UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SEASONED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS IN ONLINE TEACHING: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF ADJUSTMENT
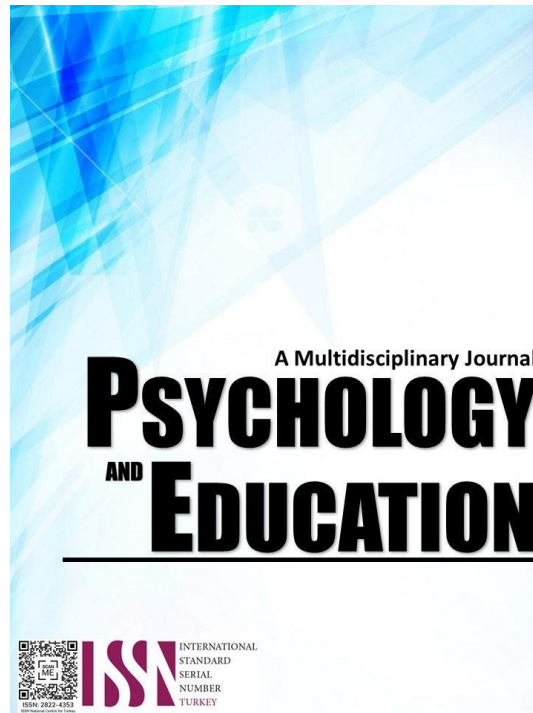
Understanding the Lived Experiences of Seasoned Language Instructors in Online Teaching: A Phenomenology of Adjustment

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of seasoned language instructors in online teaching. The study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach with 10 participants selected through purposive sampling from higher educational institutions in General Santos City. Results revealed that seasoned language instructors had negative and positive views on challenges in online teaching. They view the challenges as technological hurdles, situations that evoke uncertainty, limit students' participation, and prevalence of dishonesty. Additionally, language education becomes complex. On a positive note, these challenges promote innovative learning and serve as motivating factors that ignite passion for teaching. Coping mechanisms employed by seasoned language instructors encompass seeking help and collaboration, maintaining open-mindedness and introspection, participating in seminar workshops, sustaining a work-life balance, keeping a positive outlook, and seeking divine providence. Furthermore, their insights on improving online teaching accentuate the importance of learning by doing, upgrading technological skills, and pedagogical creativity, seeking peer support, and emphasizing the need for school administrators to be responsive to the evolving demands of online education. Thus, adjusting to online teaching requires passion and commitment to overcome the hurdles. It requires educators to be lifelong learners to be effective in practicing the teaching profession in virtual platforms.

Keywords: *lived experiences, seasoned language instructors, online teaching, phenomenology of adjustment*

Introduction

"Life throws challenges, but with patience and resilience, you can convert every challenge into a new opportunity to grow."- Amit Ray

This vignette encapsulates the transformative power embedded in the art of navigating adversities. Patience is the foundation for understanding, while resilience threads lessons into our being, fostering wisdom and strength. Embracing challenges with fortitude allows us to evolve into a more resilient, enlightened self. This sentiment resonates with language instructors adapting to online teaching amid the COVID-19 pandemic, where online instruction has become essential for education continuity. The rise of online learning has been significant since the onset of the pandemic, facilitating remote education through technological platforms and reliable internet connections, acknowledged globally as a secure strategy for uninterrupted learning (Dhawan, 2020; Liguori & Winkler, 2020; Mhayoob, 2020).

Several studies have investigated the experiences of seasoned educators in online teaching. Among them, three are pertinent to my research. One case study in Taiwan examined the transition of three seasoned Chinese junior secondary school English teachers to online teaching using boundary-crossing learning theory. They underwent three stages of online shift and utilized four dialogical learning mechanisms to overcome challenges. Another study in the Philippines focused on the quality of life of seasoned teachers at Bulacan State University during the pandemic, revealing challenges with technology and internet connectivity but an overall increase in quality of life. Finally, a qualitative phenomenological study in General Santos City SPED Integrated School described the experiences of seasoned teachers handling online classes during the pandemic, revealing anxiety and stress alongside recognition of the meaningfulness and excitement of online teaching. These studies underscore the challenges and successes of seasoned teachers adapting to online teaching during the pandemic and offer recommendations for improved delivery and professional development (Dela Peña et al., 2022; Santos, 2021; Yan & Wang, 2022).

Pertinent to those mentioned above, seasoned educators familiar with conventional teaching approaches may encounter various obstacles in adjusting to online education. This issue pertains to the disjunction between their pedagogical training and the optimal delivery of course material in an online learning environment. On top of that is a maximum requirement of using technology to teach; even before the onset of the pandemic, seasoned educators encountered a significant obstacle in the realm of pedagogy regarding information and technology integration; they may experience difficulty adapting to technology due to their unfamiliarity with the corresponding approach which consequently led them to experience a hard time incorporating ICT skills in promoting critical thinking with their learners (Almazova et al., 2020; Kit & Ganapathy, 2019; Lestiyanawati, 2020; Sewell et al., 2020).

Despite the proliferation of online teaching in recent years, research on the experiences of seasoned language instructors in this domain is scarce. While many scholars generally study challenges in online teaching, little is known about the specific perspectives of language instructors. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this issue, causing a sudden shift to online teaching globally. With institutions increasingly offering online courses, understanding the experiences of language instructors is crucial for developing effective support systems. This study addressed this gap and provided valuable insights for educators and institutions.

As an educator, my experience working in a higher education institution allowed me to observe how seasoned instructors adjust to online instruction, including some who had previously served as my instructors during my undergraduate studies. The proficiency of their pedagogical skills in delivering education to students within traditional classroom settings is indisputable; nevertheless, they were put to the test in the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic since online teaching has become the norm in delivering instructions. Thus, the study of the lived experiences of seasoned language instructors is of utmost importance to gain insight into their challenges and develop effective interventions that can enhance the quality of teaching and increase access to education, professional development, and organizational change.

Research Questions

The following research questions were utilized in the in-depth interviews to obtain essential data deemed necessary to understanding the phenomenon:

1. How do seasoned language instructors describe their lived experiences in online teaching?
    1.1. How do they view the challenges in online teaching?
    1.2. How do they cope with the challenges of online teaching?
    1.3. What insights can they share to improve online teaching?

Methodology

Research Design

This qualitative research aimed to describe the lived experiences of seasoned language in online teaching by understanding their adjustments precisely, their views on challenges, coping experiences, and insight on how to improve online teaching. Thus, I employed a phenomenological design to gain an in-depth understanding of how they perceived their experiences.

Qualitative research studies the nature of phenomena, including their quality, different manifestations, the context in which they appear, or the perspectives from which they can be perceived. In other words, qualitative approaches to research value the depth of meaning in people's subjective experiences and meaning-making processes. It asks open-ended questions whose answers are not easily put into numbers such as 'how' and 'why .'Because of the open-ended nature of the research questions, it is often not linear in the same way quantitative design is. One of the strengths of qualitative research is its ability to explain processes and patterns of human behavior that can be difficult to quantify (Busetto et al., 2020; Tenny, 2022).

As a philosophy and method of inquiry, phenomenology is not limited to an approach to knowing; instead, it is an intellectual engagement in interpretations and meaning-making used to understand the lived world of human beings at a conscious level. Specifically in research, it is a design from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by the participants. Phenomenological researchers study obvious things to help us see and understand things in new ways by revealing things that have become normal that we do not even notice (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Vagle, 2018; Qutoshi, 2018).

Moreover, phenomenology can be descriptive or interpretive. Descriptive phenomenology is concerned with revealing the "essence" or "essential structure" of any phenomenon under investigation – those features that make it what it is rather than something else. In research, descriptive phenomenology is widely used in the social sciences, one in which it aims to explore and describe the lived experience. However, understanding the guiding features of phenomenology in the tradition of Edmund Husserl, its proponent, can be complex, especially when deciphering how intentionality, the natural attitude, and the phenomenological reduction are articulated in a research study (Christensen et al., 2017; Morrow et al., 2015; Van Manen, 2016).

On the other hand, Martin Heidegger's notion of phenomenology as interpretive-hermeneutic provides methodological guidance for qualitative researchers seeking to explicate the lived experience of study participants. However, most phenomenological researchers apply his philosophy loosely. This is not surprising because Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy is challenging and the influence of his philosophy in shaping the conduct of interpretive phenomenological research is broadly debated (Horrigan-Kelly, 2021).

Thus, studying lived experiences requires the researcher to adopt a second-person perspective in which he or she constitutes descriptions of lived experiences through a relational process. Hence, hermeneutic phenomenology works with part and whole in a cyclical, open, and interrogative way to understand the people's experiences transcribed in text. A person doing hermeneutic phenomenological work ultimately brings awareness, which manifests as a result of the work (Dieumegard et al., 2019; Suddick et al., 2020).

In light of the above rationale on qualitative research and phenomenology, employing the hermeneutic phenomenology method is appropriate for studying the lived experiences of seasoned language instructors in online teaching. This method allowed me to elicit stories from my participants as a source of my understanding to describe and articulate their challenging and coping experiences in online teaching. Furthermore, this method also allowed me to gain insights into improving online teaching (Oerther, 2020).

