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**A CASE STUDY OF CHINESE NOVICE EFL TEACHERS’
EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES, CONTRIBUTING FACTORS, AND
REGULATION STRATEGIES DURING THEIR TEACHING JOURNEY**

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2025**



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Abstrak

Pengajaran bahasa adalah kompleks dari segi emosi. Walaupun terdapat peningkatan penyelidikan mengenai emosi guru bahasa, guru Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa Asing (EFL) yang masih baharu di universiti China masih kurang diterokai. Kajian ini menggunakan perspektif ekologi Bronfenbrenner untuk meneleki pengalaman emosi negatif, faktor penyumbang, serta strategi pengawalan emosi dalam kalangan 12 orang guru EFL baharu dari empat universiti awam di Wilayah Hebei, China. Data dikumpulkan melalui temubual separa berstruktur dan dokumen kes, termasuk jurnal reflektif, diari emosi, dan laporan kerja. Analisis kandungan mengenal pasti tiga kategori emosi negatif: ketakutan, kesedihan, dan kemarahan. Analisis tematik mendedahkan bahawa faktor-faktor dari pelbagai sistem ekologi menyumbang kepada pengalaman emosi tersebut. Dalam sistem mikro, pengaruh utama merangkumi pelajar kolej, kecekapan pengajaran guru, dan aktiviti pengajaran EFL. Mesosistem melibatkan hubungan interpersonal profesional dan cabaran mengimbangi pelbagai sistem mikro. Dalam eksosistem, program pendidikan dan latihan guru baharu membentuk pengalaman emosi negatif mereka. Di peringkat makrosistem, nilai-nilai sosial dan budaya masyarakat Cina, bersama dengan pembaharuan kurikulum pendidikan memainkan peranan penting. Akhir sekali, kronosistem menekankan sifat dinamik pengalaman emosi sepanjang masa. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa guru EFL baharu lebih cenderung menggunakan strategi fokus tindak balas seperti penindasan, penilaian semula, ekspresi tulen, refleksi, komunikasi dan penerimaan pasif berbanding strategi berfokuskan anteseden seperti pencegahan, campur tangan, tafsiran semula, pengalihan perhatian dan pengasingan. Kajian ini memperluaskan memperluaskan perbincangan dalam literatur sedia ada berkaitan pengalaman pengalaman emosi guru bahasa serta menekankan keperluan terhadap mekanisme sokongan yang disesuaikan untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan emosi dan pembangunan profesional guru EFL baharu.

Kata kunci: Guru EFL baru, Perspektif ekologi Bronfenbrenner, Pengalaman emosi negatif, Faktor pembentukan ekologi, Strategi peraturan emosi, Pembangunan profesional guru.

Abstract

Language teaching is emotionally complex. Despite increased research on language teachers' emotions, novice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Chinese universities remain underexplored. This study employs Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective to examine the negative emotional experiences, contributing factors, and regulation strategies of 12 novice EFL teachers from four public universities in Hebei Province, China. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and case documents, including reflective journals, emotional diaries, and work reports. Content analysis identified three categories of negative emotions: fear, sadness, and anger. Thematic analysis revealed that factors across ecological systems contribute to these emotions. In the microsystem, key influences include the college students, the teaching competence of teachers, and the EFL teaching activities. The mesosystem encompasses professional interpersonal relationships and the challenge of balancing different microsystems. Within the exosystem, novice teacher education and training programs shape their negative emotional experiences. At the macrosystem level, Chinese social and cultural values and educational curriculum reform are influential. Finally, the chronosystem emphasises the dynamic nature of emotional experiences over time. The study found that novice EFL teachers predominantly used response-focused strategies, such as suppression, reappraisal, genuine expression, reflection, communication, and passive acceptance, over antecedent-focused strategies, such as prevention, intervention, reinterpretation, attention diversion, and segregation. This study extends the existing literature on the emotional experiences of language teachers. The findings highlight the need for tailored support mechanisms to enhance novice EFL teachers' emotional well-being and professional development.

Keywords: Novice EFL teachers, Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective, Negative emotional experiences, Ecological formation factors, Emotional regulation strategies, Teacher professional development

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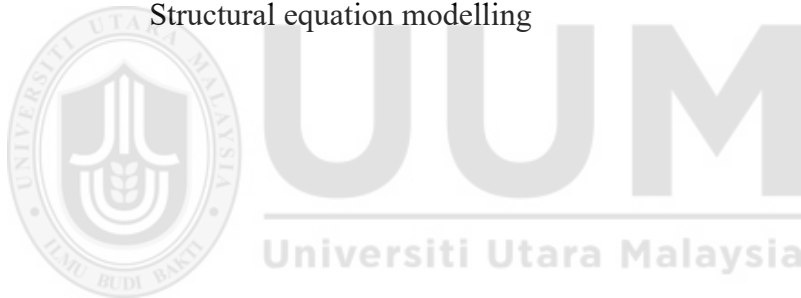
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List of Abbreviations

EFL	English as a foreign language
HEIs	Higher education institutions
GE	General English
MoE	Ministry of Education
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
RQ	Research questions
TPD	Teachers' Professional Development
PCK	Pedagogical content knowledge
SEM	Structural equation modelling



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter provides the background information for researching novice EFL teachers' emotions in Chinese universities. It encompasses articulating the problem statement, delineating research objectives and questions, elucidating the study's significance, and providing operational definitions. At the end of this chapter, the organisation of the thesis is also outlined.

