

“Positive feelings about my work: I needed it!” Emotions and emotion self-regulation in language teachers

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Similar to learning, teaching is not exclusively a cognitive matter. Teachers' emotions play a significant role in their teaching practice. For language teachers especially, the link between teachers' emotions, identities and well-being has been identified as a key factor in their lives (Day & Lee, 2011) as well as in their professional development (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Kubanyiova, 2012). Although teachers' well-being is essential in remaining engaged in the profession, little empirical work has been done to investigate how teachers cope with the affective complexities of teaching. Expectations, interest and satisfaction, as well as anxiety and frustration, are often an unspoken part of a teacher's everyday work. This empirical exploratory study aims at investigating which emotions language teachers in higher education experience and what strategies they use to self-regulate these emotions. For this purpose, we collected and analysed data from teachers in two university language centres in Germany using a variety of instruments, including questionnaires, group discussions and researchers' logs. The data show that both positive and negative emotions occur and are related to three main sources: the learners, the teaching-learning context and the teachers themselves. In addition, we identified a number of self-regulation strategies that are affected by various factors, such as individual sensitivity or personal attitudes. This paper will focus on the crucial role that emotions seem to play in the professional well-being of university language teachers and will link to theories of emotion and teaching practice.

Keywords: language teaching, language teachers, well-being, emotions, emotion self-regulation, affective strategies, functions of emotions

1 Introduction

The need to pay attention to the emotional conditions of teachers' work has been repeatedly advocated in the last decades (Day & Gu, 2010, p. 6; DiPardo & Potter, 2003; Gabryś-Barker & Gałajda, 2016). Seen from this perspective, teacher professional growth is not only based on an intellectual body of knowledge and competences, but also on emotional and affective work. Identifying the

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challenges of teachers' emotional well-being is then fundamental in order to support them in maintaining a positive balance and in developing resilience in their professional lives (Day & Gu, 2010, p. 6).

However, although teachers' well-being is essential for staying engaged in the profession, little empirical work has been done to investigate how teachers cope with the affective complexities of teaching. The manifold facets of teaching practice, such as preparing classes, managing interaction with and among learners in the classroom, evaluating learners' performances, taking part in meetings, dealing with the administration, taking care of one's professional development, may trigger various emotions, including interest and satisfaction as well as anxiety and frustration. These are often unspoken parts of teachers' everyday work and may contribute to a sense of isolation in the profession, as is increasingly being cited in the literature (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 160; Labaree, 2000, p. 230).

Up to now, the research on teacher emotions has mainly focused on negative emotions, such as frustration, tension and burnout, which are frequently associated with external causes or conflicts (Kennedy, 2013; Zembylas, 2003, p. 107). Although attention to teacher emotions has increased in recent years (Gallo, 2016; Kubanyiova, 2012), there is still a need to deepen our knowledge about different aspects of teacher emotions and to establish their importance in practice. In our qualitative study, we investigate the emotions of language teachers in higher education and the strategies they use to self-regulate their emotions in relation to teaching. In pursuing this, we draw on theoretical perspectives on emotions in order to develop an understanding of the variety of teacher emotions and how these interact with the many factors involved in teachers' practices.

In this paper, we will first illustrate the theoretical background of the investigation (Section 2), defining the key notions of emotion and emotion regulation and referring to relevant literature on language learning and teaching. After formulating our research questions, we will describe our methodological approach, the context and introduce the participants of the study (Section 3). We will then present our main findings drawing from the analysis of our data (Section 4). Following a discussion of these findings and a critical reflection on the investigative process itself, we will draw conclusions and formulate questions for further research.

2 Theoretical background

The theoretical background for our exploratory research draws on contributions from various fields, including neurophysiology, cognitive psychology and the psychology of language learning and teaching.

Neurobiological evidence confirms that cognition and emotions are closely linked and that “[e]motions help to direct our reasoning into the sector of our knowledge that is relevant to the current situation or problem”, thus allowing for problem-solving, decision-making and more social behaviour in general (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007, p. 8). Following this evidence, Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) identify the overlap between emotions and cognition as “emotional thought”, which is the basis for further processes such as

“learning, memory, decision making and creativity, as well as high reason and rational thinking” (p. 9).

This close interrelation between emotions, cognition, learning and decision-making has found recognition in the literature on SLA and more recently on language teaching. As a result, an attention to emotion and identity-related aspects of teacher development (Kubanyiova, 2012), to the affective dimension in classroom management (Arnold & Fonseca-Mora, 2016; Gkonou & Mercer, 2017;), and to positive psychology in language teaching (Gabryś-Barker & Gałajda, 2016; MacIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2016) has started to play a role both in research and, to a lesser extent, in teacher development.

Literature on emotion and cognition in the field of psychology and in the field of language teaching are the two domains we refer to in defining our theoretical approach. For the purpose of this paper, we will focus on emotions, affect, aspects of the self-regulation of emotion, and the function of emotions in decision-making processes and teaching practice.

2.1 Defining and classifying emotions

Definitions and conceptualizations of emotions in the psychological and neurobiological literature vary considerably depending on the theoretical framework of inquiry. Since discussing in detail the debate surrounding the nature and classification of emotions would go beyond the scope of the present article, we will provide a brief discussion illustrating the main characteristics of emotion, whereby emotions (and feelings) are seen at the intersection of neurobiological, cognitive and social phenomena.

From the neurobiological point of view, Damasio (2002, p. 15) defines emotions as observable, neurophysiological, transitory reactions to a stimulus, either external or internal. Damasio contrasts this to feelings, which he defines as the non-observable, private experience of emotions. Emotions can additionally be seen as steadily changing processes rather than states resulting from “appraisals of the significance of what has happened for personal well-being” (Lazarus, 1991, p. 353). As outlined by Barcelos (2015, pp. 308–310), emotions are interactive and dynamic, as well as socially and culturally constructed. These more recent conceptualisations consider emotions to be processes that guide actions rather than viewing them as states or as basic reactions. Furthermore, emotions are closely related to other aspects of individuals such as their beliefs and identities. This interrelation is manifest in two constructs: first, in the emotion-belief spiral (Frijda & Mesquita, 2000, p. 49) and, second, in the triadic beliefs-emotions-identities (BEI) construct proposed by Barcelos (2015) – who draws upon Woods’ (1996) beliefs-assumptions-knowledge (BAK) construct. These constructs emphasise how inextricably connected the concepts are.

This view of emotions as dynamic, socially constructed, embedded in discursive practices and closely interrelated with beliefs and identity seems relevant for our study since we see emotions as originating in individuals in relationship to their contexts. As such, emotions “shape and are shaped by the sociocultural context” (Barcelos, 2015, p. 309).

Appraisals and subsequent emotions strongly depend on factors such as previous experience, or “personality, mood, the state of the organism, and coincidences in the physical and social situation” (Frijda, 2008, p. 75).

Furthermore, the function of emotions – and of emotion regulation – is connected to decision-making, actions and social behaviour.

When looking at various classifications of emotions, both the Geneva Wheel of Emotions (GEW) and Scherer's multilingual list of terms related to emotions and affect (see Scherer, n.d.; Scherer, 2005; Scherer, Shuman, Fontaine & Soriano, 2013) are particularly relevant for our investigation in multilingual contexts. Another useful tool for mapping emotions is the Atlas of Emotions (Ekman, Ekman & Dalai Lama, n.d.), which identifies basic emotions along with their states, actions related to these emotions, and the possible triggers and moods these emotions may generate. Both the GEW and the Atlas of Emotions were our starting point in the analysis of teachers' reports about their emotional experience in professional practice (see Section 3.3.2).

2.2 *Defining affect*

Another crucial notion for the present study is the differentiation between emotion and affect. As "the emotional interpretation of perception, information or knowledge" (Huitt, 1999, as cited in Bown & White, 2010, p. 433), affect can be considered a contiguous construct to emotion and may, therefore, in everyday life be considered interchangeable with it. However, in the literature on language learning, affect has been used to refer to a "wide range of disparate constructs", such as "personality features, self-referential judgments, emotions, self-efficacy, beliefs, attitudes, motivation, cognitive styles, and learning strategies" (Bown & White, 2010, p. 433).

