

Researching the Expertise of Foreign Language Teachers

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Abstract

The paper brings the results of qualitative analysis of teacher expertise realized within the project *Expert Teacher: the nature of expertise and determinants of professional development (in FLT perspective)*. The project designed as a multiple case study is aimed at systematic analysis of the nature of foreign language teacher expertise and the development of its empirical model. During the first phase carried out in 2011 the data were collected in interviews with 30 teachers who had been nominated as expert teachers of English or German languages by their headmasters or teacher trainers from universities. Semi-structured interviews followed the observations of the teachers in their classrooms and focused on the aspects of expertise that were not directly observable, namely the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, their knowledge of the pupils, pedagogical content knowledge, ability to analyse and interpret educational phenomena, justify their actions and decisions, formulate their subjective theories, and pursue their professional development. The results revealed some interesting aspects of expertise of foreign language teachers.

Keywords

foreign language teacher expertise; multiple case study; pedagogical content knowledge; prototype model

Introduction

The didactics of foreign languages is an inter-subjective field, a field sharing a foreign language as teaching content with two basic factors of the teaching and the learning processes, a student and a teacher. The quality of didactic processes and their results in the form of the acquired levels of students' communicative competence is determined by the quality of the teacher's didactic performance.

Within the project *Expert Teacher: the nature of expertise and determinants of professional development (in FLT perspective)* the highest level of this quality, the expertise of foreign language teachers, was investigated. In the research into expertise, which was designed as a multiple case study and whose aim was to create a model of foreign language teacher expertise, we co-operated with 30 outstanding teachers of English or German nominated by school managers, universities or educational authorities. During the first phase of the research carried out in 2011, the features of expertise which can be directly monitored (analyzed on the basis of teaching observation) as well as directly unobservable characteristics, which were identified through interviews with the nominated teachers, were examined. Semi-structured interviews enabled investigation particularly of the teachers' knowledge in different areas and the depth of their insight. The article presents the most interesting results of the qualitative analysis of these unobservable expert characteristics of foreign language teachers.

1. The aims of the study and operationalization

The main research objective set for the qualitative part of the first phase of the research project *Expert Teacher: the nature of expertise and determinants of professional development (in FLT perspective)* was the identification of those expertise features of foreign language teachers that are not accessible to direct observation of teaching in the classroom.

This objective implies the main research question: What are the critical deep (hidden) expertise features of foreign language teachers?

The operationalization was based on the concept of "knowledge base for teaching" according to Shulman (1986, 1987) and on the prototype model by Sternberg & Horvath (1995).

Within the analysis of in-depth interviews, during which we focused on the features of expertise that are not accessible through direct observation of a teacher's activities in the classroom, we especially watched teachers' knowledge which we had categorized according to Shulman's knowledge-base for teaching.

According to Shulman, the key component of the knowledge base for teaching is pedagogical content knowledge. Other elements include content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of the context of education and knowledge about the objectives, purposes and values of education and their philosophical and historical grounds (Shulman, 1986, 1987; Janík, 2007).

Another source of inspiration for the categorization was the prototype model by Sternberg and Horvath (1995), which defines the essential shared prototypical features while also leaving space for individual traits of expert

teachers. Sternberg and Horvath consider procedural efficiency and insight to be determining knowledge for the category of expert (here they are directly linked to Shulman). Sternberg and Horvath emphasize that expert teachers, unlike novices, possess knowledge that is integrated and has the nature of scenarios, propositional structures and large-scale schemata (p. 11). Procedural efficiency is based on a high degree of automation and advanced routines that allow reinvestment of freed cognitive resources for planning, monitoring and evaluation. It is this ability of reinvestment which Bereiter & Scardamalia (1993) consider to be the core quality of expertise. The higher procedural efficiency of experts manifests itself not only in the ability to perform better, but also less effort for the achievement is expended (see also Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1988; Berliner, 1995). The last prototypical characteristic, insight, allows the teacher to solve problems creatively. Experts are able to redefine the problem and find a solution at a higher level than novices are capable of achieving.

For the purposes of content analysis of interviews with teachers we have created a system of categories, in which we focus both on the individual categories of teacher knowledge and also on some other aspects that we take hold of within the categories of deep reflection and professionalism. Categories were defined *a priori* and are described in detail in Table 1 (please, note the codes are acronyms based on Czech versions of the terms).

Table 1: System of categories for interview coding

CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	CODE
1. own foreign language communicative competence and its development (including intercultural communicative competence)		RKK
2. knowledge of the field (the ability to identify the basic structures of the field = the knowledge about the language and culture and the knowledge of language acquisition theories)		ZO
3. knowledge of pupils (including the knowledge of developmental psychology and the knowledge of psychology of learning)		ZZ

4. pedagogical content knowledge (the ability to identify essential representations of their subject and to convey them to pupils: ontodidactic as well as psychodidactic transformation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aims (short term, long term) 	DZOc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content (what to teach and when) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) transforming the content (what to teach) b) creating the content (what to teach and when, in what order) 	DZOo
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processes (how to teach = strategies, techniques, methods, types of tasks, organizational forms) 	DZO_p
5. knowledge of the context (wider = e.g. society, education policy; narrower = e.g. family, school)		KONT
6. depth of reflection (the deep qualitative analysis and interpretation of educational phenomena, the formulation of principal reasons for their actions, i.e. subjective theory problematization of professional routines and the search for alternatives)		REF
7. professionalism (commitment including emotions, attitudes to students and the profession, commitment to students, the profession and the professional community, professional ethics, responsibility for their own professional development, collaboration with colleagues etc.)		PROF

The knowledge of the field was operationalized as the ability to identify the basic structures of the field, i.e. the knowledge "about the language and culture"

and the knowledge of language acquisition theories. In order to respect the specific nature of the field of teaching foreign languages, we also created a separate category for foreign language teachers' communicative competence and its development (including the intercultural communicative competence). The knowledge of pupils included not only information about specific pupils, but also more generally conceived knowledge of developmental psychology and the psychology of learning.

Due to a more accurate differentiation we have divided pedagogical content knowledge into three subcategories, namely the didactic knowledge of the aims, teaching contents and processes.

The knowledge of the curriculum was part of the knowledge of context which also included the areas of educational policy and the relationship between family and school.

The last two categories of our system were the categories of deep reflection and professionalism, which to some extent reflect Shulman's knowledge of objectives, purposes, values and historical-philosophical bases, but are conceived more broadly. In addition to cognitive aspects they also include emotional and social aspects and to some extent also reflect dimensions that Korthagen (2004) describes as a mission or Day (2005) as a passion for teaching (see also Pířová & Janík, 2011). The categories of reflection and professionalism also appear in the American certification standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (see also Pířová et al., 2011), where reflection applies particularly to the teacher's evaluation of their own performance and professionalism includes collaboration with colleagues and working towards the inclusion of all students. In our system of categories the category of deep reflection was used for the statements expressing the deep qualitative analysis and interpretation of educational phenomena, principled reasons for a teacher's behaviour (i.e. subjective theory), problematization of professional routines and a search for alternatives.

During the interview with the teachers we did not distinguish between professionalism (which is considered by some authors as a characteristic of individuals, not of the entire professional community) and professionalism (referring to the entire community) since this distinction, nowadays worked up in detail by some authors (e.g. Evans, 2008; Hoyle, 1975; see also Pířová et al., 2011), has not been fully established in the Czech language. But we were interested in both the individual and community aspects, namely occupational commitment including the aspect of a teacher's emotional adjustment, attitudes towards pupils and the profession, commitment to pupils, the profession and the professional community, professional ethics, responsibility for their own

professional development and collaboration with colleagues in school and beyond.