1.2 Background of the Study

English as a foreign language or EFL teacher is the most populous teaching profession worldwide. They are vital in facilitating language learning for non-native English speakers and meeting the growing demand for global English proficiency (Dang et al., 2023). Due to significant sociocultural improvements and the growing significance of English for individual academic achievement, China is the home to the largest number of English language learners worldwide. Since English is a fundamental component of educational mobility, including chances to study abroad, it has been made a required subject from primary third grade to undergraduate studies (Bolton & Graddol, 2012; Gutema et al., 2024). This increasing demand has created a great demand for EFL teachers in academic institutions and non-degree language training centres. In particular, teachers with advanced competency or learning experiences in English-speaking nations are particularly desired (Zhang & Zhang, 2023). According to

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent for the Institute

Informed Consent for the Institute

I am Zhang Yingying, a PhD candidate at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). I am working on my doctoral thesis, “**Public University Novice EFL Teachers’ Negative Emotional Experiences and Emotion Regulation Strategies in Hebei Province, China.**” I would be very grateful if I were granted the opportunity to conduct the study at the institute to achieve its objectives.

Purpose of the Study: This study aims to explore Chinese university novice EFL teachers’ negative emotional experiences, formation factors, and emotion regulation strategies.

Procedures: If you grant permission for this study, the specific methods or activities involved include inviting some novice EFL teachers (teaching less than five years) to record reflective journals and emotional diaries during their daily EFL teaching and attend the semi-structured interviews.

Risks and Benefits: There are no anticipated risks associated with allowing this study. Potential benefits include providing support and suggestions in EFL teaching, research, and teacher professional development for these participants.

Confidentiality: All identifying information will be excluded from the research, and the university's and participants' names will remain completely anonymous in data analysis and reporting.

Voluntary Participation:

The decision to participate in the study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse permission or withdraw permission for the study to be conducted at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about the study or your rights as the research site, please feel free to contact me through any of the following:

Name of the researcher: Zhang Yingying

Address: Universiti Utara Malaysia

06010 UUM Sintok

Kedah Druai Aman, Malaysia

Tel: 86+15130337098 (China)

Email: zhang_yingying@ahsgs.uum.edu.my.

Consent:

By signing this form, you indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above and that they voluntarily grant permission for the study.

Signature of Dean:

Date:

Appendix B: Informed Consent for Participants

Informed Consent

I am Zhang Yingying, a PhD candidate at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). I am working on my doctoral thesis, “**Public University Novice EFL Teachers’ Negative Emotional Experiences and Emotion Regulation Strategies in Hebei Province, China**”. I would be very grateful if I were granted the opportunity to conduct the study at the institute to achieve its objectives.

Purpose of the Study: This study aims to explore Chinese university novice EFL teachers’ negative emotional experiences, formation factors, and emotion regulation strategies. Your emotional experiences can contribute much to my understanding of novice EFL teachers’ emotional research.

Procedures: If you grant permission for this study, the specific methods or activities involved include recording reflective journals and emotional diaries during their daily EFL teaching and attending the semi-structured interviews and follow-up interviews. The interviews will take about 60 minutes at your convenience.

Risks and Benefits: There are no anticipated risks associated with allowing this study. Potential benefits include providing support and suggestions in EFL teaching, research, and teacher professional development for these participants.

Confidentiality: All identifying information will be excluded from the research, and the university's and participants' names will remain completely anonymous in data analysis and reporting.

Voluntary participation: The decision to participate in the study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse permission or withdraw permission for the study to be conducted at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about the study or your rights as the research site, please feel free to contact me through any of the following:

Name of the researcher: Zhang Yingying

Address: Universiti Utara Malaysia

06010 UUM Sintok

Kedah Drual Aman, Malaysia

Tel: 86+15130337098 (China)

CONSENT

I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I recognise that my participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time without providing a reason or incurring any costs. I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant : _____ Date _____ (Day/month/year)

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date _____ (Day/month/year)

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Project: Chinese Universities EFL Novice Teachers' Negative Emotional Experiences and Emotion Regulation Strategies in Hebei Province

Date: Location:

Interviewer: Interviewee: two

Introductory questions

Icebreaker Please tell me some details about yourself, such as your personal information, educational background, and work experiences.

Probing questions:

Microsystem

1. Would you like to talk about your first teaching experience?
2. How do you feel when you are teaching English with the students?
3. What factors contribute to the negative emotions you experience while teaching?
4. How do you regulate these negative emotions?
5. How about your teaching workload at present?
6. What do you feel towards the teaching-related activities? (Teaching preparation, teaching contests, students' paper supervision)
7. How do you regulate your emotions when engaging in these teaching-related activities?
8. How do you feel when you come back home after a day of teaching?
9. Do you share your work-related bad moods with your parents or close friends?
10. Are you satisfied with your current salary? How about your income in the first year?
11. How do family factors influence your emotions during EFL teaching?
12. How do you regulate with negative emotions arising from family and income-related concerns?

Mesosystem

- Professional and interpersonal relationships
13. What kind of people do you interact with in your daily professional work? (Colleagues, administrators, leaders)
 14. Have there been any incidents or challenges during these interactions that resulted in unhappy emotions for you?
 15. How do you regulate with negative emotions arising from your professional interpersonal relationships?

Exosystem

- Organization and community level
16. What do you think of the pre-job training programs for novice teachers in your province?
 17. What do you think of the pre-job training programs for novice teachers in your school?
 18. Have you adapted to the school's environment, policies, and administrative procedures?
 19. How do these factors affect your emotional well-being?
 20. What is your attitude toward scientific research and academic title evaluation in your profession?
 21. How do you regulate your negative emotions related to these school-level factors?

Macrosystem

- National and social level
22. What are the recent national teaching reform and practices in your country?
 23. Can you share your insights on recent national teaching reforms and practices on your EFL teaching?
 24. How do you regulate your negative emotions related to social-level factors such as teaching reforms and external events?

Chronosystem

- With time goes by
25. What are the changes in your emotional experiences as time goes by?
 26. What are the changes of your emotional regulation methods as time goes by?

Exiting questions:

Would you like to add anything before we finish?

Is there any suggestion of today's interview?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATICIPATION!

