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Professional identity of a French language teacher in Poland: constancy vs. change, sameness vs. difference, agency

ABSTRACT. Studies conducted on teacher identity have mostly focused on preservice language teachers. By contrast, this study looks at the professional identity of a veteran teacher of French as a foreign language in Poland. It describes a two-stage biographic study in which the narratives obtained are subjected to semantic deconstruction with the application of Bamberg's (2010) model of identity. To this end, the author investigates: 1) what is constant and what changes in the participant's professional career in terms of the emotions she experiences, 2) what are the similarities and differences between the teachers she refers to and herself, 3) what is the role of agency in the participant's professional decisions. Through the analysis, the Author seeks to find out with what content Bamberg's identity pillars may be filled, what teacher emotions and feelings can be inferred from what is said, and what insights can be gained into the identity of a French language teacher in Poland.

KEYWORDS: French teacher identity, teacher emotions, Bamberg's model, LOTE.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although foreign language teacher identity has been systematically investigated for over a decade now, there are few studies focusing on the identities of experienced language teachers teaching languages other than English (LOTE). Most studies are conducted with candidates for the teaching profession rather than in-service teachers, possibly because university teacher researchers have ready access to student teachers. This article aims at partially filling this gap and looking at teacher professional identity through the lens of a veteran teacher of French, a language which is regarded in Poland as one of the 'other' foreign languages, or a language of secondary value. The intention of this study is not to showcase the history of a single teacher but, through focusing on the biography of one language teacher, to gain more general knowledge about French language teacher identity and the educational and social processes that affect its reshaping,

which may prove important in deconstructing popular discourses. In the study, Bamberg's (2010) theoretical model of three identity dilemmas is employed in order to find out if and what emotions and feelings his framework's dilemmas may produce in the participant's professional life.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study comprises three constructs within the language teacher education field: the language policy, teacher emotions, and language teacher professional identity.

2.1. Language policy

Foreign language policy in Poland, as in other EU countries, is aimed at promoting the learning of foreign languages. Although official documents do not stipulate which particular foreign languages are to be learned, few Polish primary schools have introduced a language other than English as the first foreign language in the first grade. Compulsory teaching of a second (understood chronologically) foreign language in Poland is introduced in the seventh and eighth grades of primary school. According to the CEFR scale, primary school pupils are expected to reach a level of A1 in the second foreign language, and a level of A1+ in the case of bilingual classes in which there are twice as many hours of the language in comparison to non-bilingual classes. The second most often taught foreign language in Poland is German (Jugo 2019). Spanish and Italian, though popular with teenagers, are rarely taught due to a shortage of Spanish and Italian teachers. French is usually only taught in larger cities and in schools considered to be elitist, but also as a second or elective language.

In upper-secondary schools, learning two foreign languages is obligatory (Eurydice 2020–2021). The learners who decide to continue to learn the language chosen in the primary school are required to achieve A2+ competence, whereas those who are learning the language from the beginning are expected to reach the level of A2.

2.2. Teacher emotions

Judging on the basis of recent publications (e.g. Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre 2019; Gkonou, Dewaele & King, 2020; Gregersen & Mercer 2022; Jackson 2021; Mercer

& Kostoulas 2018; Mynard *et al.* 2020; Rudolph, Selvi & Yazan, 2020; Sampson & Pinner 2021), the psychology of language learning and teaching is gaining popularity, especially in the literature on English language acquisition. In this new subdiscipline representing a blend of linguistics, psychology, and education (Gregersen & Mercer 2022: 1), teacher emotions (e.g. Benesch 2017, 2018; Gkonou *et al.* 2020; Talbot, Gruber & Nishida 2021) occupy a significant place. They are perceived in the poststructuralist sense with the focus not on what they are, but what they do to the people experiencing them.

In the psychological literature, a difference between emotions and feelings is often made. According to Damasio (2002), for example, emotions are observable, neurophysiological, and transitory reactions to stimuli, whereas feelings are the non-observable, private experience of emotions. There are also different classifications of emotions and feelings (e.g. Ekman 2003; Russel 1991), as well as complex elaborations on the existing taxonomies (e.g. Plutchik 1980).

In terms of professional work, an important distinction with regard to emotions is that between 'feeling rules' and 'emotional labour', terms originally coined by Hochschild (1979). Feeling rules are dictated by obligations, principles, expectations and refer to exhibiting the emotions 'outside'. By contrast, emotional labour can be defined as the discrepancies between the principles of feeling (or feeling rules) and authentic emotions experienced by employees. Both constructs constitute a vital interpretative tool. The dissonance between the feelings shown outside, or surface acting (Hochschild 1979), and what is truly felt inside, or deep acting (Hochschild 1979), may trigger agentic forces, build resilience, and ultimately improve a person's well-being.

