


# Cross–Cultural Perspectives on Emotions and Professional Growth in English Language Teaching

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Dedicated to the teachers who know that teaching is, above all, a work of the heart.

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The present study is intended as a conceptual replication which explored in-service English Language teachers' emotions in anxiety-provoking classroom situations in an appraisal-based framework through vignettes. The present study employs a vignette-based design. The participants are around 230 pre-service EFL teachers. The eight vignettes representing potential emotion-bearing situations were prepared through a meticulous analysis of the literature in addition to expert opinion that was obtained from experts in the field. The participants were asked to evaluate the situations in the vignettes in terms of what emotions they invoke and how they evaluate these cases in terms of appraisals. The findings demonstrated that PSTs have variable perceived competence in terms of culturally sensitive issues and regarding emotionality they exhibited more ambivalence and negative emotions compared to positive ones.

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Depending on Job Resources and Demands model (JR-D) and Existential Positive Psychology Theory (EPP) as guiding frameworks, this study explores pre-service English teachers (PSTs) inner struggles, uncertainties, and the (mis)match between their expectations and experiences as well as their ways of job crafting during the practicum. We contend that uncovering the inner strengths and core qualities of PSTs through structured reflection is critical to their job crafting. In this qualitative case study, the journey of two PSTs was tracked through pre- and post-practicum interviews, reflection and evaluation forms in addition to core reflection activities conducted throughout the term. The thematic analysis of the data indicated that PSTs' development progressed through emotional tensions, exercising relative agency

and explored identity, supported by reflection on the core qualities and values. The findings emphasized the transformative potential of core reflection in enabling PSTs manage their job crafting practices and resolving professional tensions.

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A Systematic Review of English Language Teachers' Emotions ..... 57

*Şenol Karayılan, Amasya University, Turkey*

*Ayfer Su-Bergil, Amasya University, Turkey*

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly transformed the emotional landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, reshaping their pedagogical practices, professional identities, and classroom environments. This chapter presents a systematic review of empirical studies published between 2020 and 2025, focusing on language teacher emotions in EFL/ESL contexts during and after the pandemic. Drawing on PRISMA-guided methodology, the review synthesizes findings from 30 studies employing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs. The results reveal a complex spectrum of emotional experiences, including negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and burnout; emergent emotions like digital fatigue and isolation; and positive or adaptive emotions such as resilience, creativity, and professional pride. These emotional dynamics are shown to significantly influence teaching practices, identity formation, and classroom climate.

### Chapter 4

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and Identity Work Across School-Site Reforms ..... 85

*Ha Thanh Le, Foreign Trade University, Vietnam*

This chapter examines how Vietnamese EFL teachers negotiate professional identity through emotion while enacting school-site reforms in accountability-saturated environments. Drawing on narrative inquiry with three secondary teachers across distinct public-school ecologies, the study traces how audit rituals—targets, paperwork, public comparison, and performativity—produce institutional and interactional “feeling rules” that govern emotional display and shape pedagogical risk-taking. The findings show that teachers’ instructional choices often become defensibility-oriented responses to test-driven evaluation, intensifying tensions between communicative ideals and exam washback. Emotions such as pride, guilt, frustration, fatigue, and joy function not only as outcomes of reform pressures but also as mechanisms of identity work: diagnosing misalignment, sustaining moral agency, and motivating identity-protective moves. The chapter argues that teacher emotion is critical policy-enactment data, signaling what reforms make possible—and costly—in everyday practice.

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### Voicing Indonesian ESP Teachers' Emotions: Their Vulnerability and Professional Transformation ..... 117

*Noni Mia Rahmawati, Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia*

*Yazid Basthomi, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia*

*Priyatno Ardi, Universitas Sanata Dharma, Indonesia*

Emotions play a crucial role in teachers' professional identity constructions, yet the impact of vulnerability on language teachers' transformation and development remains underexplored. This narrative inquiry study delves into the lived experiences of two English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers from different universities in Indonesia to uncover how vulnerability influences their professional growth. Using a purposive sampling technique, the study gathered rich, in-depth data through semi-structured interviews, and the data were analysed thematically. The findings revealed that vulnerability is not merely a challenge, but also a catalyst for professional transformation. Social and institutional contexts emerged as key factors shaping ESP teachers' experiences that highlighted the intricate relationship between vulnerability and professional development. By shedding light on these dynamics, this study contributes to the growing discourse on how teachers' emotions affect their professional growth and calls for further research into the multifaceted role of vulnerability in diverse educational settings.

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*Ayşegül Angi, Marmara University, Turkey*

'Job satisfaction' may influence behaviour and indicate potential problems. This subject matter was extensively the focus of academic interest but the number of the theses on the job satisfaction levels of the English language instructors is rather limited. Measuring the instructors' job attitudes may provide an insight on how to improve their job satisfaction levels, thus, their teaching performance and the quality in English language training. This study conducted in 2002 may provide a good example of how assessing the job satisfaction levels of the English language instructors may be utilised to improve their training performances and professional growth. For example, the finding on the lower levels of general and intrinsic satisfaction of the ESP instructors indicated a necessity to review the ESP practices. A multidisciplinary approach can be adopted to develop an ESP curriculum in line with students' needs (i.e., for EAP and/or EOP). Providing the instructors with the opportunity to a further specialisation via ESP courses may make a difference in language teaching.

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From Survival to Self-Definition: Agency and Identity Work Among Early-Career EFL Teachers in Vietnam..... 179  
*Kham Bao, Hue University, Vietnam*

This chapter examines how early-career EFL teachers in Vietnam construct professional identity during their first year in upper-secondary schools. Drawing on longitudinal narrative data from six novice teachers, it analyses their experiences through the lenses of agency and micro-political literacy, using a narrative-biographical approach, electronic diaries, blogs, and interviews gathered over one academic year were analysed within and across cases. Three identity adaptation patterns emerged—integrative, fragile, and mixed—illustrating how teachers enacted agency under hierarchical and resource-constrained conditions. The findings foreground identity work as both emotional and political, positioning agency as key identity capital that enables movement from survival to self-definition. The chapter argues for embedding micro-political literacy, reflective practice, and identity-focused mentoring in teacher education, and contributes a non-Western perspective to language teacher identity research.

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Developing Literary Literacy in Pre-Service English Teachers: Reflection, Interpretation, and Growth..... 225  
*Abdullah Nejat Töngür, Maltepe University, Turkey*  
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This study explores the influence of the “English Literature I” course on the literary literacy development and professional awareness of pre-service English teachers at a foundation university in Türkiye. The study has a qualitative design, and it was conducted with 17 voluntary participants who were selected via purposeful sampling among pre-service teachers who were in their second year of teacher training and enrolled in an English Literature course for the first time. Data were collected before and after the course was completed to make comparisons possible. Two parallel sets of open-ended questions were used for data collection. Participants’ written responses to these questions were analysed using an abductive thematic analysis. Findings indicate that prospective teachers, who primarily perceived literature as a

superficial or instrumental field before the course, began to interpret literary texts within aesthetic, cultural, and historical contexts as the course progressed.

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# Preface

To teach a language is not simply to present a new set of rules, but it is to navigate a complex emotional landscape where identity, culture, and power intersect. In this regard, this volume approaches emotions and professional growth in ELT through a distinctly cross-cultural lens, recognizing that what language teachers feel, how they interpret those feelings, and how they act upon them are shaped by culturally situated norms, expectations, and interactions.

A unifying theme across the contributions is the understanding that language teaching extends beyond technical skill; it is an inherently human endeavor, deeply intertwined with the complexities of emotion and identity. Across varied contexts—from Türkiye to Vietnam and Indonesia—the contributors show the resilience, commitment, and reflective capacities of teachers striving to make an impact both on their students and through their own ongoing professional development.

Methodologically, the collection showcases considerable diversity. Conceptual replications, narrative inquiries, systematic reviews, qualitative case studies, and autoethnographic work provide complementary perspectives on the complexities of teaching. This range not only enriches the field's theoretical and empirical foundations but also prioritizes teachers' voices as they confront tensions, exercise agency, and pursue professional growth.

