LGBTQ+ representation and language teaching in higher education: an exploration of the Danish Lecturer Scheme

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Declaration page

I, Jesper Hansen, confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

The research on which this thesis is based originates from my commitment to developing more inclusive curricula. In my professional roles as Danish language tutor in UCL Scandinavian Studies and part of the Danish government's Danish Lecturer Scheme, and later as Programme Director in the UCL Arena Centre for Research-based Education, I initiated a series of projects with colleagues across the institution to explore ways in which LGBTQ+ voices can be included more in language teaching. My thesis takes inspiration from these projects, analysing more specifically the (lack of) inclusion of non-normative gender and sexuality in the context of Danish language teaching in higher education institutions across the world.

Based on interviews with 11 Danish language teachers from around the world, this study analyses the extent to which they have reflected on and included non-normative gender and sexuality in their teaching. It finds that, overwhelmingly, these teachers have avoided non-normative topics, and where they have included any non-normative identities, these have been considered within a hetero/homo-normative framework (such as gay marriage). Furthermore, with one exception, the participants felt a lack of support from their institutions, failing to receive relevant training to engage with identity beyond the heteronorm.

The thesis discusses the enablers and barriers that the teachers have encountered, and based on this suggests concrete ways in which the Danish Lecturer Scheme and universities more generally can improve their strategies in relation to representation. My key recommendation is the need for more and better training in this area. While my focus in this study is on gender and sexuality in language teaching throughout, my overarching argument is that taking a queer pedagogy-informed approach will be beneficial for all students, across all departments.

Impact statement

There are a number of places where impact from this EdD is possible: some are local to the Danish Lecturer Scheme, while others have the potential to have impact on higher education more generally; some relate to the specific roles that I have focused on, namely language teachers, while the overarching ideas presented can be applied much more broadly to all teaching in higher education (and indeed in other sectors).

Firstly, the results can enable the Danish Lecturer Scheme to recalibrate how they work with individual lecturers and the institutions that they have partnership agreements with. My work has showed that there is a need to prepare lecturers better for their role as teachers in new cultures, helping them navigate the potential tensions between Danish and local values and norms. This will help ensure individual lecturers are not left to their own devices when making decisions that can potentially impact their students negatively, and it will help the lecturers navigate what one of my participants perceives as a 'minefield' of gender and sexuality.

Secondly, the impact described above also applies to language teachers at UCL, in UK higher education, and, more broadly, worldwide. I draw on the research from this EdD already when I work with language teachers, and when I go on to publish this research, it will reach an even wider audience.

A third potential audience are publishers and creators of textbooks and language learning materials. My research adds to the growing understanding that these stakeholders play a crucial role in representing diverse characters and topics. While my research has showed that Danish lecturers enjoy a level of freedom to teach how they see fit, beyond what is seen in many other places, they still rely heavily on published textbooks, and their view of what good teaching is can be seen as rooted in the books.

Finally, my work has the potential to support ongoing discussions in UK higher education relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). It challenges the notion that inclusion is always the end-goal, and it shows how other strategies, rooted in queer pedagogy, can provide a different, more fruitful framing for goals to ensure equitable experiences for all students. This impact is already felt as I am, for instance, supporting

another PhD student who is writing up a toolkit on how tutors can queer their modules, based on her research with participants in workshops for UCL staff that I co-facilitate with a colleague.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I want to thank my supervisor Prof John Gray. At a time when my doctoral journey felt like one long uphill trek, he helped me find joy in it. His positive and constructive feedback has helped me reach the next milestone along the way to this doctoral thesis. And who knew that supervision could be fun and that it could involve laughter as well as more serious discussions?

I also want to thank my second supervisor Dr Ian Warwick. His feedback on drafts has been invaluable and constructive, particularly at the beginning of the process when I was changing my thesis' direction, and towards the end when ironing out the last few things.

A special thanks should go to Prof Dilly Fung and Prof Sam Smidt. When I started my current career in UCL Arena, they were the Director and Associate Director respectively, and right from the beginning they inspired me to pursue a doctorate. And not only did they support me by discussing this with me and helping me frame my initial ideas, they also allowed me to carve out time to do so as part of my work. Without this, I would not be where I am today.

The participants in this research deserve particular thanks. I cannot mention them by name, but they know who they are. A special thank you also to my colleague in UCL School of Languages, Culture and Society, Christine Sas, who agreed to participate in my first pilot interview, which helped me hone this part.

Finally, I want to thank my wife Dr Elettra Carbone and my daughter Nora Carbone-Hansen. The former for her endless patience with me; the latter for just being who she is and making me smile a little every day.

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List of abbreviations

DLS: Danish Lecturer Scheme

EDI: Equality, diversity and inclusion

FoP: Foundations of Professionalism

ICD: International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems

IFS: Institution Focused Study

IPA: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

LGBTQ+:   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (and more)

MOE1:   Methods of Enquiry 1

MOE2:   Methods of Enquiry 2

RTA: Reflexive thematic analysis

SELCS: UCL School of European Languages, Society and Culture

SSEES: UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies

TA: Thematic analysis

Reflective statement

A journey of two parts

My journey through my professional doctorate can be divided into two distinct phases. In the first years, I saw it as something very instrumental, something I had undertaken because it was a good career choice and because I wanted to learn more about how researchers think and work. This was linked to my professional identity as an experienced teacher and educator, who suddenly found myself working in higher education without a researcher background. While I never felt this was a problem, and never felt any lack of respect from colleagues I worked with, I was aware that there was a part of my professional identity that could be strengthened. However, this also meant that the first years of my doctorate were tough to get through, and while I recognised that I *was* learning, I did not enjoy this part much.

In 2019-20 this changed as I became interested in representation and queer pedagogy. I suddenly felt a connection to the topic, which enabled me to reflect critically on the assumptions that underpinned and informed my language teaching, and it became clear to me that my research could have real impact, and that it could help other (language) teachers transform their teaching and make it more diverse – on a side note, I often end up using the word 'inclusive' here, but as will become clear in the thesis, this is a term that comes with its own problems, as it creates a dichotomy between the includer (the norm) and the included (the periphery).

It was also around this time that I changed supervisors, and it has been interesting to observe the different supervisory styles, particularly as I will in the near-future be working with and supporting UCL supervisors. For me this change invigorated my commitment to my doctoral studies and injected a whole new degree of enthusiasm into the work. It also, however, meant that I almost had to 'start over', as I could not draw on the work I had done, for instance, for my Institution Focused Study (IFS) when doing my thesis.

The EdD modules

Foundations of Professionalism

Foundations of Professionalism (FoP) was clearly meant to bridge the students' professional life with the doctoral studies. This is a good idea, and the focus on professionalism makes sense. However, for people like myself, who were already working in higher education and were used to reading and writing academic genres, it felt familiar and somewhat repetitious. The teaching often repeated what was in the set reading, rather than open up for interesting discussions. One thing did become clear to me: that many, maybe even most of the other students, had come to their doctorate with negative experiences of professional life, and this was often a driver for them; they wanted to address these issues through their research, or they simply wanted better jobs. I did not recognise this in my own professional life: I was not being pushed to run faster and faster in my job, and my line manager was a reasonable and kind person. In one activity, for instance, where we were discussing 'critical incidents', I really struggled to identify any.

This also meant that I did not take as much interest in the assessment as I should have. I remember, though, reflecting on 'being assessed', and I was keenly aware that I did not like it. The idea of 'getting a mark' was annoying and counterproductive, and when I got feedback on my work, it was not particularly useful either. On this occasion, I actually asked the person who had assessed my work for a meeting because I did not understand all her comments; she refused that. I got a 'C' for the work, which represents the lowest mark I have had since secondary school.

Methods of Enquiry 1

Methods of Enquiry 1 (MoE1) and Methods of Enquiry 2 (MoE2) were much more interesting, and I was enthusiastic about discussing and learning more about ontology and epistemology. As with FoP, however, I found that there was not really enough time to explore how the module readings connected with the concrete research that we were preparing to do as part of our IFS. It was interesting to learn more about terms such as

positivism and post-positivism, but the links forward to the next stages of our doctorates felt difficult to make.

At this stage I was still interested in exploring educational development in higher education and understanding more about how to measure impact. For MoE1 I therefore wrote a research proposal titled 'The impact of a term-long educational programme for postgraduate teaching assistants'. This suggested interviewing participants to understand what they felt had been impactful. I got another 'C' for this too, and on reading it today, that is entirely fair. While I was beginning to understand what a research proposal looked like and contained, it was rather generic and many of the suggested stages were not explained in detail. These are areas where I feel I have improved massively, and it was visible even in the IFS.

Methods of Enquiry 2

MoE2 was somewhat different from my previous experiences. We mostly worked in smaller groups with a tutor, and she provided some of the most useful feedback I have ever had. It was also the first time I conducted interviews, which was something I had looked forward to. I remember the first interview and how nervous I was about ensuring the digital recorder was on (I even had an iPad too, as a backup). However, the interviews went really well, and I felt that I had a flair for it.

The five interviews were with participants who had completed UCL's mandatory training for postgraduate teaching assistants (Gateway Workshop), so it was aligned with MoE1 but also distinct from it. I used picture prompts during the interviews, and this proved incredibly effectful in supporting participants to reflect on their experiences – this was something I also found very fruitful for this thesis. Once I had transcribed the interviews, I began the analytical process. I was working with Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. This experience later convinced me to look into their Reflexive Thematic Analysis, which is what I used to analyse my data in this thesis. An interesting thing is that I still saw themes as 'arising' from the data in my MoE2 assessment; today, I would tend to acknowledge more explicitly the researcher as intricately linked to the analytical process, for instance by writing 'as a result of my analysis, I propose two themes which...'.

I received a 'B' for my assessment, and my feeling was that I had found something I actually enjoy – working with data, spending lots of time reading and analysing it, and finding effective ways of communicating my insights.

Institution Focused Study

As a result of MoE1 and MoE2, I knew what I wanted to focus on for my IFS. I also knew that I wanted to work qualitatively with interview data. In a session on MoE1 we had discussed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), and I had since read the main text relating to it by Smith et al. (2009). This inspired me to centre my research on experiences – what kind of sense would participants make of their experiences of participating in training? The way interpretation is understood in IPA has left a lasting impact on me, which will be clear later in this thesis.

My study was called 'How do postgraduate teaching assistants experience educational development: an interpretative phenomenological analysis' and to collect data I interviewed five postgraduate teaching assistants. Compared to my work on MoE1 and MoE2, I spent more time considering frameworks within which to understand my results. This allowed me to link my results much closer to the literature, which is something I have also attempted in this thesis. I received an 'A' for this work.

One of the insights I gained was that IPA might not be a good fit for this type of research. I say 'might' as it was the first time I conducted phenomenological research, so it might also have been due to my own inexperience, but it proved difficult because my participants often struggled to remember specific experiences. While I was able to turn this into something positive in my IFS by seeing it as one of the key findings – a reminder to those of us who lead modules or programmes that while we might think a lot about our own teaching, this is not always the case for participants for whom our module is just a small part of their overall experiences – I also realised that thematic analysis was better suited for the type of research undertaken in this thesis.

Thesis

As already explained I changed supervisors after my IFS because I decided to change the topic of my thesis. Initially I wanted to align it with MoE 1, MoE2 and my IFS,

exploring the impact of a training programme for lecturers on probation, and I also produced a draft proposal for this. Despite the complete change in direction for my thesis, it is still influenced by previous work and my learning during the first years of my doctoral journey. Specifically, I feel I have taken three things with me: interview skills; the idea of using prompts during interviews; and an interest in working with thematic analysis.

Beginning to work with queer theory was, admittedly, a big change for me, and it has required me to think critically about my work and myself as a person, both professionally and personally. I have become keenly aware of how privileged I am as a middle-class, white, able-bodied, heterosexual, cis-gender man. And I have found that it is not that common to work on LGBTQ+ topics without belonging to that group yourself. This has become one of my main drivers, as I feel strongly that diverse representation cannot and should not be seen as something that only people who do not belong to the majority should be interested in. This is also where I see the greatest potential impacts. My research might be informed by queer theory and people who identify as LGBTQ+, but in reality it is much broader than this. I will therefore also be suggesting towards the end of the thesis how this research has implications for practice on many levels: institutionally and on policy; on programmes and departments; and on individual teachers.

This thesis brings together many aspects of me as a person and researcher: my professional background as a language teacher; my current work in educational development in higher education; my commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion; and my insistence that change for the better is possible, that there is scope to imagine 'something else, something better, something dawning' (Muñoz, 2009, p. 189).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Personal and professional link to this research

In 2019 I was contacted by a colleague who was in contact with someone at UCL IOE, who wanted to do some work with university language teachers. As I had been teaching Danish at UCL from 2010-2016 and was still involved with my old department, he was wondering if I would be interested in this. This is how I first met Prof John Gray, who later became supervisor for my thesis. John presented his ideas, which broadly revolved around a series of workshops on queer theory and queer inquiry, erasure and representation. I was immediately hooked, and together we set up three workshops for language teachers in UCL School of European Languages, Society and Culture (SELCS) and UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES).

At the first workshop, more than 25 language teachers showed up, the largest number of language teacher colleagues I have seen at a single workshop during my time at UCL. It is not necessary to go into details here, but I vividly remember reflecting after the workshop: why did I not think about this before? How can I have been teaching in further and higher education for 10 years without thinking more broadly about representation? And what can I do differently in the future?

Talking to colleagues after the workshop, it became evident that my experiences were shared by many other participants, and in some of the other workshops later in the year, they presented some of the changes that they had introduced in their language classes. The following year I worked with three of the colleagues to produce UCL's first toolkit on LGBTQ[1]+ representation in language teaching (Hansen et al., 2021).

Representation is not as straightforward a term as it might seem at first glance, and I had not given it much thought before beginning this research. Hall (1997) introduces three theories of and approaches to representation: the reflective approach, which sees language representing meanings that are already present in the world; the intentional

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[1] In this thesis I have decided to use the acronym LGBTQ+, which is the one used by most of the sources that I cite, as well as being used by organisations such as Stonewall.org.uk. When I quote or refer directly to other people's work, I will, however, be using their preferred acronym (for instance LGB or LGBT).

approach, which argues that meaning stems from the speaker or author; and finally the one which is most relevant here, the constructionist approach, which argues that '[i]t is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others.' (p. 25) This moves representation away from the individual and instead sees it as a part of a culture, which Hall argues 'is not so much a set of things […] as a process, a set of practices.' (p. 2)

This understanding of representation is important to this thesis as it entails that 'cultural meanings are not only "in the head". They organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects.' (p. 3) The point is that the way something or someone is represented in a certain culture has very concrete and tangible effects. If LGBTQ+ people are represented, for instance, as '"barebackers" and "virus-breeders"' (Tomso, 2008, p. 265) that can have the concrete effects that people belonging to this group are 'singled out as the targets of moral furore or, among the more liberally minded, as targets of state surveillance and scientific management' (p. 265). As Hall (1997, p. 3) explains, 'we give things meaning by how we represent them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them.'

The idea that culture is not a thing but a process or set of practices is something that queer theory develops further, arguing that there is no essential identity, a thing, but that what we perceive as identity is a result of repeated actions. I will be exploring this in much greater detail later in the literature review, but for now the important point is that the work I did with John showed me the power of a queer theoretical perspective; how it could be mobilised to enable change, which is the reason I wanted to do an educational doctorate in the first place, rather than, say, a traditional PhD. Finally, it was my work with colleagues that convinced me that change is not only possibly, but also desirable to teachers. All we language teachers needed was a gentle push and some support, then our own professionalism allowed us to work effectively with our teaching in new, more equitable ways.

Bearing this in mind, this research seeks to understand better how language teachers view the role of gender and sexuality within their teaching, if and how they include it, and what barriers and enablers they have experienced. I have chosen to focus on a specific group of Danish teachers who are part of the Danish Lecturer Scheme (DLS) and I will outline my reasons for this below. However, before turning to the DLS, I want to discuss why this research is necessary and important.

1.2 Why is this research needed?

The above section centres on myself and my own journey, and, somewhat relatedly, my fellow language teachers' journey. Here, however, I would like to discuss *why* it is needed and beneficial (as one could certainly imagine areas where there is an appetite for something, but where this would not be worth pursuing).

When I began looking into concrete advice for language teachers – or, indeed, teachers more generally – on how to work to ensure more inclusive representation, I was able to find very little material; and there was nothing tailored to language teachers in higher education specifically. Some of this was because I was not yet using the correct search terms, and as I show in my literature review later, there are indeed available books, articles, online toolkits and so on. However, this highlights the need for more visible and easily accessible resources. A qualitative study like this thesis would therefore have the potential to significantly and positively impact on the DLS, on language teaching at UCL as well as language teaching in the UK and beyond – if not on its own, then together with other studies that are conducted with/on language teachers, learners and producers of materials.

A final reason for undertaking this research is the increased focus on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in UK higher education. It is now part of almost all discussions at my current place of work, UCL, which is a positive thing. However, when it comes to actioning EDI and making concrete changes, the focus has tended to be on race and racism. At UCL this has led to institutional projects such as 'Decolonising the curriculum' and 'Why isn't my professor black?', and while I recognise their importance and that they stem from a desire to make UCL more inclusive and equitable for racially minoritised students, I see three fundamental problems: firstly, they focus on one

(protected) characteristic at the expense of others (*Equality Act 2010*, 2010); secondly, they do not provide much concrete support to colleagues who are interested in decolonising their curriculum; and finally, there is a potential danger that these projects are seen as linear: you decolonise your curriculum and then you are done. It is important to point out that these concerns are not specific to UCL, but are applicable to schemes such as the DLS and second language teaching more generally (Macedo, 2019).

With this research, I aim to address all three points: providing recommendations that allow teachers to think about representation that go beyond single identities, adopting an intersectional point of view (Cohen, 1997; Crenshaw, 1989); drawing on my insights to organise relevant training for colleagues; and finally, suggesting a queer pedagogy framework for thinking about teaching, which enables reiterative questioning of norms and normalcy. My research questions are thus:

> 1. How do Danish Lecturers who are part of the Danish Lecturer Scheme view the role of gender and sexuality within language teaching?

> 2. If they include non-normative gender and sexuality, how and why do they do this?

> 3. What barriers and/or enablers do the Danish lecturers perceive in relation to how they choose to represent gender and sexuality in their language teaching?

1.3 Rationale for choosing the Danish Lecturer Scheme

Although I see this study as relevant to my current role and to second language teaching in general, I have chosen to focus on lecturers who teach Danish abroad, specifically the Danish Lecturer Scheme, for several reasons. I have intimate first-hand knowledge of the DLS, having worked as part of it myself until 2016, and I have been one of the leading figures as Chair of Lektorbestyrelsen (2011-2014), which represents all the lecturers (duties included organisation of the annual summer seminar, support of new lecturers and leading policy discussions with the governing body). Furthermore, working with the scheme both offers a certain degree of focus (all lecturers teach

Danish language at a university outside Denmark) and a diversity of experience (lecturers work across the globe: Western and Eastern Europe, Asia and North America). The two final reasons for my choice are a) that there is, to my knowledge, no other research relating to this particular group (not just with regards to gender and sexuality, but generally); and b) the teachers already form a community of practice, meaning that the outcomes of my research will prove immediately useful: the lecturers will be able to discuss results and how they might affect their practice.

As most people will be unfamiliar with the DLS, I will give a brief overview of its history and remits in the next section.

1.4 The history of the Danish Lecturer Scheme

The DLS was established in 1937 at the University of Copenhagen 'to oversee the university's interests in lecturerships abroad' (Andersen, 1998, p. 3) and later that year this was formalised by the Ministry of Education. By 1938 it supported 14 lecturers, including one at UCL. The emphasis of the scheme was on exchange and collaboration, and the Danish Lecturers were meant to both teach and conduct research, just like they would have done at a Danish university.

Up until the 1980s the scheme saw mostly minor changes, but over the next decades there was significant expansion due to new collaborations with Eastern Europe and the USA (see Table 1 which shows how many Danish Lecturers were being paid to teach Danish abroad in the stated years – no numbers are available for the period after 1994, except the current ones which I list below in Table 1). In 1989 the role of the lecturers was redefined significantly: lecturers were now to focus on teaching Danish language and culture and only do research if this was seen as desirable by the foreign university.

Year	Number of Danish Lecturers
1938	14
1951	14

1956	18
1968	17
1972	22
1987	31
1994	38

Table 1: Development in the number of Danish Lecturers abroad (from Andersen, 1998)

The period leading up to today saw changes such as the move in 2001 to the Ministry for Science, Technology and Development and again in 2020 to its current place within the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science which itself sits within the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

The DLS is overseen by a steering group ('Lektoratsudvalget', the Lectureship Committee) which consists of five academics, each responsible for a part of the world, and a specialist consultant appointed by the Ministry of Culture. The Head of the Committee is appointed directly by the Minister of Higher Education and Science, and the other members are appointed by the Minister based on recommendations from the organisation 'Danske Universiteter' (Danish Universities) which represents the eight Danish universities. The Lectureship Committee works closely with 'Lektorbestyrelsen' (the Lecturer Committee), which consists of a number of lecturers who are elected at the annual summer seminar by their peers.

As per 2022, the year when data for this thesis was collected, the scheme supported 26 lecturers all over the world. For most of these, the scheme pays the entire salary of the lecturer, making it comparable to a similar position in Denmark, reimburses costs relating to reallocation, organises and pays for a five-day summer seminar every year (including travel costs), and supports local initiatives such as author visits or other cultural events.

Apart from supporting these lecturers directly, around 80 other staff who are employed locally receive some degree of support from the scheme. Altogether over 60 universities

outside Denmark offer Danish programmes, and these are followed by more than 2000 students.

As my research relates directly to the DLS and the lecturers who are part of it, it should be immediately useful for them. However, I see the potential implications and impacts of the research as much broader than that. Firstly, I am already working with all departments in UCL Arts and Humanities, many of which have strong language programmes. Here my research will allow me to put in place relevant and targeted continuous professional development for all language teachers. Secondly, while this research focuses on language teachers, my experience of working with other types of staff at UCL tells me that they are facing many of the same challenges (such as how to broaden representation beyond the heteronorm, and how to diversify reading lists). In 2022-23 I co-led a series of four connected workshops with a colleague, which we called 'Queer pedagogy: how to stop teaching straight'. We had over 50 people sign up for this but only had capacity for 24. The workshops demonstrated an appetite for discussions about how to include diverse students, and my colleague and I discussed with the participants the potential benefits offered by a queer pedagogy-inspired approach (discussed below).

In some evaluative research done by a PhD student who interviewed several of the participants, one of them explained how attending the workshops had finally given them the courage to come out to his colleagues and what a relief this had been. And while this was not one of our intended outcomes with the workshops, it shows how and why this type of work is needed, for students as well as staff, and without having done the work for this thesis, I would not have been able to instigate and lead this kind of work. This workshop is being repeated in 2023-24 where we are working with another group of around 20.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

I begin this literature review with an overview of how sex, gender and sexuality have been defined in relation to different theoretical approaches. My main focus is on contemporary discussions about how the terms can and/or should be understood, though I will include a historic perspective as this provides essential context for current debates in this field. The rationale for choosing this approach is that my research questions centre on teachers' current work, not the historic dimension.

I use as my starting point the opposition between biological essentialist ideas and non-essentialist perspectives, understanding the latter particularly in relation to Giddens's concept of self-reflexivity. In this process, I will try to place the two terms in their respective historical and theoretical contexts. This is followed by an overview which attempts to outline the main debates relating to different waves of feminism. To contextualise my research and demonstrate the importance that legislation has played in defining gender and sexuality in different societies, I introduce a short overview of important legislative milestones in relation to sexual equality and representation in the UK and Denmark. Finally I present the key theoretical frameworks that directly relate to my study, namely poststructuralism and queer theory, while addressing how I see these two as intrinsically related to one another. The last section turns to questions of gender and sexual representation in education, reflecting on how LGBTQ+ issues have been included / not included in pedagogical contexts and ends with a discussion of ideas on how to queer the language classroom.

2.2 Sex, gender and sexuality: essentialism and non-essentialism

At a very fundamental level, it has been argued that sex, gender and sexuality can be understood as either essentialist or non-essentialist. Gowaty (2018, p. 145) defines essentialism as 'the idea of fundamental, intrinsic, necessary, determinative differences between entities, such as females and males'. This is often referred to as biological essentialism, as it has its root in biology, and here sex is understood as something that is completely governed by our biology: you are born a boy or a girl, and this will

fundamentally determine who you are, namely your behaviour (such as levels of aggression and kindness), approach to life (such as educational and job choices) and romantic/sexual pursuits (whether you desire men or women). People who do not fit neatly into either category are considered outliers or 'mistakes' that do not challenge the binary system. Their inability to fit into either category is seen as a consequence of a biological problem/failure: for example, the American Psychological Association 2012 wrote about intersex, that it is 'atypical combinations of features that usually distinguish male from female' (quoted in Schellenberg & Kaiser, 2018, p. 168). From a biological essentialist perspective, gender is seen as a natural extension of one's biological sex: if you have female genitalia, you will adhere to feminine norms, and if you have male genitalia, you will adhere to masculine norms. By extension, individuals' sexuality is also aligned with their biological sex and gender role: if you are a girl/woman, you will desire boys/men, and if you are a boy/man, you will desire girls/women. Schellenberg & Kaiser (2018, p. 167) give an illustrative example from their discussion of psychological research, and they argue that the vast majority of studies have adhered to a binary understanding of sex and gender and have dealt with any identification which fell outside the binaries 'by excluding participants' data as outliers'. And historically, any deviance from these binaries would have been considered as a medical or psychiatric issue that should be treated. Dickey (2020, p. 26) explains, for instance – and here they are writing about 19th century doctors and transgender people – that 'they wanted their patients to feel at ease with their identity even if that identity was inconsistent with societal expectations'. In that same article, Dickey (2020, p. 26) quotes the 19th century German psychiatrist, Von Krafft-Ebbing, who stated that 'any departure from procreative intercourse represent[ed] a form of emotional or physical disease'. So while it was, obviously, recognised that some people were outside of these binaries, they were seen as anomalies that needed treatment or incarceration. I will return to this later in this chapter when I discuss key legislation in the UK and Denmark respectively.

According to Foucault, this essentialist understanding became prominent in the 19th century because during this time the way sexuality, specifically homosexuality, was understood changed. He argues that there was a shift from understanding homosexuality as an act, committing sodomy for example, to being an integral, even

dominant part of the person. This meant that homosexuality was no longer something you did but something you were (Foucault, 1998 [1976], p. 43).

At around the same time, gender also began to be viewed differently. Whereas men and women had hitherto been seen as 'fundamentally similar' (Lennon & Alsop, 2019, p. 32), as inversions of the same fundamental physiology, the 19th century saw a change among medical professional viewpoints towards 'male and female bodies [being] viewed as opposites' (p. 33).

2.3 Modernity and self-reflexivity

Giddens (1991) offers a theory of modernity which helps explain and understand these historical changes. He argues that modernity – which he locates, in a European context, to the post-feudal era, but mostly sees as taking its shape from the 17th century onwards – saw a shift in the balance between tradition and the individual: '"How shall I live?" has to be answered in day-to-day decisions about how to behave, what to wear and what to eat – and many other things – as well as interpreted within the temporal unfolding of self-identity' (Giddens, 1991, p. 19). This meant that things that had hitherto been self-evident, such as who we were and where we belonged, began to become more tied to the individual, who had to show and demonstrate their being and belonging. This was obviously a process, but it meant that categories were less fixed, and, paradoxically, this led to them having to be more clearly demarcated and, as Foucault argues in relation to sexuality, policed:

> [There was a] multiplication of the discourses concerning sex in the field of exercise of power itself: an institutional incitement to speak about it, and to do so more and more; a determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause *it* to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail. (Foucault, 1998 [1976], p. 18)

Moving closer to our time and to what Giddens terms high modernity, which is the period after World War two, he sees an even more profound disruption of the traditional connections between changes in society on the one hand and human experiences and

ability to control these on the other. The pace of change increases and the causes of the changes are no longer local but global. This means that most people felt and experienced a separation from the processes that led to change. One of the key responses to this has, according to Giddens, been increased self-reflexivity in the individual: 'the body is becoming a phenomenon of choices and options' (Giddens, 1991, p. 13). This means that people more than ever have to reflect on who they are, what they should do and how they want to live, as they can no longer anchor these decisions firmly in traditions, family, social class and so on: 'Modernity confronts the individual with a complex diversity of choices and, because it is non-foundational, at the same time offers little help as to which options should be selected' (p. 85). It is important to emphasise two things about the concept of individual self-reflexivity. Firstly, Giddens is not arguing that the individual has a completely free choice. Rather, he connects privilege directly to the various degrees of freedom to determine the path of one's self:

> [C]lass divisions and other fundamental lines of inequality, such as those
> connected with gender or ethnicity, can be partly defined in terms of
> differential access to forms of self-actualisation and empowerment
> (Giddens, 1991, p. 11)

This recognises that there are vastly different options open to a middle-class white gay man in the UK and a poor, black lesbian woman in the US: 'To speak of a multiplicity of choices is not to suppose that all choices are open to everyone, or that people take all decisions about options in full realisation of the range of feasible alternatives.' (p. 87) Both would thus be engaged in self-reflexivity – as this is a defining aspect of modernity, not an optional choice – and both would have to make decisions about their lives in ways that would have been almost impossible even a hundred years before. Secondly, self-reflexivity is not a set of questions or decisions that an individual makes and then lives with the consequences. On the contrary, the decisions are made on a continuous basis and the individual's actions are what create the identity:

> Self-identity, in other words, is not something that is just given, as a result
> of the continuities of the individual's action-system, but something that has

to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual. (p. 57)

This is not quite as radical as Butler's ideas about performativity, which I will address later, but it does have some of the same flavour. However, Giddens seems to assert a certain core identity which is established in the process of reflection and lived experience:

Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography (p. 58)

Giddens makes explicit connections between self-reflexivity and the body. Discussing gender, for instance, he emphasises that '[n]othing is clearer than that gender is a matter of learning and continuous "work", rather than a simple extension of biologically given sexual difference' (p. 68). This is a clear rejection of essentialism, embracing instead the idea that gender, and sexuality for that matter, are social constructs (the result of learning and active work). He makes this even clearer when he adds that 'to be a "man" or a "woman" depends on a chronic monitoring of the body and bodily gestures. There is in fact no single bodily trait which separates all women from all men' (p. 68).

2.4 Feminism

Giddens's way of understanding gender seems to be indebted to feminist theory, and in his analysis there are clear traces of the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir. Lennon & Alsop (2019) argue that Beauvoir's 1949 book *The Second Sex* should be understood as a crucial destabilisation of what it means to be a woman. Beauvoir demonstrates, according to Lennon & Alsop (2019, p. 107) that

[t]here is a process of becoming female and male selves, and this was, for her [Beauvoir], a process of adopting and internalizing the objective social positions offered, alongside their justifying myths.

We see here a clear link to Giddens's theorisation that gender is something that is learned and something that is communicated to others by certain behaviour (such as body language and language) and certain symbols (such as clothes and interests).

Before continuing to discuss how Beauvoir inspired later feminists (today labelled second-wave feminism), it is useful to briefly look at their origins in first-wave feminism, which has its roots in the 19th century, thus during the high-time of biological essentialism. Malinowska (2020, p. 2) explains how it

> relates to social campaigns that expressed dissatisfaction with women's limited rights for work, education, property, reproduction, marital status, and social agency.

First-wave feminism can thus be described as rights-based, and its focal point was women's suffrage, which was achieved, with some limitations, for women over the age of 30 in the UK in 1918, lowering the age to 21 (and making it equal to that of men) in 1928 (*Key Dates*, n.d.). In a Danish context, women gained the right to vote in local elections in 1908 and in general elections in 1915 and at the election in 1918, 41 of the 402 candidates that could be voted for were women, though only four were elected to parliament (*Kvinder i Folketinget*, 2016).

