A Phenomenological Study on the Lived Experiences of Self-Aware-Non-Fluent English Teachers

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Abstract

This study delved into the lived experiences of self-aware-non-fluent English teachers in their instructional delivery to come up with practical strategies and ways to strengthen the delivery of instruction in using the English language. Accordingly, qualitative research design and hermeneutic phenomenological processes were utilized. In analyzing the acquired responses from the participants, the following steps were applied: (1) hermeneutic phenomenological reduction; (2) imaginative variation, where the possible meanings of horizons were attained through the individual and composite structural descriptions; lastly, (3) essence, where the synthesis and reflections were made to form implications. The epoche was also applied before and during the conduct of this qualitative research to suspend the researcher's connection to the experiences of the participants and maintain bias-free data. Based on the testimonies gathered from the participants, 139 subordinate themes, 28 superordinate themes, and four (4) main themes were unveiled. Challenges encountered in using the English language in an English classroom, Practices in developing English language fluency in the classroom, Various training on enriching the English language fluency among English teachers; and Favorable experiences as English teachers were the four (4) main themes which highlighted all the significant occurrences in the classroom regarding English language fluency. As a result, a booklet entitled "I am a Pedagogue: Repertoire of English Fluency Enrichment Strategies" was crafted, which emphasized strategies acquired from the lived experience of the participants and was intended to be applied by all the English teachers in Calamba City.

Keywords: *English Teachers; Enrichment Strategies; Instructional Delivery; Non-fluency*

INTRODUCTION

English has been considered a universal language, for it is the most spoken language worldwide. According to Lyons (2021), out of the world's approximately 7.8 billion inhabitants, 1.35 billion speak English. Because of several historical factors, most notably the patterns of colonialism by English speakers. The implementation of English language education was promoted in the Philippines when the United States defeated Spain in 1889, and since then, English has become the common medium of communication in the country (Bernardo, 2006, as cited in Turmudi & Hajan, 2020).

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The language clause in the 1987 constitution, Article XIV, Sections 6 and 7, provided a legal basis for the many language policies that should be implemented throughout the country, according to Espiritu (n.d.) of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

This focuses on the Filipino and English languages as communication and instruction mediums. The Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) issued Department Order No. 25 in 1974, which was the first to implement the policy. In 1974, the policy on bilingual education's implementation suggestions was issued. The Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) of the Philippines is defined as the use of Filipino and English as separate mediums of instruction in specific subject areas (Portillas, n.d.).

The Department of Education (2016) stated that the K–12 curricula adhered to the previous standards in utilizing English in education, with the goal of assisting students in developing highly developed literacy skills that enable them to comprehend that the English language is the most widely used medium of communication in Trade and the Arts, Sciences, Mathematics, and the global economy. As a result, the academic community in the Philippines has continued to enrich the English language, as most disciplines are taught and written in English.

Key stakeholders from the government, academia, private, and non-government sectors agreed that, while the Philippines is progressing in terms of English competency, the country needs to step up its efforts in developing the teaching and learning of English, enriching it as a vital skill in the workforce (Cabigon, 2015, as cited in Alamo, 2018).

Cabigon (2015) also noted that the Philippines was one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world, with the majority of people achieving some level of fluency in the target language. According to the latest international education organization, Education First, the Philippines' global English competence has slipped to 27th place in the 2020 EF English Proficiency Index (Magsambol, 2020).

Likewise, Madrunio, Martin, and Plata (2016) explained that English language education in the Philippines was frequently experiencing low academic performance among Filipino students. Poverty, lack of school facilities, qualified teachers, and learning resources were the contributing factors. Generally, the factors above come from the country's financial difficulties, but they may be different concerning qualified teachers.

Additionally, according to Schleicher (2018), the vast majority of learners in the Philippines failed to attain minimum competency levels in all three PISA disciplines, reading, mathematics, and scientific literacy, with a wide socioeconomic disparity. In reading and math, 81 percent of kids scored below the required competency level, and 78 percent in science. In later years, poor English proficiency severely limits kids' capacity to learn in all disciplines.

Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (2016) emphasized that the Philippines language curricula possessed a strong literacy orientation. The Mother Tongue, Filipino Language, and English Language curricula were each focused on the hands-on application of students' skills, knowledge, and understanding. It was reflected in the goal of the curricula, which was to lead graduates who apply the language conventions, principles, strategies, and skills in (1) interaction with others, (2) understanding and learning other content areas, and (3) fending for themselves in whatever field of endeavor they may engage in. The English curriculum also has a literacy orientation with multiple references to learners of the future. English is seen as a tool that can equip students with the tools to navigate the world economy, producing learners who will be able to

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appreciate and be sensitive to sociocultural diversity and understand that the meaning of any form of communication depends on context, purpose, and audience.

During the Multi-Stakeholder Panel Discussion: PISA and the Challenge of Education Quality in the Philippines conducted at SEAMEO Innotech, Briones (2019) issued orders to address the challenge of quality in basic education. She emphasized that learners' weaknesses in English reading had hampered their performance in Science and Math, as English is the medium of instruction and testing in subsequent grades. She also told DepEd's Curriculum and Instruction strand, specifically the Bureau of Curriculum Development (BCD) and the Bureau of Education Assessment (BEA), to look into how learners' language choices affect their test scores.

In line with that, Bernardo (2017) mentioned that the present English Language Teaching and Learning (ELTL) curriculum, which was termed K-12 Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum, was anchored on language acquisition, language teaching, and learning and assessment. This tapped the following characteristics: (1) all languages are interconnected and intertwined, (2) acquiring a language is a continuous and active process, (3) meaning is a prerequisite to learning, and (4) effective use of language is achieved through meaningful engagement and study of texts, (5) listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing comprises language learning and (6) language learning requires recognizing, accepting, valuing, and building on students' existing language competence, plus the deployment of non-standard forms of the language, and outspreading the range of language accessible to students.