Importantly, the diversity of this volume is reflected in its thematic breadth, following the teacher's journey from the first steps in the classroom to the complexities of long-term practice. By exploring the tensions experienced by pre-service teachers, the contributors show how the initial practicum serves as a critical site for professional growth, forcing novices to bridge the gap between theory and the emotional demands of real-world teaching. This journey continues as the volume examines job satisfaction, viewing it not just as a workplace metric, but as an emotional state tied to a teacher's sense of agency. Furthermore, the research connects growth to the development of literary literacy, demonstrating that engaging with texts is a deeply affective process for both teachers and learners. Together, these chapters argue that professional growth is not a simple climb toward technical

mastery, but a continuous journey of emotional discovery. In this light, learning to navigate emotional labor and embrace vulnerability becomes a powerful catalyst for professional transformation.

## **CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

Chapter 1 examines pre-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy through a vignette-based conceptual replication, highlighting emotional ambivalence and perceived competence in culturally sensitive situations.

Chapter 2 investigates pre-service teachers' professional tensions and job crafting through core reflection, emphasizing the role of inner strengths and reflective practices.

Chapter 3 provides a systematic review of language teacher emotions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying key emotional trends and their pedagogical implications.

Chapter 4 analyzes how teachers negotiate identity and emotion within audit-driven educational reforms, focusing on "feeling rules" and performativity.

Chapter 5 explores vulnerability as a driver of professional transformation among ESP teachers through narrative inquiry.

Chapter 6 examines job satisfaction among English language instructors and its implications for teaching performance and professional growth.

Chapter 7 traces early-career teachers' identity development, highlighting agency and adaptation during the transition from survival to self-definition.

Chapter 8 investigates the development of literary literacy among pre-service teachers and its impact on professional awareness.

The insights offered in this book hold meaningful implications for teacher education, policy, and practice, providing both novice and experienced educators with guidance, encouragement, and a long-overdue recognition of their emotional labor. By highlighting the resilience and reflective capacities of teachers striving to make a lasting impact, these chapters advocate for more responsive and humane approaches to professional support that prioritize agency and cultural context. Ultimately, this volume serves as an invitation to look beyond the mechanics of the classroom and honor the human heart at the center of teaching and learning. By making the "invisible" work of emotions visible, we hope to foster a global ELT community that is as compassionate as it is professional—one where vulnerabilities are recognized as strengths, and the emotional landscape of the classroom is treated with the profound care and scholarly attention it deserves.

# Acknowledgment

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many avoid remote postings, who will teach students here?”—and positive emotions reinforced this anchoring, enabling her to persist through early disappointment and resource constraints. These emotions were not incidental; they maintained a viable professional self by confirming that her work still mattered. Yuca’s pride in school improvement under supportive leadership similarly functioned as an emotional resource, validating years of patient work and reinforcing identity as a teacher whose care can translate into system-level gains when leadership aligns accountability with learning.

Third, emotions drive identity-protective and identity-revision moves. In Poppy’s case, the emotional cost of repeated dissonance appeared to precipitate boundary setting and selective withdrawal from additional contact, a self-protective form of ethical self-formation. The move is adaptive but costly: it helps preserve viability under hyper-accountability, yet may narrow the identity space available for relational investment. In Yuca’s case, discomfort under a new regime prompted self-renewal strategies—pursuing further study, anchoring standards internally (“remain at least mid-to-upper tier”), and redirecting attention to authentic student interaction. In Lily’s case, early frustration was transformed through reframing, upskilling, and mentoring others, converting constraint into steady purpose. Across cases, emotion is not merely endured; it reorganizes identity by orienting teachers toward care, caution, or recalibration.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

This discussion brings the findings together by showing how teachers’ emotions and identity work are shaped within a wider culture of audit, method discourse and institutional accountability. The sections that follow examines, first how “good teaching” is performed and emotionally disciplined, second, how modern-traditional method discourses generate guilt and moral dissonance, and third, how emotions function as mechanisms through which teachers sustain, revise and protect their professional identities.

### **5.1. Performing ‘Good Teaching’: Pride, Guilt, and the Emotional Discipline of Audit Culture**

The cases show that audit culture does not simply evaluate teaching; it produces a locally recognizable version of “good teaching” and then disciplines teachers to perform it—emotionally as well as pedagogically. In Ball’s (2003) terms, schools become “fields of judgment” in which quality is rendered legible through what can be counted, displayed, and compared. Targets, dashboards, paperwork, and public

ranking practices form an evaluative grammar that tells teachers what “counts.” Crucially, this grammar is also affective. It installs feeling rules about what a professional teacher should feel and show: composure under scrutiny, loyalty to institutional priorities, and steady effort regardless of fatigue. In this way, “good teaching” becomes not only a technical standard but a moral-aesthetic performance—one that links credibility to both measurable outputs and disciplined emotional display (Hochschild, 1983; Zembylas, 2007).

Seen through teacher identity scholarship, these accountability rituals compress and reorganize identity space. If identity is relational and context-embedded, then audit infrastructures become powerful identity-making environments: they provide the categories through which teachers are positioned (high performer/low performer; compliant/non-compliant; innovative/traditional), and they shape which identities are socially rewarded or made risky. This echoes Vietnam-based work showing that teachers are not “mere policy implementers,” but active interpreters who adapt mandates through preferences, choices, and teaching conditions (Le et al., 2021; H. T. M. Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Yet the cases also show the limits of such agency under audit. When institutional success is defined through exam-oriented indicators, teachers’ interpretive work becomes increasingly constrained by what can be defended in public and aligned with the metric system. In effect, the context does not eliminate agency, but it tilts teachers’ choices toward low-risk enactments that protect professional standing.

A clear example is the seminar lesson as an audit ritual. Yuca’s account captures how “modern methods” become legitimate as display—a performance staged for observation—rather than as a sustained pedagogy. She described the seminar as the moment she could plan the way she “likes,” with interactive games and varied activities, and she remarked that it was “the only time of the year” she felt like a “real teacher.” This is not simply nostalgia; it reveals how institutional recognition is unevenly distributed. In the everyday classroom, she faces time scarcity and class size (40 students, 45 minutes) that make communicative tasks impractical, while the seminar temporarily suspends these constraints and authorizes the visible signs of “good teaching.” The result is an identity split: teachers learn to inhabit two professional selves—one oriented to ceremonial innovation for recognition, the other oriented to routine exam-aligned work for survival. This split maps onto the identity literature’s emphasis that teacher identity is co-constructed through institutional practices and role expectations, rather than freely chosen (Santoro, 2018).

This ritualization also reorganizes emotion. Pride becomes available when performance aligns with the institution’s evaluative script, especially when teachers can link visible outcomes to recognized competence. Under supportive conditions—such as Yuca’s experience with the second principal’s fairer evaluation system—accountability can feel meaningful and pride becomes a collective resource. It stabilizes identity as

competent professional and sustains commitment. Yet the same system generates guilt when teachers' moral or pedagogical commitments cannot be enacted consistently. If "good teaching" is rhetorically tied to communicative competence, project-based learning, and student-centeredness, but evaluation is dominated by test results and paperwork compliance, teachers are pushed into a double bind: they are expected to be modern and humane in principle, and exam-effective in practice. This is precisely the kind of contradiction that produces moral dissonance and guilt, especially for teachers whose training and professional imagination have been shaped by communicative ideals (Hochschild, 1983; Zembylas, 2005a). While the present section foregrounds pride and guilt, the mechanism is broader: audit culture makes teachers accountable for outcomes while narrowing the conditions under which ethical, context-responsive teaching can occur.

Poppy's trajectory shows how this discipline intensifies when audit practices include public exposure and punitive comparison. Her account of school meetings where low-performing teachers were named illustrates a strong institutional feeling rule: teachers must absorb evaluation—sometimes humiliating evaluation—without disrupting the accountability narrative. Even though she was not personally named, she experienced embarrassment on behalf of colleagues and judged the practice unethical. This moment matters because it converts accountability into affective governance: the meeting does not only communicate information; it signals what emotions are permissible (silence, composure, acquiescence) and what emotions are risky (anger, protest, explicit dissent). Such episodes also reshape pedagogical risk: if reputational harm is a realistic possibility, teachers are more likely to intensify exam drilling and reduce experimental communicative work, because "safe teaching" becomes synonymous with defensible teaching.

