

## Embodied metaphors in instructors' narratives about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the positive and negative experiences of English instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic in Philippine context. Specifically, this study sought to reveal their thoughts, insights, and attitudes through the embodied metaphors evident in their narratives. Specifically, this study aimed to: identify the positive and negative experiences of English instructors thematically; determine the embodied metaphors used to highlight the positive and negative experiences of the English instructors; and ascertain the views of English instructors towards their teaching experiences in the time of the pandemic. This study utilized written narratives and the responses were analyzed through thematic analysis, content analysis, and Likert scale score. Findings reveal three themes for positive experiences: optimization of skills and abilities; development of character; and increased opportunities. On the other hand, two themes were found for the negative experiences: lack of resources and difficulty in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, the participants' narratives contained 16 metaphors: jungle, force, game-changer, underprivileged, stones, heart, fumes, technology, browser, sinkhole, challenge, myth, episode, taboo, thing, and clam. Moreover, independent learning and flexible learning were mentioned to be the benefits of distance education, whereas the use of technology, learning quality, and learning environment were the problems encountered. However, positive, partially positive, and negative views were found to have described the instructors' teaching experiences during the pandemic. In general, it is concluded that despite the hurdles encountered during the pandemic, instructors were still able to overcome the challenges and demands of the new learning environment.

## Introduction

In most countries, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted to the major adjustments in schools, training institutes, and higher education facilities owing to lockdown and social distancing measures (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Because of this circumstance, difficult challenges have come to the decision-making body of the educational system in the new normal setting which led them

to implement either blended learning or modular distance learning which is dependent upon the situation of the school and other affected sectors. Under the new normal education system, especially in the Philippines, teachers encountered heavier challenges and bigger concerns. Among these common concerns in the new normal teaching and learning include the transfer of learning quality, distribution of learning materials, and internet connection on top of the health risks (Agayon, Agayon, & Pentang, 2022) posed by the pandemic. As a result, educators and educational leaders have opted to implement blended learning and distance learning.

Blended or hybrid learning is described in different ways. Graham (2006) defined blended learning systems as a combination of face-to-face and virtual classes. Also, Picciano (2009) defined blended learning as a method integrating face-to-face and online activities. In other words, it is a blended course with 30 to 79 percent of online material delivery, with the rest supplied through face-to-face instruction (Allen, Seaman, & Garrett, 2007).

Moreover, blended instruction is employed in higher education institutions to ease access to and flexibility of learning environment, enhance pedagogy, and lessen costs (Dziuban, Graham, Moskal, Norberg, & Sicilia, 2018). The primary motivations for faculty use of the blended technique are to boost participation and engagement of students in the learning process, as well as to improve student learning. Student satisfaction with blended instruction has usually been highly favorable, with convenience and control over the pacing of learning, which has become one of the main advantages of the blended approach (Alammary, Sheard, & Carbone, 2014; Vaughan, 2007). However, despite the positive ideas set by blended instruction, problems in the teaching process still arise because of the presence of the pandemic which made a heavy impact to some Philippine institutions especially those located in rural areas (Alvarez, 2020).

This is where exploring experienced-based insights, understanding, and attitudes of teachers in the pandemic becomes crucial. As proposed by Lakoff and Johnsen (2003), the use of embodied metaphors in a person's expressions or narratives could be a portal to understanding a wide range of human experiences, including time, causes, events, emotions, the self, morality, and sickness, especially among educators. In the area of teaching especially in higher education, the metaphors used by instructors reflect not just their own perceptions of reality, but also their professional views, attitudes, and practices (Akkaya, 2021). In other words, metaphors provide instructors a window into their own personal experiences, and thus, serve as "translators" of their daily encounters in life (Al-Hasnawi, 2007).

