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An Exploration of Language Teacher Reflection, Emotion Labor, and Emotional Capital

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In this article the researchers explore the notion of emotional capital in relation to language teachers' emotion labor and the role of reflection in understanding their emotional experiences. They draw on interview narratives with teachers ($N = 25$) working in higher education institutions in the United States and United Kingdom. During these interview conversations, the researchers elicited accounts of teachers' emotionally charged experiences that arise as part of their ongoing, mundane teaching practice and how they respond to these situations. The researchers argue that as language teachers struggle to orient to the feeling rules of their institutions, they develop the capacity to perform the emotions that they believe are expected of them. This capacity is further shaped through their reflective practice, as both individual reflection and collaborative reflection with colleagues. The researchers thus analyze how language teachers' accruing emotional capital, developed through emotion labor and reflective activity, can be converted into social and cultural capital. The authors also point to how language teachers' emotional capital is entangled in power relations and thus requires careful scrutiny.
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The significant body of research into emotions within second language acquisition (SLA) has disproportionately centered on the negative repercussions of anxiety on language learners and the process of learning (see, e.g., Gkonou, Daubney, & Dewaele, 2017). Recent efforts have, however, focused on more holistic explorations of language learner emotions with a view to advancing understandings of

emotions other than anxiety, such as enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Dewaele, Witney, Saito, & Dewaele, 2018). With relation to language teacher emotions, research has drawn heavily from other disciplines such as education, psychology, and sociology, with the latter inspiring SLA scholars through Hochschild's (1979, 1983) introduction of the groundbreaking concept of *emotional labor*. Hochschild demonstrated that emotion labor efforts are tied to how service workers' job performances are evaluated, legitimated, and rewarded, even though these efforts are rarely overtly acknowledged as labor. Hochschild additionally highlighted the importance of managing employee emotions in accordance with organizationally desired emotions for the sake of higher customer satisfaction, thus depicting emotion labor as typically negative. However, SLA researchers have concluded that the performance of emotion labor among language teachers has diverse consequences for them—both negative, which might pose a threat to their professional longevity (Cowie, 2011; King, 2016; King & Ng, 2018), and positive, thus enabling teachers to reap emotional rewards (Loh & Liew, 2016; Miller & Gkonou, 2018).

The voices of scholars from within SLA and beyond thus suggest that research into emotions and interdisciplinarity in the field is not new, and that emotions play a fundamental role in teacher identities, classroom practice, and teacher professionalization. Yet more nuancing is necessary, and there is still much that we do not know about how emotions work in practice (Prior, 2019). Rather than categorizing emotions according to their valence a priori (i.e., positive vs. negative), as poststructuralists we contend that scholarly focus should consider what emotions do and explore how emotions could be viewed from a historical, cultural, contextual, and sociopolitical lens. In taking this approach, we draw on Benesch's (2017, 2018) poststructural approach to language teacher emotions. Emotions thus are not viewed as individual psychological phenomena nor as discrete affective states but rather as feelings or affects experienced and performed *in relation to* other people and particular situations—situations that are shaped by local feeling rules. *Feeling rules*, a term developed by Hochschild (1979), refers to the "conventions by which people judge whether their feelings are appropriate in particular situations or not" (Benesch, 2017, p. 39). The feeling rules of schools and classrooms, though usually implicit and often only subconsciously recognized, nevertheless shape what language teachers believe they should feel in their professional roles and how they should perform emotions. This orientation to feeling rules crucially points to the role of power in constituting which emotions are valued in schools and classrooms. For this reason, we find education scholar Michalinos Zembylas's (2003) definition of teacher emotions particularly compelling. He contends that teacher

emotions involve "matters of personal (private) dispositions or psychological qualities" as well as their "social and political experiences that are constructed by how one's work (in this case, the teaching) is organized and led" (p. 216). We find this workplace relational structuring of emotions to be particularly important as we elaborate in this article on how we understand emotional capital and its connection to emotion labor and how these are mediated through reflective practice.

Emotional Capital and Teachers' Capacity for Emotion Labor

In this article we draw on the notion of emotional capital in making sense of our participants' accounts of their emotional experiences and efforts to control their emotions as language teachers. Attention to language teachers' emotional capital has only recently begun to be addressed by language scholars (see Song, 2018), and we find that this concept helps us understand how experienced teachers' conscious, reflective awareness of their ongoing struggles to manage their emotions "appropriately" can lead to other desirable symbolic goods. Though Bourdieu never used the term *emotional* capital, his influence on this notion is clear. Much like the social and cultural forms of capital that Bourdieu (1986) conceptualized, emotional capital is understood to develop over time, as an embodied capacity, within socially constructed and regulated fields, and as part of one's habitus. Like economic capital, it can be exchanged for other forms of capital.

