



ARTÍCULO

***La Conciencia de Género en la Formación de Profesores de
Lenguas en Colombia: Barreras, Progresos y Futuras
Direcciones.***

*Gender Awareness in Language Teacher Education in Colombia:
Barriers, Progress, and Future Directions*

Resumen

Este estudio analiza las percepciones y prácticas en torno a la conciencia de género en el programa de pregrado de Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras de una universidad pública colombiana. Mediante un enfoque etnográfico que incluyó 8 participantes (4 estudiantes, 2 profesores y 2 líderes académicos), seleccionados por conveniencia por su pertenencia al programa, se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas y un grupo focal. Los hallazgos revelan la coexistencia de dos entendimientos sobre el género: uno basado en el respeto y la diversidad, y otro crítico, que lo vincula a dinámicas de poder e identidad. Sin embargo, esta conciencia individual contrasta con la falta de estrategias pedagógicas estructuradas y un apoyo institucional inconsistente. El análisis, guiado por la teoría de la performatividad de género de Butler y la teoría de la justicia social de Fraser (Butler 1990; Fraser 2003), permitió interpretar esta brecha como una desconexión entre la performatividad discursiva de la equidad y su materialización en las prácticas y políticas curriculares. El estudio concluye subrayando la necesidad de un compromiso comunitario e institucional para traducir la conciencia en prácticas educativas transformadoras.

Investigaciones futuras deberían indagar estrategias efectivas para integrar perspectivas de género en los currículos, examinar cómo la conciencia se traduce en la práctica profesional y comparar enfoques entre universidades para identificar mejores prácticas para el desarrollo curricular y de políticas.

Palabras clave: conciencia de género, formación de profesores de lenguas, educación superior, justicia social, etnografía, Colombia.

Abstract

This study analyzes the perceptions and practices regarding gender awareness in the undergraduate Foreign Language Teaching program at a public Colombian university. Using an ethnographic approach that included 8 participants (4 students, 2 professors, and 2 academic leaders), selected by convenience sampling due to their involvement in the program, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and a focus group. The findings reveal the coexistence of two understandings of gender: one based on respect and diversity, and another, more critical one, linking it to power dynamics and identity formation. However, this individual awareness contrasts with a lack of structured pedagogical strategies and inconsistent institutional support. The analysis, guided by Butler's theory of gender performativity and Fraser's theory of social justice (Butler 1990; Fraser 2003), allowed for the interpretation of this gap as a disconnect between the discursive performativity of equity and its materialization in curricular practices and policies. The study concludes by underscoring the need for community and institutional commitment to translate awareness into transformative educational practices.

Future research should investigate effective strategies for embedding gender perspectives into curricula, examine how awareness translates into



professional practice, and compare approaches across universities to identify best practices for curricular and policy development.

Keywords: gender awareness, language teacher education, higher education, social justice, ethnography, Colombia.

1. Introduction

Throughout our process studying the FLT undergrad program, we have observed the gaps that exist around gender consciousness within the teaching field. Furthermore, as future educators and researchers, we recognize gender awareness as an essential component of teachers' professional responsibilities. As Butler (1990) states, "gender is not something that one is, it is something one does"; therefore, in language classrooms, teachers must be aware that the discourses they model and allow can either reinforce or challenge gender dynamics. Hence, it is necessary that educators acquire the proper knowledge and training about gender-related topics to create a safe environment where students can learn and grow, individually and as members of a community.

According to the National Higher Education Information System (SNIES for its Spanish initials) of the Colombian Ministry of National Education, there are 68 foreign language programs across the country, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. It is important to acknowledge the absence of a dedicated course on gender studies in many programs, revealing the need to integrate gender-related content into higher education curricula in Colombia, particularly within the bachelor's degree in foreign languages.

In this sense, the focus of this qualitative study is to identify perceptions and practices of gender awareness in the FLT undergrad program among pre-service teachers, faculty, and academic leaders. The leading research

question is the following: How is gender awareness addressed in the FLT undergrad program? To answer this, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding by following these objectives: (1) identify pre-service teachers' perceptions of gender awareness integration in the EFL program; (2) determine the faculty's perceptions and practices regarding gender awareness; and (3) characterize academic leaders' understanding of institutional policies that support gender approaches in the EFL program.

