Tipo: Articulo original **- Sección:** Critical Issues in ELT- Thematic Issue (Dosier)

The Emotional Journey of Female Novice Researchers in Mexico

El viaje emocional de las investigadoras noveles en México

Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano
Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, México.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1092-3568

e-mail: leticia.salas@correo.buap.mx

Elizabeth Flores Salgado
Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, México.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4311-2163

e-mail: elizabeth.flores@correo.buap.mx

ABSTRACT

Doing research has become part of language teachers' academic demands in many educational institutions around the world. This article presents the findings of a qualitative narrative inquiry that explored the emotional landscape of a group of Mexican female language teachers who were entering the field of research. The transition from teaching to research involves a process of insights and awareness of the factors that affect the emotional status of female novice researchers. Their narratives evidenced their personal and professional struggles and their emotional labor. The findings reveal a complex interplay of emotions identified through the Pratham Life Skills framework within the social-emotional learning (SEL) approach. The study highlights the importance of acknowledging and addressing these emotional facets in the academic career trajectories of female researchers, with the goal of fostering their well-being and a more inclusive and supportive academic environment in the language teaching and learning research field.

Keywords: Social-emotional learning (SEL); female English language teachers; teaching and research; social expectations; teachers and researchers' well-being.

RESUMEN

Realizar investigaciones se ha convertido en parte de las exigencias académicas de los profesores de idiomas en muchas instituciones educativas alrededor del mundo. Este artículo presenta los hallazgos de una investigación narrativa cualitativa que exploró el panorama emocional de un grupo de profesoras de idiomas mexicanas que se estaban adentrando en el campo de la investigación. La transición de la enseñanza a la investigación implica un proceso de percepciones y conciencia de los factores que afectan el estado emocional de las investigadoras noveles. Sus narrativas evidenciaron sus luchas personales y profesionales, así como su labor emocional. Los hallazgos revelan una compleja interacción de emociones identificadas a través del marco de Habilidades para la Vida de Pratham dentro del enfoque de aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL, por sus siglas en inglés). El estudio destaca la importancia de reconocer y abordar estas facetas emocionales en las trayectorias de la carrera académica de las investigadoras, con el objetivo de fomentar su bienestar y un entorno académico más inclusivo y de apoyo en el campo de la investigación sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de idiomas.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje socioemocional (SEL); profesoras de inglés; enseñanza e investigación; expectativas sociales; bienestar de profesores e investigadores.

Introduction

Research has recently been considered an essential task for teachers besides teaching and pursuing their professional development. However, embarking on a research journey can be challenging for novice researchers. Generally, novice researchers go through the process of writing an M.A. or a PhD thesis which, in the words of Bailey and Corrales (2020), "is considered a rite of passage for those entering the world of research" (p. 1) and helps in creating and enhancing a culture of consuming and conducting research from early stages as Méndez García (2020) affirmed. Therefore, a novice researcher can be described as someone who is either writing a postgraduate thesis or somebody who is committed to start a further career in research. However, for novice female researchers, the research development process might involve a unique set of challenges that trigger their emotions and feelings along with their efforts to do research. This article explores the process of becoming a professional researcher that a group of novice females went through once they made the decision to become researchers. This qualitative narrative study (Bamberg, 2006; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) focuses on the words and stories of a group of female language teachers who decided to continue studying a doctorate program after being in the language classroom for several years.

Academics who opt for a career in research are also willing to take on additional challenges involved, such as presenting at conferences and academic events, accepting publishing demands (Borg, 2013; Hasrati, 2013; Yuan & Lee, 2014), and engaging in the struggle of keeping their status as researchers (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006). One option to become researchers for language teachers is to enroll in a postgraduate program (i.e., master's or Ph.D. programs), either on their own initiative or encouraged or required by personal, professional, or institutional demands. The participants in this study were all English teachers who decided to become researchers and enroll in a doctorate program.

Women form more than three-quarters of the total of teachers around the world, according to World Language Teacher Demographics (n.d.). When it comes to research, however, only one in three researchers is a woman (UNESCO, 2021). The emergence of postgraduate programs and the chance for equal opportunities have meant that more females are willing to pursue research as their main professional task in academia. To date, scant research in English language teaching (ELT) has explored the emotional landscapes and motivations that shape the experiences of novice female researchers along their journey (Tran et al, 2017; Pentón Herrera et al, 2021). Motivated by this gap in the literature, in this qualitative narrative study, we explored this almost invisible group in the ELT literature, paying special

attention to participants' initial curiosity and discovery of research as an academic endeavor, as well as their struggles in a world (and cultural context) that characterizes women in roles different from being researchers. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

a) How do female language teachers deal with their emotions and feelings in their journey into doing research?
b) To what extent may the SEL approach facilitate female novice researchers journey to succeed in their research journey?
c) How can a SEL approach support the journey of female English teachers in their journey as novice researchers?