Appendix D: Interview Transcripts (Excerpt Sample)

Interview Translated Transcript

(Excerpt Sample from T6-Shirly)

Lydia (00:00:02): Hello, Shirly. I'm happy you could join my interview today. First, please briefly discuss your educational background.

Shirly (00:00:13): Educational background. I majored in English for my undergraduate studies. Then, for my postgraduate studies, I pursued a master's degree in foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at Nankai University.

Lydia (00:00:30): Do you think your undergraduate major and master's in applied linguistics impact your current teaching?

Shirly (00:00:44): I've always studied English. I am now an English teacher. My postgraduate studies in linguistics have specific benefits for my current teaching. Linguistics is about studying language, how to learn language, and more profound aspects. So, it has helped me with my work.

Lydia (00:01:19): Have you encountered difficulties in your teaching process?

Shirly (00:01:32): Because linguistics tends to focus on theory, it may not be as practical as teacher education majors, which emphasise teaching practice more. In my everyday teaching, I need more practical experience.

Lydia (00:01:59): Do you think new teachers graduating from teacher education colleges have any advantages?

Shirly (00:02:09): They may have more abundant teaching practice experience.

Lydia (00:02:10): How long have you been in your current position?

Shirly (00:02:14): I should have been in my position for one and a half years. I started teaching in September 2022.

Lydia (00:02:50): And what courses did you teach before?

Shirly (00:02:56): Currently, I teach college English.

Lydia (00:03:00): In teaching, how do you get along with your students?

Shirly (00:03:10): Initially, it was a bit challenging. After half a year of teaching practice, my relationship with students is now acceptable.

Lydia (00:03:24): When you mentioned the initial discomfort, what exactly do you mean?

Shirly (00:03:29): The role still needs to be entirely switched. At that time, I didn't feel like a teacher. It felt a bit unnatural.

Lydia (00:03:40): So, what do you think are the reasons for not being able to switch roles well?

Shirly (00:03:56): It's related to the non-teacher education background. Those who have undergone pre-service practice can enter the role earlier, unlike us, who need time to adjust.

Lydia (00:04:14): Do you remember the first time you stood on the podium?

Shirly (00:04:14): Last September of the previous semester, I had a class and felt so nervous! Very nervous.

Lydia (00:04:33): Where does this nervousness come from? What do you think are the reasons for your nervousness?

Shirly (00:05:39): There were so many students in the classroom. I've never experienced such a situation before. Facing so many people to lecture, I was afraid of not teaching well. This should be attributed to a need for more confidence!

Lydia (00:08:22): Did you start teaching these students from the first semester or the middle of their sophomore year?

Shirly (00:08:29): I took over from other colleagues starting my sophomore year. So, students might compare the experiences of the previous teacher, an experienced one, with me, a new teacher. They may not entirely approve of the transition.

Lydia (00:09:08): Well, worried that students might disapprove, right?

Shirly (00:09:11): Yes, worried that students may disapprove. Another reason is that my teaching experience could be more affluent, and I need practical experience, so I need to improve.

Lydia (00:09:33): Well, does this state of not being able to switch roles well may have specific reasons?

Shirly (00:09:39): My psychological lack of confidence will affect my performance in class.

Lydia (00:09:49): How did you adjust your state then? Did you make any adjustments?

Shirly (00:09:58): Later, it took a long time to adjust, probably about half a year. The adjustment is mainly through communication and feedback with students and other teachers. I realised that this approach needed fixing and some necessary changes. I tried to make some changes to become more confident.

Lydia (00:10:29): What specific changes did you make?

Shirly (00:10:34): I made some changes in attitude and behaviour. In terms of attitude, I needed to be more confident. I had to learn some skills, treating teaching as a performance. Regarding behaviour, I learned from other teachers, paying attention to teaching demeanour during lectures.

Lydia (00:11:11): Do you think the preparation situation will affect your performance in class?

Shirly (00:11:19): Yes, it will. If the preparation is sufficient, I will be well-prepared in advance, and I anticipate giving a more exciting class to be more confident. If there is time for preparation and the preparation is sufficient, then I will be more confident in class.

Lydia (00:11:47): Is the current teaching workload heavy for you?

Shirly (00:11:50): I am responsible for four college English classes and should have six weekly and 12 sessions.

Lydia (00:12:07): Are the majors and English levels of the students in these four classes the same?

Shirly (00:12:12): No, they are different, and their majors are also different.

Lydia (00:12:15): Alright, do you think the performance of students from different majors will affect your emotional experience?

Shirly (00:12:22): Yes, it will affect, and there is a pronounced difference.

Lydia (00:12:28): Can you briefly talk about the situation of these four classes?

Shirly (00:12:34): I currently have a class majoring in Economic Statistics, one in Financial Mathematics, one in Insurance, and one mixed. The class atmosphere of Economic Statistics is particularly dull, but their learning level is quite good. The atmosphere in class is very tedious and inactive, and this class should be the one that affects my mood the most because when you ask questions, they seem like they need to be more cooperative. I was initially lecturing quite well, but seeing their feedback made me feel a loss of confidence. Initially, you were pretty spirited, and slowly, you got a sense of frustration from their performance.

Lydia (00:13:56): And what about your other classes?

Shirly (00:13:59): They are relatively more active in financial mathematics. They handle their relationship with the teacher better. So, when teaching this class, I was the most relaxed and happy.

Lydia (00:14:25): Well, does this relaxation and happiness come from the atmosphere in the classroom?

Shirly (00:14:32): Yes, mainly from this atmosphere and the interaction between students and teachers.

Lydia (00:14:44): Have there been any unexpected situations you did not anticipate in the teaching process?

Shirly (00:14:53): Major unexpected situations, I think not. For classroom equipment, because I am sometimes nervous, and when operating various devices, I feel that my mind is not enough. I often forget some things and handle them less thoughtfully.