Participants

I conducted this study in the City of General Santos, Region XII, with the active participation of seasoned language instructors teaching in selected private higher educational institutions in the city.

I utilized a purposive sampling design to select the qualified or intended participants who fit the inclusion criteria I have set for seasoned language instructors. Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. It resides on the proposition that information-rich samples are selected to have an in-depth view of the phenomena. Samples are generally small, so their utility and credibility are questioned based on their logic and purpose. Employing this sampling technique is essential in selecting the source of information that would help answer the research objectives. Further, setting inclusion criteria is a fundamental attribute that delineates the particular group of individuals researchers intend to engage in addressing their study objectives (Shaheen et al., 2019; Patino & Ferreira, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2013).

Therefore, the inclusion criteria for participants in this research encompass seasoned language instructors who meet the following qualifications: individuals of any gender with a minimum of ten years of experience in the teaching profession. Specifically, they must have been actively teaching in a higher educational institution in General Santos City. Furthermore, they must have taught language-related courses within the general education framework or major courses associated with teacher education, as well as humanities and social sciences programs. Additionally, they were working as teachers on an online platform during the period when the study was conducted. Combining these criteria ensured the targeted selection of participants with extensive teaching experience and a diverse range of instructional contexts, contributing to the richness and relevance of the study's findings. For the exclusion criteria, this study excluded the participation of seasoned language instructors from public higher educational institutions as there is only one public higher educational institution in General Santos City, the Mindanao State University. Furthermore, instructors who have not served the profession for ten years or beyond and have not handled language-related courses within the general education framework or major courses associated with teacher education and humanities and social sciences programs were not considered seasoned language instructors.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal criteria were set upon conducting this study to prioritize research participants' well-being and voluntary engagement. Thus, they were ensured that if they expressed discomfort, distress, or a desire to withdraw from the study at any point, they could do so without facing any negative consequences. Fortunately, none of the seasoned language instructors withdrew from participating, and the data collected from the interviews were utilized for analysis.

The initial plan for this study was to include twenty participants, with ten individuals designated for in-depth interviews, while the other ten participants were for focus-group discussions. However, despite diligent efforts to recruit eligible participants based on the established inclusion criteria, only fourteen individuals met the specified criteria. Out of these, only ten agreed to participate in the study. Faced with this circumstance and to ensure meaningful and comprehensive data collection, I conducted in-depth interviews with ten available participants.

Despite this limitation, I took proactive measures to verify that the participants met the criteria above. After the online interviews, I visited their respective schools, where they actively taught. During these visits, I delivered the interview transcripts and took the opportunity to confirm their participation in my study. This hands-on approach facilitated the secure delivery of materials. It provided an invaluable chance to establish direct contact, ensuring a comprehensive confirmation of their suitability as participants for my research.

Instrument

Data collection for this study was done through interviews. I first developed a semi-structured interview guide based on overarching and stand-in questions. Before initiating the interviews, the data collection instrument underwent validation by three internal and one external qualitative research expert. Their thorough examination and positive remarks affirmed the readiness of my study for implementation.

This study was conducted in General Santos City two years into the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite widespread vaccination efforts, stringent precautionary measures persisted, particularly within educational institutions. In light of the persistent challenges posed by the global health crisis, including the imperative to adhere to safety protocols, I conducted online interviews via Google Meet. Nevertheless, While the interviews technically did not occur on the physical premises of the schools, the formal request to conduct the study was successfully delivered to the administrative offices of the higher educational institutions where the targeted participants were based.

This virtual platform allowed the participants and myself to engage from our homes. Online interviews offered flexibility and comfort to both the participants and the researcher. This approach proved especially beneficial for participants with busy schedules or those who may be uncomfortable with face-to-face interactions. Thus, the decision to go virtual not only aligned with safety measures but also accommodated the diverse needs of the participants, contributing to the overall success and efficiency of the research endeavor (Dillman et al., 2014; Tuttas, 2014).

Furthermore, I employed open-ended questions to realize my validated semi-structured interview guide to delve into the participants'

experiences during each interview. Open-ended interviews are designed to explore individuals' perspectives deeply, using critical questions to move beyond superficial insights (Bhattacharya, 2017; Kendall, 2014).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves assigning meaning to diverse materials, ranging from conversations and images to observations and interviews. The interpretation of qualitative data is highly context-dependent, influenced by the chosen methodology, theoretical perspective, research tradition, or field of study. There is no singular correct method for analyzing qualitative data; rather, exploring ways of using the data for thoughtful reflection is crucial. However, common outlining practices across qualitative approaches exist, such as affixing codes to field notes, identifying patterns and relationships, and gradually formulating generalizations. The iterative nature of qualitative data analysis involves revisiting the field for additional data collection, refining generalizations, and aligning them with established constructs or theories, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the studied phenomenon (Lester et al., 2020).

I utilized thematic analysis in this study to interpret the anticipated qualitative data obtained from the participants. Thematic analysis is a method for describing data that involves interpretation in selecting codes and constructing themes. A distinguishing feature of thematic analysis is its flexibility to be used within a wide range of theoretical and epistemological frameworks and applied to a wide range of study questions, designs, and sample sizes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Specifically, I employed the Colaizzi method to analyze the data. This method of data analysis is rigorous and robust and, therefore, a qualitative method that ensures the credibility and reliability of its results. It allows researchers to reveal emergent themes and their interwoven relationships (Wirihana et al., 2018). After transcribing all the recorded interviews, I followed the seven-step analysis based on the method above: Initially, each transcript is meticulously read and re-read to understand the entire content fully. Then, significant statements about the phenomenon under investigation are extracted from the transcripts. Formulated meanings are derived from these significant statements. The next step entails organizing these formulated meanings into clusters of themes and individual themes. The findings are then integrated into a comprehensive description that exhaustively captures the phenomenon's essence. Subsequently, the fundamental structure of the phenomenon is described. Finally, the findings are validated through feedback and confirmation from the study participants, ensuring the robustness and credibility of the analysis (Praveena & Sasikumar, 2021).

Ethical Considerations

A fundamental ethical consideration has apparent implications for this qualitative study. These concerns may arise primarily from the methods employed in this study. The ethical dilemmas in this research revolved around the proper operation of confidentiality and anonymity. This study adhered to the ethical norms set by the RMMC Ethics and Review Committee, particularly the ethical considerations related to the population and data, including, but not limited to:

Voluntary Participation. The participants were allowed to engage without any possible repercussions, compensations, or loss of benefits. Consequently, once the study's purposes and benefits were demonstrated to them, their rights to contribute to the pool of information were meticulously assessed and anticipated. They were not coerced into participating and had the autonomy to discontinue their involvement in the study if they experienced any discomfort.

Privacy and confidentiality. Participants are entitled to privacy, which must not be infringed upon without obtaining informed consent, following the Data Privacy Act of 2012. This act safeguards the fundamental human right to privacy. A practical method for ensuring privacy and confidentiality in this qualitative study is to allow participants to abstain from disclosing their names on the survey form. In addition, confidentiality and privacy were ensured by refraining from disclosing the participants' demographic information, including their age, gender, occupation, employment status, and any existing medical conditions. Therefore, their identity was maintained through assigned pseudonyms in complete secrecy for safety.

Informed consent process. The prospective participants in this research were thoroughly briefed on my objectives, methods, and the comprehensive benefits within the study's scope. Consent from participants was obtained, signifying their voluntary agreement to participate. This process was documented through a screen video outlining crucial details and the interview procedure. They were requested to sign the informed consent form, confirming their voluntary participation. As consenting adults, parental consent was unnecessary. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used instead of their names. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point. Additionally, strict procedures for informed consent were followed for the protection of any gathered data, ensuring that information release adhered to stringent guidelines.

Recruitment. The participants were informed of why they had become part of the study. Then, to help them understand what the study was all about, I explained the purpose of the study so that they could infer from me and also view the study's essence. Apart from the letter, the researcher gave the rationale of the study and its significance.

Risks. Research shall be conducted if there is an acceptable positive benefit-risk ratio. In this study, protecting the participants from significant harm is equally essential. Therefore, the study prioritized the welfare of the respondents. Furthermore, the participants were not harmed since their identities were confidential. Their security and safety were of the utmost concern. As the researcher, there was a need to ensure that the participants were physically, emotionally, and socially ready. In answering the interview questions, I ensured they did not feel any discomfort or awkwardness.

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Benefits. This study will greatly benefit participants, educational institutions across General Santos City, and society. The participants, who are seasoned language teachers, will be able to acquire a more in-depth understanding of how they have adjusted to teaching online. This self-awareness can help develop tailored tactics for more effective teaching methods. As important stakeholders, schools stand to gain valuable insights into training programs and support systems specifically designed to address the hurdles seasoned online language teachers face. With this knowledge, the larger educational community can improve online language instruction and create a more flexible and productive learning environment. The study's conclusions could enhance the standard of online language training and have wider ramifications for teaching methods.