This study attempts to explore the existing gaps and strengths in the FLT program regarding gender awareness, bringing valuable insights that enrich gender pedagogical practices. As Kuteesa et al. (2024, 632) point out, "by addressing challenges and promoting inclusive opportunities, we can foster a society where every individual, regardless of gender, can realize their full potential". Moreover, new points of view can be visible to future educators, encourage them to critically reflect on their own identities, uncover unconscious biases, and understand how gender dynamics influence the learning experience.

We consider this exploration as a path that could enhance further research in more universities in Colombia, promoting to question and confront different power dynamics that are often undervalued in the foreign language classroom. Finally, we hope this work inspires readers to contribute to the creation of an education system that not only teaches languages but also empowers students to challenge societal norms and construct a more equitable society.

The following literature review explores existing research on gender in education, specifically how gender is constructed, performed, and addressed within the context of foreign language teacher education.

2. Related Research

2.1. Literature Review

This section reviews existing literature on gender awareness and its role in teacher education, with a particular focus on foreign language teaching. The following paragraphs start with a theoretical introduction, outlining significant concepts of gender. Subsequently, this exploration provides an overview about the importance of comprehending and integrating gender-conscious perspectives into teacher education programs. Finally, it emphasizes that developing gender awareness is not a static process; it demands continuous professional development.

2.1.1. Understanding Gender

To establish and clarify key concepts for this study, it is important to begin by defining gender. "Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2023). We align with this perspective, as we understand gender as a social construction and personal perception. It is essential to distinguish gender from sex, as the latter refers to biological differences between males and females. In addition, Butler (1990) states that "[O]riginally intended to dispute the biology-is-destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex".

Indeed, our intention in this exploration is to reject rigid and binary conceptions of gender that reduce people to traditional roles, instead of recognizing them as individuals with diverse identities and perspectives. In

this regard, Mojica and Castañeda (2017) argue that they avoid centering their understanding of this category [referring to gender] from a dualist and essentialist view of male/female, masculinity/femininity, or girls/boys, which favors the production of rigid, fixed, hegemonic, and often discriminatory connotations of how the genders should be or act.

The discussion now moves to the concept of gender equality. UNESCO (2015) suggests that:

This ensures that women and men enjoy the same status and have an equal opportunity to exercise their human rights and realize their full potential to contribute towards political, economic, social, and cultural development, and to benefit from the results. It is the equal value attributed by society to both the similarities and the differences between women and men, and the different roles they play. Gender equality can be promoted when resources, opportunities and support are availed to men and women without regard to biological sex.

We want to highlight that gender equality does not mean treating every individual identically; rather, it is aimed at ensuring that all individuals have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities across all spheres of life, including education, employment, political participation, and personal growth.

Moreover, Waluyo and Anita (2024, 1181) note that “gender awareness entails a critical analysis of societal gender norms and biases, highlighting equity, roles, and bias as central themes.” In education, this translates to the ability to recognize, understand, and critically reflect on how gender identities, roles, and expectations influence the teaching and learning process. When teachers receive proper training in gender-sensitive pedagogy, they can effectively address gender-related situations and incorporate strategies that foster equality, respect, and critical reflection on social norms. Conversely, without such awareness, “the teaching and

learning process in higher education can reproduce these traditions, culture and social norms that promote gender inequality if teachers are not aware of pedagogical approaches that consider the specific learning needs of males and females" (Totoba and Mészáros 2024, 52).

2.1.2. Addressing gender awareness in EFL practices

We draw on critical approaches to reflect on and question English teachers' roles in their daily praxis, and their perceptions regarding gender-related EFL practices. As Mojica and Castañeda (2017) state, "foreign language teaching contexts are not exempt from the responsibility of incorporating the gender perspective to help educational institutions battle gender inequities". Certainly, gender-related topics in the foreign language classroom are necessary; however, teachers must first promote a safe and inclusive environment where students feel empowered to speak out about this topic and reflect both individually and as a group.

According to Lohe (2022, 66), the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, as well as EFL teacher training in particular, offers a perfect space for fostering gender awareness. She argues that EFL contexts serve this purpose because they function as sites for identity development and perspective change, provide safe spaces for explorative interaction, and offer authentic materials that facilitate cultural and gender openness.

