

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES AND EMOTION MANAGEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS AT COLLEGE LEVEL

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Abstract

This study investigates the emotional experiences and emotion management strategies of English language teachers working at the college level. This mixed-method study involved English language teachers from District Bhakkar, Punjab, Pakistan. A sample of 20 teachers from both government and private colleges of District Bhakar was selected by using the technique of convenient sampling. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The collected data was analyzed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers felt emotionally challenged in certain situations regardless of their teaching experience. The results of the study also suggested that reflection, reviewing and thinking about their experiences of emotionally challenged situations, and discussing challenging situations with teachers were the effective strategies used by the teachers in handling the emotionally challenged situations. This study is significant as it provides insights into how teachers handle stress and maintain control of the classroom environment. The study offers valuable information for researchers interested in studying emotion management by language teachers.

Keywords: *Emotional Experiences, Emotion Management, Semi-Structured Interviews, Thematically, Reflection, Emotionally Challenged Situations, Reviewing and Thinking*

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1. Introduction

Emotions have long been a topic of study in a variety of fields, and scientists have focused on their central significance in the human experience (Plutchik, 1962). Scholarly interest in the role and function of human emotions in applied linguistics and second language education is relatively recent, and it is part of a shift toward addressing the influence of a variety of socio-cognitive variables and antecedents in the development of target language competency. However, emotions have received little attention in comparison to numerous socio-cognitive concerns in second language instruction, such as the various antecedents of motivated behavior, which have dominated the study agenda over the last decade as stated by Dewaele (2015). Swain (2013) stated that emotions are the elephants in the room - little studied, poorly understood, and considered inferior to rational cognition while discussing the state of affairs in second language instruction.

A good definition of emotions is offered by John Marshall Reeve (as quoted in MacIntyre & Gregerson, 2012): “Emotions are fleeting, feeling-arousal-purposeful-expressive phenomena that assist us in adapting to the opportunities and challenges we confront throughout significant life events” (p. 194).

The experience of teaching can elicit both pleasant and negative feelings in teachers. Feelings like confidence, curiosity, engagement, enjoyment, eager interest, amusement, gladness, gratitude, cheerfulness, joyfulness, passion, pleasure, pride, and satisfaction are examples of positive emotions.

Angry, annoyed, apprehensive, bored, concerned, depressed, disgusted, dissatisfied, weary, frustrated, jealous, mad, nervous, sad, stressed, tense, uneasy, worried are examples of negative emotions. Instructors' feelings about themselves, their colleagues, their learners, classroom activities, their teaching context, and teaching materials, as well as their views about the advantages and pleasures of teaching, are the result of interactions between teachers and their teaching surroundings. Emotions can have an impact on a teacher's decision-making process as well as future decisions and behaviors. They can, for example, influence on:

- a.** When teaching English, the teacher's usage of English.
- b.** Her or his reaction to unplanned classroom occurrences.
- c.** The teacher's policies and procedures for dealing with classroom management difficulties.
- d.** The level to which she or he uses activities like games, songs, personal tales, and humor to address the classroom environment.

- e. Collaborating with the people you want in activities like team teaching and peerobservation.
- f. A preference for teacher development activities such as lesson preparation and curriculum development that are done in groups or individually.
- g. The extent to which the instructor uses collaborative rather than competitive learningactivities
- h. The extent to which the teacher takes emotional variables into account while teachingcommercial materials and resources.
- i. The amount of pleasure a teacher gets from instructing.

What is known as 'emotional competence,' refers to a teacher's capacity to create and maintain an emotionally-managed classroom, one in which neither the teacher nor the students exhibit excessive or insufficient emotion (Benesch, 2012; Madalinska, 2015). Negative emotions such as wrath, boredom, or anxiety are not encouraged by either teachers or students. Different teaching environments, on the other hand, can produce 'favorable' or 'disfavorable' potentials for teaching, influencing the teacher's emotional experience of teaching (Tsang & Jiang, 2018). According to Nguyuen (2019), ESL teachers' relationships with the school community, including students, colleagues, and administrators, play a crucial role in their emotional experiences and in influencing the way ESL instructors execute their work.