It is unfavorable to hear feedback from learners towards their English teachers about speaking difficulties. Even though this issue is exceptionally saddening and frustrating, it is something to be accosted. Like Spring (2019), to teach students how to speak English, one should probably be proficient in spoken English. It is challenging to teach what one does not know. Generally, it is not something that teachers do not know. It is something to be practiced and focused on since they serve as the lifesavers of students in learning the second language.

Bernardo (2006, as cited in Turmudi & Hajan, 2020) suggested that English could be spoken and understood well if the people are exposed to both spoken and written discourses. It is undeniable that in a classroom, such difficulty is inevitable.

There are many studies about the student's academic performance in a particular English subject, indigenous students' language proficiency, the relationship between first and second languages, and suchlike; and these are acceptable since the students' experiences must always come first in the teaching-learning process.

Nevertheless, there is also a need for the English teachers to determine possible factors to be developed not just for the students but also for them and professionals; and the researcher believed that one of these factors was non-fluency. Non-fluency is a word that most language teachers do not want to hear nor experience, for it is given that once a teacher passes the licensure examination and acquires many years of teaching experience, pride comes in, and being proficient and competent takes place. However, in some language classrooms, it is undeniable to admit that non-fluency still occurs. It may be a controversial issue, but it is essential to address this by looking at it as professional development and self-awareness.

With this, the researcher opted to discover the experiences of self-aware-non-fluent English teachers to decide on practical strategies and ways to strengthen the delivery of instruction through the English language. Specifically, the phenomenological approach was employed since this was a

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design of inquiry as a methodological framework that had evolved into a process that sought reality in individuals' narratives of their lived experiences of phenomena which were relevant to the study's intention in acquiring the lived experiences of self-aware-non-fluent English teachers in the English classroom. Specifically, the hermeneutic design was applied since, according to Finlay (2018), It aimed to associate meanings applied in an embodied, relational, and contextual way.

Consequently, these obtained experiences were thematized and described through language that would serve as the bases of this study to come up with standards and strategies to help these teachers develop their means of honing students' English language skills—fluency in speaking. Taking pride in this profession, the researcher believed that each has to do something to progress for the sake of the students and themselves.

LITERATURE REVIEW
English Language as a Medium of Instruction

According to Adna (2016), English was the dominant international language. A quarter of the population would speak English since it served as the language of communications, science, information technology, business, entertainment, and diplomacy and had increasingly become the key to global conversation. In the education field, English was learned by over one billion people, which led it to be termed the second language or foreign language.

Moreover, Ball (2011, as cited in Leaño, Piragasam & Rabi, 2019), in advancing quality education, it has always been a challenge for any country's educational policy to decide on and recommend the right language/s that must be used in instruction. Whether inside or outside the classrooms, the language of instruction denoted the language used to teach the educational system's basic curriculum. Some countries decided to use one language, causing learners who were mother-tongue speakers at a tremendous disadvantage in the educational system as they were receiving instruction in a foreign official language. And it was evident that some other areas in the Philippines have different dialects. They tend to adopt the accent in uttering English language words in communication, which is somewhat misleading and turns into communication breakdown.

Executive Order No. 210 (2013), under former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, was issued to strengthen the use of the English language as a medium of instruction in the educational system. It also aimed to improve the use of the English language as a medium of instruction, depending on the improvement of the educational system as a whole, particularly in the training of educators and the provision of learning materials and resources.

Specifically, she emphasized that reading in English was a weakness of most learners; this might also affect the learners' performance in Science and Math as the language of instruction and testing in later grades was English. In conclusion, she pointed out that it was possible to strengthen the teaching and learning in English if teachers were to continue with English as the language of instruction and testing. However, in the current situation, most of the teachers of other subjects or non-English subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, etc. tend to utilize the Filipino language since their point was that the main aim of teaching was to highlight the lesson of the subject regardless the language being used.

Accordingly, Richards and Bohlke (2011, as cited in Deocampo, 2020) asserted that knowing what to teach, how to teach, and what methods to use for a particular topic empowers teachers and

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allows them to personalize their teaching. Bada and Olusegun (2015, as cited in Deocampo, 2020) added that different types of students combined with a particular learning environment were likely to form the knowledge and skills that defined teaching expertise. With this, Richards and Bohlke (2011, as cited in Deocampo, 2020) said that as aspiring teachers, teacher-trainees needed to demonstrate professionalism in the actual English language classroom by presenting lessons that motivate students in the long run and help them to gain competence in using English. Therefore, incorporating and integrating different kinds of knowledge, building up a sophisticated pedagogical repertoire, and adapting to learner diversity were imperative to teacher preparation.

Classroom practices, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO-IIEP) (2021), were related to the activities and methods that teachers and students used in class during the teaching and learning process. They differed depending on social, political, and economic circumstances. Teachers were the key players in managing classroom practices, and they needed to be motivated to change their methodology. So, regardless of the subject, if teachers, most especially English teachers, were aware of English language proficiency as one of the goals to be achieved, anything would be possible.

Moreover, the British Council (2022) discussed that games offer a fun-filled, relaxed environment where people in the classroom could practice using new words and were free to express themselves. Participating in recreational activities was an effective way to develop language and communication skills. It also helped the students to be more socially confident and might be a way to forge friendships.

Williams (2009, as cited in Buendía and Macías, 2019) pointed out that various authors recognized the importance of professional development and continuous growth of language teachers in different settings and through various methodological approaches. Teacher professional development was defined as "a life-long process of growth which involves collaborative and autonomous learning… teachers are engaged in the process, and they actively reflect on their practices."

Freeman (2004, as cited in Buendía and Macías, 2019) used the term 'second language teacher education' to refer to the professional preparation and the continuing professional development of teachers, while Craft (2000, as cited in Buendía and Macías, 2019) referred to professional development as a broad range of activities designed to contribute to the learning of teachers who have completed their initial training.