Literature Review

In educational settings, emotions have been considered as a key factor affecting learning as Pekrun et al., (2002) affirm. Furthermore, positive emotions toward academic tasks might promote and even facilitate learning. However, the 21st century has brought a novel paradigm, that is, the advance of technology and the acknowledgment of the relevance of social and emotional elements in learning and, therefore, in teaching, too. The relationship between emotions and learning has mainly been researched (Méndez, 2012; Mercer, 2011) in relation to cognition and social interaction.

Emotions in the ELT field have been mostly explored from the learners' side (Hascher, 2007, Scherer, 2005) and focused on the interactions between teachers and students or the students' reactions toward their own emotions and feelings during the learning process. For example, in México, Méndez and Fabela (2014) have affirmed that the emotional experiences of learners should be acknowledged as part of the learning process. Additionally, Méndez (2012) found that emotions may regulate students' cognition development and play a relevant role in learning. Gumora and Arsenio (2002) have proved that positive emotions in students can be related to better academic performance, social and peer relationships. Additionally, Farrington et al (2012) affirmed that besides acquiring knowledge and academic skills, students must be supported in developing social-emotional competence skills.

On the other side, Pavlenko (2013) started exploring the relevance of teachers' emotions from a broad social perspective. Golombek and Duran (2014) identified emotions as an essential and functional element of language teacher professional development. Additionally, Benesh (2018) and Wolff and De Costa (2017) have taken a sociocultural approach to emotions as catalysts of change, including concepts of gender. Identifying and acknowledging emotions can facilitate female scholars´ paths in research.

In the case of novice female researchers, the interaction of emotions with other such as elements might add challenges to their development as researchers. However, social and cultural views might impact on how emotions are regarded not only by women individually, but also in their social interactions according to Hareli and Rafaeli (2008). Therefore, emotions can be considered culturally and socially shaped according to the practices and traditions developed by the community or societies as Zembylas (2007) has affirmed. Women who want to access a community of researchers must also deal with the views that their corresponding societies have on gender roles. For example, Simon-Maeda (2004) could prove that although there has been progress in teacher education, women educators, in Japan, still face disadvantages in relation to equity and cultural capital.

The numbers of women in academia have increased recently as a result for demands of equal opportunities for women and men, including the opportunity to become a researcher. This chapter takes a critical perspective (Freire, 1970) to empower female scholars to transcend

their limitations as women (Fay, 1987). For example, Montiel (2015) has stated that women are usually associated wit the domestic sphere rather than in the public sphere in contrast to men who are shown as competent in the public sphere. However, some studies have explored the way gender and inequality are still enacted and reproduced through language in texts as van Dijk (2001) has affirmed. Therefore, this chapter focuses on female language teachers who aspire to become researchers in the ELT field. However, these women claim that despite the efforts of inclusion and diversity, there are still challenges to overcome for female researchers.

Theoretical framework

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has emerged as a pathway to understanding the holistic development of learners. According to Pentón-Herrera (2020) SEL is both a teaching approach and a process that focuses on the development and strengthening of the affective skills necessary for individuals to be healthy, happy, successful, and responsible. Following Osher et al. (2016) SEL recognizes competences to deal with emotions, achieve goals, make decisions, and construct supportive interactions to become successful learners, Therefore, SEL can be applied to exploring the emotional landscape of a resilient community such as the novice female researchers.

Within the SEL approach, there are several frameworks which can be used as tools to analyze learners' needs and to identify the skills and competencies to develop. These skills and competencies may cross several aspects of the learners´ lives such as school, work, home, and community, for example. Among these frameworks, the Pratham life skills framework seemed to be the most suitable model to categorize and analyze the participants´ answers in the chapter. This framework has been used in different contexts (Banerji, 2021; Gupta, 2021), for example, the Second Chance program by the Pratham Education Foundation which aimed to empower girls and women in India. This framework was designed to help girls develop life skills to tackle social and cultural constraints by facilitating girls' access to education (Pratham Ed. 2018). According to the EASEL Lab webpage from the Harvard University, the Pratham´s Life Skills Framework consists of six components:

1) **Self-Awareness-**which involves recognizing strengths and weaknesses, identifying emotions, a process of self-reflection and the development of self-confidence.
2) **Self-Management-** The self-management element is about regulating emotions and developing self-esteem, self-discipline, self-motivation, self-care, goal setting, time management and resilience.
3) **Interpersonal Skills-** deals with communication skills and the development of empathy, trust, the appreciation of diversity and the ability to work with people through cooperation, collaboration, and respect.
4) **Problem Solving-**involves creative and critical thinking, logical thinking, decision making in daily life and under challenging situations.
5) **Leadership-** which has to do with initiative, innovation**,** vision**,** leading by example by doing the right thing or making the right choices.
6) **Technical Skills- involves** digital literacy: computer skills, exploring and researching for information, documenting facts and financial management (Pratham Educational Foundation).