As a multidimensional construct, we see affect as superordinate as it includes emotions and subjective beliefs, as well as attitudes and motivational aspects, which allow individuals to feel and to act in different situations and social contexts. Linguistically, affect manifests itself through subjectivity traits in the language, such as *difficult*, *hard* or *beautiful* (see Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2009). In self-reports of emotional episodes, it is very likely to also find expressions of beliefs, attitudes, appraisals of given situations or of oneself, such as in Mercer's (2005) analysis of emotions in language learner journals. We will later illustrate how subjectivity is intertwined with teachers' reflections on their emotions.

2.3 *Functions of emotions and emotion regulation*

As stated above, emotions help us to react and act in our personal, social and professional lives. We would like to point to two fundamental functions of emotions: orientation and adaptation.

With respect to orientation, according to Lazarus (1991), emotions include cognition and arise from appraisal processes related to individuals' relevant goals and well-being. As such, emotions guide individuals to detect and reflect on what is personally relevant (Gross, 2008, p. 498; Lazarus, 1991, p. 354; Scherer, 2005, p. 701). Furthermore, Lazarus (1991) considers the appraisal processes as intra-subjective processes that turn incoming stimuli into ones with affective value and meaning for well-being. These views suggest that emotions could be seen as a sort of translator or compass that promptly offers orientation for the situations at hand.

The second function of emotions, adaptation (Scherer, 2005), is manifest in a variety of ways, as is illustrated in the following: Frijda (2008) explains that

emotions imply “urges to act” (p. 72), an action readiness that facilitates the mobilisation of resources needed to act (Scherer, 2005, pp. 701–707) and prompts changes in behaviour. The adaptive function of emotions is also manifest in individuals’ capacity to regulate social relationships: emotions modulate social interaction and promote behaviours that have important consequences for social connections. Finally, Zembylas (2003) indicates the adaptive function of emotions specifically for teachers as having an energising function: “teachers’ emotional commitments and connections to students energized and articulated everything these teachers did” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 111).

In order to accomplish these functions effectively, however, emotions need to be regulated. Emotion regulation “refers to how we try to influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1998b, as cited in Gross, 2008, p. 497). The emotion regulation process can further be described as intrinsic (individuals regulate their own emotions) or extrinsic (A regulates B’s emotions) (Gross, 2008, p. 500).

Although emotion regulation in everyday life is a complex process, Gross and Thompson (2007, as cited in Gross, 2008, p. 501) identify five main strategies that can be involved in this process: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change and response modulation. On an individual level, emotion regulation strategies may be put into action before, during and after the arousal of an emotional process. Whereas situation selection and situation modification strategies aim at selecting and/or modifying a situation in order to avoid or induce the arousal of a given emotion, attentional deployment and cognitive change strategies make it possible to redirect attention within a given situation or to review previous appraisals of an event or of a situation. Finally, response modulation strategies allow us to influence our “physiological, experiential, or behavioural responses”, such as through relaxation and respiration exercises (Gross, 2008, p. 504).

2.4 Emotions in language learning and teaching

The increasing interest of scholars during the last decades in affective aspects of language learning and teaching processes has given rise to the well-known “affective turn” (Benesch, 2012, p. 37) in the research on language learning. Research in this field is concerned, on the one hand, with the relevance of affect for successful language learning (Arnold, 1999) and, on the other hand, with affective and identity-related aspects of bi- or multilingual individuals (Dewaele, 2010, 2011; Pavlenko, 2005, 2006), in addition to embodied perceptions and emotions while speaking a foreign language and encountering intercultural experiences (Kramsch, 2009).

Although the literature mainly concentrates on learners and the learning process, increasing attention is also being paid to teachers. The recognition that teachers’ emotions play a significant role in their professional lives is relatively recent. Some researchers have pointed to emotions as a critical factor in understanding how contextual factors affect teachers’ well-being (Gallo, 2012; Liebermann, 2010; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009). Teachers’ emotions have mainly been associated with external causes, such as imposed reform agendas, policies, or burnout manifestations (DiPardo & Potter, 2003; James, 2010; Kennedy, 2013; Zembylas, 2003). Recently researchers have pointed to the necessity of uncovering the interconnection between emotion and cognition in teacher

development (Gallo, 2012, 2016; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Johnson, 2009; Kubanyiova, 2012) and exploiting emotions as a valuable resource to be incorporated into teacher professional development.

3 Research design and methodology

The present study is an exploratory action research (AR) study, which aims at investigating the following research questions:

1. Which emotions do university language teachers feel in their teaching practice?
2. Which strategies do they use in order to self-regulate their emotions?

The aim is to recognise which teachers' emotions can be identified in the data and how these then shape teachers' actions. This investigation then serves as a crucial first step in beginning to develop instruments that may help teachers understand their own emotions and their interactions with their professional actions and development.

Being grounded in the values of its participant communities (Given, 2008, p. 4), AR is particularly relevant for pursuing the aim of understanding the subjective emotional processes of the teaching community. Being reflective, AR is a valuable way to explore our own assumptions as both researchers and teachers. This approach fits the study at hand in that this research project involved two researchers and a small group of colleagues as research participants. This corresponds with AR in that the study followed a form of inquiry in which teachers as researchers investigated their own practices in collaboration with colleagues (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). This methodology was further deemed appropriate for our research due to its flexibility and its potential for generating knowledge with an emphasis on pursuing changes in practice for participants (Given, 2008, p. 4). Furthermore, AR lends itself to qualitative methodologies (Given, 2008, p. 6) which are appropriate to the present study as a way to tackle the complex phenomenon of emotions without aiming towards generalizations (Flick, 2014, p. 15).

Our study is, thus, empirical, exploratory and reflective in nature. We formulated our broader research questions and goals on the basis of the questions that one of the researchers had used for teacher development purposes (at Language Centre 2). In order to explore the field, we asked two groups of language teachers in a higher education context to answer initial questions on emotions and feelings in their teaching practice in a short questionnaire. With this initial data, we began an ongoing process of reflection between us – the two researchers – the data collected and theories and findings in the literature. We analysed the data through qualitative content analysis (see Section 3.3.2), compared our different interpretations of the data and then reached a common agreement. Finally, we collected further data in order to reach a deeper understanding of the questions at hand and began to design specific activities meant to raise awareness about teachers' emotional work. A further step would be to test and investigate the impact of these activities in practice, but this is not within the scope of this paper.

3.1 Context and participants

The study took place in two different Language Centres in German universities, which, for the sake of anonymity, will be referred to as Language Centre 1 and Language Centre 2.

Table 1 summarises the main characteristics of the two centres in relation to the types of language courses provided, the composition of the teaching staff (percentage of permanent and freelance teachers) and whether the programmes were bound by study regulations that determine content and forms of teaching, exams and student workload, and requirements for incorporating autonomous learning.

The two contexts differ in the range and scope of their language provision. Besides language modules for non-philologists, Language Centre 1 additionally offers language courses for Philology students and for student teachers. These courses are regulated by official study regulations, which include prescriptions towards certain teaching forms, types of exams, as well as provisions for autonomous and cooperative learning. The courses at Language Centre 2, on the other hand, are for non-specialists and are not driven by study regulations. This difference may have an impact on the teachers' perception of their work and, in some cases, on the pressure teachers feel in their teaching practice and in their relation to students, as we will illustrate in Section 4.

Table 1. The two Language Centres.

	Language Centre 1	Language Centre 2
Types of language courses on offer	- 12 languages - for specialists and non-specialists - undergraduate Bachelor's and post-graduate Master's level - teacher training	- 49 languages - for non-specialists
Teaching staff	- 40% full- or part-time teachers - 60% freelance teachers	- 30% full- or part-time - 70% freelance teachers
Study regulations determining course format/content, including	teaching forms, exams formats, student workload and prescription towards autonomous learning	none

The participants in the study included nine people in total: two males and seven females: four at Language Centre 2 and five at Language Centre 1. This number included one of the researchers who took part as a participant herself. Each participant taught their native language, including French (1), Italian (6) or Spanish (2). During the duration of the study, five teachers at Language Centre 1 had permanent positions, whereas the four teachers at Language Centre 2 and one other teacher at Language Centre 1 were freelance teachers. They were all university graduates, two of them with a PhD. Their teaching experience ranged from 5 to 38 years.