Importantly, these feeling rules do not operate only "from above." They become internalized through ethical self-formation and daily self-policing. Teachers learn to anticipate scrutiny, manage irritation in meetings, suppress discouragement in front of students, and present commitment even when exhausted. This is why emotion labour becomes normalized as "just teaching," aligning with Zembylas's (2005a) argument that emotion labour is often treated as routine practice rather than recognized as institutional governance. Yet the Vietnam-based identity research you cite suggests that teachers' emotional experiences are not merely private coping. In contexts where multiple discourses circulate—traditional authority, moral guidance, care, and student-centeredness—teachers struggle for professional legitimacy, and this struggle can generate stress, frustration, and sadness (Trent & Nguyen, 2021). The present cases extend that argument by showing how audit culture amplifies this struggle: it attaches legitimacy to public indicators and ritual performances, thereby intensifying the emotional stakes of "looking like" a good teacher.

At the same time, the narratives also show teachers' agentic negotiation within these constraints, consistent with Vietnamese studies documenting teachers' adaptive and transformative policy enactment (Le et al., 2021; H. T. M. Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Lily's case illustrates how a teacher can expand identity space even within accountability pressures, not by rejecting the institutional script outright but by reworking it through care and scaffolding. She pilots communicative projects where feasible, celebrates student creativity, and uses exemplars to bring weaker classes forward. Here pride is not only a reward from the institution; it is an internally meaningful emotion tied to moral agency and student growth. Yet Lily's experience also underscores that such expansion requires substantial invisible labour—upskilling, certification, and sustained effort—which audit culture rarely counts directly. In this sense, pride and guilt are not simply opposite emotions; they are both products of a system that makes some aspects of teaching visible and valuable while rendering other aspects—care, patience, relational work—less legible.

Taken together, the section suggests that audit culture disciplines teachers through a dual emotional economy. On one side, it offers pride and recognition when teachers can align with metrics and perform sanctioned versions of modern pedagogy. On the other, it produces guilt and self-doubt when teachers cannot reconcile communicative ideals with exam-driven evaluation. This emotional discipline matters for identity because it shapes what teachers come to see as professionally possible, ethically defensible, and personally sustainable. Where identity is relational and co-constructed, feeling rules become mechanisms through which institutions quietly govern not only what teachers do, but who teachers can be.

## **5.2. Modern–traditional method discourses and the post-method critique as sources of guilt and moral dissonance**

Participants locate their professional biographies within a well-known historical arc in ELT, traditional methods, modern approaches, and post-method debate (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Celce-Murcia, 2014). In the inherited dichotomy, grammar-translation and memorization are labelled “outdated” or “ineffective,” whereas Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Content-Based Instruction, and Task-Based Language Teaching are said to promote communication in real-life situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The post-method critique rightly notes that no method is inherently good or bad and that context should determine method choice; nonetheless, the modern–traditional dichotomy still circulates in professional discourse (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Teachers in this study, born in the 1980s and early 1990s, experienced traditional approaches as learners in primary and secondary school, then encountered “modern” methods in teacher-preparation programs. They were taught (and often

observed) that memorization and repetition without meaningful use do not reliably build communicative capacity. All participating teachers with a TESOL bachelor's degree reported being substantially equipped with modern-method knowledge and often describe these methods as "proper" or "standardized" (chun). Yuca recalled with excitement her time at an English center teaching fewer than 15 learners, where she could design lessons using "proper" methods and felt mentored and recognized. Poppy similarly recalled extra English classes in high school and at university as "different" and effective for her own learning.

At the same time, contextual variation strongly shaped enactment. They all spent some time in a private after-school classes delivering lessons via "modern" methods, but later dropped most of those practices in the public schools: "It is different in the public school, we don't have time for group work. Not even enough time for cramming for the exam." Thus, the degree to which modern approaches are used varies in everyday teaching, a finding squarely in line with post-method logic that context mediates method (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The participants describe moral dissonance, "identity of moral agent" under pressure, when beliefs about good teaching cannot be enacted due to class size, time, assessment demands, or institutional scripts. Yuca and Poppy explicitly express the feeling of "betraying" their own belief system: they can design lessons with group work and communicative tasks and know students were more engaged when they previously taught this way, but current conditions prevent such enactment.

Yuca reminisced about the English-center period, where she was selected to deliver a sample class for parents and colleagues, a peak experience of being recognized and rewarded by parents, colleagues, and students. The contrast with current routines, annual student score-based performance reviews and the sense of not delivering in the way she believes is right, made present teaching feel dimmer. She captured the dynamic vividly: "The only time of the year I'd feel like I am a real teacher is when preparing for the seminar," because there she could plan the way she likes, including fun interactive games and varied class activities. She provided concrete constraints: Interactive synchronous games like Kahoot is often impractical, it takes too long for all 40 students to sign in; similarly poster creation and public presentation would exceed a 45-minute period. In the seminar, by contrast, she has more time and resources.

Poppy describes a setting shaped by large classes, test-oriented routines, and pervasive accountability, but what distinguishes her account is the negative evaluative frame. She argues that "performing" one or two communicative lessons for a school seminar has no durable instructional value; when the rest of the year reverts to test drilling, the isolated CLT performance feels inauthentic. For Poppy, moral purpose (what she believes good teaching should be) collides with institutional practice (what she is required to do). She names a blend of guilt, "I can't do what I

believe is right”, and weariness, “I purposefully chose not to engage more in this.” This is a classic case of belief–practice misalignment producing identity tension, and it aligns with work portraying teacher beliefs as heterogeneous, dynamic systems that interact with context rather than mapping linearly onto practice (Li, 2013; Tsui, 2007; Zheng, 2013).

Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) analysis of guilt helps to locate Poppy’s emotions. They contend that guilt is a central emotional preoccupation for teachers (p. 494), arising at the juncture of four elements: a commitment to care and nurturance, the limitless scope of teachers’ work, accountability pressures and intensification, and a persona of perfectionism (p. 496). In Poppy’s case, the teacher self, ethical commitments formed through TESOL preparation and early experiences with CLT, meets the system, monitoring, KPIs, and exam scores, to produce a dilemma: CLT/CBI/TBLT are valorized as methods that cultivate real-life communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), yet the hyper-accountability culture incentivizes teaching to the test. Poppy knows CLT “works”, she used it in training, at private centers, and in seminar lessons, but it is rarely feasible in daily lessons. The conflict corrodes autonomy and moral agency: contemporary policy conditions have steered teachers to work in ways that contradict their professional values, a process Santoro (2021) calls demoralization (Phelan, 2025).

### **5.3. Emotions as mechanisms of identity work: sustaining, revising, protecting the professional self**

The second research question foregrounds emotions as mechanisms of identity negotiation. In these cases, emotions do three kinds of work: they diagnose misalignment, they reinforce moral commitment, and they orient teachers toward identity-protective action. Guilt and moral dissonance emerge where communicative ideals and post-method advocacy collide with exam washback and KPI evaluation, generating a sense of “betraying” one’s beliefs or being unable to do what one believes is right. These emotions are not personal weakness; they signal a professional ethics strained by structural contradiction (Santoro, 2018).

At the same time, positive emotions—joy, pride, satisfaction—operate as identity resources when teachers can link student growth to professional judgment and care. Lily’s joy in student creativity and Yuca’s pride during supportive leadership periods demonstrate how positive affect can stabilize professional meaning and sustain commitment under pressure. This aligns with the view that emotions are socioculturally situated appraisals of what matters (Hargreaves, 2001): pride and joy do not merely feel good; they mark moments when teaching aligns with values and becomes intelligible as worthwhile work.

Finally, emotions drive identity-protective moves that can be understood as ethical self-formation (Foucault, 1983) enacted within institutional fields of action (Zembylas, 2005b). Poppy's boundary setting, Yuca's renewal through study and self-anchored standards, and Lily's anchoring in care and mentoring represent different forms of agency under constraint. These moves do not abolish audit culture, but they help teachers remain viable within it. The chapter thus supports critical emotion-labour perspectives (Benesch, 2012, 2017) by showing how teachers actively negotiate feeling rules and sometimes reconfigure them through personal and relational strategies, even when power remains unequal.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This chapter offers an empirically grounded account of how Vietnamese EFL teachers negotiate identity through emotion while enacting reform in an accountability-saturated environment. Across three cases, institutional and interactional feeling rules organize emotional display and emotion labour through audit rituals of visibility—targets, paperwork, public comparison, and showcase performances. These feeling rules shape pedagogy by reorganizing risk and defensibility, often intensifying belief–practice contradictions between communicative ideals and exam-driven routines. Emotions then function as mechanisms of identity work: they register misalignment and ethical strain, reinforce moral commitment when teaching aligns with values, and orient teachers toward identity-protective moves that sustain professional viability.

