The Communicative Predicaments and Coping Mechanisms of Filipino Teachers in Thailand

Mara Camille B. Nañez[1] and Kriztine R. Viray[2]

[1,2]Master in Communication/Polytechnic University of the Philippines

Abstract— Filipinos are highly recognized in other countries not only for their skills but also for their profound competence in academics especially in teaching the English language. Filipino educators are in high demand worldwide as more non-English speaking nations such as Japan, China, South Korea, and Thailand extend their curricula to include the English language as one of their subjects. This qualitative research employed the descriptive design and administered a semi-structured interview to eight (8) Filipino teachers working in Thailand. The participants are randomly selected among teachers who are Filipinos teaching in primary, secondary, and tertiary schools, and language centers teachers in Thailand for at least two years. The findings of the study indicated that Filipino teachers in Thailand experience various communicative problems such as language barriers, preferential treatment, racial prejudice, and intercultural differences. Thus, Filipino teachers apply coping mechanisms in adjusting to the cultural differences that led to communicative predicaments in Thailand. Filipino teachers found different coping mechanisms to be able to adapt to their environment such as code switching, repetition, speaking slower, and approximation of the words that they use in communicating with the local people. It is found that these helped them adjust and adapt to their living situations. The identified experiences and problems of the Filipino teachers in Thailand are intercultural communication sensitiveness which is the commonly recommended coping mechanism of the Filipino teachers in the communicative predicaments mentioned. Therefore, it is recommended to better understand Thailand; teachers can take advantage of the country's low cost of living and vacation opportunities to gain deeper understanding of Thai culture which will help them avoid misunderstandings.

Keywords— code-switching, communication predicaments, coping mechanisms, English as a Foreign Language, English as a Second Language, Filipino teachers abroad, teachers abroad.

I. INTRODUCTION

The phrase "English as a second language" (ESL) refers to the use of the English language by non-native speakers in an environment where English is the dominant language (Nordquist, 2019). There are four thousand Filipino English teachers are employed abroad, mostly in the top non-native English-speaking nations including Japan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia even nations that use English as their first language, like the United States, employ foreigners to teach their pupils the language. Thailand as well increases their desire to fully grasp the English language, particularly its grammatical rules. Thailand recruits more foreign English language teachers and/or native and second language speakers, including teachers from the Philippines, to give students high-quality education that emphasizes learning the English language. In Thailand, there are currently 17,921 Filipinos living in Thailand, 4,000 of whom are undocumented. Teachers from the Philippines are drawn to Thailand by the statistics of job availability that is now being offered. They typically come as tourists and are

granted "Non-B" or working visas and work permits after finding employment (The Nation, 2018). With these facts, the researcher decided to study the difficulties that Filipino English teachers have while working in Thailand.

A nation's beliefs and customs reveal its rich cultural diversity. There is no getting around the fact that Filipino English teachers from Thailand must adapt to a variety of cultural norms and intercultural communication techniques. Considering this, the researcher responded to the following research inquiries:

1. What motivate Filipino teachers to work in Thailand?
2. What are the communicative predicaments that the Filipino teachers experience in Thailand?
3. Based on the variables, how do Filipino teachers in Thailand accommodate convergence in cultural communication?
4. What communicative coping mechanisms and strategies do teachers employ in Thailand?

According to Philipsen (2010), social relationships have an impact on culture. Additionally, it has been passed down historically through patterns of symbols, meanings, and norms that people can grasp. This demonstrates that ideas are exchanged through communication. Intercultural communication therefore encompasses people from other cultures, each of whom has its own orientations and interpretations of life's values (Koester & Lustig, 2010).

This study is anchored in the theory proposed by Howard Giles called Communication Accommodation Theory in 1971. The theory posits that when an individual is immersed from a different culture, they can experience divergence or convergence. This means that they should find ways on how to fuse themselves with the diverse culture of the country (Griffin, 2012). He also stated specifications on how divergence and convergence are applied through theory: (1) variations in speech style, (2) accommodating motivation, (3) identification of groups in choosing appropriate accommodation strategies, (4) consciousness of ways of accommodation, (5) perception of other people in the means of accommodation, (6) adjustment in language, and (7) social consequences of over accommodation.

The hypothesis dubbed Communication Accommodation hypothesis, put forth by Howard Giles in 1971, serves as the foundation for this investigation. According to the notion, when someone is exposed to another culture, they may experience divergence or convergence. This means that they need to figure out how to blend their own cultures with that of the nation (Griffin, 2012). In addition, he provided details on how divergence and convergence are applied through theory, including: (1) speech style variations; (2) accommodating motivation; (3) group identification in selecting appropriate accommodation strategies; (4) awareness of accommodation methods; (5) perception of other people in the accommodation methods; (6) language adjustment; and (7) social consequences of excessive accommodation.

Giles continued by pointing out the intergenerational character of the communication accommodations process. A person has already created their processes if they have previously adapted to a diverse culture. On the one hand, a person who is unfamiliar with the system can nonetheless work within it. Additionally, he underlined the two

sorts of divergence: the first is underaccommodation, in which people keep their conversational patterns despite cultural differences. The second form, known as overaccommodation, is when people strive to adapt or accommodate another person or group by excessively changing their communication style. The overuse of another person's speech patterns that can result from this can sound patronizing or disingenuous. The major objective of this study was to identify the communication difficulties faced by Filipino instructors in various contexts, particularly in Thailand. The hypothesis was used to ascertain how the participants' coping strategies in the various settings allowed them to either diverge or converge in terms of culture. This encouraged the researcher to ascertain the participants' communication-related cultural, racial, and intercultural difficulties first. The idea therefore describes how to coexist with the new system using the facts obtained through their coping methods.