Plagiarism. There was no hint or proof that the study had misinterpreted someone else's work. Grammarly and other plagiarism detectors were used in the study. Integrity and good character are essential for researchers and are linked to moral principles and beliefs. As the researcher, I gained the utmost knowledge about plagiarism to produce a respectable research report.

Fabrication. The study had no indication or cue of purposive misinterpretation of what had been done. There was no making up of data and results or purposefully putting forward conclusions that were not accurate. Instead, the researcher employed and integrated theories related to the information and other inferential concepts.

Falsification. The study had no trace of purposefully misrepresenting the work to fit a model or theoretical expectation and had no evidence of overclaiming or exaggeration. Additionally, this study did not adhere to manipulating the data, which involved formulating statements or disregarding important details, maneuvering materials, tools, or methodologies that would mislead others.

Conflict of Interest (COI). The study had no conflict of interest. This academic endeavor, culminating in the completion of my Master's degree, received no support from any government or private agency. As such, there were no external influences that could compromise the research's integrity or the welfare of its participants. This absence of external funding ensures that the findings remain untainted by secondary interests such as financial gain or academic recognition. Further, it is vital to clarify that the researcher maintained complete impartiality and autonomy, exerting no control or influence over the seasoned language instructors' participation in the study. Thus, external pressures kept the research process uninfluenced, allowing for an objective exploration of the chosen subject matter.

Deceit. The study did not mislead the participants about any possible danger. The rights of the participants must be humongously protected in any study, especially since they have attained higher education and balanced and appropriate principles must be adhered to.

Permission from Organization/Location. The researcher of this study followed protocols. Upon receiving the signal from the panelists, the adviser, and the RMMCERC, the researcher sought the school's approval to conduct the study through a formal letter. After this, I wrote a formal letter to the administrators of the prospective higher educational institutions in General Santos City. Further, the seasoned language instructors were oriented before the interview.

Authorship. I was enrolled in the RMMC Graduate School during this study. I underwent a series of revisions based on the suggestions and recommendations made by panelists and my adviser, who guided me throughout the completion of this paper. The refinement of the paper was made possible through their guidance. Further, I also followed the standards of the RMMC Ethics Review Committee for the guidelines of ethical consideration.

Results and Discussion

The participants of this study are seasoned language instructors of selected higher educational institutions in General Santos City, Region XII.

To uphold confidentiality, unique pseudonyms were assigned. I opted for the appellations derived from Greek mythology, a venerable and resilient literary tradition undertaken to emphasize the profound historical import of these pseudonyms, which resonates with the qualities of seasoned language instructors.

Zeus is an instructor in a higher educational institution in the said city. A licensed professional teacher serving the profession for twenty-seven years. He obtained a Master of Arts in Education, major in Teaching English as a Second Language. He has taught major subjects in the programs of Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies and Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English. These subjects include Philippine Literature, Stylistics, Argumentation and Debate, Preparation of Instructional Materials, Campus Journalism, and Greek Mythology. He has also been handling subjects under General Education, such as Purposive communication. Further, he received various recognitions, including being a Journalism speaker, conducting workshops on theatre plays, and being the best thesis adviser. Currently, Zeus is finishing a Doctor of Philosophy in Education, major in Language Education.

Hera is an instructor at the same institution. She is a licensed professional teacher serving the profession for thirty-one years. She is the former instructor of Zeus, the cooperating teacher when Zeus took his teaching internship in 1996. She has been teaching major subjects in the programs of Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies and Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English at the said institution, such as Structure of English, English and American Literature, Afro-Asian Literature, Literary Criticism, Teaching and Assessment of the Macro Skills and the like.

She also handles General Education Subjects, like Purposive Communication and Art Appreciation. Her highest educational attainment is a Master of Arts in Education Major in Educational Management.

Helen is a former student of Hera and Zeus. She is also an instructor of the same institution, and a civil service eligible. She has taught for eleven years, handling language-related subjects such as Purposive Communication, Philippine Literature, and Technical Writing. She has obtained the degree of Master of Arts in English Language and is now pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics. Currently, she is the head of the institution's General Education Program of the said institution.

Athena is a licensed professional teacher who has served the profession for forty years. She has taught at a College in General Santos City, handling language and literature subjects, including Purposive Communication, Philippine Literature, and Word Literature. She completed her academic requirements in the degree of Master of Arts in Education Major Teaching English Language. Now, she is enjoying her retirement.

Pandora is an instructor at two prominent higher educational institutions in General Santos City. She handled subjects such as Speech and Theater Arts, Campus Journalism, Preparation of Instructional Materials, Introduction to Linguistics, and Professional Education subjects. She has been teaching for twenty-four years as a licensed professional teacher. She obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Education major in Applied Linguistics.

Daphne is a professor at a university in General Santos City. A full-time faculty of both undergraduate and graduate programs. She teaches language subjects such as Purposive Communication, Technical Writing, English for Specific Purposes, and Language Assessment. She has been teaching for thirty-six years as a licensed professional teacher. Daphne obtained a Doctor of Education, major in Educational Management, and a master's degree in Education major in English.

Aphrodite is also a professor at a University in General Santos City, where she handles language skills, literature, and professional education subjects. She has been teaching for twenty-one years as a licensed professional teacher and obtained a Doctor of Philosophy in Education major in Applied Linguistics.

Eurydice is a professor at a university in General Santos City. She is a faculty of undergraduate and graduate programs handling language and education-related subjects, including Structure of English, Teaching, Assessment of the Macro-skills, and the like. She has been teaching for twenty-one years and obtained a Doctor of Philosophy in Education major in Applied Linguistics. She received recognition as a speaker in various areas of education, such as questioning techniques and teaching strategies.

Like Daphne, Aphrodite, and Eurydice, Demeter is a professor at a University in General Santos City, teaching language education subjects in undergraduate and graduate programs. She handles Purposive Communication, Grammar and Composition, Introduction to Linguistics, Structure of English, Principles and Theory of Language Acquisition, Teaching and Assessment of the Macro-skills, Teaching and Assessment of Literature Studies, and Stylistics and Discourse Analysis. As a seasoned professor, she has been teaching for thirty-six years.

The last seasoned language instructor who participated in an interview was Galatia. She is an instructor at a college in General Santos City and a former teacher of Zeus and Helen in the said institution. She has taught for thirty-three years, handling major subjects in BSED-English and General Education Programs, such as Survey of English and American Literature and Purposive Communication. She is now enjoying her retirement; she is still teaching part-time at the same institution.

These seasoned language educators, each with distinct backgrounds and areas of expertise, have graciously shared their experiences and insights on online teaching via comprehensive online interviews, making a substantial contribution to identifying and comprehending key themes in my data analysis.

The significance of their viewpoints in my study is emphasized by their significant teaching experiences and scholarly achievements, which demonstrate their dedication to the field of language education. The use of pseudonyms drawn from Greek mythology serves the dual purpose of preserving the identity of these experienced language instructors and representing the lasting impact they have on the field of language education through their wisdom and commitment.

Categorization of Data

Upon careful analysis of the interview transcripts, I was able to extract a total of eighteen themes describing the lived experiences of seasoned language instructors in online teaching, whose laser foci are their views on the challenges in online teaching, their coping experiences, and insights on improving online teaching.

Seven themes were extracted from their views on the challenges they experience in online teaching: technological hurdles, evoke uncertainty, limit students' participation, the prevalence of dishonesty, and language education becomes complex. On a positive note, promote innovative learning and ignite passion for teaching are nonetheless identified as themes.

Meanwhile, there are six themes from their coping experiences, including seeking help and collaboration, open-mindedness and introspection, participating in seminar-workshop, work-life balance, keeping a positive outlook, and seeking divine providence.

Lastly, five themes were extracted from their insights on how to improve online teaching, and these are learning by doing, be a lifelong learner, upgrade technological skills, pedagogical creativity, and peer and administrative support.