The chapter contributes to sociocultural scholarship by making visible how emotions are institutional and political, configured through feeling rules and audit culture (Hochschild, 1983; Zembylas, 2005, 2007). It also foregrounds the moral dimensions of teacher identity under reform, showing how care, dissonance, and endurance are not merely personal experiences but patterned responses to accountability design. By centering narrative evidence from a Global South context, the chapter extends debates about post-method pedagogy beyond abstract advocacy to the situated compromises teachers make and the emotional costs they bear. Ultimately, the chapter argues that if reform is to be practically intelligible and ethically sustainable, policy makers and leaders must treat teacher emotion not as noise but as data: a register of what matters, what is misaligned, and what kinds of professional selves reforms make possible.

The findings suggest several practice-connected implications. First, school leaders should widen teacher participation in decision making and reduce practices that turn evaluation into public shame. Accountability systems should avoid single-score reductionism and include indicators that capture the value of strategy instruction,

metacognitive coaching, and relational work that supports durable learning. Second, leaders should streamline paperwork that does not serve learning and remove purely performative rituals that demand emotional compliance without instructional benefit. Time structures for collaborative planning can make context-responsive communicative work more feasible even in large classes. Third, professional development should integrate emotion work and narrative reflection, helping teachers name emotional episodes, identify triggers, and experiment with regulation strategies collectively. Such design principles treat emotions not as private burdens but as signals of policy enactment quality and as resources for sustainable teacher learning.

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# Chapter 5

## Voicing Indonesian ESP Teachers' Emotions: Their Vulnerability and Professional Transformation

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### ABSTRACT

*Emotions play a crucial role in teachers' professional identity constructions, yet the impact of vulnerability on language teachers' transformation and development remains underexplored. This narrative inquiry study delves into the lived experiences of two English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers from different universities in Indonesia to uncover how vulnerability influences their professional growth. Using a purposive sampling technique, the study gathered rich, in-depth data through semi-structured interviews, and the data were analysed thematically. The findings revealed that vulnerability is not merely a challenge, but also a catalyst for professional transformation. Social and institutional contexts emerged as key factors shaping ESP teachers' experiences that highlighted the intricate relationship between vulnerability and professional development. By shedding light on these dynamics,*

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*this study contributes to the growing discourse on how teachers' emotions affect their professional growth and calls for further research into the multifaceted role of vulnerability in diverse educational settings.*

## INTRODUCTION

Being a teacher is a highly emotional journey (see Kelchtermans & Deketelaere, 2016; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2012). Emotions are a fundamental component of education since they constitute a multifaceted state of feelings that induce psychological and physical transformations (Teng, 2017) which are prone to affect teachers' cognition and motivation (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). It is essential to understand teachers' emotions to find out the impact of how and under what circumstances they actually teach in emotionally demanding classroom contexts (Agudo, 2018). In the classroom, teachers commonly attempt to present positive emotions to their students to achieve teaching aims (Sutton, 2004). Teachers can decide whether to make their classrooms fun or dull by presenting suitable emotions, of which strong emotions can motivate them to act differently from how they usually perform (Teng, 2017). They also tend to control their unpleasant emotions (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015). However, suppression of emotions leads to teachers' lack of emotional authenticity, an incongruity between the emotional experience and emotional expression (Keller & Becker, 2021). Thus, not only recognising students' emotions, teachers also need to better understand their own emotions to create emotionally suitable learning environments and have positive interactions and authentic relationships with their students (Chen, 2016; Madalinska-Michalak, 2015).

Working in socio-cultural environments and interacting with their teaching contexts, individual teacher's visions and pedagogical beliefs may contrast with those of others that lead to feelings of vulnerability (Holappa et al., 2022). Vulnerability is crucial in constructing teacher identity as it is associated with their emotional reactions to their work and practice (Bacova & Turner, 2023). Not only seen from the subjective professional-self of the teachers, the feeling of vulnerability also has moral and political roots in the workplace conditions that can affect teachers' job satisfaction and their professional performance quality (Kelchtermans, 1996). In classroom and institutional contexts, it captures the unavoidable element of passivity that comes with teaching as although teaching focusses on acting, planning, and designing, there is also a passive component of undergoing surprise, puzzlement, and powerlessness (Kelchtermans, 2009). Teachers, then, must allow themselves to be vulnerable to properly engage and empathise with their students (Alsup, 2018) since in teaching, more and less than one had anticipated always occurs at the same time (Kelchtermans, 2009). In a broader educational context, evolving policies and

shifting public expectations in an increasingly commercialised and competitive educational environment are putting teachers' profession and professional identities more vulnerable as they affect the moral foundation that teachers need to build their professional identities (Gao, 2008). Understanding vulnerability is essential to properly comprehend teachers and how their teaching has evolved (Kelchtermans, 1996) and to establish a connection between the diverse emotional responses within teaching experience, especially in academic settings where reform or change is required (Song, 2022).

Like other teaching endeavours, language teaching, including English Language Teaching (ELT), is an emotionally intense practice of a complex process saturating various range of emotions (Rosiek & Beghetto, 2009). Previous studies often saw language teacher emotions to be problematic for their negative effects on the teachers' teaching and professional development, so that teachers' emotions are regarded as challenges that need to be mainly faced individually through professional development (Gao, 2008; Song, 2018, 2022). However, post-structuralist perspectives induce research on emotions in education to pay more attention to the link between teacher-self and social, cultural, and political structures of educational institutions (e.g., Song, 2018; Song & Park, 2019; Zembylas, 2011). Loh and Liew (2016) found that Singaporean English teachers' emotional labour was intensified by conflicting governmental and institutional policies on evaluative means for measuring English competence as opposed to the teachers' understanding of what composes effective pedagogy and second language (L2) acquisition. Similarly, Wolff and De Costa (2017) narrated that Puja's status as a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) affected her emotional responses over language policies, ideological biases, and institutional norms as she experienced a U.S. MATESOL program, which eventually made her confidence dropped significantly. Related to the relationship between ideology and emotions of NNESTs in Korea, (Song & Park, 2019) concluded that teachers' emotions are shaped by dominant ideologies as shown by their interviewees who all attributed their overcoming of anxiety as NNESTs to their study abroad or overseas training experiences in native English-speaking countries.

As a branch of ELT, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) distinguishes itself by focusing on attending learners' communicative needs (Hyland, 2022) as it was originally developed to assist second or foreign English learners in advancing their study or careers (Basturkmen, 2021). Not only are required to acquire English communicative and pedagogical skills, ESP teachers must also obtain skills beyond their main expertise to meet learners' needs (Iswati & Triastuti, 2021) so that they often grapple with content knowledge gaps (Wu & Badger, 2009). Such struggle leads to raising concerns about ESP teachers' qualifications (Wang, 2010), resulting in the marginalisation of the status of ESP as a discipline, particularly in universities, for ESP teachers viewed their work to be less acknowledged by their institutions

and their inability to claim expertise in a particular field (Qi et al., 2021; Tao & Gao, 2018). These circumstances may lead ESP teachers to being vulnerable since teachers' vulnerability may come from educational policies which question, contest, or reject teachers' professional behaviour and moral judgments in the classroom (Yuan et al., 2022).

In Indonesian universities, ESP is a compulsory subject in non-English departments (Kusni, 2013) that differs depending on each university and its curriculum (Akhiroh, 2017). The ESP teachers in the non-English departments are either English teachers from English or non-English departments, or content teachers with no ELT backgrounds (Adi & Khotimah, 2018; Akhiroh, 2017). These teachers are perceived as lacking in qualifications to design and instruct ESP (Poedjiastutie & Syafinaz, 2020; Yoestara, 2017) due to the absence of institutions that specialise in the training of ESP teachers and those that offer seminars or workshops to assist them in their professional development (Poedjiastutie & Syafinaz, 2020). Such condition puts ESP teachers at similar vulnerable position as novice or beginning teachers who frequently face an unavoidable loss of confidence in their teaching own abilities, accompanied by strong and conflicting emotions (Agudo, 2018).