In addition to assigning the identified statements to particular categories the quality of insight was also evaluated on a special scale that included four quality levels of insight statements: incorrect (or uninformed, naive) - standard - high standard - deep insight.

N - statements indicate shallow perception of phenomena and events and persons, mostly at the level of simple description, often based on misconception or misunderstanding or based on insufficient information. If there is criticism, it is not supported by arguments and the respondent does not provide a solution.

S - statements at the level of phenomena, event, or person description, which remain more or less on the surface, although there is no evidence of misunderstanding or lack of information.

HS - statements indicate somewhat deeper thinking about phenomena, events and persons, include some features of DI level.

DI - statements indicate deep representation of phenomena and events as well as relationships and connections between them, an understanding based on theoretical knowledge and practical experience, integration of knowledge, skill of viewing things critically.

2. Techniques and tools for data collection

For the semi-structured interviews with teachers of English or German, which followed direct observation of the teachers' teaching, we created an interview scenario (see Table 2). During the interview the scenario was always appropriately modified according to the specific respondent's answers to the initial question, therefore it was not considered to be fixed and unchanging.

Table 2: Semi-structured interview – scenario

Content related issues	
	Identification and choice of concrete contents optimal representations
	Here I began to draw a concept map of the observed lesson; can we finish it together? What were the aims of the lessons observed? Why have you set them this way? How do they relate to the overall aims of foreign language teaching in basic schools?
	Pedagogical content knowledge
	How do you decide what you will teach and when? What is the role of curricular documents, textbooks, experience,

	methodical manuals, and materials from training courses? What, in your opinion, is the core content? What cannot be left out from the long-term plan? And on the contrary, what may be left out?
Pupils	
	Pupils in the observed classes
	We have met your pupils - how would you characterize this particular class? What is the source of your information about pupils? What is important to know about your pupils (in this class)?
	In general
	How does this particular class differ from other classes? How does teaching in this grade differ from teaching in other grades? What are the implications for teaching in this class?
Teaching in context	
	Is it difficult for some pupils in this class to learn a foreign language? What are the implications for the class as a whole? How do you think children learn a foreign language best? What is particularly difficult for pupils in learning a foreign language? What is the most important component of teaching (grammar, speaking, etc.), when and why? What role do you think talent plays in learning a foreign language? Where do you look for new ideas and suggestions for your work? What are these suggestions – can you give an example?
Reflection and self-reflection (professional philosophy)	Was the teaching typical of you? What kind of teacher are you? How did your behaviour in the observed lessons reflect your personal professional philosophy? What is the role of routine (in the best sense of the word) in your work? What is the relationship between routine and creative work? How do you rate your own level of communicative

	<p>competence in the target language? How do you maintain and develop your communicative competence? What makes you enjoy your job? What discourages you?</p>
Professionalism + commitment	<p>What does the term professionalism in teaching mean for you? What are you like as a school team? Do you feel the need to collaborate with other professionals outside the school (professional associations, institutions of further education)?</p>

3. Data

The recordings of interviews with an average length of 35 minutes were transcribed and then subjected to content analysis. 30 interviews were conducted and then 29 analyzed (there were technical problems with one audio recording of an interview, so it had to be excluded from the analysis). Each transcript was coded by two coders, while their direct agreement was 87.12% on average. Another two coders then harmonized the set of codes obtained.

For each coded statement in addition to an assignment to a particular category the quality level of insight was also evaluated on the scale: incorrect, uninformed - standard - high standard - deep insight.

For the standardization of coding a brief manual for coders was created. Among the most important principles were the following:

- an analytical unit was a semantic unit,
- the categories were disjunctive, but the whole statements could fall into more than one category,
- it was always necessary to take the question into consideration, even when determining the quality of the statement (e.g. if the question was directed to the objective of the activity and the teacher was talking about the content, the statement was assessed as uninformed within the category of Pedagogical content knowledge - aims - DZ0c, but at the same time also as standard in the category of Pedagogical content knowledge - content - DZ0o.),
- when coding the categories Z0 and ZZ were chosen if the statement was at a more general level, not directly linked to a specific activity in the teaching process.

4. Analysis and interpretation of data

During the analysis, we coded individual statements using the system of categories and at the same time, we evaluated the depth of insight that the statements suggested. During the interpretations we focused primarily on the

statements of deep insight quality (DI), which is crucial for us because of its potential to contribute to the model of teacher expertise. In the following sections, to illustrate this better, a brief comparison of statements at the DI level with statements at other levels will also be presented, which is not, however, our primary goal.

Developing communicative competence (RKK)

In this category only one statement which was evaluated as a deep insight was identified.

The statement concerned the descriptors of communicative competence levels which teacher 6¹ looked at critically and expressed doubt about the possibility of descriptors to capture the essence of communicative competence. It is interesting that teacher 6 reached the highest possible level (C2) in a standardized test.

Statements at levels N, S, and HS refer mostly to the "pleasant" maintenance / expansion of their own communicative competence (stays abroad, travelling abroad with pupils, listening to music, watching movies), or alternatively, negatively evaluate their own development in the sphere of communicative competence.

Knowledge of the field (ZO)

There were only three statements at DI quality level by three different teachers. A holistic perception of the field with an emphasis on communicative activities accompanied by a clear understanding of the major structures of the branch seems to be typical: *"I think it is important for them to learn what they actually will need the language for, so they should speak, write and read during the English lesson. Because when a person drowns in grammar and spelling, they still have a lot to learn, the goals are still clear, the preparation is relatively easy, but then it is terribly difficult to convert it to the speaking skill, if the kids are not used to it."* (T6)

The statement of teacher 15 corresponds with the latest research findings relevant for the sphere of initiation of foreign language teaching (cf. Hanušová & Najvar, 2007). The teacher problematizes the usual cliché about the automatic benefits of an early start for teaching a foreign language. She is able to argue her opinion and rely on professional information: *"I read one study that said that until eighteen, until you become an adult, you learn a foreign language equally as well, no matter what age you started at. Whether you start at the age of five, twelve,*

¹ A note about the numbers of teachers - because of anonymity we chose numbers from 1 to 29 which we used to refer to the teachers

sixteen, seventeen, you get to the same point. Because the older you are, the more efficiently and the faster you learn. It's really true because here, when they start their language in the first year and learn it for three years, and then other pupils start the language in the fourth year, if there is the same teacher, the same language, they are really able to meet the same requirements at the school leaving certificate. The younger children absorb things very quickly, but then forget them just as quickly, whereas it's more constant for the older ones, and they have a much lower capacity for abstract thinking, I remember a time about ten years ago when they were thirteen and were learning the third conditional and it was a concept which they could not cope with mentally, in terms of abstract thinking. So, at this age to teach the third conditional is absolutely unprofitable for them [...] What they are more skilful at, on the other hand, is that they are able to imitate sounds better, so the younger they are, the better they learn to pronounce, during a short time." (T15)

The last statement in this category at DI level concerned the transformation of the field - the content of teaching as well as content structuring according to the developmental differences of pupils. It showed the holistic perception of language as a coherent whole, rather than as the sum of the individual components and adequate sequence acquisition of its individual components: *"In the first grade they should have nice pronunciation, be able to listen, be able to respond to sentences, be able to do what is used in the course, so we train them in this, then the first, second year comes, it is, I'd say, a playful introduction, parents really like it because they have the CD, nothing is written, nothing is basically tested or little is tested. Then the third, fourth, fifth grade come, a little structure is started, but not much, because, as I say, to conjugate the verb 'to be' in the third grade is a superhuman task, it has no meaning to teach the kids it there, so we teach mainly vocabulary, mainly to be able to talk about themselves, about their neighbourhood, family, to handle the topics in the book and the language resources are used in those parts, and we try to ensure that they have swallowed as much as possible, because they have very wide memory and absorption ability. And then the sixth grade comes, and there's summarization, because we move on to another textbook - to move from textbook to textbook is not a bad thing, I do not know why it is recommended that one course should be from the first to the ninth grade, because the children are bored after a while, when they have the same characters all the time and they close the door."* (T27)

