

# **Points of Departure: Developing the Knowledge Base of ESL and FSL Teachers for K-12 Programs in Canada**

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, I examine the contextual factors that impact the development of knowledge base of teachers of English as a second language (ESL) and French as a second language (FSL) for teaching in Kindergarten through Grade 12 programs in Ontario. Using a sociocultural orientation to second language teacher education and prominent knowledge base frameworks from the field, I discuss how a variety of local contextual factors impact the development of teacher candidates' (TC) knowledge base in pre-service teacher education programs in Canada. Individual factors include: the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of candidates' in ESL and FSL programs, the TCs' language proficiency in the target language, their personal experiences and understanding of language development, and their familiarity with real life experiences of ESL and FSL students. Beyond their own experiences, integral to TCs knowledge base are the range of student populations they could serve and the variety of language teaching contexts they can encounter in the Ontario context. I discuss the implications of such nuances for policy and practice in language teacher education programs across Canada.

## **Résumé**

Dans cet article, nous remettrons en question les facteurs contextuelles qui influencent le développement de la base de connaissances dont les enseignants d'anglais comme langue seconde (ALS) et de français comme langue seconde (FLS) ont besoin pour enseigner l'ALS et le FLS de la maternelle jusqu'à la 12<sup>e</sup> année en Ontario. En adoptant une optique socioculturelle envers la formation des professeurs de langue seconde et en faisant appel aux principaux cadres théoriques centrés sur la base de connaissances des enseignants, nous examinerons comment une variété de facteurs influencent le développement de la base de connaissances des futurs enseignants inscrits dans des programmes de formation initiale de professeurs au Canada dont : leurs origines linguistiques et culturelles; leur compétence linguistique dans la langue cible; leur vécu personnel ainsi que leur compréhension et du développement langagier, et du vécu des étudiants d'ALS et de FLS. A part les expériences personnelles des futurs enseignants, il est important de savoir s'il existe des liens ou un écart entre leur base de connaissances et la population estudiantine à qui ils feront face dans des contextes variés à travers l'Ontario. Nous discuterons des implications de ces nuances sur les politiques et les pratiques des programmes de formation d'enseignants de langue seconde à travers le pays.

## **Points of Departure: Developing the Knowledge Base of ESL and FSL Teachers for K-12 Programs in Canada**

### **Introduction**

As teacher education expands in Canada to serve an increasingly diverse student population, while at the same time preserving national languages such as French, it is important to revisit traditional teacher education knowledge base paradigms. This paper examines the local contextual factors that influence the development of the required knowledge base of teachers of English as a second language (ESL) and French as a second language (FSL) teaching in Kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12) programs in Canada. While there are many similarities between ESL and FSL teacher education, there are some fundamental contextual differences that warrant attention.

Language teacher education frameworks provide a template for pre-service programs to address. Existing frameworks often emphasize the core knowledge base required for teaching a language irrespective of significant factors such as the language under study, the teacher candidate (TC), and contexts in which teachers will be teaching. By examining knowledge base frameworks in language teacher education research from a sociocultural orientation of teacher learning (Johnson, 2009), I problematize current assumptions in FSL and ESL teacher education in Canada and provide a new way of thinking about knowledge base frameworks and conceptualizations. I examine how the background of TCs in ESL and FSL teacher preparation programs, the status of English versus French, the diverse student populations TCs are preparing to teach, as well as the varied contexts in which they engage in language teaching, impact the knowledge base that needs to be emphasized in teacher education programs.

This paper is divided into three discussions. First, I start by highlighting some key issues in the literature on second-language teacher education and knowledge base paradigms and provide some contextual information about ESL and FSL teacher education in Canada. Second, I use Richard's (1998) domains of knowledge, as well as Freeman and Johnson's (1998) reconceptualization argument as a framework to discuss the contextual differences in developing a knowledge base for ESL and FSL teachers in Canada. In the final section of this paper, I outline the implications of these differences for policy and practice in language teacher education programs across Canada.