Addressing gender in education requires the implementation of a gender-conscious pedagogy. As Chapin and Warne (2020) explain, "within the context of the classroom, pedagogy is a term that includes what is taught (the content), how teaching takes place (the teaching process) and how what is taught is taught (the teaching methods)". By incorporating gender-conscious pedagogy in education, teachers can encourage critical reflection, implement inclusive practices, and empower students to resist oppressive norms both within and beyond the classroom.

In this context, it is important to highlight gender-responsive pedagogy as a practical framework for addressing gender-related issues in education. The core principle of gender-responsive pedagogy is that: (1) “the learning needs of male and female learners are considered in teaching and learning processes (inside and outside the classroom),” and (2) “teaching staff are aware of gender and gender-responsive in the planning and delivery of courses and respond to gender needs by continuously reflecting and adapting them” (Chapin and Warne 2020, 4).

The education system must guarantee equal rights in the classroom through policy, curriculum, and pedagogy. According to the article 24 of Organic Law 3/2007 from Spain (quoted in Lucas-Palacios et al. 2022, 3), educational administrators should develop the following actions:

1. Special attention in the curricula and at all educational stages to the principle of equality between women and men.
2. The elimination and rejection of sexist behavior and content and stereotypes that discriminate between women and men, with special consideration for this in textbooks and educational materials.
3. The integration of the study and application of the principle of equality in courses and programs for the initial and ongoing training of teachers.
4. The promotion of a balanced presence of women and men in the control and governing bodies of educational centers.
5. The establishment of educational measures aimed at the recognition and teaching of the role of women in history.

2.1.3. Life-long process of professional training

“Teacher identity construction has no start or end point; therefore, the process of becoming and being a teacher is constantly shifting and is mediated and transformed through the social practice and the active

process of learning to teach" (Macías et al. 2020, 3). This underlines that teacher development is an ongoing process shaped by pedagogical context, societal norms, and sustained critical self-reflection. In addition, the 21st century is characterized by inevitable social change. As society evolves and learners' needs change, educators must adapt their practices to the shifting educational landscapes. As Rayaprol et al. (2023, 535) observe, "every generation has a different kind of bond with the teacher, and sensitive teachers can make use of this relationship to transfer ideas that could change the way children see the world".

Certainly, education is a powerful tool for transforming society; however, training to raise gender awareness among teachers is often overlooked or not perceived as a visible concern. In this regard, integrating gender awareness into teacher education is essential to shaping reflective, inclusive, and socially conscious educators. Nevertheless, achieving this level of awareness requires continuous cultivation and ongoing training. As Mojica and Castañeda (2017) emphasize, "teachers should receive training in their professional development trajectory to help them gain gender awareness, reflect on it within the context of their practice, and find strategies to attempt to eliminate gender inequalities". Training programs must therefore encourage educators to critically examine their own biases, explore how gender dynamics operates within their specific teaching contexts, and implement concrete strategies to challenge inequitable practices.

According to Kuteesa et al. (2024, 632) "by addressing these challenges and promoting opportunities for social empowerment through education, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society where every individual, regardless of their gender, has the opportunity to thrive and contribute meaningfully to their communities and beyond". Fundamentally, educators have the transformative potential to construct a

society where gender is not a determinant of inferiority or a basis for subordinate perspectives. This transformation is possible through a continuous and life-long process of learning, as new pedagogical techniques, knowledge, and skills are necessary to remain relevant in the teaching profession.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded on poststructuralist theories that challenge static conceptions of gender. Central to this framework is Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity (1990); it conceptualizes gender not as a fixed category, but as a socially constructed identity. Drawing on Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity (1990), we understand gender as enactment through repeated social behaviors, actions, and language. In educational settings, especially in the foreign language classroom, this perspective allows us to question how gender norms are reproduced through interactions in the classroom.

In addition, this study draws on Nancy Fraser's (2003) multidimensional theory of social justice, which includes redistribution (economic dimension), recognition (cultural dimension), and representation (political dimension). Fraser emphasizes that true gender equity cannot be achieved solely by addressing material inequalities; it also requires the recognition and value of diverse identities and voices that have been historically marginalized or misrepresented. In the context of language education, this means not only providing equal access to resources and opportunities, but also ensuring that the pedagogical practices, institutional policies, and teacher training programs acknowledge and support gender diversity.

