



From struggle to strategy: Experiences of out-of-field teachers teaching English

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Abstract

Aim: This study explored the challenges, coping strategies, and lived experiences of out-of-field teachers teaching English in public secondary schools in the District of Malinao, Division of Aklan. It specifically examined their perceived struggles, adaptive practices, and support systems influencing their instructional performance and professional adjustment.

Methodology: A qualitative phenomenological design was employed to capture the essence of participants' lived experiences. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and narrative accounts and analyzed using Colaizzi's method. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking, peer debriefing, and audit trail procedures.

Results: Findings revealed three major thematic clusters: (1) struggles and growth, including emotional challenges and gaps in content knowledge and instruction; (2) coping strategies, such as the use of online resources, curriculum-based planning, and simplified, student-centered instruction; and (3) motivation and recommendations, highlighting commitment to learners, resilience, continuous learning, and the importance of support systems.

Conclusion: The study demonstrates that out-of-field English teachers face significant instructional and emotional challenges but develop adaptive strategies to sustain effective teaching. These findings highlight the need for structured professional support, targeted training, and collaborative practices to enhance teacher competence and improve language learning outcomes in English education.

Keywords: *out-of-field teachers, English education, phenomenology, coping strategies, instructional practices*

INTRODUCTION

English holds a key position in the Philippine educational system as one of the major languages used for instruction, academic communication, and professional discourse. This reflects the global reality where English serves as a lingua franca in various fields such as education, science, business, and international collaboration. Internationally, English is known as a dominant medium of instruction and academic exchange, playing a vital role in education, including the development of linguistic skills (Qizi, 2025; Zhuraeva, 2026). English, aside from being a subject, is also used as a tool for instruction across various learning areas in Philippine schools. The English language is expected to be taught by English teachers who are prepared and equipped for it. However, the deployment of teachers does not always align with their academic qualifications. (Pizarra & Velasco, 2023).

The issue of teacher specialization and subject alignment remains a global concern. Teachers experience difficulties in delivering lessons due to limited language instruction skills, highlighting the existing problem in communicative competence (Widagsa et al., 2025). In the Philippine context, the Second Congressional Commission on Education, known as EDCOM II (2025), reported that a considerable number of teachers in the country are assigned to teach subjects that are not aligned with their academic training. This situation raises important questions about instructional preparedness and the support needed for teachers assigned to teach subjects outside their areas of expertise. This practice, known as out-of-field teaching, is widespread due to teacher shortages and often leads to challenges in lesson preparation, content knowledge, and instructional strategies (Arranz, 2024), although teachers demonstrate adaptability through self-directed learning, collaboration, and the use of available resources (Taclob, 2024).

Given the concerns raised in global to national reports and existing studies, it is important to explore how teachers experience out-of-field teaching assignments in specific educational contexts. Though there are previous studies conducted, there is still a need for an in-depth study about their lived experiences. Understanding their lived



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experiences can provide insights into the challenges they encounter and the coping strategies they develop in managing instructional responsibilities outside their specialization. Specifically, in identifying the problems regarding language teaching and developing linguistic competence, the study can further delve into possible realizations and recommendations to enhance the delivery of quality language education.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers assigned to teach English outside their field of specialization. To better understand their situation through their experiences and the coping strategies that they made to handle it.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Experiences and Challenges of Out-of-Field Teachers in English Classes

In the current Philippine educational landscape, many teachers are assigned to teach subjects outside their field of specialization. This phenomenon brought a lot of struggles to out-of-field teachers, which affects the quality of education, especially in the delivery of instruction and content mastery. Nagauleng et al. (2021) believed that this occurring problem is the result of insufficient training that out-of-field teachers received, as they were not formally trained to pronounce and express their ideas in English through university or college classes. This resulted in limited communicative skills and competence.