Views of Seasoned Language Instructors on the Challenges in Online Teaching

Table 1. *Views of Seasoned Language Instructors on the Challenges in Online Teaching*

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Struggle in online teaching	Technological Hurdle
Unfamiliar online teaching tools	
Lack of technical know-how	
Necessitates adaption of electronic materials	
Teaching for several years doesn't mean tech familiarity	
Difficulty in troubleshooting technical glitches	
Incompatible gadgets in a hindrance	
Closed cameras are alienating	Evoke Uncertainty
Unsure if students are really in the loop	
Uncertain on student's honesty and attendance	
Unknown to teachers if students are working the tests with honestly	
Challenged to make sense of student's work	
Students cannot be forced to participate	
Poor connectivity hampers students' participation	Limit Students' Participation
Students don't actively participate	
Lack of participation when called	
Students don't ask questions and give feedback	
Monitoring students' engagement is harder	
Copacetic answers are unbelievable	Prevalence of Dishonesty
Students dishonesty in test-taking	
Students copied answers from various sources	
Trusting students' excusing is suspicious	
Issues on plagiarism are rampant	
Preventing plagiarism is tough	
Teaching grammar is complex	Language Education
Interactive activities are limited	Becomes Complex
Communicative competence is challenging	
Teaching strategy has to be well-chosen	
Shifting printed materials to electronic is challenging	
Innovation of learning materials is necessary	
Gives new learnings and leads to new discoveries	Promote Innovative Learning
Enhances teaching skills in language education	
Challenges are significant learning	
Opens learning opportunities for technological skills	
Urges teachers to discover new things	
Fosters innovation in developing effective teaching strategies	
Enables teachers to be creative and strategic	
Humbling experience to learn technology	
Passion withstands challenges of online teaching	Ignite Passion for Teaching
Love for teaching motivates to overcome challenges	
Commitment to makes students become learned individuals	
Teaching is a mission	
Challenges motivate to continue teaching Profession	

Technological Hurdle. The findings reveal that seasoned language instructors viewed online teaching as a technological hurdle. They grappled with challenges such as adapting to online tools, navigating unfamiliar platforms, needing to adapt e-learning materials, dispelling the misconception that long teaching experience equates to tech proficiency, troubleshooting technical issues, and contending with incompatible devices, all of which underline the challenges of transitioning to online language education.

Evoke Uncertainty. Uncertainty about authentic interaction between instructors and students and the integrity of assessment activities emerged as pivotal concerns in online teaching, as seasoned language instructors emphasized.

Limit Students' Participation. Students' limited participation in online classes was viewed as a challenge in online teaching. This challenge was rooted in various reasons such as unverifiable excuses, students from far-flung areas having limited internet access, poor internet connection, and students' behavior toward attending classes.

Prevalence of Dishonesty. Dishonesty is one of the challenges seasoned language instructors have experienced in online teaching since teaching students are confined to their homes where imposing intensive disciplines is far from instructors' total control.

Language Education Becomes Complex. Language teaching involves teaching four macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It entails developing students' communicative competence. However, based on the experiences of seasoned instructors, practicing this profession has become complex when done online. The difficulties include uploading materials to LMS, modifying provided materials, adapting to online teaching technology, and ensuring accessibility for all students.

Promote Innovative Learning. The seasoned language instructors viewed the challenges of online teaching as valuable learning opportunities that fostered personal and professional growth, increased their technological proficiency, and encouraged them to adapt to the evolving landscape of education. Furthermore, they saw online teaching challenges as innovation because they encouraged creativity, required ongoing learning and adaptation, and helped establish effective teaching practices.

Ignite Passion for Teaching. Despite the challenges encountered in online teaching, seasoned language instructors stressed the pivotal role of passion and commitment in overcoming the challenges of online teaching. The intrinsic motivations of witnessing students' success, the fulfillment derived from being part of their educational journeys, and the mission to impart knowledge and shape individuals serve as powerful motivators, outweighing the negative aspects of the online teaching experience.

Coping Mechanisms of Seasoned Language Instructors with the Challenges in Online Teaching

Table 2. *Coping Mechanisms of Seasoned Language Instructors with the Challenges in Online Teaching*

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Asking help from colleagues	Seeking Help and Collaboration
Avoid being pretentious	
Asking for assistance	
Ask assistance from younger colleagues	
Discuss matters in online teaching	
Share experiences to colleagues	
Listening from others experiences	
Being open-minded to understand challenges	Open-mindedness and introspection
Be open to changes and accept the reality	
Willingness to cope with the challenges	
Open-mindedness gives a room for improvement	
Reflection on growth	
Self-checking if things are done properly	
Prior training helps easily learn to teach online	Participating in Seminar-workshop
You have to participate if there are webinars	
Be active in the training	
Be around if there are webinars/training	
Spend time with friends and sing for relaxation	Work-life Balance
Attend destressing program	
Spend time for self-care and reflection	
When exhausted, make time for family to relax	
Feel fortunate to experience online teaching	Keeping a Positive Outlook
The mindset is to stay positive	
Become more flexible, have grown and learned	
Love for the job mindset	
Online teaching widens my horizon	
Become more innovative and committed to the profession	
Enjoying the online teaching	
Pray when there is no one to run to	Seeking Divine Providence
Surviving the challenges becomes part of the daily prayer	
The challenges make us more prayerful	
Pray for strength to accomplish daily teaching tasks	
God answers the prayer by giving challenges	
Pray for physical and emotional health	

Seeking Help and Collaboration. Seasoned language instructors emphasized the critical importance of both seeking help and fostering collaboration in online teaching. They stressed the significance of open-mindedness, emphasizing the willingness to learn, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous improvement as essential attributes. Furthermore, they emphasized the multifaceted nature of self-assessment, incorporating reflection, and self-dialogue. These insights value the interconnectedness of seeking external guidance and fostering internal reflection in successfully navigating the dynamic challenges of modern education.

Open-mindedness and Introspection. Seasoned language instructors highlighted the critical importance of both seeking external help and fostering internal collaboration in the realm of online teaching. They stressed the significance of open-mindedness, emphasizing the willingness to learn, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous improvement as essential attributes. Furthermore, they collectively emphasized the multifaceted nature of self-assessment, incorporating reflection, dialogue, and adaptation to the online environment, all while preserving mental well-being. These insights underscore the interconnectedness of seeking external guidance

and fostering internal reflection in successfully navigating the dynamic challenges of modern education.

Participating in Seminar-workshop. Seminars and workshops played a pivotal role during the face-to-face to online teaching transition. Thus, seasoned language instructors believed that active participation in seminars, workshops, and training sessions as a primary coping strategy for the challenges of online teaching.

Work-life Balance. When addressing the challenges of online teaching, seasoned language instructors emphasized the vital need for work-life balance. Their coping strategies include engaging in enjoyable activities, participating in destressing programs, prioritizing mental health through self-care, and recognizing and responding to moments of exhaustion by taking breaks and spending time with family.

Keeping a Positive Outlook. While acknowledging the challenges of online teaching, seasoned language instructors had a positive outlook towards the challenges as they found fulfilment, growth, and motivation in embracing change, maintaining a positive mindset, and discovering new dimensions to their profession. Their experiences collectively highlight the transformative impact of adapting to online platforms on both personal and professional levels.

Seeking Divine Providence. For these seasoned language instructors, seeking divine providence through prayer emerged as a common thread weaving through their responses to the challenges of online teaching. Whether seeking solace, strength, patience, wisdom, or holistic well-being, prayer served as a pivotal coping mechanism, offering them a spiritual anchor and a source of resilience in the face of uncertainties and difficulties.

Insights of Seasoned Language Instructors on Improving Online Teaching

Table 3. *Insights of the Seasoned Language Instructors in Improving Online Teaching*

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Putting it into practice	Learning by Doing
Managing online resources enriches students' learning	
Practice constantly	
Do the necessary things to be able to teach online	
Practice what is learned in the webinar	
Trial and error is necessary	
Independent Study	
Do not stop learning	Be a Lifelong Learner
Willingness to learn leads	
Learn to adapt to the modern way of teaching	
Be interested in learning	
Ask questions when necessary	
Attend seminars and training	
Self-training by exploring and researching	
Think outside the box in using technology to teach online	
Be innovative in using technology	
Balancing knowledge in theory and technology	Upgrade Technological Skills
Need for computer skills is undeniable	
Keep up with technological advancement	
Betterment in technology improves online teaching	
Be exposed to different platforms	
Learn the different online tools	
Discovering other learning platforms	
Studying other LMS offers flexibility	
Creating effective learning resources	Pedagogical Creativity
Incorporating animated instructional materials	
Designing lessons easily absorbed in the mind	
Crafting appropriate activities	
Partnership and collaboration across disciplines	Peer and Administrative Support
Peer coaching	
Meeting with teachers to discuss online teaching matters	
Problem-solving with co-teachers	
School admin should provide friendly and targeted training	
School admin should support the technical needs of instructors	
School admin should provide a mental health program	

Learning by Doing. Seasoned language instructors collectively emphasized the transformative power of learning by doing, continuous practice, adaptability, innovation, and a proactive approach to self-improvement in the realm of online teaching. Their insights coalesce around the idea that the journey to effective online instruction involves an ongoing, hands-on commitment to skill development and a willingness to embrace technological advancements.

Be a Lifelong Learner. Collectively, seasoned language instructors emphasized the essential role of being a lifelong learner in the ever-evolving landscape of online teaching, incorporating elements of curiosity, persistence, and adaptability. Moreover, they stressed the importance of attending seminar and training to learn the necessary things in online teaching.

Upgrade Technological Skills. While traditional teaching expertise is given, the crux of successful online teaching lies in upgrading technological skills, according to seasoned language instructors. They stressed the importance of being adept at using technology to manipulate materials, reduce workload, enhance usability, and effectively impart learning to students who are more technologically inclined.

Pedagogical Creativity. The critical role of pedagogical creativity in online teaching emerged as a major theme based on the insights of seasoned language instructors. This involves the creation of engaging learning materials, strategies to communicate effectively without relying on facial expressions, utilizing animated resources to captivate attention, and, importantly, crafting purposeful activities aligned with learning objectives to foster higher-order thinking skills.