The usefulness of this framework has also been recognized by several institutions such as the Harvard Graduate School. The components of the Pratham Life Skills framework provide learners with awareness on essential competencies to deal with global societies and changing environments. This way, emotions can be understood as active processes (Eraut,

2011) that might foster the emergence of competencies and skills that facilitate the development of knowledge in diverse communities such as the female group of researchers in this study.

Methodology

Women in academia go through emotional processes that have not been explored in depth (Day & Lee, 2011; Pentón Herrera et al., 2021). Therefore, this study aimed to explore the emotional landscapes of female scholars going into a PhD program in Mexico while developing competencies to become researchers. The study followed a qualitative approach and a narrative inquiry analysis (Bamberg, 2016: Barkhuizen et al, 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Specifically, the study utilized the concept of "short stories" which, according to Barkhuizen (2016), are immersed in larger interactions such as conversations and interviews as it was the case of the study. Additionally, Bamberg (2020) wrote about the "small stories". The small story theory emerged from the idea that narratives come after or before other narrative actions in everyday interactions, emphasizing the contextualization of these small/short stories in a communication continuum.

A narrative inquiry allows researchers to use experiences as a phenomenon of study, as Connelly and Clandinin (2006) have affirmed. Personal experiences, then, facilitate reflection upon experience by telling stories that happen in a given field or a specific context. Barkhuizen (2016) proposed to analyze the "short stories" within interactions. In the study, the short and small stories told by a group of female scholars within interviews in relation to their emotions were analyzed and interpreted for both their content and context.

Additionally, the qualitative approach of the study involved reflexivity, as Creswell, (2014) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) have affirmed. Researchers rely on personal background and cultural knowledge to interpret the participants´ meaning in telling their accounts as novice researchers, especially novice researchers who have not had much expertise in working within research communities. However, reflexivity allowed personal insights into gender (Castillo & Salas, 2021) to emerge when interacting with the participants. By listening to their small/short stories, we also made meaning from our own past experiences.

Context

In Mexico, the opportunities to pursue a postgraduate degree in the field of Teaching and Learning English are expanding according to the demand for prepared and professional language teachers and for qualified researchers in the field. The study was carried out at the *Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla* (BUAP). This university was one of the first public institutions to offer a BA in ELT in 1984. Because of the demands for researchers in the field and more prepared professionals in ELT, in 2005, BUAP offered an MA program in English Language Teaching (ELT). More recently, in 2023, BUAP opened a Ph.D. program in language teaching: the Doctorate in Language Teaching and Learning (DEAL for its initials in Spanish). This new postgraduate program has the purpose of forming researchers in the field of language teaching.

Participants

The participants of this study were part of the first cohort of the DEAL, that consisted of 11 students. Five of them were already experienced researchers. However, six students were new to research, that is novice researchers. Previously, they had been committed to their

teaching career and were initiating a journey into the new program which required them to become researchers. Invitations to be part of the research were sent to these six female novice researchers and were arranged with five of them. These five female scholars became the participants of the study. They were all Mexican and Spanish was their first language, however, they were all language teachers for several years before they started their PhD program. Table 1 presents some demographic information about the participants:

Table 1. Participants

	Participant	Languages spoken	Languages taught	Teaching experience Years	Teaching experience Level
1.	**Emma**	English & Spanish	English & Spanish	17 years	All levels
2.	**Lia**	French, English, Italian, Portuguese & Spanish	French & English	10 years	Adults
3.	**Tina**	English, Italian, French & Japanese	Italian & Spanish	11 years	Teenagers & Adults
4.	**Carmen**	Spanish, English & German	Spanish, English & German	15 years	All levels
5.	**Alexa**	Spanish & English	English	4 years	Children

The information in Table 1 shows that the group of participants represented a multilingual context and diverse backgrounds. Participants' ages ranged from 30 to 42 years. They were all informed of the nature of the study and voluntarily consented to participate in the research. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

Instrument

Interviews were the most suitable way to collect the necessary information to answer the research questions established. According to Punch (2014, 144), "the interview is the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research… as a good way of accessing people´s perception, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality". The semi-structured interviews aimed to capture the participants´ emotional experiences and a general landscape of female novice researchers. Additionally, the oral interaction through the open-ended questions invited the participants to share the small or short stories of their daily experiences as novice researchers. (See Appendix 1).

The participants were interviewed individually, and each interview was 25 minutes long in average. Three of the interviews were conducted in English, and the rest were in Spanish. The answers were translated in order to present results. The interviews were carried out through Zoom and the participants were informed that the interviews were going to be recorded so that the researcher could listen to the dialogues several times.