Previous studies have investigated the impact of teacher emotions, which are influenced by the teacher's self and the social, cultural, and political contexts of educational institutions, on teaching and professional growth. However, the specific role of vulnerability in shaping teachers' instructional practices and professional development, particularly among ESP teachers, remains underexplored. Understanding teacher vulnerability is crucial for a nuanced comprehension of teachers and the development of their teaching practices (Kelchtermans, 1996). To address the paucity, this study investigates the influence of Indonesian ESP teachers' vulnerability on their professional transformation based on Kelchtermans' (2009) three elements that compose teachers' vulnerability. Grasping how ESP teachers' vulnerability can impact their professional transformation can be the basis for providing and improving policies on ESP teaching that can better cater the specific needs of ESP teachers in transforming and developing their professional selves. Therefore, the current study aims to answer the research question "How does ESP teachers' vulnerability impact their professional transformation?"

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Teachers' Emotions**

Emotions are crucial in teaching (Hargreaves, 1998), and teachers, as emotion-al practitioners, can make classrooms stimulating or boring (Hargreaves, 2000).

Teacher emotions can refer to evaluative reactions covering various psychological and physical subsystems that are specifically anchored in the specific events and social contexts that teachers face in their work (Frenzel et al., 2021). Frenzel et al. (2015) posit that teacher emotions are person, subject, and group specific, as each teacher's emotions may differ from one another, varying systematically depending on the academic subject and groups of students being taught. However, teacher emotions are influenced beyond the teacher-selves since emotions are also socially and culturally embedded (Hargreaves, 2000; Zembylas, 2003). Emotions are crucial in pedagogical practices, student-teacher relationships, reform attempts and change processes, and comprehending power dynamics and social structures in schools and society (Zembylas, 2011). Hargreaves (2000) integrates four key concepts of emotions that are influential: (1) emotional intelligence, (2) emotional labour, (3) emotional understanding, and (4) emotional geographies. These concepts emphasize that teacher emotions are not simply individual traits, but are also affected by their interactions, identities, and working conditions, and that teachers' emotional experiences are central to the quality of teaching, learning, and educational reforms.

Over the course of a career, emotional and cognitive well-being, which are affected by personal biography, social contexts, and external factors, are crucial for effective teaching (Day & Leitch, 2001). Teachers' emotions are highly relevant not only for the functioning of classrooms, particularly for student outcomes, but also for the teachers' well-being (Chen, 2019; Frenzel et al., 2016, 2020; Keller et al., 2015). van Veen et al. (2005) divided their teacher participant's emotions into negative and positive emotions. The negative emotions stemmed from insufficient time, a substantial volume of portfolios each semester, and inadequate support from the subject colleagues, school administration, and government. Meanwhile, positive emotions emerged when the teaching purposes were fostered and when there were chances to develop the teaching practice and strengthen the professional identity. Positive emotions are associated with positive instructions (Hargreaves, 1998; Jiang et al., 2021), as more contented teachers are more likely to provide better teaching (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015).

Not only influencing classroom events, teachers' emotions can also profoundly shape teachers' reflective practices and their professional growth, as Dreer (2024) claims that positive emotions contribute significantly to teachers' job satisfaction and their subsequent retention. Challenging emotions that are frequently deemed to be negative, such as the feelings of frustration and being vulnerable, often drive teachers to probe into their teaching beliefs and methods (Zembylas, 2020). Such feelings may incite meaningful changes in teaching practices although teachers may feel uncomfortable due to those emotional unease (Kelchtermans, 2005; Korthagen, 2017; O'Connor, 2008). On the other hand, teachers' positive emotions, such as their joy and pride of students' achievement (Chen, 2019), satisfaction in profes-

sional accomplishment (van Veen et al., 2005), contentment from fostering good relationships with students (Hargreaves, 2000), and excitement from practicing creative teaching (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009), can confirm teachers' purposes and strengthen their commitment as teachers (Chen, 2019; Dreer, 2024). Nonetheless, both teachers' positive and negative emotions connect their experiences and reflections that lead them to developing or transforming their professional selves in redefining their identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Sang, 2022). Sachs (2005) underlines that teachers' emotional lives are significant to identity construction since emotions mediate their sense of agency, belonging, and professional direction.

In the context of ESP, the teachers' emotional landscape is uniquely shaped since they navigate emotionally charged situations from interdisciplinary teaching, shifting institutional demands, and a lack of content knowledge in the specific fields they teach (Basturkmen, 2014; Hyland, 2017). The conditions can cause stress, uncertainty, and feelings of marginalization that often brings tensions around teachers' identity and sense of belonging in the profession (Mahendra, 2020; Qin, 2021). Yet, such challenging emotions can stimulate professional growth as ESP teachers reflect deeply on their teaching practices and engage in proactive strategies that ultimately trigger professional transformation (Nazari et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2022).

## **Vulnerability and Teacher Professional Transformation**

Vulnerability is essential in shaping teacher identity since it relates to their emotional responses to their job and practice (Bacova & Turner, 2023). It is a multidimensional emotional experience in an array of contexts that can be an experience of openness (i.e., open vulnerability) and trust or a sense of powerless, betrayal, defencelessness (i.e., protective vulnerability), of which individuals becoming vulnerable may mean being open that can facilitate learning, trust building, and collaboration, or, in contrast, withdrawing themselves in a defensive or protective attitudes (Lasky, 2005). Teachers often feel emotional vulnerability when there is a gap between their experienced emotions and their expected emotions which are deemed to be appropriate in a certain context (Zembylas, 2002). When teachers experience open vulnerability, they tend to have positive attitudes that direct themselves to professional developments and self-transformation (Song, 2016). Vulnerability is in complex ways intertwined with agency and authority, influencing each other (Teng, 2020). Teachers' agency can make them shift from one type of vulnerability to another which resulted in shifting pedagogies (Song, 2016). Thus, teachers' vulnerability, as a part of their emotions, also contributes to their identity construction.

Vulnerability fundamentally characterizes and constitutes teaching (Kelchtermans, 2005), not only as an emotional state or experience, but also as a structural characteristic of the profession (Kelchtermans, 2009). Kelchtermans (2009) proposed

three elements that compose vulnerability in teaching. First, teachers are politically vulnerable as they have limited control over their working conditions, for they are subject to certain legal frameworks and regulations, operate in a specific school with specific infrastructures, students, and staff. The second vulnerability is the extremely limited extent to which teachers may assert that their instruction determines the outcomes of their students. When student outcomes are positive, teachers who have a high internal locus of control may feel particularly satisfied with their teaching. However, they may suffer a discouraging effect on their motivation and self-confidence when their student outcomes are poor as they often attribute the outcomes to circumstances that are outside of their control and beyond their efforts. The last vulnerability is the fundamental conditions within the teachers themselves. Teachers are often found to be in the state of being surprised, puzzled, or powerless although they have designed, planned, and acted their teaching. Their decisions or idea of good teaching can also be always challenged or questioned.

Teachers' professional transformation is closely linked not only to external factors, but also to their experiences and responses of vulnerability since the change from protective to open vulnerability is the entry point for emotional reflection and identity shifts (Cole et al., 2022; Zembylas, 2002). The transformation occurs when teachers are willing to admit their emotional moments rather than to avoid them; that is, when they acknowledge their emotions, identify the sources, and understand how their emotions affect teaching (Song, 2016). These moments of shifting from protective to open vulnerability can prompt teachers to engage in deeper reflection on their pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices that foster their professional growth (Kelchtermans, 2005; Mahmood et al., 2024). As they make sense of moments of confusion and perceived inadequacy in teaching, teachers may use their vulnerability as a source of growth to develop more adaptive professional selves (Florida & Mbato, 2020). Vulnerability becomes connected with agency through sustained engagement with emotional reflection that enables teachers to act with more confidence and purpose (Lo & To, 2023; Teng, 2020). However, such transformations are also significantly shaped by social and institutional contexts, as supportive environments that acknowledge teachers' emotional labour and provide space for reflection can enhance teachers' capacity to cope with vulnerability and grow professionally (Cole et al., 2022; Kelchtermans, 2009; Song, 2016). When teachers embrace vulnerability within supportive institutional and relational contexts, it can foster emotional resilience and prompt sustained identity development and pedagogical development (Holappa et al., 2022).

