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Eroding trust in teacher professionalism : an ethnomethodological analysis of radio interviews with Czech experts on education

ERODING TRUST IN TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM: AN ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF RADIO INTERVIEWS WITH CZECH EXPERTS ON EDUCATION

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Abstract

Schools and teachers have been subject to a number of debates and often face contradictory demands. In this study we analyse radio interviews with three Czech experts on education. Building on ethnomethodology, namely conversation analysis and membership categorisation analysis, the study was guided by two research questions: (1) What practices and membership categorisation devices do the experts employ when speaking of Czech education and schools? and (2) How do the experts relate to teacher professionalism when characterising Czech education? The analysis shows how the expert's credibility is negotiated, how they problematise gaining fundamental knowledge and skills at schools and situate the learning of "important things" outside school, and how they claim that Czech teachers teach badly while downgrading positive results of Czech schooling. This way the experts cast doubt on basic characteristics of teacher professionalism and thus undermine trust in the professional project in teaching.

Introduction

National educational systems and policies have been subject to a number of debates and often face contradictory demands. The image of schools as respected educational organisations and teachers as competent professionals has been problematised as the requirements of politicians, policymakers, businesspeople, parents and the general public have been expressed in public debates, everyday discussions and interviews, and, consequently, in the actions taken by educational policy (Day & Sachs, 2004; Evetts, 2011). A number of sociologists and educationalists in the Czech Republic (e.g., Greger, 2011; Janík, 2015; Lojdová, 2016; Štech, 2007, 2016) as well as abroad (e.g., Ball, 2003; Davies & Bansel, 2007; Furlong et al., 2000) drew attention to the observation that the growing fascination with the neoliberal paradigm has found its way on to the public education scene. The neoliberal focus on individualism and economic efficiency has impacted the governance of education (Kaščák & Pupala, 2011, 2012), the focus on marketisation and performance was translated into educational policy with an emphasis on accountability and standardisation (cf. the story of the teacher career system in Czechia in Janík et al., 2014).

More than a decade ago, Štech (2007) analysed the impact of contemporary neoliberalism on teacher professionalism in Czechia. In his essay, he cited Petrusek's argument that "the autonomy of education systems is a sheer illusion in postmodern times," as "the education system is almost totally 'colonized' by the political and, in particular, the economic system, and indirectly by the most influential 'creator of ideas' … the media system" (Štech, 2007, p. 327).[1] Similarly, Goldstein et al. (2011) demonstrated how media coverage in the USA employed dominant neoliberal narratives and discourses to blame public education for societal diseases, and Wubbena et al. (2016) provided an in-depth analysis of the role of the media in the neoliberal privatisation of education in North America.

A crucial role in neoliberal media discourse is played by the voice of experts on education (in the Liessmannian sense, cf. Liessmann, 2015, pp. 26–37). The birth of experts on education, as Štech (2016) noted, is an accompanying phenomenon of the neoliberal revolution. Štech (2016), with reference to a critical study on PISA, explained that unlike scientists and researchers, whose critical analyses of profound changes in education are not—and cannot be—driven by a direct "usefulness" for educational policy, experts are typically prepared to propose (to the public as well as to educational policy)

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[1]   All translations from Czech into English were done by the authors.

"simple" and often ideologically based solutions to what they themselves depict as a catastrophic picture of contemporary schools and education. What remains unclear, however, is how one qualifies as an expert; the figure of an expert, it seems, may be represented by a wide range of individuals ranging from specialists in other fields to the so-called informed laymen (Štech, 2016, pp. 195–197). What is clear, though, is that frequent media occurrence is a prerequisite.[2]

In Czechia, education has become a truly public affair in recent decades – the frequency of media output focused on education has grown immensely. In light of the experience from abroad it seems vital to critically analyse the relationship between media discourse and the professional project (Macdonald, 1995) in teaching. Media reproduce some of the images of schooling and teachers held by society and, at the same time, convey the stance of the speakers towards teacher professionalism. The presence and actions of the protagonists in mass media may therefore not only contribute to the reproduction of larger sociological structures (e.g., teacher professionalism), but also to agenda-setting in society (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; see also McQuail, 2010, pp. 454–461). By analysing radio interviews with selected experts on education, we aim to identify some of the tools that the speakers employ when talking about teachers and teaching. We pay special attention to the ways in which they express (dis)trust and relate to the professional project.

The professional project in teaching

Theory of professions is a huge and historically rooted research field dominated by sociology. Within the richness of sociological perspectives shaping professionalism as a concept[3] (for reviews see Brock & Saks, 2016; Nolin, 2008; Malin, 2017; Saks, 2016) we find it useful for the purpose of our analysis to build on the notion of the professional project presented by Macdonald (1995), who himself describes his approach as "open-minded but not totally eclectic" (p. 29). While drawing inspiration from a variety of theorists, he claims

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[2]   For the process Štech (2016, p. 192) proposed a fitting term "vicious circle of celebri-tisation": "one becomes a recognised expert because he is often in the media, and he appears in the media because he is a recognised expert."

[3]   According to Nolin (2008), however, it may be more precise to talk about contributions and emphases from different schools of thought rather than about phases in the development of sociological theories of professions. He, building on a three-stage theory by Sciulli (2005), which is implied also by Macdonald (1995), opted to organise the development rather around the notions of *profession*, *professionalisation*, *social context*, and *professionalism*.

to follow the lines laid down by the interactionists, by Freidson (1970) and Larson (1977)[4], and by Weberian analyses of the development of the professions.