Findings

Silverman (2011) explained that interviews are always situated and textual. We used the end of the first semester of a newly created PhD program in Language teaching and learning as a suitable moment to carry out the interviews regarding the participants´ emotions as female novice researchers following the SEL framework. The findings of the study were organized into two sections, 1) Pratham Life Skills framework and 2) Short- Small stories according to Barkhuizen (2016) and Bamberg (2020), as exemplified in the following chart.

1) Pratham Life Skills framework:

Chart 1. Self-Awareness

Participant	Self-Awareness: strengths and weaknesses, identifying emotions, a process of self-reflection and the development of self-confidence.
Emma	*Research can enrich you, as a person, your career and even make a change in society. Through research you feel that you are not alone. There is always something to improve. Although I don´t consider myself a researcher, yet. I feel a little lost now, I need to find information to find my topic. I want my thesis to have an impact. I feel positive, but a little stressed.*
Lia	*Research can change you; I see it in my teaching practice, in my personal life. By becoming aware of practices. I can evaluate my teaching and become more human. I feel excited but worried. I would like to participate in congresses; to write about my experiences and find meaning in my practice. I want to present my teaching and learning so that others can find solutions or meanings, too.*
Tina	*I am not confident about myself; I still feel a little lost. I am doubting about myself. In the end, I know I can do it.*
Carmen	*When I was in the master's program, I discovered a new world of research! I wanted to be like my teachers.* *I discovered that I really enjoyed writing and communicating my ideas.* *I wanted to publish right from the beginning.*
Alexa	*I am a mother of three, this has not been easy, but I want to be a researcher. Don´t tell me that I cannot do it because I am a mother. I feel excited because I am in a PhD program,*

According to the participants' answers, their feelings went from excitement to anxiety and stress. They also mentioned their aspirations and goals at the beginning of the first semester of their PhD program. By identifying their emotions, the participants could express their fears but also their future plans (See chart 2).

Chart 2. Self-Management

Participant	Self-Management- The self-management element is about regulating emotions and developing self-esteem, self-discipline, self-motivation, self-care, goal setting, time management and resilience.
Emma	*I need to self-manage time, work, family, as I have to keep working.* *I would say teaching life takes most of my time. Trying to have a balance between my personal and professional life is complicated and I have no kids! If I had kids, I wouldn´t be able to be here. –* *When I talk, I relax, so I visit my parents, I talk to friends.* *To be honest, I am not good at taking care of myself, I sometimes even miss a meal because I am working.* *I do not do exercise because I think I should be working and not exercising.*
Lia	*I need time: research needs time. We need to organize our times and tasks to fulfill. But we also need to carry out other activities and spend time and time with the family.* *We need to rest, or we may suffer of burnout.* *Researchers need to balance things and organize time and tasks. I try to relax- I walk, I breathe, I feel I release all the bad energy.* *I write, I relax and then, I can write, again.*
Tina	*I don't have a personal life now, everything is about work and research, I sometimes do not pay attention to important things such as not eating well, basic things- Now, I don´t have a good balance. I need time to relax and for physical movement-*
Carmen	*I need to manage my time to do my tasks and accomplish everything. I cannot focus yet- I like everything.* *I think the opportunities are equal for men and women, but women have all the responsibilities, here in Mexico, men do not worry too much about the kids or they do not help enough. So, I feel I have to do everything.* *I relax when I spend time with my husband or kids on the weekend.*
Alexa	*With kids, I have to organize myself very well. I take responsibility of most of the things at home. My husband tries to support me, but down in my mind, I know it´s my responsibility even when he tells me that I do not have to do everything, but it is something we have in our minds.*

The Self-Management skill was a relevant one for the participants. The participants mentioned their concerns about time management, self-care and discipline development. As can be seen in Chart 3, the participants also became aware of the challenges that women face when they want to become researchers.

Chart 3. Interpersonal Skills

Participant	Interpersonal Skills- deals with communication skills and the development of empathy, trust, the appreciation of diversity and the ability to work with people through cooperation, collaboration, and respect.
Emma	Teachers have always supported me,
	My mom is in the field, and she always motivates me as well as my brothers and my husband.
	By collaborating with others, you can see other points of view and apply what you learn.
	I tell women interested in research to go for it. Find your passion and
Lia	*My teachers have supported me, my family always encourages me to keep doing what I like to do.*
Tina	*Peers in several stages—they keep me focused and they help me.*
	Collaborations are important because we can work together.
	Teachers have always been supportive, not only my theses directors, but teachers of other subjects.
Carmen	*My teachers- they have helped me a lot, they motivate me. My mom, by helping me with the kids and my classmates by sharing what they know or what they have done in research.*
Alexa	*My husband supports me. My classmates in the PhD encourage me to continue. The teachers motivate me.*

The Interpersonal skill emerged as a very important aspect of the female novice researchers´ journey. As shown in Chart 4, teachers, peers, friends, directors and family members were mentioned as essential supportive networks for the participants.