Motivated students, small class sizes, good facilities, resources, and equipment, skilled and supportive administrators who are open to new ideas, innovation, and inquiry, a collaborative school culture, and a good compensation, benefits, and reward system for teachers are allexamples of favorable contexts. Large class sizes, poorly motivated students, an emphasis on book learning, rote learning, and test scores, a lack of encouragement for innovation or creativity, limited teacher agency and autonomy as stated by de Costa et al. (2018), substandard and/or limited facilities, resources, and equipment, unskilled and unsupportive administrators, little collaboration among teachers, poor compensation, benefits, and rewards are all factors that can contribute to teacher stress and anxiety as according to Pennington and Richards (2016).

In many cases, such characteristics contribute to a bad emotional experience of teaching, preventing instructors from fulfilling their ideal or aspirational

teacher identities and leading to feelings of frustration, disappointment, and even wrath. Dewaele suggests that 'Teachers need an emotional thermometer to reduce foreign language classroom anxiety,' (as cited in Martinez, 2018, p. 13).

In addition to the aforementioned, a lack of confidence in one's subject can lead to emotions of dissatisfaction and insecurity, leading a teacher to doubt her or his identity and question who she or he is, as shown in this example of a teacher's trouble in teaching the passive. Helen, a Hong Kong Chinese English teacher, explains:

If you ask them to rewrite the sentences, it's straightforward because they find it easy to follow." They just don't understand when to use the passive voice and when to use the active voice. "Miss Wong, who do we have to utilize passive voice in our daily lives?" one of the pupils inquired. And I'm having trouble answering this question, ha, so I say, "Oh, I'll tell you next time..." "Why do we teach and use passive voice?" I asked my colleagues. And no one seems to be able to provide me with the correct answer. Then I go home and reflect on it. But even now, I'm not sure how to respond to the student's queries. I work with them to complete the worksheets, and they understand how to rewrite the sentences. But I'm at a loss as to how to explain them. It's quite stressful (as cited in Andrews, 2001).

Using English to teach English might lead to an emotional battle for the teacher: I'm not sure my English is up to par. Every lesson, I truly want to give it my all. However, I was frequently annoyed because I was unable to accomplish my objectives or the standard that I had established before class. Because I didn't want to lose face in front of my students, I constantly practiced my English lessons before class started (as cited in Teng, 2017). Limitations in a teacher's English or professional expertise, like in the instances above, can cause anxiety, frustration, and guilt since they may not be able to answer students' questions and may be fearful of making mistakes in their English if they use English during a session. Negative experiences like these may lead to attempts to repress or hide negative feelings in certain teachers. Others may be motivated to seek out possibilities for further professional growth, such as academic courses, language training, or various types of teaching experiences. Collaboration with peers through peer observation, discussion groups, or online support groups can also help teachers share and overcome the emotional challenges they face in the classroom.

While it's vital to realize that emotions haven't gotten enough attention, they

haven't been completely overlooked. Emotions have traditionally been studied as part of other processes such as motivation or individual differences under the heading of "affective variables." Pavlenko (2013) points out that when it comes to discussing emotions in terms of language learning, the sole feeling of anxiety has been the dominant emphasis, ignoring many others. Indeed, many recent studies have focused on the function of anxiety in language learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Gregersen, MacIntyre & Meza, 2014; Mercer, 2006).

It is vital to interact more thoroughly with language learners' living experiences outside of the classroom to better grasp the nuances of their emotional experiences. Shifting the context focus away from the formal classroom environment and toward the dynamic complexity of life outside the classroom necessitates researchers engaging with a broader spectrum of emotions in situations that are meaningful to individual language learners. Exploring emotions in this way allows us to see beyond the narrow implications provided for the development of second language proficiency and instead to enjoy the human experience as a whole, which includes but is not limited to second language learning.

Both teaching and learning a second language are emotionally draining endeavors. Learning to become a second language teacher is a similar process. Emotions play a significant role in language education because it is a social as well as a rational activity. It entails people congregating in a social environment in which emotions impact both teachers' instructional practices and learners' responses to the teaching and learning experience (Dornyei, 2005). Emotions can influence the way teachers teach and the desire of students to apply what they've learned. As a result, learning to teach entails knowing not only how to transmit subject matter to students, but also how to handle the emotional aspects of teaching and learning.

Teng (2017) adds his comment: Teachers – particularly pre-service teachers – experience a range of emotions, including anger, love, fear, worry, enthuse, grow impatient, doubt, brood, feel proud, joyous, apprehensive, and sad. Teachers can choose whether to make their classroom lively or dull by demonstrating proper behaviors as emotional practitioners. A teacher's strong emotions may lead him or her to do acts that he or she would not normally do.