Second-wave feminism, which is normally associated with the 1960s and 70s, took inspiration from Beauvoir's theorisation of what it means to be a woman, and its key target was the patriarchy. From this perspective, women were understood 'as a class (a "sisterhood") dominated by men who occupy a more privileged position in a gender hierarchy' (McCann & Monaghan, 2020, p. 60). Space does not allow me to explore this historical opposition to the patriarchy further here, although it is important to bear in mind that subsequent waves of feminist and queer theorising continued to keep understandings of the patriarchy firmly in their line of fire. The focus on the gender binary, i.e. that women are oppressed by men, has led, in some areas, to an essentialist view of gender, which leaves little or no space for bisexual women and a rejection of transgender people. Fraser argues, for instance, that 'efforts to valorise "women's identity" ended up exerting pressure on participants to be the "right kind" of woman, while fostering separatism and essentialising gender difference' (Fraser et al., 2004, p.

377). An example of this is given by Stryker, who describes the case of Beth Elliott, who transitioned from male to female in the late 1960s when she was a late-teenager. After taking part in lesbian and feminist political organisations, she was accused of sexual harassment. However, the point that is important here is that she 'was ousted from the Daughters of Bilitis, not because of any accusations against her, but on the grounds that she wasn't "really" a woman' (Stryker & Chaudhry, 2022, p. 103). The idea was, and still is among what are now called TERFs (trans-exclusive radical feminists), that transgender people, and particularly transwomen, did not share in the experiences of people born as women. They are, according to this line of thought, therefore not women and can never become women, and their transition is seen as mockery. Stryker (2008, p. 104) quotes Robin Morgan, who was a keynote speaker at a 1973 West Coast Lesbian Feminist Conference, as stating:

> "I will not call a male 'she'; thirty-two years of suffering in the androcentric society and of surviving, have earned me the title 'woman'; one walk down the street by a male transvestite, five minutes of his [referring to Beth Elliott] being hassled (which he may enjoy), and then he dares, he dares to think he understands our pain? No, in our mothers' names and in our own, we must not call him sister".

The split within feminism and the realisation that certain voices were silenced, however, is not only relevant when it comes to bisexual and transgender experiences, and this was also made particularly clear by black feminists:

> We are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that *the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives* (The Combahee River Collective, 2014 [1978], p. 271, my emphasis)

The Combahee River Collective are not challenging the idea that gender is an important element when understanding and combating the oppression of women; but they do challenge the idea that it is the only one, or even the most important one, asserting

instead that different types of oppression interlock and together create specific conditions:

> We believe that sexual politics under patriarchy is as pervasive in black women's lives as are the politics of class and race. We also often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously. (The Combahee River Collective, 2014 [1978], p. 274)

Put simply this means that a middle-class white woman might be oppressed because of her gender, but in relation to a black woman (or indeed a black man), she is privileged because of her race, and the black woman will experience oppression in multiple ways. Similarly, a middle-class black woman would experience oppression differently from a poor, illegal Hispanic immigrant. And so on. This expansion of feminism to go beyond white, middle-class women is often regarded as signalling the emergence of third-wave feminism, and the link to Giddens' later ideas about self-reflexivity and the different options open to individuals that I explored earlier are clear.

The term most often used today to describe these interlocking oppressions is intersectionality, which was coined by Crenshaw in 1989. It is unsurprising, given what I discussed above, that her paper was about the intersection of race, sex and class, and she makes the point that by not adopting an intersectional framework '[b]lack women are theoretically erased' (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139). Her argument is that when investigating 'racial subordination' (p. 166), attention must be given to 'an analysis of sexism and patriarchy' (p. 166); and, similarly, feminism, which already includes analyses of sexism and patriarchy, must 'include an analysis of race' (p. 166).

I want to turn now to what I believe is the latest and most current discussion around gender, namely transgender theory (which is sometimes associated with fourth or fifth-wave feminism (Courtemanche, 2019)). Stryker locates the beginning of trans studies in the early 1990s (Stryker & Chaudhry, 2022, p. 790) and explains:

> To the extent that trans studies has a radical political potential, I think it's in articulating and manifesting how it is that we have, as living people, a

capacity to change the signification of embodiment. That transness
essentially says that the body can signify otherwise than what you think:
we can make it mean something else. (Stryker & Chaudhry, 2022, p. 796)

To Stryker, then, the individual has the power to change what their body means. This,
she argues, allows transness to become liberating and empowering. Adopting
Halberstam's use of 'trans*', she explains that the asterisk does not denote '"trans
whatever"' but '"trans everything"' (Stryker & Chaudhry, 2022, p. 799), which I will
discuss further below.

Before exploring the asterisk further, however, I want to point to Stryker's warning of the
dangers of current conservative feminism:

I just think we're in a really dangerous moment right now in watching the
conscription and enlistment in certain forms of reactionary feminism for
these very pernicious ethnonationalist political agendas (Stryker &
Chaudhry, 2022, p. 796)

Reactionary feminist standpoints – not to be confused with feminist thinking generally,
as most feminist theorists like Ahmed, Berlant, Halberstam etc. are predominantly trans-
affirmative – are similar to those I identified earlier as 'TERFS', and they derive from
gender-essentialism and reject the idea that gender is a social construct, insisting on a
binary understanding. While reading the next section, it is worth bearing in mind that
trans studies are controversial for some, and that significant groups of people reject this
line of thinking, returning instead to simpler, essential, binary understandings of sex,
gender and sexuality.

The use of an asterisk in 'trans*' seems to stem from early computer searches, where
the asterisk represents a wildcard. As such a search for 'trans*' would find occurrences
of 'transgender', 'transsexual', 'transaction' and so on (H. Ryan, 2014; see also *Why We
Used Trans* and Why We Don't Anymore*, n.d. for a criticism of the use of the asterisk).
Halberstam is, however, as far as I am aware, the first to use the asterisk with trans in
an academic context in his 2018 book *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender*

Variability, and his rationale for choosing to use the asterisk is telling for how he understands transness:

> I have selected the term "trans*" for this book precisely to open the term up to unfolding categories of being organized around but not confined to forms of gender variance. As we will see, the asterisk modifies the meaning of transitivity by refusing to situate transition in relation to a destination, a final form, a specific shape, or an established configuration of desire and identity. The asterisk holds off the certainty of diagnosis; it keeps at bay any sense of knowing in advance what the meaning of this or that gender variant form may be, and perhaps most importantly, it makes trans* people the authors of their own categorizations. (Halberstam, 2018, p. 4)

This quotation contains a lot of information in just a few lines. Firstly, it recognises the importance of gender while simultaneously rejecting that transness is only or even mainly about that; secondly, it does not see trans as an activity with a start and a finish, but rather as something ongoing; thirdly, it moves transness away from a medical condition; fourthly, it sees transness as fundamentally destabilising what gender means (i.e. Halberstam rejects the meaningfulness of questions such as: what does it mean to be a boy/man? A girl/woman? Transgender?); and finally, tying all of these points together, it insists that the individual must be allowed to determine what they are and should not be forced to accept the categorising imposed by others. One of the very first experiences in a human life, the speech act by the doctor/midwife/parent 'it is a boy/girl', is, after all, emblematic of the way questions around gender permeate every aspect of society.

In even more concrete terms, the extent to which societies have attempted to regulate gender and sexuality through legislation is also indicative of their importance. A brief overview of key legislation relating to gender and sexuality in the UK and Denmark follows here as this will prove useful in contextualising attitudes towards these concepts and patterns of behaviours associated to them in these two countries.

2.5 UK and Danish Legislation

As I mentioned earlier, based on biological essentialist beliefs, people who identified outside the normative binaries were often seen as medical cases and/or risked arrest, judgement and incarceration. In fact, in many countries homosexuality was still seen as a medical condition, that is as indicative of something being wrong at a biological level, up until the 1970s (Hancock & Haldeman, 2020, p. 14; McWhirter et al., 1990, p. xx). As far as gender is concerned, the WHO classified transgenderism as a gender identity disorder (*ICD* [International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems]-*10*, 2010) up until the publication of *ICD-11* (2022) which changed the classification to gender incongruence.

In a UK context, the *Sexual Offences Act 1967* did decriminalise homosexuality in private for people aged 21 or more in England and Wales, but it was not until 2000 (*Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act*, 2000) that equality was reached for hetero- and homosexuality (age of consent becoming the same, for instance). Furthermore, from 1988 to 2000 (Scotland) and 2003 (England and Wales), Section 28 prohibited local authorities, which includes schools, from 'promoting homosexuality by teaching or by publishing material' (*Local Government Act 1988 (Section 28)*, 1988).

The *Gender Recognition Act 2004* (2004) made it possible to legally change one's gender (which here referred to sex rather than gender role): 'A person of either gender who is aged at least 18 may make an application for a gender recognition certificate' (npn), and the Equality Act 2010 protects several characteristics that are relevant for people identifying as LGBTQ+: section 7: gender reassignment; section 8: marriage and civil partnership; and section 12: sexual orientation.

In a Danish context, we see a similar development as in the UK. The term 'homosexual' actually does not enter the Danish language until the 1890s via German medical science (as briefly alluded to earlier in this literature review) (Nyegaard, 2011). In 1930 homosexuality was decriminalised, though the age of consent was set at 18 rather than 15, as for heterosexual sex. This was changed in 1976 when the age of consent was set at 15 for all. In 1981 it was finally removed from the list of mental illnesses (Nyegaard, 2011). In 1987 antidiscrimination laws were introduced, making it illegal to

make public threats or degrade people due to their sexual orientation, and in 1996 this was extended to make it illegal to treat people differently in matters of employment based on their sexuality. Before that, in 1989, civil partnership was allowed, and in 2012 same-sex marriage was finally allowed too (Bech et al., 2023).

Transgender has only recently entered into Danish legislation. Since 2014 it has been legal to change social security numbers, which are gendered so that they reflect the individual's gender, understood as either male or female only (Andersen, 2023). The first ruling determining that it is illegal to discriminate against trans people in the workplace is from 2015 (Thranesen, 2023), and in 2017 transgenderism was removed from the list of mental illnesses (Andersen, 2023). However, the first occurrence of the term 'transgender' in legislation is only from the 2021 bill that sets out which names are legal in Denmark. The bill states that a person cannot be given a name that denotes the opposite gender unless the person has confirmed in writing that it is because of experiencing a belonging to the opposite gender (Thranesen, 2024). It should be noted that there are hardly any gender neutral names in Danish and, unlike in English, names like Alex and Sam are normally only given to boys. Debates on transgenderism in the media are similar to those in the UK, and the worries voiced by Stryker can be seen as reflective of the Danish context too. As an example, I want to take a brief look at the people behind www.transkoen.dk (Ingerslev, 2023) (translating into transgender) who often publish letters to the editor in Danish newspapers and who are very active on social media. In the description of their purpose, it says:

> Do you want to know more about the massive marketing of the gender identity religion by transgender organizations and the transgender industry – especially aimed at children and young people – that you can be born as the wrong gender? Then read on here.

And the owner of the homepage, Lotte Ingerslev, says on the front page:

> I have engaged with the transgender issue because, as a human being, I can no longer stand by and watch from the side line while the trans-train runs over the bodies and lives of children and young people.

Another example is www.danskregnbueraad.dk (Rasmussen, 2023) (translating into Danish Rainbow Council), which markets itself as promoting LGBT+ equality but which is, in reality, mostly occupied with fighting against transgender people. In Figure 1 can be seen a screenshot from their current landing page. The headings translate into 'Danish children pay to transition at scandal-hit English clinic'; 'Take a position on child gender reassignment'; 'The Danish Rainbow Council takes stock of child gender reassignment in the wake of B62 [Motion for a resolution on a ban on surgical or medical sex reassignment treatment of children under the age of 18]'; and 'Stop gender reassignment for children'.

Figure 1: Screenshot from the landing page of www.danskregnbueraad.dk (20 December 2023)

These are just two of the more visible organisations that oppose transgender rights, while ostensibly seeking to promote them (notice how the T is part of the logo in the middle 'LGBT+ Danmark'). It is not relevant to go into an extensive analysis of the discourse here, but it is telling that both organisations are focusing on children. They want to 'protect' children from transitioning, and they want to 'protect' children from being exposed to trans people and trans issues. This type of discourse is only too well known in right-wing, conservative anti-LGBTQ+ contexts, and I will touch on it briefly again later when I discuss Edelman's seminal article from 1998 called 'The Future is Kid

Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive' (Edelman, 1998) in which he discusses how the figure of the child has been mobilised to attack LGBTQ+ people and cast them as dangerous for society.

While up to now I have addressed how sex, gender and sexuality can be viewed, building on the historical overview above, in the next section I will turn to poststructuralism and queer theory, as these are both important perspectives that have informed the formulation of my research questions.

2.6 Poststructuralism: the roots of queer theory

Derrida can be seen as one of the foundational figures in the establishment of poststructuralist theory. His essay 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' represents a move away from structuralism, which Derrida associates with terms such as 'center', 'point of presence' and 'a fixed origin', embracing instead a worldview with no centre. At the time of writing the essay, he argued that this was controversial as 'the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself' (Derrida, 1992 [1967], p. 1117). An early, concrete example of this idea is expressed in Barthes' essay 'The Death of the Author', which de-centres the author, focusing instead of the reader:

> [T]he unity of the text is not in its origin but in its destination, but this destination can no longer be personal: the reader is a man without history, without biography, without psychology; he is only that someone who holds collected into one and the same field all of the traces from which writing is constituted. (Barthes, 1992 [1977], pp. 1132–1133)

This fundamentally destabilises all engagement with interpretation or, indeed, any engagement with signs, as these are now tied to the reader, who changes whenever a new person engages with the activity, rather than the author.

Williams (2005, p. 2) explains how structuralism's search for structure can lead it to focus on what is normative as things that are not the norm are seen as anomalous exceptions:

The idea is that knowledge should start with the norm and only then consider the exception. The norm implies a deviation in the definition of the exception. If there is an ethical and political side to this distinction, it is that truth and the good are in the norm, although many disagreements are possible as to what makes the norm.

This is crucial to understanding the difference between structuralism and poststructuralism. Where the former is associated with binary oppositions, hierarchies and relationships – always privileging one part of the relationship (Belsey, 2022, p. 70) – the latter is more interested in the limits or outer barriers of these concepts. Poststructuralism argues that rather than these concepts deriving meaning from being in a dichotomous relationship (for instance 'heterosexuality' not being 'homosexuality'), these concepts become meaningful by excluding other meanings, by their borders or limits (so 'heterosexual' is meaningful because it excludes everything not heterosexual; and by exploring the border-region between the two terms, we can discover something about them). This also means that there is no stable definition of terms such as 'heterosexual' or 'homosexual', and indeed all terms will change their meaning depending on the context:

It means that any settled form of knowledge or moral good is made by its limits and cannot be defined independently of them. It means also that any exclusion of these limits is impossible. Limits are the truth of the core and any truths that deny this are illusory or false. The truth of a population is where it is changing. The truth of a notion is at its borders. (Williams, 2005, p. 2)

This is controversial, and when you ask most people what it means to be, for instance 'heterosexual', they will be able to answer that: it is about being attracted to the opposite sex; it is the opposite of being a 'homosexual', who is attracted to their own sex. The popular homepage netdoctor.co.uk writes, for instance, that '[a] heterosexual person is usually said to be attracted to the "opposite" sex, ie men are attracted to women, and women are attracted to men' (Hayes, 2021) and Wikipedia states that '[h]eterosexuality is romantic attraction, sexual attraction or sexual behavior between people of the

opposite sex or gender' ('Heterosexuality', 2023). However, as can be seen, for instance, in the trans-debate of the last years, defining even everyday terms such as 'woman' and 'man' is far from straightforward, and the same goes for sexuality. If we return to the homepage of the Danish Rainbow Council, the top bar on their landing page (see Figure 2) shows how this has turned into a battleground.

Figure 2: Top bar from the homepage of the Danish Rainbow Council (20 December 2023)

The box on the right contains five bullet points which translate into:

- Stop gender reassignment for children. Immediately.

- Biological women have a right to their own spaces and sport − and to call themselves women.

- Science, reason, fairness & humanism must get back into LGBT. "Wokeness" must go.

- There are two genders. That is how it is.

- There have always been ∞ [infinite] ways of being a child. So let children be children.

The point about biological women is clearly there to exclude transwomen, and to undermine their right to being women by labelling their claim as performance (they *call* themselves women, but in reality they are not, is the argument). Shaw (2023, p. 771) sums up the position of what is respectfully called gender critical feminism, which argues 'that trans women are delusional men (with trans men often unmentioned), and that their rights undermine sex-based rights through a discriminatory assumption of sexual violence/predatory behaviour'. As the next part of this literature review will show,

once categories have been established, they are difficult to see beyond and deconstruct.

Foucault (1998 [1976], p. 43) describes convincingly how categories such as homosexual are not universal and have not always existed:

> As defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology.

Foucault's analysis shows that the category 'homosexual' is a construct created in the 19th century – recall how I explained earlier that the term only entered the Danish vocabulary in the late 19th century. Yet, and this is a crucial point, once the categories 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' had been created, they made it difficult to think beyond them. Wilchins (2004, p. 45) illustrates this well with a story about her partner, who 'is comfortable as butch or femme, top or bottom, and all the things in between'. The point, argues Wilchins, is that

> [w]e have no name for this kind of gender. Whatever she is, it is assumed not to exist. It is silenced. She, in fact, is often silenced when she tries to explain herself to others. She is denied the words with which to tell her story, to communicate something as basic and fundamental as this is who I am, this is how I see myself, this is how I want you to see me. (p. 45)

Statements such as this echo the quote from Halberstam (2018, p. 4) mentioned earlier where he insists that people should be allowed to be 'the authors of their own categorizations'. A key point here is that it does not matter if someone were to come up with a name for this person's gender; that would be wholly beside the point. Rather, the crux is that the way gender and sexuality have been structured in the Western world, into man/woman and heterosexual/homosexuality, leaves little or no space for uncertainty or for seeing or existing in the border region. This is precisely where

poststructuralist readings have their strength, in their deconstruction of the term itself, its locating and exploring the peripheries, and in paying attention to the internal contradictions and power structures. Culler (2014, p. 86) describes deconstructions as follows:

> [T]o deconstruct a discourse is to show how it undermines the philosophy it asserts, or the hierarchical oppositions on which it relies, by identifying in the text the rhetorical operations that produce the supposed ground of argument, the key concept or premise.

This approach does present certain challenges to a researcher whose findings are meant to play a part in creating a better, more equitable world. Williams (2005, p. 5), however, rejects that there is a contradiction between poststructuralist thought and morality:

> To deny absolutes, such as a certain core, is not to deny significant differences that we can act upon. […] There is an ethics associated with showing that a core hides differences and suppresses them; this is not to deny morality, but to deny that ethics is a matter of absolutes.

Furthermore, following Foucault's understanding of power, which I will outline further below, power is not something that can be located in, for instance, an institution. Such an understanding would have made it much easier to resist, say, heteronormative discourse, as it would mean locating it in law, in politics or the like. Foucault (1998 [1976], p. 93), instead, sees power as much more fundamental, permeating everything:

> The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. [...] [P]ower is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.

This perspective makes it impossible to escape or fight back against power, and it makes it difficult to suggest an alternative to what is already there. Wilchins (2004, p. 98) describes the paradox that this line of thought presents: 'Following Foucault often appears to be a one-way ticket: deconstructing practically everything while constructing almost nothing.' Williams (2005, p. 7), however, does not see a contradiction between the poststructuralist understanding that we cannot establish anything as universal and insisting on fighting for a better society:

> It means that the reason for fighting for those causes has to be because they are right at a particular time and given a particular situation, rather than because the causes are cases of a wider absolute and eternal good. The struggle is for these rights now and not for universal and eternal rights.

In the next part, I turn to queer theory and how the insights of poststructuralism allowed for a radical rethinking of how gender and sexuality are understood. I will also be discussing the central differences in how queer theory has been theorised, explaining my rationale for the position on gender and sexuality which has inspired this thesis.

2.7 Queer Theory

Queer theory emerged in the 1990s with Judith Butler as the central figure. The close connection to poststructuralism can be seen in the very first lines of their seminal book *Gender Trouble* from 1990:

> Contemporary feminist debates over the meanings of gender lead time and again to a certain sense of trouble, as if the indeterminacy of gender might eventually culminate in the failure of feminism (Butler, 1990, p. xxiv)

What Butler is setting out to do here is a deconstruction of feminism and, relatedly, of terms such as gender. They point directly to the centrality of language and the impossibility of fixing meaning, pointing rather to the idea of 'indeterminacy'.

Butler thus proposes to understand gender, and sexuality, in a different way from the mainstream feminism and gay and lesbian studies of the time, and they criticise

feminism's tendency to essentialise the role of woman rather than, as they would have it, 'understand how the category of "women," the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought' (Butler, 2006, p. 4). Butler argues instead for an understanding of gender and sexuality as performative. This is 'not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration' (Butler, 2006, p. xv).

Milani (2019, npn) explains that Butler's 'key argument is that gender is not an ontological state of being', which means that our gender does not exist as something that can be said to cause anything. Rather, our acts – which should be understood as encompassing speech, body language, gestures, how we dress and so on – *create* what we see and understand as gender. This, crucially, is an on-going process that has to be repeated to sustain a coherent gender identity, and it is supported by a host of societal institutions:

> [N]ormative gender divisions do not end at birth: the boy/man vs. girl/woman dichotomy will be consistently enforced by a variety of authorities and institutions such as school, church, family, and the military. (Milani, 2019, npn)

It is important not to confuse performance and performativity. The former term would suggest that gender could be changed at will, and that there was an actor behind the performance, which would be to reassert a core and a centre. While performativity does focus on performative acts (Austin, 1962), it does not entail that gender and sexuality are decided upon by the individual or that they can be changed at will. Butler (1993, p. 21) explains that performativity is

> the effect of a regulatory regime of gender differences in which genders are divided and hierarchized under constraint. Social constraints, taboos, prohibitions, threats of punishment operate in the ritualized repetition of norms, and this repetition constitutes the temporalized scene of gender construction and destabilization.

The fundamental ideas presented by Butler still underpin queer theory, though there has been criticism. Ruti (2017, p. 41) argues, for instance, that Butler does not leave much room for a radical response to dominant culture because the subject has no choice but to collaborate with and work within the existing power structures: 'The Butlerian subject does not revolt but merely reiterates with slight variation.' Butler has responded to these criticisms by clarifying, for instance, that our understanding of gender does in fact change over time:

> [W]e should not be surprised or opposed when the category of women expands to include trans women. And since we are also in the business of imagining alternate futures of masculinity, we should be prepared and even joyous to see what trans men are doing with the category of "men." (Butler & Gleeson, 2021, npn)

In relation to their ideas about performativity, Butler now seems to take a stance that allows for more engagement by people, which is more in line with Halberstam's ideas, discussed earlier:

> [P]eople are, consciously or not, citing conventions of gender when they claim to be expressing their own interior reality or even when they say they are creating themselves anew. It seemed to me that none of us totally escape cultural norms. At the same time, none of us are totally determined by cultural norms. Gender then becomes a negotiation, a struggle, a way of dealing with historical constraints and making new realities. (Butler & Gleeson, 2021, npn)

Butler thus stays within a Foucauldian understanding of power as permeating society and as something inescapable, while also allowing for more individual resistance and autonomy.

Although queer theory is more accurately seen as a somewhat heterodox collection of theoretical positions, two distinct streams have emerged that understand gender and sexuality in broadly Butlerian terms – namely, the antisocial thesis and queer utopia thesis. I focus on these here as my research is informed by Muñoz's (2009) idea of

queer utopia which has been elaborated in opposition to the antisocial thesis. Given that Muñoz's ideas are so closely linked to that which he opposes, both of these perspectives are best understood together.

The antisocial thesis has its roots, paradoxically, in concerns over the very success of rights-based gay and lesbian activism. The securing of civil rights for people with non-normative sexualities was seen as acceptance of the fundamental values and structures of the very society that was marginalising these groups in the first place. Bersani (1995, p. 4) argued that gays and lesbians have accepted the dominant culture to the extent that '[w]e have erased ourselves in the process of denaturalizing the epistemic and political regimes that have constructed us'. This acceptance of, and desire to be included into, dominant society is sometimes termed homonormativity (for instance Muñoz (2009, p. 20)), which references Warner's use of the term heteronormativity (Warner, 1991). Interestingly, though, Berlant and Warner later argued that '[b]ecause homosexuality can never have the invisible, tacit, society-founding rightness that heterosexuality has, it would not be possible to speak of "homonormativity" in the same sense [as heteronormativity]' (Berlant & Warner, 1998, p. 548). Today, it has, however, become a common term denoting 'a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them' (Duggan, 2002, p. 179).

Edelman builds on Bersani's ideas and concerns to espouse what he calls 'the primacy of a constant no' (Edelman, 2004, p. 5). This 'no' should be understood as a general rejection of hegemonic, heteronormative society, but more specifically Edelman targets a central symbol of that society: the child as a symbol of reproductive futurism, who enacts 'the law of perpetual repetition as it fixes our identity through identification with the futurity of the social order' (Edelman, 1998, p. 28). The reason his opposition is so complete – a complete and stubborn rejection even to engage in discussion, a simple no which later becomes a forcefully repeated 'fuck' to everything (Edelman, 2004, p. 29) – is that the very terms (child, family)

> impose an ideological limit on political discourse as such, preserving in the
> process the absolute privilege of heteronormativity by rendering un-

thinkable, by casting outside the political domain, the possibility of a queer resistance to this organizing principle of communal relations. (p. 2)

Thus to engage in discussion, to try to work within the parameters set by society would, ultimately, be impossible and only reproduce what is being opposed.

Edelman's project is therefore to place queer outside of these structures, 'outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism' (p. 3), which is why this position is termed antisocial, antirelational and negative, and ultimately it argues that 'there are no queers in the future as there can be no future for queers, chosen as they are to bear the bad tidings that there can be no future at all' (p. 30).

There have been several responses to the antisocial theses. Halberstam, for instance, has criticised it for being too narrow and too traditional, drawing on what he argues is an 'excessively small archive' which 'narrows it down to a select group of antisocial queer aesthetes and camp icons and texts' (Halberstam, 2006, p. 824). Halberstam thus embraces the fundamental idea of negativity but disagrees that it cannot be contested:

Dyke anger, anticolonial despair, racial rage, counterhegemonic violence, punk pugilism–these are the bleak and angry territories of the antisocial turn; these are the jagged zones in which not only self-shattering (the opposite of narcissism, in a way) but other-shattering occurs.

Muñoz (2009, p. 1), too, agrees with Edelman that the present is not positive, comparing it to 'a prison house'. However, he is critical of Edelman's position which he, like Halberstam, sees as elitist, 'the gay white man's last stand' (Muñoz, 2006, p. 825) and as a way of centring sexuality at the expense of things such as race, gender and social class, i.e. an intersectional perspective. As Ruti (2017, p. 36) reminds us, failure and negativity look different depending on your perspective and 'those who have genuinely failed in relation to our society's dominant happiness scripts are unlikely to experience their failure as a sexy political stance.'

In place of negativity and no future, Muñoz puts utopia, which he sees as 'an insistence on something else, something better, something dawning' (Muñoz, 2009, p. 189). He

draws on Bloch's notions of abstract and concrete utopias, likening abstract utopias to 'banal optimism' (p. 3), i.e. in line with what Edelman rejects. Concrete utopias, on the other hand, relate to the past in order to glimpse what could be. As Muñoz puts it, '[c]oncrete utopias are the realm of educated hope' (p. 3).

This is not a naïve attempt at seeing a better future as the logical result of the present, which Muñoz agrees is folly; rather, it is a way to see a radically different alternative to the current politics, a way

> to wrest ourselves from the present's stultifying hold, to know our
> queerness as a belonging in particularity that is not dictated or organized
> around the spirit of political impasse that characterizes the present
> (Muñoz, 2009, p. 28)

Here we see Muñoz's indebtedness to the emancipatory ideas of the Frankfurt School, whose prominent members – such as Adorno, Benjamin, Bloch and Marcuse – he also references in his introduction to *Cruising Utopia*.

Muñoz thus differs radically from Edelman in two ways. First, Muñoz insists that turning away from the present is not an option: 'The present must be known in relation to the alternative temporal and spatial maps provided by a perception of past and future affective worlds' (p. 27). Second, Muñoz insists that the future, concrete utopia, is worth engaging with as it 'offers us a critique of the present, of what is, by casting a picture of what can and perhaps will be' (p. 35).

Muñoz, like Butler, is engaged in deconstruction, focusing on normativity, but his ideas allow for both a criticism of the current state of affairs *as well as* a view that things can be changed.

In this respect there is a clear link to education and specifically to critical pedagogy, which again draws on critical theory whose roots are in the Frankfurt School. In ways that both recognise Edelman's concerns that it is impossible to escape being part of what we criticise as well as Muñoz's visions of a different future, Giroux (2020, p. 81) argues that pedagogy is

a moral and political practice that is always implicated in power relations and must be understood as a cultural politics that offers both a particular version and vision of civic life, the future, and how we might construct representations of ourselves, others, and our physical and social environment.

In the next sections, I turn my attention to the current situation around LGBTQ+ in education and wellbeing in relation to this. This will hopefully clarify why research like this thesis is much needed as well as locate it within the existing literature. It will show, I believe, how there is hope for a better and more equitable future, but also that there are still many challenges and obstacles for students who identify as LGBTQ+.

2.8 LGBTQ+ wellbeing and education

The following sections look at LGBTQ+-identifying students in relation to education. It looks at their (lack of) wellbeing and how well they are represented in materials, before turning to what it means to adopt a queer pedagogy approach. Finally, it explores the second language perspective specifically. The idea is that these topics both show the current state of research into LGBTQ+ and education and provides a rationale for why this research is important.

2.8.1 LGBTQ+ students and wellbeing

Stonewall, the UK's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights charity, regularly conducts research into the experiences of LGBT people: their experiences in their workplace, domestic violence, at school, and so on. Their 2018 university report, based on a subset of 522 LGBT university students from a larger sample of 5375 LGBT people[2], who were invited to participate in the survey through relevant organisations and community groups (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018, p. 12), shows how significant numbers of LGBT students face discrimination, harassment, bullying and even physical violence because of their gender and/or sexuality. Some of the key findings are:

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[2] '45 per cent are gay or lesbian, 40 per cent are bi, 13 per cent use a different term to describe their sexual orientation and one per cent are straight' (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018, p. 12)

More than a third of trans students (36 per cent) and seven per cent of lesbian, gay and bi students who aren't trans faced negative comments or conduct from university staff in the last year because they are LGBT.

Seven per cent of trans students were physically attacked by another student or a member of university staff in the last year because of being trans.

More than two in five LGBT students (42 per cent) hid or disguised that they are LGBT at university in the last year because they were afraid of discrimination.

One in four non-binary students (24 per cent) and one in six trans students (16 per cent) don't feel able to wear clothes representing their gender expression at university. (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018, p. 5)

Looking further into the report, it becomes clear that the negative experiences stem both from staff and students, and that this looks even worse for black, Asian and minority ethnic and disabled students who identify as LGBTQ+. While I will discuss how this links to language education later, it is worth including the report's recommendations (p. 11), as some of these will become important when discussing my findings later:

Develop clear policies and training

Work with societies to support LGBT students

Improve trans inclusion

Support LGBT visibility

Get involved in Stonewall's programmes

In a Danish context, data relating specifically to universities is not available. However, in 2021 a report was published, drawing on questionnaire data from 910 LGBTQ+ pupils/students (henceforth just students) between the ages of 13 and 25. The data shows that 37% of the LGBTQ+ students feel lonely at school (which is significantly higher than the 6% of all students who said that in the study referred to from 2020).

Worryingly, 53% of LGBTQ+ students have self-harmed and 40% report having an eating disorder (these numbers are roughly twice as high as for all students). 90% have experienced verbal abuse at school, with 44% reporting they feel bullied (compared to 8% of all students). 6% have been threatened with violence while 5% have experienced violence due to their sexuality or gender (Juhl, 2021, pp. 8–9).

The participants in Juhl's research suggest several ways to improve conditions in schools for LGBTQ+ students (the following are shortened and paraphrased in English from Juhl, 2021, p. 10):

> Visible signs at the school prohibiting abuse and bullying against LGBTQ+ people.
>
> More knowledge about sexual orientation and gender identities.
>
> Better sexual education with more focus on diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
>
> Better education for teachers about gender and sexuality, so they can talk more openly about these, which can help ensuring a better and safer experience in class.

