1 Introduction to the Emotional Rollercoaster of Language Teaching

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Language Teacher Emotions and the Focus of This Anthology

Emotions are at the centre of all human behaviour. Sometimes we may feel excited, motivated, energetic and happy, but at times we may also experience frustration, anxiety, fear or sadness. Emotions are not static but can instead fluctuate over time and across settings; and talking about the latter, certain settings are likely to generate more intense emotions than others. Research has shown, for instance, that language classrooms are inherently stressful environments for some people (Horwitz, 2017) but also places where students can feel enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). The now large body of research into language learner emotions and in particular language anxiety has highlighted the detrimental effects of high anxiety levels on academic performance and success as well as future attempts to learn foreign languages (Dewaele & Thirtle, 2009; Gkonou *et al*., 2017). Although second language researchers have long been interested in aspects surrounding language learner anxiety, research into language teacher emotions – and other aspects of language teacher psychology – has started gaining momentum only in the last decade (Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018). This was largely inspired by work in general education, which focused on an exploration of specific emotions among teachers, such as satisfaction or anger, the relationship between student and teacher emotions, and emotions generated in moments of educational reform and change (see e.g. Hargreaves, 2000; Schutz & Zembylas, 2010. These publications have demonstrated that teaching is an emotion-laden process, yet there is still much that we do not fully understand about how teacher emotions function in classrooms, how they influence the practice of teaching and how they shape teacher professional identities.

In this introductory chapter, and before we turn to the focus of this collection, it is important to clarify definitional issues surrounding the construct of 'emotions' and also briefly discuss the main approaches to theorising emotions. We start with emotions versus feelings and the fact that many people use these words interchangeably, to mean the same thing. Emotions and feelings should, however, be seen as two distinct but highly interrelated concepts. Emotions refer to physical manifestations or responses to an event, as opposed to feelings which depict mental associations and reactions to an emotion (Barrett, 2017). In this sense, emotions lead to feelings. The second aspect to which we would like to draw attention concerns how emotions have been previously theorised. Biological approaches to emotions have suggested that emotions are innate, produced in the brain and thus universally shared (see e.g. Ekman, 1993). Such an approach therefore implies that emotions are common among all people and that all people would experience the same emotion in the same way, without considering context-related specificities and individual cultures and histories of each person that are likely to determine how an emotion is experienced. Next, the cognitive approach to emotions assumes that emotions are appraisals and arise when individuals evaluate a situation or an event and its impact on them (Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 2005). This cognitive approach has largely informed key frameworks on emotion regulation such as Gross's process model of emotion regulation, which proposed that the attention attached to a situation is appraised, thus leading to cognitive change and a subsequent response (Gross, 2014). The third approach is the theory of constructed emotion (Barrett, 2017). In this view emotions are seen as psychological constructions rather than biological entities. Emotions do not have dedicated neural regions or networks in the brain. They also do not have unique fingerprints since individuals can express them in unique ways depending on the situation and on their own previous experiences, which are shaped by the culture in which they grew up. Societies generate emotion category labels and children acquire them through socialisation and observation of the language used around them to identify emotion categories in themselves and in others. The fourth approach, the poststructuralist/discursive approach to emotions, fits seamlessly within the former. It takes into account an individual's history, social identities, cultural contexts and power in understanding and interpreting emotions (see e.g. Benesch, 2017; Zembylas, 2005) and has inspired research into teacher emotions within mainstream education and second language acquisition (SLA).

The present anthology aims at extending our understandings and conceptualisations of language teacher emotions across a range of second language contexts. In these contexts, 'negative' emotions often emerge as a result of unexpected changes, language-related concerns, less supportive leadership, excessive workload, others' and

one's own expectations, and dysfunctional interpersonal relationships among members involved in the educational process. Such conditions are most likely to exacerbate stress, uncertainty and dissatisfaction among teachers, thus occasionally leading to burnout and posing a threat to their professional longevity. Nevertheless, the picture is not totally gloomy and language teachers can also experience emotional rewards and associated 'positive' emotions. These are often felt after one has employed emotional self-regulation strategies or consciously undertaken emotional labour, a notion that was originally proposed by Hochschild (1979) in her research with flight attendants. Hochschild explored how the 'feeling rules' of a workplace determine what emotions are appropriate and should be displayed by employees during their interactions with customers. In particular, the focus was on the emotional equanimity that flight attendants were expected to project during these interactions without necessarily expecting the customers to reciprocate. The situation in the classroom is similar as teachers manage and display their emotions in front of students in appropriate ways.