The revived attention on the importance of emotions in language education aims to better comprehend teaching and learning from the perspective of the participants in the classroom's social space, as well as to capture how teachers

and students feel and deal with its subjective reality (Anttila et al., 2016; Benesch, 2012; Dewaele, 2005; Garret & Young, 2009; Martinez, 2018). The introduction of positive psychology into applied linguistics has increased awareness of the breadth of emotions experienced by language teachers and learners, as well as the role those happy emotions can play in improving teaching and learning (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). Emotions have long been seen as instances of 'affective elements' in language education literature. Due to the prominence of paradigms that highlighted the importance of cognition in learning, such traits have received little attention in mainstream applied linguistics (White, 2018). Emotions have long been seen as a hazy concept that is difficult to dissect into its various components and study. In comparison to the 'hard', quantitative, and rational facts regarding second language learning and instruction that was the focus of much academic attention beginning in the 1970s, they were frequently seen as soft and irrational.

However, the so-called 'affective turn' in applied linguistics has encouraged a re-examination of the role affective elements, particularly emotions, play in language acquisition and teaching said Benesch (2012). This shift has resulted in an emphasis on the social functions of emotions and their impact on second language (L2) education through everyday classroom interactions and exchanges, rather than on defining the nature of emotions. Emotions are viewed as a sociocultural experience that is primarily influenced by relationships and social situations, as well as by individual qualities.

1.1. Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the emotional experiences of English language teachers working at the college level
2. To find out the strategies that they use in emotion management

1.2. Research Questions

The study answers the following questions:

1. What are the emotional experiences of English language teachers working at the college level?
2. What strategies do the English language teachers at the college level use in managing emotions?

1.3. Significance of the study

The study is significant as it can help teachers handle stress and control the classroom environment. The study is also helpful for researchers who are interested in studying emotion management by language teachers.

2. Literature Review

English Language Teachers' Emotions Teachers' emotions are social constructions that are influenced by their relationships with educational policies, authorities, colleagues, parents, and students (Hargreaves, 2001; Zembylas, 2005; Nguyen, 2018). Although each teacher's experience of an emotion is unique, the context in which it occurs shapes that experience. As a result, understanding the situations in which emotions are experienced is critical to comprehending not only the feeling itself but also the reaction and behavior that follows.

Several studies have looked into the wide spectrum of emotions that instructors experience (Golombek & Doran, 2014), with some concluding that the three most common emotions described by teachers are enjoyment, worry, and anger (Chang, 2013; Frenzel et al., 2015). Students and teachers are affected by emotions in both positive and negative ways (Méndez, 2017). Preservice instructors, whose lack of experience may be viewed as a source of additional emotions, have been willing to enhance their teaching practice as a result of emotions derived from contacts with students, colleagues, or institutional authorities. Other pre-service teachers, on the other hand, have been enraged and disappointed by similar circumstances. Pre-service teachers who do not manage their negative emotions create stress, which is detrimental to their teaching.

Due to the new experiences with which they are confronted, pre-service teachers are prone to experiencing both positive (enthusiasm, contentment, enjoyment, etc.) and negative (anxiety, anger, irritation, etc.) emotions during their teaching practicum (Martinez & Azzaro, 2018). Beliefs influence teaching, hence they play a significant part in pre-service teachers' emotional experiences (Borko et al., 2000). According to Nguyen's (2018) study, pre-service teachers may have opposing ideas regarding various teaching methods they are expected to do by their supervisors during practicum, and this belief mismatch can lead to worry and tension. Positive feelings have been found in contact with students in many studies (Gkonou & Miller, 2017; Méndez, 2017; Nguyen, 2018). The development of positive interpersonal ties with students is seen as crucial not just for students' learning but also for teachers' emotional well-being as said by Mercer et al., (2016).

Preservice instructors frequently experience negative emotions as a result of their pupils' low involvement, passivity, noisiness, lack of desire, and exhaustion,

among other factors (Nguyen, 2018). Although Gu and Day (2007) discovered that pre-service teachers with a teaching vocation are more robust to negative experiences, pre-service teachers with a passion for teaching also experience unpleasant feelings (Arizmendi Tejada et al., 2016). However, pre-service teachers who have a passion tend to see negative emotions in a positive light, which helps them maintain their energy and enthusiasm (Cross & Hong, 2012). This is a significant discovery for nations like Mexico, where university entrance is restricted (Méndez et al., 2014). Some students who do not have a passion for teaching choose to enroll in ELT programs because access is easier or because their families cannot afford to send them to another location to pursue their dream vocation. As a result, pre-service teachers' emotional experiences, as well as their motivation, responsibility, and dedication, may be influenced by their lack of vocation.