Macdonald's (1995) professional project relates to emancipation efforts of teachers as an occupational group as it puts emphasis on action rather than structure. The professional project embodies the Weberian notions of conflict and competition, which have to be considered in the current changes in education, and pressures exerted on school in the neoliberal environment. Furthermore, social processes are perceived as a product of individual and collective actions, where the collective pursuit of economic advantage cannot be separated from the drive for respectability. As professions are typically involved in providing services to people rather than producing material goods, they may pursue self-enhancement and economic interests, but at the same time their actions must display a reasonable level of altruism and motivation to serve the public good. Macdonald (1995, p. 34) points out that to achieve the monopoly a special relation with the state is necessary for a profession. For the current turbulent Czech context it is important to mention that he puts emphasis on the choice of strategies appropriate to the political culture (or specific political power network). The progress (or a lack thereof) of the professional project may be understood through the concept of social closure, which is recognised as a collective strategy employed by a profession.[5]

As the services provided by a profession are different from material goods, they have to be taken on trust. Although the professionals' monopoly of knowledge is guaranteed by certificates and diplomas gained through extensive periods of education and practice, failure is an inevitable part of some of the services. No doctor, lawyer, or teacher can guarantee total success in all the cases that they deal with. Therefore, the trust of the individuals,

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[4]   Macdonald (1995, p. 31) stressed that he dealt "with the Weberian part of Larson's work, not that part where she shifts to Marxian concepts nor indeed her later Foucauldian formulations."

[5]   Malin (2017), focusing specifically on teachers, social workers, and health care workers, advocated the concept of a professional project. His analysis of main contemporary perspectives included the neo-Durkheimian framework, neo-Weberianism, neo-Marxism, post-structuralism, managerialism, and democratic and collaborative professionalism, and concluded that "the evolution of a professional project acknowledges a social, political, and cultural context composed of factors which range from social values to legislation alongside discovering the impacts of the history, tradition and power position of technological innovations that impinge on professional work" (p. 24). Another important aspect of contemporary professional projects was pinpointed by Faulconbridge and Muzio (2012). They show that as a result of globalisation, professional projects increasingly transcend state boundaries, and supra-national actors (and their dialogue with national actors) influence both "the closure regimes that restrict access to the profession" and "regimes that regulate professional practice" (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2012, p. 26).

general public, and state is the cornerstone of the professional project (Macdonald, 1995, p. 30). It follows that through the open minded approach to sociological theories of profession, the professional project captures professionalisation and professions at various levels of analysis. By deploying the neo-Weberian lens for the analysis of professions, the meso- and macro-levels (i.e., broader structural and historical analysis) are captured. On the other hand, inter-actionist approaches afford a perspective on the reproduction of professional relationships, typically by analysing interactions between clients and professionals (Saks, 2016).

Trust is a complex issue, as documented by philosophical, psychological, as well as sociological studies on the issue which adopt various theoretical perspectives. A useful starting point for our study is offered in the special issue of *Studia paedagogica* focusing on trust (and control) in education, especially in the text by Schweizer et al. (2017), where trust is conceived as a holistic phenomenon that encompasses explicit as well as implicit dimensions. Trust stands as a base in human interactions of all kinds, i.e., trust in individuals, organisations and complex systems. It is future oriented and comes to the fore in situations when we have to act in spite of uncertainty or risk (Sztompka, 1999, p. 25). Relational trust is asymmetric, as it is "an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999, p. 189). In the case of teachers and teaching, the public's familiarity with the occupational group and schooling may result in tacit, implicit trust, unless their implicit expectations are questioned or expectations fall short.

If trust is the core component of the professional project in teaching, it follows that our analysis of media discourse related to teachers and schools will focus on the manifestations of trust (or distrust) in teacher professionalism, which represent the micro-level of our analysis. On a macro-level, our analysis draws on the notion of professionalism, as presented in Malin's (2017) analysis of current sociological theoretical perspectives (see footnote 5). Malin (2017) concluded that most contemporary social scientists agree on some basic characteristics of professionals. For this study we select four key characteristics of teachers as members of a professional group. They (a) possess an in-depth specialist knowledge about / for teaching as well as the ability to define it, (b) need a thorough initial (academic) and further education, (c) visibly take serious responsibility (characterised by maximum autonomy) linked to (d) their commitment to social welfare / service in terms of meeting a significant need of society (so-called moral professionalism) (Malin, 2017, p. 8). These characteristics are relevant to our study in that we relate them to the micro-level, i.e., interactional tools (practices and membership category devices, see below) as used by the speakers in the radio interviews.

Sample, method and data

The selection of interviews for analysis was informed by an examination of Czech media coverage in the AnoPress search engine, which indexes various types of Czech media, including the press, television, radio, the Internet, and social media. It transpired that besides social networks and the Internet, radio programmes represent a large proportion of the media content related to education. We therefore selected Český rozhlas for two main reasons. First, it is the only public service radio broadcaster in Czechia. This means, among other things, that the medium receives public funding and has to follow the Codex[6], according to which the programmes are independent and ought to represent a forum in which a wide range of perspectives can be expressed and that the programmes meet high quality and ethical standards and do not subordinate to the pressure of the market. Second, Český rozhlas has four channels which are broadcast to the whole country, and also an online archive from which a number of programmes can be replayed. Some programmes, such as interviews, are also available from YouTube. It is thus one of the most popular Czech radio broadcasters—more than 2.5 million people listen to Český rozhlas per week on average, which represents one third of radio listeners in Czechia (Český rozhlas, 2019, p. 110).