Peer and Administrative Support. Seasoned language instructors emphasize collaboration, mutual support, and learning from colleagues. They stressed the value of seeking assistance, sharing knowledge, and forming partnerships across different subjects or experience levels to enhance online teaching practices collectively. Collaboration emerges as a powerful tool for professional growth and effective online education.

Furthermore, when they were asked what advice they can give to school admin to improve online teaching, seasoned language instructors expressed various sentiments including a need for tailored training sessions, focusing on specific platforms or tools relevant to their teaching roles. Additionally, there's a call for support from the administration, including mental health initiatives, to sustain teachers' well-being amidst the demands of adapting to online teaching. The consensus revolves around the idea that ongoing, practical training is crucial for effective online instruction, ensuring teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and tools to navigate the digital classroom. These sentiments boil down to the schools' need for responsiveness as an overarching theme.

Views of Seasoned Language Instructors on the Challenges in Online Teaching

Technological Hurdle. Seasoned language instructors viewed online teaching as technologically challenging. They regarded the challenge as a formidable struggle attributed to difficulties utilizing technology effectively.

This view is reflected in a study conducted at a private university in Istanbul, Turkey, where technical issues like the shortage of virtual class equipment appeared to be one of the findings. Similarly, a study conducted in the Philippines on elderly teachers' perspectives toward online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic identified technology as a challenge (Samifanni & Gumanit, 2021; Sener et al., 2020).

In support of this view, Rasheed et al., (2019) systematically reviewed published studies and literature on the challenges in the online component of blended learning. The findings revealed that teachers' challenges are mainly in using technology for teaching. Educational institutions face challenges in providing teachers with suitable instructional technology and effective training support. These findings echo the views of seasoned language instructors that the challenges in online teaching are technological hurdles.

Because of the widespread use of information and communication technologies, technology plays a more significant part in teaching now than in the past. Students recognize the benefits of educational technology through numerous programs for distance learning, the Internet, teachers, and students themselves. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, which raises the importance of technology integration in education, teachers are required to update their competencies to endow quality education and make changes to their curriculum and instruction accordingly (Lazar, 2015; United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2020).

Evoke Uncertainty. Situations like students' closed cameras, doubts about students' honesty in attending classes and taking assessments, and possible involvement of others on the students' end during online classes make seasoned language instructors uncertain if online classes were done effectively.

A study revealed that the main reasons students close their cameras during online classes are the anxiety of being exposed, shame and shyness, the desire to ensure privacy in their home and personal space, and the chance that other people might walk into the background (Gherhes et al., 2020). Meanwhile, another study revealed that students cheat because they lack knowledge of the subject matter, they want to get higher marks, some technical problems and no proctor is present during assessments (Valızadeh, 2022). These studies are a few factors that reflect why seasoned language instructors viewed online teaching as uncertain.

Nevertheless, the ability to experience uncertainty is an essential skill that enables us to optimize our performance by acting cautiously or seeking additional information when we feel uncertain and by expressing our knowledge when we feel certain (Ghetti et al., 2013). Indeed, uncertain feelings signaled seasoned language in ensuring the teaching and assessment process in online classes.

Limited Students' Participation. Class participation has a powerful impact on students' academic achievement (Akpur, 2021). However, the inability of seasoned language instructors to compel student engagement, compounded by issues such as poor internet

connectivity, presents a multifaceted hindrance. Despite virtual presence for attendance purposes, students often exhibit passive involvement by refraining from active participation.

This dilemma is reflected in a Zimbabwe study investigating the intricate issues surrounding online absenteeism and ethical considerations tied to students' engagement and assessment. The study comprehensively understood technological and pedagogical challenges influencing student participation. The findings emphasize the significance of ensuring technological resources, transitioning to digital libraries, and providing necessary training, with broader implications for the success of online learning programs in universities. These issues are related to the experiences of seasoned language instructors (Svongoro & Mudzi, 2023).

Participation in synchronous and asynchronous activities facilitates learning in online education. In contrast, a study suggests that students can participate and interact online and attend classes synchronously or asynchronously. Thus, including varied activities is recommended to increase academic success in online education (Lee & Martin, 2017).

Prevalence of Dishonesty. If academic dishonesty happens in a physical classroom, it is not surprising in online settings. This notion emerged as a "prevalence of dishonesty" theme when seasoned language instructors observed students plagiarizing and conniving with their classmates to take screenshots of the asynchronous assessments. Indeed, academic dishonesty in online learning is a challenging problem representing a complex psychological and social phenomenon for learners (Chiang et al., 2022).

Students cheat to obtain higher grades and are pressured to earn good grades. If the opportunity presents itself to improve a grade in some way dishonestly, many students will take advantage of that opportunity because they can rationalize it. Thoughts such as "everyone is doing it" or "it is not hurting anyone" are ways in which students rationalize their behavior (Peterson, 2019).

To address this issue, a study suggests that online proctoring effectively mitigates academic dishonesty (Dendir & Maxwell, 2020). Online proctoring has been implemented ever since online learning was introduced. Such platforms include Examity, Meritract, ProctorU, SpeedExam, and others. This platform monitors students' dishonesty when answering online assessment activities (Kang et al., 2023). On the contrary, a qualitative case study conducted in South Korea investigated the negative impact of adapting proctoring technology on students' subjectivities, pedagogical relationships, and educational outcomes. By utilizing Foucault's theorization of disciplinary governmentality, the authors effectively demonstrate that the binary subjectification of students as cheaters and cheated has degraded the value of student engagement in university education, creating more competitive and distrusting relationships amongst students and between students and teachers. Nevertheless, without challenging the unethical consequences of online proctoring technologies or fundamentally unfair social and educational systems, students willingly accept and adopt them as docile bodies, which has led to educational deterioration rather than innovation (Lee & Fanguy, 2022).

Language Teaching Becomes Complex. The challenges identified by seasoned language instructors encompass the complexity of pronunciation instruction, difficulties in facilitating discussion-based content, and issues in conducting speaking activities. These complexities are caused by technology, unstable internet connectivity, and students' attitudes towards online classes.

Indeed, language teaching is challenging in the context of online platforms. Several studies mirror this view of seasoned language instructors. Qi et al. (2021) explored challenges in teaching English speaking online during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the sudden shift to virtual instruction, emphasizing technological anxieties and the need for supportive strategies. Low's (2021) study on EIL pronunciation emphasizes the marginalization of pronunciation in language programs, validating instructors' concerns.

Additionally, Nwosu & Chukwuere's (2020) literature review delves into students' attitudes toward plagiarism in online learning, mirroring the persistent issues identified by seasoned instructors, while Choi and Chung's (2020) study on EFL educators in navigating online teaching shows that the participants were struggling to adapt their instruction to online formats on short notice and to find ways to increase their skills and familiarity with educational technologies to successfully deliver online language teaching. These related studies advocate for innovative solutions to navigate the complex landscape of language education in evolving teaching environments.

Promote Innovative Learning. Becoming a student again to learn new things, especially in technology, is what seasoned language instructors were grateful for. The challenges led them to discover how to develop their teaching skills in online platforms. Thus, the challenges in online teaching promote innovative learning, which is a sort of learning with a similar meaning to creative learning, by which the learners elicit change, renewal, reorganization, and a series of new questions (Zhou, 2016).

In conjunction with adjusting to online teaching, higher education institutions have faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, where educators are confronted with questions about how best to offer instruction in the face of sudden and mandatory college closures and uncertainties about when campuses might open again. Coupled with these challenges have been signs that higher education is more innovative and flexible than we might have imagined, particularly regarding teaching and learning. Thus, they found new and innovative ways to use technology to accomplish instructional goals and will most likely have reason to continue on the path of innovation going forward (Major, 2020). This notion accentuates that the challenges in online teaching promote innovative learning among seasoned language instructors.

In light of this, the pandemic never hampered education as it continued to operate through online platforms, necessitating seasoned language instructors to maximize the use of technology. Innovations in education are understood broadly as introducing a novelty, as

a change, improvement, and improvement of the existing. Innovations in education are all related to implementing advanced pedagogical experience (Schleicher, 2018).

Ignites Passion for Teaching. Without their passion for teaching, the seasoned language instructors would have given up. Thus, the challenges of online teaching reminded them of their love for the profession.

Passion is the oxygen for the human souls. Such a person who lives life without passion dies a million deaths before he is cremated (Saif, 2020). A study conducted at Georgia Southern University determined how teachers sustained their passion for teaching. The findings revealed that teachers sustain passion through building relationships with students, working in a positive school environment with support from various stakeholders, maintaining a healthy lifestyle to cope with stress, continuous learning and growth, and feeling supported and valued. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding the emotional, intellectual, moral, and physical aspects of teaching to invigorate the profession amid contemporary challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political uncertainty, and social injustice. The findings suggest that fostering a supportive environment and addressing teachers' holistic well-being are crucial for sustaining their passion and commitment to teaching (Scroggs, 2020).