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory is a different theory that will be applied in this investigation. In 1975, Richard Calabrese and Charles Berger developed this hypothesis. They claimed that the beginning of relationships is when two people are strangers or hesitate to communicate with one another, preventing them from rejecting and humiliating one another. According to the notion, there are three things that spark conversation. First, if a person will be interacting with another person for a longer period of time, such as at work, they have no choice but to do so. The second factor is the incentive value: whether both parties will profit from the contact, for as by providing assistance, receiving rewards, or accessing resources or incentives from other parties involved. Deviance, which occurs when there are misunderstandings or misunderstandings in communication.

The academic works, journals, theses, dissertations, and studies mentioned above helped the researcher shed light on the subject of the communication difficulties faced by Filipino teachers in Thailand and their coping strategies.

The main takeaways from the relevant literature and studies were that the communicative difficulties faced by Filipino teachers are typical of their profession, culture, and socialization. It is also claimed that the diversity of cultures is a common cause of communication problems. Despite this, Filipino teachers are well regarded in Thailand for their aptitude in the classroom, interpersonal skills, and communication abilities.

Additionally, it should be noted that Filipino teachers in Thailand routinely observe and accept issues like stereotyped biases, racial prejudice, discrimination, and diverse cultures as part of their adjustment and being a foreign worker. These issues are what hinder relationships between Filipino teachers and Thai students.

Given the difficulties that Filipino teachers face in Thailand, they were able to create coping strategies that they can use when necessary. These strategies include listening to the message, repetition, code-switching, the appeal for help method, lexical anticipation, lexical suggestion, lexical correction, and more.

As a result, communication problems are not just confined to misunderstandings and erroneous beliefs; they also involve student-related variables like a lack of enthusiasm, a lack of drive, and a low level of English proficiency that caused them to avoid engaging in dialogues.

The fundamental concepts of communication's divergence and convergence were the main emphasis of this study. The study found that the participants' participation in divergence was primarily caused by their professional engagement in Thailand. They may experience communication difficulties as a result of this gap, which includes differences in cultural behavior, racial biases, and intercultural communication. The seven (7) axioms are also essential to this study because they served as the basis for the researcher's investigation of the variations in communication. Despite individual differences, convergence gives people options for effective communication. Participants are able to adjust their conduct and control the entire communication process merits to it.

Southeast Asian nation Thailand is renowned for having a distinctive cultural history. our is just one of the many factors that draw travelers to our country. The nation is renowned for its competitiveness on the international stage and value of the English language as a tool for communication. Because of this, the number of international English teachers—both native speakers and non-native speakers—has been steadily rising over time, and Filipino English teachers are no exception. Teachers from the Philippines who wish to apply for a position in Thailand will gain from this research. In general, it might be used as a guide for how they should adapt to the different culture and social mores of the nation in order to accommodate their interactions with others.

The study will also be greatly significant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SGD). If it weren't for the intention of improving human relationships and education around the world, this research would not be conceivable. In order to continue raising student literacy rates and reducing the number of children who are not in school, this research aims to accomplish Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education. The expansion of possibilities for Filipino teachers and other professionals in a supportive workplace may also help accomplish Goal 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth. Last but not least, a firm dedication to Goal 17, Partnership for the Goals.

II. EXPERIMENTAL METHODS

The researcher used a qualitative research methodology for this investigation. The exploration of the nature of phenomena is what Busetto, Wick, and Gumbinger (2020) define as qualitative research. It is especially helpful for figuring out why something is observed (or not), evaluating complex multi-component treatments, and concentrating on intervention improvement. To gain a deeper insight of the participants' life, the researcher gathered non-numerical data and analyzed its meaning. The researcher was also able to study the individuals' actions, interactions, and behavior through this method. With regard to intercultural communication, cultural behavior, and racial prejudice, this research method was specifically employed to depict the lived experiences of the Filipino teachers working in Thailand. We also learned about the participants' ideas on how to accommodate cultural diversity in communication. As a result, the teachers' communicative coping mechanisms and tactics were noted for future use.

This study used the case study design because the researcher wanted to learn more about the experiences of the Filipino teachers in Thailand. The case study approach offers thorough examinations of complicated subjects. When attempting to comprehend a subject, occurrence, or phenomena thoroughly and in the context of real-world experience—in the instance of this research, the circumstance surrounding the Filipino instructors in Thailand—

it is very beneficial to put this approach into practice. The researcher was able to better comprehend the perceptions, viewpoints, comprehensions, and emotions of those Filipino teachers who had encountered communication difficulties in Thailand thanks to the research design.

The researcher generated experiences from Filipino teachers working in Thailand in order to collect qualitative data. The participants were verbally invited to accept to participate in the administration of semi-structured interviews by the researcher before any interviews were conducted. To protect the participants' data privacy, the researcher sent out a letter of consent after receiving permission. This letter allowed her to collect data like audio, video, photographs, and other personal information and/or experiences.