In regard to possible strategies, Albiladi (2020) supported this idea, for he believed that given the prevalence of access to the digital world, educators have the opportunity to explore further and understand the effects of integrating technology, specifically social networking tools, in classrooms, as they can provide more engaging and appealing educational opportunities in language classes. Specifically, Ahmad and Abidin (2010, as cited in Albiladi, 2020) pointed out that many educators and language specialists perceive social networking applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube as an alternative method for teaching and learning English.

Valle (2002, as cited in Alrawashdeh & Al-Zayed, 2017) suggested that creating students' interests in learning English through plays, songs, stories, and real-life experiences could result in more excellent students' success and enjoyment in studying English.

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Furthermore, Panko et al. (2007, as cited in Anwer, 2019) discussed that the emphasis on practical learning in a classroom has vital importance in student retention. The teachers must be flexible and adaptive to the developing classroom, which could contribute to effective learning for the students. Activity Based Learning (ABL), which is defined as a learning process in which learners are constantly engaged, was one such method. Instead of sitting as passive listeners, students in Activity-Based Learning actively participate in the learning process. These authors noted that the active learning approach differs from traditional teaching methods in two ways: (a) students take an active part in the classroom and (b) students collaborate in a learning environment. These two aspects of ABL were crucial in creating a positive learning environment in the classroom.

English prevails as the predominant medium of instruction for most subjects taught with this language. However, there was still a need for it to be developed through the practical processes of teaching and learning through enjoyable and attainable strategies.

Importance of English Fluency

Magsambol (2020) emphasized that the Philippines' global English proficiency slid down to 27th place in the 2020 EF English Proficiency Index, according to the report by the international education company Education First.

Likewise, Madrunio, Martin, and Plata (2016) pointed out that English language education in the Philippines was frequently faced with low academic performance among Filipino students. It was due to many factors, such as poverty, lack of school facilities, qualified teachers, and learning resources. Generally, the factors mentioned above come from the country's financial difficulties, but it might be different regarding qualified teachers.

Likewise, Spring (2019) mentioned that he would agree that one should probably be proficient in spoken English to teach students how to speak English. It was challenging to teach what one did not know about.

Indeed, learning a language requires the five macro skills of the English language: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing. It was also said that, generally, it was assumed that different teachers had different levels of language competencies, for some may be competent in reading and writing but poor in listening and speaking and vice versa.

Moreover, Velasquez-Ocampo (2003, as cited in Aziz & Gul, 2015) stated that teachers were exemplary when they extensively spoke among their students. Teachers with good speaking skills are expected to have students who talk. Usually, teachers and students do not get the chance to speak English in the classroom or outside.

Moreover, it was said that speaking was not a part of the examination; but learning to speak required a lot of practice and attention. Difficulty in English might be inevitable for second language speakers, but listening and repeating meant learning through the mother tongue. Hence, the teacher could also adapt naturally.

English Non-fluency in the Classroom

The English language is said to be an international language. It is a demand of today's world. To survive in society, people have to understand and speak English fluently. Hence, it plays a more significant role for the people in a community. It is an essential subject for people whose English

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language is not their native language, specifically in the Philippines. However, there are issues that still, after years of education, students, as well as teachers, cannot speak English fluently.

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (2016, as cited in Leaño, Piragasam, and Rabi, 2019), speaking most of the time was unplanned, changing, and flexible. The manner and sense of speaking rely much on situations that happened; who were involved, including their purposes, familiarities, and understanding. With this, it was relevant for these mentioned factors to be clarified and applied predominantly by the teachers in the classroom.

Furthermore, Gan (2012, as cited in Leaño, Piragasam, & Rabi, 2019) claimed that insufficient English vocabulary was a problem in the classroom. It was seen as the main reason students sometimes challenge themselves to express themselves vividly and correctly. Students likewise thought that this influenced their fluency in their speech. Another noted cause of oral language deficiency in students is a scarcity of chances to speak English in class. Most of the lectures were typically didactic, and teaching approaches are programmed. Hence, it was expected that little interaction like small-group activities and in-class questioning was anticipated, for these were not naturally practiced or spoken.

Particularly, Adil (2021) stated the following possible reasons for non-fluency: (1) common grammar mistakes while speaking the English language; (2) lack of confidence in speaking the English language; (3) shyness in speaking the English Language; (4) fear of making mistakes when speaking the English language; (5) lack of motivation in students in speaking the English language; and (6) nervous in speaking the English language in public. He added that the teachers have to focus on these problems and try to resolve them by making environments where the students can feel comfortable speaking the English language and asking questions, and reminding themselves that learning the English language is the process of speaking the English language with other people and in public fluently so it better to practice it in the classroom by starting it with themselves for the students to quickly learn and to easily communicate, and to feel comfortable speaking with other people.

Moreover, Xie (2019) shared her experience as a language speaker, and she narrated that teachers and teacher trainers, although having some of the best qualifications around, still obtained confusion or uncertainty with their language ability. She added that confusion arose with words or vocabulary, grammatical structure, and pronunciation. She noticed this happened more with non-native speakers like her. She asserted that it is essential to discuss these doubts and embrace the idea that all English teachers should remain language learners as part of the development. Feeling uncertain and unconfident could come from the following reasons: firstly, non-native speakers learn too much about the rules, such as vocabulary and grammar, for examinations rather than communication skills and language skills when studying English in school. For her, It was a very different context from using English for practical and communicative purposes at work. Secondly, exposure to language would depend mainly on life experiences. Thirdly, for the majority of the teaching time, teachers needed to grade their language down to make it comprehensible for our learners.

Last but not least, English, as the most widely used language, evolved. There was new stuff to learn every single day. There was a definite need for teachers to maintain the role of a language learner to adapt to the ever-changing language.

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Lestari (2014) asserted that four skills must be mastered in English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills were necessary to learn. But the problem was that students often complained about the difficulty of learning English; one of them was how to write, read, and have different meanings. So many students were less interested in learning English, while interest in learning played an essential role in the learning process. If students were not interested in learning the English language, the learning process would not run well because students' interests determine their success in the learning process.

