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EMOTIONS IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

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Elizabeth's research has always relied on qualitative methods. Her early research used ethnographic and discourse analytic methods to explore issues such as power relations, language ideologies, learner identity and agency, and discursive positioning among adult immigrant learners of English in the US. Her more recent work with language teachers has relied primarily on narrative and thematic analysis in exploring teacher interviews. This work has included exploration of teacher identity work and ethical self-formation. Christina's research initially centered on language learner anxiety and how it is contextually and dialogically formed and understood. She then started looking at how teachers positioned themselves in classrooms with highly anxious learners, which led to more focused qualitative explorations of teacher emotions and how to foster socio-emotional competencies among language teachers.

Our collaborative research has explored the topic of language teacher emotions, the focus of this chapter. Working within this broader topic, we have explored teachers' emotion labor and agency, how language teachers orient to discourses of teaching-as-caring, and how they conceptualize the significance of 'critical incidents' in their professional development.

Strategies for Choosing a Topic

In reflecting on the strategies we have used to pursue particular research topics related to language teacher emotions, we recognize that potential topics often emerge when we are busily pursuing something else. For example, when we collaborated on a project that involved analyzing interviews with English language teachers working in Greece (Gkonou & Miller, in press 2019), our initial focus was on how these teachers dealt with anxious learners. However, as we read through the interviews multiple times, we began to notice the importance

these teachers gave to demonstrating caring to their students, a practice which connected to the larger topic of teachers' emotion labor, and these two aspects of language teacher practice became the primary focus of our project. So one important strategy is for researchers to remain open to what their data show them. While qualitative data can be interpreted differently, depending on one's analytical tools and approaches, researchers' analyses are always data-driven and the data often lead to findings and insights that researchers do not anticipate.

This point leads directly to a second strategy, which is to read widely and across disciplinary boundaries. We have formulated topics and research questions related to language teacher emotions that developed from ideas we gleaned from general education research as well as work in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, among other fields. The cross-fertilization of ideas, findings, and methodologies from related disciplines often contributes to the seemingly serendipitous findings or insights from qualitative data that was noted in our first strategy. Third, we have found that our work with language learners and our familiarity with second language acquisition (SLA) research often helps us conceptualize topics related to language teachers. In the example noted above, it was while we were working with a focus on language learner anxiety, a well-established research topic in SLA, that we began to see the importance of examining the teachers' perspectives on these learners. A fourth strategy relates to examining evidence of what language teachers value or emphasize through analyzing important classroom artifacts such as syllabi and lesson plans. For example, we can understand and appreciate classroom priorities and teacher decision-making by analyzing qualitatively what goes into a lesson plan. Additionally, if we are to explore the perceived relevance and importance of language teacher emotions in teacher education programs, we can analyze the content and structure of internationally recognized teacher training courses such as the Cambridge CELTA or the Trinity Certificate in TESOL. This analysis could be supplemented by narratives collected by teacher educators, policy makers, and the scientific board of the awarding institutions.

Current Research Topics

Emotion Labor

One important topic that requires ongoing exploration is the interconnection between language teacher emotions and emotion labor. Benesch's (2017) interview study with language teachers demonstrated not only that emotions play a central role in their practice, but also that 'emotion labor' is a ubiquitous component of that practice. Working from a poststructuralist perspective, she defines emotion labor as the efforts by which "humans actively negotiate the relationship between how they feel in particular work situations and how they are supposed to feel, according to social expectations" (Benesch, 2017, pp. 37–38). In working to display and actually *feel* socially 'appropriate' emotions in the face of numerous challenges,

such as tensions in working with students and colleagues, dealing with unfair or unrealistic educational policies, and/or coping with increased monitoring and accountability measures due to education reforms, language teachers risk feeling overwhelmed; this can lead to burnout, cynicism, and, sometimes, career abandonment. Language teachers often view their emotional stress as arising from their own personal inadequacies and thus work to 'fix' themselves.

Our research with language teachers in tertiary settings in the US and the UK, using interviews and online questionnaires, shows that even self-identified 'happy' and experienced teachers regularly undertake emotion labor (Miller & Gkonou, 2018). Examining teacher emotions from the perspective of emotion labor shifts the focus from the individual to the complex emotional ecologies, power relations, and social discourses that inform how language teachers often think they *should* feel. As such, further research is needed to understand more fully how language teachers in different contexts, with varying levels of experience are positioned by different social discourses and what emotion labor means and looks like in these diverse situations.

Agency

A related topic is the relationship between language teachers' emotions and their capacity to exercise agency. Teachers exercise agency as they undertake emotion labor and also as they critically examine those efforts. It is this latter point that Benesch's (2017) and our own work (Miller & Gkonou, 2018) emphasizes. More research is needed to explore how emotions themselves create capacities for language teachers to exercise agency by considering the question: What do emotions do? (see Benesch, 2017). That is, language teachers' capacity to act and to assign meaning and relevance to particular practices or experiences, but this relationship is still not well understood. Interviews, teacher journals, visual collages, digital storytelling, among numerous other reflective practices, can engage language teachers in critiquing their emotional experiences and help them to consider how or whether to resist some forms of emotion labor and to reframe the pressures that contribute to that labor in terms of complex social, historical, and economic influences rather than as individual, internal emotional responses.