In order to give a reliable analysis and interpretation of the data obtained, the researcher did audio transcription, manual coding of responses, and theme extraction. On a distant communication platform, the data creation was gathered. This indicates that the researcher used social media channels to conduct an interview and gather data. To be more precise, a link was distributed among the users of the Zoom Meetings software. The participants' convenient time was used to complete this task. Data collection was followed by coding and analysis using NVIVO codes. The researcher made use of this by carrying out procedures such data familiarization, coding, categorization, and analysis of themes, as well as data organization and importation.

The researcher concentrated on eight (8) chosen Filipino teachers for the semi-structured interview in order to collect the essential qualitative data. The three of those groups were the researcher's main sources of information. Similar to this, the researcher looked through scholarly works such journal articles, essays, and studies that were pertinent to the subject of the investigation. The researcher used these documents as secondary data sources. To choose the study's participants and the academic sources used, the researcher used snowball sampling. When the desired sample attribute is uncommon, a unique nonprobability method called snowball sampling is applied. This is appropriate, according to StatPac (2017), when finding responders is excessively difficult or prohibitively expensive. This strategy was used since the researcher is located far from the respondents who were intended to be surveyed. The researcher gathered information from participants who met the following criteria: (1) teaching Filipino students in Thailand, regardless of gender; (2) teaching Thai students in schools physically located in Thailand; and (3) staying in Thailand for at least two years. The researcher used this sampling strategy to gather a sample of the population because it was practically impossible to study all Filipino instructors in the community. It is crucial that the group selected reflect the general population.

This was used as well for acquiring data on their experiences in diversity of cultural communication as well as their coping mechanisms toward their challenges. The components of this semi-structured interview guide were anchored on the questions in statement of the problem in Chapter 1 of this study. Additionally, the individuals were put through to a semi-structured interview by the researcher. Pre-determined questions based on a theme framework are the foundation of semi-structured interviews. The researcher utilized this to formulate follow-up inquiries in order to discuss the subject in greater detail.

The Pre-Interview Phase, the first portion of the interview, gave participants the chance to provide some basic information and described the main aspects of the interview, such as the duration, the name or purpose of the study, and some research ethics. In the second phase, referred to as the warm-up phase, the interviewer and interviewee establish rapport by exchanging information about their respective moods and interview expectations. The third stage, referred to as the main interview phase, concentrates on asking direct questions about the course of study. Open-ended questions based on the issue statement were utilized in this section. In the fourth and last stage of the interview, referred to as the Closing Phase, the participants' remarks were summarized, the interview process was completed, thanks were given to the participants, and the research ethics outlined during the pre-interview phase were reiterated.

The researcher's adviser then carefully reviewed and validated each element of the data-collection tool. Her feedback and suggestions were taken into consideration when creating this research tool.

This study was governed by honesty, objectivity, integrity, care, openness, confidentiality, social responsibility, and lawfulness. Through every stage of the study, the researcher was led by these moral standards. The researcher issued consent forms for the data collection to the participants in accordance with Republic Act 10173, often known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The researcher will examine the paper using Turnitin to ensure honesty and prevent plagiarism, as instructed by the Polytechnic University of the Philippines University Thesis and Dissertation Manual 2017.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the educational context, working environment also refers to the teaching and learning environment. It does not cover classroom or the physical school only, but it highlights the context of inclusive, safe, and positive surroundings. However, working environments vary depending on the culture, people, and systems implemented. In the Philippine educational context, through DepEd Order No. 35, series of 2016, working environment should promote inclusivity for diverse individuals.

The provision for high compensation provides opportunities for teachers to save money since Thailand is well-known for its relatively low cost of living among the Western countries (International Citizens Group, 2022). Teachers in are motivated because they can live with a high standard while spending less on their basic needs, accommodation, food, transportation, and other expenses. This may create an effective way for teachers to earn money, pay debts, or invest for their personal needs.

Another travel opportunity concerned and offered by Thailand is the provision for the teachers to explore its rich cultural heritage.

Thailand is very popular for the term coined, one country, various destinations. Teachers may take advantage of their rest days and weekends to experience the different places in Thailand. This shows that the country offers diverse range of travel opportunities for teachers.

As part of the adjustment of the teachers, they also observed that Thai people have their unique culture when it comes to intercultural communication. The shared experiences of the participants provided opportunity for the researcher to learn and understand the communicative etiquettes of the Thai people in terms of their distance, intimacy, and styles. Their belief, Buddhism is not just a religion, but it affects how students and colleagues act, speak, and communicate with them. The majority of the participants noticed how Thai and Filipinos vary in terms of communicative styles. Thais place emphasis on politeness, respect, and distance. Unlike Filipinos, Thai consider indirect communication instead of direct confrontation. Their cues or nonverbal communication are mostly expressed for conveying messages (most often showing politeness, e.g., bowing).

As the predominant religion in Thailand, Buddhism affects various aspects of way of living of the Thai people. The attitudes also involve the communication norms and values of the people. As Buddhism adheres to the popular quotation of, "Whatever is disagreeable to yourself, do not do unto others", Thai value the importance of respect and humility toward other people which is learned through Buddhism. They avoid breaking relationships with other people caused by offensive acts and words. This is the main reason why they avoid confrontation or direct criticism. Included in this notion is the communicative styles of the people involved, such as the tones and the degree of language (e.g., calm and avoidance of aggressive style).

