

# 17 - An Ecological Perspective Case Study: The Role of Emotion in the Identity Construction of Young Learner English Language Teachers

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## Abstract

This study explores the relation between emotions and identity construction among EYL teachers in Indonesia. It applied an ecological perspective to examine the emotional experiences that shape their professional identities. This research conducted at a private primary school in Bangkalan, Indonesia. It focused on how English teaching is integrated from the first grade and reflects the institution's commitment to second language mastery. Two female and one male English teacher, responsible for 17 classes, participated in this study. Data were gathered through unstructured interviews and analysed using a narrative framework within grounded theory approach from Corbin and Strauss (2015). The results revealed complex dynamics across the classroom (micro), institutional (meso), and societal (macro) levels influencing teachers' emotions and identities. At the classroom level, the distribution of students' gender and the heavy workload underscore the need for flexibility and classroom management abilities. Institutional challenges include lack of professional development opportunities, inadequate learning tools, and frequent parental intervention. Teachers' emotion and identity are further impacted by societal issues, such as lack of professional recognition, heavy administrative responsibilities, and unstable educational policies. Practical recommendations include increased governmental and institutional support for professional development, a more efficient of administrative responsibilities, and consistent educational policies to foster a stable supportive environment. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and educational institutions aiming to support EYL teachers in their professional growth and emotional resilience.

**Keywords:** Teacher Identity, Emotions, Ecological Perspective, English for Young Learners (EYL), Professional Development.

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## 1. Introduction

Research on the emotions experienced by language teachers has gained increasing attention among applied linguistics researchers (Nazari & Karimpour, 2022; Nazari et al., 2023; Song & Park, 2021). This interest aligns with the recognition that language teaching and learning involve not only cognitive and methodological aspects but also emotional components (Shao et al., 2020). Benesch (2017) argues that emotions are not merely internal states or universal reactions; instead, they are deeply shaped by the environment, cultural norms, intersecting social factors, and power dynamics. This view highlights the complexity of emotions, which are intertwined with social structures and interactions (Bericat, 2016; Zhang et al., 2024). Studies in this area investigate how teachers' emotions—both positive and negative—influence their teaching practices, interactions with students, and the development of their professional identity (Richards, 2022).

In the context of teaching, Benesch (2017) introduces the concept of “emotion labour,” which describes how teaching English connects affect and intellect, body and work, and passion and rationality, all while being profoundly influenced by power relations. Emotion labour refers to how teachers regulate their emotions to meet institutional expectations (Nazari et al., 2023). Song (2021) expands on this concept, noting that emotion labour also involves teachers managing their emotions both in and outside the classroom. This process allows them to recognize and counteract negative attitudes toward students, fostering greater introspection and emotional reflection. In turn, this

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introspection contributes to teachers' emotional and professional growth, aiding in the development of their professional identity.

Teacher identity, as Yazan (2018) explains, encompasses teachers' dynamic self-perception and their understanding of their role within diverse communities. This identity is shaped through collaboration, engagement with various social groups, and reflection on their place in the educational landscape (Xing et al., 2024). Teacher identity is multifaceted, incorporating self-perception, external perceptions within the educational environment, and societal expectations. Crucially, this identity is not static but evolves through social interactions, professional experiences, and self-reflection. Understanding teacher identity is vital because it directly impacts how teachers teach, engage with students, respond to educational policies, and contribute to their school community (O'Keeffe & Skerritt, 2021).

English language learning at a young age (EYL) has also become a prominent area of research (Trent & Nguyen, 2021; Nazari et al., 2023; Tavakol & Tavakoli, 2022; Nguyen, 2019). Young learners face unique challenges, including limited opportunities to use the target language in real-life social contexts. Consequently, syllabus designers and textbook authors often emphasize teaching language chunks, structures, and sentence patterns, particularly in the context of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) (Nguyen, 2018). EYL teachers need to move beyond basic teaching methodologies by acquiring specialized knowledge and skills tailored to young learners (Zein & Butler, 2023). This includes understanding child development and learning theories to create engaging and effective lessons, as well as employing strategies to foster a supportive classroom environment. Such an environment encourages exploration through play, storytelling, songs, and interactive activities (Roland, 2020).

