

‘English language teaching anxiety: A case of junior high school teachers

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ABSTRACT

Much research revealed language learning anxiety among elementary to middle school students and/or student teachers. Whereas English Language Teaching (ELT) anxiety among English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers has been understudied. Hence, the study explored ELT anxiety among ESL teachers. This case study investigated the causes of teaching anxiety and coping mechanisms among purposively selected three novice and three experienced ESL teachers in different public Junior High schools in the Philippines. Questionnaires and onsite interviews were used to gather relevant data. The study revealed that external and internal factors contribute to state and situation-specific ELT anxiety. The study also concluded that teachers employ varied teaching methods before and during the pandemic despite the anxiety felt while teaching. Furthermore, grounded on Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis it is recommended to impose training programs on ELT anxiety awareness, professional development targeting teachers’ Language weakness, and teaching assignments based on teacher’s qualification. In addition, this calls for the administration to consider additional staff or personnel to accomplish ancillary and administrative work instead of the teachers.

1. Introduction

Anxiety is a typical psychological and affective experience in the teaching profession, which may compromise a teacher’s capacity to function at work or cope with daily life (Desouky & Allam, 2017). In connection to English as Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, several studies were conducted on teaching anxiety, especially among pre-service teachers (Ipek, 2016; Liu & Cheng, 2014) and foreign language anxiousness among non-native speakers (Hismanoglu, 2013; Liu & Wu, 2021; Merç, 2011). Anxiety, as experienced by EFL teachers in various scenarios, is characterized as a multifaceted mental and emotional phenomenon shaped by different factors that contribute to the amount of stress teachers experience (Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014).

In the Philippines, wherein English is considered a second language, studies were concentrated on the language anxiety of students (Berowa, 2018; Guibangguibang, 2020; Jugo, 2020) relative to its macro-skill, particularly speaking anxiety (Milan, 2019; Bagala et al., 2021) and writing anxiety (Alico, 2016; Robles & Torres, 2020). However, English Language teaching anxiety from the perspective of ESL teachers has been under-researched (Aydin et al., 2016). This implies a need to shift the subject, focusing on the teachers’ teaching anxiety.

In the context of this study, ELT anxiety pertains to the dominant feelings of teachers' self-doubt about their competence and capacity to be fluent and effective in the macro skills of the language. Furthermore, language teaching anxiety focuses on the distinct experiences of purposively selected English teachers evident in their years of teaching. This extends to their auxiliary functions outside teaching, classroom, and student management including students' language performance and participation and personal apprehensions.

While the number of studies that were reviewed on language anxiety focused on elementary to middle school students and/or student teachers. It should be noted that addressing teacher anxiety is crucial in enhancing the teaching and learning process. Therefore, this qualitative case study aims to investigate ELT anxiety in selected public High Schools in the Philippines. Specifically, it looks into the following:

1. What are the different states, and situation-specific anxieties do novice and experienced teachers encounter in teaching?
2. What are the sources of these anxieties?
3. How does ELT anxiety impact their pedagogy?
4. How do they cope with the different types of anxieties?

2. Theoretical basis

2.1. Definition of anxiety and teaching anxiety

Anxiety is a multidimensional phenomenon defined as a subjective sensation of tension, apprehension, and discomfort accompanied by nervous system stimulation (Young, 1991, as cited in Hashemi, 2011). Advancements in cognitive and emotion theory indicate that anxiety plays a central role in negative emotions. Hence, disturbs one's activities and perspectives.

Anxiety, on the other hand, interferes with teaching as it can inhibit effective and quality educational outcomes. Aydin (2021) defined teaching anxiety as a significant emotional state that could potentially interfere with both the teaching and learning process. According to Peker (2009), this can be experienced before, during, and after teaching. Additionally, teachers recognized it as a complex psychological phenomenon shaped by certain variables (Ekşi & Yakışık, 2016). Generally speaking, it does not only affect the teacher personally but also the students' learning, the school environment, and academic achievement.

2.2. English language teaching anxiety

Many non-native language teachers, according to Horwitz (1995), experience anxiety in their language classrooms. While language teachers are expected to be fluent in the target language, achieving mastery remains to be an on-going process due to the intricacies of the language. This includes the complexity of the rules, proper usage, and pronunciation. This is why most non-native language teachers feel uncomfortable speaking the language.

Anxiety-inducing situations among Elementary and Middle school EFL teachers, according to Kim and Kim (2004), included the use of target language, students' unexpected questions, both low learner motivation and interest and high level of learners' proficiency, classroom management, mentor observations, listening activities, and teaching cultural content. Machida (2016), on the other hand, asserts that EFL student teachers' anxiety stems from student profiles, teaching procedures, under-preparation, and classroom management. Consequently, Ipek (2016) concluded that a strict policy of Speak-in-English policy while teaching can lead to ELT

anxiety. Whereas Wang and Wang (2015) found that heavy workload and unfair administrators' and students' evaluations contribute to tertiary Language teacher's teaching anxiety.

