

THE PEDAGOGICAL Horizon of Filipino English Language Teachers in Foreign Countries: A Multiple Case STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative multiple case study aimed to unveil the lived experiences, and coping strategies of five Filipino English language teachers in foreign countries: a Filipino English teacher in Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, USA, and in Italy were chosen through maximum variation sampling. Their experiences and coping strategies were examined using in-depth interviews. Data triangulation was done by interviewing each case's family members, colleagues, and friends. Thematic analysis resulted from five emergent themes on the experiences: well-provided with teaching materials, comfortable working conditions, financial stability, use of varied instructional strategies, and growth opportunities. The emergent themes for coping mechanisms included adopting viable strategies for language barriers, mending unpleasant student behavior, and resolving culture shock. The five cases were generally similar in their experiences and challenges. As for coping strategies, five cases adopted viable strategies for language barriers, three cases differed on mending unpleasant student behavior, and all cases resolved culture shock. These findings show the importance of the experiences of Filipino English language teachers working internationally as this study offers insights into their adaptive strategies and highlights areas where additional support and resources may be beneficial. These insights can enhance teachers' understanding and strategies leading to more effective decision-making and implementation of education internationally.

KEYWORDS: *Applied linguistics, education, Filipino English teachers, abroad, multiple case study, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of English-language instruction in courses offered in

other countries opens opportunity for Filipino teachers to work abroad. According to Kiramba and Oloo (2019), teaching abroad presents economic advantages. However, educators face expected obstacles such as language barriers, homesickness, cultural challenges, and societal adjustment (Arva & Medgyes, 2005). In the study of Caravatti et al. (2014), education in the migration of teachers involves various key concepts and challenges such as recognizing internationally acquired teaching competencies.

In the US, according to Modesto (2020), Filipino teachers abroad are concerned about language. Some teachers were criticized early in their careers for their accents and pronunciation, which made it hard for students to comprehend. This underlines language issues for teachers and students, with some reluctance to learn English. Additionally, language barriers are also a concern (Abramova, 2013). On the other hand, there are obstacles that migrant teachers encounter in their teacher training and classrooms in their new home country. Adair et al. (2012) discovered that migrant teachers in the United States, despite their cultural knowledge and experiences, were considered unprofessional and less competent in the workplace.

In the Philippines, there has been a persistent issue about the scarcity of educators, which has been notably highlighted during the early stages of the K-to-12 program. Simultaneously, there has been a noticeable increase in the migration of Filipino teachers (Novio, 2022). However, the gloomy aspect goes beyond the departure of skilled teachers, as some of them may experience a decrease in their skills when teaching in a foreign country, as emphasized by Cruz et al. (2015). In addition, Sumalinog (2019) conducted a study in Cebu which highlighted the limits faced by Filipino English teachers. These limitations primarily stemmed from language challenges caused by variations in accent and English proficiency levels among the students they teach.

Consequently, language serves as a means to get insight into one's culture. The understanding and broadening of perspectives are often enhanced by the different cultural backgrounds of individuals, particularly when it comes to teaching languages. Furthermore, non-native speakers or teachers may find it challenging to be exposed to diverse cultures and teach a foreign language due to the specific language environment or contextual factors they encounter. In my exhaustive readings, I found that there was a lack of local studies that specifically examined the lived experiences, perspectives, and language adaptation challenges faced by teachers from a local standpoint when teaching

abroad. Hence, this research will center on a qualitative multiple case study of Filipino educators teaching English language courses abroad, aiming to examine and reveal the emerging and existing themes among the cases or participants of the study.

Additionally, this research holds significant social relevance as its outcomes are expected to offer a wide range of information for the stakeholders in the educational sector. Filipino English language teachers working abroad will gain insights into effective linguistic and pedagogical strategies to improve student engagement and comprehension in diverse cultural settings. Administrators in international schools will find evidence-based approaches to support their teachers and implement policies that foster a culturally inclusive learning environment. Additionally, policymakers, curriculum developers, and researchers will also benefit from the findings, enabling them to create more inclusive and effective educational frameworks tailored to global contexts.