Previous research has underscored the relationship between emotions and the formation of teacher identity in language education. For example, Nazari et al. (2023) examined this dynamic in the context of teaching English to Young Learners (EYL) in Iran, focusing specifically on female teachers through an ecological lens. Their findings highlight the need for teacher educators to better prepare EYL teachers for the realities of the school environment, where emotions play a critical role in teaching. Similarly, Syahnaz et al. (2023) conducted a narrative inquiry study in Indonesia, focusing on an English teacher who also served as a vice principal. Their research revealed how the teacher's fundamental beliefs and emotions interacted to shape their professional identity.

Building on these insights, the present study aims to explore how emotions shape the professional identities of Indonesian EYL teachers. Unlike prior research, this study adopts an ecological perspective to examine the experiences of both male and female teachers. This approach provides a deeper understanding of how ecological factors influence teachers' emotions and their professional identity construction. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How are the emotions of EYL teachers affected by the classroom (micro), institutional (meso), and social (macro) ecology in Indonesia?
2. What role do emotions play in the identity construction of EYL teachers?

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 *Role of (English young learners) teachers' emotions and teachers' identity construction*

Teaching young learners is fundamentally different from teaching adults. Psychological knowledge is vital for developing a deep understanding of children, which is essential for fostering positive personality traits in teachers, such as care, patience, and love for children (Zein, 2023). Education for teaching young learners requires a specialized approach that addresses emotional, pedagogical, and interpersonal aspects to effectively support this unique learner demographic (Pourhassan & Nazari, 2023). Young learners exhibit emotional dynamics that differ significantly from those of adult learners, often characterized by greater volatility (Zheng et al., 2023). Effective learning in young learners is heavily influenced by their emotional state, making interpersonal skills essential for EYL teachers to harness these emotional aspects and enhance the learning experience.

The emotional dynamics between teachers and young learners play a critical role in shaping teachers' professional identity (Zembylas, 2003). Emotions are central to the teaching process,

influencing how teachers perceive themselves, interact with students, and implement educational practices (Brown et al., 2023). Positive emotions—such as joy, satisfaction, and pride—can strengthen a teacher’s sense of professional identity, foster deeper engagement with students, and provide a more fulfilling teaching experience (Burić & Moè, 2020; Auliah et al., 2021). Conversely, negative emotions—such as frustration, anxiety, or burnout—may challenge a teacher’s identity, potentially leading to disengagement and a re-evaluation of their role in the classroom. For instance, teachers dealing with family or workplace issues may find their emotions negatively impacted, resulting in suboptimal teaching performance and, ultimately, frustration (Lavy & Eshet, 2018).

The process of identity construction for teachers of young learners is inherently tied to the emotional experiences they encounter throughout their professional journey (Chen et al., 2022). These experiences are shaped by emotional connections with students, the emotional climate of their classrooms, and the emotional support provided by the broader educational community. Positive traits and emotions—such as patience, empathy, confidence, and enthusiasm—are crucial for fostering constructive emotional experiences in language learning environments (Shao et al., 2020). Teachers who embody these qualities are better equipped to create and sustain productive and engaging learning atmospheres. This, in turn, influences their identity construction, which evolves as they navigate the emotional landscapes of their profession. Teachers’ identities integrate their personal values, professional knowledge and skills, and emotional experiences (Chen et al., 2022; Dewi & Fajri, 2023).

Research by Hong et al. (2024) highlights three key factors influencing teacher identity. First, teacher identity is part of a continuous, goal-focused, and agentic self-regulation process. It develops over time as teachers actively regulate and direct themselves to achieve specific professional goals—what they aim for determines what they achieve. Second, teacher identity intersects with other identities, including gender, ethnicity, and social identities, within a cultural-historical context. This perspective emphasizes that teacher identity is inseparable from the socio-cultural and historical environment in which it exists. Third, teacher identity is shaped by professional experiences, including adherence to professional community standards. A teacher’s interactions and adjustments to these standards significantly influence the construction of their identity.