On the other hand, the level of ELT anxiety varies significantly on the number of teaching experiences. Kralova and Tirpakova (2019) determined non-native teachers' English-speaking anxiety increased with age. It is claimed that novice teachers have a difficult time teaching the subject; however, middle and late career stages bring challenges that can influence teaching satisfaction. A study conducted in India discovered that junior college teachers experienced significantly higher levels of some stressors than senior teachers (Kumar & Deo, 2011). In addition, novice teachers are more likely to experience tension, which is a source of anxiety caused by teaching load and career anxiety (Alashev & Bykov, 2002). However, Kesen and Aydin (2014) discovered that novice instructors at a private university in Turkey experienced less teaching anxiety than experienced teachers.

2.3. Types of anxiety

In the context of language anxiety, Spielberger (1983) categorized it in the psychological viewpoint as State Anxiety, and Situation-Specific Anxiety.

The state perspective is defined as an emotional state. This is a social type of anxiety that occurs under certain conditions. In other words, state anxiety is a transient emotional state manifested as a response to a particular situation perceived to be threatening (Spielberger, 1983). Hence, those who can recognize situations as being threatening manifest such type of anxiety. Teaching anxiety is a type of state anxiety that describes the feelings of teachers in the preparation and execution of classroom activities (Gardner & Leak, 1994). This in turn influences teachers' feelings, thinking, behavior, and teaching pedagogy. The study emphasized state anxiety as a momentary discomfort or frustration, a response to a particular anxiety-provoking stimulus in an English Language classroom and the school in general.

On the other hand, situation-specific anxiety in the context of L2 education is termed foreign or second language anxiety (Horwitz, 2010). Language anxiety is an example of this type of anxiety which occurs systematically over time. For the learners, it exhibits a lack of confidence in L2 performance. While in teaching, it relates to low perceived proficiency in the language as non-native speakers. In relevance to the study, it focused on second language learning or the fluency and mastery of the language to teach the students effectively.

2.4. Relevant Studies on ELT Anxiety

Sources of language and teaching anxiety vary depending on the years of experience, proficiency in the language, and external factors. Consequently, coping mechanisms are unique among different Language teachers. Research revealed that English Language teaching anxiety was due to a lack of language competency, self-confidence, and material knowledge, poor class preparation, lack of teaching experience, and fear of negative evaluation. In higher education, due to several factors, such as workload and concerns about research and advancement, college English teachers at a university in China are currently experiencing teaching anxiety and FLA. Training, self-awareness, preparedness, and personal assistance are all beneficial in reducing anxiety, as highlighted by Liu and Yan (2020). It is indeed critical for college English teachers to understand what is expected of them in terms of teaching and research and to act accordingly (Liu & Wu, 2021). Other studies also found the varying effects of personal and professional profiles in ESL/EFL teaching anxiety and their respective ways of dealing with them. For instance, male teachers tend to focus more on work and less on home and family life, which relieves them of a lot of stress (Liu & Yan, 2020).

Wieczorek (2016) categorized sources of anxiety experienced by Poland teachers. The two groups fall under general stressors applicable to teachers and stressors specific to FLT. The latter category includes students' diversity, insufficiency of teaching aids and resources, integration of materials in classroom practice, and language skills teaching. On another note, Kang and Park's study (2013) found that in-service teachers with low target language proficiency refrained from using the communicative approach in the classrooms.

Pre-service teachers, on the other hand, who experience high levels of anxiety tend to avoid the use of the target language during language-intensive activities. As a result, the inability to freely and spontaneously use the language impairs the effectiveness of their teaching (Tum, 2015). Sammephet and Wanphet (2013) investigated the possible causes of anxiety among pre-service teachers and their subsequent anxiety-management strategies. The self-control strategy, let-it-be strategy, and face-it-and-handle-it strategy were found to be effective in managing and relieving anxiety. On the other hand, anxiety is also due to unmet high expectations. Tum (2015), in contrast to other studies, concentrated on the impacts of teaching anxiety rather than its causes. He discovered that anxiety had a negative impact on pre-service teachers' use of target language and pedagogical competence.

Alternatively, Klassen and Chiu (2010) discovered a link between years of experience and job challenges in the academe. Moreover, teaching experience also defines teachers' coping mechanisms and strategies. It is claimed that novice teachers have a challenging time teaching the subject matter; however, middle and late career stages bring challenges that can influence satisfaction. Seasoned teachers are less anxious than novice teachers. Tüfekçi-Can (2018) suggested that non-native pre-service EFL teachers are likely to be more vulnerable to FLTA. FLTA, according to Tum (2015), may be traced back to three distinct times. First, FLA may be experienced by pre-service EFL teachers as language learners in foreign language classes. Second, as pre-service teachers, they became increasingly conscious of the obstacles and obligations that they would face in their future careers as their training course approached. Furthermore, for relatively new teachers, entering a foreign language classroom for the first time as a teacher might be intimidating.