The scope of these findings can be broadened by looking at UNESCO's 2016-report, focusing on students across the world (in UNESCO's report 'school' covers all levels of education, not just university students). Overall, the findings echo those presented above, and they show that discrimination based on sexuality and gender is *not* mainly a non-Western problem. A recent report from Denmark concluded, for instance, that recent immigrants to Denmark

> constitute a particularly vulnerable double minority. For example, in the past year, a majority of 55% have felt discriminated against because of their ethnic/religious background or their sexual orientation/gender identity, while 45% have felt discriminated against because of both. (Følner et al., 2022, p. 9)

UNESCO's report confirms that schools are globally places where LGBTQ+ people are particularly vulnerable and the report concludes that '[a] significant proportion of LGBT students experience homophobic and transphobic violence in school' (UNESCO, 2016, p. 14). As an example of a Western country where these issues are pronounced, the US data shows this to be true for 85% of students. The report further stated that 'LGBT students are also more likely to experience such violence at school than at home or in the community' (p. 14). These experiences affect their education, employment and wellbeing. Interestingly, the report points out that '[s]tudents who are not LGBT but are perceived not to conform to gender norms are also targets' (p. 14). When discussing queer pedagogy a little later, this point is worth bearing in mind, as it is another reason why engaging with discourses of normativity is crucial, not just for people identifying as LGBTQ+ but for everybody.

I want to end this section by considering the findings by Ellis & High (2004) who noted that legislation, like the previously mentioned Section 28, did *not* mean that homosexuality was mentioned less in schools. However, they found that the majority of LGB-identified youths did not find the information they received useful, and that there had been

> highly significant increases in the reports of problems that young people
> felt they experienced at school because they identified as lgb [sic], with
> especially worrying increases in verbal abuse, physical assault and
> feelings of isolation (Ellis & High, 2004, p. 223)

This suggests that legislation and policies are not enough, and even talking more about non-normative groups is not sufficient. This makes sense, as talking or teaching about LGBTQ+ people might reinforce stereotypes rather than challenge them. I will return to this and discuss how queer pedagogy might provide a lens through which to change this, but first I want to continue discussing areas that contribute to the issues experienced by LGBTQ+ people.

2.8.2 LGBTQ+ representation in education

In this part I lay out some of the key areas of research into LGBTQ+ representation in education. These have all been important to the design of my own research, and I draw further on several of the sources in my analysis of my data later in this thesis.

One strand of research has explored how staff and students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identification, respond to the inclusion of topics on non-normative gender and sexuality. In a US context, Snapp et al. (2015) analysed focus group data with 26 participants, 24 of whom identified as LGBTQ+ and 2 as heterosexual, about their experiences of LGBTQ+ curriculum content in high school. They found that experiences of LGBTQ+ people as part of the curriculum were very varied. Furthermore, the experiences only rarely addressed 'systematic injustice and oppression, and lessons that were inclusive appeared to stand alone' (p. 254). The reason this is important is that this can reinforce LGBTQ+ identities as something unusual, something to deal with in special circumstances and classes, rather than a normal and integrated part of society. As Paiz (2020, p. 80) advises in his book which is subtitled 'A Practical Guide for Teachers':

> It is essential to avoid the 'inoculation' or 'one-and-done' approach to queering classroom practice. Do not have a 'gay day', leave that to the amusement parks. Instead, to truly queer our classroom practice, we must look for ways to incorporate LGBTQ+ content and voices throughout the curriculum.

Despite the paucity of experiences with LGBTQ+ affirmative curricula, those in Snapp et al.'s study who had experienced it were positive about this, describing 'those experiences as having meaning for them in a number of positive ways, which suggests that LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum has the potential to promote agency and change' (Snapp et al., 2015, p. 254). However, students were critical of the choices made by those teachers who 'fail[] to include LGBTQ information even though students suggest that the opportunity to do so was clearly present' (p. 255). It is of particular interest that some of these students talk about specifically encouraging teachers to include LGBTQ+

representation but being rejected. Overall, while a small study, this research shows how even in 2015, LGBTQ+ voices were hardly heard in the school curriculum.

Rhodes & Coda (2017) surveyed 26 US teachers of adult English classes, and their findings show that these teachers are in favour of more inclusive curricula. Thus their overall analysis 'revealed that there was general support for including topics and materials with LGBQ representation in their curriculum, but that there were many obstacles to doing so' (p. 102). The obstacles were: institutional support (see also Banegas, 2021); lack of materials; conservative student culture; and perceived irrelevance. So despite very different rationales, the effect is ultimately the same, namely a continuation of heteronormative teaching.

In a Danish study from 2021, it was found that '[o]nly 23% of LGBTQ+ students say they have learned about different sexual orientations at school, while only 9% say they have learned about different gender identities at school' (Juhl, 2021, p. 9, my translation). When analysing the data further, Juhl found that there was a clear tendency to delegate the teaching of non-normative gender and sexuality to special school projects or themed days. He interprets this as indicating 'that these subjects are not otherwise incorporated into the teaching, but are done as something special once during one's time at school' (p. 9, my translation).

This chimes with the findings in a relatively small, qualitative study from 2016. This study (which was submitted as an MA dissertation) interviewed six Danish teachers who themselves were responsible for teacher training modules relating to sexual education. The conclusions are that 'Sex Education in the teacher education programmes mostly focuses on the heterosexual pupils' and that 'the only gender identities referred to were "boys" and "girls", which create [sic] a world exclusively consisting of cisgendered boys and girls' (Engel & Houe, 2014, p. 1).

The final study I want to discuss here is Page (2017), which looks at how comfortable English language arts teachers are when including LGBT materials or classroom activities. The research is based on a survey of US middle and secondary school teachers, which was answered by 577 respondents. The results align with Rhodes and Coda's in that

although ELA [English language arts] teachers reported a relatively high level of comfort in utilizing LGBT texts, discussing LGBT issues, and promoting LGBT literature for pleasure reading, there was a low level of implementation—the literature curriculum is not being widely diversified in terms of the texts included. Few teachers reported actually using queer texts in their classrooms at all and even fewer still reported using such texts for purposes other than student pleasure or choice reading. (Page, 2017, p. 11)

The reasons given by the teachers are somewhat different, though, which might be explained by the fact that they teach school children rather than adults in a university: the fear of being challenged by parents or others, and the fear of protest from students, parents or others. And while one could argue that the inclusion of queer texts for 'choice reading' is positive, Page makes the point that 'it still places LGBT literature in the margins rather than as a central part of the curriculum' (p. 11). An important finding in this research is also that a teacher's level of comfort does not necessarily predict their engagement with LGBTQ+ topics.

Before outlining one way to address the difficulties faced by teachers who want to include more diverse topics in their curricula, I want to turn to the teaching materials, which is also the most well-researched area.

Gray (2013) analyses and discusses materials produced for teaching English as a foreign language. Gray acknowledges that things have improved for people who identify as LGBTQ+ in terms of protective legislation, but also reminds the reader that there is still far to go, and that some things have not improved (which I have already alluded to earlier in this literature review when discussing the UNESCO and Stonewall reports). Gray examined 10 contemporary English-learning textbooks and interviewed six teachers who identified as LGBTQ+. The result of his analysis was that 'there is no reference to same-sex sexual orientation in any of the titles' (p. 49), which echoes earlier findings such as Thornbury (1999) who found that '[c]oursebook people are never gay' (quoted in Gray, 2013, p. 42). Furthermore, Gray found that even where gay figures were included, such as Elton John or Oscar Wilde, 'these are all notable for their

avoidance of any mention of homosexuality' (p. 49). Combined with findings that men and women are treated in stereotypical ways, focusing for instance on how they shop differently or prefer different types of food, Gray concludes that the books are fundamentally heteronormative. This is the most relevant finding for this thesis, though it is also worth mentioning Gray's analysis of commercial considerations as an important factor when discussing global English: publishers simply do not want to risk alienating certain audiences, in certain countries and cultures, by including anything that might be seen as controversial. However, a further discussion of this is not only beyond the scope of this thesis, but also quite different in the context of the Danish Lecturer Scheme.

Hawkins (2012, p. 238) conducted a content analysis of 12 US history textbooks, looking for the use of terminology related to LGBTQ+ issues. The books contained a total of 8874 pages, on 55 of which there was an LGBTQ portrayal. This amounts to 0.62%[3] of the pages (p. 245). On a more positive note, Hawkins found that the actual information presented about LGBTQ+ topics was overwhelmingly 'comprehensive, accurate and realistic' (p. 246). Hawkins argues that the lack of representation in textbooks is problematic for two reasons:

> To rely upon instructors' supplemental materials is problematic because it
> assumes expertise that many instructors may not have without the support
> from a text. Also, when textbooks exclude certain groups of people it
> sends the implicit message to the reader that the group of people is not
> worthy of inclusion (p. 238)

The latter point is often referred to as erasure which

> refers to the systematic editing out of certain groups or identity positions
> (i.e. their non-representation) from officially endorsed versions of social
> reality, and the resulting denial of recognition. (Gray, 2013, p. 6)

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[3] The article has the number 0.006%, which seems to be off by a factor 100. The correct calculation is: (55/8874)*100 which equals 0.6198% which is rounded up to 0.62%. This, however, does not, in my opinion, challenge the conclusion or the validity of the overall argument.

The chapters in Gray (2013) show that this is not just a UK issue but a global one. To go into all the research from specific contexts is not necessary here, but a recent example that illustrates this is Selvi & Kocaman (2020, p. 5) whose research in Turkey showed that

> there is a clear exclusion of LGBTQ+-related topics in undergraduate, graduate and PhD programs and course content, including psychology, counseling, sociology, medicine and education programs.

There is not much research relating to this topic from the Nordic countries, with a recent Swedish MA dissertation making the point that 'it was identified that this area [LGBTQ+ perspectives in teaching materials for upper secondary school level] is unexplored in a Swedish context' (Fornstierna et al., 2022, p. 2). What the dissertation did find was that LGBTQ+ voices were included in the history curriculum by some teachers, but that it was mostly in passing, for instance when discussing the antiquity, rather than an integral part of the curriculum.

Beyond that, the materials I have located relate to sex education and to science textbooks. Junkala et al. (2022) analysed, for instance, Swedish biology textbooks for 13-16-year-old pupils finding that they all include LGBT content. Actually, heterosexuality content is only 'slightly higher than the LGBT total' (p. 527). They also find trans issues included in all the books. However, queer and intersex topics are both mostly avoided. At the same time, they find that the books rely on (hetero)normative representations. Looking at how sex is illustrated in the books, for instance, they conclude that

> penis-in-vagina penetration is the only sex act illustrated in detail, mostly with a male body on top of a female body. Only once is a cross-sectional picture of heterosexual intercourse portrayed with the two bodies standing up (Puls 283), thus in equal power positions. (p. 532)

So while the books have, they argued, come a long way since the days when only heterosexual biology was explored, there is still a long way to go and they conclude that the materials are 'strongly heteronormative in character' (p. 533).

Analysing Norwegian science textbooks for grades 8-10, Røthing (2017, p. 143) argues along similar lines that the books do include diverse representation but that it happens within a heteronormative framework whose effect is to other all other forms of sexuality:

> Heterosexuality is the only framework when bodies, sexual practice, contraceptives, and sexually transmitted infections are addressed and critical perspectives on heteronormativity are not provided. Selective inclusion of sexual orientations in science textbooks, leave teachers with limited tools for providing inclusive and anti-oppressive sexual education.

From a Danish perspective, Roien et al. (2022, p. 75) analysed sex education in primary and lower secondary school, in which they identified

> three sidelined discourses: discourses on pleasure and erogeneity; discourses on LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning) issues; and discourses on ethnic, cultural and/or religious diversity related to sexuality.

Importantly, and as the quotations above also point out, the normalising tendencies, the erasure and silencing are not just seen in relation to gender and sexuality, though they are the focus of this thesis. Rather, the same points can be made for any identity position which is not considered normative by the materials, the institution (the school, university, etc.), the teacher and so on. As Coffey (2013, p. 151) found when comparing a UK-produced and a French-produced coursebook for learning French: 'What the student is presented with is a kind of homogenised, cosmopolitan, and middle-class, lifestyle'.

Returning to the points made by Hawkins earlier, this has important implications for how these erased identities are viewed, *not* just by those identifying with the identity (such as LGBTQ+ people), but, in this case, by all students (including those identifying as heterosexual). Furthermore, Gray argues that erasure is not just about not seeing certain identities, for instance in the textbooks; rather, by erasing identities, these may become 'off limits, literally unmentionable in class' (Gray, 2013, p. 50), or, to use Ludwig & Summer's (2023, p. 3) term, taboo: 'considered unacceptable and inappropriate'.

They make the argument – and we should remember that this is 10 years after Gray's book and 11 years after Hawkins's article – that

> foreign language teaching materials typically focus on everyday-life topics such as families, spare-time activities, and cultural content by focusing on specific countries and their traditions. Consequently, teachers working with the textbooks are likely to refrain from discussing taboos with their learners unless they consider themselves to be critical pedagogues. (pp. 7-8)

Looking at these three sources, it is difficult to see how this will change. The publishing companies are mostly concerned about making a profit; teachers are restrained by having limited time to make their own materials, and their (perceived) lack of expertise. And all of this comes together to erase all non-heteronormative identities. I now turn to the specific issue of queer pedagogy.

2.8.3 Queer pedagogy

Queer pedagogy can be understood as an attempt to find ways of actioning the theoretical insights offered by queer theory. Warner (1991, p. 8) argued in ways that were affiliated with what became queer pedagogy:

> Social theory, moreover, must begin to do more than occasionally acknowledge the gay movement because so much of heterosexual privilege lies in heterosexual culture's exclusive ability to interpret itself as society. Even when coupled with a toleration of minority sexualities, heteronormativity has a totalizing tendency that can only be overcome by actively imagining a necessarily and desirably queer world.

There is a desire to move beyond tolerance and acknowledgment of identities towards an understanding of heteronormativity as the overarching problem. However, the question was, and in many ways still is, how to do this? Cohen's (1997, p. 75) criticism is still, in my opinion, valid today, certainly when looking at the language classroom:

In many instances, instead of destabilizing the assumed categories and binaries of sexual identity, queer politics has served to reinforce simple dichotomies between heterosexual and everything "queer." An understanding of the ways in which power informs and constitutes privileged and marginalized subjects on both sides of this dichotomy has been left unexamined.

And to demonstrate that this has not changed much since the late 1990s, Renn (2010, p. 132) argues that 'colleges and universities have evolved to tolerate the generation of queer theory from within but have stalwartly resisted the queering of higher education itself'.

If the above paragraphs sound as if no attempts have been made at actioning the insights from queer theory, that is not the case. Beyond a much better understanding of the role of heteronormativity in materials, for instance, Britzman's conceptualisation of queer pedagogy from the mid-1990s has had a clear impact – without it, this thesis probably could not have been written. In her seminal article 'Is there a Queer Pedagogy? Or, Stop Reading Straight' from 1995, she sets out one of the key problems about learning to tolerate or acknowledge an 'other':

> For those who cannot imagine what difference difference makes in the field of curriculum, the hope is that the truth of the minority might persuade the normative folks to welcome the diversity of others and, in allowing the presence of the other, maybe to transform – at the level of these very transferable feelings – their racist, sexist, and heterocentric attitudes. But how, exactly, is identification with another to occur if one is only required to tolerate and thereby confirm one's self as generous? In other words, what has actually changed within the ethical imperatives of one's identity? (Britzman, 1995, p. 159)

The point is that simply adding othered, minoritised identities – whether based on gender, sexuality, disability, religion, race, the list goes on and on – does not in itself lead to tolerance. We might think that we are creating a more inclusive classroom if we add, for instance, gay characters to our language textbooks, but, according to Britzman,

if we continue to see them as 'other', that does not actually change anything. The dichotomy created remains one of tolerant majority versus tolerated minority. This, in essence, is what queer pedagogy seeks to challenge, and with that in mind it is *not* particularly relevant to, for instance, members of the LGBTQ+ community but to everyone. Britzman (1995, p. 151) asks poignantly:

> Can gay and lesbian theories become relevant not just for those who identify as gay or lesbian but for those who do not? What sort of difference would it make for everyone in a classroom if gay and lesbian writing were set loose from confirmations of homophobia, the afterthoughts of inclusion, or the special event?

In her later writings, Britzman is even clearer about the purpose of queer pedagogy which she understands as 'a pedagogy that worries about and unsettles normalcy's immanent exclusions, or, as many now pose the problem, normalcy's passion for ignorance' (Britzman, 2012, p. 293). It is worth reminding oneself that this is radically different from something like 'inclusion' which is what institutions and teachers often focus on: 'Pedagogies of inclusion, then, and the tolerance that supposedly follows, may in actuality produce the grounds of normalization' (p. 298) The important point here is to realise that inclusion requires an identity that is seen as normal and one that is seen as in need of being included and tolerated. The dichotomy itself is not challenged and the idea of normalcy remains intact. Britzman sums up her ideas and explains:

> My interest is in provoking conditions that might allow for an exploration of unsettling the sediments of what one imagines when one imagines normalcy, what one imagines when one imagines differences. (p. 305)

Interestingly, LGBTQ+ Danmark, which is the largest political organisation for LGBTQ+ people in Denmark, writes about themselves that they are for 'lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender people and anyone else who **breaks with norms** of gender and sexuality' ('Om LGBT+ Danmark', my emphasis). While the first part of the quotation identifies members as having a range of sexual and gender identities, the ending aligns these identities with the breaking of norms. When looking at the organisation's teaching materials (which seem to be for primary and secondary school teachers), it becomes

clear that their thinking and approach are influenced by the kind of thinking presented by Britzman above. The guidance for teachers is called 'LARM for LGBT-rettigheder' which translates into 'NOISE for LGBT rights'. While the latter part focuses on rights, the use, and capitalisation, of the word 'NOISE' points to a more disruptive way of thinking. It is about upsetting and unsettling something in order to achieve rights, but the upsetting/unsettling part is as important, or even more important, otherwise why use capitalisation, as the rights-part. When looking at the teacher guidance, it says that its purpose is to prepare teachers 'to teach about norms and gender' (Kronborg et al., 2019, p. 4). The main part of the material is titled 'Norm criticism in practice' (p. 5) and it asserts that 'by using a norm-critical approach in practice, we have three advantages' (p. 5) which are identified as:

We get to put norms and power structures into words

We create a space where we acknowledge norm violations

We do away with the 'normal' and take responsibility (p. 5)

I do not know how impactful this material has been, but, as we shall see, none of my participants mentioned this or any similar guidance, so it is safe to say that it is not widely known or used, at least not in higher education. However, it shows that there are at the very least contexts in which the fundamental ideas of queer pedagogy inform both knowledge about gender and sexuality and the pedagogy about how they can be taught.

While my participants do not show an awareness of queer pedagogy or the work carried out by LGBTQ+ Danmark, this part is important as it affects how I use terms such as normative and non-normative. In much of the literature relating to LGBTQ+ issues, the terms are inextricably linked to gender and sexuality with normative being 'heterosexual' and 'cisgender' and non-normative acting as an umbrella term for everything else. In this thesis, however, I will be using the terms in a way that aligns more with queer pedagogy, i.e. as terms that highlight a general pattern of 'a norm' versus 'everything else', something that unsettles and shows the boundaries of the norm. This will often relate to gender and sexuality, as those are the topics of my thesis, but they can also

relate to other areas such as social class, disability or ethnicity with some people being seen as the norm (middle-class, able-bodied, white) and others as periphery.

2.8.4 The second language perspective

In this section I want to look at how the ideas of queer pedagogy and discussions on representation have impacted specifically on second language teaching. I start by looking in depth at Nelson's theorisation, as my own research shares some traits with her important work. After that, I discuss other ways that researchers have attempted to translate the more abstract ideas of queer theory and queer pedagogy into concrete classroom practice.

Nelson was, to my knowledge, the first to interrogate sexuality in relation to language teaching when in 1992 she and two colleagues spoke at a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) event in Canada about being a gay or lesbian TESOL teacher. In her 1993 article, she presents the talk which identifies 'seven attitudes that seem to me to be both prevalent and problematic', revolving around the tension between heterosexual/homosexual teachers, students and classrooms (Nelson, 1993, p. 143).

What Nelson (1993, p. 149) was calling for at this early stage was allies, and she makes the important distinction that '[b]eing heterosexual is not the same as being heterosexist'.

By 1999 Nelson's work began to take shape, and she was moving away from a gay/lesbian framework towards one that is aligned with queer theory and queer pedagogy. She explains her rationale, arguing

> that a queer theoretical framework may be more useful pedagogically than a lesbian and gay one because it shifts the focus from inclusion to inquiry, that is, from including minority sexual identities to examining how language and culture work with regard to all sexual identities. (Nelson, 1999, p. 371)

Nelson quotes Britzman in this paper, and it is clear that her ideas have influenced and shaped Nelson's own approach. Nelson's approach is, however, more immediately practical compared to Britzman's, and she is constantly looking for ways in which teachers can harness the practical potential of theory in their classrooms:

> On a practical level, inquiry may be more doable than inclusion because teachers are expected not to have all the answers but rather to frame questions, facilitate investigations, and explore what is not known. (p. 377)

In other articles Nelson (2002, 2004, 2006) continues to explore the possibilities offered by a queer theoretical approach to language teaching, but these articles are best understood as preparation for her 2009 book *Sexual Identities in English Language Education*. In this book, Nelson (2009, p. ix) asks

> how sexual diversity and sexual identities are being talked about within language learning contexts and what sorts of teaching practices are needed in order to productively explore the sociosexual aspects or language, identity, culture, and communication.

Her findings come from data collected in two different ways. First, she conducted focus groups with 44 ELT (which refers to the teaching of English to non-native speakers) teachers asking one broad question: 'What, if anything, do sexual identities (straight, gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender, queer, etc.) have to do with teaching or learning English?' (p. 27). Second, she carried out classroom observations over two weeks of language classes at three different institutions. As part of this, the three teachers (one at each institution) were interviewed before, during and after the observation period, and 28 (of a total of 63) students were interviewed once, either on their own or in pairs.

Nelson's analyses of her data are interpretivist, and she looks for common themes across her data, which are then understood in light of the insights from queer theory and queer pedagogy. As I will return to in Chapter 3, I have chosen a similar way to approach my data collection and analysis.

While Nelson discusses her findings in great detail, exploring a range of different teacher and student perspectives from her data, one of her fundamental conclusions is

that 'lesbian/gay themes and perspectives are, in fact, being raised in language classes' (p. 205). However, when looking deeper into how they are presented, she finds that the pedagogical strategies chosen by teachers differ significantly, as does the comfort with which these themes are included. This leads Nelson to suggest five overarching strategies that she argues can help teachers to include queer themes and harness the pedagogical potential they hold (pp. 205-218).

Strategy I argues that sexualities are constructed and interpreted differently in different cultures, and that an understanding of this should therefore be part of learning a new language. Strategy II refers to Nelson's finding that language teachers who included non-normative sexuality in their language teaching adopted '[t]hree main approaches to framing sexual diversity as subject matter' (p. 209), a counselling approach, a controversies approach and a discourse inquiry approach – I will discuss these in detail below. Strategy III focuses on how heteronormative discourses position non-normative identities, leading, for instance, to homophobic speech or other types of inappropriate language. While Nelson found that most teachers try to avoid and prevent this type of language in the classroom, she argues that it is necessary to engage with and unpack them with the students so the speech becomes 'openings rather than closings' (p. 212). Strategy IV suggests that there can be a tendency to frame the language classroom, including teachers and students, as heterosexual, which frames non-normative sexualities as 'other'. Nelson (p. 214) stresses that teachers need 'to avoid framing "students in this room [i.e. the classroom]" and "lesbian and gay people" as two distinct groups–in other words, to avoid an "us" and "them" approach'. In her study, it was seen as particularly important to LGBTQ+ students 'when the existence of lesbian/gay people was acknowledged' (p. 215). And finally strategy V, which is different from the others in that it focuses on language learning resources and research studies, rather than teachers and students, suggests that the topics raised by the four other strategies should also be applied to other areas: 'Language teachers need to be asking some queer questions of our professional publications–both student resources and research studies' (p. 218) – hopefully this thesis is doing exactly that.

I want to return to Nelson's second strategy, as it suggests that there are distinct ways in which teachers can work with LGBTQ+ topics. This is something I used to prepare my interviews (further details in Chapter 3), and it is therefore worth exploring here in greater detail.

Nelson calls the first approach that she identified in her data for 'a counseling approach' which she describes as teachers seeking to educate their students to accept and tolerate people who identify as LGBTQ+. It focuses on positive role models and on addressing homophobia and sees sexual identity as an essential part of being, i.e. something which is an unchanging part of us as humans, whether it is out in the open or repressed. While the intention behind adopting such an approach is positive and admirable, Nelson argues that it risks creating an opposition between heterosexual and non-heterosexual students.

Teachers who adopt the second approach identified by Nelson, 'a controversies approach', move away from looking at individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ and instead focus on sexual identity as a sociohistorical construct. This allows for an exploration of how different cultures and times have understood and responded to non-normative sexuality, including civil rights campaigns and institutionalised heterosexism.

The final approach, 'a discourse inquiry approach', focuses on how certain discourses structure and construct what we consider as normal, and how this, in turn, leads to other identities becoming peripheral. Furthermore, it explores how identities are performed and constantly re-enacted. This entails a heightened awareness of language and text, analysing how, for instance, we signal our identities to others through multiple semiotic resources that includes *inter alia* dress, bodily hexis (i.e. posture, stance, gesture) and gaze. An example from my own life might be used to exemplify this: in 2004 I was on a study trip to Manchester as part of my master's at the University of Copenhagen, and together with some fellow students I had been invited to a gay club to talk to the DJ who was also on the city council. At the door, the doorman rejected us and when I stepped up to him to ask him why we could not come in, he looked at me and said something to the effect of 'the way you stand right now is so heterosexual', which was, of course, the reason we were not allowed it. This could be an example of how our body language

signals our sexuality, and how this is often something we are not conscious about, and a deconstruction of it could be part of understanding why some things become normalised and normative.

Analysing her data, Nelson found that most teachers' approaches align with the first two ones, but she argues that adopting a queer discourse inquiry approach is the most effective at 'exploring the language/culture/identity nexus' (p. 211). This chimes with queer theoretical ideas and Britzman's queer pedagogy and focuses on how sexuality is discursively constructed and how various acts (speech, gestures etc.) come to mean what they mean, thus ultimately questioning heteronormativity. The prompts that I presented for the interview participants in this research, and which I will come back to later, are versions of these three approaches, which I had made more understandable for people who are not familiar with Nelson and Britzman.

In the remainder of this section I want to turn to ways in which others have tried to translate queer pedagogy into classroom practice. These materials often attempt two connected things, though they give different weighting to each part: introducing and discussing the pedagogical rationale for adopting a queer pedagogy stance, and supporting educators to ask relevant self-reflexive questions about their practice; and presenting ideas for the classroom, suggesting concrete materials or activities.

Blackburn & Buckley (2005, p. 202) start by interrogating the implications of adopting an LGBTQ-inclusive approach versus a queer-inclusive approach:

> We deliberately argue for queer-inclusive curricula rather than LGBTQ-inclusive curricula. An LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum would expose students to certain authors and texts, but a queer-inclusive curriculum would educate students about the interconnections among sexuality, identity, and literature.

This distinction is repeated in all other articles and books on this topic that I have encountered, though in slightly different ways. Bollas (2021, p. 138), for instance, uses the term diversity focus, explaining 'that this is an approach that does not aim to expand

what is included and accepted as part of mainstream society and culture; rather, it renounces altogether the existence of a norm'.

Both these quotations are echoes of what I have explored earlier when discussing queer theory, and they are a movement away from identity-based inclusion (trying to include more people with non-normative identities) to an interrogation of how norms are established and upheld, who benefits from them, and who are marginalised and why. This is what Bollas refers to when renouncing the existence of a norm: it is not, the way I understand it, a rejection of the fact that norms are felt to exist by and impact on all of us; it is, rather, a rejection that norms have any ontological basis and a rejection that they hold any objective truth – they are social constructs that are upheld due to our reiterative performance of them, and as such they can be deconstructed and these aspects can be laid bare for students. Blackburn & Buckley (2005, p. 210) phrase this nicely when they explain that

> we want to provide students the opportunity to experience how we are all
> called into being. Yet we do not want to provide students a rigid script for
> what we hope will be their (re)experience of how they have identified.

Their support for other teachers wishing to adopt a queer-inclusive stance consists of a range of concrete suggestions for texts that can be read with students, providing for each some brief notes about their perceived strengths and potential issues. The latter is crucial, as this allows for critical engagement with the texts, even when they relate to and include LGBTQ+ perspectives: are the depicted characters representative of diverse homosexual identities (and not just, for instance, gay men); do they contain intersecting identities (for instance with race); are there stereotypical parts which need to be addressed and engaged with critically (such as the butch/femme binary or marginalisation of certain groups such as Hispanic Americans), and so on. Importantly, their suggestion is not only to include more non-heterosexual characters but about questioning the privileging of heterosexuality more widely. They give as an example how heterosexuality can be explored: 'In Ellen Wittlinger's *Hard Love* (2001) a young man whose parents are getting divorced struggles to make sense of whom and how he loves. However, it is his own heterosexuality that he questions, while his best friend

identifies as lesbian' (p. 208). So while their suggestions do include a focus on non-normative characters, the goal is a deconstruction of all identity-categories, enabling *all* students to ask questions about how these categories are established and how/why some come to be seen as normative while others are marginalised.

More recently, Paiz (2020) presents a number of chapters that are meant to help teachers adopt a queer inquiry stance. The book starts by presenting queer theory, making similar claims about why it can become powerful as a pedagogy as those outlined above. The chapters then discuss how to trouble 'Normative Classroom Spaces' and 'Normative Curricular Materials' (from the contents page, npn) before suggesting how teachers can address challenges and pre-empt negative reactions from a range of stakeholders. The book ends by outlining what Paiz sees as the three overarching goals for a queered classroom. The first goal, 'Awareness Raising and Establishing Relevance' (p. 124), is about ensuring students understand more about LGBTQ+ lives and issues, while also helping them to understand why this is relevant to them. The second goal, 'Valuing Sexual Diversity' (p. 125), is to show students that sexual diversity is valued, by you, the teacher, as well as by other stakeholders in society, and how diversity 'adds to and enhances society' (p. 125). The third goal, 'Facilitating Dialogue' (p. 125), is about creating opportunities for students to talk and enabling them to be heard as well as listening to other voices, both those in the class, of course, but also ones represented in materials studied in the class. Paiz (p. 126) links this final point directly to the development of intercultural competence because it 'gives students real-world experience navigating sensitive topics with peers that come from different big- or small-c cultural orientations'.

Beyond these sources, there are an ever-growing number of internet guides. Most of them target pre-university teachers and teacher education, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a review of them. I therefore want to end this section with the most comprehensive guide I am aware of at university-level, The University of Birmingham's 'LGBTQ-inclusivity in the Higher Education Curriculum: a best practice guide' (Ward & Gale, 2016), which also acted as inspiration for the UCL toolkit that I co-authored in

2021 'Recognising and including LGBTQ+ identities in language teaching' (Hansen et al., 2021).

Ward and Gale's research found that while university is often perceived as a good place for LGBTQ+ students, they actually had higher discontinuation rates than heterosexual students, and they were more likely to report mental health issues (Ward & Gale, 2016, p. 10). Furthermore, while the University of Birmingham, like many other universities, had thriving LGBTQ+ initiatives (such as mentoring schemes, an active student union, counselling service), their study

> found that openness and inclusivity outside the lecture room is not being matched within teaching and learning environments. We found that students feel more uncomfortable expressing their gender and sexual identities within their departments and various teaching and learning spaces than they do in halls or sports (which have traditionally been seen as some of the most problematic spaces for LGBTQ students). (p. 9)

The guide contains specific guidance for different faculties (dividing them into 'Arts, Humanities and Law', 'Social Sciences', 'STEM' and 'Professional and vocational degrees'), alongside case studies and testimonials from staff and students, but overall it suggests a framework that looks at three areas in three different ways (see figure 3).