When reviewing recent education-related interviews aired on Český rozhlas, it became apparent that besides representatives of the Czech educational system (the minister, politicians, representatives of universities and very rarely also representatives of schools) a large amount of airtime is dedicated to experts on education—representatives of NGOs, business-people (e.g., owners of private schools) and freelance lecturers. From the most recent interviews (2017–2018), we purposefully selected ones with Bohumil Kartous (a representative of the NGO EDUin), Ondřej Kania (a businessperson in education), and Robert Čapek (a freelance teacher educator).[7] According to our inquiries, they have been afforded a large amount of airtime[8], which, in turn, enables them to set the agenda and influence attitudes towards and judgments about teacher professionalism. Each interview was approximately 30 minutes long and comprised talk between

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[6]   See Rada Českého rozhlasu (n.d.).

[7]   The three interviews can be found online (see Český rozhlas Radiožurnál, 2017a; Český rozhlas Plus, 2018; Rádio Junior, 2018).

[8]   For example, for 2018, the Anopress service returned 362, 102 and 87 occurrences of Bohumil Kartous, Robert Čapek and Ondřej Kania, respectively, in relation to Czech keywords for schooling, teaching, education, and teacher (including social media and the Internet).

a moderator and one guest.[9] When transcribing the interviews, we used the conventions from conversation analysis (see the Appendix).

In our analysis we focus on the ways in which the speakers make themselves understood, and, at the same time, what the others do to interpret what is being done. This reflexivity in speakers' making sense of what is happening in interaction has been described in Garfinkel's ethnomethodology (1967) and further developed in conversation analysis and membership catego-risation analysis by Sacks in the 1960s and 1970s (Sacks, 1995a, 1995b). We used conversation analysis (Clift, 2016; Sidnell & Stivers, 2013) to uncover how the speakers sequentially produced the radio interviews. When exploring how the experts speak of schools, students and teachers, we also used membership categorisation analysis (Lepper, 2000), whose aim is to identify the membership categorisation devices (MCDs) that the speakers themselves employ. An MCD can be understood as an inventory that comprises membership categories (e.g., the MCD school consists of categories such as teachers, students, etc.) as well as activities that the speakers relate to the categories (i.e., category-bound activities). Both conversation analysis and membership categorisation analysis are firmly based on exploring what the speakers themselves do in interaction, how they recipient-design their talk and how their talk is made sense of by other speakers. The outcomes of such analyses are therefore detailed accounts of the use of practices and MCDs by the speakers themselves. This represents the micro-level of our analysis and corresponds to our first research question: What practices and membership categorisation devices do the experts employ when speaking of Czech education and schools?

In the three interviews the experts were invited to talk about teachers, schools, and education. Despite the fact that the topics did not explicitly include teacher professionalism, the experts, through the use of some practices and MCDs, related to the four aspects of professionalism as characterised by Malin (2017), which represent larger societal, cultural, institutional, political, and also organisational structures. These can be situated onto the macro- and meso-levels of our analysis, in which we aim at linking the levels (see also Schegloff, 1992) by concentrating on the practices and categories employed by the experts when speaking of education, especially when touching upon trust, teachers and the role(s) of schools in society. Thus, our second research question is: How do the experts relate to teacher professionalism when characterising Czech education?

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[9]   There were no questions from the listeners. Discussions among representatives of different interest groups are quite rare (we return to this problem in the discussion section).

Findings

We present the findings in four sections addressing (1) the education of one of the experts, (2) learning outside school, (3) how badly Czech teachers teach, and (4) professionalism. In the first three sections we analyse relevant practices and MCDs as used by the experts in the interviews, and thus address the first research question. To be more explicit, the first section directly relates to the expert's credibility and the degree of their insider status regarding their judgments on education. The following two sections focus on the professional core of teaching: what and how pupils learn at school. The fourth section provides answers to the second research question (i.e., how the experts relate to teacher professionalism). This section, in fact, presents our judgement based on the statements uttered by the experts.

(Un)educated experts on education

The nature of the knowledge that pupils should acquire at schools is problematised mainly by Bohumil Kartous (BK). The following extract shows how the interview begins. The moderator (Mo) opens the interview by introducing her guest and by asking about his greatest school experience. It is worth noting how BK formulates the answer.

