, ableism, ageism, poverty, animal rights etc.

by critical literacy (Luke, 2014; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) were used as a scaffolding device to help students design their lesson concepts as the final outcome of the course.

In order to increase the visibility of these products, student groups who had designed excellent concepts[4] in the seminar were invited to present them at the student-teacher conference "Teachers for Social Justice". This conference aimed "to open up a conversation about the whats, hows, and whys of teaching for social justice in ELT for both pre-service and in-service teachers" (Louloudi & Schildhauer, 2024/2022) and was, therefore, structured around two main slots in which student groups discussed their lesson concepts with in-service teachers, university lecturers, and fellow students. To provide the students with enough security to face this exciting challenge, the conference presentations were prepared under the guidance of the first author. The discussion slots were framed by a keynote on critical language pedagogy,[5] post-lunch workshops offered by members of staff, and a final plenary round "Let's make it count: From reflecting to taking action".

In both formats – the seminar and the conference –, qualitative data was collected. While the first author participated in both formats, the second author co-organized and participated in the student-teacher conference. Besides the first author's observations, two data sources from the seminar are particularly relevant to our contribution:

- A crucial part of the sessions was the use of Padlets to discuss and reflect on digital material related to the session topic which the students had been asked to contribute.
- After each weekly meeting, the students were invited to provide feedback and reflect on the content in forum posts on the learning management system Moodle.

During the student-teacher conference, both authors collected qualitative data in the form of field notes as participant observers. Additionally, the participants were asked to reflect on the conference in the final plenary session by using a Padlet. The following discussion round was noted verbatim by the second author. In what follows, these data sets are combined with general feedback comments our students made during the reflection parts of the seminar and are linked to existing theoretical concepts from SJTE and related fields.

This way, we aim to understand our students' perspectives as lived experiences and subjective orientations (Bogner et al., 2009), as expressed in their comments, in a situated context. Considering comments and conversations that arose during the entirety of the seminar helps us see this project holistically (Schweisfurth, 2019) and the students' reflection as a continual dialogue across the different times the seminar and conference took place. In that, we understand that this content is in no way representative of a larger audience, but bound to the contextual knowledge of the students, the teachers and the situated environment and pedagogical nexus of our classrooms (Hufton & Elliot, 2000, p. 115).

[4] The target audience were students from Sek1 or Sek2. Concepts refer to the lesson plans created by the students during the seminar; these were whole teaching units, or parts of a teaching unit with cognitive/ metacognitve goals, curriculum relevance, tasks, methods, and materials.

[5] We would like to thank Theresa Summer for contributing the keynote to the first "Teachers for Social Justice" conference in 2022. Inspired by the success of the first, a second TSJ conference was held in 2024, with David Gerlach as the keynote speaker. Some of the exceptional student work presented at that second conference is published in Louloudi & Schildhauer (forthcoming). The reflections in the present paper relate to the first TSJ conference only.

3 Towards a framework for social justice teacher education: A dialogue of theory and practice

In the following, we use five core concepts that inform and are informed by our analysis of the qualitative data. These concepts emerged from a process in which we oscillated between deep dives into the data and into academic discourses. The resulting themes are closely connected to the educational work in the two formats and the student voices represented in our datasets. They are, however, also heavily informed by our own academic work and corresponding professional vision (Goodwin, 1994). Therefore, we consider the following spotlights a mere starting point for developing a model for SJTE in Germany-based ELT.

3.1 Criticality

The starting point of a SJTE journey is linked to the very definition of social justice as a topic that is concerned with aspects of race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, immigration, language, disability, religion (and many more), and the ways their social construction privileges or disadvantages people socially, economically, politically and educationally. Social justice as a topic goes beyond the inclusion of learners in a cognition-rich environment to seeing these learners as members of society that have inherited privileges in many interconnected ways. This means that SJTE as well needs to see the classroom experience not as an end-in-itself but as amalgamated to the social experiences of all its members.

