Emotions at work: Call for investigation of the affective side of teacher identity

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Abstract

The present article aims to scrutinize teacher emotions as an important affective component of constructing teacher identity. Werbińska's (2017) model of teacher identity, and, more precisely, her proposed concept of discontinuity, is used as the theoretical framework of this paper. It is believed that unexpected change and discontinuity resulting from rapid educational reforms and a neoliberal economy affect teacher well-being. Consequently, it is argued that discontinuity induces mainly negative feelings while continuity, if guaranteed, fosters mainly positive feelings. This observation should be used as an argument for promoting stability in the teaching profession if quality teaching is to be maintained. Furthermore, suggestions for future research on teacher affectivity are given.

Keywords: emotions; language teacher; identity; affectivity

1. Introduction

The study of language teacher emotions in the construction of his/her professional identity is a relatively new field (cf. Martinez Agudo, 2018). A lot of attention and research endeavor have been put into learner affectivity and traits that can inhibit or foster language learning. Seldom is it emphasized that these feelings may be a consequence of what happens in class, including teacher competences

and behavior. These, in turn, can be an outcome of an interplay of a variety of social (such as school atmosphere) or general educational conditions, as well as cognitive (such as personal theories), knowledge-related, skill-related and affective factors. The latter may characterize both the personality traits and emotions teachers experience daily while performing their professions. These days, it seems that teachers experience more stress due to less stable working conditions, higher demands from different parties, working under time and high-stake exam pressure, etc. Thus a teacher's well-being should be placed at the center of attention as it has an impact on teaching, and consequently, on student learning.

The goal of this article is to look at the affective side of language teaching as an important component of teacher identity. This relatively new direction in applied linguistics, also referred to as the "emotional turn" (Shapiro, 2010), takes into account emotions and emotionality as essentials of humanity. It will be shown what kind of emotions teachers experience in class, what they may depend on, and how they impact teacher identity, particularly in the hard times of instability caused by a neoliberal economy or repeated educational reforms. As Shapiro (2010) argues, "an increased awareness of emotional experience serves not only to increase rapport among educators, but also to counteract the persistent dehumanization of the teaching profession" (p. 618).

2. Teacher identity and emotions: In search of a model

While teacher identity has been investigated for some time in pedagogy and educational research (e.g., Hargreaves, 1998; Kwiatkowska, 2005), it is still a relatively new area of investigation in reference to language teacher identity. Why should a language teacher differ from other subject teachers? First of all, the difference lies in the nature of the subject taught and the competences required to do it. Language teaching is much more student-oriented and involves more interaction and communication between class members than any other class. This also means that the teacher has to be involved in multi-directional interactions and have "divided attention" to various group activities. Secondly, language teachers often have to work as cultural and language mediators in school settings which become more and more often multicultural and multilingual. Furthermore, Borg (2006) mentions that in contrast to teaching other subjects, teaching a foreign language requires organizing out-of-class practice activities, using more innovative technology, and organizing work in groups. There is also a necessity to individualize, as more often than other teachers language teachers have to cope with mixed-ability groups. These tasks pose additional demands on the teachers' job, such as seeking creative solutions, constant self-study and development to maintain linguistic and cultural skills. Despite coping

with these difficulties, language teachers may not always have an equally high status as teachers of other subjects.

Furthermore, in his recent work, Farell (2011) distinguished three major categories of roles in emerging teacher identities: Teacher as Manager (i.e., a person who organizes and controls work done in the classroom), Teacher as Professional (i.e., a person who is affiliated to his/her job and shows dedication to it) and teacher as Acculturator (i.e., a person preparing students for life outside the classroom setting, which is often multilingual and multicultural). It is particularly this last role that distinguishes language teachers from other content subject teachers.

For these reasons, the teaching profession has been observed to be unpredictable and dynamic. There is no static in teaching. It takes much more time for the teacher to master tricks of the trade as each day brings new challenges, new problems to solve and new lessons to teach. On the way to becoming fully professional there are many haps and mishaps. That is why some individuals persist in their teaching, while others, in the face of failure or difficulties, resign and change profession. The road to achieving professionalism in teaching is full of meanders, thus making the formation of language teacher identity a field worthy of investigation.

