

Vietnamese EFL Teachers' Shifting Emotions in English Speaking Over Time: A Sociocultural Perspective

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Abstract—A substantial body of research in applied linguistics has shown that emotions lie at the core of language teaching (Geng & Yu, 2024). For non-native speaker teachers, these emotions can be even more complex, as they experience not only the anxieties of speaking a foreign language but also those of teaching a language that is not their own. Adopting a sociocultural perspective, which views teachers' emotions as shaped through interactions with students, administrators, colleagues, parents, as well as contextual factors such as school culture, norms, and policies, and individual variables like teaching and learning experience, the present study explores Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers' perceptions of the role emotions play in their English speaking and the path of evolving feelings throughout their lifelong experience of English language speaking. A qualitatively-driven mixed methods research design was employed. There were two phases of data collection using initial and exploratory questionnaires followed by semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. The quantitative data aimed to capture the range of emotions the participants experienced in speaking English over time. The qualitative data revealed the complexity and dynamism of their emotions in the process of language learning and use. The findings show that the participants experienced shifting emotions across different contexts of language learning and language use. The emotions were seen to be dynamic, and socially and contextually constructed. The results provide practical implications for emotion research and pedagogies of EFL teaching and learning.

Index Terms—EFL nonnative speaker teachers, emotions, English-speaking, changing emotions

I. INTRODUCTION

With the advent of 'affective turn', emotions have become a focus in language learning and teaching research. The long interest in emotions in Second Language Acquisition literature has focused predominantly on language anxiety. More recently, more research has explored a wider range of emotions other than anxiety, such as frustration, shame, despair, boredom, enjoyment, hope and pride that play a much larger role in language learning contexts than anxiety alone (e.g., Bown & White, 2010; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020; Imai, 2010; Kruk, 2022; Pawlak et al., 2022; Piasecka, 2013). The scope of emotion research has broadened from the simple linear cause and effect paradigm of anxiety to multiple facets of emotions. The interaction of emotions with various aspects of language learning and teaching such as L2 learners' motivation (e.g., Valeev et al., 2020) and teachers' passion for teaching (e.g., Mirshojaee et al., 2019) has also been acknowledged. Along with this development, the social dimension of emotions is currently receiving an increasing amount of attention.

The present study continues that focus by exploring the trajectories of changing emotions throughout the lifelong experience of English language learning and language use among Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers. Within the coverage of this research, we explore Vietnamese EFL teachers' perceptions of the emotions they experience when speaking English, the source of their emotions in oral communication, and how these emotions affected their English speaking over time since they began learning English. This study, therefore, aims to answer the following questions:

1. What emotions do Vietnamese EFL teachers report experiencing when speaking English over time?
2. What are the sources of these emotions?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Emotion

As an instinctive state of mind permeating and influential to all aspects of one's life from private to professional and social, emotion has been recently researched extensively in psychology, second language acquisition and applied

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linguistics (e.g., Bashori et al., 2022; Boudreau et al., 2018; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020; Dewaele et al., 2018; Pham & Pham, 2023). The definition of emotion also varies across disciplines reflecting different scholarly viewpoints. The interpretation of this concept aligns with theoretical developments across the fields, from psychology-based paradigms to sociocultural paradigms.

Wetherell (2012) employs affective practice as a key concept which “focuses on the emotional as it appears in social life and tries to follow what participants do” and it needs to be seen as “shifting, flexible [...] rather than simple lines of causation, character types and neat emotion categories” (p. 4). Looking at emotion from the sociocultural dimension, Maynard (2002) maintains that “emotions are not simply experienced internal to the person, but rather, are experienced through interaction with other factors, including how the context influences the person, and how the interacting partner may emotionally react” (p. 6). Along the lines of Maynard’s definition, Denzin (2007) contends that emotions are not only cognitive responses to physiological, cultural, or structural factors, but also interactive processes, and should be best studied as social acts involving interactions with self and others. In this sense, emotion is both cognitive and social. Adopting a sociocultural perspective, this study views teachers’ emotions as phenomena to be understood not only in terms of their meanings but also in how they are shaped through teachers’ interactions with others across different contexts and at various stages of their learning and teaching.