Coping Mechanisms of Seasoned Language Instructors with the Challenges in Online Teaching

Seeking Help and Collaboration. Undoubtedly, seeking help is a coping mechanism when one experiences a hard time. Seeking help during difficult times is one of the most important problem-solving strategies (Nagai, 2015). Based on interviews with seasoned language instructors, seeking assistance from colleagues in the professional environment, family members, and friends played a crucial role in navigating challenges in online teaching. They stressed the importance of being proactive and avoiding reluctance or embarrassment when seeking support to facilitate online classes.

Further, giving and receiving help can result in collaboration. In navigating the challenges of online teaching, seasoned language instructors emphasized the significance of engaging in collaborative practices. They highlighted the importance of discussing common experiences with fellow teachers, spending quality time discussing online teaching matters, and actively sharing experiences with colleagues. In a workplace, collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship between two or more organizations to achieve a common goal. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals, a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility, mutual authority and accountability, mutual authority and accountability for success, and sharing of resources and rewards and rewards (Mattessich & Johnson, 2018).

Honigsfeld and Nordmeyer (2020) provided valuable insights into educators' challenges and collaborative strategies amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. They discuss the unprecedented global shift to online learning and the essential role of collaboration among educators. The key takeaways include supporting each other's well-being, planning and collaborating effectively, adopting an asset-based approach to home learning, organizing resources coherently, and recognizing students' diverse needs in virtual classrooms. These insights resonate with seasoned language instructors coping experiences.

Open-mindedness and Introspection. Coping with the challenges in teaching truly entails an open mind and self-reflection to better understand the pedagogical changes. Open-mindedness disposes us to value and seek truth, knowledge, and understanding by taking a particular stance toward ourselves, what we know, new information, and experience. It aims to improve individual and social epistemic standing (Verducci, 2021). Thus, understanding the nature of online teaching requires seasoned language instructors to be open to accepting online teaching as their reality in imparting knowledge and wisdom to students online. It took them open-mindedness to uphold innovative education and pave a smooth road towards improvements.

Moreover, they also highlighted the role of introspection as they shared insights on overcoming online teaching challenges. Emphasizing the role of reflection in personal growth, they emphasized adaptability through self-talk and self-checks for teaching efficacy. This introspective process entails evaluating the effectiveness of one's actions and considering ways to enhance performance. Questions revolve around fairness, flexibility, and clear communication of interventions. Introspection involves acknowledging both strengths and areas for improvement. Individuals are encouraged to set clear, challenging, and achievable goals when identifying aspects that need enhancement. This iterative process, characterized by setting goals, implementing, and honest self-feedback, fosters continuous improvement in collaborative professional interactions (Granpeesheh et al., 2014).

Thus, open-mindedness and introspection play an essential role in navigating the challenges of online teaching. Being open to new ideas and embracing changes leads to achievement since open-mindedness is an intellectual virtue and excellence of character in intellectual matters, especially forming or revising beliefs. Additionally, introspection, which in layman's terms is self-reflection, entails one seriously taking time to check one's character and behavior, analyzing where it comes from and what it means (Taylor, 2016; Christian, 2020).

Participating in Seminar-workshop. In educational institutions of all levels, the primary aim of educators is to promote student learning, improve teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies, and lead to the upgrading of the overall system of education (Kapur, 2022). Thus, educators across generations must upgrade their pedagogical skills to keep up with the evolving demands of the teaching and learning process and one of the ways to achieve this is to actively participate in seminar workshops.

In this study, seasoned language instructors believe they must be actively engaged in training. Anent to this, studying challenges and reflections on teacher training during COVID-19, Londoño-Monroy (2021) found that professional practices in teacher training are crucial for developing and strengthening competencies associated with teaching-learning. Thus, the imperative role of participating in seminar workshops is stressed as a vital component in the ever-evolving education landscape. As educators strive to enhance student learning and adapt to the challenges posed by online teaching, the insights from seasoned language instructors align with broader educational research.

Work-life Balance. Seasoned language instructors made an account for defining work-life dance as one of their coping mechanisms. They achieved balance by spending time with friends, therapeutic singing, attending destressing programs, and doing self-care. When exhaustion looms, they turn to family. These educators understand that maintaining equilibrium is not just a luxury but the key to educating minds and nurturing their well-being. These views affirm that practicing work-life balance is a coping mechanism. It reduces employees' stress by dividing professional and personal lives, devoting time to family, health, vacations, etc., and career management (Anderson, 2021).

There are multifarious definitions for work-life balance. Some definitions suggest the ability to accomplish the goals set in work and personal life and achieve satisfaction in all life domains. Other definitions suggest balance implies equal engagement and satisfaction with work and personal life roles. Still, other definitions include that balance indicates the absence of conflict between work and personal life. In contrast, an idiosyncratic construct is a social construct built between an individual and others in his or her work and personal life domains. Some researchers focus exclusively on balancing work and family roles (Bulger, 2014).

Although it is evident that practicing work-life balance helped seasoned language instructors cope with the challenges of online teaching, many people are having a more difficult time finding balance in their lives because there have been cutbacks or layoffs where they work. Nonetheless, work-life balance produces positive work-related, nonwork-related, and stress-related outcomes (Vyas & Shrivastava, 2017; Sirgy & Lee, 2023).

Keeping a Positive Outlook. Seasoned language instructors expressed gratitude for the opportunity to engage in online teaching, maintaining a positive mindset that they can overcome any obstacles. Flexibility and continuous growth were emphasized, with a genuine love for the profession driving their dedication. Online teaching was seen as a means to broaden horizons, fostering innovation and commitment. The emergent theme resonated strongly — keeping a positive outlook, which became the cornerstone of their approach to navigating the complexities of virtual language instruction. Positive thinking helps you see situations and people proactively, which allows you to make better decisions. It helps you live a more peaceful, happier, and healthier life. Although it does not prevent or eliminate any unfortunate happenings from anyone's life, it is powerful, and by putting it to work in your life, you can reap the positive benefits (Ekanem, 2016; Petter, 2022). Thus, keeping a positive outlook is a coping mechanism employed by seasoned language instructors in navigating the challenges of online teaching.

On the related lens, positive thinking relatively eases stress, anxiety, and depression. Generally, positive thinking improves the quality of life. Another term related to a positive outlook is positive orientation. It is associated with a positive perception of oneself, life, events, and the future. People with a positive orientation better cope with the challenges of the pandemic and are optimistic about the future. Working on positive orientation can improve well-being and reduce tension, which is extremely important in difficult pandemic times (Dymecka et al., 2022; Shokrpour et al., 2021).

Positive thinking is a mental and emotional attitude that leads one to have a positive outlook, which means focusing on the bright side of life with the hope of having a positive outcome (Osei, 2019). In navigating the challenges of online teaching, seasoned language instructors remained hopeful that favorable outcomes awaited them in enduring the difficulties they experienced in sustaining effective education.

Seeking Divine Providence. It is done through prayer. In the bible, prayer is how those who believe in God talk to him. That is how they reveal their eulogies and requests. Prayer is sometimes also defined as a deeply human instinct of humanity by which a person becomes aware of its relation to the source of life. Standing in prayer in the presence of God, we discover our wounds, weaknesses, and often helplessness. Therefore, it happens in good and bad times (Sadeghimoghaddam et al., 2019; Roman & Tuszyńska-Bogucka, 2021; Werbiński, 2010).

In this study, Seasoned language instructors grappling with the hurdles of online teaching often find solace in prayer, turning to it as a steadfast source of support when there is no one else to rely on. For these educators, navigating the trials of virtual instruction becomes intertwined with their daily prayers, where they seek strength to overcome the challenges inherent in their teaching tasks. Remarkably, the instructors observe a connection between their prayers and challenges, viewing them as a divine response fostering resilience. Amidst the multifaceted difficulties, the instructors consistently pray for professional success and their physical and emotional well-being, highlighting prayer as a central coping mechanism in their journey through online education. These views reflect the study of faith and spirituality as psychological coping mechanisms among female aid workers. The findings reveal that participants experienced a resolute identity, space for self-care, as well as access to community, belonging, and connection across national, faith, and spiritual boundaries. Results raise the importance of de-stigmatizing faith-based and spiritual coping and invite further discussion among practitioners (Ozcan et al., 2021).

Certainly, prayer is a coping mechanism for navigating the challenges of online teaching. It offers a feeling of gratitude and enhances psychological well-being. Prayer as a form of communication with God strengthens beliefs that His help and protection bring calm, relief, and joy, improving emotional well-being. Further, prayer in silence, especially during stress, facilitates a positive appraisal of a negative situation (Del Castillo et al., 2023; Van Cappellen et al., 2021)

Insights of Seasoned Language Instructors in Improving Online Teaching

Learning by Doing. Seasoned language instructors emphasized the importance of putting theoretical knowledge into practice, constant practice, effective management of online resources to enhance student learning, and the necessity of adapting to the online teaching environment. Fundamentally, their collective wisdom raised the pivotal role of learning by doing in navigating, which means learning from experiences resulting directly from one's actions, as contrasted with learning from watching others perform, reading others' instructions or descriptions, or listening to others' instructions or lectures. Its principle has been advocated widely and in many forms. It includes learn-by-doing, trial-and-error learning or discovery versus instruction, practical experience versus book learning, the practice-theory-practice dialectic, and "proof upon practice." In education, the approach uses engaging learning activities tailored to the needs and interests of the learners (Abuzandah, 2020; Reese, 2011).