On these grounds, SJTE is inseparable from critical literacy practices, because it understands education as a political act that entails the "analysis of social movements, engagement with repressed or silenced histories and cultures, service learning and political activism" (Luke, 2014, p. 25). In classroom practice, this translates into analyzing and deconstructing biases through texts and other media that are still being perpetuated in our diverse communities. Identifying and analyzing these matters (of race, gender etc.) as topics to be investigated and discussed in the language classroom is a fundamental step in this journey. Hence, it is also necessary in SJTE. Oftentimes, our pre-service teachers' own school education did not embrace interaction with social justice as a topic, which led to them being puzzled or confused about the reasons for this omission, but also overwhelmed by the possibilities as well as responsibilities and challenges a critical education can pose to a teacher (König & Louloudi, 2024)

Helping the pre-service teachers in this journey through a critical literacy lens means

1) giving them the vocabulary to talk about these matters, for instance defining words and concepts such as *oppression*, *privilege*, *intersectionality* and *power relations*;
2) allowing space for topics with which they personally identify, providing a variety of relatable materials such as Netflix series (e.g. Colin in *Black and White*) or (children's) picture books (e.g. *The Rainbow Fish*) and
3) centering a dialogue about their own lived experiences with each topic. The goal here is to support students in "build[ing] on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar" (Zeichner, 2020, p. 11).

The responses of our students, both in the seminar reflection and during the conference, highlight the ambiguity with which social justice as a topic is being treated in school education. The majority of students refer to their school education as "never having addressed" issues of social justice, or when done so, never making it relevant to their reality. One comment mentioned for instance:

> *We just talked about the past/history, but not about the effects it still has or about the present!* (Padlet about Black Lives Matter as a topic in the English classroom, May 2021)

Connecting the topic under discussion to the students' lives and current situation is vital for a meaningful – critical – analysis. Accordingly, Freire argued that

> "acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words or syllables – lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe – but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context" (Freire, 1998, p. 86).

For our students, this still seems to be a 'different' way of seeing classroom practice, but one that is worth the additional labor involved. Students have reflected on taking up social justice topics in their future classrooms:

> *I am at school these days and this topic and mindset are secondary if not trivial to many teachers (due to the lack of time they say). This disappointed and frustrated me. I want to be different.* (Padlet about the reasons of participation in the conference, September 2022)

This remark negotiates the very foundation of critical literacy pedagogies in seeing the goal of education grounded in changing society and not only linked to the acquisition of cognitive skills (Luke, 2014; Mills, 2016; Pennycook, 2021). As the student's comment suggests, there are indeed more time and a different mindset necessary. Teaching for social justice is still perceived as *"secondary"* to acquiring the cognitive skills of reading, writing, and speaking in the additional language. Deconstructing this perspective requires us to collectively question the very purpose of (language) education.

3.2 Student-centredness

The concept of student-centeredness (also: learner orientation) has been highly influential in language teaching since the 1970s (Königs, 2010). It emerged in the context of a paradigm shift in second language acquisition research: While the previous focus had been on general mechanisms of language acquisition, the interest in the impact of various learner variables on acquisition processes grew (Martinez, 2016). This had implications for language pedagogy:

1) From a teaching methodological perspective, the learners' individual predispositions to language learning in terms of aptitude, anxiety, motivation, and so on are taken into account when designing tasks, materials, and exercises so that all learners can learn the target language in the best possible way (e.g. Kieweg, 2013; Riemer, 2015). This also appears to be the mindset underlying concepts such as adaptive teaching (e.g. Dumont, 2019), differentiation (e.g. Eisenmann, 2019; Trautmann, 2010) – and inclusion in ELT understood as allowing every learner to reach (their individual) learning goals (e.g. Schildhauer & Zehne, 2022, for an overview).
2) Similarly, the concept of learner autonomy (e.g. Little et al., 2017) aims at addressing individual learner needs. The focus, however, is on empowering learners to "increasingly assume responsibility for managing their own learning" (Little et al., 2017, p. 4) by negotiating and engaging in task cycles while using the target language in an authentic way.
3) This connects with an interactional perspective (Schildhauer, 2021) that tries to foster a shift of the teacher's role from instructor to facilitator (Martinez, 2016) by promoting interaction patterns that are conducive to empowering learners (Schildhauer, 2023).