B. Research on Emotions in Language Education

Though more limited in numbers compared with research on language learners’ emotions, the literature on teachers’ emotions also shows a wide range of emotions. Joy, satisfaction, pleasure, and excitement are the most common positive feelings while anger and frustration are most frequently listed among negative ones (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Previous studies have also focused on the impact of these emotions, typically of anxiety (e.g., Bashori et al., 2022; Boudreau et al., 2018; Imai, 2010), of enjoyment (e.g., Pavelescu & Petrić, 2018) and both (e.g., Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019), and of boredom and motivation (e.g., Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Kruk, 2022; Pawlak et al., 2022) on language teachers’ instruction. For instance, research has emphasized the significant role of positive emotions in effective foreign language teaching (e.g., Lu & Jun, 2024) and suggested they mediate the relationship between critical thinking and foreign language learning (Ma & Xu, 2024). In addition, teachers’ emotions are found to affect and can be used to predict foreign/second language teachers’ grit (Hejazi et al., 2024).

Recognized as “a multifaceted psychological phenomenon” (Bashori et al., 2022, p. 1058), teachers’ emotions are emphasized for their dynamic and shifting nature (Kruk & Pawlak, 2022; Sampson & Yoshida, 2021). They are viewed to be closely related with teacher-student relationship and with students’ behavior and progress (Chang, 2013; Hagenauer et al., 2015). For example, Hagenauer et al. (2015) found that the teachers’ joy and anxiety were generated from the positive and negative relationships between teachers and students. Meanwhile, the teachers’ anger emerged from a lack of discipline in the class. These studies also suggest that the teacher–student relationship plays a crucial role in shaping and changing teachers’ emotional experiences in the classroom.

In the field of social psychology, Sutton et al. (2009) reviewed the literature on how teachers express their emotions in the classroom and how they attempt to modify the intensity and duration of their emotions. Their review indicates that teachers’ practice of emotion regulation stems from their belief that it makes their classroom management, discipline, and their relationships with students more effective. Teachers are expected to “mask” or “suppress” their negative emotions to act in their students’ interests (Benesch, 2013; Schutz & Lee, 2014). That is the teacher often has to “display or conceal their emotions” to attain institutional goals (Brown et al., 2014, p. 205). In other words, emotion regulation is vital for classroom effectiveness. However, although teachers can be aware of the benefit of emotion regulation, in effect, not all of them can control it (Sutton et al., 2009). This may be due to the cultural and social contexts in which they live and work.

Although a number of studies have investigated EFL teachers’ emotions, they have focused on the local events in the classroom and educational institutions at specific times other than the emotional experiences that have accumulated over time, especially in terms of their perceptions of the role emotion plays in their oral communication. Furthermore, little research has examined the emotional dynamics of EFL non-native speaker teachers in their dual role as both language learners and language instructors over time. To this end, by examining Vietnamese EFL non-native speaker teachers’ perceptions of the role of emotion in their English oral communication, this study seeks to address these gaps and contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexity and dynamism of emotion across changing relational contexts throughout their language learning and use.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The participants consist of 43 teachers (7 male and 36 female) of the Faculty of English of a state-run university in Central Vietnam. Most began learning English as a compulsory school subject from grade 6 (age 11-12) and continued to grade 12 (age 17-18). At the time of data collection, they had from three to thirty-two years of teaching experience. Eight had doctorates, and thirty-five held master’s degrees. Most had also pursued their higher education in English-speaking countries including Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America. In terms of English language

proficiency, the participants had CEFR-level C1 or above.

B. Data Collection

In the first phase of the data collection procedure, all participants were invited to complete the online questionnaire. In the second phase, ten participants volunteered to take part in interviews and complete reflective journals. The first round of one-to-one interviews was conducted with ten volunteer participants. However, one participant dropped out after the first interview and the raw data was deleted. After the first interview, each participant was asked to keep reflective journals for 6 weeks, with at least one entry per week. After reflective journal entries were collected, the second interview was conducted.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire (Appendix A), developed by the researchers based on the purpose and context of the study and relevant literature, explores the teachers' perceptions of the role of emotion in their English speaking. It first collects the demographic and linguistic background of the participants. The participants were then asked to report the levels of emotions in their early English-speaking experience as language learners and current experiences speaking English and in some specific communicative events, along with the influence of these emotions on their English speaking. Given the well-documented impact of foreign language anxiety (i.e., nervousness), the questionnaire included a cluster of items specifically targeting this emotion to examine the levels of English-speaking anxiety among Vietnamese EFL teachers in the current stage of their career.