Chart 4. Leadership

Participant	Leadership- which has to do with initiative, innovation, vision, leading by example by doing the right thing or making the right choices.
Emma	*Doing research can enrich you, as a person, your career and even make a change on society, I can tell women who want to get involved in research: Find something you want to do and see how you can contribute in a way to society,*
	I want to do research not only at the local context, but at an international one. I want to make a difference. I know I can do it.
Lia	*I have changed and improved in my personal and professional life.*
Tina	*I know I can do it. I will find the way.*
Carmen	*Now I want to explore the research path- I want to pursue a career as a researcher.*
	I want to exhaust all the possibilities- I want to write- I feel I can do it and I want to explore it.
	My thesis director in the M.A. was not the support I expected, but this allowed me to do it by myself.
	I feel excited and humbled- when you´re in the MA you feel you know everything, but in the PhD, I realize how much I need to learn!
Alexa	*I will do everything I can to do this for myself.*

The participants mentioned perseverance and they were confident about their decisions and agency. They realized that things can be difficult, but they were willing to work hard to pursue their dream of becoming researchers (See Chart 5).

Chart 5. Technical Skills

Participant	Technical Skills- involves digital literacy: computer skills, exploring and researching for information, documenting facts and financial management.
Emma	*I feel I need to learn how to do research properly.*
Lia	*I don´t feel prepared- I need knowledge to produce knowledge. I need to improve my academic and scientific writing skills- I want to know how I can access and belong to the research community.*
Tina	*I have to learn many things,*
Carmen	*I wanted to become a researcher since the MA, but then, I realized there was a different way to say and write things, I wanted to polish my first paper, but I didn´t know how to do it, so I had to do it several times and I decided that I needed to learn more. I want to become the expert in an area, give conferences, and so on.*
Alexa	*I still do not feel that I am a researcher, maybe in the future. I have to learn many things. I feel that I am behind my classmates, as I have not worked or studied since I finished the MA. So, I need to update my knowledge.*

Regarding the technical skills needed to become researchers, the participants mentioned, among others, to learn about academic writing and to develop the researchers' discourse. They also mentioned the need to update their knowledge in order to succeed in their studies.

2) Short- Small stories- Barkhuizen (2016), Bamberg (2020)

During the interviews, some stories emerged. The participants' stories mirrored the concerns and challenges they have faced as they have embarked into their PhD and research journey. The stories they shared made meaning and created community among these female novice researchers. For example, they told stories about collaboration, resilience, and support. As can be seen in (1), the participant talked about the support that she received from another female and how both of them collaborated to conclude their M.A. thesis. In (2), Lia expressed the stressful moment that she lived as a novice researcher when she did her research and defended her thesis. In addition, she mentioned that the support of a teacher helped her to overcome that difficult situation. In (3), Emma commented that writing a thesis could lead to feelings of insecurity and confusion. In the same vein as the participant in (2), Emma considered that the support of an expert researcher helped her to improve her work and made her feel more confident. Finally, in (4), the participant claimed that the roles that are given by the society, determine the spaces and tasks that women and men must develop within the society. This way of thinking influences how women behave, and it is hard to change.

1. **A story of collaboration**
   Tina: I made the M.A. with a friend, and this made the difference. She tried to help me and made me finish the thesis; we finished our thesis together. I was afraid for the stories I had heard about the presentation of the thesis, but we got together to study and write, and we were among the first students to defend our thesis.

2. **A story of teacher support (1)**
   Lia: I remember when I defended my BA thesis. I was very, very nervous. I got to to the university early and one of my teachers saw me. She talked to me, and we started talking about my thesis and she made me relax and told me to think about a similar situation and how I dealt with it. I successfully defended my thesis. When the questions and answers started, I could relax, and I realized that I did not have to worry about the exam anymore because that stage of my life was finishing. I was not afraid anymore.

3. **A story of teacher support (2)**
   Emma: When I was writing my M.A. thesis, I felt very insecure, and I knew something was wrong with my research. I asked a classmate to read it, and she said that there was something missing, but she did not know what it was. Then, one of my teachers volunteered to read my thesis. She even sat with me and explained what the problem was. Without any obligation, she gave me recommendations and materials. Her support made me feel safe and confident.

4. **A story on social expectations**
   Alexa: Probably, society is not asking it from us. Nobody has told me to do everything, it comes from us: that we need to be in charge of everything- I think we have been brainwashed. We, women, know we have to do everything. We feel it´s our responsibility- down there, in my brain, I feel that the responsibility is mine. Even when my husband supports me. I feel I need to do things at home.

These were some examples of the stories that emerged during the interviews. As Bamberg (2020) and Barkhuizen (2016) affirm, these short or small stories reflect the daily life of people in a field and may be common to the community. In the context of the study, the stories were told by the community of female novice teachers in a PhD program in language teaching and learning in a public university in Puebla, Mexico.