Interest, according to Firman, 2009, as cited in Manurung, 2018, is a feeling or emotion that causes attention to be drawn to an item, an event, or a process. Learning English requires a high level of interest. When a student displays interest in studying English, he or she is making an attempt to do so. Students gain knowledge and improve their English by putting up effort, and they will continue to engage with it as their interest grows. Speaking fluency is one of the most critical factors which reflects successful learning. Fillmore (1979, as cited in Pratiwi, 2018), fluency is characterized differently. First, he defined fluency as "the ability to talk at length with few pauses." Second, fluent speaker can express their ideas with understandable, reasonable, and "semantically dense" sentences. Third, a person can be considered an eloquent speaker if they can state the ideas appropriately within the context. Lastly, Fillmore argued that fluent speakers are creative with their language use. Fluency refers to an understandable response in a communication, appropriate use of connecting words in a speech, well-pronounced words, and sentences accompanied by proper intonation.

Al-Zoubi (2018) mentioned that generally, speaking skills had become the students' weakness in learning the English language, and its roots were teaching, lack of motivation, the teacher, practice and interest, and the curriculum design. He also explained that language exposure could be considered as the contact the learners possessed with the target language they were learning and needed to learn. Moreover, one of the most important roles of the teacher was to provide learners with sufficient exposure to practice the target language in various contexts and from different speakers.

Martin (2006, as cited in Castillejo et al., 2018) mentioned that the language preferences of teachers and students were often identified as the factors behind the continuous deterioration of English language proficiency among Filipino students.

Phipps and Borg (2009, as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017) expressed that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning are affected by their own experiences as learners and are established when they go to university, act as a filter through which teachers explain new information, exert a substantial effect on teachers' instructional practices, are, not always indicated in what they do in the classroom, have a significant impact on their teaching decisions, and significantly affect what and how they learn during language teaching education. Teacher education should interfere with changing teachers' ideas if it is necessary for their professional development, according to Freeman and Johnson (n.d., as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017).

Moreover, Gilakjani and Sabouri (2017) asserted that teachers use their previous beliefs for teaching and learning, and these beliefs impact what they learn and how they learn them in their teaching programs. According to certain studies, teacher education has a substantial impact on modifying teachers' opinions. Teachers' attitudes on English language teaching and learning are influenced by their prior views, according to the findings. What teachers perceive about specific

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developments in English language education is related to what they understand about those changes. As a result, in order to comprehend the specific developments in English language education, teachers must first comprehend their own ideas.

Impact of Code-switching on English learning and teaching

Weldse (2015, as cited in Alamo, 2018) highlighted that speaking a specific language or dialect was like playing with a light switch for most English teachers: it was never constant. Teachers who changed the language when they spoke could be identified as code-switchers.

Likewise, Martin (2014, as cited in Mangila, 2018) mentioned that in the Philippine classroom discourse, code-switching, which was also known as pedagogic code-switching or classroom code-switching, had become a tricky issue because Filipino teachers are expected to only use English in teaching content courses like mathematics and science, in addition to English as prescribed by the Bilingual Education Policy Pedagogic code-switching.

Classroom code-switching, as defined by Lin (2008, as cited in Mangila, 2018), specifically pertained to the alternate usage of more than one code in the classroom by any participants, such as teachers, students, teacher aides, etc.

Furthermore, Borlongan (2009, as cited in Mangila, 2018) found that most English language teachers' codes frequently switched, violating the 'English only' policy in English-dominated classrooms.

According to Ahmad (2009, as quoted in Memory, Liswaniso, and Nkengbeza, 2018), code-switching provides students with opportunities to communicate and enhance their understanding. Also, it was time effective because teachers would not waste time explaining or searching simple words to simplify any confusion that arises.

Moreover, Promnath and Tayjasa (2016) demonstrated that code-switching improved students' comprehension. Switching codes saved time and made learners more confident and at ease while learning. When compared to utilizing simply English, code-switching made it easier for students with lesser performance to follow the teachings. It relieved learners' tension by allowing them to transition from English to Filipino when they didn't know how to say something in English. Switching to Filipino also made it easier to run classrooms and incorporate morality and ethics.

However, Promnath (2016) mentioned that teachers suggested that code-switching was not supposed to be carried out word by word; instead, switching should be done inter-sententially or intra-sententially. They advised that code-switching word by word is time-consuming, so both teachers agreed that the switching should be done to emphasize some important messages or complex content for the students to understand. They added that switching to conclude each lesson could help students recall what they recently learned, and this could also help them realize what they missed in the lesson. Code-switching was the alternating use of two or more languages in teaching and learning for easy acquisition of knowledge by learners. Also, he emphasized that most teachers showed positive attitudes toward code-switching but believed that code-switching should be moderate.

Also, in the research conducted by Alamo (2018), which is entitled "Code Switching: Teachers' Pedagogical Practice in English Language Learning (ELL) Classrooms," some of the teachers mentioned that code-switching slowed mastery of the language and it prevented students from developing their communicative competence. It was supported that code-switching was not

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good in defining the word or unlocking difficulties because students only remember Filipino terms rather than English.

According to Bernado (2006, as cited in Hajan, 2020, it was suggested that English could be spoken and understood well if the people were exposed to both spoken and written discourses

Moreover, de la Cruz and Monterey (2013) stated that in the Philippines, Dr. Julio Teehankee, a professor and research fellow of Political Science and International Studies at De La Salle University, Manila (DLSU), asserted that although bilingualism, the ability to speak two languages fluently, English and Filipino languages in the Philippine context, allowed professors to have the edge in teaching their subjects and to communicate with their students more effectively, in other words, inappropriate usage of such ability may lead to the continuing usage of code-switching which had been a problem nowadays. He further emphasized that the problem perhaps was code-switching—the use of Taglish—for there had been an existing policy that prohibited the use of code-switching, which was one of the recommendations given by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU), the accreditor of educational institutions in the Philippines, to minimize the use of code-switching.