Due to the exploratory nature and scope of the investigation, the participants were chosen through purposive sampling (Flick, 2009, p. 122). In particular, given the different contexts, they were chosen according to the principle of maximal variation (Flick, 2014, p. 175) and to their personal characteristics. That is, the researchers judged the participants to be open enough to reflect and talk

about their emotions and feelings as teachers. All the teachers participated on a voluntary basis. This sample is not representative of the teacher population as a whole as only selected and motivated teachers participated in the project; therefore, the results cannot be generalised.

As one of the researchers was the coordinator of the courses for her language area, the issue of power asymmetry (Given, 2008, p. 6) could not be eliminated. Although the intention of the researchers in this study was to be a teacher among teachers, this asymmetric relation might have influenced the responses of the participants in Language Centre 2.

Ethical issues were considered in that all participants were asked for their consent for their data to be used for research purposes; in addition, in order to preserve anonymity, any references to personal data and/or to places which could have identified the participants were eliminated. For this reason, we will refer to the participants with generic feminine references (*she, her, herself*).

3.2 *Data collection*

The data were collected through individual written reflections of the participants and group discussions. In detail, we collected data as follows:

In the first questionnaire (written reflection), three open-ended questions focused on changes in teaching practice and the experience of emotions and/or cognitive dissonance while teaching (see Appendix 1). This first reflection had been collected prior to the beginning of the investigation at Language Centre 2 by one of the researchers – independently of this study's research aims – for the purpose of teacher professional development (PD). The participants were asked to answer at least two of these questions. Two questions focused on changes they could trace in their teaching practice/PD and one question on their emotions. We chose these questions because we assumed that the focus on change may shed light on emotions, since these are closely related to decisions, actions and changes in teaching practice (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Zembylas, 2003). The participants at Language Centre 1 were asked the same questions at the beginning of the investigation. They were free to express themselves either in German or in their L1: five of them chose to express themselves in their L1, whereas four expressed themselves in German.

A Skype meeting between the participants of the two Language Centres was recorded. The purpose of this meeting was to have the participants share their emotions related to teaching after having written their individual reflections in the first questionnaire. The lingua franca of this meeting was German, which is the language of the country where the participants have been living and working. Directly following the Skype meeting, the participants of Language Centre 2 went on sharing their emotions in their first language (Italian). For this discussion we have written field notes.

After having analysed the answers to the first questionnaire, we designed a second questionnaire with two open-ended questions about the participants' needs regarding dealing with emotions and the support they wished for (see Appendix 1). We then began to design specific activities (see one example in Appendix 2) to raise the teachers' awareness about their emotions in their teaching.

In order to get first insights into exploring our research questions, the present study focuses on the data obtained from the teachers' written reflections. We did not include the Skype meeting because this group discussion was different from

written reflections and would have required a different methodological approach. Table 2 gives an overview of the data obtained.

Table 2. Overview of the data collected from the participants.

	1. First written reflection	2. First discussion (Skype meeting)	3. Field notes for discussion following the Skype meeting	4. Second written reflection
Teacher No. 1	x			
Teacher No. 2	x			
Teacher No. 3	x	x		
Teacher No. 4	x	x		x
Teacher No. 5	x	x		
Teacher No. 6	x	x	x	x
Teacher No. 7	x	x	x	x
Teacher No. 8	x	x	x	x
Teacher No. 9	x	x	x	

3.3 Criteria and procedures for data analysis

In this section, we will first illustrate the criteria used for data analysis and then describe our procedure of content analysis, in which we identified and categorized groups of emotions. Finally, we will discuss difficulties we encountered in coding, which allows us to make the research process transparent for reflection according to the principles of qualitative inquiry (Flick, 2014).

3.3.1 Sorting criteria

The data were analysed through qualitative content analysis whereby we tracked the emotional content of the written texts (see Section 3.3.2). The criteria we considered were the valence (positive or negative) of emotions, what triggered them, whether subsequent action (if any) took place, what feelings were associated with them and which strategies the teachers employed for dealing with them. With regard to the positive and negative valence of emotions, Benesch (2012, p. 21) warns that this distinction may be considered presumptive. As such, we utilized this distinction as a heuristic device in the analysis.

In the analysis of the written reports we did not take into account the intensity of the emotions mentioned. This aspect would be better suited to research conducted with strictly psychological and psychometric instruments, which was beyond the scope of this study.

3.3.2 Content analysis and labelling emotions

To identify emotions, we used Ekman's Atlas of Emotions and Scherer's classification of "Affect categories and word stems of pertinent labels for category members" (Scherer, 2005, pp. 714–715), which is based on the Geneva Emotion Wheel – an instrument for measuring emotional reactions (Scherer et al., 2013). We added categories to the Geneva Emotion Wheel which are particularly relevant for our study, such as gratitude, appreciation or frustration. Since some of the data were in Italian, German, or Spanish, we also used the verbal labels devised by the Geneva Emotion Research Group describing emotion-related terms in five languages (Scherer, n.d.).

Although labelling is, in and of itself, a delicate issue, we grouped the emotions mentioned by the teachers based on similar content. We based our categories on explicit expression of emotions identified through emotion and emotion-related words, such as *pleasure, joy, satisfaction, frustration, anger*. The following two examples give the emotions first in English, then all the equivalent expressions mentioned in the original language:

1. Joy / Pleasure / Happiness / Feeling fine

Italian: *gioia / piacere / endorfina / sto bene*

German: *Freude / freue mich / Spaß / schön zu sehen / glücklich / Glück / Glücksgefühle / es geht mir gut*

Spanish: *agradezco*

2. Fear / Anxiety

Italian: *ansia / preoccupazione / angosciata / apprensioni*

German: *Angst / Ich fürchte*

3.3.3 Coding difficulties

The analysis of the teachers' emotions posed a number of problems, one of which being the distinction between explicit and implicit expressions of emotions and feelings. Indirect expressions of emotions were identified in metaphors or figurative expressions, such as "students were my lifeline" (*ancora di salvezza*). We experienced difficulty in identifying emotions in expressions of subjectivity, such as "it is difficult", "it is hard", "it is useful". As an example, when Teacher No. 8 says "It is difficult to make students understand the importance of speaking Italian in class with other classmates" (*è difficile far capire agli studenti l'importanza di parlare italiano fra di loro*), it is not immediately clear to the reader whether there are emotions behind that expression, such as frustration, anger, stress or dissatisfaction, or whether the difficulty mentioned implies additional (rational or emotional) effort for the teacher. Beliefs (about what makes sense for the teachers) could also be related to these expressions, resonating with Lazarus' (1991) observation that "what is important or unimportant for us determines what we define as harmful or beneficial, hence emotional" (p. 352).

These axiological expressions suggest an emotional content which is implicit and can only be inferred at, unless the teachers were asked for clarification. We thus decided, in accordance with Mercer (2005), to interpret similar expressions under the broader category of affect.

Further, because empathy is not strictly considered an emotion, but rather a sensitivity to another person's emotions (Ekman, 2003, p. 197) at either the cognitive or the emotional level, it was not included in our categories of emotions.

Finally, we are fully aware of the complexity of this analysis. First, we necessarily relied on individuals' reports on the nature of their experiences since, as stated in Scherer (2005, p. 712), there is no objective method of measuring the subjective experience of a person since feelings are subjective cognitive representations. Furthermore, we also must consider that expressions of emotion depend not only on subjective characteristics, but are also related to discourse practices as cultural products (Zembylas, 2003, p. 114). All these factors illustrate the difficulties encountered in attempting to pinpoint emotional content in the written reports we analysed.

4 Data analysis

In this section we will discuss our data in detail and point to relevant insights from research on emotions that link the present study with theories of emotions. All quotations in this section have been translated by the authors; all original quotations can be found in Appendix 2.