### **Second Language Teacher Education**

What constitutes the core knowledge base for language teachers to be effective in their profession? This is a central issue in second-language teacher

education<sup>1</sup>. The term second-language teacher education (SLTE) was coined by Richards (1990) to refer to the training and education of second-language<sup>2</sup> teachers. Despite the importance of outlining a core knowledge base for SLTE programs, there is little consensus in the field as to exactly what effective language teachers need to know. Efforts have been made in the field to conceptualize the teaching process (e.g., Golombek, 1998; Tsui, 2003), the knowledge (e.g., Breen, 1991; Johnston and Goettsch, 2000), the cognition (Borg, 2003, 2006), and the beliefs (e.g., Almarza, 1996; Crandall, 2000; Peacock, 2001, Mattheoudakis, 2007) that teachers possess about teaching and learning, and how their knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes inform their practices (e.g., Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Freeman & Johnson, 2005; Tsui, 2003). Following the review of a fairly wide selection of accounts of practice in SLTE, Wright (2010) concludes that new theoretical conceptualizations of SLTE have not been taken up in the daily realities of these programs. In fact, SLTE has been highly prescriptive and reform in SLTE has been very slow (Wright, 2010). This also seems to be the case in Canada, where Salvatori (2009) observes that language teacher education does not seem to be keeping pace with the changes in the classrooms for which TCs are being prepared.

### **Knowledge and Teacher Knowledge**

As language teachers are teachers in the first place, it is important to examine how general teacher knowledge is conceptualized. Tsui (2003) argues that the conceptions of knowledge by Ryle (1949) and Polanyi (1966) have influenced the features of teacher knowledge as: (a) knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983); (b) “practical knowledge” (Elbaz, 1983); (c) “personal knowledge” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987, 1991); (d) “situated knowledge” (Leinhardt, 1988); and (e) “content knowledge” (Shulman, 1987). Different from the conceptions of knowledge as experiential and situated, Shulman (1987) proposes a theoretical framework of teacher knowledge that is analytical. He distinguishes three categories of content knowledge: (a) subject matter knowledge, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) curricular knowledge. In addition, the model includes categories such as knowledge of learners and their characteristics, educational contexts, and evaluation. Shulman’s conception of knowledge in teacher education is not revolutionary, but has been quite influential and scholars have based their conceptions of knowledge on his framework (e.g., Richards, 1998). Compared to the literature that has examined the knowledge of general

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1 The terms teacher education and teacher development are used interchangeably in this paper. Tarone and Allwright (2005) distinguish training, education, and development. They perceive training as being concerned with skills, education with knowledge, and development with understanding. This fine distinction has not been taken into consideration in using the terms teacher education and teacher development in this paper.

2 I use the term second language to refer to the teaching and learning of a second, additional, or foreign language.

teachers (e.g., Grossman, 1990; Hillocks, 1999, Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers 2008), little research has focussed on second-language teacher knowledge (see however, Andrews, 1999, 2001; Borg, 2006, 2010; Day 1993; Day & Conklin, 1992; Tsui & Nicholson, 1999; Wright, 2010). Second-language teaching is complex compared to other subject matter in that the target language is both the medium of instruction and the object of learning. Conceptualizations vary as to what the “knowledge base” of second-language teaching entails and how it is constituted.

### **Knowledge Base of Second Language Teachers**

Knowledge base refers to the expertise, understanding, awareness, knowledge, and skills that second-language teachers need to possess in order to be effective teachers (Day, 1993; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Richards, 1998; Tedick, 2005). Lafayette (1993) proposes three domains which encompass second-language teachers' subject matter knowledge: (a) language proficiency, (b) civilization and culture, and (c) language analysis (i.e., knowledge about the language). He argues that language proficiency is crucial for effective language teaching. He also emphasizes that teachers should be cognizant of the culture(s) of the languages they teach, and, more importantly, they should help students gain awareness of themselves as cultural beings. Regarding language analysis, Lafayette believes that teachers should possess knowledge of linguistic structures as well as knowledge of applied linguistics (e.g., knowledge and understanding of second language acquisition, fossilization, input/output processing, contrastive analysis/grammar, and error correction).

Based on the work of Lafayette (1993) and Day and Conklin (1992), Day (1993) proposes a framework for SLTE that includes four domains of knowledge: (a) content knowledge, (b) pedagogic knowledge, (c) pedagogic content knowledge, and (d) support knowledge. This framework was specifically designed for English as a second language/English as a foreign language (ESL/EFL) teacher education programs in Canada. In this paradigm, content knowledge refers to knowledge of subject matter; pedagogic knowledge refers to knowledge of practices of teaching; pedagogic content knowledge refers to knowledge of teaching strategies for teaching the subject matter, and support knowledge refers to knowledge of fields/disciplines which influence language teaching such as linguistics and sociolinguistics.