Interview. There were two rounds of semi-structured interviews. The first interview was to elicit the teachers' perceptions of the sources of different emotions accompanying English oral communication, what part emotions played in English language communication and how they responded when emotions affected their oral communication. The second interview was to clarify the information from the first interview and to request that participants elaborate on the information in their reflective journals. Vietnamese was preferred by every participant except for one teacher who chose English in both interviews. An interview guide (Appendix B) including introductory questions to start the discussion, a list of themes related to the research, and a set of prompts was used. The sequence and forms of questions were at times changed to maintain the flexibility of the interviews and to follow up the participants' specific answers or stories. After each interview, the recording was transcribed and the transcript was sent to the interviewees prior to the second interview.

Reflective Journal. The participants were asked to keep reflective journals, focusing on their emotions when speaking English. Alternatively, when they did not experience emotions that they could reflect on, but something that reminded them of previous relevant experiences, they could add more information for clarification. The journal prompts (Appendix C), designed by the researchers, were delivered to each participant. These data help to gain greater depth of knowledge about their immediate emotions, form ideas and formulate questions for subsequent interviews. The participants were encouraged to send their entry at the end of the day after they finished one.

C. Data Analysis

With 4 questionnaires not fully responded and so excluded, the data collected for the research was composed of 39 completed teacher questionnaires, 18 recorded individual interviews with 9 teachers, and 37 written and 17 voice-recorded reflective journals. All the recorded data were transcribed verbatim.

In the questionnaire, the closed question responses were analyzed following descriptive statistical procedures and using the Lime Survey program. This system filtered the data, retrieved numbers and summaries of different responses, and transferred the results into an Excel spreadsheet. Frequency descriptions were used to indicate the general trend of the range of emotions that the teachers experienced and the perceived influences of these emotions on their oral communication.

This study employed the six-step process for qualitative data analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). These steps included transcribing the data, reading and re-reading it, jotting down initial ideas, generating preliminary codes, and organizing these codes into themes. Our coding was based on the categories suggested in the literature on emotions in second language education. Coding focusses on inclusive extracts with some surrounding data so that the context was not lost. The analysis was iterative, involving the refinement, definition, and naming of each theme, as well as considering how they contribute to the overall narrative. Guided by Polkinghorne's (1995) narrative analysis, we followed a procedure through which the data elements are organized into a coherent account. Two prominent themes appearing from the data are 1) learning experiences and 2) teaching and professional experiences.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Teachers' Emotions in English Language Speaking

This section presents the findings from the analysis of quantitative data (i.e., questionnaires) and qualitative data (interviews and reflective journals), respectively.

(a). Teachers' Emotions in English Language Speaking Over Time

Table 1 illustrates the general trends of teachers' emotions in their early and current experiences speaking English. The findings indicate that at both stages of their lives, participants experienced a wide range of emotions associated

with speaking English, such as frustration, anxiety, embarrassment, pride, excitement, confidence, and contentment, but the prevalence of these emotions varied across different phases.

In their early stage, the most frequently reported emotion was nervousness/anxiety, followed by embarrassment and pleasure, confidence and excitement, pride, and the lowest was frustration. Participants' responses show that in their early experiences of speaking English, they experienced a higher level of positive emotions and low level of negative ones. Most teachers (82%) reported little or no feelings of frustration, and the same level of embarrassment and nervousness was experienced by half of them (49-50%). More than half of the participants (59%) reported having felt quite or very excited when speaking English at that time. A considerable proportion (46%) also reported experiencing a sense of contentment. However, no clear trend was observed in the levels of confidence and self-pride.