Theoretically speaking, learning by doing is a maxim of pragmatic education. Pragmatism is an educational philosophy that says education should teach students practical things for life and encourage them to grow into better people. Many famous educators, including John Dewey and William James, were pragmatists. Pragmatists believe in practical learning, i.e., education should apply to the real world. In the context of the teaching and learning process, learning by doing is In the process, the learner took ownership of his learning. At the same time, the teacher's role is to guide the students to facilitate by providing them with multiple activities and teaching materials (Mekonnen, 2020; Rai & Lama, 2020).

Although Learning by doing is commonly centered on students, seasoned language instructors suggest it to their fellows to improve online teaching. Learning by doing in professional development is about taking ownership of your career through experience, as it facilitates the development of transferrable skills necessary for success in attaining tenure and promotion in academia (Segarra & Gentry, 2021).

Be a Lifelong Learner. Educators must know that what they understand from their experiences as learners and teachers may not always be relevant to current circumstances (Holford et al., 2019). Indeed, seasoned language instructors emphasized the significance of maintaining a proactive approach by constantly acquiring new knowledge, practicing regularly, and adapting to modern teaching methods. In general, life-long learning results from integrating formal, non-formal, and informal learning to create the ability for continuous lifelong development of quality of life. It highlights the context within which learning occurs at all times in each place throughout one's life. People need to upgrade their skills throughout their adult lives to cope with modern life, both in their work and private lives (Laal, 2010).

Changes and innovations in the world require individuals to constantly evolve, which has resulted in a need for lifelong learning throughout society. In other words, people need lifelong learning to keep up to date with the changes in the world, sustain their occupational and intellectual development, and improve their skills in different areas. In the field of teaching, where the demands of transferring knowledge and honing skills are continually evolving, teachers must be lifelong learners (Kaplan, 2016).

Thus, seasoned teachers need to be lifelong learners, as sustainable education requires teaching practices and techniques that secure strong foundations in learning. The changing contexts, needs, and trends of the 21st century challenge teachers to enable students to obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in an ever-changing and digital world (Coklar & Yurdakul, 2017).

Upgrade Technological Skills. Seasoned language instructors agreed that staying abreast of technological advancements is paramount, as ongoing technological improvements directly enhance the quality of online teaching. Mansur (2020) mentioned in his study that to improve the technical skills of modern teachers, increase their preparedness for teaching, and increase the quality of the current education system, teachers should be armed with innovative methods and master technical skills. Consequently, the COVID-19 crisis revealed teachers' need for digital skills to teach effectively online. Teachers should be able to exploit, use, and apply digital technologies in all educational activities (Perifanou et al., 2021).

To effectively teach online, teachers must be skilled in utilizing technology as it is one of the competencies expected of them since the rapid expansion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has transformed learners into digital learners, requiring the integration of technology into the pedagogical approaches, where teachers' attitudes, technological knowledge, and skills play a significant role in its effective integration (Albrahim, 2020; Akram et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, digital competence related to technological skills is not limited to manipulating computers and learning management systems. It is about using digital technology critically, collaboratively, and creatively. It encompasses information and data literacy competence, communication and collaboration competence, digital and creation competence, safety competence, and problem-solving (Rodrigues et al., 2021).

Pedagogical Creativity. Pedagogical creativity is determined by the creative potential of the teacher, which is formed based on accumulated social experience, psychological, pedagogical, and subject knowledge, new ideas, skills, and abilities that allow finding

and applying original solutions, innovative forms, and methods, improving the performance of their professional functions (Ibragimova, 2015).

In this study, seasoned language instructors stressed the importance of creating effective learning resources, using animated materials, designing easily absorbed lessons, and crafting appropriate activities; these perspectives boil down to pedagogical creativity. In a general sense, the continuous development of the creative competence of the teaching staff of educational institutions, the improvement of oriented educational programs and technologies, the development of the creative abilities of the recipients of education, the creation of modern information and methodological support increase the efficiency of the process (Saidovna, 2021).

One of the aspects that determines teachers' competency is creativity and innovativeness. Thus, it is just right that instructors, whether seasoned or neophyte, boost their pedagogical creativity as this competency is one of the aspects that hones the quality of the graduates of a certain school as it aims to nurture learners' "possibility thinking" through effective teaching strategies in a supportive environment. However, there are still many educators who are not creative and innovative enough to develop appropriate learning models and design creative and innovative learning media and interesting learning resources (Suharyatia et al., 2019; Liao et al., 2018).

Peer and School Admin Support. Peer support is offering and receiving help based on shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment between people in similar situations. In connection, the quality of an organization is virtually inextricable from the quality of relationships among the people who comprise the organization (Repper et al., 2013; Sias & Shin, 2019). Seasoned language instructors emphasized the importance of collective learning and support in enhancing online teaching. They believe in fostering partnerships and collaboration across disciplines, implementing peer coaching initiatives, organizing regular meetings with fellow educators to discuss online teaching matters, and engaging in collaborative problem-solving with co-teachers. This collective approach stresses the significance of a supportive and collaborative community to navigate the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities presented by online language instruction.

On the other hand, most scientists and researchers of education believe that if we are to have a change in education, it should start with educational management. Thus, school administrators, as the representatives of educational management in schools, are of great importance. They have various roles and responsibilities (Akbaba-Altun & Bulut, 2021; Behbahani, 2011). Anent to this study, seasoned language instructors expressed sentiments to their respective school administrators, which include fostering a friendly and targeted training environment, maintaining a consistent yet flexible teaching platform, providing comprehensive support for technical needs, prioritizing the well-being and mental health of instructors and students, and offering formal training opportunities for veteran instructors. These sentiments raised the need for school administrators to demonstrate responsiveness in addressing these multifaceted challenges and ensuring a conducive online learning environment.

In light of the above discussion, peer and school admin support improves teachers in online instruction. Studies showed that peer support is crucial for professional development, and co-teaching improves teachers' competence and autonomy associated with increased flexibility (Rahman, 2019; Riley-Lepo et al., 2023). Meanwhile, school admin support such as mentoring programs, staff development, assistance with parents, and support in general with teachers' personal and professional issues ultimately affect teachers' decisions to remain in the profession. A study revealed that administrative support has a significant role in influencing teachers' perception of teaching, self-efficacy, decreasing stress, cultivating a positive school culture, and lessening teacher burnout. The recommendations include ways district and school-level administrators can create a collaborative learning environment where teachers and students are successful (Martinez & McAbee, 2020; Anugweje, 2022).

Implication for Practice

This phenomenological study unveiled the lived experiences of seasoned language instructors in online teaching with which the identified themes have profound implications to the teaching practices as well as to the learning process.

Technological Hurdle. It is crucial to emphasize the importance of continuing professional development in technology for language instructors. Regular training sessions, workshops, and resources can empower instructors to overcome technological challenges, fostering confidence and competence in navigating online teaching platforms. This is in adherence to Republic Act No. 10912, otherwise known as the Continuing Professional Development Act of 2016, which aims to continuously improve the competence of Filipino professionals and make them attuned to the development and advancements in their chosen field.

Evoke Uncertainty. Implementing strategies to establish a sense of trust and connection with students is crucial. Encouraging open communication channels, providing personalized feedback, and utilizing assessment methods that promote authenticity can help mitigate the uncertainty surrounding student engagement and honesty in the online learning environment. On a national level, nonetheless, encouraging open communication and providing personalized feedback must comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, ensuring that any information shared is protected and handled appropriately (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)).

Limit students' participation. Designing interactive and engaging online activities can encourage student participation. Instructors should explore various tools and strategies to create a collaborative virtual learning environment, promoting active involvement and ensuring students feel connected to the learning process. This is to support Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development

Goals to ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Moreover, with students' absences due to technical problems like slow internet, instructors can give special activities and instructions to cope with their academics (The 17 goals | Sustainable Development).

Prevalence of Dishonesty. Implementing clear guidelines on academic integrity and fostering a supportive learning environment can deter dishonest behavior. Moreover, incorporating assessment methods that promote critical thinking and the application of knowledge can reduce the temptation for dishonest practices. In the contemporary, civilized world, academic integrity is fundamental to legal culture, the scientific community, and the relationship between educators and students. Each nation faces issues with academic integrity, although the causes vary greatly throughout nations, among various geographic areas, and based on cultural norms. The legal culture of the nation has a significant influence on academic integrity, but it also depends on how quickly individuals of other ethnicities and religions can pick up and adhere to local customs (Duliba et al., 2021).

Language Education Becomes Complex. It is imperative to develop a streamlined and adaptable curriculum for online language teaching. Effectively integrating technology into language lessons, providing diverse language resources, and employing innovative teaching methods can simplify the complexity associated with online language instruction. In the context of education, language and technology are tools for individual and societal development (Warschauer, 2002).