Richards (1998) finds Shulman's (1987) conceptualization of knowledge base a useful frame of reference for examining the core knowledge base of second language teachers. He proposes six dimensions: (a) theories of teaching, (b) teaching skills, (c) communication skills and language proficiency, (d) subject matter knowledge, (e) pedagogical reasoning and decision making, and (f) contextual knowledge. Later in this paper, I elaborate on Richards' framework, explain what each domain of knowledge refers to, and use the framework to discuss

the points of departure in ESL and FSL teacher education programs in Ontario, Canada. It is important to note that despite their presentation as fragmented components, there is acknowledgment that the domains in Richards' model are inherently integrated and interrelated (Grossman, 1995; Richards, 1998).

Freeman and Johnson (1998) make a significant contribution to the knowledge base debate in their seminal article titled "Reconceptualizing the knowledge base of language teacher education." In this article, they argue for a reconceptualization of the knowledge base of language teacher education and propose a framework of language teacher education that focuses on the "activity" of teaching and is comprised by three inter-related domains: (a) the teacher-learner, (b) the social context, and (c) the pedagogical process. Tarone and Allwright (2005) criticize Freeman and Johnson for not emphasizing the fundamental differences between general teacher learning and language teacher learning. Tarone and Allwright argue that language as a subject is uniquely and fundamentally different from other subject matter. Thus, SLTE is different from teacher education for other disciplines. Second language education programs should therefore draw on research that is unique to second language contexts. Tarone and Allwright (2005) argue that, "teachers of different subject areas must learn different things and may have to learn those things in different ways" (p.7). In response to this critique, Freeman and Johnson (2005) have noted that, in fact, this emphasis is at the heart of their reconceptualization. Freeman and Johnson's proposal emphasizes "who teaches what to whom, where?" (1998, p. 405). Their reconceptualization is particularly relevant to Canadian language teacher education programs given the multitude of contextual factors that impact the focus and delivery of such programs (e.g., diversity that exists among TCs, the target languages they are preparing to teach, the context(s) of their schooling, and the student population(s) with whom they are preparing to work). Furthermore, their reconceptualization is the start of a new, sociocultural orientation to SLTE whereby teacher-learning is viewed as situated and highly context-dependent.

There have also been calls in the field to establish standards for the content of language teacher education programs and delineate its knowledge base so that effective teacher education programs can be developed (Guntermann, 1993). One such response comes from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) that has operationalized knowledge base in terms of standards for language teachers. The NCATE's (2008) Program Standards for Foreign Language Teacher Preparation outline the knowledge base, skills and disposition of effective language teachers. These six standards include: (a) language, linguistics, comparisons; (b) cultures, literatures, cross-disciplinary concepts; (c) language acquisition theories and instructional practices; (d) integration of standards into curriculum and instruction; (e) assessment of language and cultures; and (f) professionalism (NCATE, 2008). These standards are intended to provide a framework for what teachers need to know and be able to do in order to be effective language teachers. NCATE is an American, performance-based system of

accreditation and this form of accreditation practice is not prevalent in the Canadian language teacher education system. There is little or no research done on the efficacy and the validity of such standards for language teacher preparation programs. Donato (2009) asserts that standards provide a framework for assessing the scope of curricula and what teachers need to know but they do not offer any direction on how to achieve such goals. Teachers may be able to demonstrate their competency in areas of the standards but still be ineffective in the classroom. Richards (2008) remarks that an unquestioned assumption is that such competency and knowledge informs classroom practices while research (e.g., Bartels, 2005) shows that teachers often fail to implement such knowledge in their classrooms. He further argues that the standards movement “reflects a reductionist approach in which learning is reduced to the mastery of discrete skills that can easily be taught and assessed (p. 172).” In the Canadian FSL context, Salvatori and MacFarlane (2009) identified three main categories of competency for effective French teachers: (a) pedagogical skills, (b) cultural competency, and (c) French proficiency. This report was prepared as a response to the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers’ (CASLT) interest in examining the knowledge base of FSL teachers. Discrete skills have been emphasized in this model taking the specific local contextual factors into account (French as second language teachers in Canada). Table 1 provides a summary of knowledge base frameworks discussed in this paper.