The statements of teachers at lower levels (N, S and HS) pointed to an exactly opposite interpretation of field knowledge, which was described as the knowledge of language means, especially grammar and vocabulary: *"Well of course, everything which is different from Czech. Grammatical structures that are*

different ... sentence structures, even pupils in the ninth grade sometimes begin a sentence with an object instead of a subject, so of course it is difficult ... otherwise ... everything depends on grammar, if you want to write, you have to know how to create a sentence, when you want to talk, it's the same ... The listening ... you have to know the vocabulary and the structure of the sentence, too, so grammar is very important, that's just my opinion." (T4, ZO-N)

Knowledge of pupils (ZZ)

In the category of ZZ eight statements on DI level by seven teachers were found. In the area of the knowledge of pupils the statements at DI level related to the knowledge of pupils in general, the sources of the knowledge (parents, colleagues and own experience), but also to the immediate understanding of signals that pupils send in a specific pedagogical situation, i.e. to the ability "to be a pupil" in the process of their learning. Teacher 14 answered the question, which knowledge about pupils is important to him, with these words: "Well, all of them. Because, I'll give a specific example again, maybe Filip, who was sitting on the side, I know about him that until the end of the seventh grade his daddy felt that he had an Einstein at home. And unfortunately, he did not. Filip is aware of the fact that he is not successful at some things, but we have to prove it constantly to his father, as he has very large claims on the child. And this is the information which I need in every lesson, because if I stress him out and want something from him that is very hard for him, if I give him extra work, I just suffocate poor Philip, because his father will look on our social website, he will find out that Philip has some extra work and he will make Filip do it until it's ready. I am probably going to make him detest English than anything else. So, this kind of information. Also, a lot of things can be found out in the staff room where we sit, they come from the lesson: David is having a bad day today, send him for a walk. So, this kind of information is at school all the time." (T14)

The relationship between a teacher and a pupil appears to be very significant for a number of teachers; it is characterized as more important for the learning process than a pupil's talent in the following statement: "It is important, but it is not at all decisive. As if the child ... Well, it usually fails when it comes to the relationship between a teacher and a pupil. If there is talent but something breaks in that relationship, talent is a nice thing, but the child stops enjoying the subject, so he or she does not learn, thus losing, losing and losing until it goes to the other way, that he or she is tired and unsuccessful in that subject. So, talent is good, it's a nice assumption, it's great when someone has such talent and if the teacher manages to develop it, but unfortunately there are also cases with talent when it goes just down." (T8)

A child's self-esteem was also thematized, especially increasing their confidence with appropriately challenging tasks (this corresponds to "the zone of proximal development"): *"It must always be a little bit ... it may not always be an interesting thing, it must always be a little "catchy" I would say, a bit amusing, an interesting thing. But it is also good to give them tasks to handle, and just when they handle them, they grow older and gain self-confidence, also so I place those tasks that are not so interesting in front of them, like an obstacle and we still work on them until everyone has jumped over them, not so that everyone ... can get around them a little bit, but that they can get over them and improve their self-confidence. I always hold the bait in from of them, the carrot, so that they can follow me and still add something."* (T27)

The theme of integration, inclusion and teaching in heterogeneous classes, which is highly topical in Czech schools nowadays, occurred in two cases. Although a number of teachers comment on this issue in the interviews, none of the identified statements (at all levels of quality) included an explicit answer in terms of finding a satisfactory solution to integration and inclusion. Both the teachers whose statements in this area were evaluated as a deep insight reflect that integration and inclusion place considerable demands on their work and realize that they approach a compromise between an ideal adjustment of the situation and really achievable possibilities. The diction of their statements implies the acceptance of the reality of inclusion - they do not express their disapproval or irritation (which sometimes appeared in the lower quality statements) - but they are aware of not having found a resolution to the situation, including certain reserves in their own work. This sense of their own imperfection corresponds to the concept of an expert as someone who keeps moving "at the edge of their competence" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993): *"Well, both of them are borderline children, with borderline IQ, so it depends on what kind of integrated children they are, when it's dysgraphia, it doesn't affect the class in any way, it just affects my work, I know that the child cannot write, because I cannot read their writing or that we have to choose another form or I test them more verbally, but the class is not limited by it. And if the child is integrated because of a handicap, which is for example in this - reduced intellectual ability, it is seen there. Because I cannot completely escape, it is not possible, which means that I have to divide up my work among them somehow."* (T12)

"And I could certainly, and I think, that it is a terrible problem now in classrooms with children with uneven talent, because I could certainly give a lot more to the good ones, but a terrible gap is dug there between those who are behind, and then the class completely falls apart and you cannot teach them together. Yeah, I admit that I slow down some children, that I could give them more."

But I have to slow them down to be able to work with the whole class and move on. Unfortunately." (T27)

As in the category of ZO, statements that indicate a rejection of superficial perception of pupils and common clichés ("children are getting worse") occurred: *"I have been teaching for a lot of years and someone says – kids are getting worse. They are not. Children are different. It just happens over time - when I started, children were used to a system, I may not use the right word, drill, they knew - yes, I must, I must, I must. Those who come today, those pupils already have other conditions, it probably works in some families in a different way, parents really have less time for their kids. I see it here with the kids. Or they have a lot of other activities and clubs, so some of that homework, I used to rely on in the past and I knew they would do it at home, it does not work for many children here, so it is necessary to transfer it back to the work at school. That's another phenomenon, so I had to rethink my philosophy a little and I work with these children just as happily as with those who I used to teach. And I still like teaching."* (T21)

The teachers notice changes in the population of pupils concerning the approach to teaching as well as behaviour. They perceive this change as a natural process based on a wider social context which brings, for example, a change in family functioning (parents' burden and lack of time / interest in the work of the child at school, overloading children by extracurricular activities), a general liberalization of educational practices and a performance orientation in society which leads to the self-assertion of the child being perceived as a norm of behaviour. Overall, the statements in the category ZZ at DI level suggested teachers' positive attitude, their acceptance of pupils, that the teachers attribute considerable importance to the relationship between a teacher and pupils and between pupils mutually.

On the other hand, statements at lower levels of quality are sometimes superficial judgments, "events" - an illustration of a view on a particular child appear more often, which is probably related to the problem of verbalization of an opinion or to the emotional perception of the pupil rather than to a rational formation of a more general conclusion. The learning processes and their outcomes are more often associated with talent too.

While in the quality of DI the teachers perceived the demands of inclusive education and confessed their own reserves, the statements in the category of N or S often showed rather resignation on the consideration of pupils' needs, especially in cases of gifted, extremely advanced or bilingual pupils: *"No ... because in the ninth grade, if you noticed the boy who was reading, he is an American, he does not work with us ... he is allowed to do his own things."* (T18)

Pedagogical content knowledge – aims (DZOc)

Statements relating to PCK in the area of goals of foreign language teaching were found only with three teachers at DI level (a total of six statements).

