

Unraveling the Lived Experiences of the English Language Teachers in the New Normal: A Phenomenology

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ABSTRACT

With the implementation of distance learning, it has provided new opportunities and challenges to English language teachers. Commonly, the aim of the English language teachers is to enhance the five language skills of each student: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Viewing. However, the pandemic has affected the usual teaching methods, strategies, and techniques applied by the English language teachers. Hence, this qualitative study aims to explore English language teachers' experiences on the transition of their English language pedagogy towards the new normal set up. A Hermeneutic Phenomenological design was utilized to describe and interpret the participants' responses. 15 English language teachers from selected private and public schools participated in the study. The following themes emerged from the Focus Group Discussion: Overcoming new challenges in teaching job; Altruistic act of teachers towards the second language

learners; Technology as the main tool for teaching; Teachers acting more as guides than facilitators; Eclectic approach as the common method to teaching English in this new normal. These findings imply that English language teachers have redesigned their teaching strategies in accordance with the capabilities and needs of the students. Also, some activities have been modified to make them compatible with distance learning. The researchers suggest investigating the other factors that may help the English language learners to learn the English language during distance learning.

Keywords — Education, English language, Pedagogy, Qualitative study, Hermeneutic Phenomenology, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 Pandemic has changed all aspects of life, including the educational system. The risk of the pandemic has compelled the World Health Organization (WHO) to implement some standards for the safety of individuals, such as social distancing and physical distancing. Schools, universities, and other institutions were obliged to implement such standards and to execute distance education or online education for continuous learning. This decision, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), affected almost all countries across the globe, specifically “about 67.7% of the total enrolled learners from 144 countries” (Aliyyah, Rachmadtullah, Samsudin, Syaodih, Nurtanto, & Tambunan, 2020). These changes affected the teachers, learners, and other stakeholders since this new normal provided them with a new role in the education system.

Distance learning has become significant due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Distance learning or Distance education is a form of education that implements “a qualitative education to students who are not able to be physically present on campus” (Bagapova, Kobilova, & Yuldasheva, 2020). Hence, unlike the face-to-face setup, this learning process has allowed the student and instructor to be in a separate location (Widyaningrum, Hasanudin, Fitrianiingsih, Novianti, Saddhono, & Supratmi, 2020). To facilitate the learning in distance education, teachers use various technologies that can help them connect with their students, such as the internet, email, mail, and other materials. Accordingly, this learning environment has two types of learning: Asynchronous learning and Synchronous learning. Asynchronous learning implements a one-direction communication.

For example, “when students have questions related to the subject being studied, students can ask other parties such as tutors or peers, but these questions cannot be answered immediately” (Muzammil, Sutawijaya, & Harsasi, 2020).

On the contrary, Synchronous learning allows the engagement of teaching and learning at the same time. Hence, both parties are present at the same time and place. In some ways, distance learning provides a flexible learning environment since it can save time and energy for the students. However, it provides a limited interaction between teacher to students and students to students within the scheduled time (Muzammil et al., 2020). This shortcoming of distance education may impede the student’s learning as various studies have emphasized that active communication and instructors are significant in shaping the knowledge of students (Desak, 2017; Wang, Minku, & Yao, 2018, & Muzammil et al., 2020). Nevertheless, these challenges and opportunities of distance learning were chosen by various educational sectors for the protection of learners at this time of the pandemic.

Most schools, colleges, and universities in every country have adapted to the new situation by changing their teaching and learning modalities. According to Remeirs (2020), the education system introduced diverse standpoints regarding modification of curriculum, teaching strategies impact of information technology, teacher representatives, parents’ representative, and industrial relevant instructions and materials. Some countries have utilized full online learning, while other countries have applied different learning modalities. For instance, Thailand, United Kingdom, and China initiated a face to face classroom with a limited number of students and following strict guidelines such as wearing a face mask while India attempted to utilize online learning and face to face classroom set up for underprivileged students (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). In the same case, the most number of colleges in China had implemented online learning to guarantee the safety of the learners and teachers (Wang, 2020). Also, South Korea also opted to adopt online learning instead of a face-to-face mode of schooling (Shim & Lee, 2020).

On the other hand, some countries considered the different underlying factors that may affect the online learning of students, such as the financial status of students. In light of this information, some countries implemented other modalities in learning. For example, in the Philippines, the Department of Education or DepEd (2020) has provided self-learning Modules (SLMs) with the alternative learning delivery modalities (online, blended, television-based, radio-based instruction, or modular) as the new modality in teaching and learning. Also,

synchronous and asynchronous classes are being implemented by the schools. The application of these classes is dependent on the capability of students to keep pace with their studies. Hence, some schools applied both synchronous and asynchronous classes, while others implemented asynchronous classes.