Social justice education adds a further facet that resonates particularly with points (2) and (3) above: Student voices are radically centered in order to create a milieu in which their thoughts cannot only be heard and valued but, essentially, become the driving force of pedagogical interaction (cf. Vasquez et al., 2019). This is not only a means of making marginalized voices heard but also a way of allowing members of privileged groups to realize and reflect on their privilege and ways of putting it to productive use.

From a critical literacy lens, this also entails teachers giving up their absolute control of the classroom and becoming equal participants in conversations (see also Louloudi, 2023). They are not seen as knowledge keepers who aim to convey information, but as active co-learners who strive to deconstruct their own biases together with their students. This is at the core of critical student-centeredness: a journey in which teachers learn that listening to students' voices is part of their responsibility in the classroom (Coles et al., 2022).

Being taught in a student-centered environment themselves, our students commented on their experience as very positive throughout the semesters making remarks on how they felt "included" and "heard" (final seminar reflection survey, 2021–2022). What is more important, however, is that they also reflected on what this means for their future role as teachers:

> *Teachers who ask questions instead of presenting finished answers and thoughts promote critical literacy and critical thinking* (Google Jamboard, on deconstruction of materials about racism, November 2022).
>
> *Teacher-student relationships are such a formative part of many people's lives. Making social justice teachable is crucial to break down harmful hierarchies* (Final reflection on the student conference, September 2022).

Both these comments show our students' understanding of student-centeredness:

1) it is not about *"presenting finished answers"*, but establishing an environment where discussions can flourish, and
2) teacher-student connections are vital in one's life because they can function as prototypes of deconstructing *"harmful hierarchies"*.

This idea also negotiates theoretical perceptions of teacher-student interaction being a "modeling" experience in teacher education (Louloudi & Schildhauer, 2023), since "preservice teachers are paying attention not only to what we say but to what we do" (Goldstein & Freedman, 2003, qtd. in Conklin, 2008, p. 662).

3.3 Discomfort

Both aforementioned elements – criticality and student-centeredness – are intertwined with establishing and embracing socioemotional learning. In other words, working with social justice topics in a student-centered way necessitates the investigation of emotions, both of the teacher and the students, as an indefeasible piece of critical practice. These emotions arise as part of the quest to deconstruct problematic narratives as well as in the phases where participants share their lived experiences with the respective topic (for instance, experiences with gender discrimination) and they are, in their nature, mostly uncomfortable.

The incorporation and centering of these uncomfortable moments in the classroom practice have been defined as a pedagogy of discomfort (Boler & Zembylas, 2003), focusing on the recognition and problematization of "the deeply embedded emotional dimensions that frame and shape daily habits, routines, and unconscious complicity with hegemony" (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 108). In doing so, such socioemotional pedagogical moments do not aim to cause uncomfortability to help students sympathize or even empathize with the minoritized, but to assist oneself in identifying their own privileges and inherited ways in which one might "comply with the dominant ideology" (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 108).

These moments stimulate emotions of fear, anger, disappointment, guilt, or sadness which should ultimately prompt the identification of action steps towards personal, communal, and societal transformation. In that, the question "what can we do about this" and "how will our attitude or actions change about this topic" (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) should be at the core of this discomfort.

This is certainly not an easy process, both for teachers and students as well as for teacher educators and pre-service teachers. Teachers and teacher educators need to become vulnerable themselves and allow for an environment of emotionality to take over cognition-based goals. In a real-life example, this could translate into dealing with potentially hurtful (racist, sexist, homophobic) comments, which should not be silenced by the teacher, but taken up in a problem-posing manner. As Ayers (2014) put it,

> "to silence a student who has made a racist or queer-hating remark has not really hurt that student; it has just taught that person to lay low until he or she gets out of this class, gets through this semester. So we must find ways to engage, challenge, and see struggles through without simply cutting off debate" (Ayers, 2014, p. 3).