Aside from EDCOM II findings, additional studies in the Philippine context have revealed that many English classes are taught by out-of-field teachers. Etulle et al. (2023) demonstrated, in a descriptive correlational study of out-of-field primary English as a Second Language teachers in Cebu, Philippines, that English-speaking anxiety was common regardless of teachers' age, gender, or experience. This showed low linguistic skills, which affects language instruction. These results underscore the importance of teacher support programs in addressing both emotional factors and linguistic competency.

Specifically, this brought linguistic struggle, emotional struggle, and pedagogical struggle to teachers and students. According to Guiaselon et al. (2022), out-of-field teaching is a transnational phenomenon that may significantly impact students' educational experiences. To cope with these challenges, educators continue to engage in independent learning, attend available training when offered and when feasible, and participate in peer training and coaching (Braga, 2023; Lagria, 2021).

Coping Strategies of Out-of-Field Teachers in English Classes

As out-of-field teachers encounter various challenges, they develop coping strategies to manage difficulties that may hinder effective teaching and learning. These strategies are grounded in their lived teaching experiences and serve as practical responses to make lessons more understandable and accessible to students. Matsumura and Hinoki (2025) found that continuous Professional Development (PD) focused on teaching English in the classroom can enhance teachers' self-efficacy and empower them through consistent support and collaborative mentoring.

Another research-supported instructional practice to address difficulties in teaching the subject, as noted by Lu et al. (2023), is translanguaging. This allows them to use the student's home language or vernacular to clarify the concepts being taught, ensuring accurate understanding. Teachers often used this strategy to let students easily identify the idea being taught by knowing its equivalent term in their local language.

An identified instructional practice to address difficulties in teaching the subject, widely used across all aspects today, especially in education, is technology. The Office of English Language Acquisition (2025) believed that such digital tools are beneficial as they support teaching and formative assessment and provide teachers, especially those who are not English majors, with up-to-date insights into students' learning progress.

The shortage of qualified English teachers is often the reason for this phenomenon, leaving public schools with the option of assigning other majors to teach the subject. Because of this misalignment, lesson mastery, bridging gaps for diverse learners, and the self-efficacy of assigned teachers are all well challenged. Even though it is challenging and they are struggling, out-of-field teachers show flexibility by adopting a range of coping mechanisms. Some engaged in self-directed learning, collaborative efforts with peers/colleagues, and the application of innovations such as translanguaging, ICT integration, and the development of interactive activities. These strategies enable teachers to bridge gaps in content knowledge and address their limited linguistic proficiency while creating meaningful learning opportunities.



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Aside from the mentioned coping mechanism, research further highlighted the role of structured support systems. Allowing out-of-field teachers to participate in programs such as literacy-focused interventions, long-term professional development, peer mentoring, and collaborative lesson planning is essential for developing self-efficacy and effective teaching. Practical and responsive approaches in multilingual classrooms are given importance, such as translanguaging and student-centered, purposeful assessment.

These academic and systemic constraints are calling for institutionalized support to continue delivering the quality education that every Filipino child deserves. This research calls to explore the personal lived experiences of teachers assigned to teach English outside their field of specialization to better understand their situation within their actual school context, which leads to the development of possible support from concerned individuals and organizations.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the epistemological perspectives of interpretivism and constructivism, which guided the understanding of the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers handling English classes. These perspectives assume that knowledge is socially constructed and that meaning is derived from individuals' experiences within specific contexts. Furthermore, this study is anchored too in Communicative Competence Theory (Hymes, 1972), which focuses on the ability of language usage in real-life communication.

Interpretivism views reality as subjective and shaped by individuals' interpretations of their experiences. In this study, it guided the exploration of how out-of-field teachers made sense of their instructional challenges, classroom situations, and professional adjustments. Through this lens, the teachers' narratives were treated as meaningful accounts that reflect how they understand and respond to their teaching assignments.

Constructivism complements this by emphasizing that knowledge is actively constructed through experience and reflection. This perspective supported the analysis of participants' responses by allowing meanings to emerge from their narratives rather than imposing predetermined categories. It also guided the process of organizing these meanings into themes that represent shared patterns in their experiences.