In this anthology, it is not our intention to show how language teachers should feel; nor do we aim to divide emotions into 'positive' and 'negative' and contend that the former should be maximised and the latter minimised. Poststructuralist researchers within SLA have in fact suggested that instead of focusing on what emotions *are*, we should look at what emotions *do* (Ahmed, 2004; Benesch, 2017). Additionally, in avoiding the binary opposition between 'positive' and 'negative' emotions, terms like 'pleasant' and 'painful' have also been proposed as possible adjectives to describe the nature and function of emotions (see e.g. Oxford, 2017). Thus, for the present volume we intended to bring together insights into the complexity and dynamism of language teacher emotions, suggest possible methods for researching emotions and reflect on implications for classroom practice, with a view to investigating the broader experience of emotions as lived by language teachers.

Why an Anthology about Language Teacher Emotions?

A significant body of research into language teacher psychology has focused on issues surrounding language teacher cognition (see e.g. Borg, 2015) and motivation (see e.g. Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014), with research into language teacher emotions remaining disproportionately less prevalent. Although it is worth acknowledging that emotions are interrelated with cognition and motivation, only one bespoke volume on language teacher emotions has been published to date. The edited volume by Martínez Agudo (2018) entitled *Emotions in Second Language Teaching: Theory, Research and Teacher Education* offers a holistic overview of language teacher emotions with a special focus on the teaching of English as a foreign language. Subsequently in early 2019,

the *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics* also devoted a special issue to the topic of second language teachers' emotions, co-edited by De Costa, Rawal and Li. These publications are indicative of the increased importance attached to language teacher emotions and the recognition that they should form an integral part of academic discussions, teacher education programmes and language pedagogy as a whole.

We see the current collection of chapters as an attempt to provide impetus for further research into language teacher emotions and for a new agenda on what we still need to understand about teacher emotions in order to help teachers themselves as well as their learners. Through the diverse voices of researchers represented in this book, we hope to reach fellow researchers, language teachers, teacher educators, and undergraduate and postgraduate students, and entice them to conduct their own research into this fascinating area of language teacher psychology. We also hope that the post-reading tasks accompanying each chapter will incentivise readers of the book to critically reflect on the content of each chapter and will open up fresh and fruitful discussions on language teacher emotions.

The Organisation of this Anthology[1]

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 by Hofstadler, Talbot, Mercer and Lämmerer concentrates on the professional subjective well-being of secondary school teachers of CLIL in Austria. The authors draw on previous research into content and language integrated learning (CLIL; see Pappa *et al.*, 2017), which has unravelled factors that contribute to and detract from teachers experiencing positive well-being, and use in-depth, semi-structured interviews with teachers to identify positive, negative and ambiguous aspects of teaching CLIL: what they have called the 'thrills' and 'ills' of CLIL. The teacher participants in their study were found to have positive attitudes towards CLIL and confidence in their CLIL teaching skills. They also felt that teaching CLIL contributed significantly to their own continuous professional development. However, they seemed concerned about their workload and issues of compensation, work–life balance and appreciation with regard to the amount of work they were confronted with. Factors such as CLIL teaching materials, their students and contextual support led to both positive and negative well-being. The authors conclude the chapter by highlighting the importance of teacher autonomy in CLIL contexts and calling for more research into how teacher well-being within CLIL settings could be addressed in more meaningful ways, both at a personal and contextual level.

In their 2016 interview-based study into the emotional labour performed by language teachers working in a rural high school in the southern United States, Acheson and her colleagues provided a

thoroughly depressing account of poorly supported staff engaged in excessive emotional labour in response to apathetic students not invested in foreign language learning. Over time, such excessive emotional labour can lead to burnout (see Näring *et al.*, 2006) and ultimately teacher attrition. Acheson and Nelson take this research forward, turning towards quantitative methods in Chapter 3 to investigate to what extent a sample of 83 public high school language teachers in the state of Georgia engage in emotional labour and how contextual factors mediate their emotional performances in the workplace. Findings from a modified version of Brotheridge and Lee's (2003) Emotional Labour Scale (ELS) questionnaire seem to suggest that teachers in the study's sample tended to engage in moderate to high levels of emotional labour in their daily professional lives. Interestingly, gender did not seem to play a role in whether the teachers pretended, hid or made an effort to generate particular emotions whilst teaching, with men being just as likely as women to perform emotional labour. The research presented here is food for thought for those interested in teacher well-being and has implications for the amount and type of support afforded to language teachers currently working in Georgia's public school system.