Discussion

Exploring and analyzing the emotional landscape of female novice researchers in language teaching is a necessary task in terms of equity and inclusion. The questions allowed the participants to reflect on the transition they were going through. Farrell (2015) explained that teacher reflection is an important and integral part of any professional development action such as enrolling in a PhD program. Additionally, as Simon-Maeda (2004) affirmed, being a female teacher might be a cause of conflict when they face limitations for ideological contexts. In Mexico, raising children is a responsibility that has been culturally assigned to women and it is frowned upon by the society that women put their work or academic life before their family (Figueroa Pliz & Ortega Olivares, 2010). In the study, three of the participants affirmed that they (women) take the responsibility of the tasks at home on their own. They mentioned that even when they had their husbands support, they felt that they were responsible for the household chores. They mentioned that it is part of Latin American ideology on gender roles.

The participants proved that emotions play a relevant role in a research journey, following Yazan et al., (2023) they also mentioned a complete array of feelings as part of the enterprise of enrolling in a doctoral program, from confusion, insecurity, excitement, hope and optimism as part of the process. However, the framework of the Pratham Life Skills served as a useful tool to organize the participants' answers following the SEL concepts. SEL also allowed to identify emotional aspects that more experienced researchers might overcome. The

participants also expressed their feelings from the internal and personal level to the interactions with peers and professors who shared and understood the situations they were living at the moment highlighting the importance of female support networks (Castillo & Salas, 2021) in the figures of mothers, friends, colleagues and teachers. Shehadeh (2019) mentioned that it was relevant to create options and opportunities for novice researchers as well as guiding and supporting them in their research path.

As Barkhuizen (2016) and Bamberg (2006; 2020) said, by identifying the stories may create a sense of community and a feeling of belonging. The small or short stories immersed in the interviews called for attention to the experiences that these novice researchers have gone through. Their stories exemplify some of the challenges they face in their research and postgraduate adventures. Each step involves an emotional reaction that when appropriately managed, it might lead to achievement and personal growth.

Finally, the element of gender made participants more aware of the expectations and gender roles society has on women. However, the participants reflected that they were the ones who took those expectations and roles as their own even when these chores may have a negative impact on their research tasks and their personal well-being. Women continue to be at a disadvantage compared to men since they have been assigned to take care of children and housework, for example. Even when the participants mentioned that people around them were willing to help them, they felt that some tasks related to gender roles, were their responsibility as women, that is, these were some self-inflicted tasks due to their gender. For some of them, it was a real challenge to continue studying and then, becoming professionals in order to get a good job. At some point, some women take the decision to dedicate their time only to their families and quit everything else (Flores Salgado & Flores Salgado, 2022). In the end, the participants admitted that finding balance between their academic and professional tasks and their personal lives is still a pending issue. The ideas SEL might offer them the appropriate approach to manage the different aspects of their lives and look for an integral and holistic well-being.

Conclusions

The emergence of SEL in the educational field has placed emotions and feelings in a relevant place in the learning process and has made professors and coordinators aware of the affective factors that might impact on students´ learning. SEL can be a powerful tool to raise awareness and reflection on the emotional status of people going through a transition in their personal or professional lives.

A transition in life involves reflection, growth and a development of a new self. This chapter focused on the transition from language teachers to researchers of a group of female novice researchers during a PhD program. The results proved that it is relevant to facilitate supportive accompaniment processes from teachers, peers, classmates and family members as the participants mentioned as well as a revalorization of the novice researchers´ self-perceptions and emotions.

Additionally, postgraduate programs may include the lookout for balance between the personal and the professional in order to enhance the probabilities of academic success in postgraduate students.

References

Bailey, A. & Corrales, K. A. (2020). Insight into Novice Research; a Critical Review of ELT Masters' Theses. *MEXTESOL Journal.* 44(4), 1-11.

Bamberg, M. (2006) Stories: Big or small. Why do we care? *Narrative Inquiry*, 16(1) 139–147. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.16.1.18bam.

Bamberg, M. (2016). Narrative Inquiry. In: K.B. Jensen & T.T. Craig (Eds.), The International encyclopedia of communication theory and philosophy (pp. 1295-1303) John Wiley & Sons, Inc. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect239.

Bamberg, M. (2020) Narrative analysis: An integrative approach – Small stories and narrative practices.: In: M. Järvinen & N. Mik-Meyer (Eds.), *Qualitative analysis Eight traditions* (pp. 243-264). Sage Publications.

Banreji, R. (2021). Learning for All: Lessons from ASER and Pratham in India on the Role of Citizens and Communities in Improving Children's Learning. S. Ra et al. (eds.), *Powering a Learning Society During an Age of Disruption, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects* 58, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-0983-1_13.

Barkhuizen, G. (2010). An extended positioning analysis of a pre-service teacher's better life small story. *Applied Linguistics* 31.2, 282 – 300.

Barkhuizen G. (2014). Narrative research in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*. 47(4):450-466. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444814000172.