Self-awareness as Professional and Self-Growth and Development

Imbs (2020) emphasized that learning about oneself was a journey–exploring, understanding, and fine-tuning ourselves–that developed one into a thriving, likable person. Importantly, it touched self-awareness. For him, self-awareness was a key to high emotional intelligence and a vital leadership skill no matter what rank and title one possessed in the workplace. It served as the cornerstone of leadership that may be associated with kindness, empathy, intelligence, and awareness toward others.

Furthermore, Kahler (2018) stated that in his three decades as a corporate executive and professional coach, he has discovered that honest and objective self-awareness is the most important talent for professional development and advancement. Understanding your strengths, development possibilities, blind spots, and leadership derailers are critical to reaching your career goals. It is a clear understanding of one's personality, strengths, shortcomings, thoughts, beliefs, motives, and emotions. It also enables a person to comprehend other people, understands how they are regarded, and be aware of their current attitudes and responses to others.

Additionally, honest and objective self-awareness is essential because we are not always in tune with the skills that need to be developed, which puts us at risk of stalling our careers. Lack of self-awareness can lead one to focus on the wrong skills. Sometimes, the focus is given to development efforts on the easy stuff. "Executive Presence," "presentation skills," or "networking" are common skills that people put on their list of development opportunities. These might be the right skills to work on, but they are likely not the things that keep us from achieving our career goals. Whatever is holding us back is typically something much more critical and challenging to improve.

Accordingly, Kahler (2018) emphasized that he has this so-called discussion with sure students about their "skills inventory." Before conducting a formal skills assessment, he asks them to identify which skills they leverage for their performance and which ones they feel need further development. It helps set a self-awareness baseline. Once they complete the skills assessment phase, he asks them to compare the baseline to the skills assessment results. It is rare for the two

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lists to match. A reason for the mismatch is that some people focus more on those things that can be learned through traditional learning mechanisms and much less on the skills that are core elements of their personality. Said differently, they tend to overlook their "DNA" and focus on those things that are more tangible. People around them, however, notice the former rather than the latter. Indeed, there is a need for a person to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Likewise, Exploring Your Mind (2022) highlighted professional self-awareness as a technique to improve one's development—after all, one is an integral being. As a result, what one supports in one area can have an impact on another. When learning how to manage one's emotions in order to lead a team, for example, they were already working on their emotional side, which can have a social and physical impact that can be linked to the educational context—the instructor as the leader and the students as teammates. Indeed, the latter could be influenced by their leader depending on how they manage themselves or themselves. It turned out that everything that pertains to one's consciousness, such as focusing on how one acts; what one perceives and what one does it for; what one's thoughts and emotions were like; and how they affected other areas, were all matters that boost personal growth. They all helped increase one's physical, emotional, and social well-being, beginning with self-knowledge and self-regulation.

Similarly, Corcoran (1995, as referenced in Widodo, 2016) stressed the importance of diverse professional development programs in enhancing awareness and learning. The programs provided numerous chances for English teachers to further their education. Teachers' professional development needs may be met through customized and in-service programs. When people have options that meet their needs, expectations, interests, strengths and learning styles, they learn more effectively. Furthermore, professional development programs that were closely linked to school initiatives to improve training were more likely to have a significant impact on practice, and these initiatives could promote the professionalization of teaching by engaging more teachers in serious professional development activities.

The possibility for teachers to interact with their learners, as indicated by Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, and Espinoza (2017), is frequently used as a type of active involvement in the same learning. Context-specific, job-embedded, and content-based teacher professional learning is critical for meeting the unique requirements of kids (and consequently instructors) in various situations.

Similarly, the DepEd Regional Office 2 Cagayan Valley (2019) informed the public about the conduct of Training on English Language Proficiency for Classroom Teachers and School Heads sponsored by ARCZONE Professional Development. To address the challenge of enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills in motivating students to learn through English while improving their language proficiency at the same time, ARCZONE Professional Development, Inc. offered a four-day workshop. This module was intended for English and non-English teachers who earnestly desire to improve their English communication skills for general and professional purposes. Moreover, this was ARCZONE's response to requests of teachers to conduct seminars in preparation for the Test of English Proficiency for Teachers {TEPT} administered by DepEd.

Professional development, according to Day, 1999, as cited in Cortezano, 2021, is defined as "all-natural learning experiences and conscious and coordinated activities that are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the teacher, group, or school, and that contribute to the quality of education in the classroom; it is the process by which teachers, individually and in collaboration

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with others, review, renew, and extend their commitment as change agents to the moratorium on corporal punishment."

There are many foreign and local studies and literature regarding English language non-fluency among the students in the classroom; it is implied that this occurrence can still be experienced in the present time in any part of the world that uses the English language as part of its school curriculum. On the other hand, regarding the teachers' experience in the Philippine context, the topic is not yet explored, prompting the researcher to delve into the self-aware-non-fluent English teachers' world to determine possible ways to enrich the English teaching-learning process.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher utilized the qualitative method of research that was referred to, according to Creswell, 2014, as cited in Almalki, 2016, comprehending and exploring the meaning among different individuals or groups ascribed to various challenges or problems. Moreover, non-experimental research was applied since this kind of research lacked an independent variable. Instead, the context in which the phenomenon and the experiences garnered were observed and analyzed.

Also, Moustakas (1994, as cited in Yüksel, 2015) explained that a phenomenological approach was employed for this, referred to as a design of inquiry as a methodological framework that had evolved into a process that sought reality in individuals' narratives of their lived experiences of phenomena. Specifically, the hermeneutic design aimed to associate meanings applied in an embodied, relational, and contextual way. And these obtained experiences were thematized and described through language (Finlay, 2018). These were all employed since the study highlighted the lived experiences of the self-aware-non-fluent English teachers to come up with strategies that could help them enliven and improve the usage of the English language in the classroom.

Particularly, in this qualitative research, the purposive sampling design was utilized. The participants who met the eligibility criteria were communicated, and the purpose of the study was explained even to their principals and heads. Several participants met the selection criteria for the initial questions given to every school in Calamba City.