By integrating these two perspectives, this study explores how future teachers may be engaged with gender awareness in the classroom not only as an identity category, but as a site of power, discourse, and social

justice. Butler's framework sheds light on how gender is performed , while Fraser's theory broadens the lens to examine how gender equity must involve structural, symbolic, and participatory dimensions (Butler 1990; Fraser 2003). Together, they provide a critical foundation for understanding the importance of gender awareness in the foreign language classroom. In order to explore the integration of gender awareness within the FLT program, the following section outlines the methodology employed in this study.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Method

In this qualitative research, we conduct an ethnographic study using two semi-structured interviews and a focus group to explore gender dynamics in the FLT program. Ethnography facilitates the observation and interpretation of human behavior in its natural educational context. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) explain, ethnography involves "participating in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and asking questions". To complete the ethnographic fieldwork, we consider the program's curriculum as a reference point that allows us to go beyond observable practices and critically engage with pedagogical intentions, thus offering a more comprehensive understanding of how gender operates within the program. Additionally, focus groups were selected as a complementary data collection tool to generate data that is rich in context, nuances, and meaning. As Kitzinger (1995, 299) explains, "focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data". Finally, the sampling method selected was convenience sampling, as the participants (program

colleagues, faculty and academic leaders) were easily accessible to recollect data.

4.2. The participants and data collection

The study involved eight participants from the FLT undergraduate program, selected through convenience sampling to capture a range of insider perspectives. The sample was composed of two academic leaders, two professors, and a focus group of four senior students, ensuring the integration of diverse viewpoints from administrative, instructional, and student experiences. Data were collected using two primary methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted separately with the academic leaders and the professors; each protocol contained six open-ended questions, with the leaders' interview exploring institutional policies and strategies for fostering gender awareness, and the professors' version examining classroom practices and pedagogical approaches. Additionally, a focus group employing five open-ended questions was held with the students to investigate their perceptions of gender awareness within their academic formation and lived classroom experiences.

4.3. Data analysis

The data were analyzed following the principles of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). This process provided a systematic and flexible approach to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis followed several key phases. First, all audio recordings from the interviews and the focus group were transcribed and translated into English to ensure accuracy. An inductive, data-driven coding process was then employed. The initial stage utilized in-vivo coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998), which prioritizes the use of the participants' own language as codes to ensure the analysis remained grounded in their perspectives. These initial

codes were subsequently refined and grouped into broader analytical categories to identify recurring patterns and meanings. The evolving themes were organized and reviewed using a comparative map (Annex 2) to ensure they formed a coherent pattern relative to the coded extracts and the entire dataset. The finalized themes were then compiled into analytical memos (Annex 3), and the findings were contrasted with the existing literature and the theoretical framework to deepen the interpretation.

4.4. Reflexivity

As researchers embedded within the FLT program, we recognize that our insider position may have shaped both data collection and interpretation. To maintain methodological rigor, we systematically incorporated strategies for critical reflexivity. Data triangulation was employed by comparing insights from three participant groups—academic leaders, faculty, and students—allowing for the identification of both convergent and divergent perspectives across institutional levels. Furthermore, analytical memos were used not only as tools for interpretation but also as reflexive records to capture assumptions, positionality, and decision-making throughout the analytic process. These memos informed structured peer debriefing sessions, in which co-researchers critically examined interpretations and considered alternative readings of the data. Additionally, feedback from colleagues external to the research context was solicited to identify potential blind spots. These procedures increased the study's legitimacy and transparency by explicitly including our subjective interaction with the data in the analysis process.

4.5. Relevance, ethics, and Limitations

This study follows the ethical standards of institutional and national research committees. Participants received an informed consent form explaining the study's purpose, as well as parameters of confidentiality, risks, and voluntary participation, with the option to withdraw at any time without consequences. To protect participants' identities, pseudonyms were used (e.g., professor 1), and all data were anonymized during transcription and analysis. The research is relevant to the community, specifically to the FLT undergrad program, as it explores perceptions and practices regarding gender among its members. Interviews were conducted with care to ensure participants' comfort. All study details were informed orally and in written form, participants signed the consent form (Annex-1). After analysis, to ensure transparency and respect, results will be shared with participants via email. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the study's scope was limited to a small number of participants, which may restrict the generalization of the findings; however, this focus allowed for an in-depth and contextualized understanding of gender awareness in language teacher education.