The complex perception of aims at a level of more general features of communicative competence (integration of language skills, transfer, situational context, sociolinguistic competence) was typical for the statements: *"Because of what they can say in that language, you need to work hand in hand on refinement of expressions, because it is important in how someone will perceive them, so it will also play a role."* (T6)

"At the end of the ninth grade, yeah. But writing is certainly at a lower level. But that is not, I think, our task, for example from secondary schools there was more pressure on us to teach grammar, but because grammar can continuously be learned, from my experience, from the seventh or eighth grades, to be meaningful. So I do not listen to it, it is their thing to teach grammar rules and grammar. We focus mainly on listening, speaking, so that the children are not scared." (T27)

The teachers attributed great importance to the aims in terms of attitudes towards a foreign language, its use in communication situations and particularly the processes of learning a foreign language. Setting goals reflected the specific age of pupils (cognitive maturity). In addition to linguistic aims, also non-linguistic aims and objectives - motivation to continue learning, reducing the fear of foreign language expression, etc. appeared quite often: *"The goals ... the main goal is to make the children speak somehow and not discourage them, it's the main thing which we always pay attention to, as I say myself - what the children will need when they leave us and what our purpose is here. And I do not want to discourage them at the beginning by a rigorous approach, or something like that, so I pay attention to communication, speaking, listening, then reading and a little bit of writing, so that all those skills can be linked. But mainly communication, it is our goal and not to discourage them. They should have the feeling that it's still fun and that English can be learned. That's why we have native speakers here, and I have a goal that each class should have the native speaker at least once a year, even the youngest, to see that the teacher is talking to them, and that they are able to understand him or her, and ask for example 'How are you', or trivial things, they always should have the goal in front of them, where to get. And I think that's where I use the goal that they see outside the school, that there are some teachers that come over here ... we have a relationship with Canada, with lecturers who used to teach here, but they visit us with projects. And the kids can see that it's a possible thing that it can be achieved, and we want to see them leaving school able to speak, talk about something, about what we have discussed here."* (T27)

Aims, or rather the hierarchy of aims and objectives, are clearly and distinctly defined in the statements on DI level. The aims are formulated rather as long-term (it is interesting that at DI level there were no statements regarding the objectives of a particular lesson).

"I'm like, really, if a person doesn't have it, you can't do it without language, because if you don't know the language, then you can't ... cannot communicate with people and you don't know it ... so I think it really enriched me as a person. Not only professionally but also personally... not like that at all and that life has changed and I am very grateful and I enjoy it all the time, because I'm just saying that these kids will need it, right? These kids do not know it yet, but ..., some already suspect, some will hear it at home or go somewhere with their parents and see that they cannot do without it and some others will find out in the future, it is such a reward when our ex-pupils come and say here ... just two months ago some of them turned up here, one was studying medicine and said: I still remember our first portfolio, when we were in the third grade, I found it at home! And it was a boy who was not a typical pupil, he was not a problem-free child, but then you have the feeling that ... or when they come and say that if they had done their secondary school leaving exam straight away after finishing here, they'd have almost been at the same level as after this school, it's such a good feeling as the work we all here do in English, so it has some meaning for the kids ... it gives them something." (T11)

Teachers are very familiar with authoritative documents like Common European Framework of Reference for Languages including the hierarchy of reference levels; they are able to approach them critically on the basis of reflection of their own experience.

"I think that the expected outputs in the FEP (Framework Educational Programme) and ultimately in the school curriculum, I think that even linguistic descriptors in the portfolio, are just like formulas, which are largely generalized. That the student can speak in a situation or answer a question, that the skill itself may still be at several levels and is somewhat subjectively perceived by the teacher and the evaluator, so I would like, I have a feeling that this guy's expected output in FEP or SEP (School Educational Programme) is better than expected or not enough there, because if I do not give it much importance, so it's something I include in the lessons." (T6)

"That's why we have a final exam, which we examine, and I think that according to the European Language Portfolio that is like B1 minus what we achieve here in speaking and listening." (T27)

While in the statements at N, S and HS levels, from the point of view of the foreign language teaching aims, the teachers depended on a textbook, at best on FEP (Framework Educational Programme) as a curriculum document, in the

statements at DI level a detached view is evident, a formulation of objectives in terms of basic structures of the course, the textbook is not mentioned in connection with the aims of teaching at all.

The following statement is typical for the statements at N level in category DZOc:

"I am working on it now, actually I have restructured it for lower secondary classes and I kept to this course, the textbooks that we study from. I used them because I think they are well-made, so they help me, and I think that they are helping these kids as well." (T7, DZOc - N)

Typical statements on N and S and to a large extent HS quality level in category DZOc related to objectives of a lesson rather than to long-term aims. In particular, at N level the teachers were unable or unwilling to formulate long-term aims: *"Not at all, I do not think about general goals and what is in these documents, those are abstract things for me, I do not think about them. If it doesn't actually affect me, I don't really think about it."* (T3, DZOc - N)

Pedagogical content knowledge - content (DZOo)

At DI level talking about pedagogical content knowledge in the area of content teaching turned out to be similarly problematic as in the area of objectives. In this subcategory the statements at DI level occurred only with two teachers (in both cases there were three statements by the same respondents as in subcategory DZOc) with a total of six statements.

They relate to the transformation of content; in particular to the selection of subject matter with regard to the pupil, taking into account age specificities, but also with regard to the specifics of the field (the relationship language means - language skills, the emphasis on the integration of language skills): *"... I think that it is closely linked to how much the lesson is based on language skills. This is automatically successful if the language is spoken constantly and the children always move within it, so then it is not that those children currently live only in the world of the future tense and other tenses are taboo."* (T6)

The respect for the student and their interest and cognitive maturity as prerequisites for the structuring of content is very evident from the following statement: *"Some kids simply hear anything, then they somehow build it into the system. I had a first lesson with the fifth years and somehow we mentioned the perfect tense, which they hadn't learned. And they wanted to ask if someone had ever seen a film and they created the phrase "Did you see .." and I suggested them that there's another way to express it, without getting into a grammatical interpretation."* (T6)

Another statement by the same teacher illustrates the importance of content for the learner and the relevance of content in terms of the field, as well as the

importance of the aesthetic function of language in the early stages of its acquisition: *"Then I also think that the text has the advantage that it is a piece of authentic English. That a kind of authentic language appears there. And Eric Carl writes very well for kids. And I think that English in the textbook is always modified to some extent. So that, even if it is very simple, you can hear poetry of the language, there is the native speaker, it's simply written by a person who thinks in the language, and this is reflected in the poetics of the text."* (T6)

The problematization of the usual stereotypes (e.g. using the same series of textbooks) appeared in the statements at DI level as well.

The statements in the subcategory Pedagogical content knowledge - content at lower quality levels were characterized by a search for a "pre-prepared" curriculum in textbooks even to the extent that the content was identified with the textbook: *"Well, even though we were told that it should not be done, we make our plan according to the textbook. Because the textbook is a basis for learning a language, as I said, and when I teach the future tense, I take the advantage of what the textbook offers, at least for most parts, because explaining and doing everything without textbooks - supplying vocabulary, listening, texts, that is almost impossible for a language."* (T3, DZOo - S)

Pedagogical content knowledge - processes (DZOp)

In this subcategory the statements at DI level were more numerous than in the other components of pedagogical content knowledge. Eleven statements with a total of five respondents were identified.