With the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic, several research had been conducted to investigate the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has made towards education (Fitria, 2021; Hijazi & Al-Natour, 2021; Goldberg, 2021). The spread is truly terrifying, posing challenges to all sectors of human life, especially in the Philippine educational system. As a result, teachers - the backbone of education - have been affected in a variety of ways. They were having difficulty in dealing with the newly established standards, at the same time, sustaining the quality of education that the Philippine educational system is aiming for (Talidong & Toquero, 2020). Similarly, the lack of apparatus and material assistance at the outset of the category is an added dilemma whether Filipino instructors can make it through. As a result, instructors endure stress and burnout while navigating through the difficult situations during the pandemic (Vargas-Rubilar & Oros, 2021).

Because of this, this study investigated the positive and negative experiences of instructors to reveal how they have dealt with the pros and cons that the pandemic has brought to them. This study also serves as an avenue where instructors' experiences during the pandemic be found evident through the examination of the embodied metaphors found in their written narratives. This study also makes a profound revelation of how embodied metaphors display and project the thoughts and attitudes of instructors who have gone through a once-in-a-century dilemma.

Several studies had been conducted about the experiences of educators during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study of Klapproth, Federkeil, and Heinschke (2020) and Mercier, Centeio, Garn, Erwin, Marttinen, and Foley (2021) explored about the experiences of teachers during the COVID-19 induced distance learning. Klapproth et al. (2020) found out that teachers' digital skills still have to be enhanced and schools should have better technological equipment – both hardware and software – for teachers to effectively deliver their lessons even in distance learning. Mercier et al. (2021) had also identified unique hurdles to delivering reasonable and efficient remote instruction this is why ease of access to technology especially among teachers was suggested.

Also, more studies have explored how the pandemic has made changes to the teaching and learning process. The study of Agayon et al. (2022) shows that teachers are greatly challenged with the quality of learning transfer, distribution of learning materials, power interruption, and internet connectivity. However, they have shown ways to overcome them by employing their own unique coping techniques. Moreover, the study of Özüdoğru (2021) also explored the problems faced by pre-service teachers in the distance learning process which was carried through a qualitative design. The study reveals that pre-service teachers faced problems such as scarcity of time given for courses that are live regarding implementation, failure in communication, and absence of internet. The studies of Pokhrel and Chhetri (2022) and Vargas-Rubilar and Oros (2021) also explored how the pandemic has made changes to the teaching and learning process. These studies also revealed the challenges faced by teachers and the coping mechanisms they did to overcome them. Moreover, the studies of Talidong and Toquero (2020) and Tsegay, Ashraf, Perveen, and Zegergish (2022) explored the experiences of instructors with emphasis on the methods of teaching and learning adopted, as well as the benefits and challenges encountered in the pandemic.

There are also studies which explored the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning. The study of Alvarez (2020) investigated the different hues of experiences faced by the five facilitators who were teaching National Service Training Program (NSTP) in a certain university in Manila, Philippines. It is a qualitative study employing semi-structured interviews to gather data, which were analyzed thematically. Results reveal that there were five hindrances reported in the data analysis that include instructional, technological, technical support, class size, and collaboration. Further, Dziuban et al. (2018) examined blended learning in the new normal and the developing technologies alongside it. Vaughan (2007) also studied about the perspectives of the administration, faculty, and students toward blended learning in higher education. Students indicated that there is greater time flexibility and enhanced learning outcomes with blended learning though some notable issues were also reflected. The faculty also suggest that blended learning produce wider opportunities for student-teacher interaction though lack of time, support, and resources are among the main concerns. From the administrative lens, blended learning enhances the integrity and reputation of the institution though challenges such as resistance to change, lack of organizational structure, collaboration, and partnerships were also expressed.

These studies might have explored blending learning in the pandemic with teachers as the main source of experiences and information; however, these studies have not explored investigating both positive and negative experiences of educators especially those teaching in higher education institutions. Analyzing their experiences through the investigation of metaphors used in their narratives also remain untouched. The investigation of metaphors in the narratives of play a crucial part to reveal what lies beyond what is seen (Akkaya, 2021; Lakoff and Johnson, 2019) especially among the backbone of education - teachers. Hence, it is timely to have a study that would explore how instructors have gone through the opportunities and challenges in school while at the same time facing the pressures that surround them as posed by the pandemic.