TABLE 1
TEACHERS' LEVEL OF PERCEIVED EMOTIONS IN THEIR EARLY AND CURRENT EXPERIENCES OF SPEAKING ENGLISH

	Early experiences				Current experiences			
	N	Little or none (%)	Somewhat (%)	Quite & Very (%)	N	Little or none (%)	Somewhat (%)	Quite & Very (%)
Content	35	14	40	46	36	0	3	97
Confident	34	32	30	38	37	0	0	100
Excited	34	11	30	59	35	0	17	83
Proud	33	24	43	33	35	6	26	68
Embarrassed	35	49	31	20	33	97	3	0
Nervous	36	50	25	25	33	94	6	0
Frustrated	32	82	9	9	33	97	3	0

Questionnaire data revealed a shift in participants' emotions when speaking English in their current experiences. Almost all the teachers felt very content and confident speaking English currently. Confidence was the most frequently reported emotion, with all thirty-seven respondents (100%) selecting it, followed by contentment, excitement, and pride. In contrast, embarrassment, nervousness/anxiety, and frustration were reported least frequently, each with thirty-three responses. Notably, none of the participants reported feeling quite or very embarrassed, nervous, or frustrated. Overall, the teachers' current experiences showed the general trend of positiveness growing over time and the negative reducing – with contentment and confidence having the highest growth. This shift in teachers' emotions when speaking English, compared to those experienced in the early stages of their lives, may be attributed to their higher proficiency and lifelong experience with the language.

(b). *Teachers' Levels of Nervousness/Anxiety When Speaking English in Different Contexts*

As noted earlier, given its well-documented impact on foreign language speaking, anxiety was given specific attention in the questionnaire to further investigate the teachers' perceptions of this emotion in different speaking contexts in the current stage of their career. Figure 1 presents their responses.

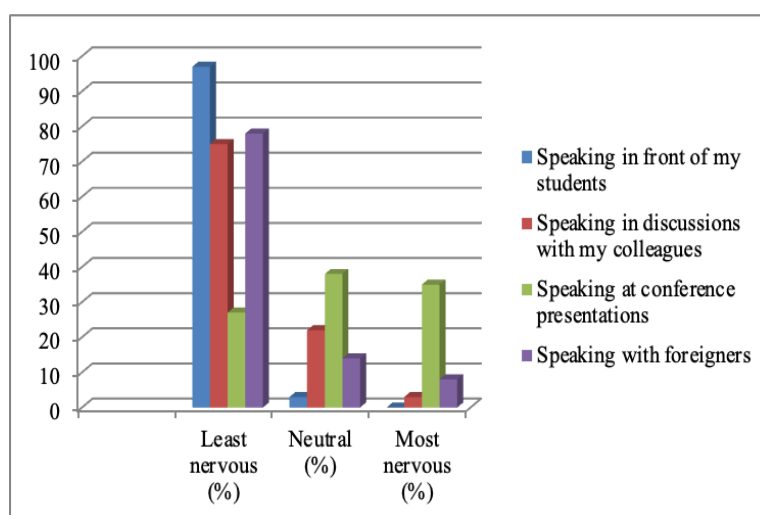


Figure 1. Teachers' Levels of Nervousness/Anxiety When Speaking English in Different Contexts

The quantitative data analysis indicates that participants generally reported low levels of nervousness across most speaking situations, with the exception of conference presentations. The context in which teachers felt least nervous was

speaking in front of their students (97%), followed by speaking with foreigners (78%) and participating in discussions with colleagues (75%). These findings suggest that teachers experience the least nervousness when addressing groups over whom they hold greater authority or with whom they are familiar. Interestingly, the reported levels of nervousness when speaking with foreigners (78%) and with colleagues (75%) were quite similar. Nervousness remained relatively low in discussions with colleagues, despite the frequent involvement of academic matters. This may be explained by the familiarity and collegiality within this group. Similarly, although teachers may not share close relationships with foreigners, it can be assumed that conversations with them often revolve around familiar topics, which may reduce anxiety.

No clear trend emerged regarding levels of nervousness when speaking at conference presentations, as each level was reported by roughly one-third of the teachers. Several factors may help explain this pattern. One possible reason is that participants did not have equal opportunities to attend and present at conferences. Teachers with more experience in conference presentations were likely to feel less nervous, whereas those with limited or no experience may have reported higher levels of nervousness or a more neutral stance.