Communicative Competence Theory explains how teachers utilize language effectively in classrooms to effectively teach lessons. The theory guided the study in understanding that teachers with limited English training might encounter difficulty in achieving communicative competence, which affects their ability to use, model, and teach language accurately in classrooms.

Together, these perspectives and theory provided the foundation for using a phenomenological approach, as they emphasize understanding participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to them.

Statement of the Problem

Out-of-field teaching in English has become a persistent issue in many educational systems, particularly in contexts where teacher deployment does not align with specialization. In the Philippine setting, this mismatch raises concerns about teachers' linguistic competence, instructional effectiveness, and their ability to facilitate meaningful communication and language learning in the classroom. Teaching English requires not only content knowledge but also proficiency in language use, discourse strategies, and communicative pedagogy. When teachers are assigned outside their field of expertise, they may experience difficulties in delivering instruction, managing classroom interaction, and supporting students' language development.

Despite existing studies on out-of-field teaching, limited research has explored how teachers make sense of their experiences in handling English classes, particularly in terms of their linguistic challenges, coping strategies, and professional adaptation. There is also a need to understand how these experiences influence their teaching practices and their ability to support students' communication competence.

Thus, this study seeks to explore the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers teaching English, focusing on their instructional challenges, coping mechanisms, motivation, and the support systems that shape their teaching practices.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To explore the lived experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of out-of-field teachers in teaching English classes.



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Specific Objectives

1. To identify the linguistic, instructional, and emotional challenges experienced by out-of-field teachers in teaching English.
2. To examine the coping strategies employed by out-of-field teachers to address challenges in English language instruction.
3. To analyze the motivations and professional adjustments of out-of-field teachers in sustaining their teaching practices.
4. To determine the role of support systems in enhancing teachers' instructional practices and communication effectiveness.

Research Questions

1. What linguistic, instructional, and emotional challenges do out-of-field teachers experience in teaching English classes?
2. What coping strategies do out-of-field teachers employ to address these challenges?
3. How do out-of-field teachers describe their motivation and professional adjustment in teaching English?
4. What support systems influence their instructional practices and ability to facilitate language learning?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using phenomenology as the research design. This approach was appropriate for examining the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers in teaching English, particularly in relation to language instruction, classroom communication, and pedagogical practices. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018), phenomenology seeks to explore, describe, and interpret the essence of participants' lived experiences related to a specific phenomenon. Phenomenology enabled the exploration and interpretation of how teachers construct meaning from their experiences in teaching English outside their field of specialization. Through this design, the study captured participants' linguistic challenges, instructional adaptations, and communication practices in the classroom.

Population and Sampling

This qualitative study was conducted through interviews with out-of-field teachers currently teaching English classes in junior high school within the District of Malinao, Division of Aklan.

Sampling Technique. These teachers were selected through purposive sampling, a qualitative research technique that identifies participants who can provide rich, relevant, and in-depth information about the phenomenon under investigation.

Participants. To be included in the study, participants must meet the following criteria: (1) they must be permanent public junior high school teachers assigned to any public secondary school within the District of Malinao; and (2) they must have at least 1-5 years of experience teaching English despite not having English as their field of specialization. This requirement ensures that participants have accumulated sufficient experience in teaching English outside their field of specialization and can therefore provide detailed, reflective accounts of their instructional experiences. This study sought data from eight (8) qualified participants.

Instruments

This study used a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide as the primary data collection instrument. The use of a semi-structured interview was appropriate for phenomenological research, as it allowed participants to freely narrate their lived experiences while enabling the researcher to probe, clarify, and deepen understanding through follow-up questions. The interview questions were open-ended to encourage rich, detailed descriptions of participants' teaching experiences, perceptions, and reflections in handling English classes as out-of-field teachers. The questions were designed to elicit participants' different language teaching experiences covering the struggles and the strategies they developed and employed. In addition to audio recording, the researcher maintained field notes during and immediately after the interviews to document non-verbal cues, contextual observations, and preliminary reflections that may assist in interpreting the participants' responses during data analysis.