The present analysis acknowledges that there is a lack of existing research conducted in the province of Davao del Norte. While Fabella (2022) of Davao City, compared the job satisfaction of Filipino teachers in Philippine and U.S. public schools, and Macapagong et al. (2023) in Davao de Oro, explored the experiences of Filipino teachers in the USA through a phenomenological lens, both studies were limited in scope to specific contexts and focused primarily on teaching abroad rather than on language adaptation and the pedagogical horizon. My study addresses this significant research gap by using a multiple case study approach to examine the experiences of Filipino English language teachers in five different countries from Asia, USA, and Europe. This broader perspective offered a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by these educators across diverse international settings, with a particular focus on language adaptation and pedagogical practices.

Finally, the outcome of this research will be disseminated at a global conference dedicated to the field of language teaching. The distribution of the study results' excerpts will serve as a valuable resource for understanding the adaptive skills required in the context of teaching abroad. The study will be disseminated through webinars and in-person research presentations to target audiences, including educators in the field of English language teaching and other relevant language disciplines. The manuscript will be distributed to the University of Immaculate Conception, as well as the English and Filipino

language program of Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology for further examination and analysis.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine how Filipino English language instructors adapt linguistically to foreign settings. The research endeavor utilized a qualitative multiple case study design to investigate the complex dynamics of language adaptation in out-of-the-country educational environments. The study further aimed to analyze Filipino English language teachers' experiences, coping strategies, and viewpoints as they deal with linguistic challenges in various educational settings abroad.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the experiences of the Filipino English language teachers working abroad?
2. How do these teachers deal with the challenges of their experience?
3. What explains the similarities and differences of each case?

METHODS

This qualitative research design utilized multiple case study approach. Multiple case studies involve the examination and comparison of two or more cases that have certain similarities but also exhibit differences in various aspects. This is intended to compare the cases, analyzing their similarities, differences, as well as the commonalities and recurring themes or patterns that arise from the analysis. Alblooshi (2023) highlights the importance of using a multiple case study approach to enhance the generalizability of findings. By closely examining how a phenomenon varies or remains consistent across different contexts, settings, situations, or locations, researchers can gain valuable insights. More importantly, the purpose of a multiple case study approach is to determine the pattern, relationship, or similarity of the cases. When conducting a multiple case study, it is important to consider the similarities or differences between the cases.

The present study employed the method of maximum variation sampling. Maximum variation sampling by Patton (2002) is a method that involves identifying the primary dimensions of variation and subsequently selecting cases that exhibit the greatest possible diversity from one another. This study involved a total of five participants who met specific criteria for inclusion. The inclusion criteria comprised Filipino English language teachers employed in teaching positions abroad, each with a minimum of one year of teaching experience. Additionally, participants were chosen because they had navigated diverse educational landscapes, encountered varied pedagogical approaches, and interacted effectively with students from different cultural backgrounds. However, they would not be part of this study if these teachers had less than one year of teaching experience or who did not meet the specified criteria. This clear delineation of criteria ensures a precise understanding of the participant selection process, providing a solid foundation for the study's exploration.

The participants were recognized according to the case unit that they belonged to. Case A was a Filipino English teacher in Thailand, Case B was a Filipino English teacher in Vietnam, Case C was a Filipino English language teacher in Japan, Case D was a Filipino English teacher in the USA, and Case E was a Filipino English language teacher in Italy.

The data collection started when I obtained ethical certification from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Immaculate Conception with protocol code GS-0105-03-24. Invitations for interviews were sent out to potential participants through Messenger, email, and WhatsApp applications, who were requested to return the informed consent form along with a letter inviting them as participants of the study. Once all participants confirmed their willingness to take part, specific interview schedules and virtual meetings were arranged.

Confidentiality of responses was emphasized, underscoring the importance of trust and respect in online interviews. Participants were asked to provide electronic signatures for informed consent, ensuring their comfort and security during the online sessions. To maintain a conducive environment, interviews were conducted in participants' preferred settings, often their homes, free from distractions. Throughout the interviews, the researcher actively listened to participants, showing genuine interest in their sharing. Sensitivity to participants' responses was paramount, with probing questions used when necessary to ensure clarity. Measures were taken to address any missed details or

ambiguities, including repeated questions and confirmation of responses.