Lydia (00:15:45): How do you feel when there are problems with the multimedia equipment during class?

Shirly (00:15:53): It's also very frustrating. I need to do better.

Lydia (00:16:00): Oh, does this sense of frustration last long?

Shirly (00:16:12): It lasts pretty long.

Lydia (00:16:15): If the negative emotions persist, do you have any appropriate ways to adjust?

Shirly (00:16:24): At that time, I couldn't immediately think of a way to adjust. Although I wanted to change myself, I needed help finding a good way.

Lydia (00:16:37): Still trying to figure out how to adjust this state, right? Were there any training sessions when you first joined the school?

Shirly (00:16:59): In the first half year when we first came, the school specifically held a workshop for the new teachers of that year, and some simulations were conducted. However, opportunities were relatively scarce, just going on stage once.

Lydia (00:17:20): You mentioned the simulation; what kind of simulation was it?

Shirly (00:17:23): It was a teaching practice simulation.

Lydia (00:17:26): Teaching practice simulation, right? At that time, did the teachers evaluate your teaching behaviour under the stage?

Shirly (00:17:35): There were some evaluations.

Lydia (00:17:37): Do you think this feedback is important to you?

Shirly (00:17:41): It's pretty essential. The feedback is on some more common issues.

Lydia (00:17:48): Did you pass the higher education teacher qualification certificate examination?

Shirly (00:18:05): Yes, I have obtained the qualification certificate.

Lydia (00:18:06): How do you view this exam?

Shirly (00:18:11): This exam, how to say, is a qualification for teachers engaged in higher education. The written test is helpful for teaching because it covers education and psychology, which can be beneficial.

Lydia (00:18:51): During your preparation, were specific teachers who came to give classes for you?

Shirly (00:19:02): There was online learning! However, the courses were recorded lectures, and there was no opportunity to communicate with the lecturer if there were doubts about the course.

Lydia (00:19:23): Were there any doubts in your preparation?

Shirly (00:19:29): There were some doubts.

Lydia (00:19:33): How was your state when preparing for the exam? Was the workload heavy?

Shirly (00:19:40): At that time, the semester had yet to be scheduled for us. So, there was still some time to look at relevant books.

Lydia (00:19:57): You mentioned higher education and higher education psychology earlier. Why do you think these two courses are helpful for you?

Shirly (00:20:21): It covers some knowledge of education and psychology, which I needed to gain.

Lydia (00:21:08): You mentioned earlier that when you started working, you had negative emotions and didn't know how to adjust. So, is it necessary to pay attention to teachers' psychological and emotional aspects in relevant courses, focusing on their mental state?

Shirly (00:21:55): It is essential. New teachers must improve their lesson preparation, adjust their roles, and understand how teachers can undergo psychological debugging.

Lydia (00:22:30): How would you describe your overall emotional experience in the past year?

Shirly (00:22:44): Overall, it's a bit negative but improving and growing.

Lydia (00:22:56): If there are specific courses or teachers to teach you how to adjust when you have these negative emotions, how do you think it will affect your negative feelings?

Shirly (00:23:10): The duration of the existence of negative emotions will be shortened.

Lydia (00:23:13): Well, when you are in a low mood, how do you generally adjust yourself?

Shirly (00:23:25): It's mostly self-reflection, reflecting on where I did not do well, and then learning, trying to find ways to solve these problems.

Lydia(00:23:41): Okay, let's get back to teaching. Have you participated in any teaching competitions related to your field so far?

Shirly (00:23:55): I participated in my first year's national teaching innovation competition.

Lydia(00:24:15): Could you briefly describe that competition?

Shirly (00:24:26): The preliminary round required creating a PowerPoint presentation and preparing teaching design materials. Since we decided to participate on short notice, we needed more time. I teamed up with a colleague, and we divided the tasks. I was responsible for the teaching presentation.

Lydia(00:25:06): How was your emotional state during the preparation process?

Shirly (00:25:11): Because it was a bit rushed, and this was the first time I had participated in such a competition, plus I needed more confidence in myself. So, I was pretty anxious. However, I realised it was work and required to take it seriously. I learned from some excellent experiences of other teachers. During the preparation, I had to work late into the night for several days, working until after 10 PM every day for a couple of weeks.

Lydia(00:26:11): Did you gain anything from the competition?

Shirly (00:26:18): Although the results weren't excellent, they were somewhat unexpected. Given the limited time, I thought the quality of our work wouldn't be great, and I believed it would be overlooked. Surprisingly, even though it was the lowest level, we received an award: an honourable mention.

Lydia(00:26:50): Despite the outcome, what did you gain from this experience?

Shirly (00:26:56): Well, after this experience, I started to engage in this kind of work, and when I encountered similar teaching competitions later on, I gained some small experience. It also boosted my confidence, and I knew how to prepare for such events.

Lydia(00:27:19): Do you plan to participate in similar teaching competitions in the future?

Shirly (00:27:24): I probably will.

Lydia(00:27:26): This experience has particularly impacted your future career development, right?

Shirly (00:27:32): Yes, it has, as it was like a first attempt, taking the first step.

Lydia(00:29:06): In your unit, after joining, do you have responsibilities guiding students' theses?

Shirly(00:29:13): No, because we are not a specific department but a university English teaching department. We don't have our students, nor do we have such responsibilities.

Lydia(00:29:30): Let's talk about your family life. I read in your journal that your family expectations had some influence on your choice of this profession. Could you elaborate on that?

Shirly (00:29:48): My parents had higher expectations for me. That's why I later decided to pursue postgraduate studies and aim for a job with a relatively higher social status. Hence, I chose the job of a university teacher.

Lydia(00:30:21): Before joining, did your unit have a rigorous selection process?

Shirly (00:30:29): There was a written test and an interview.