To establish content validity, the interview guide was subjected to expert validation by a panel composed of a District English Coordinator, Master Teachers, and research experts. The experts' comments and recommendations



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regarding relevance, clarity, and representativeness of the questions were integrated into the instrument prior to its finalization and approval by the research adviser.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained all necessary permissions to conduct the study. In October 2025, a formal request letter was submitted to the Dean of the College of Teacher Education, followed by a letter of approval addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent, the School Heads, then the participants. Data were gathered in December 2025 through one-on-one, in-depth interviews conducted with each participant. Interviews were scheduled at a time convenient to the participants to ensure their availability and comfort, be it face-to-face or through online platforms. Before the interview proper, participants were oriented on the general nature of the questions to be asked. Open-ended questions were used to allow participants to freely describe their preparation, experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in teaching English classes as out-of-field teachers. Interviews were conducted in English, Filipino, or Akeanon (a regional language spoken in Aklan, Philippines) depending on the participants' language preference. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure data accuracy. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. For responses delivered in Filipino or Akeanon, translations were verified through back-reading to preserve the original meaning of participants' accounts.

Treatment of Data

The data gathered through in-depth interviews were analyzed using Colaizzi's Method of Phenomenological Data Analysis (1978). This method was appropriate because it offered a systematic, rigorous process for uncovering the essence of participants' lived experiences, aligning with the central objective of this phenomenological study.

1. Familiarization – The researcher repeatedly read the interview transcripts to gain an overall understanding of the participants' accounts.
2. Identifying Significant Statements – This involved extracting statements from transcripts that directly relate to out-of-field teachers teaching English.
3. Formulating Meanings – It involved interpreting these significant statements to derive their underlying meanings while bracketing the researcher's presuppositions.
4. Clustering Themes – It involved grouping the formulated meanings into sub-themes and broader themes that reflect common patterns across participants' experiences. To ensure traceability and analytic rigor, theme clustering was organized using a matrix (significant statement → formulated meaning → sub-theme → theme), allowing clear linkage between raw data and the emergent themes.
5. Developing an Exhaustive Description – This involved integrating all theme clusters into a comprehensive narrative that fully described the phenomenon under study.
6. Producing the Fundamental Structure – This required condensing the exhaustive description into a concise, coherent statement that captured the essential structure of lived experiences while retaining their core meanings.
7. Verification – This is conducted through member checking, in which synthesized findings or thematic summaries were returned to participants for confirmation and clarification, ensuring that the interpretations accurately reflect their experiences.

In addition, peer debriefing with a research expert was undertaken to review the coherence of themes, examine negative or discrepant cases, and strengthen analytic credibility. To further enhance trustworthiness, peer checks and external reviews were conducted wherein discrepant cases were examined and reported.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher is committed to upholding the confidentiality of the data gathered throughout the process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured through the use of pseudonyms and secure data storage. The study adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and received approval from the appropriate institutional authority. For any concerns, participants were provided with the contact information of the researcher and their adviser.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and interpretations of data gathered from in-depth interviews with out-of-field teachers who teach English classes. The data were analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological method, and the



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themes that emerged reflect the participants' lived experiences, challenges, coping strategies, motivations, and insights regarding teaching English outside their fields of specialization.

1. Struggles and Growth

Themes

Emotional Struggles
Knowledge and Instructional Gap

1.1 Emotional Struggles

The participants' initial experiences in teaching English were marked by intense emotional challenges. Participants commonly described feelings of fear, nervousness, anxiety, and low confidence and self-doubt upon being assigned to teach a subject outside their field of specialization. These emotions stemmed largely from concerns about content accuracy, grammatical correctness, and the risk of providing students with misleading information. Such experiences reflect the internal pressure teachers feel when they perceive themselves as inadequately prepared for the instructional demands of English teaching. The following is the sample of transcription:

Participant 1: *“Kinoeba-an ako tag ginhambae kakon nga gaturu ako it English. From being a math major, kaeayo ag iba gid-a ro English kasi I study about numbers and different gid kung grammar. I am not confident kasi bukon it duyon akong specialization.”*

(I felt nervous when I was informed that I will be teaching English. From being a math major, teaching English is really different because I study about numbers and not grammar. I am not confident in teaching it because it is not my specialization.)