The study of Areemit, Cooper, Wirasorn, et.al (2021) said that in Thai culture, there is this concept called Kreng Jai where it shows the practices of Thais of deference and consideration especially to people at authority or older individuals. One participant quoted, "…Oo bawal ka dito, kahit foreign you're not allowed to mention the "hari" ayoko immention baka may makarinig di natin alam may microbugs dito, oo totoo yon. Hindi ako mag co-comment on their government, hindi naman din ako mag co-comment about their kings, parang nasa utak mo nay yon tapos minsan may mga batang aktibista yung mga gusto talaga nila sabihin, you will cut it,…" This cultural value often translates into polite and respectful communication styles. However, it does not necessarily imply blind obedience or unquestioning submission to the government or other authorities. This has been a practice for most people in Thailand. In communication, people avoid setting discussions or complaints about the government. Even in schools, teachers or students who have complaints are not allowed to go directly to the teachers. They need to address it through administrators where they are required to dress properly or prepare for their communication with the higher people. "if there any problems, they have to call first in the admin. Hindi direct sa teacher. So, they want you to dress well and you know, good grooming like that. And one time, I waited for my last lesson. The teens are not conservative."

One communicative practice of Thai people is simplicity, or conservative in terms of their verbal and non-verbal communication. This is the result of their less expressive attitude in communication. This practice is influenced as well with the cultural values and traditions of Thailand. Thai culture often emphasizes modesty and frugality. Some Thais may choose to live simple lifestyles, placing less emphasis on material possessions and focusing on contentment with what they have. One participant shared that even in clothes, it serves as non-verbal communicative strategies of Thais, they tend to wear simple, clean, and conservative means of presenting themselves.

The adjustments of the Filipino teachers was easier because of the friendly- nature of Filipinos. The study of Sha'ar and Boonsuk (2021) highlights the importance of identifying and understanding the factors that hinder English speaking competencies among students at Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University in Thailand. The findings highlight the need for educational stakeholders, such as administrators, curriculum designers, policymakers, teachers, and parents, to recognize and address these obstacles. By doing so, they can support students in overcoming these factors during English language learning and implement effective strategies to develop their speaking skills. The participants shared their experiences on the extent of their relationships to the stakeholders of the school, including students, colleagues, and the community. One common shared experience is Thai students and colleagues who have high English proficiency levels are comfortable in communicating with their teachers, especially to non-native English speakers. Hence, they set close/near proximity when talking with their teachers, they initiate conversations, ask questions, and participate in discussions. On the contrary, students tend to set far distance if they are not confident to speak in English. They will not approach the teachers if it is not school-related or work-related. Thai students and colleagues may be more reserved or hesitant to speak in English, especially if they feel unsure about their language skills. This could lead to a perceived far distance in communication with non-native English speakers. The more people are engaged in an effective communication, the greater the chance that they will build strong relationships with the participants.

Another key factor that affects the relationship between Filipino teachers and their colleague is the language differences and individual preferences. In the case of students, as mentioned earlier, Thai students who are proficient in English may have a higher level of comfort and ease communicating with non-native English speakers. "hindi siya—hindi siya nag T-Thai." The respondent expressed that some pupils might wonder why she does not speak in Thai. Some Thai students who are less confident in their English skills may prefer to communicate with other Thai students or use Thai as their primary language. Non-native English speakers, including those from different countries, may have varying levels of English proficiency. In fact, some Filipino teachers feel that they are being discriminated as non-native speakers versus native speakers who are mostly British. Consequently, Filipino linguists also predict that the Philippines will remain in the outer circle because our dialect lacks the "social prestige" of the inner circle's native speakers (Jenkins, 2003, as cited in Urkovi, 2019). The perceptions of Filipinos about Philippine English are still influenced by this idea, particularly those who are involved in education, such as ESL teachers and ESL students.

The common predicaments of the Filipino teachers in Thailand circulates in both tone and pronunciation of the words in Thai language brought challenges among Filipinos. In order to avoid communication breakdown, Filipinos initiate learning the language of Thais, however, misunderstanding still occurs since Filipinos are non-native speakers. The tone of voice in saying the Thai words carries meaning and influence how the message will be perceived by the receiver. Filipino teachers may have different tonal patterns and accents compared to Thai native speakers. As Thai pupils may be unfamiliar with the complexity of the Filipino accent or tonal patterns, this can occasionally lead to misinterpretations or misunderstandings. Buarqoub (2019) highlights that language or semantic barriers can arise from various factors, including differences in the meanings and uses of words, symbols, images, gestures, languages, and dialects.

Nonverbal cues are essential in communication; however they vary across cultures and can have different meanings or interpretations. Filipino teachers may use gestures that are common in their own culture but may not be easily understood by Thai students, leading to confusion or miscommunication. Body language, such as posture, hand movements, and proximity, can vary across cultures. What is considered appropriate or respectful in one culture may not be the same in another. Filipino teachers may unintentionally use body language that is misinterpreted or not aligned with Thai cultural norms, which can hinder effective communication. The researcher determined the communicative strategies of the Filipino teachers in order to avoid communication breakdown. Themes that were identified were (1) approximation, and (3) repetition. The participants shared that these strategies are effective responses.