Among many different models of constructing language teacher identity (e.g., Cheung, Ben Said, & Park, 2015, Miller, 2009), I would like to point out those which were recently proposed by Polish researchers. The starting point for the following discussion is the recent model proposed by Werbińska (2017), which seems to be the most versatile and encapsulates almost all teaching aspects across the lifespan. Developed over a number of years of qualitative research, the 3ALTIF (i.e., 3A Language Teacher Identity Framework) model describes the dynamics of language teacher identity development.

The 3ALTIF distinguishes three crucial components that describe teacher professionalism: *affiliation, attachment* and *autonomy. Affiliation* denotes the integrity of an individual, of his/her motives for choosing the profession, and professional endeavors. A person who is strongly affiliated to the teaching profession will show dedication to the preparation for and the carrying out of the teaching mission. *Attachment* refers to the personal theories and beliefs that a teacher holds towards different teaching practices which derive from his/her study, as well as experience. This manifests itself in teacher choices as to what to teach and how, and what to omit. *Autonomy* relates to the teacher's ability to make informed and independent decisions as well as to learn from one's own actions. Werbińska (2017) characterizes the concept by three crucial components, i.e. agency, reflectivity and resilience, the last of these understood as resistance to external influences, such as demands from school authorities, colleague teachers, parents, etc. All these concepts develop in a teacher under special conditions, characterized by *continuity* or *discontinuity*. The latter term was adapted by Werbińska (2017) from

English (2013), and the former was introduced by the author herself. The two terms accurately encapsulate the growth of the teacher identity. In times of continuity, the teacher can slowly and methodically improve his/her competencies, whereas when facing discontinuity, they are confronted with many challenges and unpredictable circumstances. When too much strain is felt, the teacher may develop a negative attitude towards the profession and even leave the job.

3. Continuity and discontinuity as sources of emotions

Discontinuity can be marked by such events as sudden educational reforms, of which teachers were not informed, and may constitute a threat to the stability of their employment or pose new challenges. In the Polish context, an example of this is the reform (Ministry of Polish Education, 2014) admitting six-year-old children to primary school, which has inevitably caused a number of educational and behavioral problems, namely, teachers having unrealistic expectations towards child self-controlled behavior and cognitive ability, and the lack of preparedness to handle these. Also the recent educational reform of 2017 (Ministry of Polish Education) has resulted in changing the structure of the schooling system; thus teachers who had worked in lower secondary schools had to change their place of work, combine a few workplaces, or even change their profession. Even if the change ends with success, that is, keeping the job, adjusting to new work conditions always brings about some stress, apprehension associated with a new setting, colleagues, authority, and so on, and a sense of loss, when forced to break relationships with old colleagues and students. This is particularly painful if the decision of changing the job was not made by the teacher, and was not a mark of his/her agency, but enforced and unexpected.

Another reason for lack of stability in the profession may be the impact of a neoliberal economy which is also permeating the teaching profession, particularly in the private sector. Many language teachers work for private language schools. Often employed on short term contracts, they cannot be certain of employment for the following years. While this flexible employment can be appreciated by a beginning teacher, after a couple of times of starting anew, investing one's time and intellectual resources with ever changing groups of learners, it is difficult to develop a sense of attachment or affiliation towards the educational institution, learners or the profession. Teaching often becomes a kind of service on the private market governed by the rules of demand and supply. Needless to say, lack of stability and lack of reward for continuous investments in the profession result in teacher burnout (Pitura, 2014).

When there is lack of stability, and there are intense human interactions, emotions come into play. Although omnipresent in daily life, they are still difficult

to define. According to an encyclopaedic definition, an emotion is "a complex experience of consciousness, bodily sensation, and behavior that reflects the personal significance of a thing, an event, or a state of affairs" (www.Britannica.com/science/emotion). Izard (2010), who investigated the complexity of the notion and a way of defining it by numerous scientists, identified different sources, functions and ways of regulating emotions. Among the functions mentioned, three seem to be most relevant for the current discussion:

> [emotions] motivate cognition and action and provide emotion information (...) to guide and coordinate the engagement of the individual in the physical and social environment for coping, adaptation, affiliation, and well-being (...). They also increase (or decrease) salience or value of an event to facilitate adaptive (or maladaptive) associations between context, event, emotion feeling, and response (Izard, 2010, p. 365).