Lydia(00:30:33): After joining, for instance, when you had moments of self-doubt or frustration, did you choose to communicate with your parents?

Shirly (00:30:49): I only communicated a little with them because my parents have relatively low educational backgrounds. When discussing work-related matters with them, they couldn't understand, and I didn't get much help from them. So, I rarely communicate with my parents.

Lydia(00:31:27): When you experience negative emotions, how do you usually handle them?

Shirly (00:31:33): I mainly handle it on my own.

Lydia(00:31:36): Do you have friends or classmates to contact in this process?

Shirly(00:31:39): No.

Lydia(00:31:43): Do you think your way of regulating emotions is related to your personality?

Shirly (00:31:59): It is related to personality. Extroverted people might actively talk to others, seek help from colleagues, or even communicate with students. But I am relatively introverted, so I internalise my feelings.

Lydia(00:32:31): What do you mean by "internalise"?

Shirly(00:32:42): Self-reflection.

Lydia(00:32:45): Do you think the income you receive after joining the university is as expected?

Shirly (00:32:53): Well, it's a bit lower than I expected, especially in the beginning. The salary was relatively low.

Lydia(00:33:01): Do you feel any internal discrepancy?

Shirly(00:33:12): Yes, there is a discrepancy. During that time, the job was tough. Despite the difficulties, I was earning such a small salary. It felt like working so hard, and the pay was even less than what children who hadn't gone to school could earn by working.

Lydia(00:33:26): Can you reveal approximately how much you earn in a month?

Shirly(00:33:31): About 3000.

Lydia(00:33:33): You mentioned earlier about the difficulty of your work. What tasks did you undertake in your first year?

Shirly(00:33:39): I had to take on class-related administrative tasks then. I had to be on duty in the office from Monday to Friday, handle all the administrative work for the department, and write materials and news releases. In short, all kinds of miscellaneous tasks were part of our job.

Lydia(00:34:12): Were you a jack of all trades?

Shirly(00:34:13): Yes, that's right.

Lydia(00:34:15): It seems like you had a lot of responsibilities in your first year. How did you feel about it?

Shirly(00:34:27): At that time, because of the duty shifts, I felt exhausted. I didn't expect the job to be so exhausting.

Lydia(00:34:42): Do your superiors usually assign your work?

Shirly(00:35:00): Other teachers may also assign tasks, such as helping them invigilate exams, but the assignments come mainly from within the department. As I had to be in the office from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day, time was tight.

Lydia(00:35:30): Did you consider resigning during that time?

Shirly(00:35:36): There was some subconscious consideration, but if you ask about actually resigning, I definitely wouldn't. Getting this job was difficult, and I wouldn't easily give it up.

Lydia(00:35:47): What were the reasons behind the subconscious thought of resigning?

Shirly(00:35:53): I thought the work would continue to be like this in the future, and I felt some pressure. Perhaps it was because of the transition from student to professional life, and I needed to adapt better.

Lydia(00:36:19): Where did this pressure come from?

Shirly(00:36:22): At that time, without teaching, it might have come from the transition in roles entering the workforce. I wasn't used to it.

Lydia(00:36:36): Did your thoughts about resigning relate to your income?

Shirly(00:36:42): Yes, because I was earning such a low salary then, and I didn't know how much I would earn in the future. When I asked colleagues, they said our school's salary was meagre. I began to question the significance of the job. The school had strict requirements, and with such low pay, I started to doubt the meaning of the job.

Lydia(00:37:38): After experiencing these emotions, how did you adjust?

Shirly(00:37:44): At that time, my family was from another city, and I needed more social support here, so I only had a few people to talk to. I could only speak to my parents, but they didn't quite understand.

Lydia(00:38:04): How did things change after the one-year probationary period?

Shirly(00:38:24): After working for a year, the situation improved, and my salary increased slightly. I no longer have to be on duty, so I have more free time.

Lydia(00:38:43): How is your relationship with colleagues at work?

Shirly(00:39:17): I need to become more familiar with my colleagues because I am introverted. As full-time teachers, we are more individualistic and focus on our work. There is little opportunity for teachers to connect, and we can go home after class.

Lydia(00:39:57): Does your school have a system for young mentors?

Shirly(00:40:02): Yes, I had a mentor when I started, and my relationship with him was more familiar.

Lydia(00:40:11): Do you think you benefited from the young mentor system?

Shirly(00:40:18): Yes, it was helpful. I am still attending my mentor's classes and learning much from him.

Lydia(00:40:33): What are you learning from your mentor?

Shirly(00:40:37): My mentor teaches me some teaching methods and good designs. I think it's more about interacting with students and controlling the classroom.

Lydia(00:41:02): Can you briefly describe your mentor?

Shirly(00:41:09): My mentor is versatile and comprehensive. He excels in various aspects, mainly controlling the classroom and interacting with students. He is well-liked by students, and his teaching evaluations are consistently high.

Lydia(00:41:50): Apart from teaching, did your mentor provide help or guidance in other aspects?

Shirly(00:41:58): He didn't directly assist me in other areas, but I could learn his teaching demeanour and style from him.

Lydia(00:42:16): Do you have much contact with your mentor outside class?

Shirly(00:42:21): Quite a bit. I have the best relationship with my mentor.

Lydia(00:42:28): What role do you think your mentor plays in your career?

Shirly(00:42:34): He helps improve my teaching, but in terms of career planning, research, and participating in competitions, my mentor hasn't provided much guidance in those areas, like a master guiding an apprentice.

Lydia(00:42:54): Do you think these aspects are necessary for you?

Shirly(00:42:58): They are necessary because I could be more proactive. I want a mentor who can help me throughout my career like a master guiding an apprentice.

Lydia(00:43:16): What about your new colleagues? Do they evaluate their mentors?