In addition, Racial Profiling as a Determining Factor for Compensation and Deference Although Filipino teachers consider high compensation why they are motivated in applying for a teaching position in Thailand, salary also is one of the main reasons why Filipinos experience racial prejudices in the country. It is inevitable that people will have pre-conceptions on what you can and cannot do based on your physical features. Thais believe that native English speakers (whites) are better than non-native speakers. Their preference is based on the comparison of the ways how native speakers deliver the language, for example, accents of native speakers are authentic than non-native; "…Pero, mababait naman po sila. Hindi lang po naiwasan na pag-usapan ka kasi nga kung paano ka mag-pronounce ng words, mga ganon."

As a result of this situation, racial prejudices affect the provisions of the Filipino teachers seeking for positions in schools. These include the salary being offered among applicants, "…Let's say—let's say they have offer like, let's say, 40,000 baht for native speakers. And then for Filipino teachers, it would be around 35,000 baht…" The non-verbal communicative aspect: physical appearance of the Filipino teachers, contributes to the racial prejudices that they experience.

Despite Thai people do not have a noticeable difference from Filipinos, some students tend to compare some Filipinos to white people thinking that they are foreign teachers, they should also have a fair skin. One of the participants shared "I think the first who have noticed my color is…students. Students also. Students always notice…always asking. And also, wondering why I can't speak in Thai. But maybe they're just curious. I don't take it very seriously as what they call bullying—bullying the teacher. Something like that. Because, it's like…the child is like, "bakit may teacher ako na ganito?", "hindi siya maputi.", "kulot buhok niya.", "tapos hindi siya—hindi siya nag T-Thai.". So, there were times that they compare you to other teachers." The participants observed that Thais preferred white teachers, since they are the native speakers of the English language.

This preference can be influenced by societal biases, cultural stereotypes, and perceived notions of superiority associated with Western countries (Amurao, 2020). This was supported with the transcribed answer of one participant, "minsan naiirita ako kasi mas pabor sakanila Malaki ang sahod wala masyadong ginagawa kahit andami mo ng nagawa yun lang naman na parang minsan pag pagod ka syempre…paper works halos parehas naming kami kasi kailangan yun eh…"

As part of the adjustment of the Filipino teachers to be able to fit in and make a conducive environment to grow a career, they were able to come up with different coping mechanisms and strategies communicatively. In the academe, one of the major challenges of the Filipino teachers is for them to be understood by their students. Most of the participants utilizes approximation wherein they must simplify everything that they wanted to mean. They simplify everything from the language, tone, delivery, choice of words, and even the message itself. "…mag aanalize ng anong ibig mong sabihin mag ka iba pala yung gusto niyang sabihin (laugh) ide-decode ko nalang yung writing ng bata ah eto yung gusto niya yung mga sabihin ma a-appreciate nila para pag nakita nila kahit papano iniintindi mo sila yun kang talaga naman language barrier kasi nung dumating ako dito din parang inadvise ako na wag mo i-learn yung language nila." Some strategies for approximation involve simplifying their language by using shorter sentences, avoiding complex vocabulary, and using familiar words and expressions. By simplifying their language, they can enhance comprehension and reduce the chances of miscommunication. Filipino teachers also use visuals that will aid them to understand their students. They let them write their message and the teachers decode their meaning. Aside from approximation, teachers also maximize the use of nonlinguistic means of communication. Non-verbal cues play a vital role in communication. Filipino teachers may use gestures, facial expressions, and body language to reinforce their message. These non-verbal cues can provide additional context and help students understand the intended meaning. Since Thai students are less expressive, they appreciate non-verbal cues and gestures.

"…Even their body language, I can now understand them. Like nonverbal communication as well, I can understand it. So, with the parents, typically Thai people, they are not that so expressive. They still are afraid communicating with foreign people. Not really. Because, you know, when you are a language teacher, or when you are also, you know, learning English language, you can construct the thought of what these local people are trying to say." Filipino teachers should enhance the use of nonverbal communication strategies in understanding Thai people. Non-verbal cues can help bridge language barriers and provide additional context for effective communication. Thai people are fond of specific body language patterns and gestures. Filipino teachers should pay attention to these cues to understand the meaning behind certain movements or postures.

The most common shared experiences of the participants regarding their strategies in coping with the communicative predicaments that they encounter is the repetition. This communicative strategy is a good way to enhance comprehension among colleagues and reinforce learning among students of Thailand. Some of the shared experiences of the Filipino teachers through repetition is when students ask questions or provide answers that are unclear, Filipino teachers may restate the question or response to clarify any misunderstandings. Moreover, they can recount examples as well. When introducing new concepts or illustrating ideas, Filipino teachers may provide multiple examples or scenarios. By presenting different instances that highlight the concept, teachers reinforce understanding through repetition, allowing students to grasp the concept more effectively.