The perception described by Ayers was highlighted by our students during the seminar in that they were asked to reflect on whether they have worked with similar methods and materials in their school days. In one of the comments, they mentioned:

> *No, because many teachers do not like to talk about critical things or too sensitive things. Maybe they also do not like to build the effort to be critical since it might cause problems* (Google Jamboard, activity on depictions of refugee 'crises' in German newspapers, November 2022).

This remark negotiates similar stances towards emotionality that derives from conversations about social justice: they are difficult and teachers tend to avoid them because they *"might cause problems"*. Being educated in an environment that is grounded in critical discomfort, however, is decisive for student teachers to be able to engage in such conversations themselves. One of their comments about their own discomfort in the seminar indicated:

> *[taking action to me means that even though] I have experienced uncomfortable scenarios where students said things that are racist, homophobic etc. […], I want to continue to talk to them, educate them on why that is problematic, because usually they understand after you talk to them. A lot of people just don't want to have these conversations because they are uncomfortable. But this is part of it […]* (Final reflection on the student conference, September 2022).

This remark indicates that the student understands that having these conversations is uncomfortable, but thinks they should continue embracing the uncomfortable moments, because it *"is part of"* taking action.

3.4 Digital culture(s)

According to media sociologist Andreas Hepp (2021), we live in an age of deep mediatization in which digital media penetrate all domains of life to an increasing extent. Many everyday practices previously not thought of as being related to media use are becoming media practices – if only because we use digital media to communicate about and coordinate them (Hepp, 2021, p. 31). This process of deep mediatization has led to and is a characteristic of what Stalder (2016) labels the digital condition (*Kultur der Digitalität*). Stalder (2016; 2018) identifies three key features of this digital condition, namely referentiality, communality, and algorithmicity. These features are summarized in Table 1 on the following page.

Table 1 indicates that the label *Kultur der Digitalität* comprises a multiplicity of forms and forums of expression and digital participation. From the individual participant's point of view, it may, therefore, be more accurate to speak of digital cultures in the plural, as many participants are likely to be a member of several affinity spaces (e.g. Jenkins, 2006), with each developing their own sub-culture and related practices.

Table 1: Features and practices of the digital condition (following Stalder, 2016; adopted from Schildhauer et al., 2023)

Referentiality	In a digital culture, cross-references are built between cultural artifacts by curating, mixing, and re-mixing existing content (cf. also Jenkins et al., 2013). Social media platforms are one of the core loci at which users can like and share content (e.g. Pflaeging, 2015).
Communality	Digital culture is marked by the emergence of participant networks ("affinity spaces", Gee, 2013) around certain topics, professions, or political action. The use of hashtags on social media platforms, forum discussions, and so on is a condition for and an expression of the emergence of such affinity spaces.
Algorithmicity	To an increasing extent, algorithms are involved in creating order in the tremendous universe of information. Besides search engines, which rely on algorithms to allow users to use the vast amounts of information available to them, any social media feed is co-authored by algorithms (Leander & Burriss, 2020). These algorithms are far from neutral but are designed to cater to the economic needs of platform designers (Jones & Hafner, 2021).

The artifacts referenced, remixed, and exchanged in these contexts are multimodal to such a noticeable extent that The New London Group (1996) already highlighted multimodality as a key feature of digital communication in the 1990s. A quick look today at social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which rely heavily on (moving) images, is enough to underline the point the New London Group made 30 years ago.

For our purposes, this means that SJTE cannot be thought of as separate from digital cultures as it is deeply situated within and at the cross-sections of the various digital cultures students, pre-service teachers, and teacher educators are part of. In fact, it has been pointed out by educational policy makers (KMK, 2017) and researchers (e.g. Diehr et al., 2018) how crucial it is that students learn how to analyze and participate in digital discourses. It goes without saying that these multimodal discourses are also highly relevant to negotiating social justice, e.g. with an eye on gender conceptions (Fuchs, 2021), mental health (Zehne, 2024), positions towards climate change (Kemper & Schildhauer, 2022; Summer, 2021), and others.