Shirly(00:43:23): One of my colleagues, who started with me, has a mentor similar to our discussion. The mentor makes specific demands on him, such as preparing work, writing papers, and showcasing teaching designs in the next class.

Lydia(00:43:48): Oh, the mentor truly makes demands and asks for changes. So, you expect the mentors in the young mentor system to provide guidance in specific directions?

Shirly(00:44:14): Yes, that's right.

Lydia(00:44:22): In the past year and a half, besides having more contact with your mentor, have there been any incidents or interactions with your superiors?

Shirly(00:44:38): Regarding superiors, they mainly provide feedback on my teaching. At the end of last semester, the leader gave me feedback, suggesting that I needed to improve.

Lydia(00:45:03): How did you feel when the leader gave you this feedback?

Shirly(00:45:09): In the past, if leaders spoke with a high and mighty attitude, I would feel increased pressure and a resistance mentality. I only felt the pressure without figuring out how to solve it. But the leader spoke very sincerely this time, considering my career planning. Under these circumstances, although I still felt some pressure, I wanted to turn the pressure into motivation. I thought about how I could change.

Lydia(00:46:00): Why do you think the leader's style changed?

Shirly(00:46:08): It's not that the style drastically changed; it's more that there was less human care. This time, I could feel that he genuinely cared for me. He spoke very earnestly, probably because the leader thought I had been working for a long time and needed to make changes.

Lydia(00:46:34): How often do you interact with your leaders?

Shirly(00:46:37): Not much regularly.

Lydia(00:46:40): Why not much interaction?

Shirly(00:46:45): There is a sense of distance and awe.

Lydia(00:47:11): Alright. You mentioned earlier that you sometimes resist when older colleagues ask you to do specific tasks. Is that correct?

Shirly(00:47:27): Yes, I sometimes resist tasks like invigilating exams or helping with end-of-term exam papers because, as young teachers, we still take on some administrative tasks for the department. Although not on duty, we still handle materials and teaching courses. So, I tend to resist.

Lydia(00:48:06): Do you express your reluctance to accept these tasks?

Shirly(00:48:10): I express it tactfully. I would politely refuse. But at the same time, I consider the relationship, thinking that young teachers should take on the tasks assigned by senior teachers.

Lydia(00:48:31): Is the work assigned by those senior teachers their responsibility or arranged by your teaching and research department?

Shirly(00:48:42): It should be their own assigned work.

Lydia(00:48:49): Do you feel any change in your relationship with colleagues after refusing such tasks?

Shirly(00:48:56): Generally, I prefer to express a refusal attitude first, but I'm afraid of causing discord. I can still help you if you are still looking for someone else. I tend to refuse tactfully, but in the end, I still end up helping them.

Lydia(00:49:20): Oh, do you think the way your school deals with issues with senior teachers is related to traditional Chinese culture?

Shirly(00:49:31): It's highly related. Only after I started working did I realise that our country still has deep-rooted traditions, such as the hierarchy in the workplace and the traditional notions of seniority.

Lydia(00:49:54): Actually, you didn't want to do it, but considering the relationship with your colleagues, how do you feel when doing these tasks?

Shirly(00:50:17): It affects my work state in two ways. First, it adds to my workload, affecting my usual class preparations. Second, it affects my mood, making things more stressful and causing anxiety.

Lydia(00:50:38): Do you have any suitable methods to adjust?

Shirly(00:50:47): If it's related to relationships with colleagues, we, young teachers, have a group, and I might complain about these things with other colleagues in the group.

Lydia(00:51:05): Through your communication, do you find similar situations happening to other new teachers?

Shirly(00:51:12): More or less, they all encounter some.

Lydia(00:51:18): Do they handle it the same way as you do?

Shirly(00:51:23): They have yet to express how they handle it explicitly. If the department assigns some tasks, they complain similarly but won't outright refuse.

Lydia(00:51:45): So, it's like, because I'm a newcomer, I have to do more.

Shirly(00:51:50): Yes, that's right.

Lydia(00:51:52): Do you usually interact with administrative teachers from other departments?

Shirly(00:52:04): Some tasks involve communication with other functional departments.

Lydia(00:52:09): How is your interaction with them while handling these matters?

Shirly(00:52:15): I take work seriously but am a bit slow. For example, I always submit information late. Teachers in the personnel department may be happier with me.

Lydia(00:52:54): Oh, did this dissatisfaction manifest in any way?

Shirly(00:52:59): There may be some unhappiness expressed in words.

Lydia(00:53:02): Hmm, how about your relationship with teachers from other departments?

Shirly(00:53:30): Overall, it is relatively smooth without affecting the work process.

Lydia(00:53:41): We just discussed the national teacher qualification examination. Does your school offer other relevant training for new teachers?

Shirly(00:53:53): In addition to the teacher qualification certificate, there was a training workshop for new teachers in their first year after joining. This semester, our school plans to gather new and old teachers for exchange and discussion and organise similar activities.

Lydia(00:54:27): Does your department provide specific training for foreign language teachers?

Shirly(00:54:33): Our department has regular meetings every Monday or Thursday. Teachers conduct teaching exchanges, discussions, or presentations during these meetings internally. There are also teaching and research workshops, usually inviting experts to lecture, and new teachers can learn a lot from them.

Lydia(00:55:09): Okay, let us talk about research. In your initial journal submission, you mentioned being somewhat fearful of research. However, you mentioned earlier this year that your attitude towards research has changed. Can you elaborate on that?

Shirly(00:55:41): Yes, there has been a slight change. Research is similar to teaching competitions—you must act and not just sit there and think. This attitude change has given me more confidence. For example, our department organised training courses related to research. Although I only learned a little, I am actively preparing and gaining confidence.

Lydia(00:56:29): Do you understand your unit's academic title evaluation regulations?