The above relevant studies provide the paper with several conclusions. First, teaching anxiety is over-researched in the EFL context, particularly pre-service teachers and grade school to college instructors. Second, ELT anxiety is a result of insufficient language knowledge, leading to low self-esteem. Lastly, types of anxiety also have different sources of anxiety and coping mechanisms depending on the years of experience.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

A qualitative case study was adopted in this research in which data on the types of teaching anxiety were collected through semi-structured interviews from purposively sampled respondents. When exploring a current phenomenon in its real-life surroundings, the case study method is most applicable (Yin, 2003). Specifically, this current undertaking utilized an exploratory case study to further investigate the phenomenon under investigation and explain the sources of such anxiety and how novice and experienced language teachers design coping strategies to combat ELT anxiety. According to Yin (2014), exploratory case studies are used to investigate potentially causal linkages that are complex for a survey or experiment.

3.2. Research participants

Table 1

Profile of Teacher Respondents Across Cases

Novice teacher (pseudonyms)	Years of teaching experience	Experienced teachers (pseudonyms)	Years of experience
Alex	Two years	Gabby	Six years
Maria	Two years	Donita	Ten years
Clara	Two years	Samantha	Thirteen years

Source. The researcher's data analysis

This multiple case study utilized purposive sampling of the three novice and another three experienced language teachers. They were identified as having the highest teaching anxiety from the seventeen Junior High School teachers who answered the modified Teaching Anxiety Scale (TAS) from Parsons (1973) about the findings of Liu and Yan (2020) and the modified Teacher Foreign/Second Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS) adapted from Horwitz (2007); Liu and Wu (2021).

Based on teaching anxiety, the respondents were categorized based on (Aslrasouli & Vahid, 2014; Graham et al., 2020) studies. Novice teachers are those with up to two years of teaching experience. Whereas, experienced teachers have more than 05 years in the profession. Excluded from the study were those whose anxiety levels were low.

3.3. Data collection procedure

There were two parts to the data collection process. The 18-item Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (TFLAS), created by Horwitz (2007) and modified by Liu and Wu (2021), was distributed and answered as the initial step in the current study. The TFLAS was also a 5-point Likert-type scale, with values ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" assigned to the five descriptors. Thus, a respondent's anxiety level is determined by the sum of his or her responses to all the questions divided by 18: an average of around 03 indicates slight anxiety about language proficiency; a score of around 04 indicates a certain amount of anxiety in language proficiency (Horwitz, 2007). The 33-item Teaching Anxiety Scale (TAS), which was adapted from that used by Parsons (1973) regarding Liu and Yan's (2020) findings, was also employed in the pilot study. The current study added paperwork and related roles and activities to relate to the Philippine educational context. Pre-service and other interns/teachers were also replaced with colleagues/other instructors, as well as English coordinators and heads. In the first week of November, both TFLAS and TAS were responded to through Google Forms and distributed by Email.

The request letter for research conduct was signed by the Schools Division Superintendent and forwarded to the school heads. Informed Consent forms were forwarded before the preliminary conduct of the study. Three of the novice teachers exhibited a high level of anxiety, and another three experienced teachers were the participants of this case study.

With the two groups of respondents, the second stage of data collection was conducted using semi-structured open-ended questions. The goal of the interview was to obtain more useful information. From November 8 to 12, 2021, interviews were conducted onsite for fifty to sixty minutes per respondent. The author collected and maintained documented ethical permission

following university standards. And is granted by the Ethics Review Committee in the conduct of the said study. Furthermore, the confidentiality of each teacher respondent was guaranteed. By providing each participant with pseudonyms, the participants' identities were kept as private as possible. Data gathered are only accessible to the researcher and are kept confidential only until the study is finished.

3.4. Data analysis

To obtain the necessary data, narrative inquiry through interviews was conducted to solicit responses among the two groups of participants. Narrative interviews aimed to explore how English teachers experience both state and situation-specific anxiety and the impact on their motivation and performance. In this inductive, interpretive analysis, a systematic approach was used in both within-case and cross-case analysis (Stake, 2006); each of the six cases was analyzed separately, and then a cross-case analysis was performed to look for commonalities and relevant differences/outliers in the cases. There was a total of 16 categories assigned. Finally, using all of the data analyzed, a cross-case analysis was undertaken, identifying four emergent themes.

Inductive and thematic analyses were followed to find, assess, and create a theme expressed by participants (Galloway & Jenkins, 2009). In analyzing interview data, the researcher followed some steps: transcribing the data, analysis of each case, presenting the data per case, conducting cross-case analysis, and drawing conclusions.