	LANGUAGE	ROLE MODELS	CURRICULUM CONTENT
INCREASING AWARENESS	Avoiding abusive and discriminatory language	Signposting to LGBTQ organisations and events	Basic acknowledgement of gender and sexual diversity
ADDITIVE APPROACHES	Avoiding hetero-normative and cis-normative language	Access to mentors for LGBTQ-identified students	Inclusion of topics, themes and readings about LGBTQ identities
TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE	Critical engagement with queer/trans inclusive language	Role models and allies in the teaching and learning environment	Critical approaches to pedagogy, supporting social engagement and action/inclusive professional practice

Figure 3: The Ward-Gale model for LGBTQ-inclusivity in higher education (Ward & Gale, 2016, p. 10)

The three different ways suggest that staff can engage with each area in progressively more critical ways, from 'increasing awareness' over 'additive approaches' to 'transformative practice'. Fundamentally this means that the first step is recognising and understanding something; then considering adding something to your current practice that creates more space for people identifying as LGBTQ+; and finally changing your practice and engaging critically with the structures that marginalise LGBTQ+ people (the guide does not commit to queer pedagogy and rather seems to suggest two transformative lenses, queer pedagogy and/or critical approaches).

These three ways of working are then applied to three areas: language, role models and curriculum content. Language covers how we talk about non-normative gender and sexuality, avoiding discriminatory language and, ultimately, engaging critically with it; role models is about signposting LGBTQ+ resources, ensuring access to mentors and working with allies; and curriculum content is about ensuring LGBTQ+ content is represented and, where possible, engaged with critically. None of the suggestions here are directly actionable (though as indicated above, they are unpacked more later in the guide) but they demonstrate how staff can work in different ways to ensure their LGBTQ+ students are supported and their voices listened to and included. It also allows staff who are new to this kind of thinking to take small steps, rather than expecting them to take the deep dive of queering their entire practice.

Having introduced a range of topics relating to the teaching of LGBTQ+ topics, I want to turn to my own research and how I have designed it to address my research questions.

Chapter 3: Research design

3.1 Interpretivism and constructivism

Although my understanding of gender and sexuality is informed by queer theory, following scholars such as Nelson (2009), I take the view that my research questions are best addressed within an interpretivist and constructivist framework, which van der Walt (2020, p. 59) sees as 'two sides of the same coin'. At its core, this perspective 'argues that truth and knowledge are subjective, as well as culturally and historically situated, based on people's experiences and their understanding of them.' (Ryan, 2018, p. 8). This is a rejection of positivism and objectivity and related claims that there are universal truths that can be accessed or found by the researcher.

Van der Walt (2020, p. 66) argues that in what he calls interpretivism-constructivism

> [r]eality is in some sense constructed by the mind, not simply perceived by it. There is, therefore, no empirical fact that is not already theory-laden, and there is no logical argument or formal principle that is a-priori certain. All human understanding is interpretation.

Hammersley (2013, p. 35) adds that ideas are constructed within various cultural contexts, which entails that what might appear as similar experiences can be understood in very different ways by different (groups of) people:

> [P]erception and cognition are active processes, in which anything apparently 'given' is actually a product of processes of selection and construction. Another key theme is that these processes are socio-cultural in character, with different cultures generating divergent experiential worlds and stocks of 'knowledge'.

In this we see the links between constructivism and social constructivism, the latter emphasising that meaning-making is social rather than individual; it is something that happens among people who, together, construct and re-construct the meaning(s) of events and experiences (van der Walt, 2020, p. 65).

3.2 What is interpretation?

Interpretation is, not surprisingly, central to interpretivism, and within an interpretivist framework it emphasises the active engagement of the researcher. It does *not* see it as problematic that the researcher brings themselves into the research process, rather arguing that it is impossible not to do so. Things like the researcher's age, gender, sexuality, socio-economic background and all such factors will influence the analysis and interpretation:

> Interpretation depends on us – on our psychology, our affect, our values and politics, and the assumptions and ideals that permeate our take on the world […] Some of these are temporal and shifting – for instance, our mood in the moment […] or the immediate context of our lives […] Some are more deeply embedded. (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 199)

Another useful way of understanding interpretation is the hermeneutic circle, which understands interpretation as

> the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole, at a series of levels. To understand any given part, you look to the whole; to understand the whole, you look to the parts. (Smith et al., 2009, p. 28)

It also recognises the dialectic between the interpreter and what is being interpreted, and it rejects the idea that interpretation can be objective. George (2021, sec. 1.2 Against Foundationalism) describes how

> hermeneutics affirms that we must remain ever vigilant about how common wisdom and prejudices inform—and can distort—our perception and judgment, that even the most established knowledge may be in need of reconsideration, and that this finitude of understanding is not simply a regrettable fact of the human condition but, more importantly, that this finitude is itself an important opening for the pursuit of new and different meaning.

The point here is that all interpretation is filtered through our human consciousness and that we cannot separate out things like our cultural understanding. This also means that there is no single meaning of anything, and that we can always 'reconsider', i.e. interpret anew.

When applying this to texts, such as the interview transcripts in this study, it means that there is a movement between various parts of a text and, moreover, a movement back and forth across a series of texts/interviews:

> [T]he meaning of the word only becomes clear when seen in the context of the whole sentence. At the same time, the meaning of the sentence depends upon the cumulative meanings of the individual words. (Smith et al., 2009, p. 28)

Smith et al. (2009, p. 3) describe this as a 'double hermeneutic because the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense', which, bearing in mind Barthes' dead author, can be extended to include the reader of this thesis: the reader (you) making sense of the researcher (me) making sense of the participants making sense of their experiences. While Smith et al. were discussing phenomenology (specifically Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis), the view is not incompatible with the poststructuralist recognition of the role of discourse in constructing the world and the ways in which it is negotiated culturally – poststructuralist research, however, does not normally focus on individuals and their perception(s) of reality but rather focuses on discourse:

> In this model [i.e. poststructuralist theory] our existence as persons has no fundamental essence, we can only ever speak ourselves or be spoken into existence within the terms of available discourses. (Davies, 1991, p. 42)

So while poststructuralism and interpretivism-constructivism share the idea that there is no objective social reality and that what we perceive of as reality is a construct, their analytical foci are very different.

3.3 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

To answer my research questions within an interpretive-constructivist framework, I have chosen to adopt a similar approach to Nelson (2009) and work with thematic analysis. The specific variant of thematic analysis I have chosen is Braun & Clarke's (2022) 'Reflexive Thematic Analysis' (RTA). While RTA has been developed so that it can be used with a range of research perspectives, they advocate for what they call 'a BIG Q framework' (p. 5) which refers to qualitative research that completely rejects positivism (as examples of what would constitute small q frameworks they mention (post)-positivist elements such as inter-coder reliability, codebooks and saturation (pp. 237-242)).

Braun and Clarke's first article on thematic analysis (TA) appeared in 2006, and in that article they argued that while TA was widely used, it was often not adequately grounded in theory. Core to their argument was that 'thematic analysis should be considered a method in its own right' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78) and not merely another term for analysis. Central to their approach was what I explored above when discussing interpretation, namely that the researcher is active in the analysis: the researcher is not uncovering the hidden truths of the data but rather constructs and selects what to focus on and report. They do, however, describe TA in relatively general terms, arguing that TA 'involved the searching *across* a data set […] to find repeated patterns of meaning' (p. 86), setting out six phases that the analysis should go through.

Reflecting on TA in 2019, they clarify that their version of TA is fundamentally qualitative and does 'not contain even a whiff of positivism' (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 591). They specifically argue against ideas such as inter-coder reliability, saturation (see also Braun & Clarke, 2021) and domain summaries which they describe as 'organised around a shared topic but not shared *meaning*' (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 593). While it should be clear that their earlier version of TA was *also* reflexive, they now begin specifically labelling their approach to TA as Reflexive TA.

Reflexivity is inextricably connected to interpretivism as it 'allows others to appreciate that you do not consider yourself a neutral conduit of information' (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 15). In other words, the reflexivity is a recognition that our interpretation is not put forward as an objective truth, but rather as a contextualised construct (made by the

researcher). This does not mean that anything goes and that we cannot judge the quality of an interpretation by asking questions like: how well does it hold up to scrutiny? How convincing is the interpretation? Are the claims defensible? (pp. 200-201).

In their book *Thematic Analysis – A Practical Guide* all these things come together. There is, as far as I can see, not much new in terms of theory, but every aspect discussed in their previous articles is fleshed out in further detail. They still recommend six phases when conducting RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 6):

1. dataset familiarisation
2. data coding
3. initial theme generation
4. theme development and review
5. theme refining, defining and naming
6. writing up

These phases are not meant to be linear but rather recursive. An example from my own analytical process is my first writing up of themes (10,000 words), which I immediately discarded on re-reading it as I realised the themes did not feel quite right – what I had achieved was closer to a summary of the interviews than a thematic analysis. I therefore decided to go back to re-read all the interviews, coding once more, and this iteration led to the generation of the themes that are presented later in this thesis.

After the first step of reading and re-reading the dataset, the next step is coding, which is the smallest unit of analysis in RTA. Braun and Clarke describe the difference between the two steps succinctly: 'Where familiarisation is engaged-but-not-yet-systematic, coding is engaged-and-systematic' (p. 53). The codes 'differentiate between meanings' (p. 54) and this means there will inevitably be many of them. RTA allows for both a deductive and an inductive approach to coding, or a blend of the two. For my coding, my approach was inductive, though my theoretical framing obviously meant that I expected certain codes to be present (particularly around gender and sexuality and the materials used).

A theme, in RTA, is a specific thing, and it is seen as separate from what is labelled a topic summary:

> A topic summary is a summary of everything the participants said about a particular topic, presented as a theme. One of the main problems with topic summaries for us, and for reflexive TA, is that they unite around a topic, rather than a shared meaning or idea. (p. 77)

This is important when moving from code to theme, which is not just about merging codes and understanding the diversity of an experience in the data. As is emphasised, 'themes capture multiple facets of an idea or concept – whereas codes capture a single facet or idea' (p. 80). Themes should be linked to how you seek to address the research questions, and they are therefore not simply a representation of what the researcher has decided is important in the data:

> A crucial thing to realise here is that your task is both to generate themes/interpret patterned meaning and to tell the reader how it addresses your research question – and what the implications of it are. (p. 90)

Their suggestion is to ask four questions about each theme (p. 111):

1. What the theme is about (central organising concept).
2. What the boundary of the theme is.
3. What is unique and specific to each theme.
4. What each theme contributes to the *overall* analysis.

The final parts relate to the write up, which Braun and Clarke see as integral to the analytical process. Writing is not just the end-product, but part of the refinement of codes, initial themes, and final themes. I have taken their notion of storytelling seriously: 'Think of writing your analysis as telling a story – your story should engage the reader and convince them of the validity of your analytic claims and argument' (p. 118). Thus I have tried to hold my reader's hand, guide them through my observations of the data and provide rich and exciting excerpts from the transcripts.

Having described the theoretical underpinnings of my research, I now turn to the actual recruitment of participants and collection of data.

3.4 Selection and sampling

I sent email invitations to participate in this research to all 23 Danish lecturers who teach abroad (at the time some of the positions were being recruited for, which explains why this number is slightly smaller than the number of universities that are part of the DLS). The email addresses are publicly available online. I also posted an invitation in a closed Facebook group where all current and former lecturers are members (if they so wish). Thirdly, I participated in a social meeting on Zoom, open to all current and former lecturers, where I presented the research and extended my invitation to current lecturers.

Thirteen lecturers agreed to be interviewed, though one later decided they did not have time and energy to participate due to a family emergency. Of the 12 people I interviewed, I decided to exclude one interview, as I realised during the interview that the person was not technically a part of the lecturer scheme. I therefore ended up with a total of 11 interviews.

My participants represent Danish teachers stationed all over the world: Europe, North America and Asia. They represent different age groups (from late 20s to early 60s), and different levels of experience (though most were inexperienced, there were participants with 15+ years of experience). I have decided not to provide much of this information in detail, as that would make it possible to identify my participants. Table 4 provides information about the pseudonym used to refer to each participant in this research and, for those unfamiliar with Danish names, whether they present as male or female (nobody provided any indication that they did not want to be identified with the gender they present as):

Pseudonym	M(ale) / F(emale)
Cecilie	F
Einar	M

Henrik	M
Margrethe	F
Mathilde	F
Michael	M
Pernille	F
Rasmus	M
Thomas	M
Viktor	M
William	M

Table 2: Pseudonyms and genders of research participants

All interviews were conducted in Zoom. Apart from a few technical issues which did not cause any major problems – such as short disconnects, lagging sound and difficulty sharing screens) – this worked well. Most interviews took around 60 minutes, but in a couple of cases they went on for longer, one taking almost 120 minutes.

The interviews were conducted in Danish, and the transcriptions were in Danish too. I used Zoom's auto-generated transcripts as a starting point, but, as these are faulty, not least in Danish where the algorithm makes more mistakes than in English, I manually corrected all parts. My analytical work was also done on these originals before translating quotes into Danish. A full translation of an interview has been included in Appendix A.

3.5 Data collection

In line with the theoretical perspectives described above, I see an interview as 'an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 2). This does not assume that the interview is simply a conversation between people: the interviewing I am discussing here is semi-structured – meaning that the interviewer has prepared a schedule which guides the interview – and while the focus is on the participant and their experiences, the interviewer does control events, which can be seen as entailing a 'clear power asymmetry between the researcher and the subject' (p. 18). It should be recognised,

therefore, that this process does not produce, or seek to produce, any objective insights, which would be aligned with positivist or realist epistemologies (Flick, 2018, p. 35). Rather '[t]he interviewer and the subject act in relation to each other and reciprocally influence each other. The knowledge produced in a research interview is constituted by the interaction itself, in the specific situation created between an interviewer and an interviewee. With another interviewer, a different interaction may be created and different knowledge produced' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 17; see also Kvale, 1994). This is aligned with a constructionist epistemology (Flick, 2018, p. 36). It is important to add that although different interviewers will necessarily obtain somewhat different interview data, this does not invalidate interviewing as a research instrument. While interviewees may give different answers depending on who is asking questions, interviewees in a research context are constrained to speak as members of the discourse communities to which they belong.

These methodological considerations affect how I decided to conduct the interviews. In a study on cultural content in textbooks, Gray (2010, p. 140) discusses how 'teachers often lacked a vocabulary for talking about culture in anything other than very general terms' and a similar argument can, I believe, be made for talking about gender and sexuality. Gray also mentions that some teachers might be nervous about participating in an interview, feeling they have nothing of value to add, but from my knowledge of colleagues in the DLS, I did not think this applied to my study.

Rather than seeing myself as doing research on the participants, therefore, I wanted to invite them into the process, i.e. doing research with them. This recognises the participants as experts in their own right (as people who have learned languages; taught languages; created language learning materials; and sometimes done research), and it recognises that the participants are also among the key people who will hopefully learn from and be inspired by the results of my research.

To achieve this, I divided the interviews into three parts.

For the first part, I asked participants around a week before the interview to have a look at the materials they use when teaching languages and bring to the interview two examples where gender and/or sexuality are included (I also asked participants to send

these to me at least a day before the interview so I could prepare, and so I have a copy of them for later use). This allowed participants some autonomy from the beginning of the interview, and it allowed us to explore their ideas and reasoning in relation to my research questions (the document sent to participants can be found in Appendix B). The participants chose a range of materials: published textbooks, novels, handouts, links to YouTube and Danish television and articles:

Figure 4: Illustrative examples showing some of the materials sent to me

There was no attempt in the interview to analyse these materials in great detail, but they often proved a good starting point, and they were often referenced during other parts of the interview.

For the second part – which I sent to participants at the same time as the first task, outlined above – I asked participants to reflect on their own teaching in relation to Nelson's three approaches (Nelson, 2009, p. 201 – outlined earlier in this thesis). I did not think it would be meaningful to participants if I sent them part of Nelson's concluding chapter, and it would prove problematic if they did not get around to reading it. I therefore decided to simplify Nelson's points by creating three prompts, each of which aligns with one of her approaches, which I asked participants to reflect on (the actual handouts are included in Appendix B):

Prompt 1:

> A language teacher includes non-normative gender and sexuality...: by looking at stories of people identifying as LGBTQ+; to promote personal development in students so that they learn to tolerate diversity; by letting students explore their own feelings and attitudes.

This was accompanied with examples of articles that could exemplify this prompt: an article about famous gay men (*Kendte Bøsser*, 2017); a one-page online document titled '10 things you can do for transgender people' (Lodahl, n.d.); and an article titled 'Muslim and homosexual – and so what?' (Aslanes, 2017) focusing on the story of a young Muslim man.

Prompt 2:

> A language teacher includes non-normative gender and sexuality...: by looking at LGBTQ+ groups in society; by opening up a discussion on how LGBTQ+ identities are social constructions and how this varies over time and in different cultures; to promote civil rights and problematise institutionalised discrimination.

The examples accompanying this prompt were: an article about it being 30 years since the first homosexual couple got married in Denmark (Møller, 2019); an article about where homosexual couples can get married in Europe (*FAKTA Her Må Homoseksuelle Ikke Blive Gift i Europa | Udland | DR*, 2015); an article about Polish LGBT-free zones (Mørch, 2020); and an article about gender titled 'Can one be something apart from male or female?' (Herlufsen, 2021) which introduces non-binary gender identity.

Prompt 3:

> A language teacher includes non-normative gender and sexuality...: by looking at how people signal / mark their gender and sexuality through language (such as word choice, pronunciation) and non-verbal signs (such as how they walk or what clothes they are wearing); by analysing how language and culture work in relation to all sexual and gender identities, and how these are learned by people in different groups and contexts.

This was accompanied by the following examples: an article about the 'new' gender-neutral pronouns in Danish (Alminde, 2020); an article by a homosexual man titled 'Damn, you are so gay' (Juhl, 2016); a tabloid article where a right-wing politician complains about the European Song Contest saying that it is 'too gay' (Madsen, 2019); and a link to a podcast which discusses whether there is a specific language for gay people (*Klog på Sprog*, 2020).

In the interviews it became clear that people had thought about these to varying degrees. Some started by discussing the prompts, reflecting on how they related to their own teaching; others admitted to only having skimmed them. There were also some examples where participants had clearly misunderstood the prompts. This did not prove to be a problem, as the interviews were not really about the prompts; rather, they were there to begin the conversations and make participants think about their own teaching in relation to gender and sexuality.

Reflecting on the two pre-interview tasks, I found that they proved very helpful as they meant that all participants came to the interview prepared to discuss the topic, even though their ideas were often not fully formed. They had considered their teaching and thought about examples from their practice, which had often led them to reflect critically on their teaching – this is something I will return to in my analysis, and the impact of this will be particularly clear when I discuss overarching theme 6 'The interview as a trigger for reflection'.

The interview schedule can be found in Appendix C.

3.6 Ethical issues

This study adheres to the BERA ethical guidance 2018 (*British Educational Research Association, Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, 2018).

All the participants were educated adults and as such they were able to understand what they were agreeing to participate in. They understood informed consent and were able to read and understand the information sheet, detailing how their contributions would be used (information sheet and informed consent sheet are included in Appendix D). Participants were informed about their right not to answer a question and/or withdraw at any time without stating a reason, but none decided to do so during or after the interviews.

The main ethical issue is that non-normative gender and sexuality are controversial in some countries where the participants teach. However, as participants are part of the DLS, meaning that formal contracts between the foreign university and Denmark have been agreed, it is very unlikely that this will put any participants at risk. However, part of the information sheet asked participants to consider this in their own contexts so they do not feel they put themselves at any real or perceived risk.

The main ways of protecting participants are a) through safe storage of un-anonymized data on UCL servers; and through thorough anonymisation of individuals and the institutions they work at (for instance not using a university's name or even naming the country it is in, but instead using Eastern European University, or Asian University).

Finally, during one interview, the participant disclosed a number of traumatic events that had clearly affected her. During the interview itself, I did ask them about this, and they indicated they were happy to go on. After the interview, I sent an email asking them if they felt they were given the support they needed, and whether there was anything they would like me to do. The person expressed gratitude for my care but assured me they were supported by their colleagues and did not need further support.

Ethics form is included in Appendix E.

Chapter 4: Analysis

Having gone back and forth through the six phases outlined in Braun & Clarke (2022), I have arrived at a number of themes that both work independently of each other as well as tell a story that addresses my research questions, which centre on my participants' inclusion, or lack of inclusion, of non-normative gender and sexuality in their language teaching. I have decided to subdivide this part under overarching themes, as I feel this makes my narrative more coherent, emphasising areas that I will return to when discussing implications for practice.

For each subtheme I provide a description of the theme and analyse the nuances in how my participants have presented their ideas and experiences, providing rich quotes from the transcripts. At regular intervals, I relate my analysis to other scholarship, so the reader can get an idea of how it connects to the bigger picture.

In the following I present six overarching themes, four of which are divided into two subthemes each:

> Overarching theme 1: Concern for students
>> Subtheme 1: Concern about students' reactions
>> Subtheme 2: Care and respect for non-normative students
> Overarching theme 2: The language classroom
>> Subtheme 1: In language classes, the focus is on language learning
>> Subtheme 2: Choice of materials is outside the teachers' control
> Overarching theme 3: Normalisation
>> Subtheme 1: Silent representation
>> Subtheme 2: Representing culture and diversity
> Overarching theme 4: The teacher
>> Subtheme 1: How can one engage with identities that one does not represent oneself?
>> Subtheme 2: Fear of misrepresentation
> Overarching theme 5: Institutionally embedded heterocentrism
> Overarching theme 6: The interview as a trigger for reflection

The organising principle is an outward movement starting with the students (overarching theme 1); I then move to the classroom (overarching theme 2) and then to how different strategies are used when deciding what to represent, which relates to which materials are selected to study (overarching theme 3); the next step is the teacher (overarching theme 4) and then the institution (overarching theme 5); finally, I analyse the effect of taking part in this research (overarching theme 6).

4.1 Overarching theme 1: Concern for students

Not surprisingly, all my interviews touch on the students and how they have reacted to various types of teaching and the topics discussed. Within these conversations, many of my participants articulate a range of concerns relating to their students, and I will be examining here their importance while trying to understand why my participants view language teaching the way they do. Concerns here should not be understood only in its negative meaning of 'anxiety' or 'worry' but also more positively as 'matter of interest' and as care and respect for students and their voices. In the first subtheme, I analyse how my participants are afraid of alienating students, and I look at what solutions the participants offer. I then move to the second subtheme, which explores the care that my participants show for all their students, focusing particularly on those who identify as non-normative.

4.1.1 Subtheme 1: Concern about students' reactions

Several participants explain why they do not use much material that includes non-normative identities. They are keenly aware that gender and sexuality can be sensitive topics, not least in many of the cultures where they are teaching, and they take great care not to cause upset among their students:

> And sometimes I might feel a little bit of anxiety because I don't want to step on anyone's toes, make someone sad. And I know that gender and sexuality are sensitive areas, and when I, especially when I read in the Danish media, I can see that one can very easily go wrong in relation to these things. (Viktor)

Viktor uses the term 'berøringsangst', which I have translated as 'anxiety'. However, the Danish word is actually a compound made up of 'berøring' (touch) and 'angst' (anxiety, fear or the more existential angst), literally a fear of touching something. He is afraid of approaching, or maybe touching on, to stay with his metaphor, topics relating to gender and sexuality because they have the potential to make someone uncomfortable and cause offense. This shows a fear of offending students by exposing them to something that, they believe, is inappropriate, which might also ultimately reflect negatively on the teacher. Viktor shifts from 'I' to 'one' in the last line, but it is clear that his point is that, approaching these topics, the teacher might 'go wrong'. I will come back to the gendered nature of this concern shortly and only add Michael's comment that

> [o]ne is just so careful, but that's not the only thing, there's also MeToo,
> there are races, you know, there are so many minefields. (Michael)

The image of a 'minefield' and the reference to MeToo show that these concerns are meant to be taken seriously: these teachers see potential threats as very real. This does not mean, however, that they cannot or will not include non-normative topics, but that they are careful when doing so and rely on a number of protective strategies, which will become clearer as my analysis progresses.

This is the only area of my analysis where my participants' gender seems to have played a role in their responses, and several of my male participants talk about their concern for how students will view their person and agenda; my female participants, on the contrary, do not touch on this. For Rasmus this becomes a concern about being seen as political and trying to make your students think in a certain way:

> [I]f I bring an article about LGBTQ+ rights in Denmark, for example, I think
> some of my students may feel that I want to impose an opinion on them,
> or that I am acting politically (Rasmus)

Thomas frames similar thoughts as a real dilemma, and not one that he has found an answer to. In the interview, he begins reflecting on representation:

> I recognise that if we let it dominate [non-normative topics] and give it an
> overrepresentation in relation to society, it gets some reactions that

quickly become, well, you [plural] have the gay agenda and you're trying to impose something on us; where an underrepresentation is also problematic, in the sense that it seems like you are trying to hide it away (Thomas)

There is evidence in the literature that these are not merely theoretical or imagined scenarios. In a survey of 622 undergraduate students from a university in Texas, Anderson & Kanner (2011, p. 1559) found that the students

> viewed heterosexuals as the normative professor who is relatively objective and value-free. Lesbian/gay professors who taught a course with the exact same syllabus as heterosexual professors were viewed as coming to the course with a political agenda, with personal biases, and with the aim of forcing their views of sexuality on students.

Similar worries were expressed by Oesterreich (2002, p. 291). Teaching as an openly gay woman, she reflected on this, asking herself: 'might I be accused of pushing my agenda, recruiting for my people, or favoring gays and lesbians in the class'.

What is interesting is how Rasmus and Thomas's worries do not prevent them, or the other participants, from – they state – including non-normative sexuality in their teaching. However, as we shall see later, they do so using very specific strategies which enable them to avoid such accusations. I will explore this further in another theme, and now turn to concerns relating to the students.

Three of my male participants directly express concerns about how their gender might make it more difficult to represent *anything* that might be considered sexual (referring here to sexual acts). We have already looked at some of Michael's concerns, but Thomas and Viktor both mention how talking about sexual orientation might be perceived as talking about sexuality (sexual acts), which can reflect badly on the teacher:

> I love sex as a topic, and I love sexuality as a topic, but it can also be a problematic topic, and when you teach languages, you typically have a majority of female students, and when you are a heterosexual man, who is

older, you have to be careful for several reasons. You have to be careful

that you are not perceived as sex-fixated via the themes and topics you

choose to work with. (Viktor)

This echoes Michael's concerns around MeToo, and Viktor recognises elsewhere that these fears have an inhibiting effect on him, making his teaching more conservative (his term). While I will not focus much further on my participants' gender in this study, it is telling that Cecilie reports a conversation about the teacher's gender and topics relating to sexuality with a colleague who told her that he, as an older male, would have had to think much more carefully about teaching such topics than she had:

> [He said] that if it had been a 50-year-old man laughing in a half-sultry way
> and showing John Dillermand [title of a Danish animated children's show.
> Literal meaning is something like John Penis or John Willy] in front of
> some 17-year-old girls, it might have been a little bit different. (Cecilie)

Below, I will move on to analysing some of the concrete experiences my participants shared from when their concerns became real, and when reading this, it is worth thinking about the many pressures on my participants. So far I have already touched on concerns about the learning environment, about stepping on students' toes, about being seen to push the so-called LGBTQ-agenda, and being seen as a potential sexual predator.

It is interesting to notice that the concern about how students will react also relates to topics beyond gender and sexuality, and it seems to be a general concern when including anything that is not strictly normative. Cecilie explains how she found that sensitive topics disrupted her teaching, which 'developed in an unintentional, loose and comical direction'. Having included poetry from authors who have experienced a violent childhood and who thematise suicide, Cecilie was unprepared for the responses she got from students:

> So I got emails from students who wrote how they themselves had
> experienced being beaten [/chastised] at home, or how they themselves
> felt that they had had a terrible childhood. Someone even wrote that she

had attempted suicide herself, and then I'm sitting there thinking, "I just wanted us to read some poems, and you wanted to, and I chose these poems because they were relatively accessible; you know, I didn't choose them to bother you" [laughs]. But there were many reactions that were completely unintended – and in that way I try not to, well, actually I've always tried not to provoke them with the topics I choose (Cecilie)

Having moved away from the safe topics and exercises that she describes elsewhere – what she exemplifies with the example 'yes, I like tomatoes, no, I don't like them' (Cecilie) – she has managed to connect with several of the students, who write to her about their own experiences. However, this was never Cecilie's plan, and she does not really know how to respond. Instead of looking at the pedagogical consequences of her teaching, and considering, for instance, how the positive connections with students could be activated without necessarily discussing suicide, she concludes that it is better not 'to provoke them with the topics I choose'. Even as she explains to me how one student later wrote to her to say that 'it might in fact have had a positive or kind of a therapeutic effect on her to do so' (Cecilie), Cecilie does not find value in the experience, and she is mainly looking to avoid something similar in the future, which is reminiscent of key findings in other studies. A participant in Gray (2010, p. 151) explained, for instance, how 'you have to be diplomatic' and that as a teacher 'you mustn't offend', and teachers in Nelson (2009, p. 68) also share their concerns about students' reactions, here relating to discussions around non-normative sexuality: 'some of the nicest students I know have some of the most, you know, really intense homophobic comments to make.'

In addition to Cecilie's experiences, two of my participants specifically talk about how they have experienced disruption when discussing certain topics (they both mention gender, but Rasmus also alludes to political topics, so it is, as above, not just about gender and sexuality, but probably about any topic that is considered non-normative, in terms of classroom expectations). These experiences are important because I see them as representing exactly what many of my other participants fear. As such, they also show that there is some reality to those fears, and that they are not just imaginary:

> I have three students and there are two of them who are at two very
> different political poles, and sometimes, even when we've discussed
> gender or race, one of the times it resulted in one of them walking out [of
> the classroom], so it's been hard for me to include, how do you say, I don't
> know how to put it in a nice way, but I've definitely had a student who
> opposed non-normative thinking in many ways. So it's also been to make
> sure there was some kind of healthy learning environment [laughs]. [...]
> [G]iven the climate in one of my classes, it has been a disruptive element
> if I had included something of that kind, actually. (Rasmus)

This clearly goes beyond Cecilie's experience of her classes taking unintentionally comical directions, and it has had a big impact on Rasmus's thinking. Having a student leave class is linked to a failure to provide a 'healthy learning environment' for everybody, and Rasmus has had to consider how to respond to this. His conclusion, however, mirrors Cecilie's in that he decided not to include that kind of material in the future. The student who left the class, and who opposed non-normative thinking, prevailed. Rasmus is very aware of this outcome, and he is not happy about it:

> I'm very sorry that it kind of gets to dictate the type of material I actually
> want to include, but that's the way it is sometimes (Rasmus)

The last part of the quotation is crucial. What we see here is a teacher who has tried to include diverse materials, been challenged by a student, and who does not know how to deal with it. Instead he feels deflated and has accepted that this is the reality he is facing – and like Cecilie, he has no one to discuss this with and no theoretical understanding to guide him. Earlier I quoted a teacher from Nelson (2009, p. 68), and, interestingly, they also struggled with how to deal with these situations: 'I don't know quite how to jump in there and … challenge that [behaviour].'

The above analysis might seem to suggest that my participants would stay clear of anything non-normative, and while they certainly do that to some extent, it is too simple to see it that way. Several actually employ a strategy where they begin with safe, non-sensitive topics and then open up if the environment allows it. Mathilde articulates this in a very nuanced way, so it is worth quoting at some length:

And when I say it's easier to talk about yourself, maybe it is for many, in the sense that it's easier to stick to "My name is, what do you do in your spare time, what do you like to eat" and start with the small, if I may call it easy topics. It often makes people want to say something and to create a closer relationship, teacher-student relationship too, creates security and comfort, and things like that make the person want to open up about other topics later on. So that's kind of the strategy that I always use by trying to say, I'm first creating a bond where everyone feels safe and comfortable about the classroom culture and so on, and that might just lead to there being space afterwards to be able to choose topics that can stick a little outside in one direction or another. So yes, I do think I consciously choose topics that I think are a little more straightforward[4], which aren't necessarily as challenging, academically challenging of course, yes, but not on a personal level. (Mathilde)

In the beginning of the quotation, she mirrors Cecilie's point about doing very simple tasks, here exemplified by 'my name is, what do you do in your spare time, what do you like to eat'. She argues that these tasks encourage students to open up and that this fosters positive student-teacher relationships, which in turn enables them to include 'other topics' later on. Another of my participants, Michael, puts it very simply when he explains that

You have to create a mood in a class, you know, before you bring up those things. (Michael)

It is hard to disagree with Mathilde and Michael, and I think most teachers use similar approaches. In fact, Hatch & Groenke (2009, p. 72), surveying teacher educators, found that

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[4] The idiom used is 'de ligger lidt mere til højrebenet' which literally means that they can be kicked with the right foot, i.e. the foot that most people consider their primary foot.