While some of the participant's view learning the language as a way of defeating the purpose especially for English teachers, some on the other hand prioritized the need to learn the Thai language in order to better communicate with the stakeholders. Most of the teachers shared that they learned basic Thai language especially words that

would project positive reinforcement among the students. Although, one of the participants mentioned that it is not a good practice to translate English terms to their language, code-switching is the best way to effectively communication among Thais. Teachers exert effort on learning the language of Thailand, "…But now that I can speak their language somehow, it helps me a lot. It really helps me a lot because I can easily understand them. Even their body language, I can now understand them. Like nonverbal communication as well, I can understand it."

Filipino teachers may have basic understanding of the Thai language, which allows them to incorporate Thai words, phrases, or expressions into their conversations. By code-switching to Thai, they can establish rapport and show their willingness to engage in Thai language and culture. Code-switching can help bridge language gaps when encountering unfamiliar or difficult-to-translate terms. When communicating with Thai individuals, Filipino teachers may switch to the Thai language to explain certain concepts or use Thai words that have become commonly used and understood within the local context.

On top of the communicative coping mechanisms of Filipino teachers in Thailand, the common factor that makes the relationship of Filipino teachers among other foreign teachers and Thai people inside and outside the academe boils from kindness and cultural sensitivity. It is important that Filipino teachers have coping mechanisms in adjusting to the cultural differences when they enter Thailand. They will be meeting not only Thais but also people from other countries. The participants mentioned in their answers that it is important for foreigners to have cultural awareness when visiting any country. They need to initiate learning Thai customs, traditions, and social norms in order to understand the cultural context of the country. They have common mechanisms in general which is being adaptable. Filipino teachers should embrace flexibility and openness to new experiences, adjust their communicative approaches when talking with students and colleagues. This includes their teaching styles. Filipino teachers can engage in active listening and keen observation to understand the subtle nuances of communication in Thailand. They can pay attention to non-verbal cues, tone of voice, and the context in which messages are delivered, enabling them to interpret meaning beyond words.

The findings of the study of Nawamawat and Cedar (2021) mentioned that both Thai and Filipino teachers prioritize listening to the message as an important communicative strategy. This emphasizes the significance of actively listening and understanding the content being conveyed. Cultural misunderstandings and miscommunications are inevitable in intercultural settings. Filipino teachers can practice patience and tolerance when faced with challenges, allowing for open dialogue, clarification, and learning from mistakes. Part of the communicative strategies developed is restriction.

Restriction involves limiting or controlling the flow of information or communication in order to achieve specific objectives or manage a situation. It is commonly employed in various contexts, such as in negotiations, conflict resolution, or organizational settings. Filipino teachers restrict themselves in communicating with others if there is an occurrence of misunderstandings. Shifting the focus or redirecting the conversation to steer it away from sensitive or unfavourable topics is a common strategy in communication. This strategy can be used to avoid confrontations, defuse tense situations, or maintain control over the direction of the communication.

IV. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to acquire data on the communicative predicaments and coping mechanisms of Filipino teachers in Thailand. In order to do this, the researcher gathered information that led to determining the challenges of the Filipino teachers and their coping mechanisms to address their problems.

The first data acquired highlights the factors that influence the teachers' decision to work in Thailand. Firstly, the working environment is highlighted as an important factor, emphasizing the need for inclusive, safe, and positive surroundings. The participants in the study valued supportive peer relationships and school policies. Additionally, a strong sense of community and a supportive working environment were found to contribute to job satisfaction and motivation. Secondly, salary is mentioned as a significant consideration, with Thailand offering competitive salaries compared to the Philippines. The lower cost of living in Thailand further enhances the teachers' ability to save money and achieve personal goals. Lastly, the text mentions the travel opportunities available in Thailand, both in terms of ease of job application and the chance to explore the country's cultural heritage. Teachers can take advantage of their time off to visit various destinations within Thailand.

The researcher also gathered data on Thai attitudes and factors influencing the relationship between Filipino teachers and the stakeholders. This data helped determine the most effective communication strategies to prevent communication breakdown. Filipinos can utilize non-linguistic means of communication because Thais are reticent and less expressive. Nonverbal communication can help overcome language barriers and provide additional context for effective communication. Thais engage in less verbal communication; they do not always engage in social interaction; however, their nonverbal cues convey politeness and respect.

It was also determined that language barriers influence Thais' participation in communication, and that Thai students do not partake in communicative processes because they lack English proficiency. They do not respond to inquiries or messages because they are unable to communicate effectively in English. In this instance, teachers execute code-switching by translating certain terms into Thai. However, this was not an acceptable practice among other teachers. This may occur if pupils do not acquire the second language. Thailand, unlike other countries, does not require its citizens to learn English language.

Although terms are simpler to remember, the tone and pronunciation of words make learning Thai difficult for the majority of the teachers. Occasionally, this communication method also results in communication disruption. It occurs when Filipino teachers mispronounce words. As a result, Filipino teachers use restriction communicative strategy.

The divergence and convergence of Communication Accommodation Theory was seen through the shared experiences of the Filipino teachers. The language barrier between Thais and English-speaking individuals leads to divergence in communication. Thais' lack of English proficiency prevents them from actively participating in communicative processes and responding to inquiries or messages effectively. In an attempt to bridge the language gap, teachers execute code-switching by translating certain terms into Thai. This divergence in

communication occurs when teachers switch between English and Thai languages to facilitate understanding. However, this practice is not universally accepted among all teachers, indicating a divergence in approaches to communication. Filipino teachers, faced with difficulties in learning Thai, resort to a restriction communicative strategy. This strategy involves adapting their communication style by simplifying their language or using alternative methods to ensure effective understanding. This adaptation demonstrates a convergence in communication as the teachers modify their approach to accommodate the difficulties they face.