4. Results and discussions

4.1. English Language novice teachers

From the interview, the primary anxiety the respondents provided was on students' perception and attitude toward English learning and Classroom management. The common source of anxiety emphasized was supplementary services and activities. They also provided varied responses relative to their coping mechanisms and the impact of ELT anxiety on their pedagogy. The table below conveyed various categories from the analysis of responses of the three novice ESL teachers.

Table 2

Emerging Categories from Novice English Teachers' Anxiety, as well as its Impact on their Pedagogy and their Coping Mechanism

Category	Selected respondents interview excerpts
Students' perception of learning the subject	<p><i>During classroom observations, I feel anxious since only a few will answer or participate since they find the subject or topic hard. (Clara)</i></p> <p><i>Once I asked my students why they didn't cooperate in my class, they would say: Your subject is difficult ma'am, and we cannot speak straight English. (Maria)</i></p> <p><i>Before, I conducted remedial classes since I could see who was learning or not, but now, I become anxious as to who answered my students' modules or whether my students were really learning. (Clara)</i></p> <p><i>They don't mind whether they pass or not because they are aware that they will be promoted to the next year's level. (Maria)</i></p>

Category	Selected respondents interview excerpts
Students' low proficiency in English skills	<p><i>There are even a great number of students who can't even read and comprehend what they read. (Clara)</i></p> <p><i>Even the basics, like spelling, sentence structure, and grammar, are unmastered. (Maria)</i></p> <p><i>It is already assumed they master the basic skills in elementary, thus they give us stress in teaching back the basics. (Maria)</i></p>
Classroom management	<p><i>Despite how well you prepare, these students will ruin your mood. As a result, your teaching will be affected (Maria)</i></p> <p><i>My students' adjustment period gave me stress since I needed to lower my standards and suit their interests while in my class. (Clara)</i></p> <p><i>Every time a difficult student happens to be unruly, the teacher on duty finds it difficult to manage without violating students' rights. However, in this pandemic, the struggle is on how to keep them motivated. (Clara)</i></p>
Limited resources and complex curriculum guide	<p><i>In the CG, the same objective is good for one week, and it is very broad. (Maria)</i></p> <p><i>Especially in my class wherein I have only limited resources. (Alex)</i></p>
Ancillary services and activities	<p><i>I cannot focus purely on teaching since we have additional burdens that seem to be done urgently. (Alex)</i></p> <p><i>Let a teacher be a teacher. We should not be given too much of the extra work. (Maria)</i></p> <p><i>Both before and during the pandemic, extra activities consume most of our time. (Maria)</i></p> <p><i>Multitasking drains my energy, and these include seminars, webinars, training, paperwork, etc. (Clara)</i></p>
Relationships with co-teachers	<p><i>Relationships with my co-teachers can contribute to stress especially when there are misunderstandings. (Maria)</i></p> <p><i>Misunderstandings give me stress; however, not too serious. On the other hand, I always share my personal experiences with seasoned teachers for their guidance. (Clara)</i></p> <p><i>I share with other teachers my problems so that I will learn from them. (Alex)</i></p>
Teachers' difficulties in selected English skills	<p><i>I personally am not good at literature. It gives me anxiety, especially when teaching poems and short stories, since I am not an English major. (Maria)</i></p> <p><i>I struggle in speaking with my diction and pronunciation. (Clara)</i></p>
Teachers' resourcefulness	<p><i>I make sure to research games and strategies to encourage class participation. During the pandemic, I encourage other students who are neighbors to do peer tutoring. (Alex)</i></p> <p><i>I differentiate my instructions and strategies to cater to students' diversity and inclusivity. (Clara)</i></p>

Source. Data analysis result of the research

In summary, the data reveals a variety of concerns that English novice teachers have in both traditional and new normal education. This demonstrates anxiety during the first two years in the service may result in a high risk of burnout if not appropriately addressed and teachers are not properly guided by the management and seasoned co-teachers. According to Lynch (2013), high anxiety appears to enhance teacher autonomy, which pushes new teachers to explore individually and obtain long-term professional development, hence reducing anxiety. This was evident from their responses as they sought help and shared their challenges as well in teaching to further improve their strategies. Moreover, doing research and adapting several techniques to capture students' attention has positively affected their English Language teaching anxiety.

It is also noteworthy that novice teachers' awareness of personal inadequacies manifests anxiety in transferring necessary skills and knowledge to the students. On the other hand, misalignment of teaching assignments not relevant to the degree program finished was evident in this group. It can be noted that teachers, too, were once learners in the language who struggled with some English skills and competencies which were not corrected. This should be addressed and remedied as it can hamper students' language learning and acquisition. Gabrielatos (2002) highlighted teachers' role in helping students overcome their problems in learning. Having specific anxiety about language skills can disrupt this significant role. Thus, teachers must be proficient users of the language in all skills, knowledgeable about language teaching methodology, and have pleasing characters that will assist learners in overcoming obstacles in the learning process.