In exploring the role of emotions in teachers' habitus (their socially formed system of dispositions), Zembylas (2007, p. 444) contends that we need to treat emotions as resources that can be "circulated, accumulated and exchanged for other forms of capital." For example, emotional capital can be converted into social capital in the form of better relationships with students or higher regard by one's peers or administrators. It can likewise be transformed into greater cultural capital in the form of enhanced professional confidence and "positive self-image" (Song, 2018, p. 460). Such enhanced cultural competence can empower teachers to advocate for themselves or their students or pursue professional advancement. As with all forms of capital, teachers' emotion-based knowledge and embodied capacity for emotional control is unequally distributed, as Song's (2018, p. 462) study of nonnative English language teachers demonstrated. Her study showed how powerful nativist discourses that positioned such teachers as having diminished authority on linguistic issues led to a "deep sense of insecurity" among the nonnative teachers. They often felt that they were not recognized as equals with their colleagues who were native users of English. The circulation and exchange of language teachers'

emotional capital in schools and classrooms always occurs in power-laden, often inequitable, socially inscribed contexts. Given the ideologically shaped contexts in which emotional capital forms, we argue that it inevitably develops through and in relation to the feeling rules of those contexts.

Benesch's (2017, 2018) research focuses on the intersection of language teachers' emotion labor with unequal power relations, and particularly the kinds of "dissonance" teachers might experience in navigating the feeling rules of their schools that conflict with their own beliefs, values, and professional training (Benesch, 2017, p. 2). For example, she examines the emotion labor language teachers undertake in their struggles to resist or reinterpret problematic institutional policies relating to plagiarism and student attendance as well as instructional practices involving high-stakes literacy testing and responding to student writing. These situations pitch less powerful teachers against more powerful institutional policies and discourses. Benesch does not, however, view teachers' ensuing emotional struggles simply as negative experiences to be overcome, but rather as "useful signals ... about whether current conditions are favorable or not," information that can then be used to guide teachers' efforts at "collective action and educational reform" (Benesch, 2018, p. 61). She, in fact, argues that emotions can be viewed as agents in themselves when they provoke teachers to undertake emotion labor through resisting inequitable policies and practices.

In this study, we expand the frame for the kind of emotion work that can constitute emotion labor among language teachers by eliciting more holistic accounts of teachers' emotional experiences in their everyday classroom teaching rather than focusing on particular institutional practices. In thinking about how teachers work to develop an "appropriate" system of dispositions or habitus, one that aligns with the feeling rules of their professional contexts, we examine their struggles to maintain emotional control—efforts that they believe are necessary to perform their professional duties. Zembylas (2007, p. 447) writes that feeling rules in school contexts "delineate a zone within which certain emotions are permitted and others are not permitted, and can be obeyed or broken, at varying costs." He adds that such norms "reflect power relations and thus are techniques for the discipline of the habitus in emotional expression and communication between teachers and students" (p. 447). Elsewhere Zembylas (2003, p. 119) discusses the many kinds of emotional experiences that teachers confront "on a daily basis," noting that teachers are "urged and incited" to learn to control feelings such as "anger, anxiety and vulnerability" and must learn instead to "express empathy, calmness and kindness" in classrooms and among colleagues.

It is the ongoing, daily, mundane struggles of language teachers to bring their emotions in line with feeling rules when confronting challenging emotional situations that we focus on. We do not, as such, focus on emotion labor exclusively as resistance to feeling rules but include the emotion work teachers undertake as they struggle to align with them. Though one might argue that this aligning work exhibits conformity to power relations, it is important to recognize that such work still is shaped and necessitated by power relations. We find that as language teachers develop the capacity to perform the kinds of emotions expected of them, they can gain emotional capital in their professional context. It is also true that teachers often reproduce feeling rules as they accumulate emotional capital (Edgington, 2016; Zembylas, 2005, 2007). Developing emotional capital holds no guarantees that teachers will resist social inequities. However, rather than treating emotion management as universally desirable, as suggested in concepts such as emotional intelligence, conceptualizing emotion labor—whether as resistance to or as alignment with feeling rules—in terms of emotional capital gives emphasis to the social regulation and return value of particular kinds of emotion work. On this point, Yarrow (2015, p. 354) contends that the "idea of emotional capital" enables "emotions and emotional work to become visible as a distinct phenomenon, economically and culturally."

Most important, as Ward and McMurray (2016) have argued, emotional capital enables individuals to persist in undertaking difficult emotion labor. That is, the accumulation of emotional capital does not diminish the need for teachers to struggle to conform to or resist the "written or 'unwritten' rules of the field" (Edgington, 2016, p. 4), but, as a resource developed in relation to the feeling rules of their school contexts, it can be exchanged for an expanded capacity to work through those struggles. It is for this reason that Ward and McMurray view emotional capital as "the socially, culturally and economically informed capacity to labour emotionally" (p. 92). Language teachers' commitment to undertaking emotion labor often provokes reflection, which can facilitate their development of emotional capital.