2.3. Teacher professional identity

The third construct of the theoretical framework in this article is teacher professional identity. Although the exact nature of teacher identity and what it is made up of is still an open question, there are numerous examples of models and frameworks in the language teacher identity literature (e.g. Barkhuizen 2017; Gee 2001; Pennington 2015; Trent 2015; Varghese *et al.* 2005; Wenger 1998; Werbińska 2017). In this study, Bamberg's (2010) identity model, comprising, as mentioned above, three pillars, or identity dilemmas, has been used. Thanks to its capacity, scope, prevalence and binarity, this model has been found to be exceptionally useful. The categories distinguished by Bamberg (2010) are broad enough (capacity) to accommodate many situations from a study participant's professional life and enable the narrator to refer to professional identity spanning the whole of her professional life (scope). The dilemmas distinguished in

the model are always potentially present (prevalence), whereas their expression through the use of binary pairs (binarity) makes the constructs in the pairs mutually exclusive, thereby contributing to the model's validity.

Constancy and change, the first pillar of Bamberg's (2010) model, refers to how much a person has changed diachronically. Events occurring in the course of professional life may leave an imprint on a teacher's identity, create discontinuities and, as a result, reshape professional identity. What is crucial in this dilemma is its temporal perspective and the way in which the study participant's self-presentation of the experienced time is negotiated. Such questions as 'Can the same person who was known to the same interlocutor in the past still be recognized (constancy), or is it someone completely new and different (change)?' are illustrative of this dilemma. It can even be argued that biographic narratives in which narrators present themselves are a *par excellence* instrument for exploring the diachronic aspects of identity (re)formation.

Similarities and differences, a second dilemma of teacher identity in Bamberg's (2010) model, refers to the horizontal sphere. As a person is now being compared and contrasted with others, a potential contradiction existing here is not temporal but synchronic. This is a kind of self-positioning *vis-à-vis* others achieved with the employment of social categories with whom a person identifies (sameness) or disidentifies (difference). Categories of sameness or difference, such as age, sex, religion, ethnicity, nation, etc. determine the person's group belonging. Recalling and accepting such categories, as much as recalling and rejecting them, makes them valid and, consequently, indicates who one is.

The dilemma of agency has neither diachronic nor synchronic attributes. Bamberg's (2010) third dilemma addresses the question of control and its owner. In other words, the dilemma is whether it is the same person that construes the world and her professional life or, perhaps, someone who accepts what is given, assuming a subordinating position in terms of what happens. Agency (and passivity) in narratives may result in situating oneself in the role of hero or victim, being emotionally engaged, as well as taking responsibility for one's behaviour. Although the dilemma of agency is often considered to be as dependent on external factors, there is moral agency according to which people act, believing that this is how they 'should' or 'should not' act, which also leaves room for identity modification.

The three categories: language policy, teacher emotions, and teacher identity provide the main theoretical framework for this article. Teaching a particular foreign language in Poland may generate positive or negative emotions in the teacher, which subsequently impacts the teacher's professional identity. This study also contributes to explorations of emotions in the teaching profession (e.g. Song 2016; van Veen, Slegers & van Veen 2005; Zembylas 2004, 2005a, 2005b)

and language teacher narrative studies (e.g. Rudolph *et al.* 2020; Thompson 2021). The analysis of the data was conducted using Bamberg's (2010) model, and the three components of the model (three pillars – dilemmas constituting it) will often be referred to in the present study.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research questions

Based on Bamberg's (2010) model of identity pillars-dilemmas, the present model explores the identity of one French as a foreign language teacher. The research questions underpinning the study were:

- RQ1: What real-life content could be inserted into the three pillars of Bamberg's identity model?
- RQ2: What insights into language policy, teacher emotions and teacher identity can this content provide?

3.2. Data collection

The qualitative case study method was chosen for this study as it is better suited than the quantitative or mixed methods case study for investigating issues rich in context, such as the role of identity in language teaching (Hood 2009: 68). The case study participant is Eva (a pseudonym), a teacher of French as a foreign language who has been working for 30 years in a general education upper secondary school in a middle-sized Polish town. In addition, she has worked in a lower secondary school and, for three years now, has supplemented her teaching load by working in a primary school where she teaches Spanish as an optional language for those pupils who want to learn it. The teacher is regarded as one of the best French teachers in town and has earned a reputation as an expert in her field.

The data for the research were obtained from two in-depth interviews conducted at the beginning of January 2019 (stage one of the study) and at the end of August 2019 (stage two of the study), each lasting about two hours. With the teacher's consent, both interviews were recorded and then transcribed with a view to making written protocols.

The first interview was not structured, though at the time of making the interview appointment Eva was informed that the conversation would concern her professional biography. The first meeting started with a specific question /

instruction: *Tell me about your journey with French and other foreign languages that you have studied from as far back as you remember. How did it start?* This open format of the question was considered optimal, as the participant could choose what to say about her relationship with French, as well as devote as much time to particular subjects as she deemed appropriate. In this way, she assigned meaning to the content, whereas the author, by creating an atmosphere of interest, confidence and respect for the narratives heard, assumed the role of an attentive listener and conversation maintainer. This seemed more natural than ticking off pre-prepared questions, which is typical of structured interviews. Although Eva was talking about her experiences related to learning and teaching French, her narrative was not artificial. She included digressions at times, requests to switch off the microphone, and appealed to joint experiences with the author during their University language studies, all of which made the conversation more natural and less like an interview.