The emphasis on the individualization of learning processes was reflected in a very significant way, specifically by taking into account the individual needs of pupils, and attention to individual learning styles (analytical, holistic style): *"The pronunciation test for vocabulary can be quickly remembered, but it needs a lot of practice. As for the grammar, it is very abstract for them, but here again the clever kids have a problem to accept it just as a "chunk", just as how something is said. They want to know why, and what it consists of, their analytical brains just want something and it is very difficult to find a balance between what we need to go over and not complicating it unnecessarily. And that is different for different people, some people ask 'And why?'"* (T15)

The statement of the same teacher indicating her ability to time the teaching of content with regard to the linguistic needs which the pupil expresses at some point was very remarkable: *"... in one lesson there was a boy, and he said: 'And when I want to say that someone is not like that and not like that, so how can you say it?'. And I had been expecting it, because I was prepared for the possibility that this may be an additional input, but only if someone noticed it."* (T15)

Another dominant theme is the development of pupils' autonomy – the pupils' co-decisions about the processes as well as the content of teaching, the development of the skill of pupils' self-evaluation through a digital portfolio, but also the participation in the creation of tests and leading them towards responsibility for their own learning. The statements emphasize the stimulation of pupils by various means – the use of different organizational forms (especially group work), the use of modern technology in teaching, etc.: *"So tomorrow I'd like to, because tomorrow we're back in the computer room, so I want to give them ... again I put them into groups and give each group a topic and they will take their textbooks, workbooks and have to create, write, prepare one exercise on the computer to go in the test - something to read, something to do or to understand."* (T11)

The following statement is an illustration of the preference of individual relational standards in the assessment of learning outcomes and verbal evaluation. The teacher leads pupils towards the development of the skill of self-evaluation (with the help of a portfolio) and the enhancing of responsibility for their own results, to which she motivates them, besides other things, by providing of the possibility of choice/decision: *"And I think that many times I have a problem grading the children, because I'm like, well, some children know more and some less but why they should say: 'Jesus, I've got a grade three on my report' ... Well I fight with this a little because I think that the fact ... it would suit me personally, if I did not have to grade their language, if I could write to the kids: you need to talk more, or you make a lot of grammatical mistakes, or you have a limited vocabulary and need ... you speak well, understand when reading, but still make a lot of mistakes when writing [...] the kids are responsible for what they learn on their own, not that I'm responsible, but they are responsible for what they do and so I try to make them to realize that this is 'my' worry, because 'I' will need it in life [...] I give them a lot of opportunity to do something extra, many children are able to do many things that are quite difficult."* (T11)

The same teacher also spoke about a balanced application of different educational styles depending on a specific situation (a tendency towards a focus on the pupil prevails, but if necessary, the application of authoritative teaching management is used) and a balance between different types of learning tasks including drill, if it seems appropriate due to the nature of the content: *"Of course, you have to devote some time again to drilling and things like that, it's the past tense now, because if I do not drill it, it will not stay in their heads."* (T11)

The following statement refers to an adjustment of teaching processes depending on the diagnosis of group dynamics and shows the teacher's effort to influence the classroom climate by modifying the teaching processes: *"Well now, I*

think we have managed to go quite a long way. And it is not only my contribution, but also thanks to the form teacher and the other teachers that are there. We try to put in a lot of cooperative activities. We want the children to have a kind of shared responsibility during the activities. And to find a space where those who are not quite so good at grammar can excel. A project." (T6)

A never-ending search for new procedures and activities suitable for particular pupils as well as contents, adding a database of activities and pedagogical creativity are characterized for experienced practitioners: "I like using a really simple method, I saw it at a training day and it's a great method, each pupil gets a piece of paper, folds it in half and on one side they write themselves, they take a textbook and write down ten words from the textbook for example from two lessons in Czech. Below it they sign it, and it is sent to someone else who translates it into English, it goes back and is checked out, signed, then I take it back and it's done. [...] But it is just in waves, because I decide in accordance with the current situation I find in the classroom. When I find that I need to stop and do something for a long time, I do it for a long time, I try to look for even more extra material ... But I always wonder how long to spend, because it is not worth doing something for a long time, because it goes round in circles and we will come back to it again, but they should not miss it, maybe those questions with 'Did you ...' or 'Did you see ...', so that they can grasp the principle, the basis. So that's what it's like with decisions." (T11)

"Thinking it up so that they can understand it. If there is a grammatical phenomenon, and not only in grammar, but in grammar I enjoy it. And inventing various mnemonics. That is great. And I know that for 90% it works, this method. Then there is the 10%, so I explain it differently, with completely different examples, and again and again, until the last one understands it." (T30)

In statements at N and S levels, these accents do not appear, only some partial aspects of learning processes are mentioned, typically for example the need for changing activities, the complaints about a large number of pupils in the classroom, the quality of teaching tasks in the textbook, the opinions on the use of drills, etc.: "For me it was useful when pupils worked with other materials than with a textbook. It would be good to have a small group, I know, that this is not practical, but it would be good if there were up to ten pupils, and then the work would be much more efficient than in a group of sixteen children." (T2, DZOp - N)

Knowledge of context (KONT)

Statements in category KONT at DI level were among the least frequent ones. Only three statements by two teachers were evaluated as DI. The statements are characterized by an emphasis on the connection between a family and a school, whether in the form of parental involvement in decisions about the school

programme or the continuity of learning activities on the theme of family: *"It is quite special also for cooperation with parents, because the parents got, actually, they were there when that programme was prepared, which means they want to participate in a much greater degree in the creation of its continuation and they want to be more involved in the decision-making mechanisms about how the programme will run."* (T6)

The statements also concern parents as key players in the competitive environment of the educational system (especially grammar schools vs. elementary schools) and the pedocentric educational style of parents today, which leads to excessive self-promotion of children at school.

"The younger ones, their needs, for example when we did that lesson about that profession, then we continued with the careers of mums and dads so that they would be able to say what they do as a profession. And I got really sweaty from that lesson, because I had said – see, who knows, we have learned something, we will do it - but it was a whirlwind. 'And my mom and my dad,' and that sort of thing. 'Be quiet, I will give you all that, I will write it on the board, all of you get what you need, what I want you to know.' But it's a difficult thing, all of them simply demand the attention of the teacher and their 'I' is not ... not held back, I would say, and parents even support them in that, because growing up with the child in the middle of everything is a frequent phenomenon in our school, so we fight a lot with this. They can't come to terms with the position of being one of several pupils, and not necessarily the first one, and so it is quite painful." (T27)

In statements at N, S, HS levels a much wider range of contextual variables appeared, such as lack of opportunities for further education, low prestige of the profession, high number of pupils in classes / schools, etc. In most cases, however, they remained at the level of a statement or complaint; there was not a deeper analysis or generalizing judgements. The typical statements of this type include the following: *"...because over the last five years, children have changed so much that what used to deserve a punishment is not even registered now and we are glad that they are at their desks and that it is not worse."* (T5)

"It's hard to find something [further education of teachers is meant], because those publishers have those seminars based on the presentations of new textbooks, and that's the main thing, which I understand, it is their bread and butter, but it is quite difficult to find new ideas." (T10)

Deep reflection (REF)

Statements in category REF of DI quality were the second most common of all categories, which is indicated by the relatively broad definition of this category (see above). It was a total of 20 statements by six teachers. The formulations of their own professional philosophy are heard repeatedly in the statements. These

are also contained in the following statement, in which the need, the will and the willingness to learn constantly, try new things and seek innovative approaches are stressed. All this is framed by a professional relationship with children and by empathy. The balance, the proportionality, and rejecting extreme positions are characteristic here, which is expressed in the relationship of drill vs. the communicative approach to teaching a foreign language: *"What kind of teacher am I? I think that one thing that is characteristic for me is that I can empathize quite well with those kids and I think I can understand them, and I think that the relationship between us, no matter which class I teach, I think it works really well. They do not have to all love me, I do not have to love all the children, but I can honestly say that I like all of them, so I can understand them and empathize with them and ... what else? I think that I am not afraid of trying new things, I think I want them to be able to use the English language in real life, but on the other hand, I also think that in school, in the lessons there should also be drills. They need some translations and so on, some exercises where they only complete sentences and learn one grammar point all the time, so I think that this also has its place here. So definitely not just communication and having a lot of fun, but I think that even those things are meaningful here."* (T25)