4.6 Context description

The study was conducted within the FLT undergraduate program, a public university in Colombia. This program prepares future foreign language teachers, and its curriculum integrates pedagogical and linguistic components. As part of a diverse academic community, four senior students, two adjunct professors, and two academic leaders were invited to participate in the study. Efforts were made to ensure balanced participation and representation of voices. In this educational setting, the study explores how gender awareness is perceived and integrated within the program, considering the institutional culture, educational practices,

and broader socio-educational dynamics that may influence teaching and learning processes

5. Findings

5.1. Meaning of Gender

In terms of the notion of gender, participants expressed diverse understandings of gender. Data reveals that one part viewed gender as a matter of respect and diversity and others linked it to power dynamics and identity formation. For instance, a professor defined gender awareness as "the critical ability to analyze our daily relationships and identify violent patterns under cis-heteronormativity." Similarly, students associated it with values such as "diversity", "respect", "understanding", and "perspective".

5.2. Importance of Gender Awareness in Teacher Training

There was a clear consensus among participants on the critical importance of integrating gender awareness into teacher training, yet this recognition was consistently paired with expressions of profound professional vulnerability and a perceived lack of preparedness. The urgency for this training was emphasized by a professor who stated, "Absolutely, yes. Because the students I work with are future teachers. If they aren't exposed to these topics, they'll keep perpetuating these violences as educators," highlighting the high stakes of the omission. Moreover, one student lamented, "no one teaches us how to act when a kid comes up with a sexist comment," while another concluded, "I think we are not prepared to face those kinds of situations." This evident contrast between the recognized necessity of gender training and the current state of unpreparedness among future teachers points to a significant and urgent gap in the teacher preparation program.

5.3. Teaching Approaches and Methodologies

The approaches to gender-related topics were predominantly characterized by their informality and reliance on individual instructor initiative, leading to a significant gap between faculty efforts and student needs. While professors expressed a commitment to promoting respect, their methodologies were often unstructured, as one professor admitted, "indirectly in my classes I try to approach it through respect," and conceded, "when you ask me about specific strategies... it makes me stumble." This informal approach is very different from the clear, zero-tolerance method of another professor, who said, "I address it explicitly from day one... by naming it outright: 'This is misogyny, this is transphobia, this is homophobia.'" Students feel the effects of this inconsistency the most during their teaching practicums, when they have to deal with real-world gender dynamics without any formal help. Students also reported facing direct gender bias, such as the observation that "kids... respect more male practicums than women practicums," and felt unprepared to respond, with one stating, "no one teaches us how to act when a kid comes up with a sexist comment." This demonstrates a clear disconnect between the implicit, goodwill-based approaches of some faculty and the explicit pedagogical strategies required to empower future teachers in real classroom settings.

5.4. Institutional Support and Policy

A clear gap emerged between the existence of institutional gender policies and their practical application within the Foreign Language Teaching program. Administratively, one academic leader recognized this issue, noting, "We've conducted training sessions and disseminated the gender policy, but frankly, they remain underutilized resources." In contrast, faculty described a lack of accessibility and understanding. As one

professor remarked, "For gender topics, I think it would be great if the university created spaces for updating knowledge and training." This disparity reveals that institutional resources, though formally established, are perceived as absent by those expected to use them. The gap is further underscored by a bottom-up demand from students, with one professor observing that "students are demanding that these topics be explicitly addressed across all university areas, not just administratively but in coursework." Together, these perspectives reveal a circular pattern: underused institutional tools contribute to a lack of awareness, which in turn sustains their underuse.

5.5. Challenges and Suggestions

Participants identified a complex web of challenges to implementing gender awareness but concurrently provided a clear roadmap of suggestions to overcome them. The obstacles described were both external and internal, ranging from a conservative socio-cultural context where, as one student noted, "parents are seeing all these genders [topics] as liberation... as something bad that their kids shouldn't learn," to the practical classroom difficulty of discussing topics like "the LGBT community... because they are like close in mind." Furthermore, the challenge is embedded within the institution itself, as a professor pointed out the existence of colleagues with "very antiquated views" and "rigid mindsets they refuse to reconsider." In direct response to these barriers, the participants proposed concrete, actionable solutions. Students advocated for structural changes to the curriculum, suggesting "an elective course would be a start" and that gender topics be integrated into existing modules, specifically noting that "in ethics... that's the place to do it." These ideas were reinforced by academic leaders who highlighted the "need for teacher training" and the value of "promoting open dialogue spaces."