Likewise, in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals connected to the participants to validate the responses of the different cases, supporting the credibility of the findings through triangulation. Through these rigorous online interviews and triangulation, the study aimed to present a more accurate, complete, and objective depiction of participants' experiences in the online realm.

The data from interview transcripts, observation notes, audio recordings, and other textual materials used in the study was transcribed to deepen understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The data collected from the participants were subjected to various analytical processes, including transcription, translation, coding, and categorization of data, thematic analysis, and cross-case analysis. Each case was initially analyzed individually, and then the cases were compared to identify patterns of similarity and difference.

This paper was evaluated thoroughly by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Immaculate Conception based on the ten ethical tenets of research: social value; informed consent; vulnerability of the research participants; risks, benefits, and safety; privacy and confidentiality; justice; transparency, qualifications of the researcher; adequacy of facilities; and community involvement. As such, the study was subjected to careful scrutiny to affirm that the ethical principles were strictly applied in the research process at all times to protect human participants, most particularly those who belong in the vulnerable sectors.

RESULTS

This study focuses on the lived experiences, and coping mechanisms of Filipino English Teachers working abroad. Their profile is reflected in Table 1. Firstly, Case A, resided in Thailand, where he spent over ten years teaching in a government school alongside his wife. Secondly, Case B, a 25-year-old Filipino English Language Teacher residing in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, has been teaching there for over a year. Her teaching approach was deeply grounded in early childhood education, focusing on hands-on learning, play-based activities, and interactive storytelling tailored to children's developmental needs. Thirdly, Case C was a 26-year-old educator who taught in Japan for over a year. Before teaching English, she underwent Nihongo training to communicate effectively with students, colleagues, and the community. Case C's pedagogical journey was marked by adaptability, motivation, and cultural understanding. Motivated by the

opportunity for personal and professional growth, she seamlessly integrated into Japanese culture, navigating language barriers with patience and innovation. Transitioning to Case D, a 34-year-old Filipino English Language Teacher originally from Davao del Norte, faced initial challenges adapting to teaching abroad, particularly with unfamiliar terminologies and cultural nuances. Lastly, Case E, a 46-year-old English language teacher, who taught in Italy for 20 years, demonstrated adaptability and creativity in navigating linguistic and cultural differences.

Table 1

Profile of the Participants in In-depth Interview

	Filipino English Language Teacher in Thailand (Case A)	Filipino English Language Teacher in Vietnam (Case B)	Filipino English Language Teacher in Japan (Case C)	Filipino English Language Teacher in USA (Case D)	Filipino English Language Teacher in Italy (Case E)
Participant Code	P01	P02	P03	P04	P05
Age	37	26	26	35	45
Sex	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Years of Teaching in the Philippines	4	1	1	6	1
Years of Teaching in the Foreign Country	12	2	2	2.5	23

Experiences of Filipino English Language Teachers Working Abroad

Using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) model of thematic analysis: five themes emerged which explained the experiences of Filipino English language teachers working abroad. As shown in Table 2, these are well-provided with teaching resources, comfortable working condition, financial stability, use of varied instructional strategies, and growth opportunities.

Table 2
Experiences of Filipino English Language Teachers Working Abroad

Essential Theme	Core Ideas
Well-Provided with Teaching Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● being provided with teaching materials ● school giving free supply to the students ● having access to digital resources ● receiving educational support from the government ● being in a spacious and well-ventilated classroom that is conducive for learning ● being exposed to various school events ● receiving support from the administrators
Comfortable Working Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● being focused more on the instruction not on paper works ● having more instructional time than paper works ● being provided with teaching assistance ● encoding of grades is in a scheduled date ● achieving specific goals on time ● not being given with ancillary roles aside from teaching ● having spacious and well-ventilated classroom
Financial Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● being well compensated ● providing more funds for the family ● saving for leisure and emergency purposes ● managing finances well ● being given stipend or extra pay