B. Sources of Teachers' Emotions in English Speaking Over Time

This section presents the findings on the sources of teachers' emotions in speaking English over time, as revealed through interview and reflective journal data. The teachers reported experiencing a range of emotions that emerged from different sources, including contextual factors and various stages of their personal and professional lives, such as at home, school, and university.

Emotions associated with speaking English in the participants' English learning period are reported to cover from their primary school time to university, closely connected with the support they had from their family to the experience they had at school and then at university as language learners. More importantly, the data reveal that teachers' emotions while speaking English evolve over time and are so dynamic and complex that describing them with single states such as 'proud' or 'confident,' or categorizing them simply as positive or negative, may not be sufficient.

Family Support. Support from their family emerged as a source of their love for and passion toward speaking English. This was the most frequently cited source of emotions experienced by teachers while learning and speaking English, particularly in their early lives. Five out of nine teacher participants reported support and resources from their parents shaped their passion for English. These teachers acknowledged that their early emotional experiences of learning and speaking English encouraged them to choose English as their university major later. Four teacher participants talked about their first exposure to the English language with their parents or other family members which led to an affinity for English and positive feelings about learning the language. Their experiences with their parents seemed to have provided an incentive to learn English later in their childhood studies. Teacher (T) 3 recalled:

When I was a child, I used to speak a little bit of English with my father. Despite his limited ability to communicate in English, he used to teach me some phrases and vocabulary to help me speak. ... My father inspired me and I guess from there my love for English grew. And it was from that love that I became really good at English ... (T3, Interview 2)

For those whose parents or family members could not speak English, they were given support to learn English outside their homes. They were sent to foreign language centers. The feelings of being cared for in relation to their language learning fostered their positive emotion for English. Recalling her first experiences learning English, T4 said: "When I was a little girl, my father used to ride me on his bike to a foreign language center to study English regardless of sunny or rainy days. He also looked for good books and bought them for me to study" (T4, Interview 1).

The emotional experiences linked with the advantages of receiving family support for the participants' exposure to English in their early years disposed them positively to learning and speaking English.

School Experience. School time experience was cited as a source of mixed emotions for English speaking. The teachers' school experiences were reportedly associated primarily with feelings of disappointment in both learning and speaking English. Participants recalled that when they reached the age to begin learning English formally at school, they experienced traditional teaching methods, such as the grammar-translation method. All the teachers showed their disappointment with their "minimal learning" of English at school and lack of opportunity to speak English. They all shared that they did not seem to have opportunities to speak due to the traditional teaching method, which focused on grammar and reading comprehension. Several teachers added that their English speaking in the class was just the process of initiation-response-feedback, not a communicative or interactive speaking task.

Outside School Experience. Participants also reported seeking opportunities outside the classroom to practice English with tourists. This local practice involved approaching English-speaking strangers in the street or at tourist sites to engage in conversation. Stepping beyond the classroom and interacting with native English speakers generated excitement as well as other emotions, depending on the interlocutors' attitudes and the teachers' personal motivation. For example, T1 described her strong motivation to practice English, which led her to actively seek out English speakers after school. She recalled feeling happiness and excitement when conversing with individuals who showed genuine interest, noting that in such situations she could easily generate many topics and ideas to sustain the conversation. She also described feeling at ease and unconcerned about making mistakes, attributing this to her own strategies for managing communication.

Similarly, T3 reported mixed feelings of anxiety and excitement when she first spoke English with a group of

American students visiting her senior secondary school. She associated her anxiety with a negative self-image, believing she lacked sufficient vocabulary to communicate effectively. At the same time, she attributed her excitement to the opportunity to speak English for real-life communication. The participants reported that a passion for English, together with pride, stimulated them not just to practice speaking English but also to choose English as their major at university.

University Experience. The teachers' experience at university was referred to as a source of various emotions associated with different teaching methods and social interactions. Both the younger and older teachers talked about their English learning in tertiary classroom contexts. For the older experienced teachers, the tertiary contexts were challenging. Though no emotion was explicitly named, these teachers signaled a feeling of disappointment through their description of the traditional language teaching methods and limited and out-of-date learning resources their teachers used at that time.