However, only a few of them responded. Nonetheless, the researcher still attained the number that should be part of the study, and the agreement to participate willingly was achieved. Spradley (1979, as cited in Palinkas et al., 2015) noted that the availability and willingness to participate and the ability to communicate experience and opinions were relevant as these serve as the initial step of making the study possible.

This study required seven (7) participants that comprised English teachers of high school or college in the Division of Calamba City. The following were the selection criteria for the potential participants of the study: (1) finished Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English; (2) licensed professional teacher; (3) attained at least two (2) years of teaching experience; (4) teaching English subjects or courses in high school/college; and (5) using the Filipino language in instruction for either of the following purposes and reasons: (a) nervousness, shyness or lack of confidence; (b) fear of committing grammatical errors; (c) utilization of code-switching between sentences; (d) hesitation of the students to speak and cooperate in class (for some students, they

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do not want to speak nor to cooperate in the class discussion if the English language is to be used); (e) disturbed environment of the class; and (f) low motivation (if the teacher feels that it is acceptable not to use the English language in the English instruction for the school management or the environment itself is not strict in practicing it).

The fifth criterion was summarized and anchored on the study conducted by Jaya, Petrus, and Pitaloka (2022), for they cited factors concerning non-fluency, which were lack of general knowledge, lack of speaking practice, fear of mistake, lack of words usage and grammar practice, low motivation, low participation, reading laziness, shyness, less dictionary usage, nervousness, fear of criticism, and unfamiliar words pronunciation. Also, Adil Blogger (2022) stated the following possible reasons for non-fluency, which were disturbed environment of the class, limited teaching resources, a large number of students in the classroom, wrong syllabus to be taught, little time for lecture to teach, students hijack lessons, students disturbed the class, using other languages in the classrooms, student depends on a teacher, students bored and not interested in learning the English language and difficult to manage the class.

Utmostly, in the conduct of the study, the primary consideration was the protection of the participants' privacy. The researcher followed the ethical guidelines stipulated in Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU) Research Manual and gave all the privileges to the participants on their desired online platform for the oral interview. It was indispensable that the interview was private and safe to protect the participants. The researcher utilized the online forum to follow the COVID-19 guidelines and protocol that mainly safeguard the participants' safety.

Consequently, at the data gathering, she asked about the participants' willingness by sending them a letter of consent and ensuring that they agreed to the terms and agreement explained in the letter highlighting that the information gathered would be treated with strict confidentiality and would be used exclusively for the purpose of this study before formally inviting them to be interviewed. Also, in analyzing the responses or horizons acquired from the participants' lived experiences, their names were covered through numbers and pseudonyms.

There were four (4) criteria in qualitative research that showed a trustworthy study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1986, as cited in Forero et al., 2018), these were (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) validity, and (d) reliability. Credibility applied was supported by (a) prolonged engagement, (b) persistent observation, (c) triangulation, (d) member checking, and (e) peer review. These factors were used to increase the credibility and quality of this study. Notably, in this study, the thoughts, feelings, and experiences that the participants provided were given importance to achieve trustworthy research through the help of the mentioned criteria.

Research Instrument

In gathering pertinent information, the researcher formed ten (10) interview guide questions and three (3) initial questions that were accorded to the selection criteria. After that, the crafted questions were validated by three (3) experts. Specifically, the first expert suggested developing the entire set of interview questions and maintaining specificity to acquire more meaningful and significant responses. At the same time, the second expert mentioned separating the two questions since it would be difficult to come up with a theme if these two topics belonged to one question only. Also, she suggested using what and how questions only. Lastly, the third expert mentioned

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separating two questions that were not related to one another since experiences and challenges were different.

All the suggestions and corrections were applied and modified to improve the questions. The improved questions were revalidated and used for the interview.

Before using such vital questions, the researcher first communicated with the potential participants by asking three (3) initial questions according to the selection criteria and specific sources and explained the interview's endeavor of inquiry and purpose. These were all done with the English teachers in the Division of Calamba City.

Moreover, the following are the three (3) initial or opening questions to introduce the potential participants to the topic and make them feel comfortable sharing their opinions with the researcher.

1. How long have you been teaching English in high school/college?
2. How do you find teaching English?
3. How often do you use Filipino instead of English when teaching? What is the purpose or reason?

After that, ten (10) interview guide questions were asked to the participants to delve more into their relevant experiences about the research topic.

1. How do you describe your typical day in your English class as a language teacher? What do you love/not love about being an English teacher?
2. What challenges have you encountered in teaching English to your students?
3. Do you have any fear/doubt about using the English language as a medium of instruction? What are these fears/doubts?
4. How long have you been using both languages, English and Filipino, in teaching English subjects?
5. What are the advantages of using the English language in an English classroom?
6. What are the disadvantages of using the English language in an English class?
7. How can you avoid such disadvantages to feasibly enliven the English instructional delivery in the classroom?
8. How do you help yourself improve fluency in using the English language in teaching?
9. What are the support programs your agency or institution has given to enrich your fluency in the English language?
10. What possible strategy would you like to suggest to teach the English language fluently and effectively?

Treatment of Qualitative Data

The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data collected from the participant's responses. Particularly, the researcher crafted an illustration in Figure 1 comprising the steps in analyzing the qualitative data aligned with Moustakas' (1994, as cited in Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015) explanation of phenomenological analysis.