In critical literacy practices, deconstructing digital cultures means helping students identify and interrogate how digital artifacts around them perpetuate existing biases or challenge them (Ávila & Pandya, 2013). This translates into using materials and tools that students frequently use themselves outside of the classroom, with a particular focus on social media. For classroom practice, this may still be thought of as a taboo, among others because digital materials might not be viewed as 'academically inclined' or prestigious as traditional text materials. This perspective is reflected in our students' comments about the seminar, which emphasised on the use of digital media:

> *I couldn't imagine that my teachers would use a TikTok to introduce us to a topic. They would give us literature to read. Nowadays, I feel like this is in no way reprehensible because these videos contain meaning and most of the students personally have access to these platforms and since they use it they probably are more interested in using these sources as a stepping stone to move onto the actual topic.* (Padlet about Black Lives Matter as a topic in the English classroom, May 2021)

In this remark, the student comments on digital materials such as TikTok still being seen as frowned upon in a classroom environment as opposed to reading literature. In their opinion, however, the TikToks used in the seminar to analyze issues of racism could be

thought as *"stepping stone[s]"* because they are more relatable to students. This perspective was made stronger during the final reflection during the student conference when students were asked to think about what "taking action" means to them:

> *To use a multitude of different media for greater authenticity* (Final reflection on the student conference, September 2022).

Here, students not only see digital materials as stepping stones, but recognize their use as necessary "for greater authenticity", because, as mentioned before, they dominate "social fields of everyday life" (Luke, 2014, p. 21). This does not exclude the use of literary materials, but prompts students to combine these, rather traditional forms of teaching, with digital materials.

3.5 English as a working language

One crucial contextual aspect of the formats under scrutiny here is that they focused on ELT. In other words, the pre-service teachers involved were mostly both learners of English themselves and training to become teachers of that language. In (English) language classrooms "the language being used is not only the means of acquiring new knowledge, it is also the goal of study" (Walsh, 2022, p. 28). This is not only relevant for the future classrooms in which the pre-service teachers would work one day, but also for the university formats: Albeit implicitly, students had to acquire language that enabled them not only to talk about and apply critical literacy concepts (see Section 3.1) but also to deconstruct their own experiences with social justice topics, negotiate their own personal involvement, and reflect on their (very personal) development. In short, students had to develop their 'voice' by "finding possibilities of articulation" (Pennycook, 2021, p. 142); in that, it is also important to reflect and expand on the particular possibilities of articulation that the additional language allows: expressing oneself in English, in particular regarding social justice issues, can help "create a moral distance" (Lau, 2019, p. 80) to problematic issues. However, to be able to use these opportunities, addressing social justice issues requires the use of students' linguistic repertoire holistically. While this constituted a (language) learning challenge in its own right, it can also be argued that the use of the target language for these communicative tasks was beneficial in that English constituted a detached, neutral space in which sensitive topics could be negotiated (König, 2018). This not only helped them embrace their discomfort more easily but also supported them in making necessary reflections on what it means to teach English in the German context.

At the same time, the use of English as a target language in our formats entails two potentially exclusive aspects:

- As the "de facto global lingua franca" (Callies et al., 2022, p. 1), it does not only stand for the capitalistic global economic order for which it serves as a tool of communication, but it also is a language whose promotion in educational contexts often leads to the marginalization and exclusion of other languages (Pennycook, 2021). Within ELT classrooms around the world, this is enforced by language policies that either prescribe the sole use of the target language or a rigid framework that aims at reducing the use of the respective students' L1 as early as possible (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009). In favor of fostering English language proficiency, classrooms may, therefore, become a site of exclusion of other languages present in a learner group – despite their potential for expressing thoughts out of reach of current language proficiency as well as emotional reactions (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009). Additionally, the potential role of L1s in fostering a sense of security should not be underestimated (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2023).
- Language educators often hold and perpetuate a standard language ideology according to which only a few selected varieties of English – mostly Standard British

> English and General American English – count as 'correct' and 'prestigious' (Jansen et al., 2022). In light of the vast variety of Global Englishes, these ideologies exclude a range of widespread uses of English (also as an emergent lingua franca: e.g., Mauranen, 2018), perpetuate ideals of the native speaker (Cook & Singleton, 2014; Galloway & Rose, 2015; Pennycook, 2021), and are prone to creating a learning climate in which accuracy dominates over fluency (König et al., 2023).