This study provides insights as to how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced English instructors, particularly those teaching in Philippine rural areas. It specifically aimed to: identify the positive and negative experiences of the English instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic; determine the embodied metaphors used to highlight the positive and negative experiences of the English instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic; and ascertain the views of English instructors towards their teaching experiences during the pandemic.

## **Materials and methods**

### **Research design**

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative content analysis. The researchers conducted written interviews with two open-ended questions for each category of experience – positive and negative. It also employed textual analysis which delved into previously undiscovered themes in order to find variables tied to a specific type of event that is examined (Cortini & Tria, 2014). Moreover, this study utilized a web-based questionnaire with close-ended questions. Questionnaires are a commonly employed method of data collection that uses Likert Scale Score because they can be easily distributed (Mcleod, 2019).

### **Study group**

Seven English instructors from a certain department in a tertiary institution situated in a rural area in the Philippines were purposively selected to participate in answering the written interview questions through written narratives. This was done in order to closely investigate both positive and negative experiences in their narratives and to generously give them enough time to answer the questions in detail. Also, this was done for them to properly share and explain their views towards teaching English lessons during the pandemic.

Moreover, these instructors were selected based on the following criteria: a) they have the relevant experiences teaching English subjects during the pre-pandemic period; they have relevant teaching experiences teaching English subjects during the pandemic period; c) they teach in a tertiary school situated in a rural area; and d) they teach students who live in rural areas where easy and strong access to the internet is unstable. With these criteria, the direction of the study is narrowed down according to the general purpose of the study.

### **Data collection tools**

To answer the first research problem, the instrument adapted from the study of Fioretti, Palladino, Nocentini, and Menesini (2020) was utilized in order to elicit information about the positive and negative experiences of instructors during the pandemic. The first set of questions asked about their positive experiences in the time of pandemic and what they did during this episode of their life, while the second set of questions asked about their negative experiences and how they have overcome those challenges. Also, the second research problem was addressed through the use of the tool used by Jelinska and Paradowski (2021). It is through this that the embodied metaphors were identified and analyzed. Then, a semi-structured interview form adapted from the study of Demir, Kaleli-Yilmaz, & Sert-Celik (2021) was used to gather the views of English instructors about their teaching experiences during the pandemic. This interview form consists of three questions asking about a) their views on the benefits of distance education in English lessons; b) their views on the problems encountered while teaching during the pandemic; and c) their views on the effectiveness of distance education towards academic achievement and attitude.

## Data collection and analysis

Qualitative interview is deemed a suitable strategy for the collection of information from participants such as in-depth information, knowledge and beliefs, as well as personal encounters in life (Le Compte & Schensul, 2010). In order to gather data, several steps were undertaken. The researchers sought permission from the school to conduct the study. After the approval, participants were identified, given with consent forms, and briefed with the background of the study and its purpose. They were also informed of their right to withdraw anytime in the conduct of the study. Next, they were given with written interview questions containing a total of four open-ended questions – two for each type of experience – for them to also respond in written narratives. This was employed for them to have ample time to explain and detail their experiences for an in-depth analysis of data. However, participants were given freedom with the length of their answers though they were encouraged to write their narratives truthfully.

When all narratives were collected, transcription followed to prepare data in-depth analysis. The actual data were read multiple times before the actual analysis was done thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the thematic analysis, core ideas or words were noted before the creation of categories and themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020) to answer the first research problem which is about the positive and negative experiences of the English instructors under the new normal learning environment. Afterwards, content analysis through the examination of embodied metaphors in the written narratives followed, which was achieved through naming and classification. After making an alphabetical list of metaphors observed in the instructors' narratives, these metaphors were grouped into common features based on the tool used by Jelinska and Paradowski (2021). Afterwards, the views of English instructors towards their teaching experiences during the pandemic were analyzed and presented through codes with the corresponding sample lines from the participants.