Teachers with their own professional philosophy work purposefully, consciously changing it. They perceive their quality in a developmental perspective, i.e. they realize what they lacked as novices, what they had to work on: *"I remember, when I actually got to the school here, I think it was about something completely different, the teaching, especially because of the fact that I myself did not know exactly what I wanted from the pupils, what would be required, what was really set in concrete, what was ok, let's say disciplinary problems, that all of this becomes clear over the years and as you gain experience, so I think this does a lot, too, that I myself know what I require from the children and thus they have some rules that they know will work and that's what it's going to like."* (T25)

The shift in emphasis from the teacher's towards the pupil's responsibility for the results of learning processes and the emphasis on the aspects of autonomous learning are typical: *"Well, I've already said it here, basically after many years of experience, I have come to the conclusion that I try to offer the kids as much as possible, but I also try to explain to them that it is not my duty to learn it, that I already know it, but that they have to choose, so I try not to be a teacher who checks everything so see if they have done it. Maybe it's wrong, I do not know, but I'm not someone who, when someone says something, immediately corrects it, I think I prepare them for life because I believe: no one will prepare the way for them and they have to realize it, even though they are still relatively small, if I do not do this, I will not be able to know it, I have to learn something otherwise I will not*

know it. And if I do not know it, maybe I won't mind, but maybe I will. So I'm trying to make them realize what is important for them and ... I'm definitely not one of those teachers who is ... very controlling ... but I try to give them feedback, but not so detailed and not all the time because I just think that when they learn it, it is better for them to correct themselves and then when they do not know exactly, when they are not given the exact instruction and are then lost and do not know what to do, I think that ... it is better to lead them so that they can manage it themselves." (T11)

In the context of teaching practices and their choice the teachers talk about intuition, but they also apply it to internalized knowledge and experience. A contradiction of the stated meaning of intuition appears in the following statement, but the teacher in the same breath states what she has done for her professional development. It appears that, rather than about intuition it is about the internalization and encapsulation of knowledge, from which, then, the processes seem to result intuitively (see Boshuizen et al., 2004), i.e. that the teacher does not have to think about a number of things and operates on the basis of insight, which is given by the reflected experience and encapsulated knowledge: "[Q] *What kind of teacher are you?* [A] (without hesitation) *Intuitive. Definitely. I think it just cannot be learned, that it is somewhere in you, it's as if you create something. You just have to react to what the children need at that moment. I have read a lot about this, I went through a number of training courses, and I have it somewhere in myself, but on top of that there is insight into the situation, emotion, the kind of intuition of what I think is good. And when I stick to it, it works. When I go against it, it starts to fall apart.*" (T27)

A further statement from the same teacher also confirms that the intuitive choice of processes, based on reflection-in-action, is accompanied by self-reflection and purposeful efforts for consistency, which appears as crucial in terms of expertise: "*And it's always good, I always, when I look inside myself, what I think is best is what I first think, so it usually works best, yes. And those children cannot get around it in any way, make a promise and not do it, do something inconsistently, which is my problem, I know I'm pretty inconsistent. And I have to be really strict with myself to be able to manage to be consistent in those limits that they need, there I have to keep an eye on myself a lot, to be organized, not to forget all that I have promised, to fulfil it, and so on.*" (T27)

The unpredictability of pedagogical situations is not, unlike the statements at the lower levels, perceived as frustration, but as a positive motivational aspect and as a challenge: "*Well, I like it because that work is really – I am looking for the right word - there are a lot of moments of surprise. It is creative in the sense that within the lesson there are a lot of unexpected things which make the job interesting for me. Sometimes it happens that I have sloppy preparation, and the*

lesson, which was created somewhere in the midst of what was going on, is fantastic, and sometimes, on the other hand, I feel that I have a perfectly prepared lesson, and just by the constellations of the stars some awful lesson will come out of it. I think that's the reason why I have lasted out in an elementary school. Because this definitely works with children. For adults, what happens in the lesson and what is on the paper is more similar." (T6)

The following statement, at the same time, thematizes the experience as a source of professional self-confidence and balance which, moreover, allows improvisation and flexibility: "I would say that on the one hand it is an advantage, the years of teaching, even though I always say that I'm ready for anything, you are always surprised by something, whether you teach for a year or 30 years, it does not matter, but the kids are just like they are ... and this is perhaps every lesson, you can prepare as much as you want, and some element always gets in there ... whether it's the language, today I didn't know the word 'fortified settlement', I will have a look how it is said, but here again ... the kids know that I do not want them to know everything, so you can't be completely perfect, I don't have the problem that young new teachers have, to tell the children I do not know, I will look ... will you find it? Fantastic, next time you can tell us ... and I also learn something new, so this is what I have learned, but on the other hand routine really helps in that I know what, where, how to do something or I know where the problem is." (T21)

In their work, the teachers look for a balance between routine and creativity, which teacher 6 summarizes aptly: "Then I have routines like that at the end of each lesson we write a test. Before each test, we get ready for it. I don't want to scare them about the test coming. I think it is important for them to include it in their preparation. They have to have feedback for the test. Then every lesson after the test, we correct it; I sit with each of them individually and we talk about what was wrong in the test, and what was successful. That kind of routine." (T6)

"And creativity - I need it there to have a good feeling from my work and not get bored myself. When I do something twice the same way, I get bored. For example, when I teach the same thing to the fifth grade in the third and the fourth lessons on Monday, I have to do it differently during the second lesson." (T6)

The possibilities of the creative concept of teaching and the perception of its meaningfulness are among the reasons why the teachers continue to enjoy their work: "Well, because it's something different, something new and then again they... You know, the reason is that, when you teach a few hours [the respondent is a headmistress], you get energy, because I go there to relax from all the paperwork. I go to relax in the class from all the paperwork, so I have more energy to bring many new things there, because it is so refreshing, because it makes you so happy when you do it... Sometimes I teach when I'm busy, so I take a book and teach in a

traditional way, but on the other hand I think I give them a lot of extra things and look for other ways." (T11)

The statements at a lower level are typical by their description – of specific procedures, situations, children (individuals or classes); it is a rather superficial reflection and the teachers either do not formulate their professional philosophy at all or only at the level of phrases. The statements at N and S levels in category REF often included expressions about the complexity of the situation that the teachers were not able to grasp in a communicable manner: *"I think, yeah, yeah characteristic, but to characterize myself, I probably can't do that very well, someone from outside would probably have to characterize it. Of course, teaching is necessarily affected by what kind of person it is, I'm trying to put those things into a logical structure so that it can follow logically, because I think in this way."* (T3)

Professionalism (PROF)

The statements in category PROF at DI level were the most common of all categories. Altogether 22 statements by eight teachers were recorded.