By contrast, the younger teacher participants reported being more fortunate in experiencing communicative language teaching, as their teachers gradually familiarized themselves with this approach. They had more opportunities to speak English in the classroom with their teachers and peers. In this more interactive context, the participants being exposed to others' judgment and being recognized by others were linked to both negative and positive emotions. T5 reported feeling under pressure and tension when she was asked to speak English in the class. However, it was also from social interaction that T5 received encouragement and understanding from her teachers, which led to pride associated with a sense of acceptance, and the drive for her to study well to become an English teacher at a university.

In addition to experiences at different life stages, participants also identified their teaching and professional activities as important sources of emotions in speaking English. Classroom situations, along with academic activities such as conferences and workshops, emerged as contexts that strongly shaped their emotional experiences with the language.

Classroom Situations. Classroom situations were reported to cause impact on the teachers' emotions and hence their English speaking. Almost all the teachers said that they experienced different and / or changing emotions when speaking English in their classrooms depending on their students' attitudes towards learning, and their degree of participation in classroom activities. All the teachers stated that they were often very "excited and enthusiastic" to convey their knowledge and understanding of the subject area to their students. Their emotions remained positive if their students cooperated and showed positive attitudes towards learning. A commitment to speaking English was reflected in T3's third journal when she was helping a group of students with IELTS speaking test strategies:

They were intelligent, eager to learn, which motivated me to speak more than I needed to. They were prompt in responding and had interesting ideas in answering my questions. So, I was excited to share with them my knowledge and experience with the IELTS speaking test. (T3, Reflective Journal 3)

However, the teachers' commitment often changed to resentment when their students displayed negative attitudes to learning and non-participation in classroom activities. This can be clearly seen in T3's, T4's, T7's, and T9's stories. T3 reported in her fourth reflective journal that her initial feeling of eagerness to speak English changed to annoyance because some of the students did not participate in the class activities after her lecture. She did not try to hide her feelings, but showed her anger in her speech by using words to "criticize the lazy students" in the class discussion. Three participants (T4, T7, and T9) shared similar experiences.

Three teachers reported that negative emotions adversely affected different aspects of their English speaking. In reference to the unpleasant situations described above, they admitted that the emotion affected their fluency. They also revealed that emotion influenced the quantity and complexity of their speech. They spoke "just enough to complete" their teaching tasks. Furthermore, emotion also affected the quality and coherence of their speech. T9, for instance, stated that she experienced "cold feelings" of "letting it be" and did not care how expressive she should be in her speech. She asserted, "I spoke incoherently and failed to connect the ideas together" (T9, interview 2).

Conferences and Workshops. Five out of nine teacher participants had presented at international conferences and all attended workshops for their professional development. The predominant emotions most teachers reported were anxiety and caution associated with their self-concept, and their colleagues' and audiences' attitudes and cooperation. This finding aligns with the teachers' responses in the questionnaire in terms of their most nervousness speaking at conference presentations compared with other situations. Five of the teachers reported caution and anxiety associated with their anticipation of not doing well and unpleasant past experiences with first language audience. One young teacher, by contrast, reported her eagerness linked with her needs to share and learn, and her perceptions of others' tolerance to her inexperience.

The common emotion the participants experienced at the conference was anticipation anxiety. By anticipation anxiety T3 meant the anxious feeling people often experience before they actually present because they anticipate that they may not perform well (T3, Interview 1). T7 related his anxiety to his anticipation and his selection of language. These, in turn, affected his fluency. T7 stated: "I felt anxious. I wondered if I could fully express myself and I might speak more haltingly. I needed to think more about the ideas, structures and vocabulary. I had to be very thoughtful, so I couldn't speak naturally" (T7, Interview 1).

Unlike the more experienced teachers, T1 acknowledged that her young age was an advantage as her perceived low self-image in comparison to her colleagues and peers led to her comfort speaking English:

I feel very eager and hardly anxious when I present or have any ideas to share at a conference ... because I am

young and the people around me are mostly doctorates, I think they will be tolerant if I make mistakes. (T1, Interview 2)

All of these participants associated their emotion with their self-concept as a language teacher and language speaker in relation to their colleagues and peers.