Table 1  
*Summary of Knowledge Base Frameworks*

	<b>Shulman (1987)</b>	<b>Lafayette (1993)</b>	<b>Day (1993)</b>	<b>Richards (1998)</b>	<b>Freeman &amp; Johnson (1998)</b>	<b>NCATE Standards (2008)</b>	<b>Salvatori &amp; MacFarlane (2009)</b>
<b>Knowledge Bases</b>	subject matter knowledge	language proficiency	content knowledge	theories of teaching	the teacher-learner	language, linguistics, comparisons	pedagogical skills
	pedagogical content knowledge	civilization and culture	pedagogic knowledge	teaching skills	the social context	cultures, literatures, cross-disciplinary concepts	cultural competency
	curricular knowledge	language analysis (i.e., knowledge about the language)	pedagogic content knowledge	communication skills and language proficiency	the pedagogical process	language acquisition theories and instructional practices	(French) language proficiency
			support knowledge	subject matter knowledge		integration of standards into curriculum and instruction	
				pedagogical reasoning and decision making		assessment of language and cultures	
				contextual knowledge		professionalism	

Moving away from “discrete” skills and competencies, SLTE is now influenced by perspectives drawn from sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000, 2009; Johnson, 2006, 2009). Sociocultural perspectives emphasize that learning is a “situated activity” that takes place in specific social contexts (Lave & Wegner, 1991). As Johnson (2009) points out, how an individual learns, what s/he learns, how s/he uses that information depends on the individual’s prior experiences, the sociocultural contexts in which the learning takes place, and the individual’s needs and wants, as well as what s/he is expected to do with that

knowledge. Thus, Donato (2009) questions the possibility of assessing teacher quality through standards while respecting the dynamic and situated understanding of teacher learning. Along these lines, Richards (2008) suggests that a focus on the “nature” of teacher learning should be at heart of rethinking the content and delivery models of SLTE programs. Adopting a sociocultural orientation he states:

From this perspective, learning takes place in a context and evolves through interaction and participation of the participants in that context. Teacher learning is not viewed as translating knowledge and theories into practice but as constructing new knowledge and theory through participating in specific social contexts and engaging in particular types of activities and processes. (Richards, 2008, p. 164)

Following these lines, I continue by providing a context for ESL and FSL teacher preparation in Ontario.

### **ESL and FSL Teacher Education in Ontario**

In Canada, education is the responsibility of the provincial government and, therefore, each of the thirteen provinces and territories are permitted to establish their own teacher certification criteria. In most provinces and territories teacher accreditation falls under a department within the Ministry of Education. In Ontario, however, the College of teachers has been established to govern all aspects of the teaching profession (Salvatori, 2009). The Ontario College of teachers has designed a system of basic and additional qualification for teacher licensure in the province. In order to become certified, teacher candidates (TCs) should complete a program to teach at a particular grade level (e.g., K-6, 4-10, or 7-12) and for the secondary level, for specific subject areas (for grades 4-10 and 7-12). ESL and FSL require a qualification for the teacher to be able to teach them as subjects. The difference is that FSL is a teaching subject (teachable) in initial teacher education programs in Ontario. This means that TCs generally receive about a full course equivalent (e.g., 72 hours of instruction) in French curriculum and pedagogy. The government of Canada plans to double the number of bilingual graduates to 50% by 2013 (Government of Canada, 2003) and there is a chronic shortage of FSL teachers to deliver FSL programs (Salvatori, 2009).

On the other hand, ESL is not a stand alone teachable; rather, a credential that is added to licensure in another area (e.g., math, geography, or elementary education). Therefore, ESL certification can only be obtained as an additional qualification. Canada receives approximately one quarter million immigrants every year and almost half (44.9%) of permanent residents in Canada settle in Ontario (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). ESL is not a mandated component of most initial teacher education programs in Ontario despite the fact that in Ontario, more than 30 percent of all immigrants are school-aged and there are schools in Ontario where over 90 percent of the school population requires English language support (People for Education, 2009). Due to this diverse

demographic in the school population, the mandate of the provincial government has been to support every teacher in his or her efforts to become an ESL teacher (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). Most teacher education programs offer elective courses focusing on ESL-inclusive pedagogy in K-12 classrooms. These courses range from 18-36 hours of instruction for each course (e.g. Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto).