Identity

The intersection between emotions and identity is another topic that needs further research in order for us to better understand language teachers' professional development. Language teacher identity is now understood to be fundamental to teacher practice and growth as well as to social and political change more generally (Barkhuizen, 2017a). Research conducted in the broader

field of education has furthermore demonstrated that teacher identities are nearly always formed in and through their emotional experience (Zembylas, 2005). In exploring how emotions help constitute teacher identities, researchers who adopt a dialogical and/or poststructural perspective will want to examine how teachers' accounts of their emotional experiences (emerging from one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, or written reflections) intersect with a complex ecology of ideologies, histories, and daily interactions with others. Undertaking such research can help language teachers recognize the situated and contingent nature of their emotions and identities, allow them to position themselves differently, sometimes resist powerful norms, and even resignify what their teaching experiences mean.

Teaching as Caring

Another current research topic is the intersection between language learner and language teacher emotions, which often leads to an understanding of how language teachers enact teaching as caring. It is important to investigate how learners and teachers regulate their own emotions, but it is also worth examining how teachers help their students to regulate their emotions in class and how this process shapes and potentially impacts on teacher identity. In our own analysis of interview data from English teachers in Greece (see Gkonou & Miller, in press 2019), we found that the participating teachers put into practice several strategies for helping their learners to regulate their emotions. In rereading the interview transcripts though, we came across narratives of teachers in which they positioned themselves as aware and responsive to instances of language learner anxiety and worked towards consciously creating caring classroom environments to enable their learners to perform at their best. These discourses of teacher agentive action in response to high levels of learner anxiety also led to teacher emotion labor.

Critical Incidents

Analyzing teachers' accounts of critical incidents in their teaching practice and experience is another helpful way to understand the complexity of language teacher emotions. In producing narratives in response to researcher interview questions, teachers tend to tell stories, which might come from early in their careers or could be more recent, are self-reflective, and help them to interpret what happened retrospectively (Barkhuizen, 2017a, 2017b). Some of these stories could be classified as critical incidents due to their long-lasting effects, their high emotional impact and the fact that they are treated as leading to significant turning points in teachers' professional and often personal lives (Tripp, 2012). In our forthcoming research study of English teachers in tertiary-level settings in the US and the UK (Gkonou & Miller, forthcoming), we identified several critical incident stories in which emotionally

charged discourse was employed and which revealed how teachers worked through ethical dilemmas and emotional challenges to experience emotional rewards. Conducting such research can help towards expanding our understandings of the complex nature of teacher emotions at different stages throughout their teaching journeys and of moments in their careers which defined their own professional identities.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers characterize their emotional experiences?

This open-ended question can help researchers to consider the role of teachers' emotion from a variety of theoretical and analytical perspectives.

2. What kinds of language do teachers use when describing their emotional experiences?

In examining teachers' linguistic choices in characterizing their emotions as somehow problematic or as desirable, researchers can gain insight into teachers' perspectives on their emotion labor or emotional rewards.

3. What kinds of emotions do teachers identify as most frequently experienced and in what situations?

This more focused question allows researchers to compare accounts produced by multiple teachers and/or to compare how emotions are assigned to diverse teaching situations.

4. In what way/s could teacher stories be used for the understanding of teacher emotions?

This question can help researchers to better understand the content and depth of stories that teachers produce with a view to learning more about teacher perspectives on changes in the emotional experience of teaching.

5. How do teachers describe or refer to changes over time in their emotional experience related to teaching?

From this question, researchers can gain insight into teachers' identity formation and professional development as well as their capacity to exercise agency.

6. What else or who else do teachers reference when giving accounts of their emotional lives?

Paying attention to these references can help researchers better understand the social, material, and political contexts in which particular emotions emerge.

7. How does the experience of different emotions translate into emotion labor?

This question can shed light on the possible link between different emotions and emotion labor, also showing how emotion labor can have a formative function for teachers and their practice.

8. What is the relationship between teacher emotions and teaching/classroom practice?

Through this more applied question researchers can look at how emotions work in practice and how they influence or interfere with the actual process of teaching.

9. How/to what extent could emotion-related input be incorporated into teacher education programs?

This exploratory question aims to elucidate how emotions could be directly and explicitly addressed in language teacher education.

10. How do teachers' accounts of emotion labor and agentive effort change when they have been introduced to poststructural or relational (or other theoretical) perspectives on emotions?

This kind of question can be used in teacher education courses or longitudinal research.

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RESEARCHING EMOTION IN LTE

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I am an associate professor of English at Arizona State University, where I teach and mentor students in applied linguistics, TESOL, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, qualitative methods, and discourse analysis. My interdisciplinary research interests and publications focus on socio-psychological dimensions of second language learning and use, mental health and well-being, narrative and discursive-constructionist approaches to identity, and social interaction through the lenses of conversation analysis, discursive psychology, membership categorization analysis, and formulation analysis. A unifying thread that runs throughout my work is the topic of *emotion*, a fundamental feature of human life and language. Emotion (and associated terms such as *affect*, *feeling*, *mood*, *qualia*, and so on) can mean many things: a physiological response, a psychological process, a socio-cultural activity, an interpersonal resource for performing social action, an expression of identity, an agentive and moral force, and a means of experiencing and mediating the world. The complex and dynamic nature of emotion makes it an exciting and rewarding area of study and research.

Strategies for Constructing a Research Topic

Topic *construction* (not just selection) is a crucial, yet often challenging, part of all research. Personal inspiration or motivation can come from many sources: experience (e.g., as a teacher or student), a conversation, social media, a news report, or just a dilemma. To determine which topics are researchable and which questions are answerable, it is helpful to examine recent professional publications and conference programs; to consult other researchers, teachers, colleagues, and resources; and to familiarize yourself with potential data sources or research sites, when appropriate and available. It is also important to consider, among other