Based on the identified experiences and problems of the Filipino teachers in Thailand, intercultural communication sensitiveness is the common recommended coping mechanism of the Filipino teachers in the communicative predicaments mentioned.

Intercultural sensitiveness involves being aware of and respecting cultural differences. By developing an understanding of Thai culture, traditions, and communication norms, Filipino teachers can adapt their communication style to align with the cultural expectations of their Thai colleagues and students.

This awareness helps avoid misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and communication breakdowns. The text highlights that Thais engage in less verbal communication but convey politeness and respect through nonverbal cues. Filipino teachers can enhance their intercultural sensitiveness by paying attention to these nonverbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures. By being sensitive to these cues, teachers can better interpret and respond to the intentions and emotions of their Thai counterparts, leading to improved understanding and communication.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Participants' Profile

PARTICIPANTS	DESCRIPTION
PARTICIPANT 1	Working in a public school; has taught English in a language center among adult and businesspeople for one year; and has been teaching English among primary and secondary students for almost six years.
PARTICIPANT 2	Working at a private school; assigned in the international school department as an administrative officer; and teaches mathematics among primary students for five years.
PARTICIPANT 3	Working at a private school; assigned in an all-boys Catholic department handling science subject among grades 4 and 5 students; and has been teaching in Thailand for four years.
PARTICIPANT 4	Working in a public school; has taught English among primary students for two years and secondary students for six years; has been in Thailand for eight years.
PARTICIPANT 5	Working in a private school as an English teacher handling secondary students for four years.
PARTICIPANT 6	Working in an International school for four years handling English among primary students.
PARTICIPANT 7	Working in a public school; teaching English among elementary pupils for three years.

APPENDIX 1

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Filipino Teachers in Thailand

Dear participants,

The undersigned is writing a research titled **"THE COMMUNICATIVE PREDICAMENTS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF FILIPINO TEACHERS IN THAILAND"**. This is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Masters in Communication. In this regard, the researcher would like to request you to be the participants in the conduct of this interview. Rest assured that your responses will be kept in strict anonymity and confidentiality.

Thank you and Godspeed.

Very truly yours,

MARA CAMILLE B. NAÑEZ
Researcher

I. PRE-INTERVIEW STAGE

Directions: Fill out the following items pertaining to the details of interview.

Name:

(Optional) _____

School:

_____

Designation:

_____ Teacher of _____

Date:

_____

Time:

_____ Start   _____ End

Recorder:

_____ Yes   _____ No

II. WARM-UP STAGE

Directions: Answer the following questions as honestly as you could.

1. How are you feeling?

   (Kamusta ka?)

2. What do you expect from this interview?

   (Ano sa tingin mo ang mga mangyayari sa interview natin ngayon?)

III. MAIN INTERVIEW STAGE

Directions: Answer the following questions as conscientiously as you could.

1. What are the reasons why you chose to teach in Thailand?

   (Ano ang mga dahilan kung bakit mo pinili na magturo sa Thailand?)

2. Do you experience any predicaments/problems in communicating with the people that you encounter in Thailand? Please specify.

   (May nararanasan ka bang suliraning sa pakikipag komunikasyon sa mga nakakasalamuha mo sa Thailand?)

3. Do you have any problems with communication practices in Thailand? In what sense?

   (Nakatagpo ka ba ng anumang mga problema tungkol sa mga kasanayan sa komunikasyon sa Thailand? Sa anong paraan?)

   Note: You may ask follow-up questions as to practices in their (a) delivery of instruction, (b) socialization in workplace, (c) public relations.

4. What communication attitudes did you encounter in Thailand that made it difficult to adjust?

(Anong mga kaugalian sa komunikasyon ang naranasan mo sa Thailand na nagpahirap sa iyo upang maunawaan at maintindihan?)

1. How do Thai traditions vary from those of our country? What effect did it have on your communication?

   (Paano naiiba ang mga tradisyon ng Thai sa ating bansa? Ano ang naging epekto nito sa inyong komunikasyon?)

2. In what situations have you been judged because of your ethnicity or color in Thailand, and how has this hampered your connection with them?

   (Sa anong mga sitwasyon ka hinatulan dahil sa iyong lahi o kulay sa Thailand, at paano ito nakahadlang sa iyong relasyon sa kanila?)

3. Did you experience any issues with misunderstandings and misconceptions in your verbal interactions with Thai people?

   (Nakaranas ka ba ng anumang mga isyu sa mga hindi pagkakaunawaan at mga maling kuru-kuro sa iyong pandiwang pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga Thai?)

4. Did you experience rudeness or offensive non-verbal communication with Thai people?

   (Nakaranas ka ba ng kabastusan o nakakasakit na pakikipag-usap sa mga Thai gamit ang hindi berbal na pakikipagusap?)

5. How did you manage to adjust throughout your stay in Thailand?

   (Paano mo nagawang mag-adjust sa kabuuan ng iyong pananatili sa Thailand?)