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E P O C H E			
E **P** **O** **C** **H** **E**	**1)HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL REDUCTION**	**2) IMAGINATIVE VARIATION**	**E** **P** **O** **C** **H** **E**
	HORIZONTALIZING	**COMPLETING THE INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS**	
	ACQUIRING THE EMERGING THEMES	**COMPLETING THE COMPOSITE STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS**	
	COMPARING TO OTHER DATA SOURCES	**3) ESSENCE**	
	SPECIFYING INDIVIDUAL TEXTURAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS	**SYNTHESIS**	
	SPECIFYING COMPOSITE TEXTURAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS	**REFLECTIONS THROUGH FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**	
E P O C H E			

Figure 1. Steps in the Conduct of Analysis of the Lived Experiences of Self-Aware- Non-fluent English Teachers

For the first step, it emphasized the hermeneutic phenomenological reduction since the researcher acquired the lived experiences of self-aware-non-fluent English teachers and applied interpretation by obtaining the meanings of the participants' responses. Under this step was horizontalizing, where the researcher gathered and assessed the responses if these were directly aligned to the questions. After doing these, significant responses were chosen, which served as the horizons. These horizons were thematized and clustered into emerging themes with a total of 139 subordinate themes, 28 superordinate themes, and four main themes. Then, through triangulation, the researcher compared the acquired responses to other sources to ensure their consistency and accuracy. The researcher then specified the individual and composite textural descriptions of participants that served as the narrations of the self-aware-non-fluent English teachers of their experiences dealing with their instructional delivery. Specifically, the researcher used their verbatim responses to clearly present their experiences.

Secondly, for the imaginative variation, the researcher sought possible meanings through the individual and composite structural descriptions. These allowed the researcher to imagine the experiences of the self-aware-non-fluent English teachers and come up with structures.

Lastly, the essence highlighted the synthesis and reflections for these consolidated all the narratives and extracted them to form implications.

Most importantly, the epoche was applied before and during the conduct of this qualitative research to suspend the researcher's connection to the experiences of the participants and maintain bias-free data.

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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data gathered, the results of the study are the following:

1. The participants described their experiences by first narrating their typical day as English teachers.

Some of them mentioned the usual routine they had in the classroom, such as 'kumustahan' with the students, greetings, and review. Also, some of them pointed out the opportunities they attained as an English teacher inside and outside the classroom.

However, the majority of the participants emphasized the challenges they encountered in utilizing the English language in the classroom. Various factors were unveiled, including their experiences every day. It tapped the difficulty of both teachers and students in embracing the culture of using the English language as a medium of instruction.

Specifically, they highlighted the following: assessing students' understanding, translating English instructions to Filipino, encouraging students to speak in English, hesitation to speak the language, exposure to the English language in the majority of the subjects, interest in learning English, understanding in learning English, ability to express themselves in English, confidence to speak the English language, the need to speak in vernacular in the English classroom, and high expectations from people.

These were teachers' experiences dealing with instructional delivery in an English classroom. These challenges interrupt English teachers from using English fluently, leading them to use code-switching in their classes. Aside from these, they also mentioned the fears or doubts they experienced as English language teachers. Specifically, these were: students' eyes and mockery of teacher's grammatical errors in speaking, non-fluency in using the English language, doubts about speaking the language, uncertainty with the grammatical usage of English language, doubts about using the English language as a medium of instruction, doubts in accent, pronunciation, and enunciation, feeling that students are not satisfied with the examples given, doubts in English spelling, uncertainty on the students' learning acquisition, students' sudden questions about unfamiliar words, not enough mastery of the topic, committing mistakes, committing grammatical errors, the low interest of students in English subject, getting used to code-switching, and perception that it is okay not to speak in English.

Zuriff (1985) highlighted John B. Watson's Theory of Behaviorism which was a well-known theory focused on changing behavior. For behaviorists, information was conveyed from a knowledgeable person, a teacher, to a less familiar source, a student. In education, behaviorism could inform literacy instructions meaningfully by leading teachers to use specific strategies and assessment methods.

Western Governors University (2020) mentioned that it was a critical theory associated with direct instructions and implications for speaking that could improve language fluency. Behaviorism focuses on the idea that all behaviors are learned through interaction with the environment. This learning theory states that behaviors are learned from the environment and that innate or inherited factors have very little influence on behavior.

Similarly, Language Fluency: Definition & Promotion Strategies (2017) emphasized that linguists had endless debates and came up with countless definitions for the term ''fluency''. Nonetheless, linguists disagreed with having a general definition of fluency, but the critical association about this term was confidently, quickly, and accurately expressing oneself in a

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language. Speed, pauses, repairs, proper expressions, and degree of understanding were critical elements of fluency. Gaps in vocabulary were possible, but a fluent speaker could easily guess the meaning from context or get the point across by explaining, rewording, or describing the unfamiliar word.

Generally, this theory embodied the cause of the experiences mentioned by the participants. Environment, indeed, plays a big role in developing one's literacy; this includes the teachers and students as big players in enhancing English fluency in an English classroom. Of course, teachers should start the way in order to make it feasible.

2. Four themes emerged from the testimonies of the lived experiences of the self-aware-non-fluent English teachers dealing with their instructional delivery.

Challenges encountered in using the English language in an English classroom.

The participants experienced unfavorable feelings towards the role as a teacher, the student's challenges, and the English language interaction. Also, they revealed that they encountered various difficulties in teaching the English language and multiple problems affecting students' understanding and interest in the English language.

Moreover, they also experienced doubts about teaching and speaking using the English language, which led them to utilize code-switching. Also, some of the people around them had high expectations of how they taught and used the English language.

Lastly, they were told that they tend to give an unpleasant aura to the students. No specific programs on English language fluency for teachers were also part of their challenges as language teachers.

Practices on developing English language fluency in the classroom

The participants also revealed the suggestive practices that might help them attain English language fluency in the school with the mentioned difficulties. One of these was the continuous development of English language skills of both teachers and students and the utilization of the English language solely in the classroom.

Also, they included integrating various activities to maintain the English language usage in the classroom, utilization of digital and print media, conducting various English activities in the classroom, and establishing an English-speaking environment.

Various training on enriching the English language fluency among English teachers

The participants unveiled that self-practice in speaking the English language, exposure to English language learning and opportunities, training on English Fluency for teachers, webinars for all teachers, various General English programs, embodying the profession as a language teacher, pursuing a master's degree, and being with other English language speakers could enrich their English language fluency.

Favorable experiences as English teachers

The participants, despite the challenges, also revealed that doing the usual teaching practices in the classroom led them to have a sense of fulfillment and feeling of liberation and satisfaction as language teachers.