Shirly(00:56:41): Well, not very precisely. It could be related to the stage I am currently in because it still feels quite distant from the title evaluation. So, I have yet to pay much attention to this.

Lydia(00:57:02): In your daily interactions with colleagues, have any teachers mentioned things related to research, title evaluation, etc.?

Shirly(00:57:12): Well, I mainly communicate with the few new young teachers. They might occasionally mention these things, but our discussions mainly concern routine teaching.

Lydia(00:57:47): When do you think you will start paying attention to the title evaluation?

Shirly(00:57:59): It will be when I can firmly stand in front of the classroom and proficiently control the class.

Lydia(00:58:13): Okay, regarding research, are you willing to join other people's research teams?

Shirly(00:58:26): If it is teachers I get along with or those with good character, I am very willing to cooperate.

Lydia(00:58:39): Regarding research team members, is it more about being involved throughout or just having your name on it?

Shirly(00:58:51): I need clarification about that. It depends on actually doing the work. In the process of doing it, you can learn more, and that is more important.

Lydia(01:00:38): Does your unit have ongoing teaching reforms or practices? Moreover, do these reforms affect your teaching work?

Shirly(01:00:58): It does have an impact. Our school is like a pioneer, constantly trying new things and innovations in teaching. Teacher requirements are relatively high, and ideological and political education concepts are frequently emphasised. For example, last semester, our school focused on course design.

Lydia(01:01:29): Does it affect your teaching work?

Shirly(01:01:34): Yes, it does. Because it is at the school level, it imposes specific requirements for approaching it. For me, it is an opportunity for growth. It encourages me to learn new knowledge and theories, which is very helpful for teaching.

Lydia(01:02:01): Can you specify how it helps you improve yourself?

Shirly(01:02:11): These scattered elements and course-related ideological education helped me design the class more reasonably. They also helped me learn and apply new teaching theories to teaching practice, improving my class design and student interaction.

Lydia(01:02:42): Does it add pressure to your lesson preparation?

Shirly(01:02:46): I do not think so. As long as it is meaningful, it will not increase pressure.

Lydia(01:02:55): What other teaching reforms does your school have?

Shirly(01:03:02): Our school often emphasises a blended online and offline teaching mode, which is well implemented. We have online and offline classes and micro-lessons; our teachers are dedicated and responsible.

Lydia(01:03:30): When you first encountered this blended teaching, did it create pressure for you?

Shirly(01:03:39): Initially, I did not quite understand the term and felt it was high-level. I needed to learn how to implement it. Later, by observing other teachers' classes, I found it an excellent method that helps improve our teaching.

Lydia(01:04:08): What emotional experience do these teaching reforms bring you?

Shirly(01:04:17): Certainly, there are some negative emotions, a feeling of resistance. Especially for new things, there is a feeling of resistance, which increases work pressure. Now, I tend to consider it positively. It helps me grow faster and is conducive to improving my teaching, so I find it helpful.

Lydia(01:04:59): In the past year, whether the emotional experiences were positive or negative, do they empower you somehow?

Shirly(01:05:16): Yes, they do empower. Positive emotional experiences indeed empower. Regarding negative ones, it depends on how you view them. Recognising some issues and working to change them is a form of empowerment.

Lydia(01:05:57): Do you feel your efforts are practical?

Shirly(01:06:00): There is some effectiveness. Positive emotional experiences empower. Recognising and addressing negative emotions prompted me to make a thorough change. Now, I am making a concerted effort to enhance myself.

Lydia(01:06:34): One last question. What challenges do you think English major new teachers will face compared to other new teachers?

Shirly(01:07:08): English teachers are different from teachers of other subjects. It may be related to the nature of the English subject itself. Especially for university English, it is not a specialised course and needs specific knowledge; it is all scattered. On the one hand, students may need to attach more importance to it. On the other hand, there needs to be more consistency in how to teach such a course. You can prepare it differently than high school English, which focuses on grammar points. It is also a

window to understanding the external world, Western culture, and customs, and you need some profound knowledge. However, in this situation, students may need help understanding. The class could be more helpful than other professional courses packed with expertise. So, if students cannot participate well in class, I feel frustrated.

Lydia(01:08:37): Are there pressures for lesson preparation for you and your colleagues in this regard?

Shirly(01:08:44): Yes, there are pressures. Students' demands and sense of achievement are different, which adds pressure to lesson preparation.

Lydia(01:08:50): Hmm, do you conduct classes entirely in English?

Shirly(01:08:55): Currently, it is not entirely in English. Since students only have 90 minutes of reading and writing classes per week, using full English might take time.

Lydia(01:09:09): Firstly, do you feel pressure when teaching entirely in English?

Shirly(01:09:14): There is pressure, a bit of pressure. My English proficiency is challenging, and students need help understanding. For example, if I ask them a question in English, they might need help understanding, and I have to explain in Chinese.

Lydia(01:09:50): I have asked almost all today's questions. I will transcribe and organise today's interview moving forward. In the future, I will need you to check the accuracy and truthfulness of the content. Thank you very much for your participation today!

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Appendix E: Participant's Reflective Journal (Excerpt Sample)

Translated Reflective Journal Sample (From T5-Vincent)

My current teaching challenges primarily involve communication with students, particularly when they ask unexpected in-class questions, especially sentence analysis-related ones. I recognise that I must put in more effort to strengthen my skills. Additionally, preparing for lessons requires significant time since I am still familiarising myself with the materials. I often spend extended periods understanding texts and learning teaching methodologies to convey knowledge to students better. Managing class time effectively is another area where I could improve. Usually, when I cannot consult other instructors due to our split between two campuses, I must independently resolve teaching issues. Fortunately, my first-year students tend to be attentive, take notes seriously, and ease some of my workload.