Reflective Practice on Emotion Labor and Emotional Capital

Schön's (1983) introduction of the concept of *reflective practitioner* has revolutionized the way in which teacher reflection is theorized, understood, and enacted. Specifically, Schön moved beyond the classic conceptualization of professional practice as being entirely or solely rational and cognitive, contending that emotion and experiential learning are powerful tools that can enrich the process of teacher

reflection. At its most mundane level, reflection refers to the process of "thinking about something" and "might happen 'in the head' or through writing (e.g., diary writing) or talk (e.g., collaborative exploratory talk)" (Mann, 2016, pp. 7–8). It does, however, encompass both "intellectual and affective activities" (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p. 3) in that emotions—particularly strong emotions—can influence the recall of an event and skew how an event is interpreted; it is also likely that the event itself unfolded in the way it did due, in part, to emotion. We have discussed elsewhere (Gkonou & Miller, 2020) how emotionally charged certain classroom episodes—so-called critical incidents (Tripp, 2012)—can be and how emotions contribute to which (parts of) events are recounted. Thus, it is not just the interpretation of the event according to the feeling rules of the context that is influenced by emotion but also an individual's agentic efforts to act and respond to the event, both of which responses are examined through reflective practice (Archer, 2007; Miller & Gkonou, 2018; Wolff & De Costa, 2017).

When reflection takes emotion into account, emotions can come to be understood as socially, historically, relationally, and politically constituted (Denzin, 1984; Schutz, Hong, Cross, & Osbon, 2006). In commenting specifically on the relational nature of emotions, Zembylas (2014, p. 211) discussed the notion of "critical emotional reflexivity" and argued that reflexive processes help to "legitimize or delegitimize certain teaching practices" and also determine whether practices should be reproduced or interrupted. It is worth noting that numerous scholars have distinguished between reflection and reflexivity, highlighting that the two terms are often confused or misinterpreted. Finlay (2012, p. 317) suggests that "reflection can be defined as 'thinking about' something after the event. Reflexivity, in contrast, involves an ongoing *self*-awareness" (italics in the original). Holmes (2010) cautions that reflexivity is not about just calculating how satisfied or dissatisfied an individual is with a practice or aspect of their life—such as a language lesson or a teacher's classroom performance— but rather what emotions such a practice brings and to what extent it fits or does not fit with others' emotions, thoughts, and actions. As Holmes succinctly puts it, "reflexivity is emotional and comparative and relies on interpreting emotions" (p. 148). This is particularly salient in cases where reflection is happening with other people—such as teachers reflecting together with colleagues like in our study. Not only does reflection benefit individuals in that they compare their emotions about practice with colleagues and take action to improve current conditions, but it can also circulate and reproduce a form of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), which stems from their appreciation of social relations, networks, and existing social structures (Cottingham, 2016; Zembylas, 2007). For this reason, emotional experiences can be seen as

opportunities for teachers to reflect on the influence of power relations and feeing rules on the emotions that they value and the dispositions that they seek to avoid. As Zembylas points out, teachers need to explore how they have been "taught to *feel the world* through an ideological lens" (italics in original) and develop the capacity to critique many of their assumptions regarding "appropriate" emotions (p. 218).

The emotionality associated with reflection and reflexivity is also underlined in writings in which the "emotional self" (Howe, 2008, p. 185) is depicted as an integral part of the professional self, and reflective practice requires that practitioners "analyze what [they] *think, feel,* and *do*, and then learn from the analysis" (Howe, 2009, p. 171; italics in original) in order to inform their teaching. Learning through reflection does not emanate simply from enacting professional work but also from evaluating the emotions that this work has engendered in oneself and others (Ferguson, 2018; Redmond, 2006), thus leading to higher levels of emotional self-awareness and resilience in the face of struggling to display appropriate emotions in front of students and/or colleagues, especially in other-oriented professions such as teaching (Grant & Kinman, 2014). With relation to teachers who have been in the profession long enough —such as the ones in our study—reflection and action can facilitate the process of learning how to manipulate and even modulate their emotions to project the emotional equipoise expected from them in their professional roles. Reflection can be even more beneficial for teachers when it is turned into social practice among them (i.e., teachers reflect together with colleagues on emotion-related experiences that are concerning them), on feeling rules and decisions that they may have to resist or follow, or on matters relating to students that they would otherwise be unsure of how to tackle.