In Chapter 4, Benesch builds upon her previous work considering emotions in English language education from a critical perspective (e.g. Benesch, 2012) by exploring the emotionally charged experiences of teachers who provide feedback on students' written work. In contrast to biological or cognitive theories which locate emotions within the mind or body of the individual, Benesch argues that it is more productive for critically orientated researchers to view emotions as sociocultural constructs mediated by power relationships. Following Ahmed's (2004) ideas about a cultural politics of emotion, she discusses the notion of 'sticky objects' as a tool for theorising about emotions, arguing that social norms of emotion become 'sticky' with affect through repetition. Drawing on data collected from interviews with English language instructors working within the author's own faculty, the chapter illustrates, via instances of interviewees' emotional discourse, the conflicts and dilemmas they experienced when responding to student writing. These conflicts and dilemmas appear to assemble around two main themes: emotion labour associated with a lack of time to provide feedback and uncertainty about the type of feedback to give students. In light of these findings, Benesch discusses the quandary of how to give meaningful feedback to students without spending unreasonable amounts of time on marking and highlights the ongoing debate about whether providing detailed written corrective feedback is in both the student's and the instructor's best interests.

Edwards and Burns use the metaphor of Pandora's box in their chapter (Chapter 5) on the dynamic emotional experiences of five in-service novice and more experienced English language teachers

engaged in action research (AR). They propose a sociocultural perspective on the study of language teacher emotions and identity and show how metaphor analysis could be extended to the study of emotions, acknowledging that to date it has been constrained to focused explorations of teacher identities only. Moving from a teacher role to a researcher role requires institutional support from the teacher education programme and the workplace. Insufficient support can cause negative emotional experiences while sufficient support, combined with voluntary participation, can strengthen teacher engagement, solidarity with fellow teacher researchers and a feeling of belonging in institutional, cross-institutional or even global communities of practice. The authors discuss the wide range of emotional experiences of their participants, by showing how participants felt overwhelmed and euphoric during AR, humble or energised at the end of AR and restricted or re-energised after AR. Edwards and Burns conclude that teacher engagement with action research comes with personal, professional and wider institutional benefits.

In the next chapter (Chapter 6), Kostoulas and Lämmerer explore the concepts of resilient adaptation, which helps towards facilitating the management of unpleasant emotional states and expanding the repertoire of emotion regulation strategies for teachers; and teacher resilience, referring to teachers' ability to function effectively in their professional roles despite hurdles and adversities. The authors construct a tentative, complexity-informed model of teacher resilience by drawing on interview data from two pre-service teachers, who have just completed their first assignments on teaching, for the purposes of testing the descriptive utility of the model. The chapter illustrates the participants' inner strengths, the role of external support and environmental determinants in the development of resilience, how resilience can exert both an adaptive and maladaptive influence on the teachers' professional performance and in particular their adjustment to the demands of teaching, and how the so-called negative emotions of teaching, which are likely to be experienced in stressful environments, help practising teachers to grow professionally. The authors stress that adversity could be viewed as a trigger for psychological growth and continuous professional development, and are hopeful that the dynamism of teacher resilience will be taken forward in future projects.

Over the last decade there has been a blossoming of applied linguistics research into the notion of the L2 self, primarily focusing on how the concept relates to language learner motivation. In Chapter 7, Falout extends the construct by exploring how learners' *past selves* relate to emotions and group dynamics within classrooms. Past selves involve thinking back to previous learning and teaching experiences, with the subjective interpretation of past events helping to dynamically construct one's present identity. Falout argues that the complex interplay

of personal and shared autobiographical histories of past selves therefore helps to mediate both learners' and teachers' present emotions and behaviours in language learning settings. With memory being plastic and fallible (in-the-moment emotions in particular appear difficult to reliably recollect), Falout presents some innovative ideas for researching past selves, using example studies focusing on strategic comparison, such as interpersonal comparisons of in-class emotions over time and intrapersonal comparisons of the effectiveness of different L2 teaching methods across age groups. The plasticity of memory would suggest that there is a potentially fruitful opportunity for teachers to help learners subjectively manipulate their recall of learning incidents with an emotional element in order to facilitate future learning goals.