In reference to the findings of novice teachers' anxiety towards students' low proficiency even in basic skills, particularly grammar and sentence structure, the Affective Filter Hypothesis of Krashen (1985) suggested that only when students are interested in the subject and the target language is employed as a medium of instruction can the teaching of grammar result in language acquisition and competency. When this happens, both teachers and students are satisfied that formal grammar study is necessary for second language acquisition and helps them improve their reading comprehension. In other words, the teacher's commendable strategies satisfy the requirements for comprehensible input, and the classroom becomes an environment conducive to learning with the students' maximum participation. However, respondents assert that there are still a significant number of students who underperformed.

Furthermore, it was also noted that, despite the years of teaching experience, teachers were able to criticize the materials. The irregularity of the competencies in the Curriculum Guide to the textbook, including the activities, can also be blamed for the student's poor performance.

Another factor that affects English teachers is the ancillary services. Though it is only secondary to teaching, the new teachers, however, considered it a burden. They confessed that they expected this profession to focus on teaching the English subject and performing related school activities relative to the subject handled. Yet, the overwhelming amount of paperwork, school, and division or district-wide activities consumed the teachers' time and efforts. One striking statement from the respondents signified the desire to tell the administration to let teachers be teachers. Especially in this time of pandemic, the respondents demand some considerations in reducing auxiliary functions and services. Teachers actively expressed the desire to pursue graduate studies since classes are online. However, most of the weekends are even spent working in school or finishing tasks and documents at home. This even posed a serious threat of teacher breakdown led one of the co-teachers from the other department to exhibit signs of depression. It shows an impact on mental health and relationships with work, family, and social relationships. Data from the interviews, on the other hand, revealed the novice

teachers' optimism and best efforts in instruction amid the pandemic. Such findings support studies on job satisfaction despite job burnout in the Philippine setting (Bravo et al., 2021; Robosa et al., 2021).

4.2. Experienced English language teachers

From the interview, the primary anxiety the respondents provided was students' perception and attitude toward English learning and Classroom management similar to the novice teachers. It was also noted that students' performance contributes to the respondents' anxiety. The common source of anxiety emphasized was supplementary services and activities and parents' role in students' learning. They also provided varied responses relative to their coping mechanisms and the impact of ELT anxiety on their pedagogy. The table below conveyed various categories from the analysis of responses of the three experienced English teachers.

Table 3

Emerging Categories from Experienced English Teachers' Anxiety, as well as its Impact on their Pedagogy, and their Coping Mechanisms

Category	Selected respondent's interview excerpts
Teachers' personal struggles	<p><i>Whenever I am not in my best self, I feel like I am loading and slow in my response and especially on how to explain the lesson to my students. (Gabby)</i></p> <p><i>How to let them understand even the simplest topic that will not waste most of my time (Samantha)</i></p> <p><i>During classroom observations, I often overthink whether I'm on the right track or not. I feel anxious during class observations since I cannot predict my students' attitudes and participation. (Gabby)</i></p> <p><i>I struggle with my pronunciation. Though I have been working for quite a long, my previous years of experience in teaching other subjects not aligned with my degree program. I was assigned to teach English just three years from now. (Samantha)</i></p>
Students' performance and learning	<p><i>Their difficulty in making coherent sentences is due to their unmastered skills and competencies from their previous grades. In addition, I cannot validate on hand my students if they mastered the skills, especially during this pandemic. (Gabby)</i></p> <p><i>Some students in my class struggle with phonetics, and can't read yet. When we were allowed for home visitation during this pandemic, we found out that other students let their family members answer their modules. (Donita)</i></p>
Classroom management	<p><i>Students are fully aware of their rights, thus they become unruly. (Gabby)</i></p> <p><i>Difficult students who do not know how to behave properly are those who initiate noise. During the pandemic, most of these students will stop studying despite numerous home visitations. (Donita)</i></p>
Limited resources and materials	<p><i>Scarcity of relevant and reliable books and materials (Samantha)</i></p> <p><i>Though shortened in Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCS,) however, I feel like other competencies should be included that are considered significant and fit to students' level. (Donita)</i></p>

Category	Selected respondent's interview excerpts
	<i>Too much competency in the Curriculum Guide and others are too difficult for my students relevant to their level (Gabby)</i>
Ancillary services and activities	<p><i>I feel more anxious about Ancillary activities than teaching during this pandemic (Samantha)</i></p> <p><i>I always feel exhausted in school and even bring my work at home even if it is pandemic (Gabby)</i></p> <p><i>The bulk of work and its deadlines that fall even on the same dates make me burnout. (Donita)</i></p>
Relationship with co-teachers	<p><i>As the English coordinator, other English teacher's attitudes and non-cooperation stressed me before or during the pandemic. However, I still seek advice from other teachers. (Samantha)</i></p> <p><i>My colleagues' attitudes also contribute to my anxiety, however minimal. Yet, I ask other English teachers how to help my non-readers. (Donita)</i></p>
Parents involvement	<p><i>The role of parents creates a threatening atmosphere for the teachers since they have a grip on their child/children's performance and outputs. (Gabby)</i></p> <p><i>Parents' involvement today is evident compared to the traditional classes. (Samantha)</i></p>
Teachers' resourcefulness and strategies	<p><i>I established peer tutoring to help struggling students in my class learn (Samantha)</i></p> <p><i>Find strategies to catch my student's attention (Donita)</i></p> <p><i>Make class lively, and as much as possible involve everyone in class. (Gabby)</i></p>