The characteristics of teachers' professionalism, which appeared in the statements, emphasize lifelong learning from theory (self-study, continuing education): *"Well, it depends on the type of person, because we are here at school, when I am here ... when I was elsewhere, and then we did it here at school, like a special project, it was called the Let me learn programme, which is basically something like learning styles, but it's a bit more developed, because what should I do with it if I know this, this, this, and what to do so that I can manage in every situation? So it is true that there are people who need structure and need a clear plan and need drills and need to know what happens next. And then there are people who get annoyed when it has an exact order, so I think it's probably the most difficult when teaching a group of children, who are each a little different, for the teacher to accommodate everyone."* (T11)

At the same time the teachers gain from the areas outside their own field or narrowly understood pedagogy: *"Well especially, how people process information. Generally. Because in this area, I really promote learning through pictures. Otherwise, you can sketch graphs, mind maps, you plan the process, and so on. I study this a lot. For example, dual coding or those kinds of things interest me. And I use it in the language too."* (T14)

Professionalism is closely related to collegial collaboration and inspiration; the involvement in projects and networks (including international) and associations: *"I get the most inspiration from when I see other teachers teach, which I have the opportunity to do quite often thanks to my function. Then probably just a reflection of what I do, what I did well, what went wrong. Also by my lecturing, I've led some training. So I spoke to other teachers. Just that I talk about*

my work with other teachers and that I see other teachers in action, this is interesting and beneficial for me." (T6)

"I am personally chairwoman of the Association B.S. B. and S. are twin cities, so I am the president of this community, then I work as a member of the Association of Teachers of German, where I work as a multiplier, I try to organize, like last year it was *Deutschlehrrer tag* for the whole country here in A. Street, this year *Sommerakademie* will be here, so the academy ... " (T8)

"It's a part of the project. I think that when I go over this with them, I will take these kids and other teachers, because I have had one training session with them, so I will go through it with them once again so that they can use it too, because this is digital, it has the advantage that you do not have any paperwork and in addition there is a good ... a part in which you communicate with the kids like what is shared in the dossier, in the collection, there is a part, which is shared with the teacher, so you can share a part with the teacher there, so I have access there and I can write them a comment because when we did something, some project, we tried to insert it there within a pilot study, and I wrote comments for them, they were quite amused when they saw that I had written something there, so it's different to email, isn't it?" (T11)

Some statements emphasized the importance of the school / staff room / wider community climate as a determinant of teachers' enthusiasm and professionalism: "I think that the level of enthusiasm and the level of professionalism of the teacher partly depend on what the mood of the teaching staff, school and community is." (T6)

The social aspects of professionalism were also reflected in the teachers' negotiations outside the classroom, for example with parents. The following statement illustrates the importance of the ability and courage to defend / justify their action or opinion, professional self-esteem, or even professional pride:

"Well, I think so. Surely they must be professional and I often tell my colleagues ... because I think that the professionalism of teachers is reflected in dealing with parents and interacting with others, because a lot of colleagues who, I think, are good teachers but have not yet come to the point that they are such professionals in the truest sense of the word, because they cannot sell what's in them and are unable to convince others because ... For example, with regard to inspection, various people asked, but I said, but after all ... I have just met a lady who came and said that her colleague had been observed by the Czech school Inspectorate, and they complained that she did not use listening during the lesson, they meant a CD or something authentic. And she asked why she should have it in each lesson ... and they said that it is a part of the lesson and it should be there, and I said, that as a professional, I could justify it, I would be able to explain to them, like that ... She said it was just

difficult to defend it, and I said, I saw professionalism in that the teacher basically knows why he or she is doing something, he or she can explain why they taught this, because when somebody comes in and sees the piece, they do not know what is behind it, what is next to it, and I have to be able to explain why I do this and I have to justify that what I do is just right. Because I'm the professional, I am in the classroom and I lead the children and nobody will tell me that I do it wrong. It's just your opinion, but I know that I'm doing well because of these reasons. So it is, I think, ... how teacher professionalism is reflected in this." (T11)

The professional pride and loyalty were described as attributes of professionalism (in connection with the low-prestige occupation they were also seen as a challenge): "Well, I guess it also belongs to that professionalism. I think it is important that the teachers should be proud of their work and loyal to their school. They should not have any feelings of discomfort associated with the fact that they speak about their work. This negative stigma is in schools and female teachers. I think that's still the way that education and teachers must go because they in turn undermine the process. You can feel when people are ashamed of their work. And this in turn undermines the institution, and there is no way out of it." (T6)

The main source of professionalism and professional commitment is particularly the awareness of the meaningfulness of the teachers' work. Teaching is seen as a mission and the moral dimension of teachers' work is highlighted, while the partner relationship between a teacher and a pupil is seen as crucial: "To perceive the child as a partner, not as I know something and you have to listen to me. That is the most important thing for me, because everything else depends on it. Completely different, in my opinion. I have never felt that I watch a kid from above. I cannot say that I have had conflicts with parents, but I have a feeling that parents treat me a little differently when they see that I have this approach. Definitely to do everything I want to do responsibly, it is another quite useful thing. Well, sometimes, I don't know how to express it, but sometimes I just have fun with those kids in their own language, and I do not mind it at all, although I think that some of the teachers, especially stuffy ones, would consider this somewhat unprofessional. For example that my suggestion today in the lesson that the associate professor is here, they did not do well in the test, so let's go and poison the teacher's tea and these things, things of this type, so that all of us can laugh." (T14)

"I do not know whether at this moment I feel like a professional teacher or a clerk in this position, unfortunately, but if I have to evaluate the teaching staff from the aspects of professionalism, I really keep a code, like lawyers have, we have also developed a code for teachers of our school here, and it is not always fully followed by everyone. Sometimes emotions play a big influence and when you say I can do it, not always, though, we should respect professionalism at all times, not always

everyone can handle it, which ... I know that we are just people, I also explain that to the kids and it is difficult to speak or act when you are feeling emotional, but the teacher professional should be able to manage their emotions, as well as following pedagogical tact, what happens in the school should stay there and not to share about it at the hairdresser ... because sometimes I get some news here and we live in a small town, of course ... I think that we have no problem with the students here in terms of trust, openness, which I acknowledge because it is very important for children to know that they can come to the teacher to confide in him or her and that he or is will help them. And it is also part of professionalism." (T21)

According to the respondents, teachers' professionalism is connected not only with education but also with personal qualities, professional commitment and ethical aspects: "Well, ideally, they should have knowledge in their field, they should have the methodology and didactics, as it is called today, that is knowledge of how to teach, and they should be suitable for the job as a personality. And I'm afraid that I would be critical in terms of education, it is limited mainly to the knowledge of the field, and the methodology is not much there, or maybe it's too theoretical, and young teachers cannot convert it into practice. And the third thing, there is absolutely no way to influence if the teacher will be there for the child, or will be one of those misanthropes, who themselves will suffer in that profession and also torture generations of others." (T15)

The statements indicating that the teachers are satisfied with their jobs, express positive emotions resulting from a positive attitude towards their profession and from the awareness of the meaningfulness of their work, which the teachers see in fulfilment of their role as a mentor / guide on the path of knowledge, learning, maturing, were very common: "Well, I have an office here, I enjoy teaching more, every time I come to the classroom, I think I'm at that point where I should be and I really enjoy seeing children as they walk to the classroom on the first day, they have new dresses, those bags, I just really like it, the system in the school, it's a game, like a play, because every day is different and when that day passes, it is gone, it's such a special job that runs from September to June, then it ends, then it starts again, such a circle, so I like it, well, it also scares me, where the children will go in their lives after it, what they will reach, yeah, I'm like a guide, I'd say. So I like that. I enjoy teaching, I also enjoy teaching adults." (T27)

"What is professionalism in teaching? ... A sort of moral credit. I do not want to exaggerate it, but it is terribly important there, because ... And maybe I would say it is in the first place - to pass on a pattern of behaviour. In the first place, in second place there is the field. That's how I see it. And raise them to be adult people, self-reliant people, and creative people. I'm like, I have chosen this profession and I'm not afraid to describe it as a mission and that's what I enjoy. Very much, I cannot

imagine another job, even if associated with language. [...] A wonderful profession." (T30)