Extract 1 (BK=Bohumil Kartous, Mo=the moderator)

```
 1 Mo: dnes to bude hodně (.) o škole a o vzdělávání,
        today it's going to be much about school and education
 2     .h mým hostem je Bohumil Kartous, specialista na vzdělání
          my  guest  is Bohumil Kartous, a specialist in education
 3     ze společnosti EDUin=vítám vás tady dobrý den.
        from the organization EDUin=welcome hello
 4 BK: dobrý den
        hello
 5 Mo: .h jaký máte nejsilnější eh školní zážitek,
        what is your greatest eh school experience,
 6     (1.6)
 7 BK: <to je zajímavá otázka> protože m-moje nejsilnější zážitky
        <that's an interesting question> as my greatest experiences
 8     se nestaví ke $škole$ e:h $ale dyž budu hodně dl- e:h se
        are not related to $school$ e:h $but if I try hard to e:h
 9     snažit odpovědět$ na tu otázku, .hh tak se vlastně netýká
        answer$ that question, .hh so it actually doesn't relate
10     školy jako takové: pravděpodobně by to mohlo být něco co se
        to school as such it could probably be something that
11     s přihodilo čistě f- náhodou v tom že se toho odehrálo ve
        happened by accident in that it happened at
12     škole, .hh asi $nějaké vztahové záležitosti$ ale $hh hheh
        school, .hh perhaps $some relational things$ but $hh hheh
13     heh [heh heh] heh
14 Mo:     [heh heh] ((shortened))
```

The moderator introduces BK as a "specialist in education", thus qualifying him as an expert, adding BK's affiliation with the NGO EDUin. The moderator then formulates her question in line 1 as a warm up question, which might have elicited answers related to BK's school experience. In this context, the question can be read in relation to BK's presence in school either as an expert on education or as a learner. However, BK responds after a pause (line 6) and by postponing his answer by saying "that's an interesting question" (line 7), i.e., he produces his response as a dispreferred one (e.g., Sacks, 1995b, pp. 414–415). He then refuses to answer the question ("my greatest experiences are not related to school", lines 7–8) and concludes that some of his greatest experiences, such as "relational things", might have happened at school by accident (lines 11–12). By producing the answer in an amused tone of voice and with subsequent laughter, BK signals that his turn is over. The laughter may be connected to the core of BK's answer, since the expression "relational things" (line 12) can be read as romances. Alternatively, the laughter may mitigate the answer, as not only has it been produced as dispreferred, but also because BK has not actually responded as a specialist in education, who one would expect to have many interesting school-related experiences both as a learner and as an expert who is familiar with the situation in schools.

The laughter is also produced by the moderator, who then asks a more specific question. After line 14 she first refers to a part of a classic saying related to important pieces of knowledge that is often attributed to Czech teachers (this is not included in the transcript) and then asks what BK would say. This way the moderator reformulates her general question from line 5 and attempts to elicit BK's greater experiences as a learner. BK's response is captured in Extract 2.

Extract 2 (BK=Bohumil Kartous, Mo=the moderator)

```
 1 Mo: tak co z vás [vypadne]
       so what do you say
 2 BK:             [°hhh°]
 3 BK: a::: to bude těžký já si (.) vlastně e:h jsem zjistil že
          that's going to be hard I (.) actually e:h I've realized
 4     .hh eh já si spoustu těch eh tak zvaných eh tak těch
       that .hh eh many of those eh so called eh those
 5     <rudimentů>, to co česká škola často považuje za (.) to
       <rudiments>, that Czech schools often consider
 6     nutné aby si člověk pamatoval tak si vážně nepamatuju,
       necessary for one to remember those things I don't really remember
       ((4 lines omitted))
11     er z:: těch z- z eh řekněme znalostí: (.) <základní školy>
          fro::m the eh let's say knowledge(.)typical of <basic school>
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12      e:h bych možná: dokonce b- z většiny předmětů propadl,
            I'd probably even fail the majority of subjects,
13      e:h >stejnětak bych možná dneska neudělal $maturitu$< hheh=
            >in the same way I'd probably fail the $maturita$<
14 Mo: =takže eh žádný eh ný natý itý ič- istý ičelý
          so eh no ((lists Czech endings for chemical formulas))
15 BK: eh
16 Mo: to to NEMÁTE VŮBEC V HLAVĚ,
          that that don't you HAVE THAT IN YOUR HEAD AT ALL,
17 Mo: [>é se rovná] em cé [na druhou]<, bás[ničku krát]kou, nic
          >E equals    M  C    squared<,   a short poem, nothing
18 BK: [  nemam    ]       [ne ne    ]       [e::::::::r]
          I don't             no no
19      eh nemám to v hlavě:,
          I don't have it in my head,
```

Similarly to Extract 1, in Extract 2 BK produces his answer as a dispreferred one, which can be read from him postponing his response (line 3). Then BK says that he actually does not remember those "rudiments" that Czech schools consider to be important (lines 4–6). He adds that he would even fail the majority of subjects and he would probably not pass the "maturita," i.e., the Czech upper-secondary school leaving examination (lines 11–13). This way BK produces an answer in which he declares that he has none of the knowledge that is required in Czech primary or secondary education. In response, the moderator starts giving examples of knowledge structures typical of the basics in chemistry (line 14), physics and literature (line 15) and asks "don't you have that in your head at all" (line 16). While the moderator's previous questions were designed in a way that would elicit answers related to activities typically associated with experts on education or learners, her question in line 16 is reformulated in a way that confirms that an expert on education does not possess fundamental knowledge. BK confirms this assumption in two overlaps (line 18) and then explicitly says that he does not possess such knowledge in his head (line 19).