The second interview, half a year later, took place under similar circumstances (an informal meeting place), but the opening question concerned the events taking place in education at that time – the teachers' strike and its consequences. The conversation opener was: *The second term of 2019 was in the shadow of an all-Poland teachers' strike. How do you view that time with reference to your subject?* The purpose of the second interview was to gain more information about Eva's professional work in the light of a specific and unique moment in any teacher's work (the period of teachers' strike), which, in the author's opinion, had the potential for provoking a number of conflicting emotions. Moreover, the material from the second long interview was intended as a means of validating Eva's views expressed earlier. When requested to respond to the protocols after the two meetings, Eva did not raise any objections.

3.3. Researcher's positionality

Eva was well-known to the author and, prior to the study, they had often discussed profession-related topics in which educational issues in Poland were brought to the fore. As the case study approach is highly individualised in its design, Stake (1995), one of the leading case study researchers, claims that the interest lies purely in one particular case, without any intentions of generalising from the case being studied. What is important is throwing light on a particular issue, presenting a contextualised picture of a particular phenomenon, or understanding a lived experience. The researcher is, therefore, not a detached, objective observer but someone who is enmeshed in the study eager to better understand the world through an analysis of the particular rather than by the

generalities produced by quantitative methods. Such a role in the study requires good interaction between the researcher and the participant, which was possible in this study. Had the two not known each other before, the participant might have failed to agree to take part in the study or sustain openness throughout.

3.4. Working with the data

As the primary topic of the study was the exploration of a French language teacher's professional identity on the basis of Bamberg's (2010) model, upon obtaining the verified protocols, the author proceeded to analyse the research data as soon as the verified protocols were obtained. The work consisted of four processes that could be called: immersion, reflection, analysis / synthesis, and heuresis. Immersion involved the careful reading of the protocols, taking notes, and rereading with a view to verifying that none of the content had been omitted. Reflection was associated with the researcher's investment in deep thinking about the data, attempting to look at it from different angles and frequently consulting the notes. Analysis consisted in extracting detailed codes from the teacher's narrative, whereas synthesis involved adjusting the categories created to Bamberg's binary dilemmas. Finally, heuresis was implicated in creating a framework of a teacher's professional identity, based on Eva's emotions and feelings about the intricacies of teaching French, as presented in the light of Bamberg's (2010) identity model.

4. FINDINGS

In the findings section of this text, Eva's case as a French teacher will be presented from two perspectives: descriptive and analytic. The first part is descriptive and depicts Eva's short professional biography, whereas the second is analytic and directly refers to Bamberg's (2010) model of three identity pillars.

4.1. Descriptive perspective

Eva has been teaching French for over thirty years now. She originally wanted to study history but she was discouraged from this by her history teacher at school who would sit down, put down her belongings and just read out from the coursebook. She therefore decided to study French, a language she had been learning at extended level, that is seven hours a week for four years. Her

teacher in the small town where she lived taught in a traditional way. The first contact with French was without any books. For about a month, the teacher used French all the time while pupils tried to remember as much as possible, a way of teaching which reflected methods such as The Direct or Audiolingual Methods. After this first period, the teacher taught from French course books obtained from the French Embassy in Poland. Her way of teaching would be considered traditional today – working with a text, translating vocabulary to and from Polish, answering questions, doing grammar exercises. During the school holidays the teacher would lend students French books to read, and some students, including Eva, were asked to prepare themselves for all-Poland French competitions. Eva managed to get through the second stage, which was considered a huge success. While still at secondary school, on the teacher's advice, she took part in a summer language school. Such language schools gave school students the opportunity to converse with native speakers of French and were attended by students from the best schools in Poland. Although she had never spoken French to a French native user, she fared better than her summer school friends from larger places.

Eva had no problem in being accepted for the best French Philology department in Poland. As in the case of the summer language school, at first she felt a little daunted by her studies and especially by some of her peers, many of whom she playfully called 'birds'. These were people colourfully and fashionably dressed, who regularly spent their holidays time with families in Belgium or France and were confident of their linguistic and communicative superiority in French. After a short time, however, it turned out that Eva, through her determination, conscientiousness and, above all, her motivation to study, proved to be an equally good student who never failed any examinations, which was not always the case with other students.

After her studies, Eva started teaching French at a secondary school in a middle-sized town far away from her home town. She taught classes following an extended mode of teaching French and, with time, became the best French teacher in town. After 10 years of teaching, the first educational reform of 1999 was announced, with a new secondary school leaving examination, known as 'New Matura'. Eva accepted this change enthusiastically. She attended innumerable teacher training sessions devoted to the new format of the examination, sincerely believing that it would resemble university thesis defence examinations and increase the prestige of the school leaving examination. It had never occurred to her that the new examinations would contribute to learning 'to the test', with the resultant trend for minimalism and pragmatism among students. With time, the number of French lessons were reduced, leaving only the basic mode of French classes and, in consequence, Eva did not have the required number of hours to

make up the required teaching load for a full-time position. She therefore decided to do a BA in Spanish Studies in a small private higher education college, and for some years now Eva has taught Spanish in more than one school, including primary schools, so as to secure a full-time workload.

In the spring of 2019, Eva took part in the Polish teachers' strike, which was a form of a protest against changes in the educational system introduced in 2015. For financial reasons, Eva could only take part in the strike for one week as the teachers were not paid for the days when they were on strike.