Source. Data analysis result of the research

The data reveals a variety of concerns that experienced English teachers undertake in both traditional and new normal education. This demonstrates the varied anxieties regardless of the years in service. Data further reveals diverse coping mechanisms to improve teaching and relationships with the students, parents, and management.

Experienced teachers' self-awareness of personal struggles in English skills and discrepancies in their teaching assignments and field of specialization bear both positive and negative effects. Negatively, the language anxiety stimulated the teacher to discuss or take up the lesson, which the teacher was not confident about. The passive teaching of a skill results in shallow learning. In connection, Machida (2016) disclosed that English proficiency level significantly affected teachers' anxiety levels. And if not addressed have a lasting effect primarily on the teacher. On the contrary, the data disclosed the teacher's level of self-awareness in teaching motivates them to improve in teaching and disregard unsuccessful practices and habits. Moreover, it was also shown that teachers of all levels, from beginner to experienced, were able to criticize the materials provided by DepEd, which in turn added to their anxiety. This demonstrates the persistent problems with these learning tools and the essentiality of topics.

Classroom observations as a teaching anxiety do not specify teachers' low level of proficiency, but rather the students' cooperation and participation. As indicated, respondents did

not experience anxiety in the preparation but rather during observation. In accordance with Barrogo's (2020) proposal, which can also be applied to this research. The findings emphasized the importance of open discussions between school administration and teachers about needed standards in teacher performance, particularly classroom observations, and being updated on what is expected of them during in-service workshops and learning action cell sessions training to alleviate their anxiety in this matter.

Students' passive participation in an English class and the labeling of the subject as difficult is attributed to underachieved basic language skills, which caused experienced teachers' anxiety. This results in a constant battle on how to conduct classes in the easiest and most comprehensible manner. It can be noted that difficulty in the basics of phonetics results in reading difficulty. Incompetence in sentence construction also leads students to withdraw from activities, including writing and speaking. This implies that the teacher's intervention be tailored to the learners' level of reading development because each stage of growth necessitates a unique focus. Furthermore, each of these obstacles can be addressed in an age-appropriate manner, using interwoven curricular strands that evolve along a developmental timeline (Green, 1996, as cited in Moats, 2002). This means that regardless of experience, English teachers are expected to adopt different strategies so that the same problem will no longer be carried over to other teachers. This as well results to the discussion on the validity of students' outputs in this pandemic, which is another anxiety teacher's face. This implies constant monitoring of students' work progress, even at home.

Based on the data presented, anxiety in classroom management is caused by difficult students. This factor kept teachers exhausted before the pandemic. It is significant because it has an impact on how students behave and learn in the classroom, and it asserts that teachers have direct control over students' behavior. It also aids teachers in recognizing how a student's home environment and lifestyle influence their behavior, allowing them to objectively monitor and offer assistance. Furthermore, class management in this pandemic is in the context of constant monitoring using varied media and strategies to keep students' interest and performance.

According to the teacher respondents, ancillary functions, activities, including training, seminars and webinars, and the load of paperwork before and during the pandemic are some sources of anxiety. The input from the interview disclosed that experienced English teachers can loosen up their teaching anxiety. However, anxiety caused by deadlines on the multitude of paperworks, attendance to trainings, and seminars, and coaching students in academic contests branched out to longer burnouts, sleep deprivation, and lesser family time. Thus adversely affecting their teaching performance.

Moreover, teachers' relationships due to misunderstandings can also contribute to teacher's anxiety. This holds true for experienced teachers who handle administrative designations. Co-workers' attitudes toward additional tasks and assignments cause a considerable amount of stress. The data implies that experienced teachers have utilized several ways to sort out not only their personal rift but also misunderstandings involving other teachers with the head. This shows that they are effective communicators not only in the classroom but also in handling misunderstandings.

Specific to the new educational set-up in the pandemic, parents' involvement in learners' education is also their source of anxiety. It was found out that parents before the pandemic were not that involved in school-related activities. This has been considered as a new challenge. It is in the sense that parents' grip on their child's outputs will be their basis in questioning a student's grade. And, the use of social media in exposing errors committed by teachers posed a

serious threat to teacher's credibility and expertise, especially Language teachers. This anxiety can either yield a positive or negative effect. Positive since Language teachers are encouraged to be extra careful to produce error-free modules. It has a negative effect due to the tendency of teachers to be labeled unconstructively.