### **Points of Departure: Developing the Knowledge Base of ESL and FSL Teachers**

I use Richards' (1998) framework of language teacher knowledge and Freeman and Johnson's (1998) emphasis on "who teaches what to whom, where" to discuss the points of departure in ESL and FSL teacher education programs in Canada. In this discussion, I draw on literature that pertains to native speaker and non-native speaker teacher characteristics specifically in the field of ESL where the literature is rich compared to FSL (see however, Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Turnbull, 2006). I acknowledge the simplistic and problematic native–non-native dichotomy and have previously argued for a reconceptualization of the native–non-native categories (Faez, 2007)<sup>3</sup>. I use Richard's framework for two reasons: (a) it is comprehensive and highlights the various aspects that have been addressed by other educators in the field; and (b) it allows for differences to surface more clearly. I draw on Freeman and Johnson's (1998) emphasis on "who teaches what to whom where" as it provides a back drop from which to highlight the local contextual differences between ESL and FSL teacher education in Canada.

#### **Theories of L2 teaching.**

A theory of teaching provides the theoretical foundations for a teacher education program. In a language-teacher education program, this includes developing a critical understanding of major second-language teaching theories and their implications for teaching, as well as the assumptions, values, and beliefs underlying one's own pedagogical practices. TCs enter teacher preparation programs with preconceived notions of what constitutes language teaching based on their years of experience as language learners and what Lortie (1975) refers to as "apprenticeship of observation" (p. 61). Their notions might include that there is one right "method" to do so (Johnson, 2009).

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<sup>3</sup> The native and non-native dichotomy is problematic both in terms of its linguistic designation as well as attributes associated to this designation. My research (2007) reveals that linguistic identities are complex, dynamic, multiple, and negotiable in specific social contexts. In spite of this acknowledgement, I use these labels when referring to studies whose purposes have been to investigate native/non-native language teacher issues. The native/non-native terminology is frequently used in literature and I am afraid I might be distorting much of the literature by using other terminology. However, I avoid using the labels in the discussions that I make replacing native/non-native speaker with terms such as "speakers of English or French as a first language" or "speakers of English or French as a second language" and also "Internationally educated TCs." I use the native/non-native literature to refer to some salient issues but my intent is not to generalize and attribute specific characteristics to each group based on their linguistic status. I emphasize that developing expertise in teaching is a highly individualistic phenomenon and broad generalizations are problematic. At the same time, I acknowledge that there is much that can be learned from some common themes and patterns.

Literature that pertains to native/nonnative language teacher issues suggests that the pedagogical assumptions, values and beliefs underlying individuals who speak a language as their first language could be quite different from those who speak it as a second language (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Braine, 1999; Reves & Medgyes, 1994). Speakers of a second language generally have personal experiences learning the same language as a second language. Cook (2005) explains, non-native teachers, “provide models of proficient second language users in action in the classroom” (p. 57). They have often experienced a number of teaching methodologies as a student in such classrooms and therefore have developed a unique set of assumptions about language teaching theories. They have personally experienced what does and does not work for them. TCs do not have this tacit knowledge base to draw on in contexts in which they have no prior personal experience (e.g., if they were never required to learn content matter through the medium of a second language, perhaps even a second language that was not fully developed as is the case of many ESL learners). This mismatch places some TCs in an unknown position. This mismatch observation holds true for English-speaking TCs in ESL courses and French-speaking TCs in FSL programs though in different ways. For instance, French-speaking teaching candidates in FSL programs who were schooled in French themselves may not understand what it is like for non-French-speaking children learning content matter in French immersion programs. It is important to note that not all TCs in ESL courses are English first language speakers and not all FSL candidates are French second language speakers. These differences nuance the mismatch alluded to above. In teacher education programs, it is extremely important that teacher educators draw on these varied backgrounds in helping language teachers develop an appropriate theory of teaching.

### **Teaching skills.**

The core competency of a teacher is his/her teaching skills which Shulman (1987) refers to as instruction. This includes the most crucial aspects of pedagogy such as organizing and managing the classroom, preparing lesson plans, providing clear explanations, questioning skills, etc. In language teacher education this also includes developing competence in using language teaching methods (e.g., communicative language teaching, task-based language teaching, etc.), and being able to adapt teaching skills and approaches to new situations. Teacher education programs have a significant role in preparing TCs to develop appropriate teaching skills. Based on a comprehensive review of research on language teacher education, Wright (2010) concludes that SLTE programs have been highly prescriptive and reform in this area has been very slow. This observation holds true for both ESL and FSL programs in Canada (e.g., Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott, 2005; Salvatori, 2009; Turnbull, 1999) where experiential and interactive approaches are not necessarily being implemented in classrooms.