In analyzing the language teacher interview accounts, we formulated three research questions:

1. How do the participating teachers orient to feeling rules?
2. How does emotion labor enable teachers to develop emotional capital?
3. How does teacher reflection contribute toward developing emotional capital?

METHODOLOGY

Context and Participants

The participants in this study were English language teachers working in tertiary education programs in the United States and United

Kingdom and who were invited to participate in a larger study that focused on language teacher emotions and agency (Miller & Gkonou, 2018). For the first phase of the larger study, 30 teachers from six programs—three in the United States and three in the United Kingdom—completed an anonymous online questionnaire. Of these, 25 teachers took part in follow-up, semistructured interviews with the researcher who was based in the same country as them. This study draws only on the interview accounts provided by these 25 teachers. Table 1 provides a summary of the demographic information for the participating teacher interviewees.

Data Collection Process

We conducted semistructured interviews with the participating teachers, most of which took place on university premises. Due to timing issues and inability to travel, 10 interviews were conducted via Skype. In line with our poststructural approach to researching emotions, we regard interviews as meaning-making encounters in which knowledge is socially constructed. When scripting the questions for our interview guide, we sought to align them "to the theoretical conceptions of the research topic" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 157) and so drew on key readings on the topic of teacher emotions. We crafted questions that would enable us to find out as much as possible about each interviewee's background, perspectives, and experience with emotions while teaching. The resulting interview guide included 11 questions that concentrated on teachers' responsibilities in their current positions, aspects of their teaching that they enjoyed the most or least, strategies for managing their emotions while teaching, the extent to which emotion management was easy or difficult for them, issues related to teacher autonomy, job-related stress, and advice on

TABLE 1
Demographic Information of Teacher Participants

Location	United States: 15
	United Kingdom: 10
Gender	Female: 19
	Male: 6
	Prefer not to disclose: 0
Full-time/part-time	Full-time: 20
	Part-time: 5
Highest academic qualifications	MA: 20
	PhD: 5
	Language teaching certification: 10
Years of teaching experience	Mean: 16.4 (min = 2, max = 45)

emotion management for newly qualified teachers and colleagues. Although the interview guide helped us focus on the topics of interest to us, we allowed interviewees to speak freely and encouraged new topics to emerge organically in the interview conversations. The interview questions—albeit not intended to elicit narratives of emotional history per se—allowed interviewees to share experiences, deliberate, and tell past stories to a listener who showed interest (i.e., the interviewer). Such reflection might not have taken place if we had not asked teachers these specific interview questions. In other words, although, as argued earlier, reflection encompasses both cognitive and affective dimensions, in the case of the present study the latter is likely to have been accentuated in response to our interview questions. Reflecting on the interview conversations ourselves and acknowledging the consequential role of interviewers (Roulston, 2016), we did not observe differences in the amount of disclosure and type of reflection undertaken by teachers between what Mann (2016) classes as acquaintance interviews (i.e., the research participant is known to the researcher) and interviews with teachers whom we met for the first time on the day of the interview.

The average length of the interviews was 33 minutes, with some of them lasting up to an hour. Although there were no questions that specifically addressed the topics of emotion labor or emotional capital, we did specifically ask them about how they managed their emotions. Upon rereading the interview transcripts numerous times, we were struck by the salience and recurrence of teacher references to how much they felt they had learned about working through difficult emotional situations throughout the course of their teaching and also by their frequent references to reflection in enabling that emotion labor. We therefore decided to examine how they characterized the role that emotion management—which we here regard as emotion *labor* for the reasons outlined in the literature review and as evidenced later in our Findings section—played in the emotional texture of their teaching practice.

Data Analysis

The 25 interviews were transcribed verbatim, resulting in a data corpus totaling 99,925 words. The corpus was first analyzed using the qualitative data management software Atlas.ti. However, we found it more useful to develop deep familiarity with the interviews by reading the transcripts multiple times. This iterative engagement allowed us to identify salient themes inductively, as part of an "organic and flexible process" of qualitative thematic analysis (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, &

Braun, 2017, p. 20). Each researcher analyzed the data separately, producing a draft of codes and memo writing associated with relevant excerpts. In coding the data, we were interested in teachers' subjective experiences and personal histories and in how they talked about their emotion labor and gave implicit indications of accumulating emotional capital. All of these accounts were guided by the interview guide and the additional questions that we felt were necessary to ask depending on the direction each individual interview took. Thus, we coded the interview data mainly on the basis of teachers' subjective accounts of their emotional experiences without, however, approaching each interview as an individual case study. We then consulted together to refine the codes and develop the themes that aligned with our interest in language teachers' emotion labor and emotional capital. The reflexivity that teachers exhibited during the interview activity allowed us to explore the emotional self-awareness that they had gained throughout the years and their perceptions of good language teachers as necessarily including being good emotional managers while often undertaking emotion labor too. Our analysis of the emotional capital that they had gained throughout their careers is illustrated in more detail in the discussion of the findings that follows.