With these new learning modalities, certain challenges have been arising in the teaching-learning. In the study of Aliyyah et al. (2020), some challenges experienced by teachers in the new normal were enumerated, namely the online teaching experiences, technical obstacles, the participation of students, and student conditioning. Similarly, Slimi (2020) enumerated the difficulties of Oman teachers during the pandemic, which are (1) network issues; (2) pressure from the management; (3) lack of policies related to online learning and teaching; and (4) cultural issues. Reich (2020) revealed other challenges such as students' interest, professional burnout, and exacerbated inequities. While Pastor (2020) specifically imparted that student's location and other factors could affect internet connectivity, which may result in ineffective online learning. These challenges have influenced the common teaching pedagogy to be reformed as suited at the time of the pandemic.

The teaching pedagogy is a systematized sequence and pattern in teaching-learning. This system aims to develop the students' interest in learning, immerse the creation process, and strengthen habits of creation. Hence, pedagogy influences a student's interest in learning and their motivation to learn.

In that sense, failure to exhibit a proper pedagogy could make the learners feel uncomfortable, bored, inattentive, resulting in poor performance (Svarcova & El-Hmoudova, 2015). For instance, Asian education, which was known for its examination-driven orientation, has failed to nurture the students' twenty-first-century competencies because of its distorted process of learning and teaching pedagogy (Chan, Looi, Chen, Wong, Chang, Liao, & Ogata, 2018). Accordingly, Polakova and Klimova (2019) posited that "the nature of education must change to accommodate the skills and the interests of the new generations." Thus, teachers need to redesign their pedagogy to teach accordingly to the situation for the benefit of the students.

Henriksen, Creely, & Henderson (2020) believed that the COVID-19 Pandemic forced an immediate transition from a traditional medium of instruction to a new one. Also, it mandates educators to attend to the need of the learners through the use of alternative solutions that can respond to the current challenges. For example, Sutarto, Sari, and Fathurrochman (2020) enumerated the new teaching strategies of SDIT Rabbi Radhiyya Curup teachers during a

pandemic, such as (1) providing understanding and attention to students in any situation that they must keep learning; (2) preparing a brief, clear, easy to understand and interesting learning materials; (3) choosing a simple and attractive learning media; and (4) conducting regular and continuous evaluations. Popa, Repanovici, Lupu, Norel, & Coman (2020) applied Chalmers and Hunt (2013) model in designing and implementing their online teaching process, which includes the following: efficiency in teaching-learning, synchronization of essential elements of learning environment, cognitive, social, and teaching presence, the introduction of new technologies, and formative and continuous assessment of the formation experience to improve it. Evidently, teachers need to develop their technical abilities and to cope with the confined situation. As a result, a modification in teaching pedagogy successfully offers a contemporary view towards a shift in teaching-learning modalities.

Most of the Language teachers experience a range of challenges during the pandemic as there was a shift in teaching English from a face-to-face setting to an online setting. Various studies were conducted on the impact and effect of the new learning system. For example, MacIntyre, Gregersen, and Mercer (2020) investigated the coping strategies of language teachers on teaching online. Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) studied the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on ESL learners. TESOL practitioners in the United States. Lie, Tamah, Gozali, Triwidayati, Utami, & Jemadi (2020) learned about the secondary school language teachers' online learning engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Mardiah (2020) studied E-learning to teach English at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, Munni and Hasan (2020) studied teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic using the Facebook group as an LMS. Most of these studies are focused on the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in teaching the English language; but, few studies have been conducted on exploring English teachers' experiences in transitioning their pedagogy relevant to the demands of the present time.

English language teachers have applied the use of technology in their classes. For instance, many classes have adapted the online presentation and online applications as part of their activities (Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020). But, in this present situation, the integration of technology in the teaching-learning process is a challenge to teachers. The COVID-19 has reshaped the educational setting in which teachers and students are fully dependent on the materials they have and the use of technology. Thus, this study provide an understanding of the impact of the phenomenon in teaching the English language. Thus, the English

Language teachers' in-depth narrative lived experience was used to explore their coping mechanism towards the shift in teaching pedagogy during the Pandemic.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This phenomenological study focuses on the lived experiences of English Language teachers on transitioning their pedagogy at this time of the pandemic. Specifically, this study addressed the following objectives, (1) to narrate the lived experiences of English language teachers in transitioning their pedagogy during the pandemic, (2) to enumerate the English Language teachers' perception with their adjustment of pedagogy from pre-pandemic to during pandemic, and (3) to identify the coping mechanisms of the English Language teachers with the teaching pedagogy during the pandemic. The participants of this study were the Junior High School and Senior High School English language teachers of the CALABARZON Region.

Theoretical Support

The framework of this study explains the corroborative behavioral theories for this study. This study stemmed from the following theories: Technology Acceptance Model of Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989), Eclectic Approach, and SLA Theory of Krashen (1982).