From the perspective of membership categorisation analysis, Extracts 1 and 2 reveal an interesting tension between the expectations related to the category of an expert on education. As evident from the moderator's introduction and questions, she categorises her guest as an educated specialist in education who can talk about his greatest school experiences (Extract 1, lines 1–5) and who possesses fundamental knowledge that he acquired at schools (Extract 2, lines 1, 14, 16 and 17). On the contrary, BK observably resists being categorised this way and responds as someone whose greatest school experiences do not exist (Extract 1, lines 7–8) or are connected to "relational things" (Extract 1, line 12) and who does not possess the fundamental knowledge typical of basic and secondary education (Extract 2,

lines 3–12, 18, 19), which evokes the category of an uneducated person. Thus, Extracts 1 and 2 show how the speakers in the interview manage these disjunctive categories (Lepper, 2000, pp. 36–39): BK uses dispreffered responses, and, in turn, the moderator reformulates her questions.[10] As will become visible from the other extracts, the rest of the interview with BK and the interviews with the other guests as well were not as confrontational. Instead, we observed that the interviewers themselves referred to the experts' previous work and asked questions that elicited the guest's critical views on education (e.g., Extract 5). We will return to these methodological issues in the conclusion. In the rest of this study, we will present some of the practices and MCDs related to what learners and teachers do at schools, and how these relate to teacher professionalism.

Students learn important things outside school

In the previous extracts it could be observed that BK presented himself as somebody who would probably fail the majority of school subjects. One can therefore wonder how learners can learn the basics. The answer can be found in Extract 3, where BK says how he learnt languages and grammar. Extract 3 is a part of BK's response which he started in Extract 2.

Extract 3 (BK=Bohumil Kartous, Mo=the moderator)

```
1 BK: .hh e:r jazyk používám profesionálně (   ) a gramaticky,
              language I use professionally     and grammatically,
2      zajímavý dlouhý eh krátký text v různých žánrech ať už je
       interesting long   short text in various genres be it
3      to v analýza ať už je to fejeton nebo je to eh v povídka,
            an analysis or an essay or eh a short story,
4      eh ale já jsem se prostě gramatiku eh stejně jako cizí jazyk
            but I've simply learnt grammar as well as a foreign language
5      $hh naučil prostě mimo školu h$
              simply outside school
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[10] A video that captures the interview is also available from YouTube where comments can be posted (Český rozhlas Radiožurnál, 2017b). The discussion under the video reveals that some of the points raised by BK were perceived as controversial by some of the viewers. For example, in response to the part of the interview as captured in Extracts 1 and 2 one user says: "Nevzdělanec coby expert na vzdělání. Kde se v něm bere ta drzost ?" ("An uneducated person as an expert on education. How dare you?"), which confirms the presence of the disjunctive categories. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to address the reception of or reactions to the interviews by the general public. We will return to this point at the end of this study.

In Extract 3 BK admits that he uses language "professionally and grammatically" (line 1) and that he is able to produce different genres (lines 2–3), which is in contrast to what BK says in Extract 2, where he declares that does not possess the knowledge structures whose examples were given by the moderator. At the end of Extract 3, BK locates (Lepper, 2000, pp. 25–29) the activity of his learning of grammar as well as of foreign language(s) "simply" to "outside school" (line 5), which he produces with an amused tone of voice. Here BK speaks about the activity of learning, which is typically bound to the category of "students" or "pupils". However, it can be argued that a common location for learning grammar or foreign languages for a student or pupil is school. On the other hand, in Extract 3 we can see that BK locates the activity of learning grammar and language(s) outside school, which may evoke categories such as "autodidact", "tutee", or "workplace learner", but not the "student" or "pupil" categories, which are closely related to going to school.

Similarly, Ondřej Kania (OK), who finished his secondary education in the USA, as he himself mentions in the interview, emphasises the importance of work and learning on the job, as can be seen in Extract 4.

Extract 4 (OK=Ondřej Kania, Mo=the moderator)

```
 1 Mo: a nechtělo se vám studovat když vám bylo dvacet nebo
       and did you feel like studying when you were twenty or
 2     devatenáct,=
       nineteen
 3 OK: =devatenáct já si myslím že jsem (.) dostal dobrý
        nineteen    I think     that I got good
 4     vzdělání=primárně teda em na tý škole ve státech,
       education=primarily      at the school in the states
 5     .h kde to bylo skutečně jako hodně jiný (.) než to je:
          where it was really very different than it is
 6     hm tady u nás
          here with us
 7     .hh dokonce jsem u toho i musel pracovat takže tam jsem
          I even had to work during that      so there I
 8     se naučil poměrně [dost věcí   ]
       learnt quite a lot of things
 9 Mo:                  [a musel jste] pracovat proto abyste
                         and did you have to work to
10     měl peníze nebo protože to bylo součást výuky,
       have money or because it was a part of the instruction,
11 OK: musel jsem se zaplatit školný takže ((shortened))
       I had to pay my tuition fees so
```

In Extract 4 OK responds to the question of whether he wanted to pursue a higher education degree after finishing secondary education. OK first mentions that he received a good education primarily in the United States (lines 3–4) and then emphasises that American secondary school was "really very different" from schools "here with us," i.e. in Czechia (lines 5–6).[11] Then he mentions that he had to work and thus he learnt quite a lot of things (lines 7–8) and then clarifies that he had to work to pay tuition fees (line 11). In the part of the interview which follows after line 11 (not included in the transcript), OK mentions that his duty was to sell cookies, yet he does not explain what exactly he learnt during that activity.

Here, again, the activity of "learning quite a lot of things" is not described as happening at school (i.e., bound to "students" or "pupils"), but at work (i.e., bound to "workplace learners" or "trainees"). Interestingly, OK speaks of a good education and at the same time of learning many things outside of school. One can read this in two ways: OK either extends the location of the activity of learning important things to outside of school (and thus "students" or "pupils" are also bound to work in order to learn important things), or he claims that a good education can be obtained outside of school when working.

Czech teachers teach badly

The above section has shown that both BK and OK maintain that many important things can be learnt outside of school. The following extract reveals what another expert on education, Robert Čapek (RC), says about teaching and learning in Czech classrooms. It should be pointed out that earlier in the interview the moderator confessed that she had read RC's books and in other parts of the interview she refers to the previous interviews with RC, where he was very critical of Czech education and teachers. Thus, she asks about the worst thing that is currently happening in Czech classrooms (lines 1–2 in Extract 5).

Extract 5 (RC=Robert Čapek, Mo=the moderator)