Novice instructors go through five stages, according to Furlong and Maynard (1995): (1) early idealism, (2) survival, (3) recognizing problems, (4) achieving a plateau, and (5) moving on (pp. 73- 98). Novice instructors may have idealistic feelings and pictures of themselves at the start of their careers. While they are primarily concerned with putting what they have learned in earlier years into practice, the demands of their new employment may come as a surprise, as teaching requires more than just producing materials or using a strategy or approach. Pre-service teachers may experience the same thing during practicum since they may encounter unpleasant situations for which they are unprepared. It is therefore critical to offer them the necessary assistance so that they can build confidence in not just their teaching abilities but also in other areas. As a result, it is critical to provide sufficient support to pre-service teachers to minimize the negative effects of negative experiences (Mercer et al., 2016).

Teachers who experience positive emotions in the classroom, according to Sutton (2005), are more likely to produce new ideas and solutions to help them better solve or manage difficulties. However, it appears that the variety of events that beginner teachers encounter is more likely to elicit negative rather than good feelings. According to Britzman (2007), novice teachers' negative emotions are a result of their lack of confidence, which means that pre-service teachers may be more prone to negative emotions that negatively impact their teaching practice. In some situations, the frequent occurrence of unpleasant emotions can lead pre-service teachers to abandon the profession, according to research from around the world (Hong, 2010).

Mercer et al. (2016) found that designing teacher education programs based on a knowledge of the spectrum of emotions experienced by pre-service teachers and an awareness of the meaning they assign to those emotions can help to mitigate their harmful consequences on future teaching practice. Pre-service teachers require a venue where they can engage in teaching experiences that are representative of the difficulties they may face later in their careers. They must also be provided with the tools and resources necessary to overcome their difficulties (Nguyen, 2018). Pre-service teachers can, according to Furlong and Maynard (1995) "gain authority over their teaching" through developing notions like identity (p. 73). It is critical, then, that they be allowed to reflect on their views and emotions to better understand themselves as future professionals.

Two studies on pre-service teachers in Mexico were examined. Arizmendi (2016) and Mendez (2017) looked into whether novice teachers employed ways to manage negative emotions during practicum. They gathered information through observation and semi-structured interviews. Participants utilized preventative and responsive emotional management tactics like selecting situations and altering their emotional expression, according to the findings.

These researchers discovered that pre-service instructors choose a teaching level based on their image and self-confidence to avoid feeling challenged or threatened. They also determined that other regulating tactics, such as emotional understanding or hiding emotions, were not used by pre-service teachers because they needed to be instructed on how to utilize them. Finally, they emphasized that ELT programs should contain a component concerning the emotions involved in teaching a foreign language so that pre-service teachers are more prepared for teaching.

Martinez (2018) performed research to find out what emotions first-year English teachers felt during their first year of teaching and what produced those feelings. The researcher discovered that first-year English teachers' positive and negative emotions stemmed from their interactions with students, administrative duties, and a lack of classroom management skills using semi-structured interviews conducted at three different points in their teaching practice over six months. They felt anger, annoyance, and nervousness while interacting with students and performing administrative chores, but also delight, confidence, and motivation. Although the emotions experienced as a result of a lack of classroom skills were negative, participants expressed optimism at the end of the school year because these emotions enabled them to

look for strategies to reverse difficult situations, such as talking to colleagues and previous teachers about ways to control children. These studies illustrate that there is a modest but growing corpus of research on how Mexican English teachers view their profession emotionally.

According to Weiner's (1980) attribution theory "Humans are motivated to discover why an event has occurred," (p. 276). As a result, people frequently attribute the reason for a certain occurrence or situation to someone or something.

The current research focuses on the attribution awareness process that pre-service teachers go through when reflecting on their practicum teaching performance.

Weiner (1980) writes that "The most prominent causal inferences are ability and effort but many other elements are also relevant." (p. 393). Stability, locality, and controllability were highlighted by Weiner (1980) as characteristics for causal conclusions.