My experience as a newcomer regarding relationships with colleagues has been positive; everyone seems dedicated and approachable. When I encounter challenges, my colleagues enthusiastically offer advice and solutions. Faculty members in the teaching office set rules and guide teaching methods, and I ensure that I complete assigned tasks promptly.

For research, experienced and senior faculty members offer support, such as explaining how to apply for research projects, writing papers, and guiding students in practical teaching. Our department regularly organises experience-sharing meetings

and teaching competitions, creating a balanced environment of competition and collaboration for shared growth.

Outside of teaching, administrative responsibilities are also part of the role. After three months on the job, my performance stabilised, and I was assigned to manage duties in the elementary education research office. Initially, I felt nervous and questioned whether I could handle the role, especially during the early stages when I was unfamiliar with conducting research activities. I consulted with experienced colleagues and previous staff members, who provided insights into routine tasks and transitioning responsibilities. With guidance from senior colleagues and leadership, I gradually took on the role independently, planning activities, organising pre-class preparation sessions, and leading other research-related tasks. This experience has contributed to my personal growth, requiring careful and precise communication and the organisation and management of faculty members for various events.

I tend to be introverted and do not interact extensively with others. Most describe me as steady and reliable. I set high standards for myself, aiming for thoroughness and quality in all I do. The college entrance exam was a challenging experience for me, as my results were not as ideal as I had hoped, but this setback motivated me to continue striving academically. I eventually pursued graduate studies with the goal of self-improvement and continuous learning. By choosing a teaching career, I plan to keep enhancing my skills, building a foundation for future research opportunities, and ultimately achieving a better job and life in the coming years.

Appendix F: Participant’s Emotional Diary (Excerpt Sample)

Translated Emotional Diary Samples (From T1-Alice)

March 28, 2023 - Friday

Today, my emotional state could be described as speechless, helpless, and angry. Recently, I’ve been swamped. In May, our college mandated that all teachers under 40 participate in an “Ideological and Political” open class. Right now, I don’t have time to prepare for it; I already spend a lot of time on my regular course prep. Additionally, our English department prepares for a first-class undergraduate assessment, and every instructor has a task. My responsibility is to compile the directory, but I’m unfamiliar with the requirements, which causes me stress as I review the relevant documents. Furthermore, I’m currently editing students’ theses, which has been frustrating. Despite multiple reminders to adhere to the provided formatting, some students ignore the instructions—some even delete my comments without making the necessary changes.

June 12, 2023 - Wednesday

This term, I haven’t noticed any changes in my relationships with students; it’s still a blend of teacher-student dynamics and friendship. Compared to last semester, more students chatted with me informally, possibly because I was teaching a new course, “Chinese Culture,” where I met more friendly English majors. Initially, I found teaching Chinese culture challenging. Still, by the end of the term, I felt a sense of

accomplishment—I'd learned about new cultural topics like the origin of the Forbidden City's name and the story behind the Terracotta Army.

Professionally, I've met more colleagues but haven't interacted extensively with most of them. However, I did join the faculty volleyball team, which has allowed me to bond with colleagues on a different level. I haven't felt much impact regarding our university's environment (training, policies). Our school also held an ideology and politics competition, encouraging me to explore ideological themes and giving me new perspectives.

Now that the semester is ending, I feel more relaxed. Earlier, handling students' theses was stressful due to their repeated issues with following guidelines. As for teaching, I don't have strong feelings about any particular class—I've become numb to it. Every class has attentive and inattentive students; I've grown to accept that and let go of the urge to help everyone. My emotional detachment also stems from a busy schedule and added responsibilities, like covering for colleagues or taking on extra work unexpectedly. My go-to coping mechanisms include talking with friends and celebrating small wins, such as dining out, which helps maintain my happiness.

My colleagues don't impact my teaching much; we handle our responsibilities, and I view teaching as supporting myself. Recently, I was notified of my appointment as the postgraduate exam team advisor, and while I'm the only new advisor, I'm not exactly thrilled as it adds to my workload. I'll oversee postgraduate exams this Friday, followed by exam invigilation on Saturday and Sunday. Overall, I feel exhausted. During my first semester, I had little guidance on teaching and was initially anxious

and stressed, relying on self-exploration. Now, with a heavier workload, I feel like I'm experiencing early signs of professional burnout.

However, one highlight of the semester was participating in the volleyball matches. Playing volleyball, which I've loved since my undergraduate years, helps me release tension and forget my frustrations.



Appendix G: Participant's Work Report (Excerpt Sample)

Translated Work Report Sample (From T7-Na)

Female, 29 years old, master's degree in English Subject Education, primarily focusing on English teaching. Employed as a high school teacher in Baoding from 2018 to 2020 and a faculty member at Baoding University since 2021.

Since joining, I have faced the transition from high school to university-level teaching. This shift has required adjustments in teaching content and complexity and, more significantly, in how I engage with a different student demographic. Initially, detaching from the high school teaching mode took time, especially in classroom management and interacting with students, which felt unnatural. This phase brought considerable anxiety, as my first class was a group of sophomores, and I was constantly concerned about their acceptance of me as their new instructor.

By 2023, I felt more adapted to university teaching. Participating in several teaching competitions, where I collaborated closely with colleagues, fostered mutual understanding and was an enriching experience. This also strengthened my sense of belonging in my role. In October of that year, I got married, which brought stability to my life and allowed me to focus more on work. Since my spouse and I live apart, I have ample time to dedicate to my work; the long-distance arrangement has not impacted my professional life negatively as I enjoy the solitude it provides.

In 2023, alongside my regular teaching duties, I took on additional responsibilities as a comprehensive course leader. With these increased responsibilities, I felt both the

pressure and the motivation to excel, but the support from my colleagues and team has made this transition smoother. This year marks my third year in this position, and I am up for promotion to lecturer, which has introduced new pressures regarding research and publishing papers. Currently, I feel some anxiety as I lack the experience and skills needed in this area.