Zembylas (2003), using a poststructuralist approach, examined the relationship between teacher identity and emotions. He argued that teacher identity is in a continuous state of negotiation, shaped by power dynamics, ideologies, and social factors. He proposed two main theories: first, that power and individual organization play a critical role in shaping teachers’ identity, making it an inherently emotional process; and second, that a deeper understanding of teacher identity emerges when its emotional aspects are explored. Power, as a key element, both forms identity and influences its evolution.

Chen et al. (2022) also emphasized that teachers’ emotions are not random but are deeply influenced by their professional goals. These emotions, in turn, shape the development of their identity. For example, teachers who feel happy and satisfied with their teaching outcomes are likely to be more motivated and confident in their abilities. On the other hand, teachers who experience frustration or dissatisfaction may struggle to develop their professional identity.

## *2.2 (English young learners) teachers’ emotions and identity construction in ecological perspective*

Lier (2004) argued that ecology represents a contextualized or situated form of research. Ecological research considers the complex interactions and relationships within environments or contexts where phenomena occur. In this sense, "ecology" is utilized to describe research approaches that consider how various elements within a system (such as an educational setting) interact and influence each other. This perspective emphasizes the importance of understanding the setting, participants, social standards, and other relevant variables that affect the subject of study. Essentially, it implies that research is not disconnected or confined, but deeply embedded in and influenced by its surrounding environment and conditions (Holland, 2020)

An ecological approach explains the elements that influence teacher identity formation from various contexts. An ecological perspective on teacher professional development emphasizes the interconnectedness, scope, and temporality of learning experiences, enhancing teacher identity



formation within diverse contexts (Ehrenfeld, 2022). This approach suggests that teachers' development is strongly influenced by their interactions with their environment, whether with students, fellow teachers or the wider community. In addition, teachers' learning experiences outside the school environment are also recognized as one of the factors that influence the formation of their professional identity, as Masry (2021) argues that ecological factors, along with intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects, significantly influence the construction of language teachers' professional identity. Thus, the combination of these factors-ecological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal-together form a complex framework within which a language teacher's professional identity is formed and continues to develop throughout his or her career. By understanding the importance of the interactions between these factors, teachers' education and professional development can be designed to more effectively support their professional growth and well-being.

Ecological perspective in other studies also highlight other factors that influence the construction of teacher identity. An ecological perspective of teacher identity emphasizes that the teacher's self is formed through interaction with the subject matter, focusing on a thing-centered approach (Vlieghe & Zamojski, 2020). This finding revealed that teacher identity is not only influenced by external factors but also by how the teacher interacts with the learning material he teaches. The emotions felt by the teacher will play a role in this time. The level of confidence teachers has in their teaching material will make them easier to form their identity. an ecological perspective on teacher identity underscores the importance of understanding how interactions with subject matter affect the formation and development of their professional identity. It emphasizes that the process of teacher identity is not only limited to external or social factors, but also involves a deep interaction with the substance or subject matter being taught.

By emphasizing the sociopolitical and contextual aspects of teaching, the ecological approach to language learning has looked into the effects of sociocultural and ideological influences on teachers' emotions (Nazari et al., 2023). Besides, to completely understand the complicated layers influencing language teacher emotions, it is essential to reveal how various individual and contextual factors affect these emotions across different levels. These levels included the classroom (micro) level, the institution (meso) level, and the society (macro) level. Wolff & De Costa (2017) investigated how the emotions of a non-native English-speaking teacher were influenced by personal (micro), institutional (meso), and societal (macro) levels. These three factors have a complex, interdependent relationship. Institutions are impacted by societal attitudes, which caused teachers to feel different degrees of pressure or support (Blake & Dewaele, 2023). According to Zhao, et al. (2022), institutions are influenced by public sentiments, which cause teachers to encounter differing degrees of support or pressure. This suggested that teachers' emotions are influenced by social variables, which may have an impact on how they create their identities. For these reasons, the researcher in this study discussed on how emotions of EYL teachers affected the construction of identity from an ecological perspective.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