These experiences suggest that low confidence is not merely an emotional response but a contextual and professional condition shaped by out-of-field teaching assignments. A correlational study by Pizarra and Velasco (2023) found that teachers with lower perceived English proficiency reported reduced self-efficacy, which in turn negatively affected classroom communicative confidence and instructional performance, resulting in limited interactional activities and communication opportunities. This finding aligns with participants' accounts of hesitant confidence, including speaking and providing meaningful discourse for language use, as well as their reliance on preparation to mitigate instructional uncertainty.

Similarly, Lagria (2021) reported that out-of-field English teachers frequently experience insecurity and diminished confidence due to limited content mastery and unfamiliarity with language-specific pedagogical strategies. This showed the critical role of language not just in the delivery of lessons but in ensuring the accuracy of knowledge and information conveyed, mirroring the participants' experiences in this research.

Taken together, these themes highlight low confidence as a pervasive yet evolving challenge in the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers. By gaining control over this struggle, teachers enhance students' language learning experience by providing comprehensive and accurate knowledge and by modeling communicative competence in speaking. While initial self-doubt constrained instructional confidence, participants gradually rebuilt their sense of competence through preparation, classroom experience, and adaptive strategies, illustrating that confidence in out-of-field teaching is not fixed but continuously negotiated through practice and support.

1.2. Knowledge and Instructional Gap

A significant challenge identified by the participants was the gap in content knowledge and instructional competence in teaching English. Since English was not their specialization, participants perceived limitations in their mastery of English grammar, language structures, and pedagogical techniques. These perceived gaps affected not only their confidence in explaining lessons accurately but also their ability to implement subject-specific teaching strategies. The following is the sample of transcription:

Participant 2: *“In my experience, do pinakachallenge gid hay do content knowledge because daya do mga lessons nga bukon ako it prepared nga ituro since iba do akong specialization. Kinahanglan ko gid nga tun-an anay by myself ag erevisit do lessons before ko ituro sa mga unga. This is very true especially if medyo deeper and specific content na do covered it lesson.”*

(In my experience, the biggest challenge is the content knowledge because there are lessons that I am not prepared to teach since my specialization is different. I really



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need to study them on my own and revisit the lessons before I teach them to the students. This is especially true when the lesson covers deeper and more specific content.)

This narrative highlights that the knowledge gap experienced by out-of-field teachers extends beyond content mastery to include challenges in facilitating classroom language discourse and language interaction. Teachers not only struggled to understand language concepts but also to facilitate communicative activities and foster student participation in English, which may affect learners' development of communicative language competence. It is significant to note that English exists both as a subject and as a medium of instruction; this dual role may result in limited communicative opportunities.

The findings are aligned with the study by Buenacosa and Petalla (2022), which documented that out-of-field teachers often experience difficulties related to deep content understanding and lesson delivery, mainly when lessons encompass complex grammar structures or communicative tasks. From a language education perspective, these challenges highlight the need for support in the development of teachers' discourse-based teaching strategies such as interactional scaffolding and questioning styles and techniques that promote learners to speak using the English language in meaningful and authentic contexts.

2. Coping Strategies Used by Out-of-Field Teachers

Themes

Use of Online Resources

Curriculum-based Planning

Simplified Instruction and Student-Centered Activities

2.1. Use of Online Resources

To address gaps in content knowledge and instructional preparation, participants consistently relied on online resources as a primary survival strategy in teaching English. Participants mentioned using the internet, educational websites, and YouTube videos to better understand lesson content, review language concepts, and prepare instructional materials. The following are samples of transcription:

Participant 3: *“Kung may mga malisod nga topic hay ginaresearch ko lang sa internet ag kun amat hay gapamantaw ako it explanation videos it lesson.”*

(If there are difficult topic, I looked for it on the internet and sometimes, I watched videos that explained the lesson.)