<p>Use of Varied Instructional Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● integrating technology in the teaching-learning process ● focusing more on answering worksheets and performance tasks ● preparing activities and games ● gathering new techniques from the social media ● employing collaborative and cooperative activities
<p>Growth Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● attending seminars and trainings provided by the school ● being provided with strategy training ● having time to evaluate and assess students' progress report

Well-provided with Teaching Resources. Based on the table shown, seven core ideas from the participants and informants were rendered as support for the essential theme. More so, all of the case participants revealed that all of the teachers' instructional materials and resources were handed by the school, which aided them in teaching the learners. Case D said that:

The advantage, ma'am, are less paperworks... less preparation for school needs because they are already provided. Also, there is no need to know Japanese to teach. (P03_RQ1.S1)

Comfortable Working Condition. For this theme, eight core ideas are supported by the case participants and informants. Hence, the case participants shared the same ideas as to the case of their working conditions. In other words, providing materials by the school, and an organized educational system that promotes a hassle-free working environment for the teachers. This encapsulates the working conditions that create a teaching-learning process in language teaching.

Case D gladly had this to say:

We have that kind of website wherein all of the teachers, the staff, can log in to that and we can get all of the materials there. So, it's not really a burden for us, we are not going to think of giving them a lot of materials because it's already there. We just have to print it if you need it or if you need a lot of worksheets to use. (P04_RQ1.S1)

Financial Stability. Six core ideas were then supported with this theme, as narrated by the participants and informants of the study. Hence, financial wise, as what they experienced as Filipino English Language Teachers working abroad, each case has narrated that they are well-compensated, more funds for the family, and also funds for emergency purposes. Case C expressed her financial status while being abroad. She affirmed that:

I have separated my remittance to the Philippines, my personal money, and my savings. I also have money set aside for outings and leisure. I have calculated all my salary. I can say that I am stable because I have money compared to when I was in the Philippines. I can send money if there is a serious emergency and they really need it. (P03_RQ1.S1)

Use of Varied Instructional Strategies. Table 2 shows that this topic supports five main notions from participants and sources. The participants agreed that there is integration of technology, the use of innovative methodologies, and the emphasis on collaborative and cooperative activities in learning and teaching English. Hence, case A narrated:

Of course, because in the classroom now we have everything we have high tech, our boards are already those big screens... the materials like it's in their book, it's in the digital... because we do have internet, we do have a website something like that. (P04_RQ1.S1).

Growth Opportunities. This topic supports four fundamental notions that were disclosed by the study's participants and informants. Attending seminars and workshops, as well as having adequate time to review and assess learners' progress, were among the possibilities for improvement that participants had while working overseas. Case D remarked:

“Professional development, every quarter we have our professional development wherein we are trained or retrained on the strategies we need to do to our learners, to our students and what are those updates that we can do like additional strategies for us to do to the students so that we can really give them the correct content.” (P04_RQ1.S1)

Coping Strategies of Filipino English language Teachers working abroad

Meanwhile, three coping strategies of Filipino English language teachers working abroad emerged. As shown in Table 2, these are adopting viable strategies for language barriers, mending unpleasant student behavior, and resolving culture shock.

Table 3

Coping Strategies of Filipino English language Teachers working abroad

Essential Theme	Core Ideas on Coping	Challenges
Adopting Viable Strategies for Language Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -seeking help from colleagues on translations -adapting to their manner and accent in speaking -using terms when communicating 	Using terms that are off in their L1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -using students' native language -learning the language and culture of the country -using gestures when communicating -using simple language for better understanding -giving clear explanations and examples 	Being misunderstood by learners Feeling frustrated because of with students not understanding the non-native English teacher
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment -setting rules and regulations -providing clear expectations -being firm in imposing discipline 	Being bullied
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -breaking down complex concepts into smaller parts -using various strategies to overcome students' obstacles in learning 	Students having difficulty learning English