4.2. Analytic perspective

After the general outline of Eva's professional biography, this section focuses on analysing her professional identity using the three identity pillars – dilemmas making up Bamberg's (2010) model of professional identity: constancy and change, sameness and difference, agency. That said, it must be noted that however valid the model may be, in terms of practical application, it is not always easy to identify and discuss all the dilemmas in one article. This is due to their complexity and overlapping nature, making it difficult to classify examples of change unambiguously within a particular construct, e.g. 'agency' and 'difference'. Nevertheless, such an attempt is undertaken below where illustrative examples from Eva's narratives are given under the codes referring to each of the dilemmas. The numbers (1) and (2) at the end of the lines refer to the first or the second interview conducted with Eva.

4.2.1. Dilemma 1: Constancy and change

The first dilemma is about what seems stable and what has changed in Eva throughout her thirty-year-long professional career.

Eva's constancy

Love of learning and teaching languages

- I often read teacher journals, and whenever I can, I attend language conferences. I even use private contacts for learning Italian. One of my friends was my Italian teacher, even though she wasn't a qualified teacher. She didn't know linguistic terminology, so instead of saying subject / object, she used to say, "This word here, this word there". Lack of terminology, but I still learnt for the pure pleasure of learning. [...] I wasn't interested in getting any certificates. (1)

- Trips, constant learning, as far as language goes, produce such good emotions. (2)

Respect for humanistic values and knowledge

- Within the language, I've always been interested in the cultural sphere, literature, civilization, the history of the culture. One of my professors was in the process of writing an Introduction to *The Divine Comedy*. He would come to classes with old yellowing sheets of paper on which there were a few words and then he would talk for an hour and a half about literature, both French and Italian, using quotations. This made us respect him and the humanistic values he discussed. (1)
- I always think that had it not been for my studies, I would be much poorer. I wouldn't have read all that literature, 80 books or so. I wouldn't have attempted to read half of them if I hadn't studied French philology. (1)

Eva's change

Reflection on social issues related to language learning

- During my studies we were expected to have our own grammar books. There was a possibility of ordering them from the French Embassy. I remember sitting and thinking about it: "How can I tell my parents about this?" Such a French grammar book cost as much as my father's monthly salary. Going to a French speaking country and practising the language? This was just a pipe dream for me. When I think about it now, I realize that language studies are sometimes not socially just. (1)
- Students were more ambitious in the years after the transformation in Poland. Everyone wanted to learn. They associated languages with investing in their hopes for a better future. (1)
- When I went to school none of the students ever said that too much homework was being assigned. When my French teacher dictated homework for the next class, it could last several minutes. I still have my notebooks. Nobody objected. It was simply a different model of education that made people disciplined. Nothing could be gained without hard work. (1)
- People at the time did not choose their studies for pragmatic reasons. If I liked French, I wanted to study French. I didn't do it for instrumental reasons. People studied Latin because it was their passion. It's a bit sad it's not like that any longer. (1)
- Our ideals may be redundant now. People don't need them any more, which makes their lives easier. Minimalism has come to dominate everything. It has influenced professional life. (2)

Helplessness

- I'm constantly short of time. Since the reduction in the number of hours the material to be covered has not changed at all, and the pace is dizzying. I have no time at all to include the cultural background of the language, which has always been important for me. I used to organize French Days, a school performance in French, but that required time. I did some of the preparations during the lessons but once the students got into it, they were willing to come to rehearsals even at weekends. But when French was reduced to three 45-minute lessons per week, I couldn't 'waste' a single lesson. That was the first step towards marginalizing foreign languages. And then the generation of the Internet, and faster and faster. [...] When the 3-year secondary school appeared, a lot of teachers said that we were changing from a secondary school for general education ('general' being an important adjective here) to a course preparing for the final school leaving exam. That is exactly what happened. It's no longer 'general education', as learners have started to adopt a different attitude to their studies. A very pragmatic approach. The term 'second foreign language', not just 'foreign language', means that it is something of minor importance. If not taken as a final exam, what is it for? Despite the boom in active methods, the present generation is not much interested in this. Students are passive, helpless, uncreative; when asked for their opinion, they say "I don't know" without embarrassment and this is the end of their opinion. Their general knowledge is at a very low level. We as teachers are helpless because we lack support. Everyone looks through the lens of requirements, places, positions. But I can't see the learners behind these piles of paper. Only bureaucracy counts. Education is criticised, so are teachers, but never parents. The media have created the belief that parents are clients, only interested in the scores, rather than in what students have in their heads. Do you know any other country in which everyone consents to cheating in tests? Horrible. In France teachers strike a lot but parents support teachers as they are interested in what and how their children learn. We don't have this. And that is why foreign languages are becoming so difficult to teach right now. (1)
- Someone from the ministry called my subject 'second foreign language'. This word 'second' relieves me from work. I don't need to do anything. This is only a second language, not a major subject. The subjects at schools are divided into major and less important ones. In the opinion of students and often their parents, students should only learn major subjects because this pays off. And the strike didn't contribute anything. (2)
- Some kind of helplessness that you've got to adjust to the principal's decision although you know it is pointless. Too much paperwork, overin-

terpretation of regulations, newspeak. You do your best but it's like water off a duck's back. You would like to do more but you hear a question from students "What do I need this for?" (2)