```
1 Mo: co nejhoršího se podle vás eh v současné době v českých
       what's the worst thing that in your view is currently
2      třídách děje
       happening in Czech classrooms
3 RC: .h no eh řekl bych že (0.7) zase m- všechno se to odvíjí
       well  I'd say that     again  everything is related
```

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[11]   In other interviews (e.g., Cihelková, 2019) OK mentions that he, after finishing his basic education, studied at three different upper-secondary schools before deciding on finishing his secondary education at an American private secondary school.

```
   4      (.) od (0.3) nepříliš dobré didaktiky?
               to      not very good pedagogy
   5      .h kterou tam ti učitelé realizují,
             that the teachers realize there
   6      .h řekl bych že (0.4) například nepoužívají (.) ty správné
             I'd say that they  for example don't use    the correct
   7      a pestré metody,
          and varied methods
   8      .h eh nesprávně hodnotí,
               assess incorrectly
   9      .h eh snaží se o výkony
               they strive for performance
  10      (0.2)
  11      a ne o  (0.3) jiné věci který- které jsou důležitější
          and not for other things which are more important
```

In Extract 5 RC speaks of Czech teachers and mentions the following category-bound activities: Czech teachers do not "realize very good pedagogy" (lines 4–5), which means that they "don't use the correct and varied methods" (lines 6–7), "assess incorrectly" (line 8) and that they "strive for performance" (line 9). RC adds that there are other things which are more important. Several lines later on he specifies this further, as shown in Extract 6.

Extract 6 (RC=Robert Čapek, Mo=the moderator)