The interpretation of the key findings of the study indicates that in the shifting contexts of the participants' journey of language learning and use, a number of factors figured importantly in their emotion regarding English speaking and learning. A dynamic interplay of emotion, motivation, cultural values and expectations, relationships, and recognition from others were apparent throughout the study. Their shifting emotions were also associated with their self-concept in relation to their sense of belonging and acceptance. They were linked with their agency in seeking opportunities to practise English and affirm their speaking ability and their acceptability to native English speakers. The relationship between teachers, students and peers in the classroom and the importance of teachers' and peers' favourable responses may have encouraged them to perform better and participate more in a broader English-speaking world and to confirm their position as competent English teachers and English users.

For a number of teacher participants, early childhood marked their first exposure to the world of English. Through pleasurable activities with their parents, these teachers became exposed to an English-speaking world where they interacted with their parents to learn and communicate in English prior to school. There was a strong association between these participants' sense of belonging in the family and positive emotion about the English language. They also saw English users as part of a pleasurable social world. This association provided an emotional momentum for learning English. Baumeister and Leary (1995) have pointed out that satisfaction of people's universal need to belong leads to a wide range of positive emotions including "happiness, elation, contentment, and calm" (p. 508). The features of belonging are evident in the above teachers' reports of close, regular familial contact, which was consistently positive, and associated with the English language.

There was a complex relationship between language teacher self-concept, Vietnamese cultural values, and teachers' expectations from students in classroom contexts. This relationship was closely linked with the teachers' fluctuating emotions which affected their language performance. The teachers' emotions fluctuated according to their enhanced or threatened self-concept along with their students' participation. In response to the teachers' "excitement and enthusiasm", their students "showed their interest in and actively participated in" their lessons. In their view, student participation implied their appreciation of the teacher's work and hence enhanced their teacher self-concept. The emotions could be interpreted as emerging from their positive self-concept enhanced through positive interactions with their students. This result aligns with Hargreaves's (2000) research on teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. Looking at the issue among primary and secondary school teachers, Hargreaves also found that the students' progress and responsive and cooperative behaviour were likely to contribute to the teachers' positive emotions. The teachers' enhanced self-concept led to them becoming more positively emotionally involved in teaching and speaking English. All the teacher participants reported they went beyond their lesson plans to provide the students with knowledge.

By contrast, student disengagement appeared to threaten the teachers' self-concept and evoked emotions of resentment. This emotional shift was associated with the traditional cultural value of respecting others. Six out of nine teachers stated that their commitment to the teaching profession and to students was sometimes repaid by their students' disengagement. These teachers reported their anger and frustration when their students did not engage with class activities. When the students were noncompliant, the teachers perceived themselves as disrespected, not considered important, and hence, perceived their self-concept to be challenged.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study has shown that Vietnamese EFL teachers experienced a wide range of emotions throughout the process of learning and speaking English. Their emotions were experienced, accumulated, and shifted across multiple contexts over time since they began learning English. They fluctuated throughout their journey associated with their interpretation of their interactions and relationships with others. The teachers' stories indicate that the teachers felt emotionally engaged in learning and speaking English with a majority of teachers having advantages and resources from parental support regarding the English language in their childhood. Their positive early experiences seemed to lead to a positive disposition to learn English, which established an emotional foundation for them to keep learning and speaking English and become successful language learners, teachers and users.

Mixed emotions of anxiety and excitement were reported in relation to their opportunities to access native English speakers and a sense of being accepted. Shifting emotions were also reported along with Vietnamese cultural values and language teacher self-concept. These emotions were accumulated throughout their life along with opportunities and positive reinforcement of their use of English along the way. Although not systematically reported by the teacher participants, emotions were, to some extent, seen to affect some aspects of their English speaking.

This study has contributed to providing an understanding of emotion regarding English in changing contexts throughout the participants' lifelong language learning process, beyond the language classroom. It confirms the sociocultural view that emotion is developed in social contexts and acts to mediate language learning. The study has contributed three factors to the theory of emotion in language learning: sense of belonging, language teacher self-

concept, and L1 cultural values. These factors have played an important role in the mediation of emotion and language learning and speaking for the study participants.