#### *3.1 Research Approach*

This study is a qualitative study. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative researchers usually collect data directly from participants as they experience the problem or issue under study in their natural environment, without giving any treatments or interventions. By using this approach, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the setting and surroundings in which participants carry out their activities as well as more comprehensive and in-depth insights into their experiences. Qualitative research prioritizes naturalistic observation of the interactions and behaviors exhibited by participants. This type of approach is highly effective for exploring complex social phenomena and generating comprehensive data (Denny & Weckesser, 2022).

#### *3.2 Context and Participants of The Study*

Since the onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in 2011, there is a pressing require for English teachers to update their professional and pedagogical abilities to keep pace with technological

advancements (Prayogo, 2022). This period characterized mainly by innovation, automation, and enhanced information transfer. In the context of English language education in Indonesia, the need for curriculum updates aims at adjusting with student needs is becoming crucial. This need reflects a broader global trend towards educational change driven by innovative progression and evolving learner needs. By revising curriculum to join advanced education abilities and align with industry demands, teachers can better prepare students with the students' skills required for future. This condition will influence on how teachers manage their emotions.

This current research conducted in a private primary school located in Bangkalan, Indonesia. This location is ideal for examining how English language teaching is integrated from the beginning of primary education. The school implements a specific policy where English is taught starting from the first grade. It demonstrates the institution's commitment to master a second language among its students. In this context, two female and one male English teachers are responsible for teaching across 17 classes. It indicates a significant workload and demands for having good classroom management skills and high adaptability.

The research setting offered a unique chance to investigate the various factors influencing teachers' emotions. The purpose of this research was to comprehend how the ecology of teachers' emotions is shaped and influenced by factors at the classroom (micro), institutional (meso), and social (macro) levels in relation to the construction of their identities. Micro factors might include daily interactions between teachers and students or dynamics within the classroom, while meso factors related to school policies or support from colleagues, and macro factors involved the influence of the national education system and global trends in English language education. This study focused on identity construction as a field where teachers can develop strategies to manage work stress, enhance pedagogical skills, and ultimately improve the learning experience for their students. It also explored how the school's professional development programs assist teachers in addressing the challenges they face and support their overall identity construction in professional growth.

### *3.3 Design and Data Collection*

This study aimed to explore the role of teachers' perceived emotions in shaping their professional identities. A case study approach, as described by Yin (2018), was adopted. According to Yin, a case study is conducted in a real-life context, enabling researchers to answer how certain phenomena occur. Rose et al. (2017) further emphasized that case studies provide a comprehensive analysis of specific cases, allowing for detailed and in-depth exploration of particular subjects or situations.

Data for this study were collected through unstructured interviews and narrative frames. Unstructured interviews facilitated a holistic understanding of the participants' perspectives (Dawson, 2007) and were conducted in an informal, conversational manner (Rose et al., 2017). While the interviews were unstructured, the researcher prepared key points in advance to maintain focus on the relevant data needed during the discussions.

The study involved one male and two female English teachers from an elementary school in Bangkalan, examining their emotions and identities as Early Years Language (EYL) teachers. The interviews explored how these teachers managed their emotions and professional identities while interacting with students and colleagues. Additionally, the study investigated the influence of institutional and societal factors on the teachers' emotional management and identity construction. Questions also addressed the historical-cultural aspects of teacher identity and emotion, drawing on insights from Benesch (2017).

In addition to the unstructured interviews, data were gathered using narrative frames created by the three teachers. Narrative frames provided a structured yet flexible framework for understanding and analyzing the teachers' experiences (Kayi-Aydar, 2021). The teachers were asked to narrate their teaching experiences in EYL settings and describe how these experiences affected them emotionally and shaped their professional identities.