Language learning as a must

- French is not a language chosen by students and my director told me there wouldn't be hours for me. I'm not an English teacher. French is considered difficult to learn and these days school should be light, easy and pleasant. Why should it be like this? Is work like this? Is life like this? But there are always some exceptions, even a small percentage for whom it is worth making the effort. (1)
- I started doing my BA in Spanish in a private college. It wasn't like learning Italian, something for myself but more of a must. I started when I was 49. The last call for me. (1)
- My Spanish was a matter of 'to be or not to be'. (2)

4.2.2. Dilemma 2: Sameness and difference

The second dilemma refers to who Eva liaises with as far as other language teachers in Poland are concerned and what, if anything, makes her different from others in her communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Eva's sameness with others

Alignment with language teachers who have graduated from good university departments

- I don't regret choosing French. When I look at the level of those who teach English today, my hair stands on end. (1)

Alignment with teachers of other than English foreign languages

- When I talk to my colleagues teaching French I can see that we all come to class prepared with worksheets and still plan our lessons in advance, whereas English teachers can just click here, click there or play a YouTube film. If I don't find the films before the lesson, I won't be able to find them on the spot in French or Spanish. (2)

Alignment with veteran teachers

- In education there is a group of the oldest teachers who still believe they have a mission. If someone says, "I rely on you", this still works with us.

[...]. When I talk to teachers of my age, I can see that their involvement and investment in their work hasn't changed. (2)

Eva's difference from others

Distancing from teachers badly prepared for teaching language

- When I was doing my BA Spanish studies there were students who were really surprised at the courses we did. They said they wanted to study language but in reality they were only interested in doing a language course. They were against learning about Spanish literature, or difficult (as they said) things in Spanish grammar, or expressions which sounded incorrect to them, according to their experience of working in Spain as holiday waitresses. [...] I regret that those teachers who are entering the job market are so bad at language methodology. There used to be French methodological in-service courses but now, based on those who came to me for teaching placement a few years ago, students of French don't know any methods. They only rely on their intuition and coursebooks. This turns a teacher into a technical service operator sticking rigidly to the coursebook and coursebook activities, which would be humiliating for me. I wouldn't like to end up like a technical service operator. Everyone has a personality. (1)
- When I was writing my 50-page-long BA thesis, I remember one student saying, "50 pages? I've never written anything longer than three pages". Can you imagine such a person with language teaching qualifications? Those people are only interested in 'having', 'getting', settling down'. (1)

Distancing from minimalistic teachers

- When it comes to my Spanish, I know enough to teach at a primary school but I lack the wider knowledge concerning history and literature that I have in French. I don't need that at primary school but I would like to have this knowledge. (1)
- In my school there are several teachers in their late 30s, early 40s who function differently. It's as if they go to the office, do what they're supposed to do and that's it. Of course, there are exceptions but not many. These teachers don't need discussions about agency in the methodological literature. They work like a cog in a machine. It's too late for them to requalify, so they are just passive parts in the system. (2)

Distancing from opportunists in the critical situation of the teachers' strike

- I joined the strike with mixed feelings, not ideologically but financially. I told the organizers that I could afford to strike for only two or three

days. I joined the strikers in my school. We all sat in one room and the non-strikers – just three people – in another. I was on a strike for five days, more than I could afford and lost about 300 zloties per day. We thought we would be needed for the exams but, as you know, nuns, police officers, retired teachers were employed and paid as much as 300 zloties for conducting a two-hour exam. We are never paid for exams. The authorities decided that anyone with a pedagogical qualification could conduct such exams. We had never really been a team but the strike changed the atmosphere at school and caused a deep rift in our relationships. (2)

4.2.3. Dilemma 3: Agency (and passivity)

The third dilemma concerns issues of Eva's agency and autonomy or, in their absence, compliance with the existing structure.

Eva's agency

Dislike of routine

- In the past there were annual conferences for French teachers. Some of them were better, others worse but they existed. There are no offers now. I miss the training sessions very much, but not so much the generally-oriented ones for all language teachers, like workshops on group work, but those specifically catering for training French language teachers. (2)
- I wouldn't like to fall into a routine. In a way I envy English teachers as they have so many teaching resources. They are often system operators who switch on a lesson. I don't have this luxury. I have to create a syllabus, search for materials, see if it can be done within the time allocated, hand it in, and I have to organize this all by myself. I've got used to doing it like this. But it gives me a sense of creation. (2)

Rejection of conformism

- I have to supplement my teaching load by working in a primary school. It was a new type of school for me, so I had to find my feet there. It wasn't stress-free, but I met fantastic people. I'm still aware of Spanish not being my first language of specialization. I know there are gaps in my knowledge, so I would never come to lessons unprepared. If I know there are some cultural issues related to a topic, I try to find out more about them, because my BA studies were not as comprehensive as my university French studies. (1)