### **Communication skills and language proficiency.**

Developing effective communication skills as a basis for language teaching is particularly important. For effective language teaching, it becomes crucial for one to have an advanced proficiency in the target language and the ability to use it as a medium of

instruction (communication skills). This does not mean that higher proficiency in a language makes a better teacher; in fact, TCs, regardless of their linguistic background need to develop effective communication and teaching skills (Coelho, 2004; Faez, 2008). Language proficiency is often identified by non-native teachers themselves to be their most identified weakness (Inbar, 1999; Mawhinney & Fengying, 1997; Medgyes, 1994; Tang, 1997). Teachers' lack of confidence in their level of language proficiency may limit their ability to conduct all classroom functions through the medium of the target language. Thus, maximizing target language use in the classroom (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002) and providing opportunity for exposure through the target language may prove to be a challenge for FSL TCs who often do not speak French as their first language. The field has specifically emphasized language proficiency as a factor that affects major aspects of their teaching expertise including teaching skills and subject matter knowledge (Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Turnbull, 2006). Li's (1998) study revealed that non-native speakers perceived their gaps in their English proficiency to constrain them when implementing communicative methodologies. The chronic shortage of FSL TCs has sometimes led to placing unqualified and ill-prepared FSL teachers in classrooms (Salvatori, 2009); therefore, FSL teacher education programs should emphasize improving French language skills in their courses. Internationally educated TCs who are also from diverse linguistic backgrounds in initial teacher education programs may also need such emphasis in the program (Gagné, Faez, & Lawrence, 2007).

On the other hand, for all other TCs who speak English as their first language and have experienced English-medium schooling, improving their language proficiency is not usually of concern. However, preparing them to communicate with individuals possessing limited English proficiency, where the teacher needs to be cognizant of colloquial expressions, figurative use of language, phrasal verbs, complex vocabulary, accented language, and speed of articulation, is significant (Coelho, 2004). Also, sensitizing TCs to issues related to successful intercultural communication (Cadman, 2000; Eland, 2001; Hofstede, 2001; LeGros, 2010; Roach, Cornett-Devito, & DeVito, 2005) in multilingual and multicultural classrooms is equally important. All teachers, regardless of their backgrounds and regardless of the languages they are teaching, need to develop appropriate communication skills for effective classroom instruction.

### **Subject matter knowledge.**

What do language teachers need to know about the nature of language and language use? Knowledge of subject matter in this context includes pedagogically based descriptions of phonology, syntax, and discourse as well as an understanding of the nature of second language learning. Understanding the principal approaches of language teaching, curriculum development, testing and evaluation, and materials development is also part of subject matter knowledge of language teachers. Familiarity with the nature of language and language use often comes more naturally to individuals who have learned a language as a second language and not acquired it in a natural setting (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Bailey, 2002). As Medgyes (2001) has noted, "non-NESTs [nonnative English-speaking teachers] can provide better *learner* models" (p. 436). Since they have been second language

learners themselves, they “have deeper insights into . . . the learning process” (p. 437.) Individuals who acquire a language as their first language “do not necessarily have a *conscious* knowledge of the grammatical rules of the language” (Cowan, 2008, p. 2). Non-native speakers, on the other hand, could possess a much stronger explicit understanding of how the language works compared to individuals who speak it as their first language (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik & Susser, 2004; Medgyes, 1992, 1994). Arva and Medgyes (2000) posit that grammar occupies the “pride of place” (p. 361) on the non-native speaker teachers’ list and ranks first on the gaps perceived in the native speaker repertoire of knowledge. Ellis (2004, 2006) suggests that this might be due to monolingualism versus bilingualism rather than native or non-native status of such teachers. This argument highlights that individuals who have learned a second language, regardless of what that second language is, develop stronger explicit understanding of the nature of language and how it works.