First, when asked to participate in the study, all participants reacted enthusiastically to the project. Their enthusiasm and subsequent comments in informal encounters indicated to us that speaking about their emotions as teachers was important for them. Second, upon looking through the teachers' accounts, we observed that emotions lurked in the teachers' accounts even when they were not explicitly mentioned, as is the case in an account from Teacher No. 1 who, in speaking about changes that had recently occurred in her classroom, describes the decisions she took and gives two examples:

Quotation 1 - [...] there are always changes depending on the participants. This means that I have to recognise their needs with respect to their affectivity, their motivation and their difficulties [...]. I am thinking of one student who was older than the others; her competence was not that high and I tried to motivate her [...] Besides, I had to change the group dynamics [...]. Also their personality is important (whether, for example, they are timid or open and communicative, or confident, or insecure individuals). In addition, their culture. I think, these aspects are important and influence the group. This means that different cultures also learn languages differently. I refer in this case to one Japanese student who preferred to work alone. He did not like to speak with others. Therefore, I had to have lot of understanding to steer the situation. (Teacher No. 1)

This example illustrates the remarkable empathetic attitude common to the teachers in this study. Related to this issue, we also noted the tendency of the teachers to pay more attention to learners' emotions than to their own. Teacher No. 7 exemplifies this:

Quotation 2 - In general, I pay much more attention to learners' emotions and I do not pay attention or focus particularly on my own. (Teacher No. 7)

The teachers' empathetic attitude towards their learners and the social dimension of their emotional competence (Goleman, 1995) attest to a high

sensitivity towards the learners and towards a learner-centred orientation in accordance with recent reform pedagogy. At the same time, this prominent attention to learners seems to be at the expense of teachers' attention towards their own emotional states.

In addition, the answers to the questionnaires show that the teachers in this study differ with respect to their awareness of their emotions. Whereas some of them explicitly express their emotions, others focus more on teaching methods and techniques or on reflecting on their teaching and classroom interactions; therefore, they are seen to be expressing individual beliefs rather than explicitly mentioning their own emotions. Similar to Mercer's analysis of emotions in learners' journals, we can state that the teachers' written reports also cover moods, evaluative reactions about their teaching and self-beliefs – all aspects which can be better classified as affective factors, rather than as emotions in a proper sense (Mercer, 2005, p. 64).

In the following sections, we will describe the emotions mentioned by the teachers, the major sources of these emotions and the strategies used to regulate emotions.

4.1 Teachers' emotions in teaching practice

In this section, we will answer our first research question: which emotions do university language teachers feel in their teaching practice? Our analysis of the teachers' reports indicates that there were positive as well as negative emotions common among the participants. When it came to positive emotions, several teachers mentioned joy, pleasure and/or happiness, enthusiasm, gratitude, appreciation, thankfulness and satisfaction. In comparison, anger, fear/anxiety, frustration and insecurity figured among the negative emotions mentioned by the teachers. In Table 3 the most frequently mentioned emotions are listed:

Table 3. Emotions mentioned in the teachers' reports ($N = 9$).

Positive emotions		Negative emotions	
Joy / pleasure / happiness	8	Fear / anxiety	6
Enthusiasm	5	Anger	5
Satisfaction	5	Frustration	4
Gratitude / appreciation	4	Insecurity	3

The numbers refer to the number of teachers who mentioned these emotions, irrespective of how often these occur in their reports.

As discussed in the theoretical background we provided, emotions do not exist in isolation from the context, they originate in individuals' interactions with the environment (see Frijda, 2008). This is manifest in the main triggers of emotions which emerged in the teachers' reports. As Figure 1 shows, the triggers can be subsumed under three main categories: the learners, the context and the teachers themselves. Additionally, these can be sources of both positive and negative emotions. These will be illustrated further in the following sections.

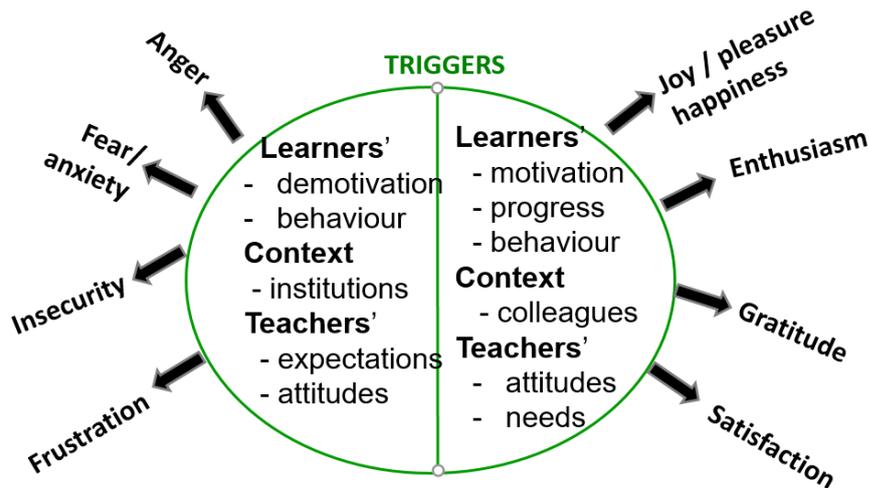


Figure 1. Teachers' emotions and their triggers.

4.1.1 Teachers' emotions and their learners

The major source of both positive and negative emotions for the teachers, as represented in the data, are the learners. Seeing the learners learning and making progress is seen to be a source of pleasure, joy or happiness for the teachers. For example:

Quotation 3 – It is a joy to see what an absolute beginner has learned. (Teacher No. 1)

Quotation 4 – I am absolutely happy while teaching!! (Teacher No. 2)

Quotation 5 – In this course the prevailing feelings at the end of each session were enthusiasm for discovering new things and pleasure for the progress made. (Teacher No. 5)

These examples indicate that the teachers love teaching and, understandably, are happy when learners praise them as this gives them the feeling that they are appreciated for their teaching:

Quotation 6 – On the one hand, I appreciate the students' appreciation at the end of a course, [...] (Teacher No. 1)

Learners' appraisals appear to be relevant to the teachers' goals, since through them teachers feel confirmed in their teacher role and their sense of mission. As Lazarus (1991, p. 354) and Gross (2008, p. 498) point out, emotions originate when individuals understand a situation as being relevant to their current goals. Learners' praise and the resulting appreciation felt by the teachers thus have the fundamental function of enabling teachers to feel in line with their (professional) self-concept, which includes their goals, their values and their self-esteem.

The learners, on the other hand, are also mentioned as a source of negative emotions, such as anger or frustration. Learners' attitudes or behaviour, such as a lack of motivation or involvement in classroom activities, are seen to trigger negative emotions. Recalling a recent episode in her teaching, one teacher speaks of learner stereotypes:

Quotation 7 – [...] they see me as an Italian clown and instead there is a lot of work beyond this! [...] Recently, I played a song in the classroom because I teach in the evening and they are usually tired, it was fine, but two of them kept snickering all the time and I don't know if it was because they were arrogant or because they did not take it seriously, in any case I got angry. (Teacher No. 9)

In pointing out the effects of inappropriate learner behaviours, Teacher No. 9 captures the crux by briefly referring to Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, converting the affective filter into a "teacher's affective filter". She continues as follows:

Quotation 8 – Well, can we ask ourselves whether this [learners' resistance towards teachers due to the affective filter] happens also to us [teachers]? (Teacher No. 9)

In these cases, the classroom appears to be a place of tension where learning and teaching, if they are to happen, depend on the invisible, delicate balance and management of emotions on both sides. Other teachers in this study address teachers' resistance towards the learners in other forms, such as in the case of Teacher No. 2 who gets angry when students arrive late to class or do not comply with rules; or Teacher No. 4, for example, who feels angry when learners fail to complete the tasks assigned:

Quotation 9 – [I feel angry] if a student did not do his homework, if a student asks a question which we have already discussed many times, if a student did not work on the text after I gave him my feedback. Also, if I proof read a text where I find many mistakes [...] or I notice, it has been written with little care. (Teacher No. 4)

Teacher Nos. 3 and 4 interpret these types of behaviour as a lack of respect. These negative emotions gain further relevance when we consider teachers who report spending a lot of time and energy in the preparation of classes, such as in the case of Teacher No. 5, who devotes part of her weekends to this task. Such statements indicate that the teachers expect the students to appreciate their efforts, for instance, by showing active participation and in attaining learning outcomes. This then enables teachers to feel that what they do has a "sense". We use the term "sense" as defined by Golombek and Doran (2014, p. 104) who explain that whereas meaning can be likened to the conventional understanding of a word, sense is personal and dynamic. Teachers thus appear to be strongly guided by firm beliefs (of 'ideal learners') and high expectations, as well as requiring a solid 'sense' for their actions and emotions which, in turn, feeds their self-concept.