Participant 4: *“Kung may mga makita ako nga lesson plans sa internet nabasa ko gid and gina compare ko rayon sa akon mismo para makita nakon do difference. Na apply ko rayon kung may manami akong mabasahan.”*

(When I scroll in the internet and found a ready-made lesson plans, I even read some and compared it to my own. I get some good ideas that I've read from those and apply it to mine.)

These accounts illustrate how online resources functioned as instructional scaffolds in developing language skills for out-of-field teachers, allowing them to compensate for limited specialization by independently accessing accurate language content knowledge and pedagogical ideas. Rather than relying solely on prescribed materials, participants actively curated, evaluated, and adapted online resources to meet classroom demands to achieve language and communicative competence.

This finding is supported by Aguda and Delute (2025), who reported that Filipino teachers integrate online resources and digital materials to contextualize English lessons and enhance comprehension, particularly when addressing complex language concepts. Through the use of these, students were able to increase their knowledge and skills in English, making them more competent and confident.

Taken together, these themes reveal that the use of online resources is not merely a convenience but a strategic response to out-of-field teaching. For the participants, digital materials served as accessible, flexible, and immediate sources of instructional support, enabling them to bridge content gaps, adapt lessons, and sustain classroom instruction despite limitations in formal training.



2.2. Curriculum-based Planning

Curriculum-based planning emerged as a key strategy used by out-of-field teachers to manage instructional demands and reduce uncertainty in teaching English. The following are samples of the transcription:

Participant 5: *“Ginagamit ko ro MELCS sang objectives and na make sure ko nga student-centered do akong pagturo.”*

(I am using MELCs in my objectives and make sure that I use student-centered strategies)

Participant 6: *“Gina review ko gid do pagtinueon-an ag do mga lessons in advance.”*

(I reviewed the curriculum carefully, studied the topics in advance.)

Participant 7: *“Ginabasa ko kun maabot ko/ it mga unga man baea ro objective, bago ko gamiton do same lesson plan sa akon nga class. If ever nga owa, gamit ro lesson exemplar hay gapahaom lang ako it mga materials such as cut-outs nga pagamiton ko sa klase agod maging engaging do discussion.”*

(I read them to see if the objectives can also be achieved by my students before using the same lesson plan in my class. If not, I use the lesson exemplar and adapt the materials, such as cut-outs, to make the discussion more engaging.)

These accounts indicate that curriculum-based planning functioned as a stabilizing strategy for out-of-field teachers in teaching English. By grounding instruction in mandated competencies and exemplars, teachers were able to structure language lessons, simplify complex content, and plan instructional language in advance, thereby reducing instructional anxiety. This underscores the pivotal role of language in ensuring that lessons are comprehensive, particularly through teachers' effective use of instructional discourse.

This finding is consistent with Angcuan et al. (2024), who emphasized that curriculum development plays a crucial role in ensuring quality education by aligning teaching strategies, assessment, and learning outcomes. This highlights how well-structured curriculum planning supports effective instruction and facilitates the development of essential competencies among learners. From the perspective of language education, curriculum-based planning supports language learning by enabling teachers to model appropriate language use and design activities that foster communicative competence among students.

Taken together, these findings reveal that curriculum-based planning served as a practical anchor for out-of-field teachers. By relying on structured curricular frameworks, participants were able to navigate content limitations, maintain learner-centered instruction, and sustain confidence in lesson delivery while teaching English outside their area of specialization, giving positive experiences in learning language meaningfully.

2.3 Simplified Instruction and Student-Centered Activities

To manage instructional challenges and support learner understanding, participants adopted simplified instruction and student-centered activities as deliberate teaching strategies. Teachers emphasized adjusting lesson complexity, using familiar language, and designing interactive activities to make English lessons more accessible and less intimidating for students. The following are samples of the transcription:

Participant 8: *“Sa umpisa gina explain ko anay do concepts in simple English ag if may confusion kanda gina clarify ko egi gamit do local nanda nga lenggwahe para mas madali eubton.”*

(I first explain concepts in simple English, and when there is confusion, I clarify them using the students' first language to support understanding.)