[r]espondents in our study made many references to taking time to connect with students and creating safe settings in which difficult conversations can take place.

However, let us consider the final part of Mathilde's quotation where she argues that her approach makes everyone feel safe, clarifying that the 'other topics' actually means topics that are 'a little outside'. Despite her not saying so directly, it is clear that she is referring to non-normative and/or sensitive topics, which are potentially challenging on 'a personal level'. Read together with Rasmus's story above, the question about the 'more straightforward' topics is: not challenging for whom? And the answer is implied not just in Mathilde and Michael's interviews but in many places: not challenging for the students who identify with the dominant heteronorm, who might otherwise feel that their toes are being stepped on, leading to discomfort and, ultimately, rejection of the teaching material and/or teacher.

The problem here lies not in the attempt to create safe, positive learning environments but in the equation and conflation of that with normative learning environments. This shows how a discourse of concern about students actually is a concern about students who fit into normative discourse, and it highlights the power asserted by the mere thought of how normative students might respond to anything that disrupts or challenges the norm. Kumashiro (2002, p. 4) argues that

> [t]he desire to learn only what is comforting goes hand in hand with a resistance to learning what is discomforting, and this resistance often proves to be a formidable barrier to movements toward social justice.

This is made even more pertinent by the fact that none of my participants articulate a similar concern for how non-normative students might respond to normative topics; like Rasmus, they accept that this is just the way things are.

4.1.2 Subtheme 2: Care and respect for non-normative students

If the previous subtheme showed all the many different kinds of concerns expressed by my participants, and how this had a certain normative effect on their teaching, this subtheme focuses on the concern they show for their students who identify as LGBTQ+.

My participants are all very clear that their classrooms should be inclusive for all students, and they show a lot of care and respect for everybody. In my analysis, I will focus on two key ways in which this came out in the interviews.

When discussing the inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics with my participants, several of them explain that they have concerns about how this might be received by students who actually identify as LGBTQ+. Mathilde explains that she leaves it up to the LGBTQ+ students themselves how much they want to discuss and draw attention to these topics:

> So in one of my classes it's been more open, and in the other class I think it's been a little bit more, like, it obviously hasn't been something the person has brought up themselves, so I haven't gone into that discussion or asked anything, it's just been, like, the person in question keeps it to themselves whether they're gay or not. (Mathilde)

Mathilde does not see it as part of her role to address the students' identities, here homosexual identities, but she has created an environment where the students can make the choice to bring it into the classroom. In other places, however, it becomes clear that Mathilde understands the potential problems LGBTQ+ students might face if they are open about their identity in class:

> I think I've avoided asking about it because of my role as an educator, because I didn't want to stigmatise anyone. (Mathilde)

It strikes me that Mathilde has chosen what might be called a very passive strategy, one that, in effect, puts responsibility onto the students rather than her as the teacher. She does not articulate a strategy or take responsibility for creating a learning environment in which students feel safe to express their non-normative identities, nor does she reflect on why it was different in the two classes she mentions. Rather, she sees it as being down to the individual students being different, which I interpret as a way of protecting herself as the teacher.

I am not sure Cecilie would like this interpretation, as she expresses a lot of care for her students, and it should be recognised that she has chosen this strategy to protect students from being, for instance, outed by the teacher. However, what this creates is a

classroom where heteronormative identities can flourish without any barriers, but all other identities require a great deal of personal courage and student self-efficacy, which is not equitable. As Kullman (2013, p. 21) explains

> an important role of the language teacher is to attempt to lead the learner towards ownership of the new language. This involves the teacher helping individual learners to find their own new voices in the new language, and to mediate between these new voices and their first language voices.

By excluding non-normative students from finding their voice in the new language, teachers not only play a part in erasing their identities; they also do not provide language teaching that is equitable for all students. As such it is not solely a values-based decision, but also about ensuring competence, which I will get back to later.

Einar and Viktor, who are both more experienced teachers than Cecilie, offer similar observations:

> But I've experienced a little bit that just because you have some students who openly identify as non-cisgender or something, at least sexually as a non-hetero, normatively, it's not like you can expect them to want to talk about it, you know, I've actually partly experienced that it might feel a little stressful [/annoying, like a burden] maybe in some way. (Einar)

> I find that the students who have a different sexual orientation than heterosexual find it nice that I do not thematise it. (Viktor)

And using a tennis metaphor and the idea of serving specific balls (i.e. questions) aimed at specific players (i.e. those students he perceives or knows to be gay/straight), Michael comments as follows:

> I have always been very careful in class not to prepare the ball for a serve, so that those I deem to be one or the other must stand up for what they are. (Michael)

I am quoting a range of participants here because all the instances highlight something important about their pedagogy and this theme. Their focus is, in all examples, on the

people identifying as non-normative: they are in danger of being put in the spotlight, and therefore they need protection from the teacher – which is laudable and in line with what LGBT students in Macdonald et al. (2014, p. 17) see as good practice (these are foreigners learning English):

> [it is important] not to push too hard when people arrive from all over the world, possibly at a point of change or discovery about their sexuality.

However, this person then goes on to stress

> the value of LGBT images, such as a poster he noticed in college reception: "...and small paper something about LGBTQ – ohpa! Oh my god! I didn't have enough time to read but recognised the letters LGBTQ I wanted to investigate" (p. 17)

There is therefore a balance to be struck between creating a safe, caring learning environment and including diverse voices and identities into the language teaching. And there is a danger that the respect for students, which Einar, Viktor and Michael express, can contribute to excluding non-normative voices, identities and topics.

This approach, however, is not just tokenistic, and while acting as a barrier for active teacher engagement with non-normative topics, it does provide space for students to express both their own non-normative identities as well as curiosity in non-normative topics (for instance from normative students). Almost all my participants thus talk about how they always respect direct student requests and input into discussions, and there is often a sense of admiration for the students who are able to challenge the teacher or materials in this way:

> But there was one of the students who, in his answers to one of the questions, almost somehow rejected the whole premise of the chapter, so I would say he answered what wasn't the norm perhaps. His point was very much this thing about, let me just see, yes, this thing about attributing the value "right [/correct]" [makes air quotes] to a certain way of being a certain person, that it was kind of wrong to do that. It was really impressive in a way, he took like a sociological approach to it and said, like, it's a form

of violence, symbolic violence, he called it, where you attribute to, say you're a woman, and then you have to be like this and that, so I think his point was that the whole discussion or these lists – of what the one and right thing is – that it was wrong to make them. (Henrik)

Henrik is clearly very impressed by the student, and he speaks in a way that is much more aligned with disciplinary discourse in higher education than in the rest of the interview (using terms such as 'sociological approach' and 'symbolic violence'). It is clear that this represents an unusual experience and that this is not something Henrik would expect from his students. More importantly, it was not something he planned for and tried to foster. This is particularly interesting to this study, as what Henrik is presenting here is very close to a queer angle on materials, i.e. questioning the premise(s) they are built on, discussing how categories are constructed, what 'right/correct' means, and how it has come to mean that. Henrik is open to queering the materials and is even impressed by a student who does so, but then chooses to see it as an exception rather than inspiration for his future teaching. While he thus sees this as significant, and worth recounting during the interview, he does not indicate that it is something he has since tried to foster in his teaching.

This interpretation is reinforced by comments made by Pernille, who talks about using teaching material that she is familiar with from her own childhood. The series *Alle vi børn i Bulderby* [US title is The Children of Noisy Village] was originally written in Swedish by Astrid Lindgren in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but most Danes know the stories from the popular film created in 1986. I am choosing this example because Pernille talks about queer theory in the interview, having taught this in relation to a translation module where she and her students discussed non-binary gender. She is also the only one in this study who had included the gender-neutral pronoun 'hen' [3rd person singular, it looks similar to 'han' (he) and 'hun' (she)] in her materials without this being a request from students. Yet, when working with *Alle vi børn i Bulderby*, she explains that

[i]t wasn't me, actually, who brought it up. We were reading, and one of my students, who identifies as non-binary, pointed out that it was actually

very gender stereotypical, this thing about girls playing with dolls and boys playing outside in the mud. And it was actually a really nice point that I had never thought about myself, probably also because my relationship with *Alle vi børn i Bulderby* is a little too close. (Pernille)

Despite the age of the text, and the clearly old-fashioned gender roles, this aspect was not part of her planning for the class, which focused on basic language ('nouns in relation to dolls and names of games and things like that' (Pernille)). Pernille only became aware of this when a non-binary student made this point – and then she herself reflects on why and adds that she might have been a bit too close to the text. What she is referring to here is something I will come back to and which others simply call 'blind spots'. For this theme, what is interesting is that she missed the point herself. Considering her background and focus on queer theory, this suggests that theoretical knowledge itself is not enough to queer the language classroom.

4.2 Overarching theme 2: The language classroom

Where overarching theme 1 focused on concerns and related mostly to the students and how this impacted on the teacher and their choices, this overarching theme focuses on language teaching. It does so by exploring three subthemes relating to how language learning is viewed, how the students' level of proficiency impacts on topic selection, and, finally, the language learning materials.

4.2.1 Subtheme 1: In language classes, the focus is on language learning

All of my participants talk about teaching both language and culture, and they clearly do not suggest that it is possible to separate these two (Banegas & Zappa-Hollman, 2023). They are all university graduates, and their view of language is nuanced and well-developed. In addition, several times across the interviews, they voice their belief that language and culture cannot be separated. However, when discussing the inclusion of LGBTQ+ topics in their teaching, or the lack of inclusion, a different approach is often activated, namely one that *does* separate the two. Notice in the following quote, which is a response to my question whether Rasmus has included any non-normative gender or

sexuality in his teaching so far, how this is seen as disconnected from grammar and, more generally, language teaching:

> No, we haven't [had anything about non-normative sexuality or gender]. In this academic year, I have taught in the first year, which has been a lot of grammar and language teaching. (Rasmus)

Margrethe, the most experienced teacher in this study, concurs and argues that

> the first two years of the bachelor's degree, they really just have to learn as much language as we can possibly get away with. (Margrethe)

Finally, Pernille, who states that she is interested in queer theory and gender performativity, also sees the language class as very different from, say, a more advanced class on translation:

> When I teach languages, I am very fixated on language. (Pernille)

The three quotes all relate to the teacher's own view of what language learning is about, and it is very clear from the interviews that this is a key reason why my participants do not include non-normative topics in many of their language classes: they are seen as too advanced for the students, and rather than adding value to the language classes, they might potentially subtract from them:

> I think it [learning about gender-neutral pronouns] would complicate more than it would necessarily help my students in their learning at this time. [...] You know what, if you knew how much trouble they have even in figuring out what is the subject in a sentence. (Cecilie)

What this suggests to me is that topics around LGBTQ+ would be included when the students reach a higher level, but, tellingly, that does not appear to be the case. While my participants do talk about having included some non-normative identities, these occupy incredibly little space, and several of my participants struggled to find a single example from their teaching. Even when non-normative topics are brought up by the students, the teacher brings it back to what is seen as the core, namely language:

> At one point, someone asked something like "is it allowed to get married as a homosexual in Denmark", where I was like "yes, it is". And I think, because we were probably a little busy in that lesson, that I just, you know, said it as such a matter of fact, "of course it is". (Pernille)

There simply was not enough time to discuss this topic, which clearly shows how it is seen as 'peripheral' (which is the term Viktor uses to describe the position of gender and sexuality in his language classes). In another theme, I will mention some very interesting examples of how my participants actually do include non-normative voices, and interestingly, how this does not contradict this theme but adds another layer of protective strategy to it.

In the above analysis, the idea of language competency is not directly mentioned, though it underpins the way in which language learning is understood. Several of my participants, however, directly draw attention to the ways in which rules and regulations relating to language competency determine their teaching. Margrethe states, for instance, that

> [a]s visiting lecturers, we are faced with a reality where students have to reach a certain point in order to pass an exam (Margrethe)

The exam is here seen as the reason why non-normative topics are often not included, rather than it being a choice made by the teacher. Cecilie mentions how the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages does not specify that to achieve a certain level you need to know about gender-specific topics, and based on that she arrives at the conclusion that

> I don't think it's necessarily something that needs to be included from a language learning perspective (Cecilie)

To be fair to Cecilie, she does not deny that 'linguistically it can be useful to know how to address people' (Cecilie), but she delegates this sort of understanding to the periphery, and she does not see it as part of any pedagogical or linguistic framework for language teaching. Later in the interview she uses the term 'krumspring' about these kinds of topics and approaches, and while it is difficult to translate this term directly into

English (maybe 'antics', but it literally means something like 'somersaults') the connotations are all negative or at best signal irrelevance.

While Hatch & Groenke's (2009) research is about critical pedagogy in relation to teacher educators and their undergraduate and postgraduate students who are studying to become teachers, their findings resonate with what I have presented above. Their students' focus is on competence and skills, and ultimately the expected standards. One teacher educator wrote the following response to the questionnaire reported on in their study, and if we replace 'learning to teach' with 'learning Danish', and understand critical approaches as encompassing topics relating to LGBTQ+, then the similarity is striking:

> [I experience] resistance from students and colleagues who want to focus on preparation for teaching to standards. NCATE and associated professional associations do not value critical approaches to teaching and learning—and so shape and constrain what many think of as possible. (p. 70)

They conclude further that

> [t]he influence of standards-based accountability and associated scientifically based teaching materials and methods has had, our respondents believe, a profound effect on teaching at all levels and limited the space for, and perceived efficacy of, critical approaches. (p. 71)

Coda (2017, p. 78) also problematises the dominant focus on proficiency. His argument is not that language proficiency is not important, but rather that focusing exclusively on this 'takes attention from issues related to students' identities and discourages critical classroom discussions'. Furthermore, Gray (2010, p. 158) found similar tendencies in his study where 'the informants discussed this material [which dealt with topics such as emigration to the US, attitudes to drinking, and bonfire night] almost exclusively in terms of the activities students had to do or in terms of the linguistic outcomes – rather than focusing on the actual content itself'. The participants in Gray's study differ from mine in that they were adults, half of whom worked in a mainly commercial setting, which goes

some way to explaining why the teachers did not see themselves as educating their students but rather saw themselves as offering a service, namely the teaching of language skills. Still, Gray concludes that his analysis 'suggests a view of language teaching as largely concerned with skill acquisition for these teachers, and as having little in the way of any broader educational remit' (p. 175) which chimes with the views expressed by my participants.

What is further interesting is that my participants reach for external reasons to justify their own lack of engagement in the classroom with non-normative topics. It is, in their understanding, not because they, as people, do not want to include these topics, nor is it because it is not possible in the culture they teach in, which is an important difference from Nelson's (2009, p. 45) study from the USA where 'teachers reported that at some educational institutions any mention of [lesbian and gay] themes was discouraged, if not outright forbidden'. Rather, it is, as demonstrated earlier, due to concerns for the students or, as discussed further below, the limitations imposed by the materials or the regulatory framework, such as the expectation that students reach a certain level before the exam. The key point here is that these aspects are seen as something outside of the teachers' control and responsibility. In the next subtheme, I will relate this lack of control directly to the teaching materials, which was something all my participants mentioned.

4.2.2 Subtheme 2: Choice of materials is outside the teachers' control

The task I gave my participants before the interview meant that materials are part of all the interviews. As explained earlier, they were asked to bring a good and a bad example of how teaching materials include topics relating to LGBTQ+ topics. All participants had been able to find examples of materials, but most also acknowledged that it had been difficult to find them, and that they did not use them much. It could be seen as positive that they were all able to identify non-normative identities in their materials since previous studies have shown how many materials simply do not include anything non-normative (Gray, 2013; Selvi & Kocaman, 2020). And while it is important to celebrate this inclusion, my analysis will also show how this success should not be overstated.

What became clear when I began analysing how my participants discuss their materials is how they often seek to put distance between the choice to use certain materials and themselves. This is somewhat paradoxical since they all, without exception, tell me that they are able to choose the materials they want to, and that there are no concrete formal barriers to including LGBTQ+ topics in their teaching. What I will therefore be showing below is how the materials become part of the teachers' protective strategy, on top of the ones I have already discussed previously.

Before going into more detail about the protective strategies utilised by my participants, it is worth mentioning that they are acutely aware that their materials are very normative:

> at no time has there been anything that has exceeded this stereotype or this norm, one might say, that is a monogamous relationship between a man and a woman leading to children (William)

> But I don't think there's been anything specifically LGBT in my materials. (Henrik)

> Gender-stereotypical representations, they are in abundance in the textbook materials (Cecilie)

Many of my participants express this to the point that I feel confident arguing that none of them have used materials that include a broad and nuanced representation of gender and sexuality. The question then becomes why my participants use these materials, and a few words after the quote given above, Cecilie adds that

> I do this because it is super manageable. They [students] can always find the pages they've been working on, and it's a super-good, well-prepared material with a physical book and a website where they can go and do exercises and do listening exercises and so on. I can't just put something together that's better than what they've spent years putting together, so that's why I use those materials. (Cecilie)

Two things strike me as important here. Firstly, Cecilie draws on arguments that are reminiscent of those discussed in the previous subtheme around language learning, here focusing on how the published materials help create structure and clarity for the students. Cecilie's point is that this would not be the same if she were to create her own materials, and the implication is that this, namely clarity and structure, is most important – certainly important enough to accept that the material is heteronormative (Gray, 2010). Secondly, Cecilie does not feel confident in her own expertise as a language teacher, and she does not feel that her own materials would be as good as what others have spent years producing. She uses terms such as 'just' and 'put together' (in Danish the term used is 'bikse sammen' which has the connotation of something done quickly and without much effort). These expressions point to a time-element and imply that it would take too much time and effort if she were to create her own materials. In effect, Cecilie is creating a complex string of arguments for why she is not working with more inclusive materials. While acknowledging that the materials are very normative, she has come to the conclusion that they are better than what she could create on her own as she does not have the expertise or time to do so. Cecilie's description echoes an identity that Banegas (2023, p. 375) found in student-teachers, whose professional identity was anchored in 'their past experiences as language learners'. The study quotes Omar, for instance, who reflects on the pros and cons of using a coursebook in language teaching:

> As a learner, the lessons consisted of completing the coursebooks, page after page. The lessons were monotonous. These were coursebook-driven practices, and as much as I see now how everyone had a rather passive role, I must recognise that I enjoyed it to some extent because the coursebook gave me a sense of progression and structure. (p. 375)

Both Cecilie and Omar express ideas that are very similar to what proponents of using coursebooks often put forward according to Tomlinson (2012, p. 158):

> [I]t is a cost-effective way of providing the learner with security, system, progress and revision, whilst at the same time saving precious time and offering teachers the resources they need to base their lessons on.

However, the way Cecilie talks about her choice can, as alluded to above, also be interpreted as a way of defending a choice that she is not proud of.

In relation to the last point, it is worth noting and recognising the effect of the interview situation, as this offers an alternative explanation for the rather defensive nature of Cecilie's remarks. I believe it is fair to see her defensiveness as genuine, which is what supports the analysis above (i.e. that she is not happy about her choice, and that she is aware that it can be seen as problematic); however, it could also be understood and interpreted as face-work. Goffman (1956, p. 3) discusses what happens when individuals meet and he argues that (using the generic 'he/him' which was common at the time)

> when an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey. [my emphasis]

Given the asymmetrical power-relationship of the interview situation (I am a more experienced language teacher than Cecilie, I am older than her, I am placed in a position of relative power as a researcher leading the interview and she is the participant), it is no wonder that Cecilie experiences uncertainty as she is speaking about parts of her own teaching practice that can be seen as normative and conservative and not in line with how she talks about inclusion in other places (i.e. she has to acknowledge that she has not included LGBTQ+ much, and while I did not say at any time that the inclusion of LGBTQ+ was better than the exclusion, Cecilie obviously knows that this is an underlying premise). It is therefore, arguably, in her interest to convey to me that she is aware of her choices and that she has valid reasons for doing what she does.

Returning to the theme, some of my participants do, of course, make their own materials, but they too have not worked much with non-normative gender and sexuality, focusing instead on male and female gender-roles. Viktor talks about using a TV-programme produced by the Danish equivalent of BBC (Denmark's Radio or DR):

It [the teaching] is still based on a heterosexual world, and if we look at the teaching material, the TV programme I sent a link to, it is clearly based on a heterosexual understanding of the world, it is women's views of men. I could definitely use the programme, that's why I used it, but I would have been happier if the programme had been called 'Partners' views of men', it would have been so good if that was the programme they had made. I couldn't find that program, and therefore... (Viktor)

Mostly, Viktor mirrors Cecilie's points, acknowledging that his teaching takes as its starting point the heterosexual world. Here, it is the last line that is interesting, as he argues that he could not find a programme that did not focus on the male-female dichotomy. Like Cecilie, Viktor moves responsibility for his choice of material away from himself and onto the producer of the material, only expressing disappointment for the lack of more diverse materials. In the interview, I did not challenge Viktor on this point, but it is evidently not the case that there are no programmes that move beyond the male-female binary. To demonstrate how this is a strategy utilised by many of my participants, though in somewhat different ways, let us also look at Thomas, who talks about working with current news articles:

If there have been some relevant things, e.g. news articles, if there are some news articles where it seems relevant, I don't know, I don't think I'm actively seeking to say, "ehh, we are going to talk about, for example, gay rights or something like that", but [pause] you know, when it comes up, if it seems relevant, then it kind of gets incorporated naturally, and I think it's a relevant discussion to have (Thomas)

When moving beyond beginner's language learning, many teachers include current news in the form of newspaper articles. Thomas's choice of articles is linked to whether they are 'relevant' or not, and he argues that he has 'incorporated [it] naturally'. In the interview, however, it is clear that this is not something he has done much, though he does mention other examples of including what some might term as periphery in a Danish context such as 'Greenland' (this being the way a participant talks about Greenland in another context). What is clear here is that Thomas's thinking about what

is 'natural' has not led to diverse materials, and he has not challenged the fundamental heteronormativity of the materials. Like the others mentioned here, he does not see this as his strategy but rather seems to acknowledge it as a problem while pushing the responsibility onto the media:

> I can't control if there are any gender identity or rights-related issues that come up [in the media] or there aren't (Thomas)

The implication is that had the news media only published some relevant stories about LGBTQ+ issues, then he would, naturally, have included them in his teaching. My analysis so far does not, however, suggest that this would have been the case, and it becomes another way for the teachers to protect themselves.

As a final example of this tendency to create a distance between the topic and the teacher's active choice of it, I want to include an example where a teacher did include a queer topic. I want to start by quoting a part where he talks about the novel he decided to use in his teaching:

> it's a wild work where there are, partly there are such things, a kind of fantastic [i.e. the literary genre], there are these fuck-boys ['fuck boys' is said in English; this is the word Einar uses] working on the beach in Mexico, and one of them dies, he is killed by one of the customers, and then they revive him by this kind of ritual where they use the parasols as penetration, a group of young men, they perform some kind of strange penetration ritual and ejaculate over his dead body, and then he is resurrected, like. It's such a crazy description, in a literary way, and at the same time it's just, well, there aren't many taboos, you know, if you're going to talk about that literature. (Einar)

This is the only example of materials that directly include references to non-heterosexual sex (others do mention having included rap music where oral sex was insinuated, but this is in a heterosexual context). It both stands out from *all* published studies that I have read and the few examples of LGBTQ+ topics mentioned by my other participants, namely the first gay couple who got married in Denmark (a very

popular topic because it is covered by a well-known book); a grammar sentence with a lesbian couple; budding teenage love between two girls (who do talk about kissing, but I do not interpret that as a sexual reference here); and the recuperation of voices (relating to erased women as well as homosexual artists). In addition to the novel that Einar references in the comment quoted above, he has also taught about Danish NGOs relating to homosexuality and included a radio programme about two people, one of whom performs in drag, and the other who is transgender (the only mention of transgender in the interviews).

I have included this example, even though it stands as an exception in my data, for a couple of reasons. First, it lends credence to my participants when they tell me that they *can* include anything they like. There really do not seem to be many things that are officially off-limits (at least not in Einar's context), which makes their self-imposed normativity even more interesting. Second, despite the differences between them and their materials, Einar actually uses a protective strategy that is similar to Cecilie, Viktor and Thomas:

> It was a book for which he [Jonas Eika] won the Nordic Council Literature Prize. [...] I think it's a good way to legitimately get it in, because if I bring some work by an author who might be a little queer [...] then very quickly it becomes "why should we read this, is it because it's queer" or whatever. You want to steer clear of that kind of thing, right, because there must also be something practical about it, it should preferably be so that they can talk about the work itself and not about the reasons why that work was chosen, or to quickly dismiss it as being too esoteric or something. (Einar)

Einar alludes to the concern already discussed earlier in my analysis, namely that students might think that the teacher is pushing a queer agenda, which could become the focus rather than the novel itself. While the context is somewhat different, Francis (2021) experienced this when he introduced an elective module aiming to trouble compulsory heterosexuality. While my focus here is on Einar's experience, I have also chosen to include Francis's response to student challenge, as it shows a possible way of responding to this:

Very early in the module, a pedagogical conflict erupted when a white man student questioned the relevance of the module. Suggesting that the module "had a gay agenda," he questioned whether the module would in fact also "trouble homosexuality." Following titters of laughter from those around him, another white man student, seated in the same row, seized the moment and followed up by questioning that if homosexuality was being given such attention, what would prevent me from introducing topics on "bestiality or necrophilia" in subsequent sociology modules? Rather than react or dismiss hurtful comments that associate same-sex sexualities with necrophilia and bestiality, I had to backpedal to the social construction of gender and sexuality and open dialogue as to where and how those hurtful and offensive comments were first learned. (Francis, 2021, p. 283)

This is an example of the kind of challenge that teachers might expect from students who are not on board with the inclusion of non-normative topics and representation. The comments from the students question the entire nature and validity of the module, and the decision to trouble heterosexuality, lending credence to my participants' fear that this might happen if they, too, did include more non-normative topics. However, Francis shows how such comments can be mobilised to begin the discussion about this type of discourse and how gender and sexuality are constructed and policed. I quoted Nelson (2009, p. 212) earlier when I explained her idea that potentially disruptive language can act as 'openings rather than closings', and this is exactly what she means. However, it requires a teacher who has a pedagogical plan and who is willing to, and able to, accept a degree of discomfort in the classroom.

Einar does not wish to be seen as pushing any agenda, and he is keenly aware that students might respond negatively to the novel. Therefore he has looked for a 'valid' reason to bring in this work, something that will protect him from such accusations. And this is why it is so important for him that the novel has won a prestigious literary prize. This becomes the reason for reading it – and he links this to Scandinavian culture and what he considers as our way of understanding ourselves as very open-mined. In effect,

this changes focus from representation of and inclusion of diverse voices to understanding the culture of Denmark/Scandinavia, which is aligned with learning the language, and completely uncontroversial.

While this reading frames Einar's choice somewhat negatively, as a way to avoid dealing with diversity, I also want to acknowledge Einar's success in working with diverse identities. In fact, his strategy could also be understood as a way of sneaking queer voices into the heteronormative curriculum, which is a strategy articulated by other participants. A good articulation of this approach comes from Viktor, who explains that he tries to include non-normative identities

> [a] bit en passant, you know, we are dealing with a musician, a writer, something, and either there is something in the texts that thematises sexuality or gender, or the author or musician represents a gender or a sexuality that is other than heterosexual or cisgender, and then we talk about it. (Viktor)

I will return to this strategy in the next overarching theme, namely 'Normalisation'. This will further exemplify how concerned my participants are about not centring non-normative voices, and how they seek ways of pushing responsibility away from themselves in a number of ways.

4.3 Overarching theme 3: Normalisation

My analysis so far has shown that my participants use a range of strategies to present themselves, but this does not mean they do not include non-normative voices at all. Rather, these are seen as peripheral and only brought into the classroom occasionally. In the next two subthemes, this latter point will become clearer as I show how my participants articulate strategies that focus on what is normal and, where non-normative topics are brought in, focus on the normalisation of these.

4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Silent representation

All my participants talk about the importance of representation, and they all recognise that, as already discussed earlier, this can be challenging for a number of reasons. One

of the strategies employed by my participants has therefore sought to decentre identity, take attention away from it. I named this theme based on Rasmus's description of this:

> I think representation is hugely important, but I don't think it's that relevant to note that a given person is gay. I think it's more important to make sure to include a wide range of different voices in a curriculum. For example, it could be to make sure that gender is roughly equally represented across the board, and the same with regard to sexualities, that you get some voices included, but don't talk too much about the fact that, well, this person is gay, because it may well be a private matter that does not necessarily have to be the subject of the teaching as such. I believe more in the silent representation, I feel that is more respectful. (Rasmus)

The first lines are representative of what a number of my participants think. It is a recognition that representation is important, but at the same time a rejection of it as being important to focus on. Rasmus connects this to identity, here being homosexual, being a private matter, which should not be the centre of attention in the classroom. Instead, he suggests that teaching should include a range of voices, and he specifies how these should represent a range of sexualities and genders, but without making the identity the object of study. He makes the point elsewhere that this is due to a concern that some students are not all on board 'when it comes to the openness' (Rasmus) but also that this is a way to demonstrate that

> [i]t can be non-normative, but there is nothing abnormal about it as such, but that you embrace it without necessarily articulating it. (Rasmus)

When I first read my interviews after having transcribed them, this jumped off the page, and I made a note of it as paradoxical. However, when understood in the light of my analysis so far, I think it makes perfect sense, as a way of trying to merge values around equality and inclusion with real or imagined concerns about the classroom culture and learning environment, while also trying to adhere to regulations and external requirements like exams and standards.

With some of the participants in my study, it becomes obvious that they did not have a clear strategy for working with representation, and their ideas point in several directions at once. This is clearest with Thomas, who really wants to be inclusive, and who really wants there to be space in his teaching for a range of voices, which makes him argue that

> these people are just like us, these people have the same desires, basically have the same conditions of life, but are not treated with the same rights as us. (Thomas)

Here Thomas clearly espouses a homonormative worldview with a rights-based understanding of sameness and equality (Duggan, 2002), while also showing a commitment to equality. He does not, however, reflect on what kind of space this leaves for people who are not interested in being like the normative 'us', neither does he problematise his idea that they have the same 'conditions of life'. This might be more or less true in a country like Denmark, but the DLS sends lecturers all over the world, and in many places this would definitely not be true. Lee & Ostergard (2017, p. 38) conclude, for instance, that 'in many countries, LGBTQ people are facing more violence and repression than they have ever confronted.' I propose to understand this as a way for my participants to negotiate the twin realities of their own values and ideas of Denmark (inclusion and equality for non-normative identities) and the reality of the culture they teach in (not centring non-normative identities). Cecilie makes a link between the silent representation and her concern that she might cause more harm than good if she were to centre non-normative identities:

> [B]ut if I now stood up and raved […] and started to explain how perfectly okay and normal it was to have a different sexual orientation, then it could also be that it was really more problematic than me just saying "oh, what are their [the student's parents'] names, oh, where do you live, oh, are they divorced, oh okay, now what, who do you live with and how often are you there" (Cecilie)

Cecilie clearly does not want to bring attention to aspects that can be seen as non-normative and prefers to simply address it as if it were any other situation. While this

strategy does avoid othering people who identify as LGBTQ+, there is also a risk that it avoids talking about the specific experiences of this group of students, inadvertently silencing their lived experience.

4.3.2 Subtheme 2: Representing culture and diversity

When discussing how to work with representation, two key strategies are articulated by my participants, but as they are clearly related to each other, I will be exploring them under this one subtheme. The first is around how to represent fairly, while the second is specifically about Denmark and Danes.