Overall, the examples above resonate with Zembylas' (2003) view of teachers' emotions as embedded in discursive practices that do not seem to concede much space for a dialogue between teachers and learners. On the contrary, there are scarcely any signs of teachers attempting to share their negative emotions with their students, recalling a tendency to "downplay the discursive structures and normative practices through which teaching took place" (Zembylas, 2003, p. 108).

4.1.2 Teachers' emotions and the context

In the teachers' accounts, another source of positive as well as negative emotions stems from the teaching context, which includes interactions with colleagues and the institutions where the teachers practice.

Among the emotions mentioned by Teacher No. 6 in the discussion following the Skype meeting (see Section 3.2), joy at meeting up with her colleagues features prominently. As she notes:

Quotation 10 – A constant comparison and exchange of ideas among us colleagues would be desirable, together with a continuous dialogue with the coordinators of the language teachers. In the end, namely, the community is the force that promotes an increase in well-being. (Teacher No. 6)

Similarly, she refers to her colleagues in these terms:

Quotation 11 – Thanks for being here. It's a pity that we do not meet more often! (Teacher No. 6)

The positive effects of sharing experiences with colleagues are also clearly seen in the remarks of Teacher No. 7, who states that colleagues are “strengthening and important”. Or in the remarks of Teacher No. 4, who indicates that exchanges with colleagues could help her learn how to deal with emotions:

Quotation 12 – I would like to learn [...] to deal with the emotions which emerge with more serenity. I would surely benefit from sharing this with colleagues. (Teacher No. 4)

In a similar vein, Teacher No. 9 supplies another reason why colleagues represent a positive factor in teachers' lives. After explaining her idea of the “teacher's affective filter”, she observes that colleagues always contribute to lowering it:

Quotation 13 – Fortunately, colleagues always help to lower it [the teacher affective filter]. (Teacher No. 9)

While colleagues are represented as a positive emotional factor in some teachers' lives, this is not the case for all. Besides complaining about the workload (Teacher Nos. 5 and 7), some of the teachers, for example Teacher No. 6, express their sense of isolation in relation to the institutions they work for and complain about their status and their working conditions as freelancers (with no insurance or retirement arrangements) and about the lack of support from the institutions in which they work. This can be seen in the remarks of Teacher No. 6 who speaks of the “institutional machine/system” (*macchina istituzionale*) and who associates the working conditions of freelance university teachers to a related newspaper article she had recently read, entitled “New slavery”.

Teacher No. 7 adds another facet to this issue. Reporting about her earlier very difficult experiences at public secondary schools, she is aware that there are school contexts where stronger support for teachers is needed and recalls past experiences with these words:

Quotation 14 – It is very difficult to teach when emotions are frustration, rage and a sense of helplessness. (Teacher No. 7)

Because of the isolation she felt during her experience in the secondary school context, where she was without a network of teachers with whom to compare and share, she concludes that:

Quotation 15 – Sharing experiences should be among teachers' mandatory activities. (Teacher No. 7)

This resonates with what Teacher No. 6 states:

Quotation 16 – The teacher should not be left alone in his task, as too often happens, but should be supported in his fundamental needs, such as comparison, exchange, reciprocal support, etc., by colleagues and by those who are responsible for them. (Teacher No. 6)

Teacher Nos. 6, 7 and 8 address fundamental human and professional needs, such as recognition/appreciation of competence or a sense of belonging/relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000) which are not always satisfied.

The quotations so far point to teachers as supportive and relational individuals who care about having good relations with their learners and their colleagues, but who, at the same time, are vulnerable where they would like to be the targets of attention, recognition and support from the institutions they work for. The way they are treated by the institution seems at odds with the empathetic thought displayed by the teachers in the previous section in relationship to their students and colleagues. When no or little dialogue takes place with the institutions, the teachers seem to feel entrapped in larger power structures.

The impacts of negative emotions on the teaching-learning process are difficult to trace within the temporal limits of this study. Longitudinal studies would be required to investigate how these dynamics inform the teaching-learning process and the professional development of teachers over time.

4.1.3 Teachers' emotions and themselves

Finally, the last source of emotions represented in the data come from the teachers themselves. Positive emotions are seen to originate in situations where teachers feel they are being good teachers. Some teachers report the joy they feel when they "discover new materials" or "have good ideas for the class" (Teacher No. 3) or when they create exercises/activities that are tailored for their course (Teacher No. 5). The need for professional development leads some teachers to look for challenges, and this yields joy, as for Teacher No. 4 who feels joy when she is "intellectually challenged". This sense of positive emotion is exemplified by Teacher No. 3:

Quotation 17 – These [positive emotions] give me energy and motivation to work on my classes and to always develop new ideas and materials. (Teacher No. 3)

What teachers seem to receive back from teaching are emotions, they witness happiness and reach deeper understandings. Teaching therefore seems to be a source of positive emotions for them and to promote their sense of identity, which supports Barcelos' (2015) view of emotions as being closely connected to identity and beliefs.

The data further suggests that there is a delicate balance of positive and negative emotions. One attitude which appears to threaten this balance is what we call a "demanding stance". On the one hand, teachers' demanding stance towards their teaching and themselves (Teachers Nos. 3 and 4, above) attests to the basic "energizing" function of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2013). On the other hand, the same attitude may cause fatigue, for instance, due to the

burdensome and time-consuming workload involved in looking for new materials (Teachers Nos. 5, 6 and 7) or in the experience of negative reactions, such as expressions of anger, impatience, aversion and a lack of empathy. As Teacher No. 4 shows:

Quotation 18 - Anger ... sometimes, if I am asked to explain something I already explained or if I think it's not useful [...] when a student holds fallacious beliefs about language learning, for example 'I would like to learn grammar, before I learn to speak'.
Aversion: I admit, sometimes, for short moments I condemn students who speak very poorly, who clearly make no effort, or are stubborn and want to assert their opinions even if I know better than them [...] I think they [these emotions] should be clear to the students. I fear, those who are concerned feel my aversion and are negatively affected or their learning process is hampered, **then I regret it and feel ashamed**. (Teacher No. 4; bold emphasis in the original)

This quotation exemplifies how many emotions can originate in classroom encounters, such as anger, aversion and insensitivity, towards students who do not respond as fast as the teacher expects, or who do not remember past answers or explanations, or who hold different beliefs about language learning. Intolerance is another manifestation of this demanding attitude, such as is echoed by Teacher No. 3:

Quotation 19 - I can just hardly tolerate it, when a student in the classroom is barely motivated. (Teacher No. 3)

or Teacher No. 8 who explains her frustration as due to:

Quotation 20 - [...] the learners' incapacity to detach themselves from the learning method of an L2 developed at secondary school [...]. (Teacher No. 8)

Lastly, attesting to the professional development they underwent, Teacher No. 3 writes about her anger:

Quotation 21 - [...] while reflecting on the demands of more autonomous learning [...] I have learned that the students can also learn wonderfully without my help and my instructions or with completely different methods. But still, I notice that I become angry about specific reactions or behaviours and I do not like it. For example, I cannot stand it when students [...] are not willing to work autonomously. (Teacher No. 3)

Teacher No. 3 uncovers how many tensions teachers' emotions may harbour: this teacher had undergone a learning process (*I have learned*), is aware of her demanding expectations and monitors herself (*I notice*), and is also aware that she should not be surprised that this issue is not resolved (*still*) and is angry about it, and, on top of that, she feels discontent with her own emotional reaction (*I do not like it*). The question arises whether such well-educated and informed teachers as the ones in the present study, who keep abreast of the professional debate, can also expect their learners to keep up with pedagogical innovations as professionals do. In the case of Teacher No. 3, this demanding attitude and the emotions arising from it seem to be related to both the teacher's beliefs regarding her professional self (a conscientious teacher) and to the context (institutional regulation). In accordance with the institutional context, she implements the requirements specified in the study regulations about

autonomous learning, and expects the students to comply as well. This institutional regulation of autonomy may be felt as a sort of pedagogical paradox (“Be autonomous!” similar to the communicative paradox quoted by Watzlawick “Be spontaneous!”, Watzlawick, Helmick Beavin & Jackson, 1997, p. 199), which often generates frustration in teachers (see Graves & Vye, 2012).