Nowadays, language teachers have fully utilized technology as their aid in teaching. This situation led to enhancing the pedagogical content of language teachers in performing a meaningful teaching-learning process. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) "appears to be the most widely accepted theory among information systems research for studying user's system acceptance behavior" (Liu, Liao, & Peng, 2005). This theory is built on two fundamental elements - perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU). Also, these elements consist of the following sub-elements: Attitudes toward Using (ATT), Behavioral Intention to use (BI), and Actual Use (AU). In connection with this study, English language teachers have adapted the new normal in teaching by utilizing technology as their main instructional material.

Aside from dependence on technology, teaching the English language has shifted to cope with the new educational paradigm. With the new normal in teaching, the common method may not be applicable in online teaching. There are several factors needed to be considered, such as limited time in teaching, and some schools have limited modalities in the teaching-learning process. In line

with this information, new methods have been developing contingent on the new normal in teaching. The Eclectic Approach is defined as the one that integrates all the language-teaching methods depending on the classroom circumstances and the learners' abilities (Sagar & Afzal, 2019). This approach is based on the level of students and the contexts, such as dependent on the factors affecting the classroom and suitability to prevailing conditions (Mwanza, 2017).

To address second language learning, Krashen (1982) developed Second Language Acquisition (SLA) that consists of five hypotheses which are (1) the acquisition-learning hypothesis, (2) the monitor hypothesis, (3) the natural order hypothesis, (4) the input hypothesis, and (5) the affective filter hypothesis (McCloughlin, 1984). Krashen (1982) believed that second language acquisition is an intuitive process. This description implies that the learners are unconsciously learning the language through the process of communication. However, he also emphasizes the importance of exposure to language is crucial in maximal second language acquisition. Therefore, peak input should be abundant to provide numerous opportunities to acquire the target language (Mason & Krashen, 2019). In connection with the shift in language teachers' pedagogy in this time of the pandemic, Krashen's SLA theory provides an opportunity to provide the learners' needs in learning the language in both virtual and modular setups. Despite the need for empirical exploration due to educational transformation (Iivari, Sharma, & Ventä-Olkkonen, 2020), the input hypothesis provides consistency in the learners' linguistic aspect based on the provided output (Mason & Krashen, 2019). Moreover, it strengthens the idea that language acquisition, regardless of the teaching-learning setup, can be efficient as long as there is comprehensive input.

Furthermore, through the principles of a complex adaptive system (CAS) under Krashen's theory in his five hypotheses, the search across the fitness landscape takes an adaptive walk to the multidimensional phase in teaching the language (Kauffman, 1995). With the help of CAS, language teachers continuously learn new knowledge and upgrade skills to the new paradigm in language teaching. At this phase, the Social Constructivism of Vygotsky (1987) may be integrated with Krashen's theory to construct new learning, new insights, and new experience to cope with the New Normal (during Pandemic) mode in preparation for Next Normal (post Pandemic) mode in language teaching.

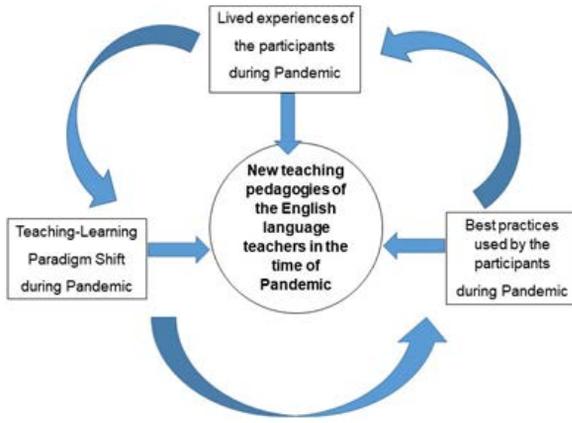


Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a qualitative research design that primarily focused on the lived experiences of a focus group of English Language teachers at this time of the pandemic. Braun and Clarke (2013) defined qualitative study as the type of research that mainly concentrates on the social and psychological phases of the participants. This type of research has guided the researchers in revealing the changes and transitions that transpired in the teaching pedagogy of the focus group based on their experiences. Also, Creswell (2016) emphasized that qualitative research can establish patterns and themes based on the participants' or focus group's viewpoints and social problems that signal a call for action. In light of this information, it provided an opportunity for researchers to uncover the in-depth meaning of experiences and beliefs of the focus group.

The focus group in this study involved 15 English Language teachers from Junior High School and Senior High School. The group shared similar characteristics and interests based on their experiences at this time of the pandemic. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) technique was utilized to emphasize the complex personal experiences, beliefs, viewpoints, and attitudes of the selected participants through a group interaction (Morgan, 1996). This group discussion is facilitated by the researchers (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018).