Together, these perspectives suggest that meaningful progress depends on a multifaceted strategy involving curricular reform, professional development, and institutional culture change.

6. Analysis and discussion

The thematic analysis revealed five core categories that capture the central tensions surrounding gender awareness in the FLT program. These themes resulted from a methodical examination of the similarities and, more crucially, differences in the perspectives and experiences of academic leaders, faculty, and students. The discussion that follows goes beyond simply outlining these categories to examine how they relate to one another

6.1. A Theoretical-Practical Chasm: From Critical Understanding to Informal Practice

The analysis revealed a deep disjunction between how gender is understood and how it is taught. While participants, particularly students, articulated a concept of gender aligned with respect and diversity, and one professor defined it through a critical lens of power (Butler 1990), this theoretical awareness rarely translated into structured pedagogy. Faculty frequently relied on spontaneous, improvised approaches, admitting they lacked formal strategies to address gender in the classroom. This disconnection between theory and pedagogy leaves pre-service teachers with the awareness of gender issues but without the tools to act upon it. As Fraser (2003) reminds us, when critique is not translated into practice, it risks reinforcing the very hierarchies it aims to dismantle.

6.2. Institutional Inconsistency: Policy, Practice, and Divergent Perceptions

The analysis uncovered a clear disconnect in how institutional support is perceived, highlighting a significant divergence between leadership and faculty. Academic leaders pointed to the existence of protocols and training sessions, yet simultaneously recognized them as "underutilized resources." In stark contrast, faculty reported a lack of accessible knowledge and clear guidance, with one professor stating it would be "great if the university created spaces for updating knowledge." This contradiction reveals that the institutional policy itself—its dissemination and integration—is part of the problem. The resulting inconsistency means that the responsibility for gender education falls disproportionately on individual faculty initiative, leading to the uneven and unpredictable experiences reported by students.

6.3. Contradictory Positions: Student Demand vs. Faculty Readiness

A critical divergence emerges between student readiness and faculty preparation. Students not only expressed a strong demand for more formal training but also provided concrete suggestions, such as dedicated elective courses or integration into ethics classes. Conversely, faculty narratives were often characterized by a sense of unpreparedness and a desire for more professional development. This tension places students in a paradoxical position: they are increasingly aware and demanding gender-conscious education, yet they are being trained by a faculty that feels under-equipped to provide it. This gap risks creating a cycle where new teachers enter the school system without the tools to break away from traditional, potentially inequitable, pedagogical models.

7. Concluding remarks

This qualitative study explored gender awareness within the Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) undergraduate program, involving perspectives

from a diverse population of the future teachers, faculty members, and academic leaders. The findings reveal a complex landscape defined by a critical disconnect: while individual awareness of gender issues is growing, particularly among students who define it through values of "diversity" and "respect," this consciousness is not supported by coherent institutional structures or pedagogical frameworks. This gap is captured in the voice of a student who lamented, "no one teaches us how to act when a kid comes up with a sexist comment," highlighting the practical vulnerability that theoretical awareness cannot remedy.

This study contributes to the field by empirically documenting how the theory-practice gap in gender education manifests in the specific context of Colombian language teacher training. While previous research, such as that of Mojica and Castañeda-Peña (2017), has advocated for incorporating a gender perspective, this study provides concrete evidence of the systemic nature of the challenge. It moves beyond identifying a general need to reveal the specific disconnects: between the critical understanding of gender held by some professors and their informal teaching approaches; between the institutional policies acknowledged by leaders and the lack of accessibility reported by faculty; and between the demand for training from students and the unpreparedness felt by their educators.

To address these challenges, further research should move from diagnosing the problem to designing and testing concrete interventions. Priority areas include:

1. Investigating effective teacher development strategies, such as the impact of micro-teaching scenarios on building educators' confidence in responding to gender-based discrimination.

2. Exploring models for curricular integration, examining how gender content can be systematically embedded across the curriculum, rather than being an isolated component.

3. Evaluating institutional support mechanisms, assessing the effectiveness of specific resources, such as mentoring programs or classroom observation protocols, in creating a sustainable ecosystem for gender-conscious pedagogy.

Ultimately, transforming gender awareness from an individual aspiration into a programmatic cornerstone requires closing the current loop between discourse and practice, ensuring that future language teachers are not only aware of gender inequities but are also equipped with the practical tools to challenge them.

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