To elaborate on the above citation, emotions are that psychological component that decides about the teacher's well-being, prompt the teacher into action, or conversely, make him fall into inertia. And yet, in the study of teacher identity, little attention has been given to them or to affect, nor are they seen in Werbińska's (2017) model, although their place can be found within the constructs of dis/continuity.

A first observation that teacher emotions lie at the bottom of formation of teacher identity was recently made by Zembylas (2003). He assumes that in the currently prevailing poststructuralist approach to the study of language and language teacher identity, the latter has to be theorized as a construct that is dynamic, and that is dependent upon owner and his agency. A second assumption is recognition that teacher emotions allow a better understanding of the teacher self, provoke him/her to action, and stimulate growth, knowledge and awareness. Therefore, construction of teacher identity is grounded in emotions and is a site of struggle for change/transformation and resilience to change. According to Hargreaves (1998), teacher emotions/affectivity could be introduced as yet another component of the language teacher identity model for the reasons mentioned above. As he says, "emotions are at the heart of teaching" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835).

Another attempt of constructing a foreign language teacher identity model on Polish ground was recently proposed by Szymankiewicz (2017). Although it was not empirically proven, nor derived from empirical findings, it can be appreciated for the fact that it emphasized teacher affectivity as an important component of teacher identity. She proposed the KOMPAS model to describe the construction of the beginning teacher identity. Its components, starting with the first letters of the words in Polish would be: construction of knowledge, observation and openness towards experimenting, meta-awareness and metacognition, practice through reflection, activity, self-awareness and self-regulation. Particularly the last component, self- regulation, has certain

features in common with emotions and learning. The author distinguishes self-regulation as an important condition in the process of learning to become a teacher. Following Dębska, Guła-Kubiszewska, Straościak, and Jagusz (2008, cited in Szymankiewicz, 2017, p. 118), she characterizes self-regulation as a complex process based on large resources of procedural and declarative knowledge, an appropriate attitudinal stance, as well as, self-control. Self-regulation is indispensable for learning, yet it can be trained if not developed to an adequate level. Szymankiewicz (2017, p. 121) observes that self-regulation draws on cognitive resources and the ability to regulate emotions. For the latter to develop, self-awareness and self-reflection are necessary. She also claims that individuals of certain personality traits are more often predisposed towards developing self-regulation and self-awareness, thus pointing to the link between personality and emotions, both constituting the affective side of the teacher identity. This view is similarly endorsed by Golombek and Doran (2014, p. 105), who argue that "emotion, cognition, and activity continuously interact and influence each other, on both conscious and unconscious levels, as teachers plan, enact, and reflect on their teaching".

To summarize, it appears that the construction of teacher identity is a lifelong and dynamic process, which consists in an interplay of teacher cognition and affectivity. Affectivity refers to emotional states which are subject to change, depending on environmental factors and innate predispositions/personality traits. If the teaching environment is characteristic of stability, predictability and continuity, teachers may experience mainly positive feelings. Contrarily, the lack of stability, such as in employment, lack of predictability, such as changing exam requirements, curricula, etc., and the resulting sense of discontinuity unavoidably cause negative feelings. Yet, it is argued that a teacher, by going through these negative circumstances and finding ways to overcome the issues, learns the most in his/her professional development.

4. Positive emotions and good teaching

Emotions lie at the heart of good teaching, which requires that teachers be emotionally involved in their profession, emotionally engaged with their learners, and show an emotional passion towards the subject they are teaching. Agoda (2018) observes:

> Good teachers are not well-oiled machines, and good teaching is not just a matter of knowing the subject matter, and being able to use all the latest techniques while teaching, or even being efficient. Good teaching is an emotionally charged event where teachers connect with each student as they passionately deliver their lesson in a pleasurable environment (p. vii).