In the ESP context, teachers' vulnerability emerges when they navigate unfamiliar subject content, as they may feel professionally inadequate for lacking subject-matter expertise, limited institutional support, and vague curricular structure (Mahendra, 2020; Tao & Gao, 2018; Zhao et al., 2022). In Indonesian tertiary education ESP

context, for example, Suherman (2024) discovered five issues that hinder English for General Purposes (EGP) teachers from transforming to ESP teachers: 1) subject knowledge, 2) institutional support, 3) ESP material, 4) heterogeneous class, and 5) teaching skills. However, vulnerability can act as a trigger for teachers' professional transformation (Lasky, 2005), including ESP teachers when they engage in sustained reflective practices and collaborative learning with students and subject experts (Mahendra, 2020; Tao & Gao, 2018). Particularly, ESP teachers engaged in curriculum reform often endure a transformation from uncertain practitioners to agentive collaborators through vulnerability-driven identity development (Jiang, 2022). This process involves teachers' agency since those who actively confront their limitations and develop professionally have more opportunities to integrate new pedagogical strategies and redefine their professional identities (Lo & To, 2023; Teng, 2020). Thus, the interaction among teachers' vulnerability, reflective practice, and agency within certain sociocultural contexts is a significant catalyst for their professional transformation and identity development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Sachs, 2005; Zembylas, 2003), which is strongly relevant to ESP teachers' professional transformations.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The current study centered on how institutional policies affected ESP teachers' vulnerability and how the vulnerability influenced the transformation of their professional selves as ESP teachers. Examining ESP teachers' experiences of vulnerability, how they navigated feelings of confusion or powerlessness, and how they managed teaching ESP classes are essential for achieving the study's objectives.

Accordingly, this study employed narrative inquiry to capture the vulnerable experiences of ESP teachers in the Indonesian context. Narrative inquiry aims at capturing realities in constructing their identity in the past, present, and imagined future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In performing narrative research, "the researcher seeks to understand the lived experience of an individual or small group" (Ary et al., 2010, p. 468). Ary et al. (2010) also argue that narrative research has been mostly employed in understanding changes. Therefore, we believe that employing narrative inquiry approach is appropriate for the study as it allows us to depict ESP teachers' vulnerability and how they make meaning of the vulnerability to transform themselves professionally.

## Context

The study was situated within the contexts of teaching ESP in two different private universities in East Java, Indonesia. They were Sami University (pseudonym) and Romu University (pseudonym). Each university had a foreign-language centre. However, the foreign-language centre did not function to coordinate the teaching of ESP performed in the respective university. In addition, not all departments in each university hired an ESP teacher. In Sami University, there were only four ESP teachers who were stationed in four different non-English departments. Similarly, there were four ESP teachers affiliated with four different non-English departments in Romu University. Instead of offering ESP subjects for the students, both universities offered General English (GE, hereafter) as a compulsory subject for the students, especially for freshmen.

## Participants

We selected an ESP teacher from each university based on purposive sampling techniques. As a kind of non-probability sampling, the selection of the participants in purposive sampling was based on some characteristics judged to be typical which act as the representative of the population (Ary et al., 2010). A male and female participant were the participants of the study. Rio (pseudonym, male) was selected as the representative of ESP teachers affiliated with non-English department of Sami University, and Karina (pseudonym, female) was chosen to represent ESP teachers affiliated with non-English department of Romu University.

From the stories that both participants shared with the researchers prior to the study, the two ESP teachers were selected due to the similarity of their background experiences in becoming ESP teachers affiliated with non-English departments in their respective universities. Both were not initially applied for the position as an ESP teacher. However, due to the policies of their universities, they were positioned as ESP teachers detached from the English departments in their universities. Thus, they experienced emotional struggle as ESP teachers. Both participants also stated that they did not experience any formal education, trainings, or workshops related to teaching ESP prior to being positioned as ESP teachers in their respective university. However, when the study was performed, they have taught ESP subjects for around five years. It can be supposed, then, that they have sufficient periods in performing pedagogical practices in their ESP classes and developing themselves professionally as ESP teachers. Prior to collecting the data, we asked both participants to give their consent as their involvements in this study were voluntarily, thus, they could withdraw their participation. Each participant biography is described in the following.

## Rio's Biography

Rio earned his Master's degree in English language teaching from Sami University in 2015. After earning his Master's degree, he went to Thailand from 2016 to 2017 to represent Sami University in a collaboration program between the university and a university in Thailand for teaching Indonesian language and ESP to the Thai students of the Faculty of International Science (FIS). Following his return to Indonesia, Rio taught ESP subjects in several departments in Sami University as a non-permanent teaching staff. He applied for a position as a faculty member in the English Department of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training (FETT, hereafter) in Sami University in 2019. Yet, different from the position he had applied for, Rio has been stationed in the Management Department of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB, hereafter) of Sami University as an ESP teacher since he was accepted to work in the university. He has overseen all ESP courses offered by all departments belonging to FEB since then. Rio is also responsible as the head of the International Development Division (IDD, hereafter) in the FEB, of which some of its duties are preparing the students for joining international programs and managing TOEFL preparation classes for FEB's students.

## Karina's Biography

Karina obtained her Master's degree from a public university in Indonesia in 2015. Before applying to be a faculty member of Romu University, she became an English tutor for elementary school students. Similar to Rio's experience, Karina also applied for a position as a faculty member in the English Department of the FETT in Romu University in 2016. However, when she was accepted to work there, she found out that she was positioned as an English instructor in the university's language centre, which was different from the position that she had applied for. During her first-year teaching there, she taught in English test preparation classes for freshmen in Romu University's language centre. Starting from 2017, she has been stationed in the Communication Science Department of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FSPS, hereafter). She has been teaching ESP subject in the department since then.

## Data Collection

Data were collected from in-depth one-on-one interviews with both participants, of which each interview lasted for about one and a half to two hours. The questions for the interviews were developed based on Kelchtermans' (2009) three elements that compose vulnerability in teaching. They focused on the participants' vulnerability

related to the political vulnerability resulted from their institutions' policies, their students' learning achievement, and their own vulnerability during their teaching practices. All interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to ease the participants in narrating their stories. The interviews were recorded, and the collected data were then transcribed for data analysis.

The data from the interview were collected and analysed by applying active interviewing perspective (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). In this regard, the meaning making was interactional and constructed together between the interviewer and participants (Song, 2016). As the researchers, we also played an active role in the interview, shifting between placing ourselves as the researchers and English teachers. Being an ESP teacher herself, one of us also shared her stories of her vulnerability and experiences in teaching ESP during the interviews. This helped the participants to be opened in sharing their stories as they had common ground with the researchers. Yet, we maintained our roles as researchers in interpreting the data collected from the interviews by having analytical perspective and paying close attention to the conflicts in the ESP teachers' stories.

## Data Analysis

We analysed the data by searching particularly for possible answers that are varied and often conflicting to highlight the multiple and differing nature of teachers' vulnerability. We adapted six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, we familiarized ourselves with the data collected from the interviews by repeatedly listening to the recordings. Second, we transcribed the data in the recordings and we read the transcriptions several times to grasp thorough understanding of the data. While transcribing the data, we also translated the data collected from the interviews in Bahasa Indonesia into English. Third, while reading and re-reading the transcriptions, we marked the excerpts from both participants which were relevant to Kelchterman's (2009) three elements of vulnerability in teaching. Fourth, we produced codes of the data. The coding process was theory-driven as we approached the data based on questions developed from the three elements of vulnerability in teaching. In coding the data, we aimed to identify features of the data that were related to the participants' vulnerability as well as their pedagogical and professional transformations. Fifth, we specified the codes into themes suitable with Kelchterman's (2009) three elements of vulnerability in teaching, including participants' vulnerability related to the political vulnerability resulted from their institutions' policies, students' learning achievement, and teachers' own vulnerability during their teaching practices. While doing this phase, we compared the data from both participants to find whether there were any coherent patterns related to

the three elements. Finally, we produced the report based on the conclusion that we drew from the previous phases of our data analysis stage.