Promote Innovative Learning. Recognizing online teaching as an opportunity for professional growth can motivate language instructors. Institutions should provide platforms for sharing best practices, experiences, and successes in online teaching, fostering a supportive community of educators. On top of that, creating a culture that values and rewards innovation in language teaching is essential. Sharing best practices and experiences can significantly enhance the teaching experience and outcomes (Palloff & Pratt, 2013). Institutions should provide resources for exploring and implementing new teaching methodologies, technologies, and approaches, fostering a dynamic and innovative online language education environment (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

Ignites Passion for Teaching. Recognizing and supporting the passion for teaching can be achieved through mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and platforms for sharing success stories. Institutions should actively promote a positive and inspiring atmosphere that nurtures the intrinsic motivation of language instructors in the online teaching context (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Seeking Help and Collaboration. Seasoned Language instructors should be encouraged to actively seek support and guidance from colleagues, administrators, or professional development resources. Institutions can establish a culture that promotes collaboration and fosters an environment where seeking help is seen as a strength rather than a weakness, ultimately enhancing the overall teaching experience. Additionally, creating opportunities for collaborative projects and initiatives among language instructors can enhance their sense of community. Collaborative efforts can lead to the development of shared resources, strategies, and best practices that improve online teaching as a collective effort (Guskey, 2002; Timperley et al., 2007).

Open-mindedness and Introspection. Emphasizing the importance of open-mindedness in professional development programs can cultivate adaptability among language instructors. Institutions should encourage a mindset that embraces change and innovation in online teaching methodologies, fostering an environment that values continuous learning and flexibility. Further, incorporating self-assessment tools and reflection exercises into professional development programs can empower language instructors to monitor their performance and make necessary adjustments. Promoting a habit of regular self-checking contributes to ongoing improvement in online teaching practices, keeping sanity and good health in general (Dweck, 2006; Farrell, 2003).

Participating in Seminar-workshop. Effective professional development includes workshops crucial in changing teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices, ultimately improving student outcomes. Thus, Institutions should invest in organizing regular seminars and workshops specifically tailored for online language instruction. This provides a platform for instructors to share experiences and offers valuable insights, updates, and training on effective online teaching methods (Guskey, 2002).

Work-life Balance. Work-life balance contributes to employee well-being and productivity, suggesting that organizations should support practices promoting this balance. Promoting a healthy work-life balance is crucial for the well-being of language instructors. Institutions should implement policies prioritizing the importance of downtime, self-care, and stress management. Training programs can include strategies for maintaining balance while excelling in online teaching responsibilities (Hakanen et al., 2018).

Keeping a Positive Outlook. Integrating positive psychology principles into professional development can create a positive teaching environment. Providing resources on stress reduction, mindfulness, and fostering a culture of gratitude can help language instructors maintain a positive mindset, even in the face of challenges. These practices can enhance the well-being and performance of seasoned language instructors. Indeed, gratitude and positive thinking can be incorporated into the professional development of teachers (Lyubomirsky, 2008; Seligman, 2011).

Seeking Divine Providence. Recognizing and respecting the diverse beliefs and coping mechanisms of language instructors is essential. Institutions should foster an inclusive environment accommodating various religious or spiritual practices, allowing instructors to draw upon their faith for strength and resilience in online teaching endeavors. Recognizing and respecting diverse beliefs and coping mechanisms in educational settings, particularly by accommodating religious or spiritual practices, is essential for fostering

an inclusive environment. Studies have shown that spiritual and religious coping mechanisms can significantly enhance mental health and resilience. For instance, faith and spirituality provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and hope, which are crucial for mental well-being (Ozcan et al., 2021).

Learning by Doing. Emphasizing experiential learning for language instructors is paramount. Professional development programs should incorporate hands-on activities, simulated online teaching scenarios, and practical exercises to enhance their ability to navigate virtual classrooms effectively. Encouraging a trial-and-error approach will empower instructors to adapt and refine their teaching methods in the online environment. Studies have shown that experiential learning enhances motivation and engagement, critical for successful teaching and learning environments. Providing hands-on training helps learners apply their knowledge to real-world situations, thereby improving their problem-solving skills. Furthermore, experiential learning fosters a deeper connection between educators and their teaching practices, promoting continuous professional growth. (Huang & Jiang, 2020).

Be a Lifelong Learner. Institutions should foster a culture of continuous learning, providing opportunities for language instructors to engage in ongoing professional development. Workshops, webinars, and conferences focused on emerging online education and language instruction trends can keep instructors abreast of the latest methodologies and pedagogical approaches. Thus, institutions should offer structured professional development programs with hands-on activities and practical exercises. This experiential learning approach enables instructors to apply new skills in a controlled environment, fostering a trial-and-error mindset that encourages adaptation and refinement of teaching methods (Vadivel et al., 2021).

Upgrade Technological Skills. Recognizing the critical role of technology in online language instruction, institutions should invest in comprehensive training programs to enhance instructors' technological proficiency. Regular training sessions on the effective use of online tools, learning management systems, and multimedia resources can empower instructors to create engaging and dynamic virtual learning environments. Institutions should encourage language instructors to explore and familiarize themselves with online teaching platforms. Providing exposure to different platforms through training sessions or workshops enables instructors to choose and adapt tools that align with their teaching styles and meet the diverse needs of their students. Research shows that pedagogical and ICT training can significantly improve instructors' confidence and effectiveness in using technology for online teaching. For instance, digital literacy and educational technology training enhance teachers' ability to manage virtual classrooms and engage students interactively (Myyry et al., 2023).

Pedagogical Creativity. Encouraging language instructors to embrace creativity in their pedagogical approaches is essential. Institutions should provide a supportive environment that values and rewards innovative teaching methods. Collaborative platforms, interactive assignments, and diverse instructional materials can create a more engaging and effective online language learning experience. Thus, professional development programs should include training on creative pedagogical techniques and offer workshops and resources to help instructors integrate these methods into their teaching practice (Yu et al., 2023).

Peer and School Admin Support. Establishing a system for peer support and collaboration is essential. Institutions should facilitate regular forums or communities where language instructors can share experiences, exchange best practices, and support one another. Peer mentoring programs can also be implemented to foster a sense of community and camaraderie among instructors. Furthermore, institutions should prioritize responsiveness to the needs and concerns of language instructors. Regular communication channels, feedback mechanisms, and avenues for instructors to voice their opinions can contribute to a collaborative and supportive working environment. Administrators should actively address concerns raised by instructors, fostering a sense of partnership and shared responsibility for the success of online language instruction (Harris, 2002).

Implication for Future Research

In the field of online language education, comprehensive research is needed to understand the long-term effects of continual professional development on seasoned instructors. Educational institutions can draw valuable insights from investigations into how workshops, online courses, and collaborative learning communities contribute to maintaining and enhancing instructors' technology skills and pedagogical innovation.

Moreover, delving into instructors' coping techniques and overall well-being is a critical area requiring further research. In seasoned instructors, institutional support emerges as a potential mitigator of burnout and stress. A nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to job satisfaction and resilience may inform the development of targeted support programs.

Examining school administrators' perspectives on support systems and regulations for online language educators is paramount. Future research endeavors can scrutinize the impact of administrative responsiveness to instructors' demands and concerns on the landscape of online language instruction. This necessitates a comparative analysis between institutional policies and instructors' lived experiences.

In parallel, future studies should spotlight the student experience in online language courses. Investigating the ripple effects of instructors' modifications on student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes is crucial for unraveling the dynamics within virtual classrooms. Research efforts can also explore innovative approaches to foster community and connection among online language learners.

Additionally, community perspectives on online language instruction and its broader educational impact demand further scrutiny. Research initiatives can delve into community attitudes, expectations, and support structures concerning online language instruction. Gaining insights into how communities value virtual language instruction can shape initiatives to foster meaningful partnerships between educational institutions and the wider community.

Generally, the research trajectory in online language education should adopt a holistic approach, examining the interconnected experiences of seasoned language instructors, school administrators, students, and the community. By exploring the long-term consequences of professional development, unraveling coping mechanisms, scrutinizing administrative responsiveness, understanding student experiences, and gauging community perspectives, researchers can significantly contribute to the ongoing enhancement of online language education.

Conclusions

This phenomenological inquiry delved into the nuanced experiences of seasoned language instructors in online teaching, encompassing their challenges, coping strategies, and valuable insights for improvement. The findings offer insights for improving the online language teaching experience and suggest studies that benefit seasoned language instructors, school administrators, students, and the community in general.

Upon in-depth introspection of seasoned language instructors' experiences in online teaching, I realized that learning is a never-ending process. It is a path with no beginning and no end since knowledge, skills, and technology are constantly evolving, necessitating individuals, regardless of age, to adapt and grow continuously. Indeed, this is particularly relevant to these seasoned instructors regarding technological advancement, pedagogical adaptation, meeting students' learning needs, global connectivity, reflective practices, and professional development.

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