The teaching profession has always been considered a very rewarding one. A teacher can expect a lot of returns on his/her investments, which are, however, immaterial. The teacher can experience a sense of joy and satisfaction after a successfully conducted lesson, a sense of pride when his/her students pass exams well, a sense of passion and excitement when they plan and implement new innovative and creative ideas. Successful experiences boost energy to undertake new ventures. They allow to experience *flow* in Csikszentmihalyi's (2009) terms. Such a state is deeply rooted in emotions, and yet, is regarded to be the most conducive to learning as it engages the whole person's body and mind. Experiencing flow while learning to teach is also possible. However, relating to the flow theory, it has to be remembered that not everyone can experience the state of flow as certain conditions have to be met. First of all, one has to face a challenge. To do this, one must have the appropriate skills and a sense of adequacy for the job. Secondly, one has to be emotionally engaged and cognitively active while performing the job. It seems that teaching particularly meets this criterion, as in a lesson, dozens of decisions have to be made on a micro-scale, such as when to stop an activity, how to react to students' misbehavior, etc. Thirdly, there should be clear criteria of evaluation as this allows to compare one's performance against these criteria. Finally, the motivation to teach should be primarily intrinsic, that is, financial motivation or other extrinsic motives cannot be the only motive for taking up the profession. One must have enjoyment and satisfaction from doing the job. Certainly, it is not possible to experience flow unceasingly as it is emotionally driven and would be devastating in the long run (King & Ng, 2018). Yet, it seems that the ability to experience it marks high quality of teaching and progress, and this is what distinguishes an artist from an artisan.

The flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) also accounts for why some people feel happy in their profession and why some others do not. For this reason, it lay the groundwork for the new direction in the study of human psychology, that is, positive psychology. Positive emotions originate from the interaction with other human beings, that is, students. The interaction and emotional engagement is what accounts for the humanity of the profession. Emotional engagement of the teacher and learners seems to be the essence of good teaching. For this reason, it is important to set up a positive climate in the classroom (cf. Gabryś-Barker, 2015) as it helps build the relationships between students and the teacher, and, consequently, contributes to better learning. If there is a mutual relationship between students and teachers, it gives both parties a sense of belonging to the schooling institution and creates an emotional bond with it. Human connection is what motivates people to choose the teaching profession, and what brings long-term satisfaction in pursuing this career. So engagement in teaching and in the teaching institution is a crucial concept enabling satisfaction

and well-being of teachers and learners, as well as their professional growth. Finally, it has to be emphasized that emotional identity is not only built through interactions with students but also with other professionals, that is, teachers in the staffroom, the head teacher, or parents at the meeting.

5. Negative emotions: Their nature and impact on the construction of teacher identity

It would be unrealistic to expect that only positive emotions take place in the language classroom, and that only they can contribute to the professional growth of teachers. Negative emotions also commonly take place in the teaching profession as at its heart is care for other human beings. Where there is care, there may often be a sense of disappointment with student misbehavior, their lack of interest, lack of gratitude or reciprocity. One can also feel dissatisfaction or even anger with the lack of support or high demands, pressure from the institutions, and powerlessness in meeting educational goals (Shapiro, 2010, p. 664).

Zembylas (2003) observes that emotions are context embedded, that is, they always exist within a given culture, yet some of them can be promoted or suppressed. For example, school culture may require that teachers control their negative emotions, such as anger, vulnerability and anxiety as a mark of their professionalism, and promote the necessity to show emotions of empathy and kindness. Thus teacher emotions can be held on a leash and are not spontaneously felt. This self-control and self-regulation denote a certain kind of emotional labor that definitely puts a strain on the teacher's emotional well-being. It is easier to perform by people who have higher degrees of emotional intelligence (EI) (Goleman, 1995). EI is characteristic of emotional awareness and the ability to direct emotions in one's thinking and behavior. This capacity helps teachers to cope with refrained emotions or to develop resilience to uncomfortable situations, to use Werbińska's (2017) terms.