```
   1 RC: může nám být jedno že v pisa (.) výzkumu jsme třeba $třináctý h$
          we shouldn't care that we came like $thirteenth$ in pisa
   2     ve všeobecným přehledu nebo v příro- přírodních vědách
          in general knowlege    or    in science
   3     .h mě nejvíc trápí že (.) český žák chodí do školy (.) s
             it bothers me most that Czech pupils go to school with
   4     nejmenší chutí (.) ze zkoumanejch zemí no a učitel taky=
          the least enthusiasm from the countries surveyed and teachers too
   5 Mo: =mm=
   6 RC: =to znamená to jsou výzkumy který ukazujou .hh na špatné klima
          that means that there are studies that show the bad climate
   7     ve školách a když si děti do školy netěší, tak ten důvod je
          at schools and when children don't look forward to school then
   8     hlavní protože je to tam nebaví
          the main reason is that they don't enjoy it there
   9 Mo: mhm=
  10 RC: =a to je práce učitele aby jim ze vzdělání udělal (.) zábavnou věc.
           and that's the teachers' job to make education a fun thing for them.
```

In Extract 6 RC adds the following activities bound to the category of "teachers": "make education a fun thing for the learners" (line 10), which also implies that going-to-school should be a fun thing for those who go

there, i.e., a learning-bound activity. This normative statement can be related to the use of "not very good pedagogy" and the lack of use of "correct and varied methods" (Extract 5, lines 4–7). It follows that correct methods are those which are entertaining and by the use of which the "teachers can make education a fun thing for the learners" (Extract 6, line 10), which evokes the category of an "entertainer" rather than of a "teacher."

In relation to teachers who "strive for performance" (Extract 5, line 9), which RC mentions as one of the worst things that is happening in Czech schools, it can be observed that RC uses one specific practice. Although in Extract 6 RC refers to the relatively good performance of Czech learners in an international comparative study (probably PISA 2015), he does not bring this aspect to the fore. Instead, RC says that "we shouldn't care that we came like $thirteenth$ in pisa in general knowledge or in science" and adds that what "bothers" him most is that "Czech pupils go to school with the least enthusiasm" (Extract 6, lines 1–5). This deliberate downgrading of the positive aspect of Czech schooling is evident from the way RC phrases the turn to highlight the negative aspect ("we shouldn't care that … what bothers me most is that…") as well as from the amused tone of voice used for the relatively good position in international comparison. We have observed the same practice of downgrading performance results as measured by international comparative studies in the interview with OK.

How the experts relate to teacher professionalism

Having dealt with some of the practices and MCDs that the experts deployed when speaking of Czech education and teachers in the three sections above, we now concentrate on the second research question, i.e., how the three experts on education related to teacher professionalism when characterising Czech education. We refer here to the basic characteristics of professionals common to various contemporary sociological perspectives formulated in Malin's analysis (2017). It should be noted that the analysed interviews did not manifestly focus on teachers' professionalism, but mostly dealt with schools and teaching. Yet, as we show below, the interviews as exemplified in Extracts 1–5 include both the direct and indirect judgements about the presence or absence of specific characteristics of teacher professionalism in Czech schools.

As regards teachers' deep specialist knowledge about/for teaching and related processes and outcomes of schooling, the experts' opinions were expressed directly (RC: "not very good pedagogy", absence of "correct and varied methods", see Extract 5), indirectly (BK: absence of greater experiences, absence of fundamental knowledge, see Extracts 1 and 2), or they were implicit in the expert's claims (OK: highlighting his American experience, Extract 4). The experts not only make negative judgements about

teachers and their professional competence, but even question school's functions (BK and OK: see Extracts 3 and 4). If the outcomes of pupils' learning (as measured, for example, in international comparative studies) are mentioned at all (Extract 6), the experts downplay these, which can be interpreted as an apparent effort to avoid any positive assessment of teachers' work. The last characteristic of professionals—commitment and teachers' investment of effort and enthusiasm—is also questioned (RC: neither pupils nor teachers like to go to school, Extract 6). Not only are the ethos of public service and the dedication to social good completely missing in the interviews, but an attentive listener may also be worried about the zero impact or even harmful effects of school education on pupils and also on society at large. It is interesting, though, that all the three interviewees direct their negative statements explicitly to Czech teachers and Czech schools while education abroad is idealised (Extract 4). These findings seem to be revealing in the light of the sociological view of professions as "interest groups … engaged in competition with each other and other groups in the society, up to and including the state" (Malin, 2017, p. 8), especially as the interviewed persons were people outside the system of education or engaged in an education--related business.

Discussion

The assumption of the public is that experts on education are—or should be—leading professionals whose aim is to promote and strive for the improvement of quality in education and, therefore, enhance the professional project in teaching. The analysis of the three interviews has revealed that this assumption seems to be incorrect: the three speakers in our data tended to offer generalised judgments downsizing the content of formal education and its results in the form of pupil knowledge and skills, questioning teacher professional competence, and adoring the instrumental conception of school (education for practical life, cf. Štech, 2016). The enacted discourse (Hilferty, 2008) is thus in stark contrast with the pursuit of teacher professionalism and mitigates the agency of this occupational group. To be more specific, the discourse in the interviews appears to work against the success of the professional project (Macdonald, 1995) in teaching because it leads to the erosion of its core, that is, the trust in teachers.

In line with neoliberalism, both BK and OK in the interviews take on the role of a dissatisfied customer by presenting their (negative) personal experience with education at Czech schools (see Extracts 1–4). In the eyes of Evetts (2009) the focus on customer satisfaction is typical of the so-called organisational professionalism, which is linked to managerial systems of accountability and audits endangering public trust in the occupational group.

Evetts puts it in contrast with occupational professionalism, which is characterised by "practitioner trust by both clients and employers, controls operationalized by practitioners and professional ethics monitored by institutions and associations." (Evetts, 2009, p. 23). In addition, OK voices the perception of education as a commodity, which students (and parents) can freely choose and base their choices on their preferences (Snoek, n.d.).[12] Štech (2016, pp. 188–189) notes that such conception stems from a complete lack of understanding that school is a cultural institution. He also adds that this conception may strengthen the conflict between individual interest and collective values. RC, who addresses teacher professional skills directly, offers devastating criticism which is not, however, supported by any evidence or research, only by calls for methods displaying features of edutainment (Extracts 5 and 6). In this interview he enacts a representative of neoliberal experts on education as depicted by Liessmann (2015, pp. 26–37).