1. What steps did you take to build good relationships with the Thai people?

   (Anong mga hakbang ang iyong ginawa upang magkaroon ng magandang relasyon sa mga Thai?)

2. What efforts did you take to improve your communication abilities in order to communicate with Thai people?

   (Anong mga pagsisikap ang ginawa mo upang mapabuti ang iyong mga kakayahan sa komunikasyon upang makipag-usap sa mga taong Thai?)

IV. CLOSING STAGE

Directions: Answer the following questions as honestly as you could.

1. What advice can you give to other Filipino teachers in Thailand encountering communicative predicaments?

REFERENCES

[1] Akhmetshin, E. M., Makulov, S. I., Talysheva, I. A., Fedorova, S. Y., & Gubarkov, S. (2017). Overcoming intercultural barriers in the educational environment. ResearchGate, 97(15), 281-288. Retrieved from: link

[2] Al Musawi, A., Al-Ani, W., Amoozegar, A., & Al-Abri, K. (2022). Strategies for attention to diverse education in Omani Society: Perceptions of Secondary School Students. Education Sciences, 12(6), 398. doi

[3] Berger, C. R., & Calabrese, R. J. (1975). Some explorations in initial interaction and beyond: toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication. Human Communication Research, 1, 99-112. Retrieved from: link

[4] Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. Neurol. Res. Pract. 2, 14. doi

[5] Cogo, A. (2009). Accommodating difference in ELF conversations: A study of pragmatic strategies. English as a lingua franca: Studies and findings. ResearchGate. Retrieved from: link

[6] Ho, L., & Limpaecher, A. (2022c). What is phenomenological research design? Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data. Delve. Accessed from: link

[7] Edera, E. (2019). Thailand to hire more Filipino English teachers. Manila Bulletin. Retrieved from: link

[8] Esquivel, O. J. (2019). The country consists of over eighty dialects in different regions. The country now uses English as a lingua franca to communicate with other foreign countries since it is common among other nations. link

[9] Fatmawati, E. (2021). Strategies to grow a proud attitude towards Indonesian cultural diversity. Linguistics and Culture Review, 5(S1), 810-820. Retrieved from: doi

[10] Giles, H., & Ogay, T. (2007). Communication accommodation theory. In B.B. Whaley & W. Samter (Eds). Explaining communication: Contemporary theories and exemplars (pp. 293-310). APA PsychNet. Linked from: link

[11] Griffin, E. A., Ledbetter, A., & Sparks, G. G. (2023). A first look at communication theory. McGraw Hill.

[12] Kirkpatrick, A. (2010). English as a lingua franca in ASEAN: A multilingual model (Vol. 1). ResearchGate. Retrieved from: link

[13] Lavankura, P. (2013). Internationalizing Higher Education in Thailand: Government and University Responses. Journal of Studies in International Education, 17(5), 663–676. Retrieved from: doi

[14] Methanonpphakhun, S., & Deocampo, M. F. (2016). Being an English language teacher: A narrative analysis of ten foreign teachers in Thailand. The New English Teacher, Vol. 10 No. 1. Retrieved from: link

[15] Markowitz, D. (2021). The meaning extraction method: An approach to evaluate content patterns from large-scale language data. Frontiers. Vol. 6. doi

[16] Nielsen, L. P. (2008). Labor Rights of Foreign Teachers in Thailand. Retrieved from Chulangcorn University Intellectual Repository: link

[17] Nordquist, R. (2019). Definition of English as a Second Language (ESL). ThoughtCo. Retrieved from: link

[18] Novio, E. B. (2018). Tourist to ajarn: The Filipino teachers in Thailand. Asian EFL journal. 20(2):33-48. Retrieved from: link

[19] Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. Adm Policy Ment Health. 42(5), 533-544. doi

[20] Philipsen, G. (2010a). Researching culture in contexts of social interaction: An ethnographic approach, a network of scholars, illustrative moves. Distinctive qualities in communication research (pp. 87–105). link

[21] Pornpibul, N. (2005). Quantitative and qualitative views of EFL learners' strategies: A focus on communication strategies. Journal of Studies in the English Language, 2. Retrieved from: link

[22] Punwalai, K., & Prabjandee, D. (2018). CLIL teacher professional development for content teachers in Thailand. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research. Retrieved from: link

[23] Raewf, M. B., & Mahmood, Y. N. (2021). The cultural diversity in the workplace. Cihan University. Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 5(1), 1-6. Retrieved from: link

[24] Ruecker, T. (2011). Challenging the native and nonnative English speaker hierarchy in ELT: New directions from race theory. Critical Inquiry in Language Studies. Vol. 8(4). doi

[25] Somsai, S., & Intaraprasert, C. (2011). Strategies for coping with face-to-face oral communication problems employed by Thai University students majoring in English. GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies. 11. 83-96. link

[26] Timbrook, A. (2019). Thailand vs. Philippines: A tale of two countries. Expert World Travel. Retrieved from: link

[27] Ulla, M. (2018). English language teaching in Thailand: Filipino teachers' experiences and perspectives. Issues in Educational Research, 28(4), 1080–1094. Retrieved from: doi

[28] Wannaruk, A. (2003). Communication strategies employed by EST students. Science and Education: An Open Access and Academic Publisher. Retrieved from: link