Pre-service teachers, for example, can blame their lack of teaching skills on a lack of vocation (a stable cause) or insufficient education in an ELT program (an unstable cause). Finally, causes might be controllable or uncontrolled, referring to our ability to influence or not influence specific circumstances to make them work in our favor. If pre-service teachers blame their lack of teaching abilities on a lack of vocation, they will assume that no matter how many courses or training they receive, they will not improve. If they blame their lack of teaching skills on insufficient training, they will be able to enroll in training classes to improve.

According to Weiner (1980), reaching causal inferences, or determining why one succeeds or fails, necessitates the use and combination of many kinds of information. Some of the proof will come from the current circumstance, while others will come from memories of earlier incidents.

Although attribution theory was created to understand human behavior (Weiner, 1992), its broad analytical lens has been applied to the investigation of student performance in other topics, including mathematics (Baştürk & Yavuz, 2010) and technology (Maymon et al., 2018). The current study used attribution theory to better understand pre-service teachers' causal inferences regarding their teaching performances during practicum in their final year of an ELT degree program.

The current study is based on pre-service teachers' attributions of emotions that arise during their teaching practice, as well as the actions they do after

reflecting on those emotions and their causal inferences. Attributions of pre-service teachers can influence not only their future teaching abilities but also their professional development. For example, if pre-service teachers believe that their underdeveloped teaching skills contributed to the emergence of unpleasant emotions during teaching practice, they will enroll in training courses to learn or strengthen those skills. However, if pre-service teachers believe that the sources of negative emotions are stable (national educational policies, institutional restrictions on the implementation of new ideas, parental demands, etc.) and that there is nothing they can do about it, they may leave the teaching profession, feel less motivated to try new techniques or develop resilience to deal with these negative situations. Thus, pre-service teachers' professional development is impacted by the outcomes of previous events, as well as their understanding of the factors that influence the success or failure of current teaching practices.

Méndez (2011) says "What motivates us to pursue a specific course of action for new or future activities, or to stop doing things because we believe we lack the capacity to achieve them," (p. 90). These attributions are subjective, as they are generated based on our experiences with and reflections on past and current events.

The current research establishes a link between attribution awareness and our beliefs. If we believe that someone or some external factor (e.g., the students, the materials we are working with, classroom activities, the focus of the syllabus) is the cause of our failure or success in language teaching, our motivational intelligence will provide us with strategies to overcome such barriers in the event of failure. As a result, pre-service teachers' assumptions drive their actions or inaction, with any actions done based on their interpretations of specific teaching scenarios. Understanding what pre-service teachers do after they've figured out what's causing a problem might help teacher trainers come up with activities that will improve the former's teaching practice.

3. Methodology

3.1. Methodological approach

The study is a mixed method in nature. The data was collected after the selection of a sample from the population that comprised teachers of English at the college level. The responses of the teachers provided during semi-structured interviews were analyzed qualitatively.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The population of the study consisted of the teachers of English at the college level from the District Bhakar, Punjab, Pakistan. The sample of 20 English language teachers working in both government and private colleges was selected for the data collection. The sample participants were selected by using convenient sampling, a technique of non-random sampling. The sample participants responded to semi-structured interviews which were conducted by the researcher who also belongs to the same district. The study is based on the responses of the participants provided in response to the interviews. The technique of the sampling and the patterns of the study were adopted from Gkonou and Miller (2021). The demographic details of the participants have been provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic details of the participants of the study

Location	District Bhakar
Gender	Male: 10, Female:10
Government	10
Private	10
Highest Qualification	M.Phil
Teaching Experience	Ranged from 2 to 10 years

3.3. Process of Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data for analysis from the participating teachers during the working premises of the colleges. In the case of two teachers, there had been some timing issues. Therefore, the responses of those two teachers were collected online via the Zoom meeting app. The strategy behind choosing interviews as the method for data collection lies in the fact that researching emotions through some way that is socially constructed can be useful, and the interviews are the encounters in which understanding is construed socially.

The interviews contained questions that were directly associated with the nature of the research topic. It was kept in mind that the questions could reflect the background of the teacher and their emotional experience during the

practice of the teaching. Resultantly, the interview included 11 questions that focused on the current responsibilities of the teachers, their aspects of interest in teaching, the strategies used by them in managing emotions, their views on teacher autonomy, work stress, and their suggestions for the newly recruited teachers about the management of emotions. The interview questions did not intend to merely attain the history of emotional experiences, rather the interview allowed the participants of the study to deliberately share the experience with the one who was interested in knowing (researcher). The reflection can encompass the cognitive as well as affective domain. In the case of the present study, the affective domain of the reflection was focused as the interview questions helped in assessing the affective aspect of the emotional experiences of the teacher rather than the history of their experiences.