In language teacher education programs explicit knowledge about the language and how language is learned, as well as knowledge of grammar and how language works are areas that need explicit instruction. TCs who speak English or French as a second language are often at an advantage in this area as they can relate such instruction to their personal experiences learning the same language in a classroom setting. Memories of language learning are not a substitute for explicit/tacit knowledge of the language. Although, personal and professional experiences with language learning can result in a higher level of empathy towards language learners (e.g., Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Barratt & Kontra, 2000; Hulsebosch & Koerner, 1993); Empathy alone, does not support TCs in developing appropriate language teaching skills (Faez, 2008). Explicit instruction on language teaching strategies is required for ESL and FSL TCs to develop such teaching skills. Should such explicit instruction be provided in teacher education programs, individuals who speak the target language as their second language may better relate the instruction to their personal and professional experiences (Faez, 2008).

### **Pedagogical reasoning skills and decision making.**

Language teachers should be able to analyze pedagogical problems and develop alternative strategies for teaching. The ability of teachers to relate theories of language, teaching, and learning to language teaching in actual situations is also part of teachers’ pedagogical reasoning and decision making. While pedagogical reasoning skills and decision making are individual phenomena, a teacher’s linguistic background could have an influence on his or her ability to relate theories of language to actual teaching situations. For example, it is common for an individual who speaks a language as his or her first language to comment on the incorrect use of the language by offering the explanation of “it doesn’t sound right.” This feedback does little to help second language learners who often need meta-linguistic explanations of their errors. Providing meta-linguistic explanations and even predicting common errors and patterns of incorrect use of language often come more easily and naturally to second language speakers (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Barratt & Kontra, 2000; Kamhi-Stein et. al, 2004; Medgyes, 1994). In the case of potential ESL and FSL teachers this applies to English and French second language speakers.

### **Contextual knowledge.**

A significant component of language teachers' knowledge is the understanding of how language teaching is influenced and shaped by the contexts in which it takes place, as well as by an understanding of the role of societal, community, and institutional factors that impact language teaching. The contextual knowledge of TCs in the ESL course and FSL course vary greatly. TCs generally have little understanding of experiences and challenges of English language learners (ELLs) in mainstream classrooms unless they are immigrants themselves. Gaining an understanding of the immigrant experience, going through culture shock, and relating to experiences of multilingual and multicultural students are areas where TCs need to further develop their skills (Faez, 2006). Internationally educated TCs however, are often at an advantage in relating to ELLs due to their personal experiences with immigration and diversity-related issues (e.g., Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Hulsebosch & Koerner, 1993). Even though most TCs in the FSL course have personally experienced learning French in Canadian FSL programs, classrooms are much more diverse than they use to be. One assignment which is beneficial for all TCs is to engage in classroom observations in ELL-populated schools and classrooms. Observations provide opportunity for enhanced understanding of these issues and can orient TCs to the nature of linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms.

### **Discussion**

I adopt a sociocultural view of teacher learning which means acknowledging the "situated" and social nature of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Johnson, 2009). A sociocultural view of SLTE emphasizes the influence of the broad social, cultural, and political context in which SLTE takes place on teacher learning and classroom practice. I therefore use Freeman and Johnson's (1998) emphasis on "who teaches what to whom, where?" to discuss the significance of contextual factors that impact ESL and FSL teacher preparation programs in Canada. The *who* in this paradigm refers to the teacher. The heterogeneity of second language teachers in the Canadian context is a central factor in determining the emphasis required in their language teacher education program. A sociocultural theory of teacher learning posits a central role to the formation and reshaping of teacher identity in SLTE programs (Clarke, 2008; Johnson, 2006, 2009). TCs' age, background, education experience, status as a first or second language speaker of the target language, as well as their experiences with issues of diversity, impact their learning and development of knowledge base as well as their teacher identity formation in teacher education programs.

The *what* of the paradigm refers to the target language to be taught. In the case of ESL and FSL education, there is a substantial difference between the status of English and French in the classroom as well as in broader society. The status and spread of English in the age of globalization and as a worldwide lingua Franca is undisputed (Graddol, 2006). English is the dominant language and the medium of communication in most parts of Ontario, whereas French is viewed as a second language and "add-on" for many students. Individuals need English in order to function in their everyday lives as well as in the larger

society, whereas French proficiency is not as crucial in individuals' day-to-day functioning in Ontario or in their lives overall. English and French possess unequal status and power and, consequently, there is a different level of motivation to learn each of these languages in Ontario public schools, even though Canada is an officially bilingual country.