- When my students won a competition the second time in a row, my principal said, "Ok, but where is the information on the school website? You haven't registered it there". I replied, "But the students know about it". It's as if I were doing something only for the sake of putting it on the website. This gets me down. I'm simply ashamed of certain things before my students. They might think I am just doing something to tick it off and be able write somewhere about my merits. This is what I would think if I were a student. (2)
- The head has told me today to consider including the issues of Polish patriotism in my French course. I can see how quickly some teachers adapt. Conformism is of the utmost importance to them. (2)

Flexibility

- I've become more flexible. Some time ago I would never have imagined that I could teach primary school students. But my French preparation, a good university, my experience, working at a good school have provided a good foundation for adapting to other contexts. (1)
- I'm trying not to go mad at school with all these tables, objectives and outcomes. I know I've got to do it but it's not my priority, or I would have to spend long hours on it. (2)

Perception of complexity of phenomena

- Who'll survive in this job? I think school will be for people who are thick-skinned and assertive, for teachers who won't let the supervisors overwhelm them. Unfortunately, some school directors shout at teachers. Definitely it won't be a school for those who put a lot into their work at the cost of their private lives. It is more likely to be for those who treat it as an institution, an office to which they come and leave. Not a school for those who say they have a mission but for those who are able to distance themselves from education and the learner, or who would like somehow to survive in this job, not to mention the financial aspect, which is an extra frustration, but I do think the job will become even more feminised. (1)
- I remember people coming to see my lessons, teacher mentors with whom I could talk about the lessons rather than head teachers who don't know the language and only want to check if I have aired the room. I miss those observations based on helping and knowledge exchange, which have been replaced by the control-based observations we have now. (2)
- The job has become more oppressive and controlled at every turn. I don't feel I'm working here but only collecting pieces of evidence to show that

what I'm doing is good. If you don't have a written or electronic confirmation of what you do, you are worthless. What really disgusts me are the tons of paper and if I don't have them, others think I'm not responsible. I should collect evidence for my existence. It's no longer working with young people. It's often working against yourself. (2)

- I try to understand young people and that's why I'm not angry with them. The Internet has deprived them of their own opinions. They are susceptible to mindless repeating what they have heard or read. They only copy others, or put 'likes' or 'hates'. They tell me that in France people sleep in cartons, so I say to them, "You said something about a trip. Don't you think about tolerance for this country where you're going?" I tell them that when they are in France they shouldn't have headphones in their ears and listen to music but look and observe. And then, I say, "Then, I will believe you because it will be your opinion, not someone else's." (2)
- I can't accept the fact that young people don't have many interpersonal relations today. They are in the same class but they don't make up a team. They have Facebook groups instead. They will probably study in the future and become doctors or business people, but they won't be able to manage others. What you have are self-centred individualists who have no interpersonal skills. (2)

Eva's passivity

Rejection of a scientific career

- In a teacher's job, writing a doctorate would be pointless. Someone once said, "Why not?", but in the place where I am now it wouldn't change anything. (1)

For the sake of clarity, the dilemmas presented above are synthetically presented in Table 1. Here, in order to highlight their dilemmatic nature, a particular dilemma has been extracted and shown in a broader dimension of which Eva is aware (Dilemma 1), in a mutually exclusive manner where Eva identifies with what is the same (Dilemma 2), and in a broader dimension of which she may not be aware (Dilemma 3), so as to better point out their dilemmatic nature. However reduced the complexity of Eva's dilemmas may seem when converted to the tabular form, the examples may help clarify the dilemmas and emphasize the particularity of the case in hand.

Table 1. Eva's dilemmas as based on Bamberg's (2010) model of identity

Dilemma 1		Dilemma 2		Dilemma 3	
Constancy	Change	Sameness	Difference	Agency	Passivity
Love of learning languages, but	deeper reflection on social phenomena	Alignment with veteran teachers of languages other than English, from good universities, and	distancing from badly prepared and minimalistic teachers	Dislike of a routine, and yet	rejection of writing a PhD dissertation
Respect for humanistic values, but	frequent experience of helplessness.	Alignment with teachers with no school entanglements and	distancing from opportunists	Rejection of conformism. Flexibility. Perception of complexity	-

Although there are many available identity frameworks in the literature (e.g. Clarke 2008; Gee 2001; Marcia 1967; Wenger 1998), Bamberg's (2010) model, based on three binary pillars-dilemmas and used in this study, has enabled the author to generate a heuristic 'extraction' of emotions and feelings that make up a professional identity framework of a teacher of a 'secondary-rate' language in the current Polish educational context. The dilemmas distinguished in the model may be treated as categories in which some of Eva's emotions and feelings emerge, generating both positive experiences, such as joy, respect, enthusiasm, a sense of knowledge or a sense of belonging, as well as negative emotions, such as helplessness, anxiety, disgust, or shame.