All of these aspects can be considered detrimental to the conditions needed for discussing social justice topics. Therefore, language policies were explicitly addressed in our formats. Students were encouraged to engage in translanguaging to make full use of their entire linguistic repertoire (García & Wei, 2014). A fundamental part of translanguaging pedagogies is "denounc[ing] the coloniality of power that keeps named languages as walls and barriers to opportunities" (García, 2019, p. 166). Similarly, the educator(s) deconstructed standard language ideologies and fostered the use of different varieties of English.

However, in the German context, this "denouncing" should also be connected to the general language policies prevalent in the educational system and, in particular, those that enforce "German-only" environments denying students their right to their linguistic identities (see Panagiotopoulou & Knappik, 2022; Panagiotopoulou & Rosen, 2018; Panagiotopoulou et al., 2018). The connection between understanding and deconstructing these general German language policies and the use of English as a Lingua Franca in the classroom needs to be further explored as part of a future research agenda.

As with the previous comments, here too, students reflected on and discussed their own experiences with multilingualism in the classroom. One of the remarks mentioned:

> *A teacher once got mad at me for speaking in my native language during break time and told me to only speak German […] this [topic] would definitely make it to my classroom […] this is a problem which many people have to face daily. It's a reality for so many people that needs to be addressed in a classroom.* (Google Jamboard, activity on "German-only" policies in schools, November 2022)

The student here connects their own problematic experiences with denied multilingualism to their own future classroom as well as the minoritizing of languages other than German as a general societal issue (*"people have to face daily"*). This certainty of wanting to change points to the results of many studies that suggest that teacher education is decisive in "chang[ing] the deeply rooted deficit perception of minority language students in German schools and to transform the monolingually oriented pedagogical approaches" (Panagiotopoulou & Rosen, 2018, p. 394).

4 The proof of the pudding is in the making – towards guidelines for social justice (English) teacher education

The elements mentioned above foreground our understanding of what (English) teacher education should entail to foster social justice in the classroom and beyond. In our opinion, all these constructs are and need to be seen as interconnected: For instance, working with social justice topics is not enough if the classroom environment is built in a traditional, teacher-oriented way. Student-centeredness alone cannot guarantee students' active involvement in deconstructing biases and power relations if their emotions are not considered. Critical discomfort will not be achieved if students cannot see themselves mirrored in the materials they use in class. Using digital materials will not maintain students' willingness to participate if their linguistic repertoire is not represented and embraced holistically.

These elements do not only relate to each other but are also to be seen as continuum practices that should be fostered in all education levels: from kindergarten to university (teacher) education (Louloudi, 2023). We understand, however, that in-service teachers

who have not been educated in a university culture of social justice pedagogies, will find it harder, if not impossible, to integrate these elements into their classroom practices. Critical literacy and social justice cannot be self-taught because they are bound to the emotional responses of the learning community, the questioning of one's own privileges, the centering of authentic perspectives, and the collective societal action. These are all processes that require a community of learning. For this to be made possible, in-service teachers should be given the opportunity for lifelong learning that is not restricted in one-day formats but allows for a deeper understanding of social justice practices for their own contexts.

In this active learning process, social justice teacher education cannot be static, but has to evolve together with the students: After all, the proof of the pudding is in the making – each day, every day with a flavor and texture adjusted to the current audience, their context, and their milieu. Each of the 'ingredients' of the figurative pudding we propose here can and should have a different practical interpretation in the classroom, to consider each student's specific characteristics. Each of our classrooms is a situated environment "with particular ways of knowing the world" (Comber & Nixon, 2014, p. 85) that need to be nurtured individually. This is unquestionably more work than printing worksheets and reading from a textbook for an already overworked teacher crowd; but its final goal is certainly more meaningful (and, thus, 'tasty' – to use our metaphor one final time) than conjugation and declension: changing a world that is not yet designed for everyone.

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