## Results and discussion

### Positive and negative experiences of the English instructors

Using thematic analysis, the researcher identified first the core ideas/significant statements under positive and negative experiences. Afterwards, the researcher developed 12 categories. There are six (6) categories under positive experiences, namely: *use of technology, application of potential skills, dedication to work, resiliency at work, fulfilment in experiencing new things, and bonding with family*. Furthermore, there are six (6) categories under negative experiences, namely: *limited access to technology, low socio-economic status, poor connectivity, difficulty with the learning materials, difficulty in checking students' output, and demotivation of students*. With these categories, three themes emerged for positive experiences and two themes for the negative experiences.

#### Themes for the positive experiences

##### *Optimization of skills and abilities*

One of the dominant themes is "optimization of skills and abilities." The optimization of skills and abilities of the English instructors is highlighted in their use of technology and the improvement they have observed in themselves concerning their skills and abilities.

Based on their narrative, their knowledge of the use of technology as a tool in teaching was optimized through attending online seminars. One of the participants mentioned, "*I was able to develop that skill through attending online seminars*" (Instructor 1). Also, some participants mentioned that they were able to enhance their skills in making video content and in using social media as a platform for teaching. One stated, "*I optimize my skills in making video contents for the*

*delivery of my lessons...*" (Instructor 3). Also, another participant mentioned, *"I was able to transform social media as effective tools to deliver my lessons"* (Instructor 1).

Furthermore, they were able to apply their potential skills in teaching. One participant mentioned, *"I learned how to be in most of my ability to make sure the students still grasp any of the subjects and lessons I am trying to convey"* (Instructor 4). Also, some participants narrated that they were able to improve their pedagogical knowledge and English proficiency. One participant stated, *"I have used such time to venture my pedagogical knowledge through attending various seminars"* (Instructor 7). Moreover, another participant mentioned, *"I was able to hone and improve my English proficiency as an English Instructor"* (Instructor 3).

This means that instructors have unexpectedly flourished abilities and attitudes they did not expect to develop. Based on the narrative, they were able to optimize skills in both synchronous and asynchronous classes. And, based on the narrative identity theory, one's life story will resonate in a number of salient themes, in which development is part of it. This result is true to the study of Karakaya, Adıgüzel, Üçüncü, Çimen and Yılmaz (2021) in that teachers were found to have developed skills in teaching that includes the use of technology and resourcefulness in the instruction processes. As what Lie, Tamah, Gozali, Triwidayati, Utami, and Jemadi, (2020) and Moser, Wei, and Brenner (2020) had studied, one of the aspects that teachers had encountered profound changes is the adoption of new roles that include being remote instructors, while at the same improving knowledge on technologies in the integration of content and pedagogical knowledge to teaching.

#### ***Development of character***

The next evident theme is "development of character." The development of character was emphasized in their dedication and resiliency at work.

The instructors' dedication was underlined in their attitude in teaching in terms of learning new things, being adaptive, committed, resilient, and prepared for their careers. One of the participants stated, *"I was feeling much better prepared... become more resilient... and committed on our profession..."* (Instructor 5). Moreover, some of the participants added, *"We learned things that help us grow as an individual and be adaptive, especially in teaching"* (Instructor 3).

More so, participants were able to improve their teaching strategies by adapting and upgrading the resources they would use despite the hurdles they faced in the pandemic. One participant stated, *"I have to spend my time modifying and improving the modules and other learning materials"* (Instructor 2). Also, some of the participants were able to work with others more effectively. One participant mentioned, *"More collaborative efforts are done by the instructors and even stakeholders"* (Instructor 1). Based on the narrative, they have found themselves being adaptive, diligent, and flexible.