Our analysis revealed that, perhaps with the exception of BK's nego-tiation of being characterised as an (un)educated person (Extracts 1 and 2), the interviews were not very dialogic in the sense that the moderator would problematise what the expert says or present contrasting viewpoints. On the contrary, some moderators even displayed familiarity and agreement with the opinions of the interviewees (Extract 5) and elicited such opinions uncritically. This, to a large extent, corresponds with the assertion that the media depict a picture of the world which is superficial, flat, and based on simplified schemata (Valenta, 2010, p. 166). Furthermore, the promotion of neoliberal ideology is evident not only in the choice of respondents, experts on education, but also in the demonstrated approach to conducting the interviews. The correspondence with the role of media identified by Goldstein et al. (2011) and Wubbena et al. (2016) in North America, and with media narratives supporting the New Public Management in Britain, is obvious.

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[12] This is also evident from other parts of the interview. For example, OK at the beginning of the interview says in relation to education: "jsme defakto vzdělávací skupina která .h to skutečně jako byznys bere" ("we're de facto an educational group which .h indeed sees as a business"). Later on, OK speaks of the choice of subjects at the school that he runs: "já dycky dávám analogii k restauraci, .h prostě student přijde k nám (.) dostane menu .h a jak máte polívku, hlavní jídlo (.) tak my máme (.) matematika, (.) sociální věda, (.) cizí jazyky, angličtina, (.) sport, umění .h a vlastně tady z těhle kategorií voni si můžou vybrat velký množství předmětů" ("I always draw an analogy to restaurants, .h put simply a student comes to us (.) gets a menu .h and while you have soup, main course (.) so we have (.) Maths, (.) Social Sciences, (.) Foreign Languages, English (.) Sports, Fine Arts .h and in fact it is from these categories that they can choose a large number of subjects"). It follows that education is perceived as any other goods: one can make profit from selling them ("business") and one can choose from a variety as customers do in restaurants.

Conclusions

The experts' claims about teachers and teaching presented in this study are likely to contribute to the formation of judgements about teacher professionalism on the part of the general public, policymakers, etc. The MCDs and practices used by the speakers reflect some of the neoliberal views held in the society, which may have implications namely when it comes to the (dis)trust in teachers.

Teaching is a profession whose primary attribute is its moral and ethical mission (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Day & Gu, 2010): when referring to teachers, the term "moral professionalism" is sometimes deployed (Sockett, 1993). It is the altruistic character of the work of teachers within which trust is grounded. As according to Freidson (2001, p. 17) the work of professionals can hardly be standardised, rationalised, and commodified, a professional mandate by the public and state is created through a social contract (Lunt, 2008). This makes teachers highly vulnerable, as professional status can only be attained and maintained if the trustworthiness of the members of the profession is considered credible.

Lessons concerning the professional project (Macdonald, 1995) in teaching and its processes related to the growth or erosion of trust in teacher professionalism can be learnt from a number of foreign countries. We shall only briefly mention two contrasting cases here in order to illustrate the possible impact of trust in teachers.

The media discourse analysed in this study is in many ways reminiscent of discourse adopted by the New Public Management (NPM) and its criticism of teachers and teacher education in Great Britain (and elsewhere) in the 1980s and 1990s. Furlong et al. (2000, p. 10) describe the arguments of neoliberals, who claimed that market reality is the best educator, and that, ideally, a free market should be created where schools will be free to choose whoever they want to work as a teacher—with or without having done teacher education. Derogatory words about the educational establishment and its harmful impact helped erode trust in public education, its organisations and teachers, which resulted in the chronically unhealthy teacher work conditions and dissatisfaction with the quality of public education. Eventually, the NPM undermined even the requirement of in-depth and extensive teacher education as well as teacher autonomy, i.e., two of Malin's (2017) core characteristics of professionals.

On the other hand, an example of a successful educational reform comes from Ontario, Canada, where education went through a fundamental change after the elections in 2003 (for an overview see Levin, Glaze & Fullan, 2008; some implications for Czech education are discussed by Veselý, 2013). Its key concept was "capacity building" and the three main objectives included (1) improving overall pupil performance, (2) reducing inequalities in pupil

achievement, and (3) increasing trust in public schools. "Capacity building" does not mean introducing brand new teaching methods and abolishing old methods, but trust in teachers and building on what they, their headmasters and pupils already know. It can be observed that the strategy of change in Ontario differed from others in that it lacked the elements of rigorous accountability (school ranking, pupil testing, assessment of teachers based on their expected performance, etc.), but provided conditions and took measures that promoted gradual change (Levin et al., 2008; Veselý, 2013). The refusal of NPM and adoption of a reform strategy emphasising a trust-based culture led to demonstrably positive effects (OECD, 2010, 2012). The culture of trust means that education authorities, politicians and the general public "believe that teachers, together with principals, parents and their communities, know how to provide the best possible education for their children and youth" (OECD, 2012, p. 100). As could be observed in the extracts and analyses presented in this study, the Czech experts seem to be setting a different agenda.

When working on this study we faced several methodological challenges. Researchers building on ethnomethodology aim at unpacking the tools as used by the speakers in the data. Although our analysis has shown that some of the practices and MCDs were shared among the three experts, we recommend that more examples of media talk should be analysed to further explore the categories and practices used both by the representatives of different interest groups and by the general public. Relatedly, our analysis has revealed that there was an observable lack of perspectives in our data, as mentioned above. In this respect we assume that events and media programmes such as debates, call-ins, and more critical interviews would be especially revealing. Furthermore, as social media and the Internet seem to play an important role in the exchanges of ideas and streaming of various types of recordings, we find the concept of dialogic media networks (e.g., Kaderka et al., 2018; Leudar & Nekvapil, 2004) promising when analysing some of the MCDs, as shown in the analysis of Extracts 1 and 2 (see footnote 10). This line of research suggests that an analysis of data from discussion platforms and social media may shed more light on the phenomena that were mostly presented unilaterally by the interviewers and their guests.

We conclude that the systematic criticism, which often tends to slip into downgrading the educational system, its members, and their professionalism, as identified in our analysis, undermines the professional project in teaching and may lead to the disintegration of the educational system. By unpacking some of the practices and MCDs used by the speakers in the interviews, we offer some areas which other experts on education, such as researchers and teacher educators, can address.

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Appendix: List of transcription conventions

(2.1)	length of silence in tenths of a second
(.)	micro-pause
=	latched utterances
<u>underlining</u>	relatively high pitch or volume
°word°	quiet or soft talk
$word$	smiley voice or surpressed laughter
?/./,	rising/falling/slightly rising intonation respectively
:	stretched sound
-	cut-off or self-interruption
h	audible aspiration
.h	audible inhalation
><	increase in tempo
<>	decrease in tempo
( )	uncertainty on the transcriber's part
(( ))	transcriber's description of events
[ ]	overlapped speech

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