Several participants refer to 'the majority' when discussing what they choose to represent in their teaching, but I want to start by looking at Einar, showing both how he stands out in my data, but also how this can say something about a significant theme too:

> [T]here is always a generic aim, so that you understand it all, or can make yourself understood everywhere, and of course that also means culturally, you know, there are some things you have to learn about, such as the national church or Christmas, which the majority of Danes are happy about, or the royal family or things like that. Whether you yourself are in favour of one or the other. [...] [A]nd there it would just be strange if you don't say, just as the Danes are proud of their 37-hour working week, just as they are proud of their attempt to create equality in terms of parental leave, between men and women, they are actually also proud that you can live out your own sexuality, as long as it's respectful, of course. It's also part of that new Danish narrative that has really taken a huge turn over the last fifty years. (Einar)

Einar's idea is that there are certain topics that are generic, which seems to indicate that they are unlikely to cause contention or debate and would be seen as uncontroversial by the majority of Danes. His examples are covered in most introductory books on Denmark, namely the state church and the monarchy. Interestingly, he argues that it is because the majority of Danes are happy with these institutions that they should be

included in teaching materials, an attitude which reinforces the normativity of the choice of topics. However, within this normativity there is space for things like the Danish openness towards diverse sexualities, which is included in Einar's narrative about Denmark and its recent history. It is clear that Einar does not shy away from non-normative topics as long as they are a part of the grand narrative about Denmark. We saw this earlier when he included what I think most language teachers would consider an extreme text, with explicit references to homosexuality and penetrative anal sex, but explained how this was done *because* it had been awarded a prestigious literary prize. And when using the text, Einar clearly takes pleasure in exposing the grand narrative as just that, a constructed narrative:

> It was a book for which he [Jonas Eika] was awarded the Nordic Council Literature Prize; That's what I think is wonderful about something like that, and that, again, is what I mean by self-understanding. Now, of course, it is Scandinavia, but the self-understanding is there. We take a work that is super-queer in certain parts, a very very, very very young writer, compared to when you normally get a prize like that, and then we give him the prize. It's not just because it's good literature, but it's also because one wants to show that self-understanding again from such a Scandinavian point of view, "look, we're inclusive", and then I like to, cool, then one can take them at their word and say "well, now we're reading this", and, you know, it is a wild work. (Einar)

The word 'self-understanding' is repeated and draws attention to the fact that this is about how Scandinavians see and understand themselves, and, as importantly, want to be understood by others, and there is clear irony in the direct speech where he takes on the role as all of Scandinavia to say 'see how inclusive we are'. His glee is felt when the giving of a prize to this literary work has enabled him to include it in his teaching, which would not otherwise have been possible. And as shown earlier, he is not exaggerating when he says it is a 'wild work'.

A related strategy is to attempt to signal objectivity in how one includes identities by introducing a mathematical angle with regard to the proportion of queer people in the

population as a whole. This is hypothetical in my interviews, as none of my participants had actually used this approach, but rather suggest it as a possible way forward for themselves:

> Partly because it [the materials] should be representative, I think. On the one hand, it should open up for students who study Danish somewhere other than Denmark, it is perhaps rather nice that they get this image that we are a liberal country with room for people who think and live differently, whether it is family-wise, or it is in relation to sexuality and so on. I do not know if that is an exact answer, but I think it can only be seen as something positive that you get those angles on it too. Not that it needs to take over the whole discourse, after all there are many who live as an ordinary, heterosexual couple, you know, with children, so I don't think it needs to be, in that way, educational [the Danish word has the same root as 'raise (children)', so it is less about school and more about personality and upbringing], "now it really has to be presented", but that it is represented in the same way as it exists in society. (William)

I have quoted William at length to show how in the utterance above, the subtheme 'representing culture' overlaps with the subtheme 'silent representation'. What stands out here in relation to the subtheme 'Representing culture and diversity', however, are the term 'representative' in the beginning of the quote and the expression 'as it exists in society' towards the end. This changes it from being about the majority, i.e. the dominant group, to being about how much space something occupies in Denmark. Thomas even quantifies this idea and argues that

> let's say 10% are gay, so 10% of gendered relationships that occur could similarly be gay. (Thomas)

All the quotations here point towards some kind of objective way to determine what should be included in language teaching. It is about the majority, it is about percentages, or, as with Einar, it is about the sanctioned narratives. This is reminiscent of the previously discussed protective strategies, ways for the teachers to be able to say

that they did not make the choice; rather, the choice was made based on external, objective criteria.

Supporting the interpretation that the lack of agency in relation to the choice of teaching materials is a protective strategy is the fact that, while, on the one hand, my participants refer to the existence of 'sanctioned' topics and narratives, on the other hand they do not define culture in this way. There are several examples in my interviews where participants state that they do not generally believe in a grand narrative about Denmark, and understand that Denmark looks different depending on your vantage point, meaning that it is not possible to represent any one version of Denmark. Yet, in practice, as demonstrated by the examples I will go on to examine in this section, they are still drawn to the representation of a homogeneous Denmark, or to use Anderson's (2016 [1983]) term, Denmark as an 'imagined community'. This tension becomes particularly clear when Margrethe talks about what I will consider next, namely how Denmark and Danes are used to justify certain versions of culture and representation:

> I do remember that in some contexts in some discussions I have said, yes,
> but the way the Danes – apart from who are the Danes and what exactly
> are Danish values – I have said to them that an explanation of the
> rationale behind this could be such and such and such. I think that's how
> most Danes think. (Margrethe)

While Margrethe does add the aside, questioning who the Danes and Danish values actually are, she still talks about presenting to her students what most Danes think. Something similar can be seen when Pernille talks about why cultural understanding is so important for students:

> And exactly to give that impression of Denmark as culture, I think would
> be very important, especially for the non-binary students, who at some
> point would like to travel to Denmark and maybe have questions about,
> how will I be perceived in a country like Denmark, will people address me
> in the way I would like, or will they address me as he or she. [...] It's
> important for the students to know whether they would be accepted or not,

and what they should be aware of and not aware of when they encounter the Danish culture head on. (Pernille)

What I find striking is the idea that students would encounter a singular Danish culture, when there are, as in all cultures, big differences between, for instance, the capital, Copenhagen, or a small village in a rural district. And even in Copenhagen, there are obviously big differences between districts. While I might theorise, based on the interviews, that Pernille is absolutely aware of these cultural differences, this is *not* the view that emerges when she talks specifically about how she presents Denmark to language learners. Pernille is, as should be clear by now, not alone in her view. Einar says, for instance, that

one reason [for including non-normative gender and sexuality in teaching] is that you can't leave it out, simply because it has become part of Danish identity. (Einar)

Other participants use Denmark and Danes in slightly more nuanced ways, seeing their teaching as presenting one version out of many potential versions, though fundamentally their rationale is similar: we teach certain topics because our students have to learn about Denmark. As I will demonstrate, however, there are differences in what this slightly more nuanced approach offers pedagogically. If we start with Viktor, he talks about teaching 'chunks of Denmark', which already destabilises the singular narrative. However, it is Rasmus who best articulates the potential of this approach, explaining that

we have worked with the bust situation and Denmark's relationship to the slave trade and things like that, where instead of dealing with individual people who may feel offended, you rather talk about, okay, but how is the debate in Denmark, what are the discourses around these groups, e.g. the incident at the Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, and that has then given rise to talk more openly about why can it be seen as a problem that we have statues of colonial masters in Denmark, that is, it opens up more perspectives, I think, than [Nelson's] first approach does. (Rasmus – his

reference to Nelson is a reference to the tasks that were sent to all
participants before the interview (see Appendix B))

Rasmus suggests looking at contemporary events, but rather than focusing on
individuals, who represent a certain perspective, he wants to look at the debates
themselves. With his students, he has explored the discourses around a specific event
in Denmark where, on 6 November 2020, someone threw a bust of King Frederik V,
who was King of Denmark and Norway from 1746 to 1766, into the canals in
Copenhagen in order to 'articulate the ways in which the colonial period is invisible'
(Jørgensen, 2020). By working with this event in his teaching, Rasmus has not just
represented Denmark's history as a colonial power, nor has he presented a version of
contemporary Denmark where openness and inclusion are in focus. Rather, he has
shown how these things are constantly being (re)-negotiated in Denmark, and how they
are thus not stable but change over time.

Within the subtheme 'Representing culture and diversity', we see how relatively small
differences in how teachers view culture can have potentially significant effects on their
teaching. Among the participants, Rasmus's approach is the most nuanced and the
closest to the principles of a queer pedagogy as it looks at how history is a discursive
construct rather than a series of facts. Even in this case, however, the interview
suggests that this approach does not permeate his teaching but is rather a strategy
among others that he uses. In fact, all my participants seem to hold a rather
contradictory approach to their understanding of what culture is as they actively define it
in what I understand as postmodern terms (multiple small narratives, not linear) while
still drawing on more modernist approaches (singular grand narrative, linear) in their
language teaching.

4.4 Overarching theme 4: The teacher

My analysis has so far focused on my participants' concerns, their view of language
teaching, and how normalisation is used strategically. In relation to all of these aspects,
I have shown how they work to protect the teacher from criticism and from potential
conflict. In this fourth overarching theme, I turn to look at how participants show
concerns about their own role.

4.4.1 Subtheme 1: How can one engage with identities that one does not represent oneself?

Some years ago, when I first began thinking more carefully about representation, this was one of the first stumbling blocks I encountered. I wanted to represent more diverse groups, but I was hyper-conscious that I was not representative of these groups, and I did not know what to do.

My participants, too, are acutely aware that where their lived experiences are heteronormative, this can be seen as a significant barrier to engaging with other identities. Mathilde tells a story about an experience she had, not as part of her teaching but during a day out in the city where she teaches. However, it is clear that she understands this anecdote as saying something important about herself, which is why I have included it. Here she is talking to a woman she has met who has mentioned her partner to Mathilde:

> [A]nd then all of a sudden she says, but it's "she" [her partner], and I'm like, "oh," I say, "I'm really sorry, I've just been saying him all along, I didn't realise that at all, I'm so sorry", "oh no, that's alright," and she was into both. So yes, I definitely have blind spots by virtue of my own sexuality, and because I'm part of the majority, that's for sure. (Mathilde)

Mathilde realises that she had not even considered the possibility that this woman's partner was a woman, though this is not a problem for her. In the interview, she links this to her own heterosexuality which makes her part of the majority (her words). Her own lived experience means that she has what she calls 'blind spots'.

This is something many of my participants repeat, namely that they simply had not given diverse representation much thought before the interviews. I will be discussing this aspect further in Overarching Theme 6 'The interview as a trigger for reflection', but here the point is simply that belonging to the majority can make it difficult to understand that more diverse representation is needed in the first place (i.e. that the textbook is *not* representative). Compare that to the experiences of Anne Moore, whom I worked with on another project at UCL, here reflecting on her experiences of learning French:

I was a terrible French student and the tutor automatically assumed I had used the wrong gender pronoun to speak about a partner. I received a very 'red pen heavy' marked up essay and this experience of correcting the tutor in an uncomfortable tutorial has stayed with me to this day! (Hansen et al., 2021)

Moore's use of the word 'automatically' is echoed in Margrethe's self-reflection during the interview, which hammers home how blind one can be to identities other than one's own (before this part of the interview, I asked her why she does not choose to represent more identities):

I think the reason is that I *don't* choose. The reason is that I rely on the spinal reflex. In that way, I'm hard-wired heteronormative. And it takes a, I have to really prick my own consciousness to include variety and variation, not least when it comes to gender identity. (Margrethe)

Her choice of metaphor 'spinal reflex' is very telling and very evocative as it suggests this happens at a pre-conscious level as a reflex, i.e. something involuntary. It is, therefore, as she herself explains, not always about making a choice, for instance about which identities to represent, but that these considerations are often not even on the person's radar, another metaphor that I will pick up on later.

I will be returning to Margrethe's point in my discussion, but here I want to analyse it further by turning to Pernille's reflections on her blind spot in relation to her teaching of a children's story. As already discussed under a previous theme, one of the non-binary students points out how gendered the story is in its descriptions of boys and girls, and retelling this during the interview, Pernille reflects out loud:

I never had that understanding of *Alle vi børn i Bulderby* as gender binary, because I could kind of see myself in all the characters. (Pernille)

Once again, the teacher's own lived experiences make it difficult for her to see the heteronormative patterns which leave little space for other identities. Two aspects are particularly important here: first, that she integrates the student's observations into the lesson and thus creates space for their interpretation; and second, that the anecdote

she refers to does not seem to have altered her general approach to her teaching, at least not in a way that was visible during the interview. This was not, so to speak, a lightbulb moment which enabled her to reflect critically on her own teaching. As already discussed above in connection with Mathilde, this is a common thread for those of my participants who have some lived experience that includes non-normative identities. Consider William's experience of marking a female student's written work:

> Then there was a girl that I've talked to a little bit, and she has a son, so sometimes it's a little hard for her to get to university in time, but she had written in her assignment that she'd been on a weekend trip with her son and her partner, and **she** [emphatic] was very interested in collecting mushrooms and stuff like that. And I had automatically corrected that, i.e. because I thought she had made a mistake, but she told me afterwards that it was not a mistake. And it was pretty embarrassing, I regretted that a lot [laughs]. But I had, for some reason, so that's an example from my own automatic-thinking, normative attitude. (William)

When I heard William recounting this story, it immediately felt like a critical incident to me, something with the potential to make him reflect on his teaching. However, from the interview this does not appear to have happened, and it seems to me that he mainly considers it an amusing story about a somewhat embarrassing moment, rather than a potentially uncomfortable incident akin to what Moore explained when describing her French studies.

William did not change his materials as a result of it to allow, for instance, for same-sex families or partners. And the same holds true for Rasmus, whose experiences are much more serious than William's and have affected him on a personal level. Rasmus talks about non-binary friends who have experienced depression due to not being able to find their place in society:

> One of my best friends of many years, who I don't talk to anymore, he, ehm, or they came out as non-binary six months ago, and then they kind of cut off all old relationships, so it was really hard for me to see that, okay, there was no place for me in that new identity. So since then, it's

slowly become more important to me because I've seen first-hand how oppressive it can be if you don't feel included in the language or in society. (Rasmus)

Despite the impact these events seem to have had on Rasmus, I did not see any indications during the interview that they had caused him to change how he approaches language teaching, and while he, like all the other participants, was happy to allow non-normative voices into his classroom, he did not actively create this space and did not actively try to find ways to include everybody in his teaching. The implication is, I would argue, that lived experiences of non-normative identity do not necessarily prompt teachers to create more space in their teaching for non-normative identities.

In the next part, I want to explore how my participants often mentioned a lack of training or lack of knowledge as reasons for not being more inclusive in their teaching, which will add to my general analysis of how the teachers' backgrounds are mobilised to explain the lack of diverse representation in their language teaching. My findings echo those of many other studies which have called for more and better teacher training (Banegas et al., 2020). Reinhardt (2023, p. 226) argues, for instance, that '[t]eachers might avoid taboo issues because they lack confidence, methods, or time to tackle them', where taboo issues include LGBTQ+ topics, and Paiz (2020, p. 141) draws on queer pedagogy when suggesting that '[o]nly by including queer scholarship from the field in our teacher education courses can we begin to redress the feelings of discomfort and unreadiness that our teachers feel'.

Rasmus is one of the least experienced teachers in my dataset, and he explains that his current job is his first full-time job after he graduated. He discusses two ways that this has affected how he views representation. Firstly, he talks about how beginning to teach took up a lot of his energy, leaving little mental space to move beyond the published materials. Secondly, he talks about how he has struggled with the role of teacher:

I think it has sometimes been very anxiety-provoking to be given such a great authority. I imagine it [the authority] is less in other countries because of the school system [word removed]. So it may also have kept

me from flying the flag too much with my own political views. So it's been

both a gift and a hindrance in some ways. (Rasmus)

The term he uses is 'angstprovokerende' which is a very strong word, and I have picked it out because it connects several parts of my interpretation and, as such, I think it says something not just about Rasmus but more generally about my participants. The term contains the word 'provoking' (as in something 'provokes a response') and the word 'anxiety'. By using this term, Rasmus emphasises how the role of teacher has made him feel anxious because of the authority attributed to the role. This has inhibited him about, for instance, presenting his 'own political attitudes'. Based on the findings of my analysis so far, this strikes me as a proxy for a more general concern for how students might respond to the teacher's personal views:

It's maybe a little more linked to the uncertainty of being new to a job,

being newly graduated, I feel that I have to try to adapt a little, without

compromising too much on my own person; I find that extremely difficult.

(Rasmus)

Notice the use of 'too much', which signals that he has accepted that one has to compromise, and he has accepted that *he* has to adapt, rather than the (normative) students. While Rasmus has included non-normative sexuality in his teaching – there is a budding homosexual relationship in the YouTube series 'Centrum' which he has used, see earlier screenshot in Figure 4 – this might explain his concern about centring this homosexuality and making it a topic, and also why it plays such a small role in his teaching. As he explains:

[I]n many ways, I think that fictional material, it works in a very nice way,

because there you talk in the concrete and talk about how can you as a

film director thematise, for example, homosexuality, so it becomes more of

a talk about the aesthetic, the aesthetic process. When talking about

characters, I think it feels less provocative, or less dangerous, to talk

about it in many ways. (Rasmus)

I have gone into some details with Rasmus because, out of all my participants, he articulates most explicitly some of the worries and problems new teachers may encounter. His preparation is best characterised as an apprenticeship of observation which 'describes the phenomenon whereby student teachers arrive for their training courses having spent thousands of hours as schoolchildren observing and evaluating professionals in action' (Borg, 2004, p. 274). Except, of course, that Rasmus is not a student teacher, undertaking training, but a Danish lecturer with full responsibility for all Danish language teaching in his department. In the next part I will show how Rasmus's situation can be generalised to my other participants, despite them having more, sometimes even significant, experience of teaching.

Viktor is a good example of this as he has both practical experience (he has taught for 15+ years, of which 11 as a Danish language teacher) and some theoretical experience (having done modules on pedagogy). Despite this, he does not feel adequately equipped to navigate what he clearly sees as difficult topics like non-normative gender and sexuality:

> [I] lack knowledge; so it's not just about what do I want, it's also about
> what can I do. (Viktor)

As already explored earlier, Viktor is very concerned about upsetting his students, and he feels he lacks knowledge to include 'sensitive topics'. The way he expresses this is crucial, as it provides a possible link between the two sides of the paradox, namely why my participants all embrace inclusivity and non-normative identities on a personal level, while not really including it and embracing it in their teaching. Viktor identifies, in fact, a clear gap between what he wants to do ('what do I want') and what he can do ('what can I do'). And with the stakes being high (or at the very least perceived to be high) – bear in mind how Viktor also reflects on his age and gender as being reasons to be extra careful as a teacher – this gap becomes a significant barrier.

Not many of my participants talk about teacher training during the interviews, and it is clear that most of them have not received any. Most have started teaching after completing their MAs and, therefore, the gap that Viktor identifies remains, even for

someone like Thomas who has been teaching Danish at the same university for six years:

> [F]irst of all, I don't have any teacher education, I have a master's degree in [name of discipline], but all the pedagogical, all the didactic stuff is learning by doing, so I don't know anything about teaching other than what I've done and what has worked and what hasn't. And the other point is that I don't have any, I've never been taught to include e.g. LGBTQ+ as a topic in my teaching, so I'm doing my best. (Thomas)

Based on all my interviews, Thomas's last point must be recognised. These teachers all do their best, and their values embrace, in varying ways, inclusion and diversity. However, as Thomas recognises, he has had to learn how to teach by teaching, through trial and error. Within such a framework, terms such as success and error can, I would argue, become problematic. Is it a success if students talk about vegetables? Is it an error if some students feel discomfort? My thesis does not seek to answer these questions, but it should by now be clear that they are important questions and that teachers cannot be expected to develop a sensitivity towards them on their own.

A final voice I want to bring into my analysis here is Cecilie's. She is an experienced language teacher with five years of experience teaching Danish at university level. Before that she taught in further education where she completed a teacher's degree. She also studied psychology as part of her Bachelor's degree, which she herself sees as beneficial to her as a teacher. Here she talks about an experience she had earlier in the same year I conducted my interview with her:

> [B]ut it has to be said that I had a student who committed suicide in January [nervous laugh], so I might be like, you know, don't joke that you want to commit suicide, and last semester I had someone who tried to commit suicide, so there's just been such a wave of suicides in my class, so I'm like, I don't think we should talk about that really [referring to her language classes, not the interview], you know, in that way, or, yes, we can talk about it, but we shouldn't, you know, I'd rather not have any more threats [nervous laugh]. (Cecilie)

This quote is part of our discussion about her materials where she talks about including two Danish authors, one a woman, the other one from a minoritised group, in order to broaden representation. Both, however, thematise violence, childhood physical abuse and suicide, and this led to student responses that she was not prepared for and which were not intentional. Cecilie's experience calls to mind Ludwig & Summer (2023, p. 14):

> Potential risks include offending learners by violating their religious and political beliefs, their moral codex and sexuality, creating personal conflicts among learners (and teachers), and provoking extreme and negative emotional responses due to traumatic experiences of individuals, who may have been personally affected by violence, experienced personal loss, or political persecution.

My point is that Cecilie was never prepared for this kind of situation, and she did not intend for it to arise; and when it did arise, it was traumatic, not just for her students, but for her as well. The result, at least as she articulates it in the interview, seems to be that she is also shying away from topics and materials that lie outside published, heteronormative language materials.

4.4.2 Subtheme 2: Fear of misrepresentation

I have already discussed how a lack of knowledge plays a crucial role when explaining why some teachers do not include diverse identities, but here I turn to the specific concern about misrepresenting identities which are different from the teacher's own identity. In my study, all the participants were white, identifying as heterosexual and cis-gender, and their concerns relate to representing people who are non-white, non-heterosexual and/or non-cis (i.e. transgender or non-binary).

When reflecting on his approach to representation, which aligns with what I have described earlier as 'silent representation', Thomas explains his reason for choosing this strategy by contrasting it with a strategy that focuses more on people's identity, which itself aligns with Nelson's first approach centring on things like individual homosexuals, feelings, attitudes, personal growth and tolerance (Nelson, 2009, p. 210). Thomas argues that

with this introspective approach, [you] have to acknowledge, well, I may actually have been complicit in keeping this group stigmatised through the way I've presented it. (Thomas)

Thomas argues, in my opinion rightfully so, that some ways of (re)presenting a group may stigmatise its members, and that the teacher can, unwillingly, play a part in this. He does not expand more on this, but I think Cecilie identifies a similar problem when she talks about why homosexuality *could* be part of her materials but mostly is not:

It could easily be part of the teaching material, you know, it could easily be a part, but what I think you could risk was that it was a very caricatured version of a gay man or woman, or a binary, uhm, I have to admit there are so many words that I don't know, really, but a fluid gender identity. Because, for example, if you make a very obviously caricatured version of a gay man or a gay woman, then it can also just become insulting, really. (Cecilie)

Her concern is that of inadvertently representing a caricature due to her lack of understanding of non-normative identities, and thus insult her students. Similar concerns are brought up by Pernille, who talks about the problem of identity being 'sensationalised' (Pernille). These might seem like relatively minor concerns, but Einar explains why they are, for some teachers, far from trivial matters:

I imagine it may be somewhat similar if you teach someone who clearly has African-American roots, and then you bring some material, it also becomes, in a way, if you're very sensitive, or if you're a little insecure, then maybe it can also be experienced as a kind of intrusion, or now this is also being colonised, or now it's kind of translated into a formula, that which I kind of wrestle with, the daily discrimination and things like that. (Einar)

Einar's choice of words is interesting. He creates the image of a person whose identity is being discussed in the classroom and who is 'very sensitive', 'a little insecure', and who wrestles with 'the daily discrimination and things like that'. The teacher in this

scenario becomes a coloniser, who trespasses and does not understand the student or topic, and merely 'translated [it] into a formula'. In this scenario, it is no wonder that the teacher is nervous about approaching these topics, for who wants to be seen as an intruding coloniser who misrepresents what they do not understand? However, Einar, or Cecilie or Pernille or anybody else in my dataset, does not reflect on how these students can be made to feel more welcome in the classroom, and none of my participants articulate any strategies for this. There is therefore a large degree of erasure in their classrooms, and where non-normative voices are heard, they are faint and often worked with in what I would argue is a normalised and normalising way. Furthermore, my participants are on their own, with their own mental images of all the things that might go wrong. And this, the lack of support, is what I want to turn to in the next theme.

4.5 Overarching theme 5: Institutionally embedded heterocentrism

I consider the findings presented under this theme both very important and, in many ways, very straightforward. This is very different from the other themes, which are otherwise marked by complexity and with subtle differences in how my participants articulate their experiences and (lack of) strategies. It is also interesting because one participant has completely different experiences from the rest, and the impact of these experiences accentuates just how important this theme is.

For some of my participants, the answer to my questions about institutional support – which, in the context of the interview, includes the institution, the department, immediate colleagues or whatever my participants might identify as such – is just one line:

> It's not something I've talked to my colleagues about. (Henrik)

In this particular example, Henrik is referring to support when discussing non-normative gender and sexuality, but it might as well have been about any topic. In some interviews, I asked my participants – such as Mathilde, who had herself mentioned non-binary students – about support in relation to specific cases. The responses all look more or less like hers:

But if I have to speak for my own university, how we feel internally among colleagues, it has not been a topic we have addressed, how we talk about students who are either at one end of the scale or who just do not want to identify with one or the other; I do not think this is something we have addressed. I haven't been to any meetings or anything where it's been a topic. (Mathilde)

There are three interconnected ways in which this lack of support is viewed by my participants. Some see it as unproblematic, which seems to be the dominant view for my more experienced participants. A few see it as a clear lack, something which they have been missing and which has occasionally caused them to worry and feel lonely. I have already indicated some of the difficulties Rasmus experienced when moving to a foreign country and a foreign university and the lack of support he felt. However, Rasmus also articulates a more in-between stance, which is typical of a third, and large, group of my participants, who see this lack of support as something that is both frustrating and liberating at the same time:

In my position down here, I have a lot of freedom. There's not really anyone who scrutinises my materials, so to speak, so I would say, there aren't any limitations as such, other than what I could imagine myself, or what I might be afraid there might be. But there are also no initiatives as such that encourage a broader representation in my teaching material, it is more of a priority that I myself bring from Denmark here. (Rasmus)

Another participant, Thomas, acknowledges that there is very little coordination at his university, and he too sees this as something positive, something which sets him free and allows him to do what he wants to do, and talk about whatever he wants to include:

We have very, very little coordination in relation to our work, we have an enormous amount of freedom. I really appreciate it, precisely because no one tells me what I cannot talk about. (Thomas)

What one should notice, however, is how neither Rasmus nor Thomas, or any other of my participants, reflect on the potential problems this laissez-faire approach entails.

Nobody considers, for instance, how a lack of discussion about representation of non-normative identities, or the lack of institutional guidelines, can serve to reinforce heteronormative teaching. The way this is seen as unproblematic is challenged by my analysis, which has clearly demonstrated that, left on their own, teachers are likely to reproduce stereotypes, even when these do not align with their own values, and that experience, and even some pedagogical knowledge, is not enough to change this. In relation to this, it is worth recalling Margrethe's metaphor of the 'spinal reflex'.

A couple of participants do link the lack of institutional support directly to the culture they are teaching in. Einar echoes Thomas's point above that having no policies is helpful in not limiting freedom of expression during classes, for instance on topics which might be taboo or illegal in that culture:

> But it is more or less something you deal with on your own, there is no kind of policy at all. That, I think, would actually be difficult if you wanted that, if the dean he had to say some things, because then you're immediately entangled in such a [name of the country] polemic, and then you immediately become the target of [name of the country's leading politician], so you can't do that, but then you operate kind of like under the radar. (Einar)

For Einar it is not only unproblematic that there are no policies and no collegial discussions, he also sees this as enabling as this lack of policies allows him to address certain topics – and as I have shown earlier, he is one of the few participants to have included LGBTQ+ topics that would not fall into the category of homonormative. He uses the metaphor 'under the radar' which is very telling for his approach. Interestingly, this is one of the exact same metaphors used by teacher educators responding to a questionnaire asking them about their 'use' of critical pedagogy in a survey by Hatch & Groenke (2009, p. 76):

> I use my imagination to see where I can fit critical pedagogy into my work while flying under the radar.

Hatch and Groenke conclude that '[m]any of those responding made references to being subversive rather than openly resistant to dealing with expectations issues in their individual contexts.' (p. 76), which is a good description of Einar's stance.

It is noteworthy that Einar's pedagogical stance seems to stem from what I see as a struggle between various positions; somewhat simplified, one might say between a Danish angle, which values inclusivity and diversity, and a local one, which values conservative, Christian values that centre around the heterosexual nuclear family. In this culture, the dominant narrative does not align with Einar's, though, importantly, his does align with the university's values. Einar has thus found a way where, rather than accepting the dominant narrative, he is able to subvert it, as long as it is not noticed by the conservative forces. While it is not something I explore at length in my interviews, there are indications that the participants who work in more repressive cultures are aware of their privileged role and understand that they are able to challenge the dominant narratives in ways that would be more difficult for local teachers:

> I would imagine that they [my closest colleagues] could address the topic [non-normative sexuality] as well, if they just make clear that now we are studying what it looks like in Denmark, but I think it would be even more sensitive for them to do so because they are subject to even more control, they are even more into the system. (Henrik)

As my data are not very detailed when it comes to this particular question, I cannot say much more than this, but this is an area that could be explored further in future research.

As mentioned at the beginning, one of the participants stands out as she is the only person who talks about any significant institutional and departmental support. I will start by letting her explain what this consists of and then look at how this has impacted her, i.e. why it is relevant in this study to explore her particular context:

> At [university name] there's kind of an understanding that the gender that an individual chooses, that's what we go with. So there's not really a discussion about whether gender is binary or not, it's not. And there isn't a

discussion about whether a person should choose whether they want to be he, she, or 'hen' [Danish 3rd person singular gender-neutral pronoun], or they and them in English. Both students and teachers are actually asked to choose pronouns. We have a system where it actively sends me push notifications because I haven't done it yet, because for me personally, it's not that important how people they address me. But for many students, like when I ask them to introduce themselves at the beginning of a semester, they say: this is my name, I identify as they and them. Or he and they, and things like that. So it's been very important in my teaching of the students to try and kind of embrace that there's this inclusive view of gender and stuff like that. (Pernille)

I have quoted Pernille at some length because I think it shows the potential impact, particularly on a relatively inexperienced teacher as Pernille, that institutional policies can have. In this university, a decision has clearly been made that gender is not binary and that staff must respect that. This is, at least for Pernille, completely unproblematic, and it seems to have helped her avoid some of the awkward situations that some of my other participants have experienced (mis-gendering students or their partners, for instance).

Pernille talks enthusiastically about her department and about her colleagues, explaining how they have frequent discussions about gender, sexuality, race, and 'difficult' topics more generally. She mentions in particular several colleagues from the German department and how Germany's troubled history leads to this kind of discussion. The tone is noticeably different from my other participants quoted above:

That in itself has been quite liberating, because it means that the conversation I have with my colleagues about the form of teaching is very open. [...] And it's been quite inspiring because a lot of the teachers we have here, they get into difficult conversations both about gender and about sexuality, and about problematic history, and all these things. And it makes it feel like there is free rein to teach anything, and there are many

places to get inspiration and information, not so much about Danish lessons but about language teaching in general. (Pernille)

Notice her choice of words: liberating, open, inspiring and free rein. These are words spoken by someone who has found a strong collegiate community, and who is benefitting from the expertise of others, seeking their guidance and becoming inspired by it. But, moreover, she herself is recognised for contributing to this community of practice:

[W]hen I have taught, for example, menstrual activism and the non-binarity in Edith Södergran's poems, I have also been commended for doing so, and it has been something where my colleagues have been, "wow, how exciting" and "I would like to hear more about that in relation to a Scandinavian perspective" and "how do you do it in relation to language teaching?" The good thing about it being such an active conversation is that you are forced to decide on a lot of things in relation to your teaching and how you teach it, because people they ask questions about, how do you do it, where you kind of go, "oh, how do I actually do it", and that's actually really cool. (Pernille)

At the end of the quotation, Pernille uses the word 'forced' which would normally be a negative word, but for her it is the opposite. Being forced to consider one's teaching, in light of conversations about teaching difficult or challenging topics, is positive because it has made her think about things she would not otherwise have considered. There is also clearly pride in the way she talks about being commended for her work, being recognised for working outside of the traditional norms. She is being respected for her existing knowledge and insights, guided to think differently and challenge her normative thinking, and supported and encouraged when she actually tries it out.