Teachers, as character educators in the pandemic, also have moral characters and dispositions that contributed to their success in their profession. They intentionally demonstrate positive attitudes to educate students in an ethically sound manner (Chowdhury, 2016). As what the findings of Robosa, Paras, & Tus (2021) reveal, public school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, though challenged by the lack of resources, still have gained positive experiences such as optimization of their passion in teaching, building more connections, and fulfillment of their duties as teachers.

### ***Increased opportunities***

The next visible theme highlights “increased opportunities.” This theme was observed in the English instructors’ fulfilment to experience new things and spend more time opportunities with their families.

Becoming an English instructor increased their desire in trying new things. According to one of the participants, *“To dream of becoming an online English tutor to different nationalities was fulfilled”* (Instructor 3). Some participants also noted being allowed to explore their potentials both within and outside of the facility. One participant stated, *“It made me give more time to explore my strength in both academe and personal life”* (Instructor 7).

Moreover, during the pandemic, participants were able to bond with their families. According to one of the participants, *“I got to spend a lot of time with my family doing household chores and vlogs”* (Instructor 3). Also, it was added that he was able to strengthen their relationships with his loved ones in which he said, *“I was able to build a closer relationship with my siblings and mother”* (Instructor 1).

The results suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic offers educators several opportunities to develop new skills and spend more time with their families. The findings are true to the study of Robosa et al. (2021) stating that teachers during the pandemic have developed a variety of opportunities, may it be in profession, relationships, or pursuits in becoming a better mentor to their students every day. As Yi and Jang (2020) mentioned, the transition to online learning has firmly developed the background and skills of teachers through envisioned new likelihoods for the enhancement of language teaching, since this period implied collaboration and creativity among educators across the globe. Also, Bhattarai (2020) said that online class gives new opportunities to both students and instructors. This means that more possibilities arise for them to polish skills and grow professionally.

### **Themes for the negative experiences**

#### ***Lack of resources***

One of the leading themes is “lack of resources.” Limited access to technology, low socio-economic status, and poor connectivity are the factors that contributed to this theme.

Limited access to technology was marked by the lack of network infrastructure, computers, and other necessary equipment. One participant mentioned, *“The lack of network infrastructures, computers, and internet access is a great challenge in distance learning in all developing countries”* (Instructor 5). Also, some participants mentioned that students have concerns with technology emphasizing that most of the students did not have standard gadgets to use in their learning process. One participant stated, *“Additionally, the negative experiences of connecting to students who have concerns to technology”* (Instructor 3). Furthermore, another participant mentioned, *“Students do not have a good and standard type of cell phones that could help students in sending the soft copy of their outputs”* (Instructor 5).

Consequently, the lack of resources was emphasized with the low socio-economic status of the students. One of the participants mentioned, *“Economic status is not that good... to access very good and competitive internet connection...”* (Instructor 5). Also, several participants mentioned that some students reside in areas with poor internet connection. One of the participants stated, *“Some students do not have good internet connections... some live in far-flung areas”* (Instructor 4).

Further, problems with poor connectivity among students and instructors revealed the paucity of teaching resources during the pandemic. Based on one participant’s narrative, *“Students [are] not*

*having their own gadget to be used online due to financial and economic crisis*" (Instructor 2). Additionally, due to weak internet connection, instructors were having difficulties in delivering their lessons. According to one participant, *"I struggled how I could possibly be able to efficiently deliver my lessons well to the students considering the situation"* (Instructor 3). This means that the lack of resources is evident during the pandemic which led both instructors and students to struggle in the teaching-learning process.

The same with the study of Andriivna, Vasylivna, Pavlivna, & Mykhaylivna (2020), online teaching of English also raised some contextual concerns about the availability of infrastructure (computer and internet), management, planning, guidance and knowledge in using educational technologies. Also, the capacity and readiness of staff, their confidence, students' availability, and suitable platforms in online learning play an important part in learning (Ali & Kaur, 2020) especially in the pandemic.