The average time length of the interviews was 27 minutes with some of the interviews having taken more than 45 minutes. It was asked by the teachers how they dealt with their emotions while teaching. The responses of the teachers were transcribed and were read numerous times. After reading the transcripts of the responses provided by the participants again and again, some recurrent references of the teachers about the way they felt and managed their emotions throughout their teaching were noted down. Then, it was examined what kind of role their emotion management, or may call it emotion labor played in the emotive aspect of their teaching.

To develop familiarity with the interviews, the transcripts were read numerously. This helped us gain a deep understanding of the themes which is a significant aspect of the qualitative thematic study (Terry et al., 2017). It was intended to understand the personalemotional experiences of teachers and the emotional labor. The interview questions were asked by keeping in view the interview guide, but some extra questions were also asked depending on the direction the interviews took. Therefore, each of the interviews was approached as a case study. Both the researchers understood and analyzed the data separately at first. Then, we consulted each other to outline the themes that were associated with our interest in theemotional experiences of the teachers and their emotional labor. The responses of teachers helpedus learn the self-awareness of teachers about their emotions which they had achieved throughout their teaching experience. It was also assessed what their perception of a good language teacher was. The analysis of the emotional experiences of the language teachers and their emotional labor has been illustrated in detail manner in the next section.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1. Their notion of Being a Professional

All of the teachers who participated in the study exhibited an understanding of the norms of emotions in the classes and the institution in general and to create distance from physical and emotionally challenging situations. To describe this advertent distancing from challenging situations, 14 teachers used the term “professional”. It was found that the teachers used this term as a term that was of common-sense knowledge, and the interviews followed that up too. This meant that everyone understood what being professional meant in class. The transcripts of the interviews reflect that teachers stated that being professional means ‘not telling things to students which were appropriate’, ‘not being overexcited’, ‘behaving seriously’, ‘managing emotions’, and ‘should not get personal’.

The responses being provided here were in answer to the question asked about what advice they would give to the newly recruited teachers.

“ They shouldn’t be going and telling the students things which were inappropriate. They should be honest and professional” (T: 12).

“A good teacher is not a person who gets overexcited at any point in the classroom. He should maintain a balanced attitude and should behave professionally” (T: 3).

The analysis of the responses of teachers about this question revealed that the teachers were not against showing any emotion at all in the context of the classroom. Rather, the teachers were of the view that teachers display moderated kind of emotions. It means that they should behave in a balanced way. The use of words like ‘should be honest’ in the first excerpt and words like ‘not a person who gets overexcited’ and ‘should maintain a balanced attitude’ depicts that they were in favor of the display of moderated emotions.

4.2. Emotions and Reflective Practice

The analysis of the responses provided by the participating English language teachers revealed that 18 of the 20 teachers considered reflection as a significant way to control and manage their emotions. They also highlighted the significance of reflection in making their emotions self-aware, and therefore, increasing their teaching abilities. Their reflection activity emerging in the situations of emotional labor was constructed by them as emotional

distress. Such as when they needed to associate themselves with emotional norms of the context, but the situation also demanded them to respond to the students as well. This was told by a teacher that when she had to inform the students about their results or their performances, she faced difficult times. This was because of the reason that students who failed to meet the performance standards or the students who achieved lower grades or marks on their tests heard the results with ‘sad faces’ or with ‘tears in their eyes’. This kind of news is consequential for the students as the reports are delivered to their parents or sometimes, they get hurt as they have developed some kind of competition with their fellow students. This kind of situation brings the interviewee to tears sometimes and she wonders what she could do for them. The excerpt from her response has been provided here below:

“ In my career, many times I had to tell the students that you are fail. You have performed below the level. I see sad faces. I see teary eyes. I’ve had tears. What could I do for them? Once you realize that what is best for the learning of the students, you get less stressed” (T: 7).

The excerpt shows that the teacher is highly experienced as she uses the words ‘ In my career, many times’, but she still cannot avoid the emotions and gets affected by the behavior of the students. She further states that engagement with such situations again and again, and reflecting on what is best for the learning of students helps her in not getting emotional and in getting less stressed in such emotionally challenging situations.