Participant 7: *“Mas simple lang ako magdiscuss ag mas ginataw an kot oras do activities... gagamit man ako it short quizzes ag oral questions para mas masayran ko kun siin pa ro need it clarification.”*

(I simplify my discussions and give more time for activities... I use short quizzes and oral questions to see which parts still need clarification.)

These practices indicate that simplified, student-centered instruction served as an adaptive response to both learner diversity and teachers' out-of-field status. Instead of using the traditional lecture-based methods, teachers decided to create a supportive learning environment that promotes gradual skill development, engagement, and interaction, which are necessary conditions for effective language learning and also the development of communicative competence.



The findings are aligned to the study of Gatil (2021), who found that simplified instructions through contextualized examples and routine-based activities clearly improved learner engagement and comprehension in multilingual English classrooms. Moreover, Li et al. (2024) reported that student-centered instructional strategies such as collaborative activities, inquiry-based tasks, and scaffolded learning improve learner engagement and classroom interaction, thereby enhancing opportunities for meaningful language use and communication development.

Taken together, these findings reveal that simplified instruction and student-centered activities served as essential adaptive strategies for out-of-field teachers. By prioritizing learners' needs, using accessible language, and designing interactive tasks, teachers sustained classroom engagement, reduced instructional pressure, and facilitated meaningful English learning despite limitations in specialization.

3. Motivation and Recommendation

Themes

Commitment and Professional Identity
Resilience and Continuous Learning
Support Systems

3.1. Commitment and Professional Identity

Participants consistently identified their commitment to learners as a primary source of motivation to continue teaching English despite being out-of-field. Participants expressed a strong sense of responsibility to help students understand the lessons, participate actively, and improve their English skills. Sample transcriptions are as follows:

Participant 2: “Do naga motivate gid kakon... hay do akong commitment sa mga unga ag do akong kagustuhan man nga mag grow as a teacher.”

(What motivates me to continue teaching is my commitment to my students and my desire to grow as a teacher.)

Participant 3: “Motivated gid ako sa pagkantiguhan it mga unga ag pagiging confident nanda mag express sa andang sarili, kapin gid kung nakikita ko andang engagement maskin malisod. Do pagturo it English as an out-of-field teacher hay nagchallenge gid kakon nga mag grow professionally, mag adapt it skills, ag mas maging mayad ag effective nga educator.”

(I am motivated by my students' growth and confidence in expressing themselves, especially when I see them engage meaningfully with texts despite initial difficulty. Teaching English, even as an out-of-field teacher, has also challenged me to grow professionally, adapt my skills, and become a more reflective and effective educator.)

These narratives indicate that teaching English outside one's specialization prompted participants to reconstruct their professional identity. Rather than defining themselves solely by their academic major, teachers began to view professionalism in terms of dedication, adaptability, and impact on learners. According to Ma (2022), the teaching profession is stressful; thus, it calls for teachers' commitment and dedication to lighten challenges. This theme reveals that commitment to learners served as both a motivational force and a foundation for professional identity among out-of-field teachers.

3.2. Resilience and Continuous Learning

Resilience and openness to continuous learning emerged as defining qualities in the lived experiences of out-of-field English teachers. Participants consistently emphasized that competence and confidence did not develop immediately but were gradually built through sustained effort, openness to guidance, and reflective practice. Sample transcriptions are as follows:

Participant 4: “Una magpangayo it bulig sa iba... kailangan mo batunon nga bukon tanan hay sayod mo... Next, be determined... Tapos do ulihi hay maging prepared.”

(First, ask for help and accept that you do not know everything... Next, be determined... Lastly, be prepared.)