FINDINGS

"Being Professional": Orienting to Feeling Rules

Each of the teachers in our study demonstrated awareness of emotion norms in their classrooms and institutional contexts, particularly in regard to the need to create momentary distancing, both physical and emotional, from challenging situations (see also Miller & Gkonou, 2018). In their descriptions of this intentional emotional distancing from challenging moments, roughly one-third of the teachers (9 of 25) explicitly used the word *professional*. That said, "being professional" was not explicitly defined (nor did we as interviewers follow up on what they meant); rather, the teachers seemed to orient to this notion as common sensical—that is, everyone knows what "being professional" means in a classroom context. However, we can see in the selected excerpts below that teachers' comments about "being professional" include descriptors such as not telling students anything they "shouldn't be hearing ... anything that is not appropriate," not getting "overexcited," "contain[ing] emotions," "keeping a firm track of how you are behaving," "controlling emotions," and "trying not to get too personally involved." The teachers' comments provided here were

produced in response to the interviewer's question regarding what advice they would give to novice teachers on dealing with emotions:

Excerpt 1

> I would say they [new language teachers] should be honest in terms of their relationship with their students and, therefore, in a sense, in terms of their emotions. Honest but still professional. I don't mean going and telling them something that students shouldn't be hearing. ... So I'd say be honest, while at the same time being professional, obviously. Not telling the students anything that is not appropriate.
>
> (T16)

Excerpt 2

> If somebody got so overexcited, just naturally that it verged on the unprofessional, then I think that would be a case for trying to contain emotions. But I suppose, with regard to, yeah. I think professionalism is the guide really, what you are doing in the classroom. ... You can't allow anything, your personal beliefs or personal emotions to override your professional values or to compromise your professional values in any way. So I think keeping, you know, keeping a firm track of how you are behaving within the class is very important ... you know, maybe trying not to get too personally involved but still be professional.
>
> (T20)

Importantly, as the language teachers in our study provided accounts of "being professional," none of them advocated showing no emotions but rather appeared to strive for moderated displays of emotions, a toning down of both excitement and frustration. As T16 in Excerpt 1 suggests, for her "being professional" is equated with a kind of middle ground in which teachers can be "honest" about their emotions with their students while still "being professional" and being "appropriate."

More important, T20 in Excerpt 2 describes the implicit feeling rules of professionalism as a "guide" for what one does in the classroom and indicates that controlling one's personal beliefs and emotions is part of one's professional values. The notion of beliefs and values points to shared discourses or ideologies. In this way, teachers' comments regarding the need to constantly work at controlling their emotions indicate "wider regimes of control" (Ward & McMurray, 2016, p. 50). Zembylas (2005, p. 213) argues that teachers' self-knowledge and self-regulation work "owes something to the emotion

discourses, pedagogical practices, professional codes, and power relations in teaching." It is true that the discourses that teachers value can lead to inequitable positioning of students and/or teachers (Song, 2018). However, they also can function as "regimes of thought, through which teachers can accord significance to aspects of themselves and their emotional experiences" (Zembylas, 2005, p. 213).

In showing awareness of the need to be professional and giving accounts of enacting emotional control, the teachers in our study point to their accumulating emotional capital. Cottingham (2017, p. 273) describes teachers' emotional capital as knowledge of local emotion norms along with the resources or capacity to meet "the practical and interactional demands" of particular situations. Likewise, Yarrow (2015, p. 355) notes that teachers' emotional capital develops from a "lifetime of practices and experiences ... rather than emerging spontaneously from them." We see in the selected excerpts introduced in this section that being professional through practicing emotional control appears to index an emotional resource, what we view as emotional capital, that requires but also enables ongoing emotion labor as well as conscious reflection, as we discuss in the following section.

Emotional Capital Mediated Through Reflective Practice

Nearly all of the participating teachers in our study (24 out of 25) highlighted the importance of reflection in controlling their own emotions, becoming more self-aware emotionally, and thereby enhancing their classroom practice. They frequently constructed their reflection activity as developing in moments of emotional struggle, such as when feeling caught between their sense of needing to align with institutional norms but also needing to attend to students' resulting emotional distress as shown in Excerpt 3 below. This response by T2 was provided in answer to the interviewer's question regarding what she does to minimize difficult emotions ("guilt" had been identified earlier as one of the emotions this teacher contended with). Here T2 describes situations when students' language learning outcomes do not meet institutionally mandated benchmarks of performance, which then require her to inform the students that they will not be promoted to a higher level. This kind of information is often highly consequential for students in these university language programs because it can significantly delay their matriculation to the university or prolong the time required to complete their university degrees if they are already matriculated. As such, receiving such news often provokes "hurt faces" and "tears" and leaves the interviewee sometimes in tears herself and wondering, "What do I do with that?"