Through this technique has allowed the group participants to share their personal thoughts and views based on the series of questions and prompts from the researchers concerning their pedagogical shift in teaching the English language this time of the pandemic? Moreover, it also offered a platform for paradigms and viewpoints shift (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) across a wide range of disciplines, including education (Flores & Alonso, 1995).

To align with the focus group's narrative study reports and paradigm shift in English teaching pedagogy, this study adapted the hermeneutic phenomenology, which concentrates on the lived experiences and interpreting the "text" of life (Van Manen, 1990). Heidegger (as cited by Hirsch, 2015) explained that experiences are described and interpreted to explain the cause of phenomena. On the other hand, Van Manen (1990) stressed that its main purpose is to reduce individual phenomenon toward a description of the universal importance. Wherein the lived experiences of the participants reflect the essential themes in the process from the gathered data in the FGD (Creswell, 2016).

Sampling and Participants

Purposive sampling was applied in this study. The researchers chose participants who can provide the expected information based on their knowledge and experience (Etikan, 2016). Also, the availability and willingness to participate were considered to converse experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive and reflective manner (Creswell, 2016). Hence, the selected participants obtained the following characteristics as their common grounds: they have at least five years of teaching experience, are teaching English subjects, and have an educational background involving English as a Second Language (ESL) or other English related graduate degrees.

These participants are all English Language teachers in public and private schools in the Philippines, specifically in the Calabarzon region. The 15 participants were chosen in alignment with their lived experiences during the COVID-19, which, according to Etikan (2016), made them proficient and well-informed with the phenomenon of interest. The English Language participants were the following in pseudo names:

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Teacher	Position	Gender	Length of Service	Subject Taught
DT	SHS Teacher	Male	6 years	English Language
LE	HS Teacher	Female	30 years	English Language
JP	English Head Teacher	Male	20 years	English Language
FJ	HS Teacher	Female	5 years	English Language
RD	HS Teacher	Male	5 years	English Language
PL	SHS Teacher	Male	6 years	English Language
MS	HS Teacher	Male	10 years	English Language
LD	HS Teacher	Female	10 years	English Language
CJ	HS Teacher	Male	5 years	English Language
JR	HS Teacher	Female	15 years	English language
XC	SHS Teacher	Female	20 years	English language
MD	SHS Teacher	Female	12 years	English language
AC	SHS Teacher	Female	20 years	English language
WV	SHS Teacher	Female	15 years	English language
SU	SHS Teacher	Female	10 years	English language

Table 1 shows the profile of the participants pertaining to the position of the teacher, gender, length of service, and subject taught.

The second column presents the teaching position of the participants. These participants are from the Junior High School department and Senior High School departments. The researchers identified a sufficient number of participants purposively (Nakkeeran, 2016). According to Creswell (2016), this technique is known as the purposive technique which the researchers deliberately chosen their participants based on the qualities they possess.

The third column displays the gender of the participants. The table depicted both female and male participants, yet the most number of participants are female, having nine (9) entries, while there are six (6) males listed. These numbers imply that the shift in teaching pedagogy in language was not exclusive to a single-gender. Furthermore, the teacher should make some adjustments in their teaching paradigm to be able to attend to the needs of the learners.

The fourth column provides the length of service of the participants. The collected data showed the teaching experience ranged from 5 years to 30 years. This column highlighted the fact that this group had participated in the group progress from the same situation as a unit regardless of the length of service (Nakkeeran, 2016).

Lastly, the fifth column exhibits the subject taught by Participants. All of the participants teach English, yet each participant applied different teaching pedagogy based on the type of classes, skills, and lessons.

Data Collection

In this study, the researchers had selected participants in accordance with their profession and experience in teaching the English language. The collected data were from a group of 15 English Language teachers (9 females and 6 males) who are currently teaching during the pandemic. These participants had experience in teaching the English subject for more than five years. Also, they are part of the academe in a different institution before and during the pandemic and had to practice using different modalities in teaching English. These participants were chosen by the researchers in consideration of the similarity of the lived experience of participants to one another. As a result, the characteristics of the Focus Group introduced homogeneity, which stemmed from the purpose of the study (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was the technique applied in gathering the data. This data collection technique attempts to assemble “a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic, aiming to draw from the complex personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of the participants through a moderated interaction” (Nyumba et al., 2018). In a Focus Group Discussion, the researchers acted as facilitators or moderators as they aimed to focus on the connection between the participants.

The gathering of data had three phases: Pre – FGD, During FGD, and After FGD. In the Pre – FGD, the researchers approached possible participants for this study and provided an invitation letter that for this study.

For the safety measures at this time of the pandemic, the Focus Group Discussion was conducted through Zoom Meeting. The encapsulated the purpose of this study, the confidentiality of the gathered data, as well as their rights as chosen participants. Subsequently, 15 English language teachers accepted the invitation to be a participant in this study.