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Participant 5: "Prepare mo gid ing lessons ahead of time... practice speaking English permi... magpangayo it support ag bulig sa mga experienced teacher... stay patient, positive, ag open for learning."

(Prepare lessons ahead of time... practice speaking English... seek support from experienced teachers... stay patient, positive, and open to learning.)

Across these narratives, resilience was closely linked to openness to feedback, mentorship, and learning beyond one's specialization. Teachers described growth not as the elimination of difficulty but as the capacity to continue teaching meaningfully despite it.

These findings align with De la Fuente (2021), who reported that Filipino teachers' professional growth is strengthened through self-directed learning, mentoring, and reflective practice. Participants' lived experiences demonstrate that effective teaching outside one's specialization is not achieved through immediate expertise but through perseverance, reflective practice, and a sustained willingness to learn and adapt over time.

3.3 Support Systems

Participants consistently emphasized that they did not confront the challenges of out-of-field English teaching in isolation. A central aspect of their lived experience was the presence of support systems, particularly from colleagues, senior teachers, and school administrators, which played a crucial role in helping them cope with instructional demands. Sample transcriptions are as follows:

Participant 1: "Gin guide mat ah ako it akong mga seniors nga teachers and workmates, gin share nanda andang mga lesson plans before kasi naka-agi man sanda it pagturo it English before as well as andang class strategies."

(I was guided by senior teachers and colleagues, and they share lesson plans they have before as well as class strategies since they have thought English before.)

Participant 3: "Ro nagbulig kakon sang journey hay ang school head kasi gin paintindi na kakon kung haman ako do gin taw-an it English kasi uwa it English major sa amon school. Also, ang mga kaibahan nga teachers man do nagbulig kakon kasi gin motivate nanda ako ag gin taw-an suggestions kung alin do tama nga ubrahon."

(The people who helped me during my journey were the school head, who helped me understand why I was assigned to teach English even though I am not an English major, since our school has no English major. My fellow teachers also helped me by motivating me and giving suggestions on what to do properly.)

These experiences align with Lagria's (2021) findings, which reported that out-of-field English teachers cope with instructional challenges by engaging in self-learning, seeking assistance from colleagues, and drawing on professional responsibility. Similarly, Cuevas (2024) found that out-of-field teachers rely on peer support and adaptive classroom practices to address content and pedagogical gaps.

Taken together, these findings reveal that support and adaptive teaching serve as survival strategies for out-of-field teachers. Their lived experience is characterized by a dynamic interaction between external support and personal initiative, enabling them to adjust, cope, and continue teaching effectively despite limitations in specialization.

Conclusions

The findings of the study demonstrate that out-of-field teachers in English experience significant emotional, instructional, and linguistic challenges due to the mismatch between their specialization and teaching assignment. These challenges affect not only content delivery but also classroom communication, particularly in facilitating meaningful language interaction and supporting learners' communicative competence.

Despite these limitations, teachers employed adaptive strategies such as self-directed learning, use of digital resources, curriculum-based planning, and student-centered instruction. These practices enabled them to sustain instructional effectiveness and promote student engagement in English learning.

The study contributes to English language education by providing insights into how teachers navigate linguistic and pedagogical constraints in real classroom contexts. It highlights the importance of supporting teachers' language proficiency, discourse strategies, and communicative teaching practices to improve language learning outcomes.



Recommendations

School administrators may consider developing structured professional development programs that focus on language pedagogy, including communicative teaching strategies, classroom discourse management, and scaffolding techniques to enhance students' communication skills in English.

Out-of-field teachers may be encouraged to engage in continuous professional learning that strengthens both their linguistic competence and instructional practices. This may include participation in language-focused training, peer mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, and the use of digital tools that support interactive and communicative language teaching.

Curriculum developers and policymakers may consider designing support mechanisms that address the linguistic and pedagogical needs of out-of-field teachers, particularly in multilingual classrooms where effective communication strategies are essential.

Future researchers may explore similar phenomena in other subject areas or investigate the impact of out-of-field teaching on students' language development and communication competence using varied research approaches and broader participant groups.

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