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3. The researcher crafted a booklet entitled "I am a Pedagogue: Repertoire of English Fluency Strategies English teachers" that consisted of various strategies lifted from the lived experiences of self-aware-non-fluent English teachers when it comes to the utilization of the English language in the instructional delivery.

The researcher herself was one of the English teachers who experienced these challenges, and these gave her the opportunity to put the concern into action. Clearly, it is to come up with a set of standards and strategies to be used in the classroom for English fluency and competency. Taking pride in this profession, the researcher believed that each has to do something to progress not only for the sake of the students but for themselves as well.

Upon attaining the research findings and implications, the output of the study was made. The strategies were divided into four major roles of a pedagogue: as a speaker, as a teacher, as a learner, and as oneself.

Robert DeKeyser's Skill-learning Theory, DeKeyser, 2007 as cited in Taie, 2014, referred to "the learning of a wide variety of skills shows a remarkable similarity in development from the initial representation of knowledge through initial changes in behavior to eventual fluent, spontaneous, largely effortless, and highly skilled behavior, and that this set of phenomena can be accounted for by a set of basic principles common to the acquisition of all skills."

To put it another way, this idea assigned responsibilities to both explicit and implicit learning in the acquisition of a second language (SLA). And as a general theory of learning, it argued that people, including teachers, can begin learning anything through seemingly explicit processes, activities, and techniques and then progress to implicit processes or skills with enough practice and exposure.

Several conceptions played a crucial role in this theory, to be sure. The first was skills, which, according to Vanpatten and Benati (2010, referenced in Taie, 2014), "refers to the ability to do rather than underlying competency or mental representation." As a result, rather than isolating the notion in mind, this had something to do with hands-on applications. It dealt with the actions that teachers and students should conduct during the teaching-learning process in the instructional delivery in the classroom.

Priming, according to Trofimovich and McDonough (2013, as cited in Taie, 2014), "refers to cognitive repetition phenomena in which earlier exposure to specific language forms or meaning improves a speaker's subsequent language processing." A speaker's usage of a word or structure, for example, will impact the interlocutor's comprehension and production of that term or structure. As a result, it "may underpin the interactive, communicative use of language." At the same time, it "may underpin implicit learning" because it often occurs without the language user's knowledge or conscious effort.

The concept of automaticity was also included in this theory. Dekeyser went on to say that in skill acquisition models, the learning processes involved in skill acquisition comprised a shift from attentive to automatic mode. In the context of second language learning, repetition plays a key role in the enrichment of automaticity. This meant that throughout practice, learners should have several opportunities to encounter familiar words. Some scholars have argued that automaticity training requires a consistent strategy in addition to repetition (Nation, 2001, as cited in Galian-Lopez, 2018).

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Dekeyser also highlighted that academics studying skill acquisition processes agreed that practice with a specific activity would reduce reaction time and error rate over time. According to Dekeyser, practice, which is essential for learning Skill Acquisition Theory, should be meaningful. Therefore, it is relevant that in acquiring the second language, which is English, in the classroom, forming strategies may be effective in helping both the students and teachers successfully practice the language during the instruction.

Another was Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which stressed the necessity of observing, modeling, and imitating behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses. Environmental and cognitive factors influence human learning and behavior, according to Social Learning Theory (McLeod, 2016).

This research was also in line with the Self-awareness Theory. People could think, act, experience, and think about what they were thinking, doing, and experiencing if they had self-awareness. The study of self-awareness in social psychology can be traced back to Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund's groundbreaking theory of self-awareness (1972). According to Duval and Wicklund, people can focus their attention on the self or the external environment. Focusing on the self allows for self-evaluation. When people are self-focused, they compare themselves to standards of correctness that specify how they should think, feel, and conduct themselves. People were able to adjust their behavior and sense pride and unhappiness with themselves by comparing themselves to standards. Self-awareness was thus an efficient self-control strategy. It leads to the idea that to attain the development that one desires to achieve, it is relevant first to self-evaluate to be aware of the standards of correctness and allow oneself to improve the behavior, and experience pride and dissatisfaction with the self, which should be normalized for it is natural as a human.

Hence, all of the mentioned theories were significant in conducting this study by acquiring the lived experiences of the self-aware-non-fluent English teachers to form a strategy to be used in the classroom for English fluency and competency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings acquired from the experiences of the participants, the researcher was able to consider the following issues and implications:

1. That the English teachers experienced doubts and challenges in solely utilizing the English language in the instructional delivery. These led them to use code-switching in speaking in the classroom. Hence, this proved that the problem exists and continuously affects teaching-learning in the classroom. The existing literature and studies were not able to point it this problem since most of them focused on the struggles encountered by the students in using the English language.

2. That the English teachers experienced interruptions in using the English language, such as dealing with students who have low interest in learning the language. Despite the mandates given by the Department of Education in regard to using the English language as the medium of instruction in the classroom, in reality, this problem happens.

3. That the English teachers were not able to experience a specific English fluency program that could help them develop their speaking skills in using the English language. This proves that higher management tends to compromise the important skills to be honed among the English teachers, and one among these skills is speaking.

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RECOMMENDATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the study's findings, the researcher has the following recommendations.

1. School administrators may lead specific training for English teachers to develop their language fluency further. They may adapt the program headed by the Department of Education – Regional Office 2 Cagayan Valley in their conduct of Training on English Language Proficiency for Classroom Teachers and School Heads.
2. School administrators may use teacher-network programs for all English teachers to form strategies they may apply to enrich English language fluency among the students. It may lead to sharing knowledge and jointly developing new knowledge that may benefit the entire educational institution.
3. The developed Booklet was containing the English Fluency Enrichment Strategy for English Teachers may be proposed to educational institutions.
4. The school administrators may initiate programs in the school highlighting the English language fluency among the school stakeholders for continuous exposure to the English language.
5. Last but not least, further research may be conducted to further form and develop strategies for the effectiveness of instructional delivery in an English classroom in other places aside from Calamba City, which served as the locale of the study.

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