Excerpt 3

> I think with guilt, I have to kind of analyze it. Many times in my career I sat there feeling really, really uncomfortable telling the students something but nevertheless, "I cannot promote you to the next level. You're not ready to go. I can't write a letter in favor of you entering university right now because I really can't do it." So those kinds of things. Their hurt faces, their tears, I've had tears. What do I do with that? I have to think it through. Am I just being pompous and throwing my power around, what little I have? And the answer is no. I never try to step on someone because I can, and it helps, but it doesn't mean I'm not affected by tears. ... Once you keep focusing on what's best for student learning, that really helps to minimize the stress.
>
> (T2)

This teacher, like most in our study, is highly experienced. As she indicates here, she has confronted the situation she describes "many times in [her] career." Although she is still "affected" by students' tears, the teacher indicates that "think[ing] it through" allows her to come to a resolution to focus on "what's best for student learning," which helps to "minimize the stress" of such situations. It seems that working through situations like this continues to require emotion labor on her part, but through reflective activity and repeated engagement with such challenging moments (i.e., "you *keep focusing on* what's best for student learning"), she has learned to work through her own feelings of discomfort and guilt as well as students' tears. In this way, we find that T2's emotion labor contributes to the development of emotional capital, an emotional resource that enables her to continue teaching (now for more than 30 years) and find ways to address students' needs.

Similar to T2, other teachers in our study frequently referred to their past experiences with emotionally challenging situations as material for reflection in response to interviewers' questions regarding the strategies they use to manage their emotions. In one such case, a language teacher described a situation from her early days as a language teacher. She had organized a prewriting activity by posting categories of influential people around the classroom (heroes, historical figures, etc.) and then asked students to post their ideas of influential people whom they could write about under each category. One student posted Hitler as one of the historical figures he most admired. The teacher noted that at the time she did not know whether she should "ignore it or address it" and wondered what she should say or do. She then indicated that she addressed the situation "in a way [she] thought was appropriate" and added that she still reflects back on that

moment and draws "on that experience for confidence" (T8). Another teacher described having to deal with a "hostile" student and the "anxiety" that the situation provoked for her because she felt that the student upset "the dynamics with the classroom" and negatively affected all of the students. She indicated that she has learned the need to "review" such "negative" situations. Her response continues in Excerpt 4:

Excerpt 4

> If it's a negative, then I think it would—then I would have to review what I have done, or I would have to have a think about if it's a particular problem with a particular student. I'd have to think about, "Right, how am I going to deal with it? Should I speak to the student individually? What will I say?" So maybe a little forward planning or just thinking around it, you know. So I try to go away from it and have a think. It's not always done here. It's often done when I am driving home. I will be thinking, returning over my mind, and I think, "Oh, all right, I will try that." … So that's how I do it. I was thinking it through at the end of the day.
>
> (T18

T18 describes her reflective activity as often occurring on her drive home from the university and indicates that while turning things over in her mind, she comes to a decision about what to do ("Oh, all right, I will try that"). She also suggests that this is an ongoing process that she undertakes ("So that's how I do it").

It seems that teachers' conscious reflection on their emotion labor over years of teaching practice provided them with "a form of embodied cultural capital" in terms of a "configuration of emotion-based knowledge, skills and capacities" (Cottingham, 2017, p. 273). One teacher referred to her "backlog of experience" that now allows her to deal with emotionally challenging situations much more easily. She laughed as she noted that a situation such as when a student turns in a late assignment is "unfortunate, but it's nothing really" for her to stress over (T5). In each of the above cases, the teachers demonstrated that the emotion labor that was required for them to work with students whom they regarded as challenging or difficult was made possible, in part, through reflective activity during which they could think about appropriate plans of action. Such reflective activity points to their accumulating emotional capital. Much as Ward and McMurray (2016, p. 108) found in their studies of individuals across different professions, for these language teachers "emotional labour is both a source and a product of the emotional capital that individuals build

over a lifetime." That is, although these teachers continue to confront emotionally challenging situations, they positioned themselves as having developed the emotional capacity to continue to address such situations—through undertaking yet more emotion labor. Their developing emotional capital does not lead to a triumph over difficult emotions, but it does seem to provide them with the resources necessary to continue to thrive as language teachers.