Barkhuizen, G. (2011). Narrative knowledging in TESOL. TESOL Quarterly, 45, 391–414. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2011.261888.

Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P., & Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative inquiry in language teaching and learning research.* Routledge.

Barkhuizen, G. (2016). A Short Story Approach to Analyzing Teacher (Imagined) Identities Over Time. *TESOL Quarterly.* Vol. 50 (3), 655-683.

Benesch, S., (2018). Emotions as agency: Feeling rules, emotion labor, and English language teachers' decision-making. *System,* 79 (1) (2018), pp. 60-69, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.03.015.

Borg, S. (2013). *Teacher research in language teaching: A critical analysis.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Castillo, O. M. & Salas, S. L.A. (2021). English as a Key Element in the Empowerment of Undergraduate ELT Female Students. *MEXTESOL Journal,* 45(1). Retrieved from:

https://www.mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article=23335.

Connelly, F.M. & D.J Clandinin (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J.L. Green, G. Gamilli & P.B Elmore (eds.), *Complementary methods for research in education* (3rd edition). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 375 –385.

Creswell, J. W. (2014) Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. (Fifth Edition). SAGE

Day, C. & Lee, J. (2011). *New Understandings of Teacher's Work. Emotions and Educational.* Springer.

De Costa, P., Rawal, H., Li, W. (2018). 2 Teachers' Emotions: A Sociopolitical and Ideological Perspective Martínez, A., J. D. (Ed) (2018). Emotions in Second Language Teaching Theory, Research and Teacher Education. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-75438-3_6.

Eraut, M. (2011). How researching learning at work can lead to tools for enhancing learning. In M. Malloch, L. Cairns, L. Evans, & B. O'Connor (Eds.), *SAGE handbook of workplace learning* (pp. 181–197). London: Sage.

Farrell, T. S. C. (2015). *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals.* Routledge.

Farrington, C. A., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Nagaoka, J., Keyes, T. S., Johnson, D. W., & Beechum, N. O. (2012). *Teaching adolescents to become learners the role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance: A critical literature review.* University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Fay, B. (1987). *Critical social science.* Cornell University Press.

Figueroa Pliz, A. & Ortega Olivares, M. (2010). Condición de género y elección profesional: El área de físico matemático en las mujeres. *Investigación y ciencia de la Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes*, *46*, 18-27.

Flores Salgado, E. & Flores Salgado L.L. (2022). Percepción de mujeres en las áreas de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales. *Opción, 38* (28), 51-70. DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7278464.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* Transl. from Portuguese by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum Press.

Golombek, P., & Doran, M. (2014). Unifying cognition, emotion, and activity in language

Teacher professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 39, 102–111. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.01.002.

Gumora, G., & Arsenio, W. F. (2002). Emotionality, emotion regulation, and school performance in middle school children. *Journal of School Psychology, 40*(5),

Gumora, G., & Arsenio, W. F. (2002). Emotionality, emotion regulation, and school performance in middle school children. *Journal of School Psychology, 40*(5), 395–413. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405(02)00108-5

Gupta, R. (2021). The role of pedagogy in developing life skills. Margin: *The Journal of Applied Economic Research* 15: 1 (2021): 50–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/0973801020974786.

Hareli, S., & Rafaeli, A. (2008). Emotion cycles: On the social influence of emotion in organizations, *Research in Organizational Behavior.* 28, pp. 35-59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2008.04.007.

Hascher, T. (2007). Exploring students' well-being by taking a variety of looks into the Classroom. *Hellenic Journal of Psychology. Hellenic Journal of Psycholog*y 4(4), 331-349.

Hasrati, M. (2013). Material and credentialing incentives as symbolic violence local engagement and global participation through joint publication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *27*(2), 154-179. https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651912468886.

Kirkwood, M., & Christie, D. (2006). The role of teacher research in continuing professional development. *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 5(4), 429-448. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2006.00355.x.

Méndez García, E., (2019). Are ELT undergraduate thesis-writers novice EFL teacher researchers? A case study with in-service teachers. MEXTESOL Journal, 43(2). https://www.mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article.

Méndez G.M.L & Fabela C.M.A. (2014). Emotions and their effects in a language learning Mexican context, *System,* 42, 298-307. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.12.006

Méndez, L., M. (2012). *The emotional experience of learning English as a foreign langu*age in M*e*xico- La Editorial Manda.

Montiel, A.V. (2015). News media coverage of women. *Asia Pacific Media Educator,* 25(2), pp. 182-193

Mercer, S. (2011). The self as a complex dynamic system. Studies in Second Language

Learning and Teaching 1(1)57-82. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2011.1.1.4.

Mercer, S., & Gregersen, T. (2020). *Teacher wellbeing.* Oxford University Press.