For the safety measures at this time of the pandemic, the Focus Group Discussion was conducted through Zoom Meeting. The Zoom Meeting is a software-based conference room that allows people to meet online. Prior to the FGD, the researchers asked the participants to rename their names with the assigned code for their anonymity. Then, a brief discussion about this study, the confidentiality of their information, and their rights as participants were shared

with the participants. Also, the recording of the FGD was mentioned to the participants.

At the start of FGD, an introduction from each participant was conducted to acquire their basic information. During the FGD, the participants' responses led to the discovery, improvement, and refinement of the prepared research questions. Also, their responses developed an evaluative framework that considers the needs and outcomes of the study (Banning, 2005). As a result, the context of the collective lived experiences and gained insights in the FG were confined to generative ideas. Throughout the interview, direct questions were given to the participants to elicit information pertinent to the study. The question revolved around the shared narrative of the lived experiences of the participants regarding their used teaching strategies this time of the pandemic. Moreover, the discussion developed further common concerns of the participants, like their coping mechanism to attain effectivity in teaching the English language in both online and modular setups.

After the FGD, the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were reiterated to them with the intention of confirming their full participation in the study. Also, the method of analyzing the data was briefly discussed with the participants. Before concluding the FGD, the researchers informed the participants of another FGD if further details are needed.

Data Analysis

The study used inductive data analysis for the gathered data from the FGD regarding the shift in teaching pedagogy of the English language teachers in this time of the pandemic. The researchers had built themes through the organization of data from the abstract narrative information from the participants (Creswell, 2016). Furthermore, it elicited a summary format from the extensive raw data, and it linked research objectives and summary findings (Thomas, 2003).

This study described important features and outline set procedures that were used in the inductive analysis of gathered data from the FGD. It is also aligned with Thomas's (2003) claim that it allowed researchers to emerge from the most substantial themes in the gathered data without controlled methodologies. As a result, five key themes were stimulated from the FGD such as: overcoming new challenges in a teaching job, the altruistic act of teachers towards the second language learners, technology as the main tool for teaching, the teacher acts more as a guide than facilitators, and eclectic approach as the common method to teaching English in new normal.

The themes stemmed from the transcript of the FGD. This transcript was read and analyzed by the researchers several times. Afterward, a coding frame was developed, and the names of the participants in the transcript were coded. The themes were categorized based on the impact of the lived experiences of the English language teachers on the shift in teaching pedagogy in the time of the pandemic. Also, the emerging themes were established through the repeated analysis of the transcript and consideration of embedded meaning that was fitted with developing themes (Jain & Ogden, 1999, p. 1597). Transcripts were also read in the syntagmatic style that grouped segments of text to identify the evident themes. Accordingly, Marshall (1999) stated that the process of systematic reading and coding transcriptions endorsed the major themes to emerge. The gathered complex data from the FGD undergo reduction process and developed summary themes.

Research Ethics Protocols

To ensure that the researchers do not violate any rules and protocols regarding the conduct of research, the conduct of interviews, gathering and recording data, and presentation of research results, permits, and transmittals were secured ahead of time. The participants were informed of the technicalities and procedures of data gathering, and rest were assured that the data they divulged will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

In accordance with Data Privacy Act 2012, the free flow of information to endorse innovation and growth should be protected under the fundamental human right of privacy. It is applicable to individuals and legal entities that deal with personal information. According to the given law, the processing of personal data should be permitted by the subject to observance to transparency, legitimate, and proportionality approach principles.

The act states that the personal data should be declared, specified and legitimate purpose during data collection required consent prior to the collection of data. The subjects or participants should be informed regarding the extent and purpose of processing. The processing should also provide requisite transparency, legitimate purpose, and proportionality. Moreover, the consent should be freely given, specific, informed and recorded pieces of evidence required to consent to the collection. Yet, the processing stage does not always require consent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data highlighted five themes that summarized the participants' lived experiences on teaching English in the new normal. The five essential themes are as follows: Overcoming New Challenges in Teaching Job, Altruistic Act of Teachers towards the Second Language Learners, Technology as the Main Tool for Teaching, Teachers Acting More as Guides than Facilitators, and Eclectic Approach as the Common Method to Teaching English in New Normal.