As a consequence of her negative emotions, Teacher No. 4 reports feeling ashamed and regretful, and depicts her attempts to mention her emotions openly in the classroom. However, the impression proffered is that the majority of teachers tend to suppress negative emotions as inappropriate. This recalls one of Barcelos’ (2015) questions: “Which emotions are they [learners and teachers] allowed to express and construct?” (p. 316). There seem to be tacit rules about what is appropriate in language classroom discursive practices; tackling this issue would surely be beneficial for all members of the community. The relief that teachers perceive after speaking about their emotions can be seen in the following observation:

Quotation 22 – I think that discussing this topic with other colleagues has been useful and has contributed to showing a different approach to emotions such as frustration, because it revealed that it is common to other teachers and originates in similar situations. Therefore, in my opinion, the discussion was very useful to satisfy the main need, which was to speak about this issue in an open way. (Teacher No. 8)

The data suggest that teachers’ anger and frustration appear to stem from the same demanding attitude towards their learners and themselves and from the consequent clash of beliefs.

Figure 2 visualizes the data of Table 3: it indicates joy/happiness and fear/anxiety as the two overriding teacher emotions. However, it also depicts a slight positive imbalance, since the positive emotions mentioned in the reports outweigh the negative ones.

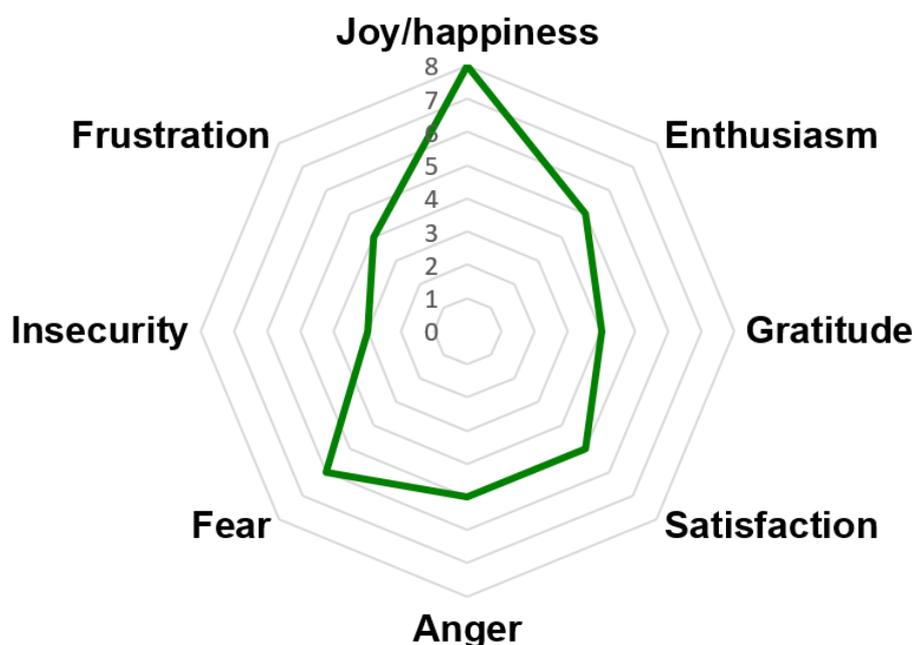


Figure 2. Radar of teachers’ emotions.

4.2 Emotion regulation strategies

As for the strategies employed by the teachers, the data indicate a range from having no strategies to having a few strategies at their disposal. The main strategies emerging from the data analysis are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Emotion regulation strategies.

Strategies	Number of teachers
Communicating one's emotions	5
Concealing one's emotions (i.e. hiding anger)	3
Becoming aware	3
Being helpless (i.e. having no strategy)	3
Compensation strategy (i.e. eating chocolate)	1

The numbers refer to the number of teachers who mentioned these strategies.

The strategies will be briefly described and discussed based on Gross' model of emotion regulation strategies (Gross, 2008).

Some teachers explicitly mention not having strategies that help them out of difficult situations. They seem to be overwhelmed in their responses to some classroom situations and are rather helpless, as depicted by Teacher No. 3 in her attempt to motivate the students:

Quotation 23 – I would like to enhance students' motivation. It works with some of them, but not with others. Unfortunately, I do not know what I could do differently, so that they are all motivated and willing to learn for themselves independently. (Teacher No. 3)

Similarly, Teacher No. 5, after recounting her feelings of anxiety and fear of not being sufficiently prepared, states:

Quotation 24 – I haven't developed any strategy to face these negative feelings. (Teacher No. 5)

The helplessness experienced by Teacher No. 8 is demonstrated in a question she writes:

Quotation 25 – How can we deal with the uneasiness (and anger) of the teacher who does not succeed in his attempt to convey a different approach to learning? (Teacher No. 8)

The most frequent strategy reported by the teachers is "communicating" (5 times, by teachers Nos. 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8). This strategy refers to teachers explicitly expressing their emotions directly with the learners. This strategy is chosen, for example, by Teacher No. 2, who gets angry when students arrive late to class or do not comply with the rules, but who prefers to deal with the problems in an open way:

Quotation 26 – Then I face the issue [...] I also emphasise it. I deal with it with feeling and empathy [...] I say very openly that I do not feel well when this rule is not respected. (Teacher No. 2)

For Teacher No. 7 this strategy of sharing her burden with the students has a profound meaning. Describing past difficult situations she has experienced, she refers to this strategy as a “lifeline”:

Quotation 27 – But my lifeline has always been, paradoxically, in my own students. (Teacher No. 7)

Talking about one’s feelings is seen to alleviate the impact of negative feelings in the teachers. According to Gross (2008, p. 502), this strategy is a “potent extrinsic form of emotion regulation” because in so doing teachers attempt to change the extrinsic environment.

In contrast to the social orientation of the above-mentioned strategy, the data show that some teachers turn to the strategy of “concealing” (3 times, by Teachers Nos. 3, 4 and 8), whereby teachers prefer to hide negative feelings, such as anger. Teacher No. 3, for example, writes that she sometimes has to conceal her aversion towards some students. Gross (2008, p. 505) calls this form of emotion regulation “suppression”. It is a response modulation by which people influence physiological-experiential or behavioural responses in order to discharge emotions. However, Gross suggests that emotions that are suppressed will leak out elsewhere, as in a hydraulic model. This suggestion seems to be supported in the present study in view of the “compensation strategy” reported by Teacher No. 4, who describes what she does in order to get rid of negative emotions:

Quotation 28 – Sometimes I eat chocolate or some comfort food. (Teacher No. 4)

Another strategy of emotion regulation is “attentional deployment” (Gross, 2008, p. 503), through which individuals try to influence their emotional responses by directing their attention to something else. This form of emotion regulation entails the risk that inhibited emotions will be muted. However, although avoiding or suppressing emotions may sound negative, the data in this study also indicate that these strategies may have a positive function. In fact, although aversion in itself is a negative emotion, Teacher No. 4 expresses how this can lead to a positive subsequent action, whereas she forces herself to be “just and precise” towards the students and is enabled to “know herself better”. According to this, negative emotions can then undergo a mutation and become channels for positive mechanisms.

The same seems to apply to another strategy which emerged in this study, that of *becoming aware*, which refers to the striving of teachers towards an enhanced awareness and cognitive change – a strategy called “reappraisal” in Gross’s model. Teacher No. 4 offers such an example:

Quotation 29 – I try to become aware of my emotions in teaching so that I can have more control over them. (Teacher No. 4)

In contrast to the first strategy (“communicating”), in Gross’s terms, these teachers try to change the intrinsic environment (i.e. themselves) through an awareness of their thoughts and emotions.