In response to the question asked about the strategies they use to manage their emotions, the other teachers frequently said that they refer back and reflect on the emotionally challenging situations they had in the past. It helps them gain confidence as well as provides them with a road map to handle the situation. T: 15 responded that once she had to handle a very hostile kind of a student. She was of the view that she kept on reviewing the situation all day, and the process of thinking helped her in handling the situation. The excerpt containing her response has been provided below:

“ The anxiety I faced in dealing that hostile student was very difficult to handle. I kept on thinking the situation all day. I though whether I should talk to the student in classroom or should talk to him individually. And what I will say when I talk to him. I kept on reviewing and thinking. This is how I deal with emotionally challenging situations” (T: 6).

One of the teachers reflected on a situation she faced in the early days of her teaching experience. She said that once she asked her students to write about influential historical figures whom they admired most. The next day, one student came up with an admiring note on Hitler. She states that she got stuck in a situation where she did not know whether she should ignore the situation or should address it. She then said that she addressed it in a way she considered appropriate.

The analysis of the responses provided by the participating teachers depicted that the teachers were of the view that the backlog of the experience provided them with skills and the abilities to face challenging situations as it helped them manage stress and control their emotions. Therefore, it can be stated that the reflection helps in managing the stress.

Another aspect of the interview revealed that most of the teachers, 16 out of 20, were in favor of the notion that reflection in collaboration with colleagues was more effective in dealing with challenging situations. The rest of the four teachers stated that they had never discussed the classroom problems they faced with their colleagues and had always responded to those problems by themselves. The excerpts from the English language teachers working in Government and Private colleges of District Bhakar, Punjab, Pakistan. Responses about this aspect of the reflection have been given below.

“ This I have learnt from experience that don't carry all you emotion by yourself. Share the emotions with other teachers, it can help you in knowing things you don't know. Eventually, sharing with experienced teachers can help you in managing stress. Once experienced, you can help the new teachers too ” (T: 11).

“ we as faculty have relationship of trust and friendship. We reflect a lot. We discuss issues and challenging situations. This helps us a lot in controlling the difficult situations. I had many issues with students who were creating disturbance in the classroom. I discussed with my colleagues at college and successfully managed my emotions and handled the situations ” (T: 8).

“ I can surely say that discussing with the senior teachers can help you in solving many issues of the classroom. They know a lot and they can help you get the skills to handle the challenging situations ” (T: 9).

This shows that reflection on the challenging situation with colleagues is one of the useful strategies in managing stress and in controlling challenging

situations as a teacher along with many other strategies.

5. Discussions

This study was an attempt to advance in comprehending what the emotions of English language teachers do in connection with the conscious use of reflection as a strategy that helps in handling and managing emotions. The responses of the teachers demonstrated that they felt emotionally challenged at certain times and being professionals helped them in handling the situation. Further, it was demonstrated that Emotional labor could equip them with the necessary skills to handle challenging situations. For the participants of this study, the reflection was carried out in the form of writing, in collaboration with the teachers, and through the observation of the lesson. Informal reflective activities were also common among the teachers. For example, reviewing the emotionally challenged situation after the classroom premises. However, the reflection in all these senses incorporated emotional aspects which helped teachers gain the ability to handle emotionally challenged situations. Reflection, according to the participants, was not just a practice of reconsidering emotional events, but it sometimes challenged the long-held beliefs and norms about emotions and teaching practices. It was also highlighted that positive results of emotional labor that develop emotional capital are increased when the teachers associate with the institutional norms of emotions.

6. Conclusions

The present study was conducted to analyze the emotional experiences and emotion management of the English language teachers of District Bhakar, Punjab Pakistan, working at the college level. The analysis of the responses collected from the sample of 20 participating teachers of the English language was carried out thematically by finding out the recurrent ideas in their responses. The results revealed that teachers at certain moments felt emotionally challenged in classrooms. The findings of the study also depicted that teachers thought that reflection, reviewing and thinking, and sharing with colleagues could be effective strategies in the management of emotions. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that teachers feel emotionally challenged at certain times in the classroom no matter how much teaching experience they have. The study also concluded that reflections, thinking, and discussing emotionally challenged situations with colleagues and be helpful in emotion management and in solving classroom-related issues.

7. References

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