Experienced teachers find the necessary solutions to the various anxieties experienced. Teachers' resourcefulness is subject to students' personalities and learning styles. It was also evident that teachers consider other Language teachers as advisers and mentors in teaching.

4.3. Comparative findings from novice and experienced language teachers

This study was guided by four research questions. Based on the results from individual cases, the presented categories across novice and experienced teachers are narrowed into four themes.

Intrinsic factor: Teachers' limitation

Individual limitations on the lack of proficiency in the target language were provided by both novice and experienced teachers. The study observed that beginning teachers are challenged on Literature comprehension and teaching. This indicates that students' lack of reading comprehension may be related to teachers' difficulty in teaching literary pieces. While both groups struggle with pronunciation. This implies a pressing problem with ESL teachers' pronunciation, which challenges Basic Education students' articulation. However, the results show no significant difference in both groups' lack of language skill proficiency which can be traced from the responses of both groups on the misalignment of teaching assignments to teachers' field of specialization. The lack of these abilities constituted either positive or negative consequences in teaching. Machida (2016) asserted that English proficiency significantly affected teachers' anxiety levels. Hence, one of the major things that influenced instruction was perceived language competency (Aydin et al., 2016).

It should be mentioned that language teachers are considered advanced speakers of the target language and since language teachers' learning is never-ending (Horwitz, 1995) then it appears that language teachers experience anxiety in comparable conditions as learners (Ipek, 2016). As a result of the study's findings, Language teachers are responsible for providing inadequate language input to learners due to a competency they are inadequate. Furthermore, one of the most important theories guiding this research is that of Krashen (1985), who discovered that intelligible input from an instructor's communication skills is necessary for L2 acquisition. Therefore, the study revealed from both groups the countermeasures applied despite the limitations. This is shown in the pedagogy utilized before and during the pandemic. With the face-to-face set-up, teachers employ peer tutoring, remedial classes, games and contests, and other similar output-oriented methodologies in teaching. On the other hand, teachers embrace process-oriented pedagogies during modular learning. It's critical to draw teachers' attention to the importance of assessing knowledge in light of the students' genuine needs (Karas & Faez, 2020). Thus, Language teachers, beginners or experienced, are expected to overcome such anxiety to maximize both their learning and as much as students' language learning.

'Teacher Factor'

In this study, respondents explained that the teacher factor is reflective of students' undesirable outputs, low performance, behavior, and learning materials. In other words, the teacher factor is attributed to charging teachers whenever students fail or receive low grades or when students don't want to finish the school year. Language teachers, both novice and experienced, as observed in the pandemic, were particularly singled out and labeled for syntax errors regarding the materials utilized, the presentation of lessons, including assessment of

activities, and even typo errors in the modules. Both novice and experienced teachers experience a high level of anxiety.

Beginning teachers, despite a few years of experience, exhibit a high level of worry when unfavorable outputs and performance are displayed, particularly by students. This group finds it challenging to adapt to students' varying levels of understanding. Teachers explained that they perceived themselves to be in a highly idealistic stage due to their belief in high academic achievement and fast learning among students. This often leads to self-doubt in one's capacity, knowledge, and ability. On the contrary, experienced teachers, though they feel stressed by students' performance, however, conveyed a more open and calm approach to the situation. Drawing on their experience, they have adjusted their teaching methods and perceptions of students to meet their needs and abilities.

In addition, results discovered that repetitive observations on low performance of students are blamed on the English teachers, novice and experienced. However, it was discovered that the root cause of this was students' underachievement of basic English skills that were not given attention and solutions due to several reasons: students withdrawing from a class, the hesitancy of students on remedial and enrichment classes, and students' perception and attitude in language learning. Hence, specifically pointing out the effect of the mass promotion of the department.

Findings also revealed that the shift of learning modality in the pandemic exposed Language teachers to 'module shaming' through social media. This has been a factor of anxiety since Language teachers are expected to produce error-free modules. English teachers' Language anxiety, particularly the skills they lack, contributes to the state of anxiety they face and, on the strategy, they use to effectively present the lesson. This was the case when parents called out teachers on the glaring errors in the modules used during distance learning. Moreover, when parents complained about students' grades. However, these emotions are also affected positively when the administration supports and hears the concerns and or implements rewards and praise incentives for hard work.

'Let teachers, be teachers'

Most of the the respondents' anxiety is about ancillary services and activities and the various paperwork to be submitted. Novice English teachers admitted that the major cause of burnout in the pandemic is not the teaching or the students, but a multitude of various tasks outside teaching. This is also true for the experienced teachers; respondents shared that they experienced less anxiety in teaching, rather than in meeting deadlines and participating in school, division-wide projects, programs, and contests. Despite this, both groups prioritize students' academic improvement amidst the pandemic but find themselves burdened by additional tasks.