Both the unstructured interviews and narrative frames were conducted in Indonesian, allowing participants to express themselves more comfortably and share their experiences in greater depth. This bilingual approach ensured a richer and more authentic dataset for analysis.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

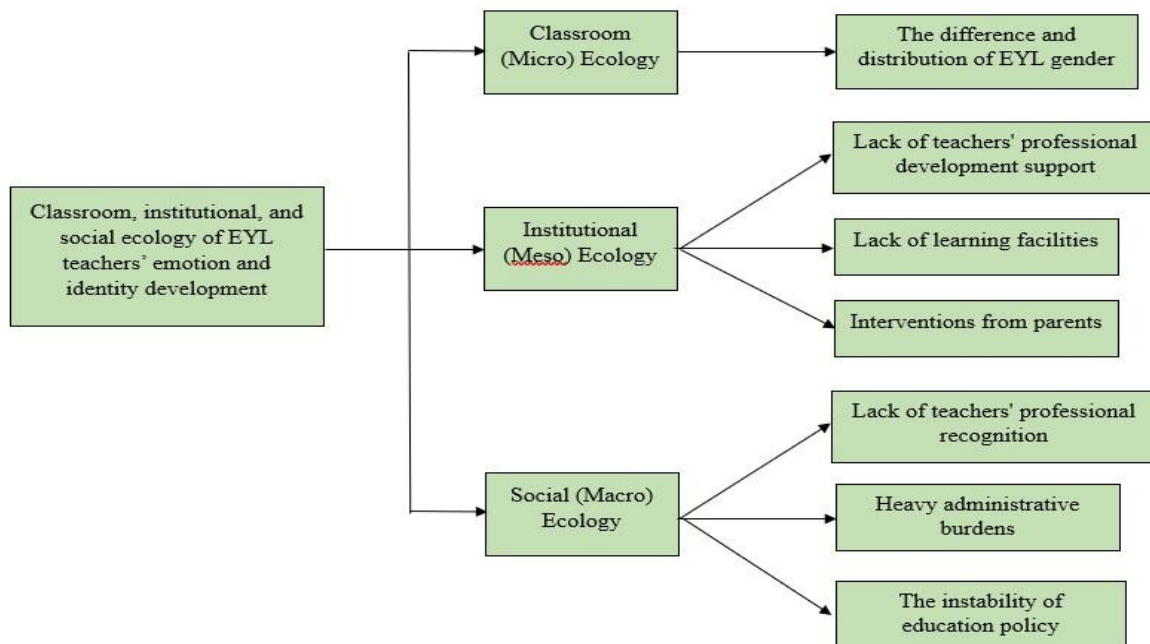
The stages of data analysis in this research used the concept of the grounded theory approach from Corbin and Strauss (2015). Grounded theory is a form of qualitative research. There are three stages in this theory, including open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Ndam, 2023). At the first stage, open coding stage, researchers collected the data from the results of the unstructured interview and the narrative frame. After collecting the data, the researcher determined the initial code of sentences or phrases that consider to be important and relate to emotions and teacher identity construction. Then the labelling process was carried out on relevant data while providing notes on the data.

Then results of the data were analysed at the axial code stage. During axial coding, the researcher seeks to establish connections between the initial codes identified during the open coding phase. This involved organizing these codes around central categories (Riazi, 2016). In this study, researchers grouped codes, such as "students' gender" and "learning facilities", based on broader categories. This stage was to get the main themes from all the data that has been obtained. In the final stage, namely selective code, the researcher integrated the findings of these categories into narratives. The narratives explained how emotion and teacher identity are related to each other.