Resilience is, however, the capacity of only a few autonomous individuals. It is inadvertently connected with the sense of loneliness. It is often a negative emotion as teachers are usually confined to their classrooms, having little opportunity to receive supportive feedback from colleagues or head teachers. Therefore, any crucial decisions have to be made solely by them, and yet any possible failures are also ascribed totally to them. One has to be highly competent and able to learn from one's failures. It requires critical reflection and self-awareness to look back and think about one's actions, draw conclusions and consider them for future situations.

So far the most frequently investigated concept in the study of teacher emotions has been *vulnerability.* Vulnerability is not an emotion per se, yet it influences emotional behavior. Vulnerability is "a complex, multi-dimensional,

multi-faceted emotional experience resulting from situational interaction with a teacher's identity, beliefs, values, and perceptions of their own competence" (Reio Jr., 2005, p. 2). Teachers are willing to experience vulnerability when the context they work in makes them feel safe enough to open up and reveal their emotions. They can only risk it if at stake is building good relationships, either among themselves as community of teachers, or with students, where student learning is the goal per se. When teachers feel fear, powerlessness or anxiety, their vulnerability and willingness to take risks are affected. Such experiences take place in moments of change, such as an educational reform (Reio, Jr., 2005).

According to Lasky (2005), vulnerability can have two dimensions: willingness/openness and inefficaciousness/protectiveness. Which dimension the teacher shows depends on his/her beliefs, identity, trust in competence as a teacher, etc. Vulnerability can be perceived as a lens through which different emotions can be magnified or remain neutral. Positive vulnerability results in open communication and increased communication with students and colleagues in the staff room. Negative vulnerability leads to anxiety and fear, protectiveness, and in building emotional barriers that might protect a teacher from experiencing negative feelings (Lasky, 2005).

It must be noted that vulnerability is not static. It can shift from a positive to negative dimension, depending on the sociocultural context and the discursive practices that surround them, for example, in the media. This means that a positive outlook on the teaching profession may boost teacher self-esteem, and consequently, encourage a more proactive approach in the classroom. By contrast, downgrading the profession in public media, as well as in public opinion, results in a critical approach to teachers, questioning their professionalism and thus undermining their self-esteem. What can help teachers move from negative to positive vulnerability is the teachers' sense of agency. The only way to cope with negative vulnerability is not to show avoidance but to take full responsibility for their teaching, which manifests itself in competence-based decision making in class.

Teacher competencies, then, are the key to lowering the sense of negative vulnerability. The language teacher competencies may be particularly challenged in times of global mobility as he/she is no longer the only source of language. This is often the case when in the classroom, the teacher can meet near native speaking children, born to bilingual families, or returning migrants from English speaking countries (Song, 2016).

The same feelings of inadequacy can also be felt by young teachers who are not sufficiently prepared for the teaching profession, particularly in respect to pedagogical competencies. The spread of neoliberalism in education resulted in numerous educational institutions issuing a diploma with a right to teach without adequate time dedicated to teaching-practice or a well-supervised practicum.

This is another reason why many teachers may feel completely at a loss when faced with over twenty children, each trying to direct attention to themselves. Teachers' unpreparedness to cope with the situation results in panic and anger with students who do not behave in the ideal way described in teacher training coursebooks.

Another reason for vulnerability and negative feelings is the sense of instability brought on by change and reform, especially if it is unexpected. Summarizing the research findings, Reio, Jr. (2005) found that unexpected change and ambiguity lead to negative emotions which consequently influence teachers. He pointed out, among others, that they impact teacher *risk taking* and identity formation, and that they affect teacher learning and development by creating the environment of uncertainty.

Risk taking has been observed to be a desirable feature in teacher development as it enables problem-solving in new unconventional ways. It can be an incentive for progress and creativity in all spheres of the teaching profession, starting from lesson planning and finishing with class management. However, teachers are less likely to take risks in a climate of uncertainty. This particularly concerns teachers who have already gained some experience, have taught for twenty years or more, and should have gained some stability in their profession. They are less willing to adapt to change and learn new things, particularly if the novelty stands in contrast to their beliefs. This stance may be an outcome of negative experiences with repeated reforms (Hargreaves, 1994), and therefore limit their risk taking.