To summarize, the data in the present study seem to confirm the basic functions illustrated in the literature (Section 2.3). The orientative function of emotions seems to be present when teachers choose to explicitly express their

emotions in order to keep in line with their own beliefs (e.g. the importance of autonomous learning) or to establish positive social relations with their students.

The adaptive function of emotions is manifested in changes of behaviour (e.g. Teacher No. 6, who changes her teaching practice to comply to students' feedback), in their urge to act and expand their professional competence and in the promotion of positive social relations; for example, shame or regret (e.g. Teacher No. 4) may prompt the teachers to maintain proximity with their students, while anger serves to maintain proximity with their own beliefs, i.e. their operating principles.

5 Discussion and further reflection

5.1 *The functions of teacher emotions*

This exploratory study suggests that emotions do indeed play an important role in teachers' professional lives. Positive emotions seem to fulfil two essential functions: as Teacher No. 3 remarks, joy, enthusiasm and other positive emotions are energizing emotions. They supply teachers with the necessary energy that makes the job attractive. Teachers' emotions proved to be closely linked to teachers' self-concepts (values, goals, beliefs) and the data in this study suggest a strong link between emotions, identities and beliefs, supporting Barcelos' BEI-construct (Barcelos, 2015). Furthermore, positive emotions provide the teachers with the feeling that they are in harmony with the learners and with themselves, thus indicating a relevant fit between the profession and the person (values, goals, etc.). This fit also feeds the teachers' need for self-esteem, as they feel appreciated and valued for what they do.

Another aspect emerging from this study is that the distinction between positive and negative emotions becomes blurred when examining the dynamics generated by emotions. Indeed, negative emotions do not necessarily have a negative impact, since teachers may use them as opportunities to change their practices. Overall, negative emotions may alert the teachers about dissonance with themselves or the environment. These emotions point to relevant discrepancies between teachers' expectations and learner behaviour or external working conditions, such as workload or institutional constraints. They also raise questions or self-doubts, which may lead teachers to self-critique and find new ways to develop themselves and their teaching practices. Therefore, these emotions can enhance teachers' professional development.

The data of the present study support Golombek and Doran's (2014) claim that emotional work is a functional component of language teachers' cognitive development, since, as a result of their reflective work, teachers do change their teaching practices.

Conversely, some positive feelings, such as the feeling of being engaged in one's professional development, may have a flipside. Despite the empathetic thinking that was demonstrated throughout this study, an inkling of contrary emotions, i.e. lack of empathy and impatience, seems to trickle through the teachers' reports in cases where the teachers implement new ideas and require the learners to quickly abandon old learning habits and adapt to the teachers' pedagogical principles.

In addition, the data demonstrate that emotional content is pervasive. This exploratory study further demonstrates that while, on the one hand, some of these emotions are shared amongst teachers, on the other hand, the present analysis suggests that the teachers are also unique in their distinct paths and life histories. Beyond the emotions common to different teachers (such as joy, frustration etc.), the individual characteristics of each teacher account for the differences emerging in this study. This resonates with Frijda's (2008, p. 69) claim that emotions are indeed affected by individual factors.

Furthermore, the study highlights the 'double task' teachers are faced with; on the one hand, they need to take care of their learners' emotions, while, on the other hand, taking care of their own emotions. In line with what Benesch (2012, p. 7) has emphasized, the teachers in the present study see it as their specific task to reduce learners' negative emotions and feel responsible for the smooth flow of classroom interactions. Additionally, the teachers seem to be sensitive to prominent issues brought up in language teaching literature, such as the impact of the affective filter on language learners. At the same time, teachers need to take care of their own emotions. With regard to this, some participants of this study wish they had someone who would 'pick them up' in difficult moments, just as they do with their learners. Although they are aware of the positive impact of their colleagues, they wish for additional emotional support from those who are in charge. As Teacher No. 6 writes, they do not like the feeling of being left alone.

5.2 Reflecting on the research project

The purpose of this study was to explore the emotions of university language teachers in order to better understand this essential component of their professional competences. The chosen exploratory approach for investigating teachers' emotions proved to be an adequate decision. However, the results of this study cannot, nor should they, be generalised for a variety of reasons. The main reasons we would like to focus on relate to the sample, the self-reporting instruments, the analysis of subjectivity and affectivity, and to linguistic and cultural specificities.

Firstly, the small number of participants and the fact that they were all motivated teachers working exclusively in a university context may have had an impact on the results. Having had a different professional experience in secondary public schools, Teacher No. 7 made it clear how different the two contexts are.

Second, we based our analysis mostly on written self-reports and field notes from personal discussions. Both rely on the teachers' competencies in pinpointing emotions and on the labels they assign to them. The difficulty of labelling emotions and feelings, including their precise intensity, could be one aspect that has influenced the results of this study (as found in Kreibig, Gendolla & Scherer, 2012). In order to analyse teacher emotions in more depth, other research instruments could be used to complement the data through qualitative interviews or other forms of introspection. In addition, the prompts given to teachers were not process-oriented questions, because our first research interest was to focus on understanding which emotions surface in teaching practice. A process-related approach would require a longitudinal study in order to identify and track emotion processes. Additionally, while we did start

to design specific emotion activities, other tools and activities tailored to elicit specific affective responses could be developed to highlight teachers' perceptions of their emotions in more nuanced ways.

Further issues relate to the multilingual setting. For example, the use of different languages to express emotions implied not only methodological problems (see Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3), but the Skype meeting posed interpersonal and communicative difficulties to the teachers. Some of them could not communicate and take part actively in the meeting because they did not feel confident enough in the second language (German) as a lingua franca when trying to share their emotions.

Lastly, as suggested by Benesch (2012), cultural specificities could be evidenced more precisely in future research by contextualising the emotions more deeply in the socio-cultural and institutional contexts in which these emotions arise.

5.3 Conclusion

The results of this study confirm that teaching is not exclusively a cognitive activity, and the study supports Golombek and Doran's (2014) call to recognise emotions as a functional component of, and as a valuable resource for, language teacher professional development. The findings resonate with the urgent need for research in the field of language teacher education, in order to support the professional growth of teachers and to sustain them in becoming aware of their emotions and how to regulate them.

The results of this analysis provide 'snapshots' of what some of the teachers we consulted feel or have felt in their teaching practice. However, due to the dynamic nature of emotions, the question arises as to how to design a process-based, dynamic research approach for investigating the complexity of factors affecting emotional episodes and their development. The present exploration demonstrated that the emotions teachers face in everyday life are manifold and - recalling Teacher No. 3 - represent the vital fluid in teacher education which gives teachers the energy and motivation to persist in their work lives. We believe this should be acknowledged in more visible ways.

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Appendix 1

First Questionnaire

The questions for the first written reflection were:

1. What have you changed in your teaching practice in this semester compared to previous semesters?
2. What would you like to change in your teaching practice, but haven't changed yet? Why would you like to change it?
3. Which emotions and feelings have you experienced in your teaching practice? In which situations did they emerge? Did you notice any dissonance between what you believe or know from any theory and the concrete situations you experienced?

Second Questionnaire

The questions for the second written reflection were:

1. Which are your needs regarding dealing with emotions and feelings in your teaching practice?
2. Which activities do you think could support you in reflecting about and dealing with emotions and feelings in your teaching practice? Please elaborate. (The questionnaire included a multiple-choice questions and space for free answers)

Appendix 2

An example of emotion-related activity

Emoziometro

Welche der folgenden Aspekte bereiten weniger-mehr (emotionale) Probleme? Bei welchen Aspekten spürt ihr spezielle Emotionen? Welche sind eher positive od. eher negative Emotionen ? Kreuzt bitte auf den jeweiligen Emotimetern an, wo sich Eure Emotionen befinden und notiert warum /wann treten sie auf, oder was sie auslöst.