The *whom* refers to the Ontario K-12 student population. In Ontario, ELLs are placed in regular classrooms according to their age. In some instances, where ELLs have limited language proficiency and where ESL supports are available, these students are placed in pull-out<sup>4</sup> ESL classrooms. Thus, in most cases ESL instruction takes place in mainstream classrooms<sup>5</sup>. In FSL classrooms, despite the growing diversity in Ontario classrooms, all students are learners of French regardless of their status and/or background.

The *where* in the paradigm refers to the social context of the schools and schooling. I use the term school broadly to refer to both teacher education programs as well as Ontario K-12 programs. ESL and FSL teacher education programs in Ontario vary greatly in terms of their location, their student population, the program itself, and attitudes and philosophies espoused in the program. Similarly, the K-12 contexts of schools in Ontario where TCs are expected to start their teaching career are diverse. These different contexts create different opportunities for learning.

Adopting a sociocultural view of teacher learning means moving beyond preparing individual competent teachers who have mastered the curriculum. It means creating conditions for co-construction of knowledge through participation in social practices (Richards, 2008). This includes adopting many ideas and practices of reflection (Schön, 1983) such as dialogic teaching (Richards, 2008), case-based teaching (Farrell 2006, 2007), critical incidents (Farrell 2008), concept mapping (Farrell, 2009), portfolio-based approaches (Little, 2002, 2006, & 2009; Tanner ., Longayroux., Beijaard, & Verloop 2000) and action research (Burns, 2005; Wallace, 1998).

While there are similarities between ESL and FSL teacher preparation and they can benefit from working in collaboration and learning with and from each other, there are contextual differences that I allude to in this paper. These differences support Tedick's (2009) recommendation that, ideally, teachers should be dually licensed in FSL and ESL so they could develop deeper understanding of language issues. Having highlighted some key contextual factors and individual differences that influence the development of ESL and FSL teachers, I emphasize that developing effective teaching skills is a highly individual phenomenon. Thus, ESL and FSL teachers, as well as native and non-native teachers, can all become effective teachers regardless of their status and language background.

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4 In pull-out ESL classrooms, students are withdrawn from the mainstream classroom to receive English language instruction for a certain period of time.

5 Readers may comment that ESL instruction does not happen in most regular classrooms and this is an important issue in the education of ELLs. I agree with this comment, but acknowledge that I am using the ESL and FSL classrooms as points of comparison.

### Implications and Conclusion

In this paper, the multiple factors that affect ESL and FSL teacher education programs in Canada have been compared. From this discussion, it is clear that a “one size fits all” approach cannot be adopted to prepare teachers from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds for teaching English and/or French in the increasingly diverse contexts of Ontario classrooms. To do so would result in inadequate preparation of such teachers and ultimately failure for both the students and teachers. Given the multiple factors that differ in Canadian SLTE programs, it is extremely important for such programs to draw on these differences and address them flexibly. Teacher education programs should draw on the varied backgrounds of TCs and address their needs accordingly. For example, FSL TCs may need additional support in developing their oral and written communication skills in French; internationally educated TCs may need support in further advancing their linguistic and cultural competence in English to perform well in Canadian K-12 TCs. Such support services do not currently exist in most teacher education programs in Ontario; therefore, a strong institutional commitment to support these TCs is required in teacher education programs.

It is important that teacher education programs gather adequate background information on applicants to their programs to be able to better prepare them as ESL and FSL teachers. This information is generally not collected from applicants to such programs. Until teacher educators know who these teachers are, what backgrounds and life experiences they have, and what language learning and teaching experiences they hold, it is not possible to appropriately address the issues. It is equally important for teacher educators to develop TCs’ understanding and sensitivity to the diversity and the contextual factors they will encounter in their future teaching environments in Ontario. Given the increasingly diverse student populations in Ontario classrooms, language pedagogy should become a mandated component of all teacher education programs in that province. Currently, only a small percentage of TCs are receiving introductory courses to language pedagogy in most teacher education programs.

By drawing on the work of key authors and main dialogues in the field of second language education, as well as my professional judgement, I have attempted to address some key contextual factors that contribute to further understandings of SLTE programs in Canada. I have sought to show that there are some general issues and patterns in ESL and FSL teacher preparation programs, but there is also great variability in terms of the TC population, target language, student population, and teaching contexts. Effective teacher education programs in Ontario need to be mindful of the multitude of factors that impact ESL and FSL teacher education in Canada.

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