Significantly, data gained from the interview also holds true for both new and experienced teachers' anxiety in auxiliary functions and administrative responsibilities as a source of anxiety in the typical educational setting. This means that they are required to be available 24 hours a day, be experts in all disciplines, and be IT specialists. As a result, they are exposed to physical, mental, and emotional weariness.

Yet the contrast between the two groups when it comes to ancillary functions is apparent on the profile of the respondents: age, years of service, and marital status. Therefore, when it comes to technology use, novice teachers are tech-savvy in comparison to the other group. They can easily navigate the computer and find immediate and fast solutions to beat and submit

documents. On the contrary, experienced teachers prioritize family and household responsibilities, leading to less time dedicated to school-related tasks compared to novice teachers.

Many scholarly studies that use fear and burnout as study constructs often use Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological stress and coping theory (as cited in Carreon et al., 2021) as a foundation. Anxiety, as of this study, is indicative of specific requirements, including paperwork, auxiliary activities and functions, webinars, training, and in turn meeting of deadlines. Because of its link to potential exhaustion, it might be considered a stressed emotion. This must also be noted that the theory recognized the association between fear and burnout in different contexts. Environmental factors that contribute to teachers' anxiety need to be given attention and consideration by the authority for teachers to give more focus on teaching.

Language teachers' coping mechanisms

Individuals' efforts to manage certain external and/or internal demands that are judged to be challenging or exceeding the individual's resources are referred to as coping mechanisms (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Coping, in its broadest meaning, refers to cognitive and behavioral efforts to reduce and overcome psychological stress or barriers (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010).

Across both cases, English teachers admitted to being in a state of self-discovery, academically, emotionally, and socially. The difference shown among the two groups is the enthusiasm and the focus of novice teachers since the least administrative functions or supports are designated to them opposite to experienced teachers. Likewise, beginning teachers' years of experience show their fresh learnings and inputs from their undergraduate course. Thus, they can still recall and apply. Moreover, both groups seek advice and help from other English teachers in dealing with difficult students, low performance of students, and students' learning difficulties. In addition, teachers' individual problems, baggage, and anxiety are related to their experiences. In other words, teachers' coping mechanisms reflect language teachers' years of experience.

This study implies self-awareness of teachers' level of anxiety to be a positive factor in coping with their anxieties. With such, teachers apply necessary pedagogies to improve and maximize learning amidst the pandemic. One of which is the quarterly home visitations though this initiative is on a school-to-school basis. In addition, Language teachers employ project-based learning, utilize task-based learning techniques that enhance practical-life skills, and use problem-based teaching in the context of the pandemic to enhance learning despite distance learning.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The present study reveals that intrinsic and extrinsic factors contribute to the state and situation-specific anxiety in English Language teaching among Junior High School teachers. This indicates an alarming situation that even teachers have second language anxiety that contributes to their situation-specific anxiety which in turn challenges teachers' authority and competence. This further activated state anxiety in their language teaching. Consequently, it calls the education sector to strengthen teacher education program training as the foundation for future educators and deepen in-service teachers' competence through contextualized training and seminars and pursue further studies. In addition, the study recommends alignment of teaching assignments on teacher's qualifications or field of specialization. Furthermore, the findings seek to establish and reinforce mental health programs and activities to alleviate anxiety.

Moreover, English teachers' anxiety yields both advantages and disadvantages in their pedagogical strategies. Positively, these enable teachers to be innovative in teaching. Specifically, during the pandemic, Language teachers employ project-based learning and utilize

task-based learning technique that enhances practical life skills and problem-based teaching in the context of the pandemic to maximize learning despite distance learning. While teachers employ several teaching pedagogies such as Audiolingual, Communicative Approach, and lecture methods before the pandemic and class remediation. Despite teachers' innovation and resourcefulness, adeptness in relevant language skills should be realized through expert consultations and realistic plans and activities for enhancement.

Furthermore, this paper calls for DepEd's attention to revisit and revise the Curriculum Guide and MELCS, and other related learning materials that will cater to Filipino students' needs and levels, reflecting on the personal learning and teaching experiences of both students and teachers. This involves the inclusion of the essentiality of topics that need to be discussed. Moreover, concerns about the conduct of students' performance through evaluations and assessments must be clearly defined as well. Not only in the assessment itself, but also in modifying guidelines regarding the grading system in collaboration with faculty, staff, students, and parents, ideally to cater to the present situation.

Relevant to the high anxiety on ancillary functions and activities, this calls for the administration to consider additional staff or personnel to accomplish ancillary and administrative work instead of teachers. In this way, language teachers can see this as a better remedy for them to focus more on teaching, and thus address other problems in the teaching-learning process.

The study is limited to the anxiety experienced by language teachers in the exact time frame the study was conducted. Thus, generalizations on all English teachers should be avoided. Further studies can be done to validate the findings of the present study with a wider number of respondents and determine whether the findings indicated in this paper still holds true with other populations and areas of research in English as a Second Language teaching.

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