The findings of this study suggest several practical implications for EFL teachers and language educators as well. EFL teachers should admit the critical importance of ensuring that every student needs to feel accepted, valued, and significant within the classroom. Providing students with consistent support and a welcoming environment is essential throughout their language learning process. Although many teachers are aware of this need, its importance can occasionally be overshadowed by the myriad challenges inherent in their teaching. In addition, several teacher participants' stories expressing negative emotions toward their students, influenced by Vietnamese hierarchical distance as discussed above, have implications for EFL pedagogies. Emotional labor theorists emphasize the importance of teachers controlling and hiding negative emotions to better serve their students' needs. In other words, teachers should effectively manage and regulate their own emotions to prioritize their students' well-being. Failure to do so can adversely affect students' self-esteem and their engagement in language learning. Last but not least, emotions should be regarded as a fundamental component and incorporated into language curriculum design.

APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear colleague,

We would like to invite you to participate in the research by completing this survey. This survey explores your perceptions of the role emotions play in your oral communication. The survey consists of three parts and will take you only 10 minutes to complete it. Please read carefully the instructions for each part. The responses will be kept confidential. The information from your responses will be used only for the research, and the results will be presented in a form from which no individual will be identifiable. Your completion of the survey will indicate your consent to participate in this research.

Thank you for your participation!

YOUR BACKGROUND

1. Your gender ☐ Female ☐ Male
2. Your highest qualification ☐ Bachelor of Arts ☐ Master of Arts ☐ Doctor of Philosophy
3. How many years did you learn English before becoming a teacher?
.....
4. How many years have you been teaching English?
.....
5. How would you rate your overall English-speaking ability? Poor (1) Excellent (10)

Please choose the appropriate response:

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

YOUR EXPERIENCES AS A LANGUAGE LEARNER AND TEACHER

6. Please rate yourself to indicate how you felt in your early experiences speaking English. Please choose response(s) only for the emotion(s) that you felt. 1 = Not at all 2 = A little 3 = Somewhat 4 = Quite 5 = Very

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	1	2	3	4	5
Content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Confident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Excited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proud of myself	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Embarrassed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Anxious/Nervous	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Frustrated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (Please specify below)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Please rate yourself to indicate how you feel when you speak English now. Please choose response(s) only for the emotion(s) that you feel. 1 = Not at all 2 = A little 3 = Somewhat 4 = Quite 5 = Very. Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	1	2	3	4	5
Content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Confident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Excited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Proud of myself	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Embarrassed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Anxious/Nervous	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Frustrated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (Please specify below)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. How much did your emotions affect your decision to become a teacher of English? Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ☐ Little or none
☐ Some
☐ A moderate amount
☐ Quite a lot
☐ A great deal

9. Please rank each of the following situations on the scale from least (1) to most (5) to indicate their potential for making you feel anxious/nervous speaking English. Least anxious/nervous (1) Most anxious/nervous (5).

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking in front of my students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaking in discussions with my colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaking at conference presentations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaking with foreigners	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (Please specify below)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview 1: Focus: The role of emotions in EFL teachers' oral communication.

- Talk about your English learning background and your early experiences of speaking English.
- How did you feel about speaking English when you were a student?
- How do you feel about speaking English in your teaching career?
- Do your feelings change according to the contexts you are in and the person you are talking to (e.g. colleagues, voluntary foreign teachers, students)? How do they influence your oral communication?
- Was there a time when negative emotions affected your oral communication? Please describe it.
- Was there a time when positive emotions affected your oral communication? Please describe it.

Interview 2: Focus: A more in-depth picture of the role of emotions in EFL teachers' oral communication.

APPENDIX C. JOURNAL PROMPTS

Think about an instance of speaking English on a day this week. We would like you to focus on your feelings when speaking English. Alternatively, if you do not experience emotions that you can reflect on, but something that reminds you of previous relevant experiences, you can add more information for clarification.

Here are some suggestions on what you can write:

- What happened? Where, when, and with whom were you speaking English?
- How were you feeling at the time of speaking?
- How did your emotions influence your speaking?

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