This is not to say that all reform has negative effects. A reform in its roots is supposed to improve education. However, what increases teacher vulnerability is the reform which was brought on with little or no forewarning, and thus did not give teachers time for preparation, either mentally or organizationally. Another reason that causes resentment in view of reform is the amount of workload needed for additional paperwork, amplified accountability for student progress, participation in school committees and other organizational duties.

Another negative consequence of abrupt reform is the decrease or absence of mentoring by older teachers to the younger ones. This causes fast burnout of the novice teacher who, in absence of support, often leaves the profession. Yet, continuous mentoring could help develop mutual understanding and support, and eventually, foster resilience to change. Mentoring could thus be beneficial for both parties (Reio, Jr., 2005).

A threat to risk-taking was also caused by the impact of a neoliberal economy in education: external evaluations, ranking of schools, teacher performance, etc. In neoliberal times, the job of the teacher constantly undergoes evaluation by a variety of stakeholders: of the head teacher who cares about the placement of the school in the ranking, of parents who want their children to do well on high stake exams, of students themselves who expect engaging, as well as effective

lessons and, finally, of other teachers who compete against each other in order to secure their own job. All these expectations and demands constitute a threat to the teacher's identity as an independent, developing decision maker. They inhibit the development of autonomy, and eventually turn the teacher into the pursuer of instructions, teaching students only what is required in school exams. As Shapiro (2010) remarks on her experience, "the more she taught, the less she would want to learn" (p. 616).

The fact that teachers experience both positive and negative emotions at their workplace should lead to the recognition that the teaching profession requires huge emotional labor, which often leads to emotional exhaustion. It is this factor that can determine whether someone feels affiliated to the profession, or is a mere performer of imposed duties. Affiliation to the profession is a construct of teacher identity (Werbińska, 2017). Teachers who do not feel affiliated to the profession are detached from it, thus do not cater for constructing their identity as a professional. Additionally, it has to be recognized that due to changing external stimuli such as working conditions, group sizes, workload, bureaucratic paperwork and contacts with other persons (i.e., students, teachers, head teacher, parents) identity is constructed and reconstructed anew, along with changing teacher knowledge and beliefs about teaching, which derive from their experience. As Schuttz and Lee (2007) put it, "this construction and reconstruction of their identities is based not only on the continually changing self-knowing of teachers, but also on teachers' continually changing perceptions of the profession itself" (p. 173).

Emotions work as a lens through which teachers perceive themselves as teachers and construct and reconstruct their identity. By demonstrating emotions openly in class they also communicate the way they feel about teaching to their students. Experiencing positive emotions in teaching, such as those resulting from a positive school-climate, supportive head teachers, and rewarding relations with students, can bring about confirmation of emerging teacher identity. By contrast, negative emotions and experiences, such as disappointment and frustration with lack of student progress or lack of appreciation (also in financial terms), may raise doubts about the purposefulness of one's endeavors, and thus undermine the teacher's emerging identity. Teachers may ask themselves questions like "Am I a good teacher?" or "Should I keep teaching or search for a new job?" Therefore, it has to be borne in mind that teachers' professional identities cannot be separated from the emotions teachers are experiencing. For the sake of keeping teachers in the profession, a friendly working environment should be maintained and teacher-well-being should be a focus at both the micro- and macro-level, that is, by the schooling institution and through educational policy.

To sum up, it seems that negative emotions are experienced mainly in the moments of discontinuity, such as problems with stable employment, rapidly

introduced changes in the curricula, and lack of appreciation for work which does not find reflection in additional pay or rewards. These negative feelings can lead to teacher burnout and abandonment of the profession. In this sense, they are considered a threat to teacher professional identity as experienced teachers, who have all the professional and psychological prerequisites for teaching, are lost forever.

6. Coping with negative emotions

Emotional labor has to be recognized as a part and parcel of everyday teaching. Experiencing an array of strong emotions puts a strain on the teachers' psyche, which, when too heavy, may result in an emotional breakdown, or the feeling of burnout. Though this primarily concerns negative feelings such as stress and anger, it may also be the result of positive emotions if experienced too intensively, that is, too often or too much (King & Ng, 2018). In order to prevent or overcome the feelings of anger, stress, burnout, boredom and many others, each teacher must develop various survival strategies.