Finally, we found that a particularly salient aspect of the interview narratives was that reflection was described as most helpful when it would occur in collaboration with colleagues. One teacher, for example, described how "helpful" and "supportive" she finds speaking to her colleagues about difficult issues. She commented on the positive effects of meeting regularly with a colleague for lunch so that they "could just speak to each other, just around emotions about the students" (T16). Another noted that "just being able to talk about it and share experiences [with your colleagues] goes a long way with processing your situation, thinking about what choices you have, what you can do about it" (T6). In describing collegiality and the process of reflecting with colleagues and through colleagues' similar experiences, teachers used the words *friendships*, *relationships*, *trust*, and *respect*. These were depicted as important qualities to survive "in a particularly stressful environment" (T7) and to deal effectively with "some kind of an issue" (T13), which were also found in previous research to sustain quality interpersonal relationships in the workplace and protect teacher well-being (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes, & Salovey, 2010; Gkonou & Mercer, 2017).

We, however, view these supportive relationships as forms of acquired social capital for the teachers in our study. For example, when asked what advice she would want to give to new teachers, T18 discusses the importance of "finding perspective" through reaching out to colleagues (Excerpt 5). She urges new teachers to "give it [a difficult emotional situation] to somebody and get them to know" about it. She further recommends that new teachers learn how other, presumably more experienced, teachers handle such situations by observing them in the classroom.

Excerpt 5

> So that would be my main advice, I think, to a new teacher, because that's how they are going to manage their own emotions. Don't carry it [fear] in, give it to somebody and get them to know. … It's not a mountain, it's a molehill, and then recognize that if that is an area that is concerning you, then go with somebody and observe them with that as your item for its part of the observation. So then you've got, then

you've got that, you've closed that, that complete circle. And then you can decide what you want to do with it. You can put it to one side or you can build on it. Yeah.

(T18)

In this excerpt, T18 treats new teachers' developing awareness of how to deal with emotionally challenging situations as a resource, something to "build" on. It is cast, implicitly, as a form of capital that can be converted into other desirable symbolic goods.

These accounts of working through emotionally difficult situations by talking about and reflecting on them with colleagues demonstrate how as language teachers develop emotional capital they also can gain greater social and cultural capital. Interestingly, in response to the interviewer's question regarding how much autonomy she feels she has in making pedagogical decisions, T6 in Excerpt 6 emphasizes the ongoing collective reflection activity among the language teachers in her program. She indicates that it allows them to "tackle" their teaching "professionally" and enables them to "push" each other to "plan, attend, and present at conferences." She further notes that this collective reflection work feels "very energizing," so when she does feel "unhappy" about "an instance in the classroom," she does not feel "powerless" but is rather "empowered to seek support and to make changes quickly."

Excerpt 6

We do a lot of reflecting as a faculty, videotaping observations, we're thinking about what we're doing, trying to talk about teaching as a craft, tackling it professionally or articulate what's happening, how we think about what's happening, how we change what's happening, we push each other to plan, attend, and present at conferences, so I think in the environment, this autonomy is very energizing ... so if there's an instance in the classroom that I'm unhappy about, I don't feel powerless, I feel empowered to seek support and to make changes quickly.

(T6)

The forms of capital described here point to teachers feeling supported and empowered (social capital), feeling confident in furthering their professional identities through improving their teaching practices and presenting at conferences (cultural capital), and feeling energized rather than unhappy (emotional capital). It seems that as teachers undertake (collective) reflective activity, they often come to better understand emotionally difficult situations, develop strategies for addressing them, which in turn enables them to continue to undertake emotion labor, pointing to the "generative capacity of emotional

capital" (Ward & McMurray, 2016, p. 105). This approach aligns with Edgington's (2016, p. 5) understanding regarding how our "past choices, experiences, hopes and expectations that we bring with us to every situation and relationship, and which interact together, form what Bourdieu called habitus and provides an opportunity for action, or *operationalizing capital*" (italics added).

DISCUSSION

In this article we have attempted to advance our understanding of what language teacher emotions do in actual practice by drawing on instances of teachers' conscious use of reflection as a resource that contributes to increased emotional awareness and capacity to respond to what is happening in class. Throughout this process, teachers demonstrated the impact of implicit feeling rules on their practice and in undertaking emotion labor to align with norms such as "being professional." In considering these accounts of emotion labor, of particular interest is T20's comment in Excerpt 2 that she finds "professionalism is the guide really." Emotion labor can accrue as emotional capital, over time, equipping teachers with the capacity to reflect on and address emotionally challenging situations in ways they believe are appropriate.