## 4. Results

The results of the study indicated that classroom (micro), institutional (meso), and social (macro) ecology gave some impacts to the emotion and identity construction of the EYL teachers, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** The ecology of emotion and identity construction in Indonesian EYL teachers



### 4.1 Classroom (micro)ecology

One of the factors affecting teachers' emotions in the classroom was the difference and distribution of EYL gender. There were about 25-27 students in each class taught by one English teacher. The percentage of male and female was 50%:50%. This gender distribution in a class greatly affected the conduciveness of learning. As stated by Teacher 1 (T1): "Male students tend to sit at the back of the class while female students sit at the front. When I teach, some male students will make noise by talking to their friends" (T1, unstructured interview). T1 faced her own challenges in classroom management. T1 had to think about how to prevent male students from disturbing other students during the learning process.

Teacher 2 (T2) provided almost the same information: "When learning activities are conducted with group discussions, students tend to group according to their gender" (T2, unstructured interview). This showed that even though students were placed in the same class, they still formed groups based on their gender. This could affect the effectiveness of group work and collaborative learning during the lesson. T2 also added a note, "When I find something like this, I usually need a special approach to ensure that each group gets equal attention and all students are actively involved in the discussion" (T2, narrative frame). Teacher 3 (T3) stated, "Most of the students who scored below the minimum score were boys. I feel that I have explained all the material but there are still many students, especially boys, who cannot exceed the minimum score" (T3, narrative frame). The information showed that in addition to challenges in classroom management, T3 also faced disparities in students' academic achievement. This could indicate that T3 was experiencing emotional problems. Although T3 had given the same explanation to students, many male students' learning outcomes were still below the minimum passing score.

In addition, this difference in students' gender also affected the way teachers interact with them. T1 stated "Male students often need a firmer approach and more frequent interventions to maintain their discipline during the lesson, while female students usually follow more easily when given verbal instructions and emotional support" (T1, unstructured interview). This emotional support could be in the form of praise, reprimands or small talk about certain topics (T2, narrative frame). To be able to do all these things, teachers needed to be more flexible and adapt to the students they teach so that classroom management can run more effectively.

#### *4.2 Institutional (meso)ecology*

At the meso-level, the three teachers gave almost the same information. The school did not provide enough support for teachers' professional development activities, especially workshops or training on the latest English language teaching. T1 explained, "The school organizes training quite often, but not specifically to help me teach English more interactively" (T1, unstructured interview). T3 gave a similar account, "Every time I go to class, this student often says that English is a difficult subject. One level with Math" (T3, unstructured interview). The existence of English as a foreign language in Indonesia certainly provided little space for EYL to interact using English in activities outside the classroom. T1 explained further, "English lesson is only taught once a week. The duration of the lesson is only 90 minutes. I think after finishing the lesson, students would have forgotten the material that I have taught. And I also feel that my teaching method is not developing. I am a little confused about what to use so that students can better understand the subject matter" (T1, unstructured interview). Lack of time allocation was also a challenge for EYL teachers in this school.

Regarding the lack of student skill development activities, T2 added "To get ideas for interactive teaching methods, I usually look at videos on YouTube or other social media. Unfortunately, sometimes the method cannot be applied optimally because the background of the students is also different from those in the video" (T2, narrative frame). This statement showed that although the teacher tried to find inspiration from outside, the implementation of these methods was not always successful because of differences in context and student background. T3 argued "hopefully the school will include us in English teaching training so that we can teach more properly" (T3, unstructured interview).

In addition to these problems, the lack of learning facilities and interventions from parents also greatly affected teachers' emotions and identities. T1 explained that there were parts of listening skills in the student book. However, the school has not been able to provide facilities that support this condition. "When teaching listening, I usually read the questions and then students will answer. Because the school does not provide speakers for listening" (T1, unstructured interview). T2 added, "Especially if I want to teach using video, it definitely cannot be. The supporting media for this is not available. So, I teach using traditional methods only" (T2, narrative frame). In terms of parents' intervention, T3 explained, "Sometimes parents complain when their children do not get good scores. Some of them asked me the way I teach their children". This would certainly affect the emotions felt by teachers. These problems faced by teachers needed greater support from the school. Teachers

would feel helped to improve their competence and relieve their emotion with better support from the school. Finally, they would be able to provide better learning experiences for students