In Chapter 8, Gkonou and Miller adopt a multiple case study approach for their empirical investigation of critical incidents mentioned by 13 English language teachers working in tertiary education programmes in the US and the UK. Interviews allowed the authors to collect critical incident stories from their participants, which emerged spontaneously while they were discussing the role of emotions in their past and current teaching. These stories were classified as critical incidents because they referred to a past event, included emotionally charged discourse, indicated a significant turning point for the teachers' practice and identity, and were treated as formative. Participants recounted how they dealt with challenging students and how they learned not to take things personally; they also recollected their constant endeavours to understand their students' emotions and behaviours, and their journey from emotional turmoil to reaping emotional rewards in their workplace. The interviews had an almost therapeutic function, as they allowed teachers to retell the difficult experiences and reflect on them, and even draw lessons for the future on how to deal with difficult students and how to frame students' behaviours and emotions, as well as the teachers' own reactions.

Chapter 9 sees Humphries discuss how changes to the English language curriculum in a Japanese engineering college had emotional consequences for teachers, with one instructor in particular, Daiki (pseudonym), struggling to adapt to the demands of using a new communication-orientated textbook. Drawing data from a series of classroom observations and interviews with Daiki, Humphries paints a vivid picture of a teacher frustrated by his students' poor performances in class and their lack of enthusiasm for learning. Interestingly, whereas a previous study by King (2016) revealed that L2 teachers in a similar context in Japan tended to engage in emotional labour by regulating their in-class emotion displays to hide negative emotions in order to motivate unenthusiastic learners, Daiki was observed to openly display his irritation and feelings of apathy towards his class. Humphries ponders whether a freedom to express true emotions might

in part be related to the values teachers hold about communicative versus transmission models of learning and their attitudes to power inequalities within classrooms. Another intriguing feature of the chapter is that it explores how the actual process of research had emotional consequences for both the participant and the researcher. The study provided Daiki with many opportunities for self-reflection and, as a result, he seems to have become increasingly discomforted by his lack of professional development, seeing the research interviews as an opportunity to learn more about English language teaching from a teacher-researcher who, in turn, felt the emotional strain of keeping his distance and remaining neutral in the face of Daiki's pleas for help.

In Chapter 10, Ikeda and her colleagues adopt an emotions perspective to investigate the dynamic nature of foreign language anxiety amongst a group of Japanese teachers of English working in elementary schools. Using a dynamic systems theory (DST) framework which emphasises the interplay between contextual factors and individuals' psychological attributes (see King, 2015), the study details an intervention programme implemented over two terms aimed at alleviating instructors' feelings of anxiety when teaching English and which sought to more generally improve their L2 pedagogical techniques. As policymakers in various countries respond to the rather simplistic notion of 'the younger, the better' when it comes to English language instruction (for a more nuanced discussion of age effects in SLA, see e.g. Pfenninger & Singleton, 2017; Singleton & Pfenninger, 2019), these types of professional development opportunities acknowledging the emotional aspects of L2 teaching are becoming more and more important as non-specialist teachers of English, particularly those working in elementary or primary schools, struggle to teach a language in which they may lack proficiency and have received little training in. Although Ikeda *et al.,* found little change in anxiety levels amongst their participants overall as a group during the course of the intervention, the story at an individual level was quite different for a number of participants, with the dreaded demonstration class (an observed lesson open to other teachers, school administrators and members of local boards of education) proving to be particularly influential in the rollercoaster of teachers' fluctuating anxiety levels.

The next chapter (Chapter 11) by Morris and King reports on an exploratory study on the emotion regulation behaviour of experienced teachers of English as a foreign language working at a Japanese university, adopting Gross's (2015) process model of emotion regulation. The authors combined the feedback of seven in-service teachers in semi-structured interviews about their emotion regulation in the classroom with classroom observations and stimulated recall sessions. The teachers were found to deploy a range of strategies to control their own and their students' emotions, especially the negative ones, in order to attain

goals connected with their perceived responsibilities, their teaching and especially their psychological well-being. Teachers also made conscious use of attention deployment, cognitive change and response modulation, thus appreciating the social responsibilities of language teaching and reaching better understandings of emotional honesty and the temporal dimensions of emotional behaviour. Morris and King additionally highlight the importance of individual and surrounding contexts that shape the emotion regulation behaviour of teachers and its efficacy. The authors call for institutions to invest in emotional regulation training for teachers.