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1 Quest'attività è stata *poco / abbastanza / molto* utile perché

Quotations

Quotation 1 - [...] es gibt immer Änderungen in jedem Kurs abhängig von den TeilnehmerInnen des Kurses. Das bedeutet, dass ich ihre Bedürfnisse erkennen muss, z.B. bezüglich ihrer Affektivität, ihrer Motivation und ihrer Schwierigkeiten, [...] Ich denke z.B. an eine Studentin, [...] älter als die anderen, ihr Niveau war nicht so gut und ich versuchte sie zu motivieren, [...] Außerdem musste ich die Gruppendynamik ändern [...] Auch ihr Persönlichkeit ist von großer Bedeutung (ob sie beispielsweise schüchterne oder offene und kommunikative, sicher oder unsichere Personen sind). Hinzu kommt ihre Kultur. Ich denke, dass diese Aspekte sehr wichtig sind und Einfluss auf die Gruppe haben. Das bedeutet, dass verschiedene Kulturen Sprachen z.B. sehr individuell lernen. Ich denke in diesem Fall an einen japanischen Studenten, der lieber allein gearbeitet hat. Es hat ihm nicht gefallen, wenn er mit den anderen sprechen musste. Deswegen musste ich sehr viel Verständnis haben, um die Situation zu steuern.

Quotation 2 - In generale sono molto più attenta alle emozioni degli studenti e non presto particolare attenzione alle mie o non mi concentro particolarmente su quest'ultime. (Teacher No. 7)

Quotation 3 - Es ist eine Freude zu sehen, was ein Schüler alles gelernt hat, der ganz ohne Vorkenntnisse begonnen hatte. (Teacher No. 1)

Quotation 4 - Bin durchaus glücklich in der Lehre!! (Teacher No. 2)

Quotation 5 - In questo corso i sentimenti che alla fine di ogni seduta prevalevano erano l'entusiasmo per la scoperta di nuove cose e il piacere per i progressi. (Teacher No. 5)

Quotation 6 - Auf der einen Seite schätze ich die Anerkennung der Studenten am Ende des Kurses, [...]. (Teacher No. 1)

Quotation 7 - [...] loro mi vedono come un pagliaccio italiano e invece c'è dietro tanto lavoro! [...] Qui mi riferivo a un episodio specifico di qualche giorno prima, avevo fatto sentire una canzone perché avevo lezione di sera e in genere sono stanchi, è andata bene, ma due ridacchiavano e non so se ridacchiavano perché supponenti o perché non prendevano sul serio la cosa, in ogni caso mi sono arrabbiato. (Teacher No. 9)

- Quotation 8 – Ecco, possiamo interrogarci se magari questo non succede anche a noi? (Teacher No. 9)
- Quotation 9 – Wut: Wenn ein Studierende eine Aufgabe nicht gemacht hat, wenn er eine Frage stellt, die schon x-mal im Kurs besprochen wurde, wenn er zeigt, dass er die Korrektur des Textes, die ich ihm gegeben habe, nicht überarbeitet hat. Auch wenn ich einen Text korrigiere, in dem viele Fehler [...] sind, oder von dem ich erkenne, dass er mit wenig Aufmerksamkeit geschrieben wurde.. (Teacher No. 4)
- Quotation 10 – Sarebbe auspicabile un costante confronto e scambio di idee con i colleghi, ed un dialogo più assiduo con i coordinatori dei gruppi di professionisti con incarico d’insegnamento. È infatti, in ultima istanza, la collettività la forza che promuove la crescita del bene. (Teacher No. 6)
- Quotation 11 – Grazie di esserci. Peccato che non ci si incontri più spesso! (Teacher No. 6)
- Quotation 12 – Ich möchte lernen [...] Emotionen, die auftauchen, mit mehr Gelassenheit zu begegnen. Hierfür würde mir [...] sicherlich auch der Austausch mit Kolleginnen helfen. (Teacher No. 4)
- Quotation 13 – I colleghi, per fortuna, sono sempre motivo di abbassamento dello stesso. (Teacher No. 9)
- Quotation 14 – È molto difficile insegnare quando le emozioni sono frustrazione, rabbia e senso di impotenza. (Teacher No. 7)
- Quotation 15 – La condivisione delle esperienze dovrebbe essere parte delle attività obbligatorie di un insegnante. (Teacher No. 7)
- Quotation 16 – L'insegnante non dovrebbe essere lasciato solo a svolgere il suo compito, come troppo spesso succede, ma dovrebbe essere sostenuto nei suoi bisogni fondamentali (di confronto, reciproco supporto, scambio e quant'altro) dai colleghi e dai responsabili a cui è vincolato. (Teacher No. 6)
- Quotation 17 – Sie geben mir immer wieder neue Energie, um an meinen Kursen zu arbeiten und neue Ideen und Materialien zu entwickeln. (Teacher No. 3)
- Quotation 18 – Wut [...] manchmal, wenn nach einer bestimmten Erklärung gefragt wird, die ich schon gegeben habe, oder von der ich glaube, sie ist nicht sinnvoll [...] wenn ein Studierende abwegige Vorstellungen von Fremdsprachenlernen hat, z. B. bevor ich spreche, möchte ich die Grammatik lernen. [...] Abneigung: Ich gestehe es, manchmal, in kurzen Augenblicken verurteile ich Studierende, die sehr schlecht sprechen, die sich offensichtlich nicht engagieren, oder die störrig sind und ihre Sicht der Dinge, ihre Meinung durchsetzen wollen, auch wenn ich es besser weiß [...] Ich denke, sie sollten den Studierenden offensichtlich sein. Ich fürchte, diejenigen, die davon betroffen sind, spüren meine Abneigung und sind negativ beeinflusst bzw. sogar in ihrem Lernprozess verhindert, **dann bereue ich es und schäme ich mich.**
- Quotation 19 – Ich kann es z.B. noch schwer ertragen, wenn ein(e) Studierende(r) wenig motiviert im Unterricht sitzt. (Teacher No. 3)
- Quotation 20 – Un senso di frustrazione si è presentato di fronte all’incapacità di singoli studenti nello sganciarsi dal metodo di apprendimento di una LS legato al periodo del liceo. (Teacher No. 8)
- Quotation 21 – Ärger: Das Nachdenken über die Förderung zu mehr selbständigem Lernen [...] Ich habe dabei erfahren, dass die Studierenden auch ohne meine Hilfe und meine Anweisungen oder mit ganz anderen Methoden als ich es tun würde und raten würde, wunderbar lernen können. Aber ich merke immer noch, dass ich mich manchmal über bestimmte Reaktionen oder Arbeitsverhalten der Studierenden ärgere, und das gefällt mir nicht. Ich kann es z.B. noch schwer ertragen, wenn ein(e) Studierende(r) [...] nicht gern selbständig arbeitet, [...]. (Teacher No. 3)
- Quotation 22 – Personalmente la discussione di questo tema con altri colleghi è stata proficua e ha contribuito ad avere un diverso approccio di fronte a emozioni come la frustrazione perché ha rivelato che è comune ad altri docenti ed è generata dalle stesse situazioni. Quindi, a mio avviso, il confronto è servito molto a supplire al bisogno principale che era quello di parlare del tema apertamente.

- Quotation 23 – Ich möchte gern diese Studierenden zu mehr Motivation anregen. Mit manchen klappt es, mit anderen nicht. Ich weiß leider nicht, was ich anders tun könnte, damit alle motiviert sind und gern für sich zusätzlich lernen. (Teacher No. 3)
- Quotation 24 – Non ho sviluppato nessuna strategia per affrontare questi sentimenti negativi. (Teacher No. 5)
- Quotation 25 – Come gestire quindi il disagio (e anche un filo di rabbia) dell’insegnante che vede vani i tentativi di trasmettere un’idea diversa? (Teacher No.8)
- Quotation 26 – Dann gehe ich an die Sache ran [...]. Das betone ich auch. Das Ganze gehe ich mit Gefühl und Empathie an, [...] Ich sage auch offen, mir geht es nicht gut, wenn diese Regel nicht eingehalten werden. (Teacher No. 2)
- Quotation 27 – Ma la mia ancora di salvezza sono sempre stati, paradossalmente, gli stessi studenti. (Teacher No. 7)
- Quotation 28 – Manchmal esse ich Schokolade oder anderes comfort food. (Teacher No. 4)
- Quotation 29 – Ich versuche, mir meiner Emotionen im Unterricht bewusst zu werden, um sie mehr unter Kontrolle zu haben. (Teacher No. 4)

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