Pernille has become part of a community of critically engaged teachers, which has space for vulnerability and space for topics that move beyond the usual normative ones. However, it must also be recognised that this does not mean that Pernille's language teaching is not heteronormative, which she herself identifies during the interview. It would have been interesting to interview Pernille at a later stage to see whether she had

changed her approach to language teaching or whether her experimentation was mostly delegated to content courses (on menstrual activism, for instance), as she had only taught for one year when I conducted the interview, and during our talk she was beginning to reflect critically on her own normative thinking (for instance when reading *Alle vi børn i Bulderby*).

4.6 Overarching theme 6: The interview as a trigger for reflection

I have decided to present this theme as the final one of my analysis because I think it draws a lot of the previous analysis together. It also provides a link to the next part, my discussion, where I will attempt to set out the key learnings from this research and its implication for practice. This theme is not one I was anticipating when I began my research, and I still get surprised when I read some of the excerpts from the interviews about just how powerful some participants found this opportunity to discuss with me, a fellow language teacher, their experiences and their reflections.

Several of my participants find that there are things they had not thought about before the interview, but which they suddenly realised they would have liked to consider more carefully. Several talk about their reflections on their materials which the pre-interview task prompted:

> It was quite interesting, what you wrote, because I honestly hadn't reflected on it like that much, other than, you know, loosely, but when I thought about it, I mean this beginner's material, I have to say – [laughs] I've also talked about it with a couple of colleagues – that it's extreme, if we talk about it in relation to gender and sexuality, mostly extremely heteronormative. "Mina and Ole live in a big nice house with their two children", and so on [laughs]. (William)

William has been using the materials available to him, and he has had very little support from anybody else. It seems clear that even the idea of thinking about materials in light of how they represent gender and sexuality – or indeed other topics, their inherent normativity – has never occurred to him. However, now that he is discussing it with me, he is able to see the heteronormative patterns himself. My point is that this is not a

difficult task for William, and nor is it difficult for any of my participants, who are very well-educated and whose values and views allow them to recognise these patterns, which are everywhere. However, they are also so much a part of my participants' own way of thinking and being that they are hiding in plain sight. Notice, for instance, how Margrethe reflects out loud during the interview, bearing in mind that she has decades of experience as a language teacher:

> I don't know, I might have to lie awake tonight and think about whether it's because it's kind of internalised in some way, like we don't bring religion into the classroom because it's perceived as some kind of private matter. (Margrethe)

The interview, both the preparation and the conversation with me, has allowed her to recognise, and possibly also question, some of these internalised patterns, and it is clear that she is both somewhat surprised and curious about what to do with this new insight.

Other participants begin questioning their own way of thinking during the interviews. These reflections do not come fully formed but seem to materialise during the discussion with me, often prompted by the questions I ask. Einar provides a good example of this when I ask him whether he has had any negative reactions from students when including non-normative identities. He thinks about this for a long time before answering 'no'. He then nuances this a little in the next part, before adding:

> What I'm thinking about, of course, is also whether anyone would express it, because the fact that I haven't come across it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. (Einar)

This is a significant moment of reflection, and it is not something that my participants seem to have given much thought. Several of them emphasise how their classrooms have space for all students and that, if a student mentions or asks for something (non-normative for instance), they would gladly incorporate it. But on their own, they do not seem to have reflected on the problematic nature of this approach to representation.

Cecilie shows how quickly this connection can be made, again demonstrating that this is not necessarily a big leap, but that it is hard to do without support and/or training:

> I think that if the students had said "can't we make a third box" or "shouldn't there be a third word" or "can we come up with some more examples on the board where you use", then I would probably, "yes, of course we can", without doubt, because that's right, you know, we have to include that, really, of course we should. But probably because there has been nothing like that, nobody has asked about it, and there was no one who has been – yes, but of course that does not mean that someone has not thought about it, it may well be that they have thought about it, of course. (Mathilde)

Mathilde is reflecting on how she has taught personal pronouns and why she had not included gender-neutral ones in Danish. She begins by clarifying that she would have included them if a student had asked for them, but that nobody did, and that is why she did not include them. Then something changes, and she recognises that the silence does not necessarily mean that nobody was interested in the gender-neutral pronoun.

Overall this theme shows how valuable professional dialogue is to teachers. My participants are all highly educated, but without support from someone, they have struggled to find strategies that can challenge the heteronormativity of the materials, of the students' expectations, and of their own lived experience. They all embrace values such as diversity and inclusion, but their teaching practices leave very little space for non-normative identities. This is particularly paradoxical as many of my participants talk about how several of their students identify as non-binary, trans and/or homosexual, to the point where many suggest that they might be studying Danish because of how they identify. But as this analysis has shown, these factors do not bring about change on their own, and teachers need support from their close colleagues, from the department they work in, and, ultimately, from the institutions they work in, and the Danish Lecturer Scheme.

Chapter 5: Discussion and implications for practice

5.1 'What does it mean to see your full self on the page?'

'What does it mean to see your full self on the page?' is the title of a blog post from 2020 by someone who just identifies themself as Medina, describing themself as 'a Honduran-born nonbinary adoptee and writer with Cerebral Palsy who lives in Brooklyn' (Unknown, 2020) In this blog post, Medina discusses their experience of growing up reading children's books that, while allowing for admiration of strong female characters like Matilda and Pippi Longstocking, did not represent people like themself:

> But I still wanted to see myself in the pages I read.
>
> I wanted to be me.
>
> I wanted to be seen.
>
> I wanted to be important enough that a book was written for me.
>
> That book never came.

This description is a powerful reminder of the stakes when discussing representation, and a reminder that this is not just an intellectual or philosophical discussion but one that has direct impact on people. It also demonstrates why, for people who are less-widely represented in books and teaching materials, the option *not* to address representation is itself a value-laden choice rather than a neutral stance.

In the following discussion, I have flipped the organising principle that I used to structure my analysis chapter, so that I start here with the areas that are (mostly) outside teachers' control (institutional support and published materials), then moving on to the teachers themselves (their concerns and lack of knowledge). Finally, I will discuss a point that has been made in previous studies (such as Macdonald et al., 2014), namely that more and/or better training is necessary to enable teachers to work more professionally with representation.

5.2 Institutional support

My participants are very clear when it comes to discussing what support they have received institutionally, and the kind of pedagogical discussions they are having with their immediate colleagues: they are both negligible except for one participant. This is not that surprising when considering that some of the participants teach in countries whose political climates are anti-LGBTQ+. However, even those of my participants who work in less repressive countries did not feel they had received any meaningful support from their institution, beyond them showing some rainbow flags during Pride week and a memo reminding staff that the university was an inclusive place. This extends to the DLS, and none of my participants felt that the scheme had helped them to develop their understanding of the importance of representation of LGBTQ+ people and issues.

Initially, I had actually hoped to include the leaders of the DLS in this research – they are all senior academic staff at Danish universities – asking them two broad questions about their role in preparing lecturers for their jobs, and how they viewed potential conflicts between Danish and local norms. The answer I received from the Chair was kind but dismissive, stating that they followed the policies laid out by the Ministry and therefore did not want to participate in this research

As I have already stated, this is not a neutral stance, and it means that the Danish lecturers are left on their own, having to decide how to teach Danish without any formal training requirements and without any guidelines. Moreover, when the local universities are either silent or only mention equality, diversity and inclusion tokenistically, the end result is, I would argue, a tacit acceptance of heteronormative values. It is noticeable here that the Danish lecturers in this study have actually included some LGBTQ+ topics and this should definitely be applauded. The fact remains, however, that while doing more than nothing is positive, there is still a lot of work to be done to challenge heteronormativity and include a diverse range of identities in language teaching.

5.3 Published materials

Published materials encompass the area that has received most attention in the literature, and the evidence is very clear: language learning materials are almost entirely

heteronormative, with some exceptions where materials have been produced specifically to include, say, homosexuality. In addition, most other examples where non-normative sexuality was included could be characterised as homonormative – a good example being that many of my participants included an article from a textbook about the first homosexual couple who got married in Denmark – or as playing only a minor part, such as the two teenage girls who show some sexual attraction to each other in the YouTube series *Centrum*.

It is interesting that many of my participants do not seem to have given much thought to non-normative gender and sexuality in their language teaching before preparing for the interview, but the pre-task asking them to identify a good and a bad example of teaching materials dealing with these seems to have facilitated their reflections. What struck me during the interviews is, however, the level of freedom my participants have: none of them seem to have been asked to use any particular book, and beyond some abstract guidelines relating to the expected level that students must reach, there are, it appears, very few rules and regulations relating to this.

The way I see it, this can be likened to what I mentioned earlier in this conclusion, namely that when nobody talks about something, when nobody draws attention to normativity, it tends to remain unchallenged, remaining the default. Before the interview, my participants did not see the materials as problematic and did not ask critical questions of it because they were not aware of it as a potential problem and, slightly rewording a quote I have used earlier, how would/should my participants be able to produce something better than the textbooks, which are, after all, written and edited by experienced language teachers and editors? Furthermore, the DLS does not raise this as an issue and nor do their universities.

It seems to me that this, once again, leads to the maintenance of status quo: teachers do not request more diverse materials, and therefore publishers do not (have to) produce more diverse materials; and therefore teachers do not request them, and so on. In order to break this normative cycle, some kind of intervention will have to happen, and from my research there is no indication that this is currently happening at institutional or departmental level in most places.

Linking this section with the previous one, a key recommendation of my research is for educational leaders at all levels to consider representation, and to recognise that a failure to do so is in itself a choice rather than a neutral, values-free decision. In some contexts, the institution might be able to drive this agenda, but there are many places where this is not feasible due to the political climate. In these cases, it might be more feasible to work with smaller groups of teachers, finding ways to create space for diversity without necessarily focusing on politically sensitive identities such as LGBTQ+ (Gray, 2021). This is where queer pedagogy offers a powerful framework, as it does not necessarily centre sexuality and gender, and I find Paiz's (2020, p. 54) suggestion for questions that can be asked both useful and inspirational (the * in the quote represents whatever the topic is such as 'family'):

Why is * so?

What conditions have led to * being view/valued/talked [sic] about in the way that it is?

Who benefits from * being held in a position of power over another group, or one group being held in power under a dominant one?

What needs to change for * to move from a marginalized, peripheral position to a more accepted central one?

What attitudes and biases and [sic] am I bringing with me that I will need to control for to provide my students with an even and fair education experience?

Some of these questions can be asked directly in a classroom, but mostly they are meant to foster reflection in the teacher, who can then tailor materials and classroom teaching to their students' needs. More importantly, none of the questions require the teacher to include anything that is deemed controversial; they are, in essence, about laying bare the way something (like the family) is constructed, which might, but does not have to, then lead to a questioning of its dominance and how it came to be considered the norm. As Paiz emphasises, queering your teaching 'is not just about sex and

sexuality. It is about uncovering and problematizing *all* normative discourses in which we are awash' (p. 46).

While this section has not offered any definite answer to how published materials can become more inclusive or how institutions can be supported to change and develop how they enable colleagues to include more diverse representations in their teaching, it has, hopefully, clarified why this is crucial; furthermore, I hope to have demonstrated why I do not believe this is something that will happen on its own; and finally, I have attempted to accentuate how a queer pedagogy approach can be effective in achieving these goals – both in published materials and in the classroom – even in contexts that are more or less hostile to non-normative gender and sexuality.

5.4 Teachers' concerns and building new ways of knowing

While some of the concerns expressed by my participants would probably be alleviated if there were clearer institutional policies in place to support them, it is also evident that their lack of understanding of how to include diverse representation and of how to deal with students' reactions is an important reason why they often choose not to do so. All my participants express general support for LGBTQ+, meaning that none of them are ideologically opposed to non-normative gender and sexuality. Obviously, as this research is based on self-selected participants, this might be because of selection bias, and, as discussed earlier, it might also be because of the interview situation and my participants being aware of my position. After all, while this was never stated directly, it is not difficult to deduce that I am supportive of more diverse representation.

However, it is interesting that my participants do not see any official barriers to including more diverse representation in their teaching, as this suggests that change can be achieved by working directly with the lecturers and without first creating institutional culture change. This is not trivial, and several of my participants are aware that they are in a privileged position because they are from Denmark and therefore not expected to follow local rules as much as other teaching staff; in effect, they are able to challenge some of the cultural norms simply because of their status as visiting lecturers.

Nelson (2009, p. 45) also found that 'in some institutional contexts, talking about these themes [lesbian/gay themes] was actively prohibited'. This suggests that for lecturers who are part of the DLS, more training would allow them to make immediate changes that would benefit their students. By extension, lecturers who teach in cultures that do not prohibit LGBTQ+ topics would also be able to action the insights from this research within a relatively short timeframe if they were supported to develop an understanding of how to do so. As discussed briefly in my introduction, this chimes with the experiences I had at UCL where colleagues were able to immediately action the insights gained from the workshops referred to in Chapter 1, which meant that changes were visible within the same academic year as the workshops. This leads me to my final point, namely that more training is needed if any of these insights are to come to fruition.

5.5 Re-orienting professional practice

In their study of UK ESOL tutors, which included more than 100 respondents to either a questionnaire or an interview, Macdonald et al. (2014, p. 23) found that '[m]ost respondents wanted much more support to improve their practice'. This is echoed by my participants, who, when reflecting on their own professional practice, are very aware that they have not received relevant training that would enable them to bring diverse representation into their curricula. This is part of a larger discussion about how much training university teachers should undertake, and this is beyond the scope of this research. Suffice it to say that my research has both found a gap in the training offered to language teachers as well as provided some evidence that language teachers would see more training as desirable.

It seems to me that there are several ways in which the insights from this research can be used. It can be used to support work at an institutional level, which will support teachers who are already interested in diverse representation and provide them with confidence that their work is valued and that, if unexpected conflict arises, the institution will have policies and procedures in place to support the individual teacher or team of teachers; and it can support teaching teams and individual teachers to develop their pedagogy, knowledge and confidence so they are able to confidently include diverse identities in their teaching.

Apart from the two organisational levels discussed above, I also see a potential for this research to inform work in various cultural and political contexts. To simplify, I will discuss two extremes in the next part, one that is mostly positive towards LGBTQ+ and one that is mostly hostile.

When working with institutions and colleagues from cultures that accept LGBTQ+ identities, this can be discussed head-on. Discussions can centre on what diverse representation means and entails, how it can be achieved without colonising LGBTQ+ spaces, explaining how damaging the alternative to diverse representation is. Training can help equip teachers to discuss topics that are perceived as difficult and support them in devising strategies to deal with students who behave inappropriately. Paiz (2020, pp. 115–121) suggests various strategies for 'Navigating Challenges' (p. 115), which include what he calls active resistance and passive resistance (pp. 116−117). He also suggests useful reflective prompts that can support teachers to think about resistance and potential conflicts before entering the classroom:

- How do I think my students will react when I deploy a more explicitly LGBTQ+-inclusive lesson?

- What worries me about the possible negative reactions that I might face from students, peers, administrators, and parents?

- What allies might I be able to call on to help me navigate these challenges?

- What proactive plans can I make to account for these challenges?

- How will I communicate the value of an LGBTQ+-inclusive English language pedagogy to others? (p. 122)

When working with institutions and/or cultures where the political climate makes it difficult or impossible to address LGBTQ+ topics directly, my research has suggested how queer pedagogy can still facilitate discussions around how and why something is perceived as normal, laying bare some of the discourses surrounding normativity. This protects institutions and colleagues from being seen as pushing, for instance, an

LGBTQ+ agenda. An example could be the topic 'family' where discussions could include how and why the nuclear family became the norm, and why some groups see it as important to protect this particular construction. It might also be possible to queer the nuclear family by including examples of children who have one parent, live with their grandparents, are adopted and so on – and all of this can be done without direct reference to LGBTQ+ (see for instance Nemi Neto (2018) for a discussion of how families are often represented in textbooks, and Garwood (2023) on how the topic of family can address what she calls 'families of origins' which 'may include non-heterosexual, gender non-conforming or trans parents, and relate to their (donor) conception, queer culture and/or wider LGBTQ histories' (p. 31)).

5.6 Back to the beginning: the research questions

As I come to the end of my thesis, I want to take a final look at the research questions. While everything has been guided by them, the analysis was not limited to seeking specific answers to them, and it unfolded organically from my reiterative engagement with the interview transcripts. Therefore, I want to end by revisiting the three questions that I asked of this research:

> 1. How do Danish Lecturers who are part of the Danish Lecturer Scheme view the role of gender and sexuality within language teaching?
>
> 2. If they include non-normative gender and sexuality, how and why do they do this?
>
> 3. What barriers and/or enablers do the Danish lecturers perceive in relation to how they choose to represent gender and sexuality in their language teaching?

In relation to the first question, the interviews showed a complex relationship between my participants and their attitudes towards including non-normative gender and sexuality in their teaching. There was general agreement that the curriculum should create space for diverse identities, and the inclusion of non-normative gender and sexuality was definitely seen as something that was potentially within my participants' control, and something they could do. However, my analysis also showed that it is not

merely a matter of attitude, but of a range of factors such as the available materials, the perceived expectations from students, the notion of safe learning environments, and also requirements that are seen as outside of the participants' control such as exams.

As for the second question, it is clear from the interviews that my participants hardly include any non-normative gender and/or sexuality in their teaching. The vast majority thought mostly about gender as man-woman with the role of the teacher being to ensure materials did not stereotype women – interestingly, this is an almost exact mirror image of my own thinking before I began working with queer pedagogy, and it calls to mind my own questions from the introduction (section 1.1) to this thesis: 'why did I not think about this before? How can I have been teaching in further and higher education for 10 years without thinking more broadly about representation? And what can I do differently in the future?'. There was a recognition among all the participants that the available teaching materials were heteronormative, and the little material that did include non-normative sexuality focused on homosexuality – retelling the well-known narrative of gay and lesbian liberation in Denmark and Scandinavia from the 1970s onwards – with no mentioning of other options such as bisexuality or transgender, and no focus on the ongoing difficulties that LGBTQ+ people face in Denmark, as shown, for instance, by the reports from Danish schools, which I presented in the literature review.

Finally, the interviews pointed to a broader range of answers to the third question compared with the other two. There was broad agreement that the Danish lecturers could include almost anything they wanted and that the institutional barriers were minimal. However, the opposite was also true, in that only one person felt that their institution actively supported them in their work with representation. Apart from that, not many enablers were identified, while a range of barriers were discussed: the teaching materials; lack of pedagogical training and lack of experience, leading participants to teach the way they were taught; fear of upsetting students and creating a negative learning environment; and fear of misrepresenting cultures that the teacher does not identify with. Interestingly, most of these are areas that can be addressed in workshops aimed at preparing future language teachers better for their role, and by trying to influence the publishers to create more diverse textbooks and materials.

A lot of these insights are already informing how I work with staff at UCL. I mentioned in the beginning how I am co-leading workshops based on queer pedagogy, but beyond that I am drawing on the insights as Programme Director for UCL Arena for Lecturers on Probation. As part of the programme, which is mandatory for all new lecturers at UCL, around 120-140 per year, I introduce ideas from queer pedagogy, and I use my expertise to challenge ideas that reproduce normative thinking. An example from 2023-2024 could be the STEM lecturer who was convinced that representation played no role in their teaching, which led to a discussion about statistical science (often artificially made binary into, for instance, man-woman), the (often violent) discrimination of homosexual scientists (for instance the well-known case of Alan Turing) and UCL's recent decision to dename buildings named after eugenicists Galton and Pearson (UCL, 2020).

Hopefully, in answering my research questions I have shown both how many of the problems already identified in the literature are still present in my participants' teaching experiences and need to be addressed further, but also that there are ways forward. To return to the beginning of this thesis, and to Muñoz, whose ideas are so central to how queer theory has been understood in this thesis, I hope and think this study points to 'something else, something better, something dawning' (Muñoz, 2009, p. 189).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Translation of my interview with William

Interviewer	What were your thoughts when you read Nelson's three approaches?
William	Oh, I looked at them when you sent them, but it's been a few weeks, I have to admit, I didn't just refresh it this morning. So they are not exactly present, they are not.
Interviewer	You know what, why don't we begin with your own material. Can't you try to tell me about the things you sent me, why you chose them and what the thoughts behind them are?
William	Yes, I would like that. I have sent two things. One is for my beginners, or the book I use for my beginners, those who started in October. And the second, the novel by Hesselholdt, I use that for a team made up of students in years 3-5. This is how it is here in [name of city], you can only start studying Danish every three years, so I actually only teach at two levels, beginners and then a mixture of some who started as 3 and 6 years ago. But first of all, it is a, I think, quite classic beginner's book, which sort of introduces the most important grammatical principles, and phonetic principles, and some of the everyday dialogues, it is probably related to something like 'Aktivt Dansk' or 'På vej til dansk' [very popular beginners' books], And the reason why I, well, I think really it was quite interesting, what you wrote, because to be honest I hadn't reflected so much on it other than loosely, but when I thought about it, i.e. this beginner's material, I have to say - (chuckles) I have also talked about it with a few colleagues - that it is extreme if we talk about it in relation to gender and

sexuality, extremely heteronormative as a rule. Mina and Ole [normal Danish names, like saying Michael and Susan in English] live in a big, nice house with you two children, and so on (laughs). I don't know how many nuances there are in it, but in any case I can state now after this year, we have gone through this entire book plus various other material, that at no time has there been anything that has exceeded this stereotype or this norm, one might say, i.e. a monogamous relationship between a man and a woman that leads to children.

And yes, I don't know, what can you say. I have an anecdote that I can tell in relation to that, because they write some assignments that they started there, and which I then corrected. Some of the things they often make mistakes in are things like he, she, for some reason, I don't know if it's like that in London, but here they sometimes make mistakes and go 'she', even the skilled ones can say 'she' even if they mean 'he', and there was a girl with whom I have talked a little and she has a son, so sometimes it is a bit difficult for her to get to the university on time, but she had written in her assignment that she had gone on a weekend trip with her son and her partner and she was very interested in collecting mushrooms and such. And I had come to correct it, just automatically, that is because I thought she had made a mistake, but she told me afterwards that it was not a mistake. And it was quite embarrassing, I regretted that very much (laughs). But I had done it, for some reason, so it is an example from my own automatic thinking, normative attitude. And that also made me think, and I apologized for that and said that I was really sorry, but it simply hadn't occurred to me, that is, and it's perhaps a bit of an extension of the material one then also uses and applies, one thinks, well, that's how the world is connected, or whatever it may be

Interviewer	What is your personal and educational attitude towards materials like this. Do you think it's fine that it represents this very normative world, after all it's language learning we're talking about, or do you think it should be different?
William	Because I'm new and haven't dealt with these materials that much before, I really just went for it without much reflection, and it's only later that I've thought about it, among other things prompted by the material you have sent, so I have to admit that I hadn't given it much thought, but I really think it should... at least you could do something else. As a teacher, you can use those books, but then you can include something else, perhaps that represents some other compositions, that is if we think sexually [uses a word that implies sex rather than sexuality, but I'm not sure this is on purpose] or about gender, or something like that. So, yes, if I were to write such a book, I would not write it in the same way as the one that has been sent to you, taught now by the reflections I have made. I would definitely include some other structures in the examples that are there.
Interviewer	Why?
William	Yes, that's a good question. (pause) Yes, why. Yes, so...Among other things because I guess it must be representative, I think. On the one hand, it must open the way for students who study Danish somewhere other than Denmark, it might be very nice that they get this image that we are a liberal country with room for people who think and live differently, whether it is family-related or it is in relation to sexuality and so on. I don't know if that's a precise answer, but then, I think, it can only be seen as something positive that you get those angles on it too. Not that it needs

	to take over the entire discourse, after all, there are many who live as an ordinary, heterosexual couple, somewhere, with children, so I don't think it needs to be educational in that way, now it really needs to be presented, but that it is represented in the same way as it exists in society.
Interviewer	You mention that it could be used as information about Denmark, as part of the culture for example, and would it be the main part for you that we learn Danish, we must learn about how homosexuality and gender in general, how it works in Denmark in relation to legislation, in relation to cultural attitudes towards gender and sexuality.
William	Yes, you could say that the main purpose, at least in the beginning, is that they learn some linguistic things, and I think you should stick to that, and then it's clear that you build on it later, those who continue, fill up with some cultural aspects and that is also what the degree] must lead to, that they might be able to carry out some, do some projects about what might interest them within, for example, that. I can then perhaps include some of the other material I have used on intermediate level, because there we are, for example, in addition to the one I sent you, it is like within the genre called exofiction that Hesselholdt has written about the American photographer Vivia Mayer. Then we also read, also within the exofiction genre, her name, her name is Signe Gerrild [actually: Rakel Haslund-Gjerrild], she wrote a book called 'Adam in paradise' last year, which is about the gay painter from Bornholm, Christian Zahrtmann. Zahrtmann is such a Golden Age painter, gay, but her novel is like an attempt to rewrite his life from his perspective, that is, in a different way than what has been done in the official biographies and such, and it is actually so seasoned [peppered?] with real, historical police reports from the beginning of the 20th century, with how they

	cracked down on people who have been or have been suspected of homosexuality, so that's like the main subject of the book, so what was it like to live as a gay artist at that time. So we have actually also read it with the intermediate class. So it provides such a historical-cultural picture of things in Denmark for the [name of country] students, and I have also talked to them about whether there is anything similar in [name of country] literature or poetry. And then the other thing we actually also have, we've listened to and read this person called Tessa, she's a hip-hop musician, not because I'm particularly fond of her or anything, but her lyrics are interesting for several reasons, with her use of Anglicisms, but also because she represents a different approach to the female gender than the traditional one perhaps, way of taking power over her own sexuality and things like that, that's part of what she does, so we actually have that too, talked about in that context, i.e. what sort of gender stereotype is she doing away with in her lyrics.
Interviewer	These are actually two very different approaches, so I don't know if you want to talk a little about their position in your Danish teaching; I'm thinking that one is a historical perhaps introduction to the problems that have existed in relation to perhaps especially homosexuality, but some of the same things could perhaps be transferred to transgender or other sexual or gender minorities. The second is more perhaps a linguistic angle, where you look at the fact that language is often much more gendered than we think. We can say that Danish is not a gendered language, we do not have, as Romance languages do, for example, masculine and feminine gender. What are your thoughts on the two approaches to it, that is, why are the two approaches important, why not just read Hans Christian Andersen and the textbooks, why bring these debates into teaching at all?

William	I guess there are two things in it. One doesn't include it if it doesn't have some quality. So in Gjerrild's novel, it's about the fact that we talked about what kind of genre exofiction is, why it is prevalent and what it can do, how it kind of brings forward some unknown destinies. It has actually been used a lot to highlight neglected women's destinies, for example the one called Inge Lehmann, who was a very important woman, natural history in relation to describing the interior of the earth, so the genre is used to give anonymized women a new voice . But it is also necessary that there is a literary quality to the novel, otherwise I don't think I would use it, but there is absolutely no doubt that it has that. And in relation to Tessa, it is then about analysing something like this with Anglicisms as well, so it is because it can be adapted to some other topics.And the other thing is that as a visiting lecturer you also have, of course, what you have to do is to introduce linguistic phenomena, but also to represent contemporary Danish culture (laughs a little) to the students where you are now teaching, so when these things are prevalent and significant in Denmark, i.e. both artistically but also socially, I think there is no doubt that it makes sense to include them.
Interviewer	And how have your students reacted to these topics?

William	Actually surprisingly positive; now it must also be said that in fact the intermediate students I have taught are exclusively girls; I don't know if it would make any difference, but at least I can see that they have dug into their brains to see if there is something similar in [name of country] literature, because that is often the comparison they make, well, this pattern that prevails in Denmark, is it also found here, and why isn't it, so that's what they're thinking about. So it certainly provided a background for some discussions, where we then talked about why do you think it is like that, where they then said, well, things are much more stereotypical and old-fashioned here in relation to gender, and then they told me such things as if you date someone, then it is completely unthinkable when you meet for the first time that the man will not pay the whole thing no matter what, where in Denmark, there it would probably be the other way around, that it would be seen as a kind of insult, or where the obvious thing would be to share, but that there are still some rather large cultural differences, even though the countries are similar in many ways.
Interviewer	I think that's quite exciting, the thing about when it dawns on someone that one's culture is not the only right one, and I'm wondering, it can happen, of course, but is that something you're looking for, to discuss the places where the culture is different, and how these things have arisen, how, for example, gender and sexuality are constructed linguistically?
William	I don't remember if we have been involved in any discussions about, like, with linguistic constructions like that. But we have certainly talked about the historical development, i.e. liberation of sexuality after the Second World War, the 60s and such, and also such things with legislation, when women could vote, when homosexuality was allowed, and all such things, that is perhaps more to place it in such a social historical context, where they have been able to respond with, after all, we lived in a

	repressive regime until 1990, so it is clear that these processes we have gone through, they have been hidden and it has been underground literature or underground poetry where these things have been able to come out, because otherwise it has not been allowed. So it's been more that way, I think.
Interviewer	Do you ever go in and discuss normative sexuality, e.g. why is it that man-woman is the way it is, and why are there many books that describe this, and why do we almost automatically assume that the normal is not to be a lesbian?
William	We haven't... it's not something I've discussed as a primary topic, at least not with the beginners, so I don't think we've touched on it at all, if I'm being completely honest, in language teaching with first-year students, it's only something we've included with the intermediate students... What was the question again?
Interviewer	Have you included the whole issue of normality in your teaching?
William	Yes, in a way, but then in continuation of, for example, Hesselholdt, who in that novel describes such dysfunctional suburban life in the USA in the 60s, where the contrast is this independent, but also asexual woman, who is then a photographer, but where a great part of the novel is a kind of dissolution of the notion of the idyllic, it is then an American life, where you live in the suburbs, and live one, you can say it is also a cliché that suburban life is a kind of shadow existence and it fosters frustration, but nevertheless it takes up quite a bit of the book, both on a symbolic level but also very concretely described. So there we have talked about what literature can do, i.e. exposing the normal discourse, and so in that novel it is also turned a little on its head, what exactly is normal, because the

	so-called normal people who are there, or apparently normal, they almost turn out to have far more problems than... well, when you drill into their soul life to be even more dull than this woman who appears on the surface as a freak, this photographer. So that's how we've talked about it, but we haven't had it as a primary theme in a lesson, for example.
Interviewer	When teaching personal pronouns, how do you do it?
William	Well, ehm... well, in the traditional way, I guess. At least not like I've included any of these things, I must say. No, that is, there I have used the textbook material from the traditionally based textbooks that I have mentioned. I have not had this angle in mind, except of course as you say that they are now aware that we do not have this feminine form like the Latin languages.
Interviewer	Have you ever discussed gender-neutral pronouns, for example?
William	Yes, I've had a little bit of the use of 'hen' [gender-neutral 3rd person pronoun] in Sweden.
Interviewer	In England we use they - how did you handle it in Danish?
William	So, I have to say, I haven't dealt with that. I only know it from personal acquaintances in Denmark, but that's not something I've come across down here, i.e. people who identify as 'they' and it's not something I've introduced on a theoretical level or told about actually (pause) yet, but...
Interviewer	How important do you think it is that students who do not identify as heterosexual can see themselves reflected in the material, i.e. is it a

	problem that they cannot see themselves or is it not a problem in reality?
William	It may depend on whether it is offset by other things.If it is only very narrowly about language, then perhaps the problem is not so great, if their teaching in Danish and Scandinavian culture, literature, then it includes that because I think most people at the university level are able to understand, or can see that, yes, this may be a little bit outdated, and this is only for language learning, but it is clear that if the same trend is transferred and if you only read, as you mentioned, Hans Christian Andersen literature and are not introduced to such things at all, then it would probably be a bigger problem. But that doesn't mean that I didn't think it could be particularly important to change, i.e. for the reasons we've talked about, i.e. because you could ask yourself, why not, what would the idea be in that, precisely also because, now my student there, who is a lesbian, you could say, and I don't know what her personal life is like, she herself comes from [name of country], where there is a different view on this kind of thing, and it may well be, I actually don't know if she has come here precisely for that reason, I have a bit of an idea that that might be the case actually, because it can be difficult... she is actually of Roma origin. And my knowledge falls a little short, but I could imagine that it is easier to live in [name of city] away from your family, i.e. as a lesbian, than it would be to stay in [name of the country that she comes from]. And there you can say that it would clearly support her view of, yes, her own identity in a positive way if even primitive, basic teaching materials reflected that.
Interviewer	Have you ever seen a Roma person in a Danish book?
William	Nah, I can't think of any examples.