In the next chapter (Chapter 12), De Costa, Li and Rawal explore the emotional experiences of teachers working in a less widely investigated educational context, that of Nepal. They highlight the recent shift to English as medium of instruction in Nepalese public schools and the difficulty for English language teachers in adapting linguistically and professionally to this new trend. Using Benesch's (2017) conceptualisation of emotion labour, they navigate through the professional demands and realities faced by their teacher participants by looking at the factors that shape teachers' emotion labour at the macro- (societal) and meso- (school and community) levels. Their findings demonstrate that the mandate to use only English in the classroom (and Nepali in specific teaching contexts) made teachers feel pressure and experience frustration in their teaching. This in turn reduced their sense and exercise of agency, causing teachers to feel powerless and exhausted emotionally, physically and mentally. Emotion labour was also associated with the lack of mentoring for these participants. In light of these findings, De Costa *et al.*, stress the need for English language teacher education programmes to incorporate elements of affective training to better equip teachers for the emotional difficulties encountered in their professional roles.

Gregersen, MacIntyre and Macmillan (Chapter 13) borrow a positive psychology intervention called 'finding silver linings' and examine how this is employed on a daily basis and in a stressful context by their case study participant. The intervention is in fact a cognitive reappraisal strategy, which is intended to mitigate the negative effects of stress. The authors first used established measures to take the 'emotional pulse' of their participant before the start of the actual intervention. During the week-long intervention, the participant also recorded her thoughts about stressors in her daily life in a personal journal. The findings showed that the stressors experienced by the case study participant could only be alleviated temporarily and without leading to a long-lasting change. In their conclusion, Gregersen *et al.*, highlight the interaction between individual and contextual parameters, which influences the efficacy of this intervention. They also recommend some caution moving forward in research on positive psychology interventions within SLA, stressing that

the effects of such interventions might be measured or interpreted across different timescales by taking into consideration both positive emotions and cognitive and emotional processes that help to manage stress and enhance teacher well-being.

Oxford goes all poetic in looking into the well of language teachers' emotional well-being in Chapter 14. She finds a kaleidoscope of different highly dynamic and interacting emotions as well as personality traits and strategies to cope with the emotions, including interventions which address teachers' empathy, emotional intelligence, emotion regulation and emotional labour. She presents theoretical frameworks associated with these emotion-related concepts and reflects – in a positive tone – on the paradoxical benefits of difficult emotions and specifically how teachers can gain wisdom from them and how they can let go of emotional pain. She then extracts themes from the stories of five teachers and teacher educators percolating in their own well of positive and negative emotions. Specifically, she discusses emotions in connection with attitudes regarding immigrants, emotions involved in clashes between caring teachers and uncaring administration, and how caring and love can continue throughout one's career. Finally, she argues that the 'compass of emotion', which comprises both pleasant and painful emotions, can be an important catalyst for teacher growth and could thus form part of teacher education and development.

Chapter 15 is the volume's final empirical chapter and comprises Dewaele's correlational study on the relationship between teachers' motivation dimensions of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation and amotivation (Fernet *et al.*, 2008), and age, gender, English as L1/LX, English proficiency, global trait emotional intelligence (Trait EI), well-being, emotionality, self-control and sociability (Petrides & Furnham, 2000, 2001). The study builds on existing work on the link between English language teacher emotions and their self-reported classroom behaviour (Dewaele *et al.*, 2018; Dewaele & Mercer, 2018). Through a sociobiographical questionnaire, the short version of the Trait EI questionnaire (TEIQ-short form; Petrides, 2009) and the English version of the LEXTALE, the author concludes that motivation is linked with a range of psychological, demographic and linguistic variables, and builds psychological and personality profiles of motivated teachers. He also contends that more research, also measuring actual teaching performance, will shed more light onto these relationships.

In the concluding chapter by the editors we begin by reflecting upon the collection's diversity of works in terms of both research contexts and methodologies. After pondering upon the inherent difficulties of investigating teacher emotions effectively, the discussion turns to the significant implications of the book in terms of language teacher training and continuing professional development. Intimately linked

to teachers' emotional experiences are teacher stress, burnout and attrition, all of which stubbornly remain worrying problems for the language teaching profession. We put forward a strong argument that an increased focus on developing emotional competence in teachers would not only enhance their own personal psychological well-being, but would also contribute to better classroom practice and, ultimately, improved learning outcomes for students.

Note

(1) All of the book's empirical studies followed standard ethical principles for conducting research with human participants. They were based on voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and participant anonymity.

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