We applied member checking to ensure the dependability or trustworthiness of the study. One of the methods in member checking is returning the collected and analysed data to the participants of a study (Birt et al., 2016). Doyle (2007) argues that member checking is regarded as “one of the most significant methods within qualitative research for establishing or strengthening the credibility of a study” (p. 889). In this study, member checking was completed by inviting the participants to give reviews, comments, and additions to the collected and analysed data. The participants offered additional interpretations that shape and enrich the findings of this study.

## FINDINGS

### Rio's Story

As stated in his biography, when Rio applied to become a faculty member at Sami University, he had not intended to become an ESP teacher there. His initial aim was to secure a position as a lecturer in the English Department of FETT. Nonetheless, he was not entirely surprised by the decision, as he had previously taught some ESP subjects at the university and had also represented it as an ESP teacher in a collaboration program with a university in Thailand. Rio believed he experienced a mix of emotions because he had faced a more significant setback when Sami University management misplaced his initial job application forms.

*When I applied for the position, no one from the university informed me about being stationed in the FEB. However, this lack of information didn't come as a shock to me. I had experienced something even more surprising before. When I returned from Thailand, I discovered that the university management had lost my job application forms, which I had already submitted to them. Despite this setback, one of the deputy rectors, who also happened to be my professor, suggested that I teach ESP subjects at the university while waiting for another opportunity to arise. Therefore, when the decision was made to assign me as an ESP teacher in the FEB, it didn't come as a significant surprise to me.*

Rio generally saw himself as someone capable of letting go and adjusting to new environments. Consequently, he noted that the longer he taught ESP subjects at FEB, the more he discovered the advantages of being an ESP teacher. One benefit he identified was the inherent specificity of teaching ESP, which made him feel like he had already found his calling in ELT.

*One advantage of being an ESP teacher for me is its specificity. I don't need to search for my niche in ELT; instead, I can delve deeper into ESP. Additionally, I believe there isn't as much research on ESP compared to other topics in ELT, which presents an opportunity for me to contribute to the field.*

Rio was confident that he had discovered his career path as an ESP teacher. His role in overseeing FEB's international events as the head of the faculty's IDD was a significant factor in solidifying this conviction. Furthermore, as an ESP teacher, he had the opportunity not only to instruct English to ESP students but also to professionals. Rio was of the belief that if the university were to assign him to the English Department of FETT in the future, he would continue teaching ESP subjects without hesitation.

*I think I have found my career path. I do not know why, but I think it is because I am managing the international division in the FEB. Besides that, when I teach ESP, I also teach ESP to professionals, not only to students. ... If one day I am stationed in the FETT, I still want to teach ESP*

Rio's conviction about finding his career path stemmed from his sense of comfort within his current academic environment at the FEB. He felt that his colleagues in the faculty treated him with kindness and recognized his abilities as an ESP teacher, as well as his capacity to assist the faculty, particularly in organizing its international events. Rio firmly believed that he had already established himself as an integral member of the FEB faculty.

*I am thankful that my colleagues in the FEB accept me and treat me nicely. Their responses are good, and I can do many things there. ... It is maybe because they know that I can do many things and get involved when they hold many events. ... I think I have made myself as an important member of the faculty.*

Rio's position as the head of FEB's IDD was crucial in fostering his comfort as one of the faculty members. He noted that his significant role in the faculty's internationalization programs made him feel appreciated by his colleagues. Rio believed that without his involvement in FEB's IDD, he might have felt isolated due to the lack of support for ESP teachers at Sami University. Additionally, as an ESP teacher, Rio felt valued by his colleagues in the FEB, who frequently sought his opinion on matters related to English.

*If I am not involved in the IDD, I would feel isolated because there is no supporting environment for ESP teachers in the university. By becoming the head of the IDD, I feel so appreciated here in the FEB. ... I also feel appreciated here for being an ESP teacher, not only being the head of the IDD. They often consult with me when there are things related to English, for example on the language of our scientific journal articles.*

Despite feeling comfortable in the FEB, Rio had concerns about his academic career development due to his affiliation with a non-English department, which

meant he lost the opportunity to supervise student thesis writings. However, Rio expressed that he had begun to let go of this concern gradually. The more he delved into understanding the necessary processes to advance his academic career, the more certain he became that he could still attain the highest academic status despite being stationed in a non-English department.

*It is true that I am worried with my career development, for example, because I lost the privilege to supervise student thesis writings. ... As long as I can become a professor one day, it is not a problem for me being stationed in the FEB. It is only a matter of administrative things.*

Rio was confident in his teaching method, observing a significant improvement in his students' English proficiency levels. By the end of his ESP courses, he assumed that most of his students had reached an intermediate level of proficiency. He favoured employing project-based learning in his ESP classes because he believed it indirectly compelled his students to engage with English.

*I think my students' achievements are moderate in general. ... At the beginning, most of them are poor in English. ... I can see their efforts when I applied project-based learning. ... You know, in private universities, we need to force our students to give their best in learning.*

Rio also took pride in his students' accomplishments, noting that more FEB students had participated in outbound mobility programs overseas in recent years compared to students from the English Department of FETT. He asserted that his teaching efforts in the FEB had truly made a difference in his students' academic achievements. Witnessing his students' success brought him satisfaction as an ESP teacher.

*I have many students who join outbound mobility programs overseas, and I am proud of it. That is a good achievement. I have bigger number of students who joined the mobility programs than those from the FETT. ... I strongly believe that my efforts to make my students learn do make a difference in their achievements. ... My students' success brings satisfaction to me.*

When asked how he would react if most of his ESP students were to fail, Rio expressed that he would feel disheartened and would need to reflect on himself, particularly his teaching methods. Fortunately, he had never encountered such a situation. He believed that by consistently giving his best efforts in teaching ESP, he was able to avoid such outcomes. Once more, he emphasized the importance of employing methods that indirectly encouraged his students to engage with English, highlighting their efficacy in fostering learning.

*If most of my students are failed, I must have a self-reflection. It means I did something wrong. However, thankfully, I have never experienced that. I do big, extra, efforts for my students, like making YouTube videos. ... I also "force" them to learn by giving them oral tests, so whether they like it or not, they must study.*

Rio expressed a dislike for feeling puzzled or powerless while teaching in the classroom. He emphasized his tendency to thoroughly prepare before entering his ESP classes. When faced with challenging questions from students, he responded based on his experiences and knowledge of relevant theories. Rio also asserted his flexibility in shifting teaching methods when things did not go as planned, reinforcing his adaptability to new environments. Throughout the discussion, Rio reiterated the extra efforts he made for his students in teaching ESP.

*I think I never got flustered when I teach because I usually prepare myself before that. I try to learn the content well, so until now, I never get surprised for being unprepared. ... I have ever got challenging questions from some of my students, and I answered them based on the theories that I know or from my experiences. ... I never hold answering my students' questions. I do not like it. I am not that kind of person. ... That is why I try to prepare myself well before I teach. ... When things go wrong in my classes, I am not puzzled. I think I am someone who can easily switch to something else when things do not go as I have planned.*

Rio's motivation for teaching ESP stemmed from his desire to unlock the potential of others, particularly his students, through the use of English. He was aware that he still had to learn more as an ESP teacher. Yet, he showed his confidence once again during the interview as he stated that he had already possessed a good content mastery. Rio believed he was on the correct path in developing his career as an ESP teacher.

*My self-driven motivation to teach ESP is I want to unlock one's potential which is often hindered by their inability in English. ... I have to learn more for teaching ESP. ... Now, I dare to say that I am very confident in teaching ESP. I believe that I have a good mastery of the content. Looking at my students' achievements, I know that I am on the right track.*

## **Karina's Story**

Like Rio, Karina did not initially intend to become an ESP teacher at Romu University. However, her path to the role was marked by a mistake in the university's announcement of job openings. In her first year as a faculty member, she taught at the university's language centre before eventually being assigned to the FSPS. Unlike Rio, Karina expressed stronger disappointment regarding this decision. She felt that the university management had misled her, but she was unable to contest it as she had already signed a contract with the university prior to the decision. Additionally, her department head once requested her to teach subjects unrelated to English, deepening her resentment toward the university management.