### ***Difficulty in the teaching-learning process***

The next noticeable theme is "difficulty in the teaching-learning process." Difficulty in the teaching-learning process was accentuated in the instructors' difficulty in the making and distribution of the learning materials, difficulty in checking students' output, and demotivation of the students.

Difficulty with the learning materials was highlighted in the complexity of the learning process, distribution of the modules, and supervision down to giving of feedback. Some of the participants encountered issues with module distribution, monitoring, and providing feedback to students who were difficult to interact with or who did not have the resources to engage in their sessions. One of the participants stated, *"I have negative experiences from the distribution of modules, supervision, assessment down to giving of feedbacks"* (Instructor 1). Similar to that, one participant quoted, *"Another complex experience I could think of is the mode of learning and delivery of learning materials to the students"* (Instructor 4).

Furthermore, difficulty in checking students' output is also a factor that added to the difficulty in the teaching-learning process. Instructors were having issues with the legitimacy of students' work and receiving work without proper content. According to a participant's narrative, *"I had also a negative experience when it comes to ensuring validity of their answers..."* (Instructor 1). In connection to that, one of the participants mentioned, *"I [am] personally experiencing receiving outputs without proper content perhaps..."* (Instructor 5).

Moreover, the demotivation of students highlighted the difficulty of the teaching-learning process. Some participants came across students who lacked the drive and exhibited no real desire to study. One of the participants mentioned, *"There are students who showed lack of motivation in complying with their academic requirements and even in answering their modules"* (Instructor 3). Also, another participant quoted, *"It was very hard for us instructors because we spent sleepless nights making modules, but some students do not have the genuine interest to learn"* (Instructor 2). Further, one reiterated, *"Some students do not have good internet connection – some live in far-flung areas"* (Instructor 4). This could be one of the reasons that students do not have the drive to study and pass requirements as internet connectivity is a problem. As one participant mentioned, *"They used to insist that they have passed all the modules, exams and requirements, but the truth is that those files were not sent to our respective accounts"* (Instructor 5). As revealed in the narrative, students are also busy doing household chores, taking good care of their siblings, and working for a living that sometimes hinder them to attend classes and comply requirements.

With these negative experiences encountered by the English instructors, the findings imply that the instructors and their institution are somehow unprepared for the new learning due to a lack



of resources essential to the new learning process. One of the biggest issues among teachers is the inability to connect with their students consistently most especially those students who come from less advantaged backgrounds (Di Pietro, Al-Ansari, Biddle, Borodulin, Bull, Buman, Lambert, 2020). As what Özüdoğru (2021) mentioned, one of the challenges faced by teachers during the pandemic include barriers in technology, conditioning of students, participation of students in education, and experience developed in online learning. In addition, emotional exhaustion and interactional teaching styles are among the difficulties encountered by teachers in the pandemic (Pöysä, Pakarinen, & Lerkkanen, 2021).

### Embodied metaphors used to highlight the positive and negative experiences

Table 1 presents the embodied metaphors used to highlight the positive experiences of the English instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a total of 9 embodied metaphors used for the positive experiences, which are divided into three classifications.

**Table 1** The embodied metaphors used to highlight the positive experiences

Positive Experiences	
Classification	Embodied Metaphors
Abstract	jungle, driving force, game-changer, underprivileged
Concrete	stones, heart, fumes
Non-living	technology, browser

As presented, the embodied metaphors for the positive experiences fall into three classifications, namely: *abstract*, *concrete*, and *non-living*. The embodied metaphors under abstract are *jungle*, *force*, *game-changer*, and *underprivileged*. Then, the *stones*, *heart*, *fumes*, *technology*, and *browser* are classified under concrete. Also, the embodied metaphors under non-living are *technology* and *browser*.