Table 2. Eva's emotions and feelings-based professional identity framework

Dilemma 1		Dilemma 2		Dilemma 3	
Constancy	Change	Sameness	Difference	Agency	Passivity
Pleasure, joy, respect	Deeper awareness	Respect for knowledge, the profession, and a sense of belonging	Disgust at superficiality	Pleasure of creation	Adoption of the stance of pointlessness
	Helplessness and anxiety over civilization changes	Disgust of career-oriented teachers	Disgust at the pragmatism, minimalism, superficiality represented by students, their parents and some teachers	Minimisation of shame	-

5. DISCUSSION

It is sometimes argued that there are strong connections between emotions and aims. According to this viewpoint, emotions appear in the process of striving for important goals and signal that their fulfilment has been found (positive emotions and feelings) or forewarn of their possible lack of fulfilment (negative emotions and feelings). In other words, experiencing positive emotions is information that a given aspect is positively received by a person and results in the person's well-being, whereas experiencing negative emotions indicates the existence of challenges in the fulfilment of aims as well as the risk of them being destroyed.

In the context of researching Eva's 'constant' emotions, what comes to the fore is joy that involves pleasure from experiencing foreign languages, accompanied by regular study of the cultural aspects of language, without which Eva can hardly imagine successful language learning. Such love of knowing, learning, and acquiring languages does not subside with age or work experience, although she could have limited herself to what she already knows, considering that for the level of education at which she teaches, her knowledge is sufficient ("I don't need that at primary school but I would like to have this knowledge"). Eva learns Italian out of pure pleasure, and even when she is, in a sense, forced to take up BA studies in Spanish for fear of losing her job as a French teacher, she still finds studying a foreign language provides her with a lot of joy. The fact that there are teachers like Eva for whom the constant development of language-related competences is perceived in terms of enjoyment is positive. Eva still maintains enthusiasm towards her subject and believes in the value of her passion for French conveyed at least to single students ("But there are always some exceptions, even a small percentage for whom it is worth making the effort."), as it was in the case of her French teacher who infected Eva with her passion for French. Thanks to teachers like Eva, students receive positive models to emulate and learn how much knowledge a teacher may have about a language and the culture of the countries in which it is spoken. They also see what a teacher may be and what teachers (and possibly students) may become.

In the case of Eva, her love of foreign languages also fulfils a need for respect. Accustomed to continuous learning, Eva feels safe in terms of her French language skills as a foreign language teacher, maintaining that high demands (be it in her secondary school or during her MA studies) have always been placed on her. Thanks to hard work, she has always managed to meet high learning requirements and strongly believes that honest work should always be promoted, irrespective of the times. It can be argued that a good knowledge of a foreign language earns her the respect of other people, which has meant that her respect for knowledge has never been relegated to the background.

That said, the joy and happiness derived from teaching French are challenged with negative experiences. The most troubling is a sense of helplessness regarding herself, her students and their parents. Eva is aware of the fact that despite her choice of a very difficult field of study, the huge amount of work that she has invested and the procurement of employment at a prestigious secondary school in the past, her subject represents the 'other' and less important language for contemporary students. Within this understanding, two other affective sensations may be spotted: blame and shame. With regard to the former, Eva blames civilization changes, especially the Internet as a source of knowledge that encourages people to be superficial, willing to obtain instant gratification, interested in minimalism and too impatient to enjoy the process of completing a task because their minds are taken up by finished products. Most young people nowadays, supported by their parents in their way of thinking are satisfied with a good enough knowledge of English and reject the diligence, regularity, or laboriousness needed to learn another foreign language at a decent level ("You do your best but it's like water off a duck's back. You would like to do more but you hear a question 'What do I need this for!'"). The mastery of English, not a LOTE like French, is considered a necessary tool for students to compete successfully in an English-dominated job market, or English language information and communication technology. Eva's voice echoes the dilemma between humanistic versus neoliberal ideologies. She clearly distances herself from young English teachers whose knowledge of English is not spectacular, and who are mostly focused on teaching to the book and preparing students for tests, yet, because they teach English the most desirable language - they are held in high esteem by school principals ("I'm not an English teacher").

Eva feels shame, as some teachers - people who should be obliged by their profession to be bright, well-educated and role models for others - resort to half measures, engage in 'quick actions' and treat 'subject minimalism' as a value in their professional lives. She laments that her English teaching colleagues, whom she has disavowed for some time, restrict themselves to providing a "technical service" when they bring their laptops to class, swich on a presentation with a lesson prepared by a book publisher and look up the answers in the teacher's book during the lesson, all because preparation for lessons would consume too much time. As resorting to ready-made materials requires neither deep linguistic knowledge nor extensive methodological competence, she is ashamed that this is the other group of professionals -foreign language teachers - to which she belongs. Although she does not verbalize this explicitly, Eva is afraid that the widespread pragmatism and minimalism, characteristic of an increasing number of language teachers, the majority of students, often their parents, and most

educational authorities, will lead to the deskilling (Richards 1998) of teachers and, what follows from this, a loss of job meaningfulness.

Eva can also be considered agentic, which is positive, and partly helps her minimise the experience of shame. Paradoxically, she is helped in this by the absence of interesting French and Spanish teaching aids compared to those available to English teachers. This shortage of interesting materials generates her agency and, in a way, releases the creativity that makes her lessons stand out amidst the mechanical mediocrity served up by many other teachers. It is in this way that she can attract students to learning French. She is convinced that she has to rely on herself, which is why she produces her own tests and constantly looks for inspirations for her self-made didactic projects. Her evidence of agency is also her moral independence which prevents her from taking 'a shortcut' and cheating (e.g. through using ready-made tests, showing her students' success in language competitions as her success), choosing the path of conformism through treating teaching as a nine-to-five job or requiring the bare minimum from teachers. That said, she only does the minimum required when a task involves unnecessary bureaucratic effort, which also reflects her agency. She is convinced that doing only what she absolutely has to in terms of reporting her work makes her respect herself and allows her to save time for better preparation for her French lessons.

6. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS

In this article, I have discussed the case of Eva in order to see how her biographic history and personal sense of self are related to Bamberg's (2010) model of identity, which provided the study's point of departure. In relation to research question one – *What real-life content could be inserted into the three pillars of Bamberg's identity model?* – it is clear that Bamberg's three pillars – dilemmas can easily be identified in Eva's narrative, as illustrated in Table 1, thereby making the model verifiable. With regard to research question two – *What insights into language policy, teacher emotions and teacher identity can this content provide?* – it has been found that Eva's story may provide insights into language policy, teacher emotions and teacher identity. From Eva's narrative, the following conclusions related to these three issues can be inferred:

- The study has revealed that teachers of French as a foreign language in Poland may feel very vulnerable. They may feel ignored, which starts with the use of terminology in educational documents where there are references to 'secondary-rate' languages, including, usually, French. As a result, teachers of LOTE languages may perceive themselves as redundant and

neglected when compared, for example, with teachers of English who are in the leading position and view themselves as experts of the primary language. As a primary foreign language in Poland, English is placed at the opposite end from other foreign languages, making the teachers of the other languages feel intimidated and less secure about their jobs. Eva also experiences an authentic feeling of the loss of the social usefulness of her teaching and the waste of her teaching capital. Yet, she is not expected to display her true feelings at work.

- The study has demonstrated a change in educational paradigms in terms of what is deemed more and less important when teaching a foreign language. It has been shown that Eva's high linguistic and pedagogical competences, impressive general knowledge, even her 'loyalty' to the profession, do not matter as much as teacher accountability, successful compliance with bureaucratic requirements and students' achievement of quick and spectacular effects that would secure for the school a high rank in school league tables.
- It can be said that contemporary education is governed by simulacra of reality that maintain a semblance of teacher professionalism or authenticity. As minimalism is not Eva's standard, a feeling of vulnerability ensues.
- The study has also shown that teacher's joy, enthusiasm, and love of languages, if undermined by outer pragmatism, minimalism, or passivity, may bring drastic consequences in relation to future generations, including future language teachers. This may take place as the philological values represented by Eva, such as a love of knowing, focus on deep learning, culture, literature, may be pushed to the margins. As a result of 'promoting' teachers as "technical service operators" where teaching aids, tests, etc. to cater for all learners' needs are provided in advance, teachers' meaningful nature of teachers' work may disappear. This lack of meaningfulness may, in turn, deprive teachers of deeper values, develop their blindness to complexity and dilemmas, ultimately blurring the boundaries between what is worth and what is not worth experiencing in teaching.

Unexceptionally, the present study is not free of shortcomings. Possible reservations may be levelled against investigating only one teacher, or lack of generalizability, or the researcher's subjectivity. While it is true that such limitations may arise, it seems justifiable to note that investigating only one teacher or lack of generalizability refer to the method – the qualitative case study based on the biographic-narrative inquiry approach adopted here – that may discourage the researchers of other paradigms from acknowledging its value, and which

proved valuable in this study. As to 'the researcher's subjectivity', Finlay (2002: 531) may come to the rescue here when he claims that "... subjectivity in research is transformed from a problem to an opportunity". Nevertheless, for a more accurate depiction, the sample of teacher cases could be expanded to regional, national, and transnational levels, possibly including a number of LOTE languages taught in various countries.

Apart from the insights into how the professional identity of one French as a foreign language teacher was (re)shaped by the emotions evoked with regard to the intricacies of language teaching in Poland right now, the study could have a vital pedagogical implication. In practical terms, it may contribute to cultivating a pedagogy of identity in language teacher preparation curricula, as the more that is known about language teacher identity, the better language teachers will be prepared for the job and its specific nature. The incorporation of in-service teacher biographies through examining the teachers' prior and present beliefs and, above all, emotions might prove worthwhile. For this purpose, an identity framework with specific guiding categories, like Bamberg's (2010), could be used. Thanks to this, pre-service teachers' knowledge of in-service teachers and the complexity of teaching LOTE languages could be increased, while the employment of a teacher's biography would better illustrate how education functions in a specific place and time.

The findings of this study, as inspired by Bamberg's (2010) model of identity, may also be explicable in terms of the recent neoliberal educational agenda, which promotes English at the expense of other languages, such as French. The model offers the adoption of a nuanced approach to the data showing what the new educational paradigm has done to French teachers in terms of the instability of their professional careers, divisions between language teachers, or ways of resisting the imposed *status quo* by those who are strong enough to do so.

All in all, Eva's case provides the reader with a number of important insights concerning the contemporary change of educational paradigms, with almost all of her comments generating potential concerns. It is hoped that her voice will resonate with many other LOTE teachers and become informative for those who are responsible for decisions in language teacher education.

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