Overcoming New Challenges in Teaching Job

The responses of the participants indicate that, generally, they find teaching in the new normal as difficult and challenging. All of the participants agreed that they are having difficulty with learning the technicalities and topics, on providing feedback and discussion due to less two-way discussion and limited time of discussion, in communicating with students, and with the distance learning set-up:

Cons would be ang hirap cause walang physical contact or genuine reactions from students. Mahirap sa feedback and less yung two - way discussion. More on teacher-centered. It will eat up time if hihintayin students' mag – recite cause most of the time, naghahang or lag, or minsan reason lang nila yun kase they don't really care to participate. Pero may ilang students na nagpaparticipate. So, meron pa rin discussion, wala lang full control since hindi kita lahat. At the same time, mahirap din because tasks tend to pile up, especially tasks during asynchronous where students should have been doing the tasks pero they don't do it in time. Then, mag - pile up na. Cons din na hindi naanticipate masyado yung amount of workloads na papagawa sa students, since everything is new, we teachers thought we should all follow the templates and tasks given by our superiors. Minsan need din natin bawasan yung tasks to promote work-life balance, not only for the students but also for the teachers. (SR).

Well, actually, English is very difficult, especially in this time of pandemic since we are not physically present in school

to guide the students on how to learn the pronunciation, the terminologies, and how to apply the English language whenever we are creating conversation. So, the pandemic restricted the usual or most common strategies that I do in school. And, I have to adapt and embrace the changes. And, at the same time, think of new strategies that will really help my students in learning English, and that will ensure that nobody is left behind. (PL)

Distance is the least of the expectation of an English teacher. What else the pandemic also gives us the challenge, how can we still monitor the learning of our students? How can we know if they still do this? If they still read? If they study at home? If every day, the authenticity of the subject is learned at home, part of the pedagogy of an English teacher is teaching them communication. So, if students are not the boss or not communicating outside or with their peers, with other people, it is a challenge for an English teacher to create a realistic setting for teaching. So, aside from teaching grammar, aside from teaching the rules, aside from teaching the context, aside from teaching communication, listening, and speaking. The distance is the real challenge that affects the pedagogy of English teachers. (CJ)

These statements signify the challenges experienced by the participants at this time of the pandemic. The limitations of distance learning compressed the activities of English language teachers. To test the English language skills of learners, alternative activities may be given:

My subject is Oral Communication. So, when you say Oral Communication, of course, it has something to do more with speech, right? Public speaking, teaching them public speaking. So, I think there's really no way to check. Like for example, they've already returned the answer sheets from the first module that they've answered. So, the answer sheet, of course, those are purely written work of the students. But actually, I think that at the end of the semester, I will ask the students to record

themselves. I need a speech that would be, maybe, that will be their final exam for me or performance task. (LE)

The pandemic had promptly forced the teachers to change their ways of teaching and to learn about technology. Consequently, it offers additional workloads and concerns to the teachers. Despite the new challenges, teachers have been adjusting to the new normal in teaching by changing their approaches and strategies:

Prior to the meeting, I prepare and post the module, PowerPoint presentation, video clips, google doc, and google forms in my students' classroom. It's difficult in the beginning, but I've mastered it through the Google classroom tutorial lessons on YouTube. On my part, I also oftentimes lose my connection; therefore, I simply use the Group Chat where I can give them my instructions and answer their queries. (AC)

Since my subject in grade 12 is a purely writing subject and applied subjects. I needed to do a lot of integrations. I considered a different task, the multiple- the multi first task giving in the modules. Rather not really disconnected, but I had to make ways to make it simple that there will be a lot of integrations. And the outputs are, same skills are needed. I just had to add more on, more let's say, on the writing part. Pounded on them skills in writing and reading. But, uh, how to come up with good outputs is something else. So, it's actually doing feedback on the tasks they did; they really submitted. (XC)

The most prevailing themes to describe the perception of the language teachers on how to overcome the new challenges in this time of pandemic are the following: they try to identify the interventions, solutions, and remedies that will help the students learning process, adjustment of activities given to the students, collaborative strategy in teaching-learning process, Social involvement to understand further the situation of the learners and practice of multi-tasking skill to be able to attend the needs of the learners and the demand of the Department of Education.

Altruistic Act of Teachers towards the Second Language Learners

Aside from the challenges in teaching and in techniques during the time of the pandemic, the participants realized the great need of the learners on their emotional aspect. Consequently, teachers consider the factors that may trigger discouragement of students. According to Robinson (2020), due to digital inequalities and social inequalities experienced by the learners, the higher rate of vulnerability became evident on the learners. As a solution, participants have been extending their understanding and patience towards the students through attending to their needs, using polite expressions when commending on their works or outputs, considering the learners' mental health before and during virtual or modular class starts, giving encouraging words to sustain their interest in learning and show empathy on what they are going through, giving uplifting comments that can boost their confidence and applying of mindfulness on how to approach them both oral and written discourse:

I tried to ask for more ideas, and I acknowledge their answers. I also express my gratitude to those who are acknowledging my instructions. (AC)

Wala naman akong [motivational] speech pero sa greetings at messages ko I would make sure na friendly, approachable at open for suggestions ang mga tono ng boses ko. Lagi akong naka – thumbs up or may heart pa minsan ang mga conversations namin. (JR)