Mending Unpleasant Student Behavior	-listening to learners' concern -setting of expectations and meeting half-way with learners	Encountering stubborn outspoken learners
	-allowing learners to become more engage in the activities -providing complements -encouraging teamwork and group activities -utilizing technology in teaching -being attentive to student's needs, strengths and weaknesses -prepare interactive games	Having demotivated students
	-expressing concern and empathy	Students needing emotional Support
	-providing open communication to students	Lacking parental support
	-reaching out to parents on students performances	
Resolving Culture Shock	-creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment -setting rules and regulations -providing clear expectations -being firm in imposing discipline	Facing bullying incidents
	-allowing oneself to learn from these differences -showing respect and open-mindedness about the culture -introducing cultural elements from the Philippines -sharing unique experiences and perspectives with the students and colleagues -foster meaningful connection	Enduring Cultural Differences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -enrolling in a language class -reading the history of the country -becoming immerse with the culture of the community 	Absorbing less cultural information
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Adopting Viable Strategies for Language Barriers. This theme essentially talks about how the participants are able to communicate and teach English language, or as their target language, to the students by simplifying its process and localizing it in order for the teacher to establish mutual understanding, as learning and teaching the English language is concerned Cases A, B, C, and E each used their unique coping mechanisms to overcome this obstacle. Case C, for instance, stated:

In our class, ma'am, there are two of us, the homeroom teacher and myself as an English Language Teacher (ELT). If I ask a question in English and a student responds in Japanese, the HRT will translate it into English for me to understand their answer because a language barrier can arise. (P03_RQ2.S1)

Mending Unpleasant Student Behavior. As revealed by the participants and informants of this study, thirteen core ideas support the theme. This theme, as part of the coping strategies of Filipino English Language Teachers working abroad, sheds a light on the phenomena that aside from the pedagogies in teaching the target language, managing the classroom also connotes to have a success and conducive learning environment for the learners. Hence, case B uttered how she sets her classroom, as being a proactive language teacher:

I think clear expectations, routines, positive reinforcement, classroom management strategies, and persistence are really important, ma'am. Then, like I mentioned before, if ever there are issues with the children's behavior, I will ask for assistance from our Homeroom Teacher (HRT) or Teaching Assistant (TA). (P02_RQ2.S1)

Resolving Culture Shock. As shown in Table 3, eight basic concepts support the key themes, as shown by the replies and cross-case analysis done with participants and informants. The subject explained how Filipino English Language Teachers endure cultural challenges. Case D stated:

I embrace how they adapt their culture, their way of lifestyle. I adapt their manner, language, the way they talk. (P04_RQ1.S1)

Table 4

Similarities and Differences of Experiences and Coping Strategies of Filipino English language Teachers working abroad

Themes on Experiences	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D	Case E
Well-Provided with Teaching Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comfortable Working Conditions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financially Stability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use of Varied Instructional Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Growth Opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coping Strategies					
Adopting Viable Strategies for Language Barriers	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Mending Unpleasant Student Behavior	✓	✓	X	X	X
Resolving Culture Shock	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

IMPLICATIONS

Filipino English language teachers abroad employ useful teaching practices to potentially improve educational practice. First, it offers educators many instructional methods. Filipino instructors abroad offer excellent insights into building adaptable and inclusive teaching strategies that fit the needs of varied student groups which can be used in global context. This understanding helps create more culturally and language-independent teaching approaches.

Looking at how Filipino teachers handle cultural differences emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity in education. Teachers can better understand and respect cultural diversity by studying how these teachers communicate with students from other cultures. Cultural understanding creates more inclusive learning settings and thorough understanding, this helps educators to create inclusive classrooms that value every student, regardless of culture or language.

Looking at how Filipino instructors use digital and traditional resources might help you optimize resource use. Teachers can learn how to maximize current resources and technologies to improve teaching and student engagement. Educational institutions can find innovative ways to provide content and develop courses that enhance learning by researching Filipino teachers abroad.

Filipino educators' foreign professional growth experiences could guide improved teacher training programs. Educational institutions can tailor professional development programs to teachers' individual needs and challenges in diverse cultural and language situations. Institutions can help teachers develop and adapt to changing educational contexts by providing ongoing support and training.

Filipino teachers' overseas experiences help us grasp global education. The exchange and collaboration of educators from diverse cultures facilitates transformative partnerships and projects across borders. This integrated education method improves educational processes by fostering cross-cultural communication, empathy, and collaboration, worldwide.

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