



The schooling of emotion and memory: Analyzing emotional styles in the context of a teacher's pedagogical practices



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Emotional experiences are connected with historical, political and social structures.
- These structures supply the meaning by which emotional styles are enacted.
- There is clash between dominant and subordinate emotional styles in the classroom.
- This clash unveils the interactional micro-processes of emotional styles.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an exploratory case study of the dynamics of the entanglement between emotion and memory in the context of a teacher's pedagogical practices in a conflict-troubled society. The theoretical concept of *emotional styles* is used analytically to demonstrate how emotions and memory are intertwined and political. The analysis shows the ways in which emotional styles enable or discourage certain representations of the past. Also, it is shown how individual emotional experiences are connected with larger historical, political and social discourses. The implications of the concept of emotional styles are discussed in the context of teacher pedagogies.

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1. Introduction/Rationale

Literature on memory studies over the last few decades shows how particular representations of past conflicts and wars are remembered, re-created and often used for political purposes (Casey, 1987; Connerton, 1991; Nora, 1989; Sturken, 1997; Todorov, 2003). Research conducted in schools, in particular, suggests that representations of the past are employed for cultivating and perpetuating certain forms of remembering and forgetting; for example, students learn to remember what is convenient and glorious to their national community, while they 'forget' inconvenient and unpleasant historical events (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012; Simon, 2005; Simon, Rosenberg, & Eppert, 2000).

Remembering and forgetting often convey strong *emotions* (Ahmed, 2004; Illouz, 2007; Lutz & Abu-Lughod, 1990; Reddy, 2001) which reveal that feeling is connected to memory and forgetting (Harkin, 2003).

The complex intertwining between emotion and memory has received increased attention in recent years, especially from the perspective of looking at the politics of memory, that is, the political dimension of remembering, recording or forgetting a particular event by different groups of people. Understanding the politics of memory as more than struggles over legitimate representations of the past, it is argued that these struggles are always *performed* and *felt* and thus always work through entangled forces of emotion and memory (Curti, 2008). The implications of this entanglement are particularly important for educators and schooling. Indeed, there has been increasing research on emotions and education (e.g. Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014; Schutz & Pekrun, 2007; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009) as well as evidence of the interplay between

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emotions and memories in schools, particularly in societies torn by conflict and war (e.g. see Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012; Zembylas, Charalambous, & Charalambous, 2011); however, there are still many unanswered questions when it comes to the ways in which the entanglement of emotion and memory is enacted in teachers' pedagogical practices. Having grown up in a divided country and having done research for the last several years on peace pedagogies, we are committed to engaging in a systematic analysis of how the politics of memory create openings or closures for peace pedagogies in the classroom. At the same time, we believe that the dynamics of the entanglement between emotion and memory are relevant beyond the particularities of the context of this specific study, because its analysis can help us scrutinize the ways in which political discourses and collective memories are linked to emotional conduct in the classroom and beyond.

The purpose of this paper is to present an exploratory case study that illustrates the dynamics of the entanglement between emotion, memory, and politics in the context of a teacher's pedagogical practices in a conflict-troubled society. More specifically, our study aims to show in detail the different pedagogical strategies with which emotions and memories are schooled – what Worsham (2001) has called the *schooling of emotion*. In order to do that we turned to the concept of *emotional styles* (Gammerl, 2012; Middleton, 1989) that provides a useful analytical tool for co-examining emotions and memories from a political dimension. Middleton (1989) has defined 'emotional style' as the normative organization of emotions in a society, highlighting that individual emotional experiences are connected with historical and cultural discourses and structures that supply the meaning by which individuals enact and interpret their everyday lives. Despite the fact that this concept has not been hitherto employed in educational literature, we found its application very fruitful in unraveling not only the emotional discourses about collective memories, but also the actual pedagogical interactions in which they are enacted. By operationalizing the concept of emotional styles along with a robust analytical toolkit from interactional sociolinguistics, we scrutinize the teaching practices and interactional strategies through which certain emotional discourses and practices that are connected to certain memories of the past are constructed in the classroom as the 'norm', whilst others are rendered subordinate. The study is important because it makes an attempt to map a phenomenon that has not been adequately examined so far with empirical data in the classroom. Furthermore, the analytical potential of presenting these different strategies has important pedagogical implications beyond the specificity of the examined context, whilst at the same time it contributes to understanding the dynamics of the entanglement between emotion and the politics of memory.