#### 4.3 *Social (macro)ecology*

Social factors were also among the key influences on teachers' emotions in developing their professional identity. Based on the accounts of the three teachers, it was found that EYL teachers were often considered inferior compared to those teaching at higher levels. T2 explained, "If I meet colleagues who teach at the junior or senior high school level, they will underestimate my job. This is very annoying" (T2, narrative frame). T1 added, "My friends often told me that my job is easier because I teach young children. So, I have more free time compared to them" (T1, unstructured interview). This perspective reflects a bias in Indonesian society, where teaching young children is seen as a simpler task than teaching at higher levels. Such perceptions can demotivate teachers, making them feel less valued in their profession and affecting their professional identity.

In addition to these challenges, T3 highlighted another issue related to the evolving dynamics of education policy. "The leader changes means the curriculum will also change, and the policy will change too. The latest is Merdeka curriculum. The students are free, but the teachers are dizzy" (T3, unstructured interview). Frequent changes in policy and curriculum were an additional burden for teachers. Each change required significant time and effort to understand and implement, creating new stressors. This concern was echoed by T2, who stated, "Besides the teaching duties, we as teachers also have much heavier administrative duties. There are so many administrative files that we have to fulfil" (T2, narrative frame). The heavy administrative workload often reduced the time teachers could dedicate to planning and implementing effective teaching strategies.

T3 further emphasized the difficulties caused by frequent curriculum changes. "The curriculum should not be changed too often. Because if there is a new curriculum, then we as teachers have to adapt again. We as teachers have those kinds of difficulties, the students will absolutely have too. And I still have one more problem. I teach English which is a foreign language. It is rarely used by children in their neighbourhood, so it will be difficult for them to master English" (T3, unstructured interview). Policy instability not only increased the pressure on teachers but also negatively impacted the quality of teaching and learning. The challenges were particularly pronounced in English language teaching, where students often lacked opportunities to use the language outside the classroom.

Disparaging social perceptions, heavy administrative burdens, and the instability of education policy posed significant challenges for teachers in building their professional identity. Support from the government and educational institutions is essential to address these issues. This support could include professional recognition, training, continuous development workshops, and the establishment of more consistent and well-planned policies.

### 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings highlighted the multifaceted challenges faced by EYL teachers in Indonesia, encompassing classroom (micro), institution (meso), and society (macro) levels of their professional ecology. These challenges significantly impacted their emotions and the construction of their professional identity.

Zein & Butler (2023) argued that young learners have unique needs that teachers need to facilitate. At the classroom (micro) level, classroom dynamics, particularly gender distribution, played an important role in shaping the emotional experiences and management strategies of EYL teachers. The equal distribution of male and female students (50% each) in the classroom created a distinctive environment in which gendered patterns of behavior emerge. These gender dynamics did not only give challenges for classroom management but also affect teachers' emotional well-being, as they attempted to balance discipline with effective teaching strategies.

In addition, the need for different interaction styles based on gender, as described by T1, highlighted the emotional burden involved in teaching. Female students generally responded better to verbal instruction and emotional support, whereas male students required a more assertive approach. The dynamics of how the fundamental beliefs and feelings of the focused participant



interacted with one another formed the identity of the teacher (Syahnaz et al., 2023). This required a high degree of flexibility and adaptability from the teacher, which contributed to emotional distress and affected their sense of efficacy and satisfaction.

At the institutional (meso) level, institutional support for professional development and teaching resources was a significant concern. Professional development would help teachers to address their immediate problems that arise during their teaching (Pourhassan & Nazari, 2023). Teachers reported inadequate training opportunities. This was needed to improve interactive English language teaching. This lack of targeted professional development limited their ability to innovate and improve their teaching methods, as described by T1 and T3. In addition, the effort to access other learning resources from YouTube showed the teachers' proactive efforts to improve their pedagogy despite institutional shortcomings. This affected how the emotions they face during teaching (Brown et al., 2023). In practice, contextual differences between their students and those depicted in online resources often hinder the effective implementation of these methods. This mismatch emphasized the need for localized, context-relevant training and resources to better support teachers. The lack of such support created bad emotions that lead to the frustrations faced by EYL teachers (Lavy & Eshet, 2018).