One way of coping with persistent negative feelings caused by the ever growing demands of the profession and, at the same time, preserving the identity of professionalism, is to hide the negative emotions. To do so, teachers develop emotional detachment from the students and their colleagues, which is severely unjustified in a profession where caring for others has a core value. As a result, teachers develop two identities: one of a detached cold professional administrator, who pursues all the regulations of the authorities, and the other of an emotional human being, willing to get involved in authentic interactions with other human beings and willing to share his/her emotions with others. This dichotomy causes constant tension and, when unresolved, leads to exhaustion and eventually burnout. Detaching oneself from the profession and remaining emotionally aloof does not seem to be a good option. The teacher not only deprives himself of the satisfaction that emotional involvement with other people brings, but misses out on how teacher efforts and investments are realized (King & Ng, 2018).

Other educators recommend that teachers treat difficult moments rich in emotional strain as a moment of learning. They should take time to pause, do critical self-reflection about life and professional priorities, and focus only on those. Continuous teacher learning, which may include both formal learning, as well as informal learning through observation, reflection and mentoring, is one way of recovery from change (Pitura, 2014).

Alternatively, teachers are encouraged to cater to their well-being by maintaining a work-life balance. This basically means learning to divide time between work and leisure, and learning to assertively refuse performing too many duties when they become overwhelming. As Holmes (2005) put it:

> Well-being requires harmony between mind and body. It implies a sense of balance and ease with the myriad dimensions of life. When we feel a sense of well-being, we are not under-stimulated and bored, nor are we suffering under the burden of excessive stress and pressure. We have a sense of control over our work and even over our destiny in life (p. 5).

Truly, one cannot be responsible for emotions teachers experience in their private lives. Yet, it should not be overlooked that certain negative feelings and stressors are evoked by the school and classroom environment and the teaching profession. Thus teacher emotional well-being should also be an objective of educational policy makers.

On a smaller scale, teachers should be encouraged to become aware of their emotions, and to reflect on their sources so that they could learn to control them and cultivate open vulnerability. This state can be achieved by self-reflection, but also through joint discussions in the staffroom (Nguyen, 2018). For the latter to be successful however, the atmosphere at the workplace has to be supportive and devoid of criticism.

7. Conclusions and implications for further research

It seems that research into language teacher emotions is a relatively new area. It remains to be investigated how teacher emotions affect language teacher identity, yet I wish to advocate that affectivity should be added to the models of constructing language teacher identity. A more comprehensive look at teacher emotions is required as, to date, researchers have dealt with individual emotions such as stress and satisfaction in reference to language learners, and not language teachers (Lemarchand-Chauvin & Tardieu, 2018). Yet, the cross-influence between the two seems to be reciprocal, that is, teacher emotions affect students, and student negative emotions can fire back at teachers.

First of all, the dynamics of teacher emotions has to be recognized. Different emotions can be felt in different stages of teacher development, that is, by the beginning teacher, the experienced teacher and the soon-to-retire teacher. Also, it has to be recognized that it is difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between positive and negative emotions, because experiencing negative emotions can also lead to positive changes and emotions.

What is more, emotions are situation-specific. It would be worthwhile to investigate what emotions teachers are most likely to succumb to, in what circumstances teachers give in, and in what situations teachers can control emotions. What might the factors be that lead to an emotional breakdown or emotional control? What strategies do teachers develop to cope with negative emotions? How can they cater for their emotional well-being?

Furthermore, the impact of emotions on teacher decision making could be investigated through participatory research, that is, class observation, reflective journals, interviews. Additionally, the variables of educational contexts, such as status, working conditions, pay, educational policy, impact of head teachers and peer colleagues could be regarded as important for research conducted within the poststructuralist framework. All these questions suggest that following the investigation into second language learners, emotions in second language teachers will constitute an exciting research field in the coming years.

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