*When I knew that I was placed in the FSPS, I was angry and disappointed. I felt that I was deceived by the university. I have ever felt a grudge toward the*

*university's head of the personnel division. ... I still had to teach there because I have signed the contract given by the university. ... Once, the head of the department told me to accept it when I was asked to teach subjects unrelated to English. I was angry, confused, and disappointed at that that time. It was beyond my expectation.*

Realizing that there was little she could do to change her situation, Karina chose to adapt to her new role as an ESP teacher. Alongside other ESP teachers at Romu University who had faced similar circumstances, Karina took actions by adjusting the compulsory general English subjects offered by the faculty. They collectively decided to transition these subjects into ESP courses that better aligned with the needs of their students. This initiative marked the beginning of Karina's journey in transforming herself professionally as an ESP teacher.

*I had no choice but to accept the situation. ... The compulsory English subject for all freshmen in my university was about teaching General English. My colleagues and I discussed that, and we decided to make the compulsory English subject offered in our departments as ESP subjects.*

Karina's professional transformation was also supported by her academic environment in the FSPS. She noted that her colleagues treated her with kindness, and the FSPS management actively included her in all activities, especially those related to academic issues. The faculty management encouraged Karina to engage in research and community service projects related to English teaching, thus fostering her academic development. The supportive measures made her feel welcomed by her fellow faculty members in the FSPS.

*The dean always involves me in completing administrative matters and managing faculty's events. ... My colleagues in the department also treat me nicely. ... They make me a part of the team when we discuss academic issues. ... However, in terms of doing research or community services, I am usually partnered with ESP teachers from other non-English departments. ... I can use the results of the research or community services for my career development because they are still related to English teaching.*

Despite displaying a more positive attitude toward her new role as an ESP teacher, Karina still harboured concerns about her academic and professional development. She recounted moments where she felt her knowledge in English was underutilized, given her affiliation with a non-English department. Furthermore, she expressed worries about her inability to collaborate with students on English-related research projects or supervise thesis writings, as there were no university policies addressing such issues for faculty members outside the English department.

Although the university management assured her that she need not worry about her academic career development as long as she taught English-related subjects, Karina felt compelled to exert additional efforts to develop herself professionally.

She recognized the need to seek out other academic environments beyond her faculty for further growth. Despite these challenges, Karina acknowledged that accepting her situation as an ESP teacher was the only viable option at the moment.

*I was worried with my career development. ... The university management told me that no matter where I am stationed there would be no problem as long as I teach English related subjects. ... The first time I joined my department, I have ever felt that my knowledge in English is useless because I teach in a non-English department. ... I still feel that I need more efforts to develop myself professionally because I need to find other communities outside my department to develop myself. ... I want to have a chance to supervise students' thesis writings or do research with the students. ... However, for now, all I can do is accepting my situation.*

During the interview, Karina disclosed that she was a first-year student in a doctoral program in ELT at a public university in Indonesia. When asked about her future goals upon completing the program, she expressed uncertainty about her plans. She acknowledged that she might not be able to fully leverage her doctoral degree for career advancement if she remained affiliated with a non-English department. However, she hesitated to switch to a different affiliation because she felt comfortable in her current academic environment, a sentiment she reiterated multiple times during the interview. Adding to her dilemma, Karina admitted that she was not entirely comfortable with her status as an ESP teacher, believing that she lacked the necessary skills to effectively teach ESP subjects. This sense of discomfort compounded her uncertainty about her future career path.

*For now, I have no plan what I am going to do next after I earn my doctoral degree. ... If there is a chance to join the English department or to move to another university, I am not going to refuse it. However, I am comfortable joining my department now. ... I am still not comfortable with my position as an ESP teacher. ... I feel that I have to learn more to teach ESP because I'm not satisfied with my current achievements as an ESP teacher.*

During the discussion about her students' achievements, Karina expressed disappointment, noting that they were lower than her expectations. She attributed this partly to her perceived lack of qualifications in teaching ESP, which fuelled her desire to improve professionally in this area. However, her determination to enhance her skills faced a setback when she realized that teaching ESP subjects to freshmen, who mostly had low-level English proficiency, for just one semester would not yield significant impacts on their learning. Karina described her freshmen students as overly reliant on her for learning, necessitating constant control and coercion to engage them in the learning process. This situation left her feeling disheartened and discouraged.

*When my students' achievements are lower than what I expect from them, I realize that a part of it is because I am still lacking in terms of my teaching technique*

*in teaching ESP. ... It makes me realize that I need to improve myself. ... One thing that demotivates me as an ESP teacher now is that the English subject is offered to freshmen only for one semester because I feel like I have to always control them so that they will study.*

Karina experienced a range of emotions when observing her students' responses to her ESP classes. At times, she felt demotivated when she perceived that her students underestimated the importance of ESP subjects, perhaps viewing them as secondary. However, her motivation was reignited when she witnessed her students' excitement and dedication to learning the topics she presented. Karina explicitly stated that her motivation in teaching ESP was closely tied to her students' responses to her classes. Their engagement and enthusiasm served as a driving force for her to continue teaching ESP with passion and dedication.

*I become dispirited when my students take my class for granted. ... I felt that my students are forced to learn English, while English is not a subject of their expertise. However, when I see my students are excited and give their best effort to learn English although their proficiency is still low, it motivates me again to teach them English. ... My level of motivation relates to how my students respond to my teaching instructions.*

Karina found herself grappling with her students' low-level English proficiency, which significantly impacted her experience of teaching ESP. Frequently, she felt compelled to revert to teaching General English because her students struggled to grasp the ESP materials and activities provided to them. She observed that her students became disheartened when she shifted to teaching GE topics, as they perceived her ESP classes as resembling the English classes they had during secondary and high school. Nevertheless, Karina argued that she had no alternative but to revert to teaching GE due to her students' limited English proficiency. Despite these challenges, Karina endeavoured to adapt her materials by integrating content-specific topics. She aimed to align her ESP materials and activities with those used in content classes, thereby bridging the gap between language learning and subject-specific content.

*When I am forced to eventually go back to GE because of their low proficiency, I see that my students are not interested in my ESP class. It seems that they see my ESP class the same as their English classes during their secondary or high school days. ... Yet, I have no other choice to go back to teaching ESP because they will get puzzled if I directly give them reading texts suitable with teaching ESP. ... As much as I can, I try to relate the materials of my ESP classes with the contents specific to my students' expertise.*

Karina reflected on her experiences inside the classroom, sharing moments of feeling flustered when unable to answer students' questions, particularly those related to content-specific vocabulary. Additionally, she admitted to frequently becoming upset when students did not follow her instructions or when unforeseen circum-

stances disrupted her planned lessons, such as sudden university or faculty events. While these situations did not necessarily puzzle her, they did trouble her, as she felt pressured to swiftly devise alternative plans to maintain the flow of the class.

*I have experienced being flustered for being unable to answer their questions which are related to content-specific vocabulary. ... I get upset when things do not go as I have planned them. Such things happened because my students do not prepare themselves well although I have asked them to do that prior to the meeting or because the faculty suddenly asks me to attend an event. ... The situation does not puzzle me, but it makes me upset since I need to come up with new activities immediately.*

Karina perceived herself as inferior to content teachers in her department, believing that her students did not treat her with the same respect they showed to content teachers. She highlighted instances where students prioritized assignments from content classes over those from her ESP class, even when they shared the same deadline. This behaviour, in her view, reinforced the perception that students considered ESP subjects to be secondary to content subjects. Karina attempted to rationalize this situation by speculating that other ESP teachers affiliated with non-English departments might encounter similar challenges. This acknowledgment, however, did not diminish her feelings of inferiority or the frustration she experienced due to what she perceived as a lack of equal regard for ESP subjects compared to content subjects.

*Sometimes I feel that my position as their ESP teacher is lower than the position of their content teachers. I am not as important as those teachers. ... I think it is not only me who feel that way, but other ESP teachers who are affiliated in non-English departments may also feel the same thing.*

Despite experiencing discontentment and facing numerous challenges as an ESP teacher, Karina remained motivated to enhance her professional skills to elevate the quality of her ESP classes. Her self-driven motivation stemmed from a dream of assisting non-English department students in achieving proficiency in English. Karina found inspiration in the idea that while it may be common for English department students to excel in English, it is particularly commendable when non-English department students demonstrate proficiency not only in their content subjects but also in English. This aspiration served as a driving force for her to continuously strive for improvement as an ESP teacher.

## **DISCUSSION**

The analysis of Rio's and Karina's experiences as ESP teachers reveals different emotional responses and structural conditions in accepting their roles and pursuing

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