Interviewer	It seems that talking about homosexuality and gender in general is not a big problem for you. Is that correctly understood?
William	Yes, it's no problem at all. [Name of city] has actually been, also under communism as far as I understand, a kind of refuge for homosexuals or maybe also transsexuals [sic], I don't know. Because it was one of the most liberal countries in that period, so there is no problem with that at all. It is also no problem here to appear in public.
Interviewer	What about at the university, is it something you talk about how you should and how you can and whether you should perhaps think about those things in relation to maybe inclusion and representation and things like that.
William	Not something we have talked about directly, but one of the things we have talked about is that there are actually a lot of homosexuals who choose to study Danish, primarily men. It's not something I have statistics on, because I'm so new, but there are many there ... my teaching colleague who is [name of country] says that there is a very, very large proportion, something like that, almost one in four or one in three of those men who study Danish; but then again, now I might have to, I don't know either, where they got it from, I don't know. But we have talked about that, and you could say that it is perhaps...but we haven't talked about how, or I haven't been told, and I know that my colleagues in the US do, how to handle it in teaching, both material-wise and personally, but it hasn't been a theme at all. So this example I just mentioned, well, it's kind of unofficial, that's the only thing we've talked about in terms of that.

Interviewer	Institutionally, there is no problem, no barriers are set up, but it is also perhaps not something that is discussed or supported, there is no institutional agenda where you say, we must try to do this in order to achieve that.
William	I couldn't have phrased it better myself, I think. At least that's my impression, I haven't encountered any kind of barrier or warning or 'maybe you should do this, maybe you shouldn't do that', but I haven't encountered the other either, something like shouldn't we put some focus on this.
Interviewer	Do you have the impression that your students are interested in these topics, homosexuality, transgender etc. or are they more just interested in learning the language, and maybe they don't care how they learn it?
William	(immediately) No, no, they are, that is, my intermediate students, they are the ones I have to talk about here, because as I said, it is not something I have talked about with my beginners yet; but yes, they are very much, partly with the position of women in society, what opportunities are there in Scandinavia and how are women represented in literature and in the arts and on the labor market. These are things they would very much like to discuss and have their own opinions about, and it is also something they write about, projects about, they do bachelor projects about. And then maybe they will try to find, an example could be, an overlooked [name of country] literary critic, a writer who a student has sat in an archive and researched all summer, to find out what she has actually done, and where the thesis has been, why is it that she has almost been written out of the [name of country] cultural canon. And this has been inspired by some themes from Danish, Nordic relations that she has, as it were, seen, tried to look for a similar figure in

	the [name of country].
Interviewer	Now of course you've only been there for a short time so I don't know if this makes sense, but let's say you were mentoring a new teacher and they asked you what do you think I should do in terms of including gender and sexuality in my teaching. What advice would you give the person in relation to including topics around gender and sexuality?
William	It could, for example, be to discuss or problematise what kind of stereotypes or what kind of normativity we see in these teaching materials. Because it is not always the case that teaching materials are available which may be representative in the way that you might think would be ideal, but then you could at least take it up and discuss it. I would give myself that advice (laughs)…
Interviewer	If you had to put it into words, why do it?
William	Because as a lecturer, one's job is also to convey some trends in Danish culture and literature, art and so on, and there you just have to say that it is a debate that is going on at an extreme or significant level [probably means that the discourse can become rather aggressive in the media etc.]. Also in relation to the post-colonial, but also in relation to gender and women's voices, so there I think it is the same, not a duty, but like part of one's work, to introduce it and problematise some of the things that are also problematised in Danish teaching at the universities, the same discussions could then be taken up with the [name of country] students, because it is Danish culture to which they must be exposed.

Interviewer	Have you considered some of the slightly more negative things? You can tell a story about Denmark that is about freedom, inclusion and such, but you can also tell a story about a right-wing person who opposes gay marriage, who gets angry when you call it a cake person [references a recent debate where a type of pastry was renamed by a well-known baker 'cake person' instead of 'cake man', sparking massive debate about 'wokeness' and that kind of thing]; Is it a story you have included and which you think is relevant to include?
William	Yes, so I don't remember exactly how we talked about it, but it is clear that this contradiction, it is always present, and then you can talk about (sound cuts out). This resistance is present, that (sound cuts out). And then you can relativize, for example, to the [name of country that is geographically close to this one], where the resistance is perhaps even greater, but it is clear, I don't see that there would be any reason to draw an overly beautiful painting [of Denmark], it is not one's job to portray Denmark as a ideal society, so these contrasts, oppositions, or what can you say, it's part of presenting a debate, it's because there are legitimate opposing views.
Interviewer	Could you imagine minorities with bad characteristics?
William	We have discussed Hassan [very well-known contemporary poet from the Danish 'ghetto', who became a superstar in Denmark, particularly the cultural elite, and then first received a prison sentence for shooting someone, later committed suicide or died from a drug overdose], for example, we have read a part of his work, and that is exactly what is to be discussed, here we have a guy who is clearly a skilled poet, but he is also a criminal and in many ways a bad human being who deserves to be punished for the crimes he commits, and then we discuss, can you

	publish a criminal's work, and why and why not, so it's quite clear, he is an excellent way to introduce bad sides of a minority at the same time you present the strengths the person has.

Appendix B: Information sent to participants before the interview

English version

As preparation for the interview, I would like you to do two things

1) Your own materials

Please bring two examples of materials that you use or have used and which touch on sexuality and/or gender. It can be, for example, a page from a book, a worksheet or the like. If you want to talk about multimedia material, this is also perfectly ok; it's just important that I have access to it so I can listen to / watch it before the interview.

You can both choose materials that you see as good or bad examples - maybe you even have one of each (but two good ones are also just fine - if you have no good materials, then two bad ones are also okay, but I prefer seeing what you like).

In the interview I will ask you to talk about why you consider these as good / bad examples of language teaching in relation to sexuality and gender.

If it is possible for you to send me a copy of these materials before our interview, then it will make it easier for me to prepare - send them to: j.hansen@ucl.ac.uk

2) Cynthia Nelson's three approaches

Cynthia Nelson (2009) observed and interviewed many language teachers and students, and based on these data, she suggested that language teachers take three approaches to teaching non-normative gender and sexuality. On the next three pages, each approach is presented separately on one page along with some examples of areas that can be included in each approach.
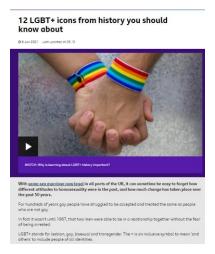
Look at and consider Cynthia Nelson's three approaches to teaching non-normative gender and sexuality.

Think about which approach best matches your own approach in your teaching and why that is. In the interview I will ask you what it is about this approach that fits with your way

of thinking, but you are of course welcome to talk about all three (if you disagree with them, for example, or if your own thoughts do not match a specific approach).

The pictures on the next pages are included to make the approaches a little more vivid, and to give examples of how they could, for example, be included in the language teaching in relation to the choice of materials. It is important to emphasise that they should not in any way be seen as exemplars, and you are welcome to completely ignore them if they confuse rather than bring to life.

Approach 1: A language teacher includes non-normative gender and sexuality...: by looking at stories of people identifying as LGBTQ+; to promote personal development in students so that they learn to tolerate diversity; by letting students explore their own feelings and attitudes.

(*12 LGBT Icons from History You Should Know about - BBC Newsround*, n.d.)

Approach 2: A language teacher includes non-normative gender and sexuality...: by looking at LGBTQ+ groups in society; by opening up a discussion on how LGBTQ+ identities are social constructions and how this varies over time and in different cultures; to promote civil rights and problematize institutionalized discrimination.

The battle over gender: what makes you a man or a woman, anyway?

Adrian Dalton, Julie Bindel, Bethany Black and Gia Milinovich discuss the controversial issue.

By Helen Lewis

(Photo By MARTIN BUREAU/AFP/Getty)

(*The Battle over Gender: What Makes You a Man or a Woman, Anyway?*, n.d.)

Approach 3: A language teacher includes non-normative gender and sexuality...: by looking at how people signal / mark their gender and sexuality through language (such as word choice; pronunciation) and non-verbal signs (such as how they walk or what clothes they are wearing); by analysing how language and culture work in relation to *all* sexual and gender identities, and how these are learned by people in different groups and contexts.

(*Beyond 'he' and 'She': The Rise of Non-Binary Pronouns - BBC News*, n.d.)

This is the Danish version of the information I sent to participants before the interview (note how there are more examples than in the English version).

Som forberedelse til interviewet vil jeg bede dig gøre to ting

1) Dine egne materialer

Medbring to eksempler på materialer som du bruger eller har brugt, og som berører seksualitet og/eller køn. Det kan fx være en side fra en bog, et arbejdsark eller lignende. Hvis du gerne vil snakke om multimedie-materiale, så er det også helt ok; det er bare vigtigt at jeg har adgang til det så jeg kan lytte/se det inden interviewet.

Du kan både vælge materialer som du ser som gode eller dårlige eksempler - måske du ligefrem har et af hvert (men to gode er også helt fint - hvis du ingen gode materialer har, så er to dårlige også okay, men jeg vil helst gerne se hvad du godt kan lide).

I interviewet vil jeg bede dig fortælle om hvorfor du betragter disse som gode/dårlige eksempler på sprogundervisning i forhold til seksualitet og køn.

Hvis det er muligt for dig at sende mig en kopi af disse materialer inden vores interview, så vil det gøre det lettere for mig at forberede mig - send dem til: j.hansen@ucl.ac.uk
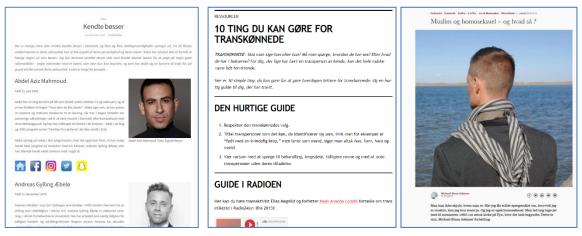

2) Cynthia Nelsons tre 'tilgange'

Cynthia Nelson (2009) observerede og interviewede mange sprogundervisere og studerende, og ud fra disse data foreslog hun at sprogundervisere har tre tilgange i forhold til at undervise i ikke-normativt køn og seksualitet. På de næste tre sider præsenteres hver tilgang separat på én side sammen med nogle eksempler på områder der kunne indgå i hver tilgang.

Kig på og overvej Cynthia Nelsons tre tilgange til undervisning i ikke-normativt køn og seksualitet.

Tænk over hvilken tilgang der bedst matcher din egen tilgang i din undervisning og hvorfor det er. I interviewet vil jeg spørge dig hvad det er ved denne tilgang der passer med din tankegang, men du må selvfølgelig gerne tale om alle tre (hvis du fx er uenig med dem, eller hvis dine egne tanker ikke matcher en speficik tilgang).

Billederne på de næste sider er inkluderet for at gøre tilgangene lidt mere levende, og for at give eksempler på hvordan de fx kunne inddrages i sprogundervisningen i forhold

til materialevalg. Det er vigtigt at understrege at de ikke på nogen måder skal ses som facitlister eller lignende, og du er velkommen til helt at ignorere dem hvis de forvirrer mere end de gavner.

Tilgang 1: En sproglærer inkluderer ikke-normativt køn og seksualitet...: ved at se på historier om personer der identificerer sig som LGBTQ+; for at fremme personlig udvikling hos eleverne, så de lærer at tolerere forskellighed; ved at lade eleverne udforske deres egne følelser og holdninger.

(Aslanes, 2017; *Kendte Bøsser*, 2017; Lodahl, n.d.)

Tilgang 2: En sproglærer inkluderer ikke-normativt køn og seksualitet...: ved at se på LGBTQ+- grupper i samfundet; ved at åbne for en diskussion om hvordan LGBTQ+-identiteter er sociale konstruktioner, og hvordan dette varierer over tid og i forskellige kulturer; for at fremme borgerrettigheder og problematisere institutionaliseret diskrimination.

(*FAKTA Her Må Homoseksuelle Ikke Blive Gift i Europa | Udland | DR*, 2015; Herlufsen, 2021; Møller, 2019; Mørch, 2020)

Tilgang 3: En sproglærer inkluderer ikke-normativt køn og seksualitet...: ved at se på hvordan folk signalerer/markerer deres køn og seksualitet gennem sprog (såsom valg af ord og udtale) og non-verbale tegn (såsom hvordan de går eller hvilket tøj de har på); ved at analysere hvordan sprog og kultur fungerer i forhold til *alle* seksuelle identiteter og kønsidentiteter, og hvordan disse indlæres af folk i forskellige grupper og kontekster.

(Alminde, 2020; Juhl, 2016; *Klog på Sprog*, 2020; Madsen, 2019)

Appendix C: Interview schedule (English version of the Danish original)

Part 1: Prompts

1: What were your initial reactions when you had a look at the prompts?

    Why do you think that prompt chimed with you? (why)

    Why is this important to you as a teacher?

Did you find that the prompt reflected how you actually teach, or was it more about how you would like to teach? (in what ways; why)

    What were your reactions to the other two prompts? (why)

    Did you find that you disagreed with any of the prompts? (how; why)

    Did the prompts make you think about other things that might be relevant to our talk today?

Part 2: Teacher's own materials

1: Can you talk me through the material(s) you have brought?

2: What would normally happen in a session where you were using these materials?

    Is that important for you, i.e. something you actively try to encourage or make happen?

    What is the most important outcome for you when using this material?

    Have you had any negative experiences when using it?

    Do you have any concerns about using it? (pedagogical; cultural; personal)

3: What is the reason you have chosen these materials?

What is it about X that makes it a good/bad example of how Y is taught?

    Are these materials you use in your teaching?

        Particularly if considered bad: why do you use them in your teaching?

What do you think they tell us about teaching gender and sexuality?

What is it in the materials that makes you say that?

4: Do you feel that the (good) materials are representative for how you teach gender and sexuality?

How are other materials that you use different?

Part 3: Focusing on the context

1: You teach in [country]. Do you feel that affects how and what you can teach about gender and sexuality?

Are there any barriers to teaching about these?

Are topics around gender and sexuality something that is being discussed at your university (pedagogical aspects, regulatory issues etc.)

2: Do you think that your students are interested in learning about and/or discussing gender and sexuality? (why/why not) And does this affect your choices?

How do you know this (from personal experience; knowledge of the culture; colleagues etc.)

3: Do you think you focus enough on gender and sexuality in your teaching?

If no:

Why is that? (personal, institutional, national)

What would enable you to focus more on these topics?

If yes:

Is this a personal choice or something you've discussed with your colleagues?

Are there institutional (/national) guidelines that support this?

4: Are you thinking about making changes to how or how much you include gender and sexuality in the future? (what changes; how; why)

Thinking, for instance, about the prompts you looked at before this interview

5: If you were helping or mentoring a new teacher, what advice would you give them with regards to teaching gender and sexuality? (why)

6: Looking back on our time here together today, is there anything you would like to add, anything that you feel I haven't touched upon that might be relevant?

Appendix D: English translations of the information sheet and consent form

Information sheet

LGBTQ+ representation and language teaching in higher education: an exploration of the Danish Lecturer Scheme

Start date: 1 March 2022

End date: 1 March 2023

Information sheet for interview participants

Background

My name is Jesper Hansen and I am inviting you to take part in my research project on 'LGBTQ+ representation and language teaching in higher education'. I am interested in exploring this to understand better how language teachers like yourself work with representation of gender and sexuality and to what extend you see this as important to language teaching in higher education.

Who is carrying out the research?

All data collection and analysis will be carried out by me. I am both a student and staff at UCL, but this research forms part of my educational doctorate (EdD) at UCL Institute of Education. My supervisor is Prof John Gray, and he can be contacted in case you have any concerns about the research or my role in it (john.gray@ucl.ac.uk)

Why are you being invited to take part?

I am inviting you because you work within the framework of 'Lektoratsordningen' (the Danish Lecturer Scheme), which my research focuses on. I aim to interview lecturers from a range of universities around the world. My results will both say something about how language teachers view gender and sexuality in relation to language teaching, and whether there is alignment between their views and how they would like to teach.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

if you choose to take part, I will contact you to find time for an online interview (preferably in Zoom, but I will accommodate your preference where possible). This will last around one hour and be audio and video recorded. As preparation for the interview, I will ask you to do two short tasks, which should take no more than 15-20 minutes: to show me some materials you use that include something relating to gender and/or sexuality; and to think about three statements and what they mean to you.

In the interviews, I am interested in how you include (or don't include) gender and sexuality in your language classes. I am interested in positive experiences and successes as well as negative experiences, consequences and difficulties you have faced.

Will anyone know I have been involved?

You are free to tell people about your experiences and that you have been involved, but we will not tell anybody about your contribution. Your confidentiality is ensured, unless there are concerns about your or other people's safety, in which case I would have a duty to discuss this with a senior supervisor.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

While every care will be taken to anonymise all participants and institutions in this research, there are only very few Danish lecturers around the world. With that in mind, you should make an informed choice about the risk of being identified. This research should not cause concerns to anybody involved, but the nature of it (gender and sexuality) is controversial in some parts of the world. There are sound strategies in place for safe-guarding your identity, such as thorough anonymization of your name and institution, but if you have any questions or concerns, please raise them with the researcher (j.hansen@ucl.ac.uk) before the research so you can discuss further measures where needed.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results will be used in my EdD thesis at UCL Institute of Education. After that all (or parts of it) might be published in academic journals. Some parts might also be used in

presentations and in workshops. In all instances, all parts will be anonymised as outlined earlier in this information sheet.

What if I change my mind?

You can change your mind and withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reason. If you do so, your data will be removed where this is possible.

Data protection privacy notice

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Further information

My name and email: Jesper Hansen (j.hansen@ucl.ac.uk)

Fill in consent form and return to me by …

The project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Consent form

LGBTQ+ representation and language teaching in higher education: an exploration of the Danish Lecturer Scheme

Participant Consent Form

If you are happy to participate in this study please complete this consent form by ticking each item, as appropriate, and return to the research team via the contact details below:

1) I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet, and have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these questions adequately answered. ☐

2) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. ☐

3) I know that I can refuse to answer any or all of the questions and that I can withdraw from the interview at any point. ☐

4) I agree for the interview to be recorded (audio and video), and that recordings will be kept secure and destroyed at the end of the project. I know that all data will be kept under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). ☐

5) I agree that direct quotes may be used in reports (these will be anonymised). ☐

6) I understand that in exceptional circumstances anonymity and confidentiality would have to be broken, for example, if it was felt that practice was putting children at risk, or there were concerns regarding professional misconduct. In these circumstances advice would be sought from a senior manager from another local authority who will

advise us as to the appropriate course of action and as to whether we need to inform the authority of what you have told us. ☐

Name:……………………………………………………………………………………………….……………………….

Signature: …………………………………………………………………. Date: ……………………………………..

Name of researcher: ………………………………………...Jesper Hansen…………………………………………..

Signature: …………………………………………………………………. Date: ……………………………………..

Appendix E: Doctoral Student Ethics Application Form

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute of Education (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in simple terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

Registering your study with the UCL Data Protection Officer as part of the UCL Research Ethics Review Process

If you are proposing to collect personal data i.e. data from which a living individual can be identified **you must be registered with the UCL Data Protection Office before you submit your ethics application for review**. To do this, email the complete ethics

form to the [UCL Data Protection Office](). Once your registration number is received, add it to the form* and submit it to your supervisor for approval. If the Data Protection Office advises you to make changes to the way in which you propose to collect and store the data this should be reflected in your ethics application form.

Please note that the completion of the [UCL GDPR online training]() is mandatory for all PhD students.

Section 1 – Project details

Project title: LGBTQ+ representation and language teaching in higher education: an exploration of the Danish Lecturer Scheme

Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678): Jesper Hansen - 1711491470090

*UCL Data Protection Registration Number: Z6364106/202205/154

Date Issued: 27 May 2022

Supervisor/Personal Tutor: Prof John Gray

Department: Culture, Communication and Media

Course category (Tick one):

PhD   ☐

EdD   ☒

DEdPsy   ☐

If applicable, state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.

Intended research start date: 2nd May 2022

Intended research end date: 1st March 2023

Country fieldwork will be conducted in: online

If research to be conducted abroad please check the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)](#) and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If the FCO advice is against travel this will be required before ethical approval can be granted: *[UCL travel advice webpage](#)*

Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?

Yes   ☐

External Committee Name: Enter text

Date of Approval: Enter text

No   ☒   go to Section 2

If yes:

Submit a copy of the approval letter with this application.

Proceed to Section 10 Attachments.

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the [National Research Ethics Service](#) (NRES) or [Social Care Research Ethics Committee](#) (SCREC). In addition, if your research is based in another institution then you may be required to apply to their research ethics committee.

Section 2 - Research methods summary (tick all that apply)

☒ Interviews

☐ Focus Groups

☐ Questionnaires

☐ Action Research

☐ Observation

☐ Literature Review

☐ Controlled trial/other intervention study

☐ Use of personal records

☐ Systematic review – if only method used go to Section 5

☐ Secondary data analysis – if secondary analysis used go to Section 6

☐ Advisory/consultation/collaborative groups

☐ Other, give details: Enter text

Please provide an overview of the project, focusing on your methodology. This should include some or all of the following: purpose of the research, aims, main research questions, research design, participants, sampling, data collection (including justifications for methods chosen and description of topics/questions to be asked), reporting and dissemination. Please focus on your methodology; the theory, policy, or literary background of your work can be provided in an attached document (i.e. a full research proposal or case for support document). *Minimum 150 words required.*

Aim and research questions

My main aim is to build new understanding of how teachers of Danish language who work in universities outside Denmark as part of the Government-funded Danish Lecturer Scheme view and work, or do not work, with non-normative gender and sexuality in their teaching. Professionally, this will also allow me to support more effectively language teachers who are interested in developing their language teaching and challenge heteronormativity.

To meet this aim, I propose the following research questions:

1. How do Danish Lecturers who are part of the Scheme view the role of gender and sexuality within language teaching?

2. If they include non-normative gender and sexuality, how and why do they do this?

3. What barriers and/or enablers do the Danish lecturers perceive in relation to how they choose to represent gender and sexuality in their language teaching?

Sampling and data collection (including outline of interview topics)

All lecturers who are part of the scheme will be invited to take part in an online semi-structured interview. This allows for co-construction of knowledge, in line with my epistemological position. Discussion will centre on what materials the lecturers' have used which relate to gender and sexuality, and how they view these. This will lead to a discussion about the role and place of non-normative gender and sexuality in language teaching. And finally, we will be talking about what would enable the lecturers to include more non-normative material in their language teaching and what might be the barriers.

To facilitate the discussion, I will be asking participants to do two things before the interview takes place. First, I will ask them to bring some materials they have used in their own teaching which includes gender and/or sexuality. Second, I will ask the participants to reflect on statements relating to the three approaches that Nelson (2009) suggests language teachers take in relation to teaching non-normative sexuality.

Reporting

The findings will form the main part of my EdD and might be used in subsequent publications.

Section 3 – research Participants (tick all that apply)

☐ Early years/pre-school

☐ Ages 5-11

☐ Ages 12-16

☐ Young people aged 17-18

☒ Adults please specify below

☐ Unknown – specify below

☐ No participants

All participants are Lecturers at universities around the world (educated to MA or PhD level).

Note: Ensure that you check the guidelines carefully as research with some participants will require ethical approval from a different ethics committee such as the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) or Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SCREC).

Section 4 - Security-sensitive material (only complete if applicable)

Security sensitive research includes: commissioned by the military; commissioned under an EU security call;   involves the acquisition of security clearances; concerns terrorist or extreme groups.

Will your project consider or encounter security-sensitive material?

Yes* ☐ No ☒

Will you be visiting websites associated with extreme or terrorist organisations?

Yes* ☐ No ☒

Will you be storing or transmitting any materials that could be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?

Yes* ☐ No ☒

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

Section 5 – Systematic reviews of research (only complete if applicable)

Will you be collecting any new data from participants?

Yes* ☐ No ☐

 Will you be analysing any secondary data?

Yes* ☐ No ☐

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

If your methods do not involve engagement with participants (e.g. systematic review, literature review) **and** if you have answered **No** to both questions, please go to **Section 8 Attachments.**

Section 6 - Secondary data analysis (only complete if applicable)

Name of dataset/s: Enter text

Owner of dataset/s: Enter text

Are the data in the public domain?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, do you have the owner's permission/license?

Yes ☐ No* ☐

Are the data special category personal data (i.e. personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation)?

Yes* ☐ No ☐

Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for?

Yes ☐ No* ☐

If no, was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis?

Yes ☐ No* ☐

If no, was data collected prior to ethics approval process?

Yes ☐ No* ☐

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

 If secondary analysis is only method used **and** no answers with asterisks are ticked, go to **Section 9 Attachments.**

Section 7 – Data Storage and Security

Please ensure that you include all hard and electronic data when completing this section.

Data subjects - Who will the data be collected from?

Danish lecturers

What data will be collected? Please provide details of the type of personal data to be collected

Only information related to age and gender (self-identified) will be collected. This is not intended to form part of the data analysis, but it might prove useful. Participants will be allowed to choose their own pseudonym (and if they do not wish to do so, I will assign one).

Is the data anonymised?   Yes ☒ No* ☐

Do you plan to anonymise the data?   Yes* ☒ No ☐

Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* ☒ No ☐

Do you plan to pseudonymise the data? Yes* ☒ No ☐

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

Disclosure – Who will the results of your project be disclosed to?

EdD supervisors and people involved in the viva; if published at a later stage, then to readers of that journal.

Disclosure – Will personal data be disclosed as part of your project?

No

Data storage – Please provide details on how and where the data will be stored i.e. UCL network, encrypted USB stick**, encrypted laptop** etc. Data will be kept on UCL secure servers.

** Advanced Encryption Standard 256 bit encryption which has been made a security standard within the NHS

Data Safe Haven (Identifiable Data Handling Solution) – Will the personal identifiable data collected and processed as part of this research be stored in the UCL Data Safe Haven (mainly used by SLMS divisions, institutes and departments)?

Yes ☐ No ☒

How long will the data and records be kept for and in what format?

Un-anonymised data will be kept until post-Viva. At that point, the document which links the interviewees and the anonymised data will be deleted. The anonymised data will be kept for up to five years after the viva.

Will personal data be processed or be sent outside the European Economic Area? (If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protections in compliance with GDPR and state what these arrangements are)

no

Will data be archived for use by other researchers? (If yes, please provide details.)

no

If personal data is used as part of your project, describe what measures you have in place to ensure that the data is only used for the research purpose e.g. pseudonymisation and short retention period of data'.

Each participant will be asked to choose a pseudonym. If they do not want to do that, I will choose one for them.

The institutions where the participants work will be anonymised to the regional level: Asian university; North/South/East/West European university; North American university.

* Give further details in **Section 8 Ethical Issues**

Section 8 – Ethical Issues

Please state clearly the ethical issues which may arise in the course of this research and how will they be addressed.

All issues that may apply should be addressed. Some examples are given below, further information can be found in the guidelines. *Minimum 150 words required.*

Methods

Sampling

Recruitment

Gatekeepers

Informed consent

Potentially vulnerable participants

Safeguarding/child protection

Sensitive topics

International research

Risks to participants and/or researchers

Confidentiality/Anonymity

Disclosures/limits to confidentiality

Data storage and security both during and after the research (including transfer, sharing, encryption, protection)

Reporting

Dissemination and use of findings

This study adheres to the BERA ethical guidance 2018.

All the participants are educated adults and as such they are able to understand what they are agreeing to participate in. They will understand informed consent and be able to read and understand the information sheet, detailing how their contributions will be used. Participants will have the right not to answer a question and/or withdraw at any time without stating a reason. They can also withdraw their data without giving a reason.

The main ethical issue is that non-normative gender and sexuality are controversial in some countries where the participants teach (Eastern Europe and China in particular). However, as participants are part of the Danish Lecturer Scheme, meaning that formal contracts between the foreign university and Denmark have been agreed, it is very unlikely that this will put any participants at risk. However, part of the information sheet will ask participants to consider this in their own contexts so they do not feel they put themselves at any real or perceived risk.

The main ways of protecting participants will be a) through safe storage of un-anonymized data on UCL servers; and through thorough anonymisation of individuals and the institutions they work at (both outlined earlier in this application)

Please confirm that the processing of the data is not likely to cause substantial damage or distress to an individual

Yes ☒

Section 9 – Attachments.

Please attach your information sheets and consent forms to your ethics application before requesting a Data Protection number from the UCL Data Protection office. Note that they will be unable to issue you the Data Protection number until all such documentation is received

Information sheets, consent forms and other materials to be used to inform potential participants about the research (List attachments below)

Yes ☐ No ☐

Enter text

Approval letter from external Research Ethics Committee   Yes ☐

The proposal ('case for support') for the project Yes ☐

Full risk assessment   Yes ☐

Section 10 – Declaration

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information in this form is correct and that this is a full description of the ethical issues that may arise in the course of this project.

I have discussed the ethical issues relating to my research with my supervisor.

Yes ☒ No ☐

I have attended the appropriate ethics training provided by my course.

Yes ☒ No ☐

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge:

 The above information is correct and that this is a full description of the ethics issues that may arise in the   course of this project.

Name   Jesper Hansen

Date   28/03/2022

Please submit your completed ethics forms to your supervisor for review.

Notes and references

Professional code of ethics

You should read and understand relevant ethics guidelines, for example:

British Psychological Society (2018) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*

Or

[British Educational Research Association](#) (2018) *Ethical Guidelines*

Or

[British Sociological Association](#) (2017) *Statement of Ethical Practice*

Please see the respective websites for these or later versions; direct links to the latest versions are available on the [Institute of Education Research Ethics website](#).

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

If you are planning to carry out research in regulated Education environments such as Schools, or if your research will bring you into contact with children and young people (under the age of 18), you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) CHECK, before you start. The DBS was previously known as the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). If you do not already hold a current DBS check, and have not registered with the DBS update service, you will need to obtain one through at IOE.

Ensure that you apply for the DBS check in plenty of time as will take around 4 weeks, though can take longer depending on the circumstances.

Further references

Robson, Colin (2011). Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner researchers (3rd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

This text has a helpful section on ethical considerations.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011) The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People: A Practical Handbook. London: Sage.

This text has useful suggestions if you are conducting research with children and young people.

Wiles, R. (2013) What are Qualitative Research Ethics? Bloomsbury.

A useful and short text covering areas including informed consent, approaches to research ethics including examples of ethical dilemmas.

Departmental Use

If a project raises particularly challenging ethics issues, or a more detailed review would be appropriate, the supervisor must refer the application to the Research Development Administrator via email so that it can be submitted to the IOE Research Ethics Committee for consideration. A departmental research ethics coordinator or representative can advise you, either to support your review process, or help decide whether an application should be referred to the REC. If unsure please refer to the guidelines explaining when to refer the ethics application to the IOE Research Ethics Committee, posted on the committee's website.

Student name:

Student department:

Course:

Project Title:

Reviewer 1

Supervisor/first reviewer name: JOHN GRAY

Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?

No

Supervisor/first reviewer signature: ███████

Date: 28/03/2022

Reviewer 2

Second reviewer name: Will Gibson

Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?

No

Second reviewer signature:

Date: 29.03.22

Decision on behalf of reviewers

Approved ☐

Approved subject to the following additional measures ☐

Not approved for the reasons given below ☐

Referred to the REC for review ☐

Points to be noted by other reviewers and in report to REC:

Comments from reviewers for the applicant:

Once it is approved by both reviewers, students should submit their ethics application form to the Centre for Doctoral Education team: IOE.CDE@ucl.ac.uk.