Furthermore, the study also explained that the lack of adequate facilities, such as listening equipment and video support, severely limited the scope of teaching methods. As highlighted by T1 and T2, the absence of these resources forced teachers to rely on traditional methods, which might not be as effective in engaging students or improving their language skills. Support from the institution is necessary as EYL teachers could not stand alone (Hong et al., 2024). In addition, parental intervention, particularly in response to students' low grades, added an emotional burden to teachers, affecting their confidence and professional identity. As stated by Chen et al. (2022) that the process of identity construction for teachers of young learners was intrinsically linked to the emotional experiences they undergo in their professional journey.

At the macro level, social factors and community perceptions significantly influence EYL teachers' professional identity and emotional well-being. Positive emotion could enhance a teacher's sense of professional identity, giving a more fulfilling teaching experience (Auliah et al., 2021). Societal biases that trivialize teaching at the primary level, as experienced by T2 and T1, undermined their professional status and could lead to feelings of inferiority and demotivation. Negative emotion potentially lead to a disengagement and re-evaluation of their role and approach in the classroom (Burić & Moè, 2020). The perception that teaching young children was easier and less important than teaching at a higher level reflected society's general low valuation of early childhood education. It could negatively impact teachers' self-esteem and professional identity.

Meanwhile, frequent changes in education policy and curriculum, as noted by T3, presented additional challenges. The constant need to adapt to new policies and curricula created a sense of instability and increased the workload for teachers, leading to stress and emotional exhaustion. The heavy administrative burden, highlighted by T2, further reduced the time and energy that could be used to improve teaching practices and student engagement. This administrative overload, coupled with policy instability, exacerbates the emotional and professional challenges faced by EYL teachers in Indonesia.

The results of the study demonstrated the intricate interplay between classroom (micro), institution (meso), and social (macro) levels that influence the emotional experiences and professional identities of EYL teachers in Indonesia. Governments and educational institutions had to provide comprehensive support in order to address these issues. To facilitate efficient language instruction, schools needed to offer chances for targeted professional development, sufficient teaching resources, and facilities. In addition, consistent and well-planned educational procedures were required to lessen the administrative strain on teachers and established a stable learning environment. Finally, for EYL teachers to be valued and acknowledged for their vital role in forming the foundational phases of education, society attitudes of them had to change. With this kind of comprehensive support, EYL teachers might strengthen their sense of self as professionals, improved their emotional well-being, and eventually gave their students greater educational opportunities.

While this study provided valuable insights into the emotional experiences and professional identity of EYL teachers in Indonesia, it had limitations that need to be noted. One of the main

limitations was the number of subjects used in this study, which was only three EYL teachers. This limited number of subjects might affect the generalizability of the research findings and might not fully represent the experiences of EYL teachers in different contexts and regions. Future research could improve the validity and reliability of the findings by using a larger and more diverse sample. By involving more teachers from different backgrounds, schools and regions, future research might provide a more comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence EYL teachers' emotional experiences and professional identity.

Future research could also consider using mixed methods to obtain richer and more in-depth data. For example, a combination of in-depth interviews, surveys and classroom observations could provide a more holistic perspective on the dynamics of teaching and teachers' emotional experiences. With this approach, researchers would further explore the contextual factors that influence teachers' experiences and evaluate the effectiveness of various interventions and supports provided to EYL teachers. Overall, while this study provided valuable preliminary insights, further research with more subjects and a more comprehensive approach was needed to deepen the understanding of EYL teachers' emotional experiences and professional identity in Indonesia. Thus, the research findings could be used to design more effective policies and interventions to support teachers in their important role in early childhood education.

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