More concise considerations very rarely appeared in the statements on N, S and HS levels, and often partial attributes such as the relation to children, enthusiasm, etc. were mentioned. The statements at N and S levels in category PROF often contained expressions about the complexity of the issue of professionalism that the teachers were unable to formulate in a communicable way (like in category REF). A typical statement on the lowest level of quality was the following statement which is the answer to the question of what defines teaching as a profession: *"Well, it is a difficult question, what defines it? ... I think the relationship with children, it is essential to be professional, it is a very general, a very broad question, do you have some subquestions there?"* (T3)

Comparison with the selected models of teacher expertise:

Following the prototype model by Sternberg and Horvath within the validation of the NBTCs study of certification (see also Pířová et al., 2011) Bond and his colleagues (Bond et al., 2000) proposed 13 prototypical characteristics of the expert teacher and established methods for measuring each of them. The prototypical characteristics included better use of knowledge, extensive pedagogical content knowledge, deep subject knowledge representation, better strategies to solve problems, better adaptation and modification of goals for individual students, better decision making, better perception of events in the classroom, greater sensitivity to the context, better monitoring of learning and providing feedback to students, greater respect for students and greater passion for teaching.

When comparing these prototypical characteristics with the results of our analysis, most of them can be considered to be unobservable characteristics of expertise, apart from four that were observed directly in teaching (namely better use of knowledge, better strategy to solve problems, better monitoring of learning and providing feedback). The remaining nine prototypical characteristics are to a large extent identical with the features of expertise that have been identified on the basis of the analysis of the in-depth interviews.

In the analysis, extensive pedagogical content knowledge was captured within the three subcategories DZOc, DZOo, and DZO_p. Particularly the last of these subcategories, i.e. DZO_p - pedagogical content knowledge in the area of process, was richly presented.

In addition, the subcategory DZOc noticed the ability to adapt and modify goals for individual students, which was also significantly reflected in the statements on DI level in the category of knowledge of pupils (ZZ). The category

ZZ also revealed respect for students, which is another characteristic identified by Bond et al.

Category Z0, more precisely the statements on the level of DI in this category, reflected deep representation of the subject knowledge.

Greater sensitivity considering the context was reflected in the statements in category KONT (the knowledge of the context), although the statements at DI level were not too frequent here. But to a large extent the sensitivity to the context was also recognized in category REF (in-depth reflection).

The passion for teaching and for the profession overall was very much evident in the statements in category PROF.

The analysis of the interviews showed, however, some other features of expertise that can complement the prototype model in relation to Czech foreign language teachers at lower secondary school level. These added prototypical characteristics include:

A holistic understanding of language and language teaching: In the statements at DI level, it is typical that the teachers understood relevant issues in a holistic way whether it is the understanding of language, language education, teaching, school context, etc. They were always able to see the big picture. The teachers often illustrated their holistic view by specific typical cases which, however, were not anecdotes about particulars taken out of context.

The ability of a critical view on their own competencies and context: Critical comments sometimes appeared in the DI level statements. The criticism was competent, informed, based on mature reflection and deep understanding of the issues. It dealt, for example, with the outcomes formulated in FEP or certain matters relating to students or the teacher's possibilities and capabilities. Interestingly, the teachers were often critical of their own abilities or processes (internalizing access) in statements at DI level, while statements at the other levels, especially N and S, often concerned "Czech" complaining about everything and everyone which came across as unfounded, unqualified, blanket, too generalizing and externalizing (they blamed pupils who are getting worse all the time, the situation which is complicated, etc.). The critiques of this type did not contain any outline of a specific solution.

The involvement in collaboration with colleagues in their own school and beyond: Another distinct feature which was experienced during the analysis was the social dimension of expertise relating to cooperation with both the school management and colleagues and teachers or other professionals in other workplaces. Many research surveys (see also Pířová et al., 2011) show that this is not a matter of course in the teaching profession.

The search for innovation and experimentation: Regarding the ways of working in the school, such as the methods and techniques of teaching, the teachers often expressed opinions resulting from their own informed eclecticism. Their view was mostly in accordance with current approaches to foreign language teaching; very often it was also about looking for new original innovative approaches, but sometimes the teachers expressed the opinion that some of the techniques that are now considered outdated or unwanted (typically drills or translations) belong to foreign language teaching and are beneficial. The efforts for innovative approaches were very typical for the statements at DI level. The extensive knowledge and skills of expert teachers do not lead to stagnation, but rather to efforts for the further search of new paths, flexibility, and adaptation to a changing context. This was also underlined by the statements that if there is constantly something unexpected in the school, it is a source of pleasure rather than frustration for expert teachers, which indicated a dynamic character of expertise.

The ability to formulate their own professional philosophy: The difference between the ability of expert teachers to formulate their own professional philosophy and the (often explicitly admitted) inability of the authors of the statements at N and S levels in this matter was striking. In the statements at DI level it was often evident that the teachers had asked questions about the meaning of their teaching earlier and therefore they were not surprised by this question in the interview.

It offers an interesting comparison with the study of Campbell (1990/1991 in Bond, 2000) who dealt with adaptive strategies of expert teachers and defined a set of eight personal qualities of these teachers, five of which substantially correspond to the above added prototypical features. These include especially a strong sense of mission and a strong sense of professional autonomy which, we believe, is closely related to the ability to formulate one's own professional philosophy. Campbell considered a constant search for better ways to improve teaching performance to be another important quality of expert teachers, which strongly corresponds with our search for innovations and experimentation. A holistic view of teaching is a part of our broader characteristic which comprises besides the holistic understanding of teaching also a holistic understanding of the language. The emphasis on peer support which reinforces a sense of mission identified by Campbell also has a parallel in our concept, namely in the involvement in co-operation with colleagues in school and beyond.

The ability to express a critical view of one's own competencies and of context did not appear directly in Campbell's approach, but as his study focused on the adaptation of expert teachers to the adverse external environment, Campbell

considered the ability of teachers not to allow the outside environment to interfere in their mission as one of the key qualities. Here a certain parallel can be seen with the ability to see the external environment critically, which can also be related to the awareness of the moments when the external environment does not support the teacher's activity which they believe to be in accordance with their competencies and mission.

Conclusion

The research focused on teacher expertise contributes to the current debate concerning the professionalization of teaching. In the teaching profession, the identification of experts and their characteristics is less tangible than in most other professions, yet it is a very important prerequisite for setting a standard as the aim towards which teachers and teacher educators should be directed. We believe that our research findings have the potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of foreign language teacher expertise and inspire undergraduate and further education of teachers and the preparation of the career system which is currently taking place in the Czech Republic.

The qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews in the first phase of the research highlighted a number of features of expertise which will serve as one of the starting points during the creation of the model of Czech foreign language teacher expertise, towards which our research project is oriented. At the same time, the connection of our findings with the results of similar studies carried out abroad, especially the above mentioned studies by Bond (2000) and some conclusions by Campbell (1990/1991), is evident.

The analysis is only a partial probe within a larger multiple-case study which had aimed to uncover only selected aspects of expertise. The limits of the analysis related to the nature of the interview: the statements by teachers could be distorted because of the lack of reflection or self-censorship resulting from an effort to choose answers that suit the researchers' conceptions, are compensated for by the longitudinal nature of the research and by the data collection during the direct observation of teachers within the entire case study as well as by other methods utilized in other phases of the research.

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