For the teachers in our study, reflection was conducted in writing, in teacher discussion groups, or through lesson observations. It also often involved very informal reflective practices such as reconsidering a classroom event on the way home after work. However, on all of these occasions, reflection incorporated a robust affective dimension, which we see as further contributing to teachers' emotional capital. Teachers admitted to thinking carefully about their emotions—and also those of their learners—and, through their accumulated emotional experiences and emotional capital, they learned about how emotions function and how they could be managed. T19 specifically advocated that such practices could be particularly insightful for new teachers, who could take their concerns to someone else and observe what they do; this way they could "build" on their concerns and decide how to address them. Importantly, the participating teachers indicated that reflection works best when it takes place in groups and through opportunities to connect and network with others, processes that point to how emotional capital can be developed and converted into social and cultural capital (Cottingham, 2016; Song, 2018). Teachers benefitted from individual reflection that enabled them to gain emotional capital through learning how to manage their emotions in line with

"being professional," but they also reflected in groups, a practice that fostered collaboration, solidarity, and positive group dynamics.

Reflection requires interpreting one's own and others' emotions but also, perhaps most importantly, recognizing and sometimes challenging emotional schemas, thus giving possibilities to invoke change in teaching practices (Edwards & Thomas, 2010). Reflection is not just about reconsidering and assessing experiences and what is being done, but also rethinking long-held values, beliefs, and practices (Mezirow, 1990). Holmes (2010, p. 143) suggests that reflexivity, with its more self-oriented dimension, is an "achievement" that can enable individuals "to exercise some control and to be the kind of person that they want to be, *within the roles available to them*" (italics added). Thus, on the one hand, teachers can reflect on how and to what extent they should tweak or adapt their emotions depending on what is happening at any given moment in time in their settings (Wetherell, 2012); on the other hand, "the roles [that are] available to them" (Holmes, 2010, p. 143) and the feeling rules of their organization can serve as points of departure for reflection that provoke "moral questions" and responses to how emotions are entangled with power relations (Zembylas, 2014, p. 214). Developing emotional capital to continue undertaking the emotionally challenging work of teaching thus invites scrutiny.

The "positive" outcomes of emotion labor that lead to emotional capital often accrue when teachers align with institutional feeling rules. Benesch (2017, 2018) has argued that there are many times when feeling rules need to be resisted. Wetherell (2012) furthermore argues that scholars need to consider "the unevenness of affective practices" such as by asking, "How are practices clumped, who get to do what when? ... Who is emotionally privileged, who is emotionally disadvantaged and what does this privilege and disadvantage look like?" (p. 17). Song's (2018) discussion of diminished emotional capital among "nonnative" teachers of English who often lack confidence in their professional capacities when compared to their "native" counterparts shows very clearly that emotional resources among language teachers can be distributed unequally due to socially and ideologically generated feeling rules rather than individual psychologies. The pathway toward developing greater emotional capital through reflection and emotion labor will undoubtedly be experienced differently by teachers in more precarious positions, such as part-time teachers or teachers who have not yet been granted permanency in their institutions. Given this ambiguous potential of emotional capital, we urge language teachers and teacher educators to critique, contextualize, and practice reflexivity in relation to these concepts. Emotion labor and feeling rules are not always bad and emotional capital is not

always good, but as concepts they can function as framing devices that allow us to better understand the social constitution and emotional shaping of language teacher practice and identity.

CONCLUSION

Our present study shows how emotion labor can contribute to emotional capital and the important role that teacher reflection can play in developing that capacity as well as social and cultural capital. We are cognizant of the fact that our study constitutes one of the very few attempts to discuss emotional capital within TESOL research and practice (see also Song, 2018), thus showing that research into this concept is still in its infancy. As such, more studies are needed to allow for more in-depth understandings of emotional capital across settings and among teachers with differential levels of teaching experience. Additionally, in our study, language teachers' reflexive comments on their emotion labor and emotional capital were produced in response to questions that were not targeting these topics per se. Although we acknowledge the cross-sectional nature of our collected data, we keenly encourage researchers to approach reflection more holistically and longitudinally, by considering its affective dimension and exploring how it contributes toward changing teacher practices and experiences of emotions. We have also come to realize that the way reflection is taught in teacher education programs often conspicuously excludes emotional practices for the sake of technical, "hard" skills, despite emotions being so central in teacher self-awareness and practice after teacher training. Teacher education curricula could thus include reflective practices that would encourage teachers to analyze what emotions do, how they are performed and dealt with in light of their struggle for displaying "appropriate" emotions in the workplace, how they can potentially enhance future practice, and how emotional capital can be achieved through reflecting individually and with others given the intra- and interpersonal character of emotions. Self- and collaborative reflection could be explicitly taught in teacher education programs by highlighting their value and promoting reflection in ways other than the traditional, writing-based approach to reflection. We learned from the teachers participating in this study that open and candid reflective conversations about their emotion-related experiences facilitated their gaining of emotional capital. Finally, raising awareness of emotion labor and helping teachers acknowledge the omnipresence of organizational feeling rules in everyday teaching practice through reviewing case studies of other teachers—with

differential levels of experience and holding a range of roles in their positions—should be incorporated into teacher education programs.

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