I try to be very polite with my expressions, and I always try to validate and verify whether the impact of the effect of what I did and so on and so forth. (WV)

So with regard to the strategy, it's more on the lenient side, not structured and not really structured, because distance learning really relies on the adaptability and the capability of the students to learn and themselves. So, therefore, the teachers, who have to lose in their strategy, have a lot of patience. (SU)

We have to look at the student's mental condition because it may lead them to an anxious experience if we ask them to be read a speech online during the synchronous time. So at least they have their time to record and record and record. Again and again. Whenever they commit mistakes in one thing, at least they have ample time again to record. So that's a thing to consider as well. (DT)

Now, we also have to adjust our activities. Yes, because the everyday we are meeting our students, they cannot always consult, as that is why we also have to adjust the difficulty of the activities somehow. (JR)

During writing exercises like correcting sentences, I give appreciation like a good job or very good. And with that, other students are encouraged to try to answer in their module there are reflection parts, I encourage them to explain their learnings and takeaways there especially during asynchronous if they could not explain during synchronous class, at least in the reflections, they were able to construct their thoughts and put it to writing (SU)

These statements manifest the positive treatments of teachers toward their students; with empathy and care. The positive approach of teachers becomes significant to meet the learners' expectations and needs. Havik and Westergard (2020) stressed that "Positive teacher-student interactions are a fundamental aspect of quality teaching, learning and student engagement" (p. 501). Hence, teachers' interaction may affect students' engagement in class and their academic and social development. Consequently, the act of altruism was considered as the primary responsibility of the English Language teacher. Such behaviors and practices display empathy towards the learners, all of which are part of altruism (Simmons & Sands-Dudelczyk, 1983).

Technology as the Main Tool for Teaching

Technology became an essential tool in teaching at this time of pandemic for both online and modular mode of schooling. This tool has been the most effective means of relaying information and teaching channel. Thus, technology and technological knowledge became highly valued and demanded innovative skill in the teaching-learning process:

Merong engage part at least every synchronous may interactive task like games. We did Pinoy Henyo, Charade, Pictionary, Taboo Card. They participated, and during discussions, we have a poll, so that I could ask few questions from exercises, then answers will be seen. (SU)

And then blended learning in the online class, we have the synchronous and asynchronous in my grade 11 students, they are not able to attend the synchronous online classes. So what they did is that I came up with a type of asynchronous strategy. Now, kung saan I created a show; it's what we call LEE show. LEE means Learn English Enthusiastically. I am creating videos of me discussing the topics in oral communication and English for academic and professional purposes. (PL)

So, the strategy that I am using is, I just created a group chat, where it's like, and chat support for the students. Students used to post their questions on the chat box; then I will just answer their questions. (LD)

Online games to online educational games now are really is a great tool in teaching, so it increases motivation. It allows students to learn and at the same time to have fun also. Since they're also are using the internet, video recordings, they can video record themselves doing the performances, practicing the activities that you are that you gave them. Also, what strategies we can say my subject is communication. and we cannot use the speech laboratory as one of the tool that we are frequently using last time, some of you are going out there I just have a CDs listening activities to be played in the music player. And then, afterwards, the student will give us yung parang magbalik sya ng feedback parang palitan lang. (LE)

The usual is giving platform education gaming platform that we use the kahoot, mentimeter, we often use those platforms just so not to be the students to a competition like environment... since I'm also into editing now, I use photoshop. And, of course, I end up with, I can utilize Powerpoint presentation. (DT)

I used to do it via google meet because the kids tell that it uses less data but now I diverted into juggling between messenger and more on organizing the different tasks via discord. (MS)

We have FB group dun ako nag-upload ng video lessons para mapanood nila (JR)

The technology bridges the communication gap due to distance learning in both virtual and modular learning set-ups. Based on the participants, they have learned to utilize group chats and video calls to attend to the needs of the learners easily. This practice goes beyond the actual conducted synchronous class through virtual zoom conference and google meet in providing input of knowledge to the learners.