Osher, D., Kidron, Y., Brackett, M., Dymnicki, A., Jones, S., & Weissberg, R. P. (2016). Advancing the Science and Practice of Social and Emotional Learning: Looking Back and Moving Forward. *Review of Research in Education,* 40(1), 644-681. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16673595

Pavlenko, A. (2013). The affective turn in SLA: From 'affective factors' to 'language desire' and 'commodification of affect in D. Gabryś-Barker, J. Bielska (Eds.), *The affective dimension in second language acquisition.* pp. 3-28. Multilingual Matters.

Pratham Every Child in School and Learning Well (n.d.). Pratham Org. https://www.pratham.org/

Pekrun, R.; Goetz, T.; Titz, W.; & Perry, R.P (2002). Academic emotions in students' self-regulated learning and achievement: A program of qualitative and quantitative research. *Educ. Psychol.* 37, 91–105.

Pentón Herrera, L J. (2020) "Social-emotional learning in TESOL: What, why, and how," Journal of English Learner Education: 10 (1)1. Retrieved from: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/jele/vol10/iss1/1.

Pentón Herrera, L. J., Trinh, E. T., & Gómez Portillo, M. D. J. (2021). Cultivating calm and stillness at the doctoral level: A collaborative autoethnography. Educational Studies, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2021.1947817.

Pratham. (2018). *The Second Chance Program: Overview of the Program and Course Modules (Part I).* Pratham Education Foundation.

Pratham. (2018). *The Second Chance Program: Overview of the Program and Course Modules (Part II).* New Delhi: Pratham Education Foundation.

Punch, K. F., (2014). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative & Qualitative Approaches.* (3rd. Ed). SAGE.

Rahimi, M., Yousofi, N., & Moradkhani, S. (2019). Exploring the professional identity construction of ELT researchers in higher education. *Teaching English Language* 13, 85–117. 10.22132/tel.2019.87594.

Silverman, D. (2011) *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting, Reasonably Cheap Book about Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage

Simon-Maeda, A. (2004). The complex construction of professional identities: Female EFL educators in Japan speak out. TESOL Quarterly, 38, 405–436.

https://doi.org/10.2307/3588347.

Scherer, K. R. (2005). What are emotions? And how can they be measured? *Social Science Information*, *44*(4), 695-729. https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018405058216.

Shehadeh, A. (2019). Leadership in publishing research: Nurturing and training young researchers. In W. Zoghbor, S. Al-Alami, & T. Alexiou (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 1st applied linguistics and language teaching conference: Teaching and learning in a globalized world* (pp. 60– 70). Zayed University Press.

Tran A., Burns A. & Ollerhead S. (2017) ELT lecturers' experiences of a new research policy: Exploring emotion and academic identity*, System,* Volume 67, 65-76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.04.014.

UNESCO Science Report: The Race Against Time for Smarter Development (2021). UNESCO Publishing. Retrieved from: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377456/PDF/377456eng.pdf.multi.page=1&zoom=auto,-16,842.

van Dijk, T.A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin, & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 352-371). Oxford: Blackwel.

Montiel, A. V. (2015). News Media Coverage of Women. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, *25*(2), pp.182-193. https://doi.org/10.1177/1326365X15604260.

Wolff, D. & De Costa, P. (2017). Expanding the language teacher identity landscape: An investigation of the emotions and strategies of a NNEST. *The Modern Language Journal,* 101 (17) (2017), pp.76-90, https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12370.

Yazan, B., Trinh, E., & Pentón-Herrera, L. J. (2023). *Doctoral Students' Identities and Emotional Wellbeing in Applied Linguistics: Autoethnographic Accounts.* Routledge.

Yuan, R., & Lee, I. (2014). Understanding language teacher educators' professional experiences: an exploratory study in Hong Kong. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 23*(1), 143-149. DOI: 10.1007/s40299-013-0117-6.

Zembylas, M. (2007). Theory and methodology in researching emotions in education. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education,* 30(1), 57–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/17437270701207785.

Appendix 1: Bank of questions for interviews

The emotional journey of female researchers
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study which has the aim to explore the emotional journey of female novice researchers. Could you, please, answer the following questions?

1.- Why are you interested in becoming a researcher?
2.- How might research change your professional career?
3.- How prepared do you think you are to become a researcher?
4.- What are some of your goals as a researcher?
5.- To what extent do people around support you?
6.- What challenges have you encountered along your professional journey?
7.- What challenges have you encountered as a female researcher?
8.- In your context, do you think that male and female researchers face the same problems?
8.- Who has supported you the most during your research journey?
9.- Can you describe your feelings during this journey?
10.- What makes you happy as a researcher?
11. What makes you angry as a researcher?
12.- What do you do to take care of yourself?
13.- How do you relax?
14.- Can you tell us a story that illustrates your journey into research?
15.- What is /are your fields of expertise?
16.- How do you manage your time between your professional and personal tasks?
17.- What recommendations would you give to a female ELT professional who wants to become a researcher?