The paper is divided into four parts. In the first part, we offer some theoretical considerations that formulate the framework of our study; in particular, we discuss how the concepts of 'schooling of emotion' and 'emotional styles' inform our study. Then, we briefly describe the larger historical, political and educational context of our research as well as the micro-level context of the Greek-Cypriot elementary classroom and the profile of the teacher who constitutes our case study. After discussing the methods of data collection and analysis, the third part of the paper provides a detailed micro-analysis of empirical examples from the case study showing how the theoretical concepts of emotional style and schooling of emotion can be used analytically; the interactional sociolinguistic analysis shows in particular the different emotional styles enacted in the classroom and their consequences in the teacher's pedagogy. The paper concludes with arguing that the concept of emotional styles allows us to demonstrate and empirically show *how* emotions and memory

are intertwined and normatively ordered in the classroom through pedagogical interactions. The implications of these practices are discussed in relation to the concept of 'schooling of emotion' and the macro-ideological educational discourses on memory.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1. Schooling of emotion

The role of emotion in the politics of memory raises questions about *how* emotions are politicized to establish and maintain certain forms of remembering and forgetting. As Curti (2008) writes, 'the role of emotion as an adhesive of experience cannot be separated from that of memory: it is not *either* memory or emotion that adhere together blocs of experiences in (re)creations of identity, but *both together* working through a reflexive embodied symbiosis' (p. 107, original emphasis). Fights over representations of the past 'are always performed and felt between, in and through bodies and thus always work through entangled forces of emotion, affect and memory' (ibid.: 108). For instance, the perception of the Berlin Wall, or the West Bank separation wall, or the walls that separate Catholics and Protestants in Belfast neighborhoods, exists emotionally and performatively through the memories, bodies and identities of the people who live(d) in both sides of the wall, albeit in very different ways. How this wall is *felt* within a society is very much relevant to the ways in which it functions emotionally (as a discourse) and affectively (as embodied).¹

The school is an important arena for cultivating certain memories of the past together with certain emotions. The term 'schooling of emotion' (Worsham, 2001) reflects the idea that schools perform certain pedagogies of emotion, and as such they are effective ways of anchoring students in a particular way of life. For example, schools in conflict-troubled societies are seen as prime sites in which the traumatic experiences that shape collective historical narratives are re-created, passed on to future generations and used to strengthen dichotomies between *we* and *they*, *victims* and *perpetrators* (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012; Davies, 2004). The schooling of emotion, then, may establish, assert, challenge or reinforce particular 'emotional hegemonies' (Jaggar, 1989) concerning what students *should* feel. Despite the evidence of this process taking place, there have been very few sustained investigations in the field of education focusing on *how* exactly the entanglement of emotion and memory takes place in teachers' pedagogical practices and how it is performed during classroom interaction and with what implications. Pursuing this research agenda, we employ the concept of 'emotional styles' which is outlined below; this concept does not only produce new perspectives in understanding the interplay of emotion and memory in pedagogical practices, but also acknowledges the synchronic and diachronic interactions of the individual and the social.

¹ There is an ongoing debate on the distinction between *affect* and *emotion* in different disciplines (e.g. see Cvetkovich, 2012). For the purposes of this paper, we use *affect* in a more Deleuzian sense: *affect* is an ability to affect and be affected (Deleuze, 1988). Affect, then, is understood both as a process and a product; a *process* in which a body acts upon another, and a *product* as the capacity of a body to affect and to be affected. Without establishing any dichotomies (see Zembylas, 2007), *emotion* refers to the cultural conventions and discourses with which an intensity (feeling) is qualified. Emotion, therefore, is understood in relation to social practices and discourses, while affect is used in relation to embodied sensations. Clearly emotion and affect are interconnected and their analytic distinction is made for strategic and clarification purposes (Hook, 2011).

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