Teachers Acting More as Guides than Facilitators

Due to the prompt shift of schooling set up from the face-to-face to virtual and modular mode, the teachers' role had been modified: from being a facilitator to a being guide. This is considered as one coping mechanism in the new normal way of the teaching-learning process in attending to the needs of the learners. Given the situation that physical interaction was prohibited because of the virus, the teachers were not able to facilitate the class. A new role was given to them, which is to be a guide to the learners through giving instructions and feedback in the virtual and modular activities:

So, I know it's clear that I am a guide, but there is still a lot of like, a big portion, a big job my role as a guide is to be a friend... At the same time, with the being a facilitator really becomes queer these days because I can't really say that I'm facilitating, yeah, I really can't say that despite the different activities that I have, I ask the kids to do or engage comfortably. (XC)

And the teacher part, it's more on guidance and facilitation na lamang. Unlike previously na most of the time, it will be the teacher discussing the matter and parang lumilitaw; it's the teacher who is performing the wealth of knowledge, this time, there will be more of us soft face independent parang elf hunt for the students, which in terms para bang if I am going to speak in a figurative manner, para bang, si teacher bibigyan nya lang ng mapa si student, and then the student could be self-hunting, or tracking the guide through the modules parang ganun. So more like independent learning, and then facilitation and guidance only from the teacher. (MD)

The effort of the educational sector in the country on how the teachers, learners, and schools can cope with the paradigm shift towards the distance learning system became every evident this time of Pandemic (Alea et al., 2020). Based on the participants, during the face-to-face setup of teaching, the instructions or lessons were directly given to the students. They only facilitate inside the classroom on how the students are working on the given instructions to come up with the expected outcome. However, with distance learning, the teachers shifted their role as a guide by giving instructions in every lesson. In some way, Feedback creates the learning experience for the learners since this strategy may impart what they know, what they learned, and what else should they learn. This strategy considers the reality that most learners are now doing the task on their own phase or independently. In a nutshell, the consultation process became the new strategy towards effective teaching-learning progression since the learners were forced to do self-hunt tactics to understand the concepts given to them.

Eclectic Approach as the Common Method to Teaching English in New Normal

All of the participants responded with the unspecified approach in teaching the English language at this time of the pandemic. Nevertheless, participants consider combining different strategies that may be suitable for the teaching-learning process at this time of pandemic:

Here in online teaching, it's a transition from activities and a transition of discussion and activities, you discuss bits and ideas, okay for them to master your extend the lesson through an activity, and then you add another idea and then extend again through activity and at the end of the entire discussion, you elaborate things to them or you make them analyze the lesson, analyze the skills, use the skills to analyze a text or materials, and then you evaluate so far more and more (CJ)

You have to search for different strategies for the deliver your lesson. Yes, you cannot confine yourself to one theory. (JR)

Under the New Normal set up in the academe, all schools and universities in the Philippines had shifted from regular classes into online and modular classes to give continuity in teaching and learning. In consort with this crucial point, the relentless effort of the teachers became notable through the alternative methods

and diverse paradigm shift in their teaching pedagogies (Jafar et al., 2020). In relation to this, based on the participants' response teaching English as the second language of the learners became more vital due to the expected competency of the four macro skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing despite the lack of readiness of the teachers and provided materials. As a result, the flexibility of teaching methodologies was taken into consideration to be able to sustain the language input to the learners.

CONCLUSIONS

The COVID-19 Pandemic has reshaped the educational system in the Philippines. It shifted the traditional academic paradigm towards the new normal in teaching-learning set-up. Specifically, it provided the educational sectors to rethink and redesign the curriculum, the strategies, the approaches, and the techniques for the teaching-learning process at this time of the pandemic.

This study revealed that English language teachers have been adjusting to the new normal through overcoming the challenges the pandemic had brought, accommodating and considering the situations of each student, learning technology as the main tool in teaching, embodying the new role as a guide to learners, and combining different strategies that may be suitable in teaching for the new normal. Through these experiences, it unravels the teaching pedagogy practiced by the English language teachers.

The concept of flexibility on teaching-learning modalities became the main practices of selected participants at this time of the pandemic. This practice has helped the teachers effectuate a different pedagogy based on the learning environment and learners' needs. The use of technology became significant in the input learning process of the second language (L2) under distance learning mode. It provides new possibilities in teaching the English language by integrating videos, records, and games. Providing feedback to each learner's output emerged as the essential component in teaching at this time of the pandemic. It creates a learning experience that helps the teacher to identify what needs to be improved. Lastly, the teachers manifest a new role in the teaching-learning process as a guide, which enkindles learners' independence to cope with the adjustment of the teaching-learning process.

In conclusion, English language teachers are determined to instill learning in the English language students in spite of the difficulties they have been experiencing in the new normal. Their lived experiences and the different

strategies on coping with the new normal mode are inevitable to change due to the adjustments and needs of learners at this time of the pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings obtained in this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

For the teachers, the English language teachers may learn to embrace the new teaching pedagogies beyond the traditional teaching strategies.

For the school administration, the school administration may consider the concept of innovation to assure preparedness and competence of teachers to align with the given changes in the curriculum. Therefore, In-Service Training (INSET) may be conducted to address the challenges that may affect the teaching-learning process and to share possible strategies as well as tools in teaching at this time of the pandemic.

Moreover, the researchers suggest further investigate the other lived experiences of teachers in other subjects or consider the experiences of learners in studying a specific subject.

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