The abstract embodied metaphors were used to highlight the positive experiences in which they associated their *time* to a *jungle* stating that, "Some of them do not have mobile phones since they live in out-of-coverage areas... they have to *jungle* their time as students and employees..." (Instructor 2). One of the participants used *jungle* as their way of coping up with the sudden change of the teaching process. Also, the *pandemic* was used to refer to *driving force* and to express that it is a *game-changer*. One of the participants claimed, "[The]pandemic has brought many good things in my life and it has become a *driving force* for me" (Instructor 3). Additionally, the virus was associated to a game-changer. One participant mentioned, "COVID-19 is a *game-changer*..." (Instructor 5). Furthermore, *school* is being compared to the *underprivileged* in such a way that the pandemic has made instructors to be considerate with the giving of requirements and other projects to students due to financial crisis. As reiterated, "This pandemic has also molded me to be humane and to be patient with my students because our school is the school of the *underprivileged*" (Instructor 6).

Furthermore, the concrete embodied metaphors were also used to emphasize the positive experiences of the instructors. They compared *themselves* to a *stepping stone*, and described themselves as someone with a *heart*. One of them mentioned, "I am grateful since I have become one of their *stepping stones* to help my students achieve their goals in life" (Instructor 2). Also, the same participant emphasized, "The positive experiences that I had will help me learn and will hone me as a teacher with a *heart*" (Instructor 2). Also, instructors see themselves as ones who run on *fumes* because despite all the challenges, they were still able to do their duties and responsibilities. One of them mentioned, "I feel like I'm running on *fumes*" (Instructor 7).

Moreover, non-living embodied metaphors were employed to accentuate positive experiences. *Technology* is used to describe *inevitability*. One of the participants said, "I realized that in today's education, *technology* is inevitable" (Instructor 1). Also, a *browser* is compared to mind to illustrate

the importance of multitasking in their teaching career. One participant said, "*My mind is like a browser with a hundred tabs open...*" (Instructor 7).

Instructors have incorporated metaphors to convey their thoughts and emotions about the good things brought by the pandemic in their teaching profession. According to Lakoff & Johnson (2019), metaphors are used by people as they help in understanding abstract concepts that include the self and its emotion. Likewise, according to Pajares (1992), perception influences how teachers interpret the experience of teaching and not just on how to think and act in teaching.

Moreover, Table 2 presents the embodied metaphors used to highlight the negative experiences of the English instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a total of seven embodied metaphors used for the negative experiences, which are divided into two classifications.

**Table 2** The embodied metaphors used to highlight the negative experiences

Negative Experiences	
Classification	Embodied Metaphors
Abstract	sinkhole, challenge, myth, episode, taboo, thing
Living	clam

Results reveal that the embodied metaphors for the negative experiences fall into two classifications namely: abstract and living. The embodied metaphors under abstract are sinkhole, challenge, myth, episode, taboo, and thing. Then, clam is classified under living.

The abstract embodied metaphors were used to emphasize the negative experiences of English instructors in which they associated themselves to a sinkhole to express feelings on the sudden shift towards blended learning. One participant mentioned, "I was like confronted by a sinkhole" (Instructor 1). Also, the validity of answers is seen as a challenge that made instructors' work become more difficult and challenging. One participant said, "Some students had the same answers so establishing validity was really a challenge" (Instructor 6). Also, one of the participants associated depression to a myth, episode, taboo and real thing. He said, "I really thought that depression is just a myth or some dramatic episode... the concept of being depressed is still a taboo... I could that say indeed depression is a real thing" (Instructor 7).

Furthermore, the living embodied metaphors used to highlight the negative experiences of the instructors is clam, implying that despite the pending tasks and challenges they have endured, their passionate desire to do their job and help their students is their top priority. One instructor said, "It was very hard for us instructors because we spent sleepless nights making modules, but doing all these things can make as happy as a clam" (Instructor 2). This means that no matter how tired they have become in preparing learning materials for students, they still have hopes and happiness in their hearts that one day their effort will all be paid off.

The results of this study are also in congruence to the phenomenological study of Baş & Şentürk (2020) in which teachers were found to have produced more positive metaphors about their perceptions on the concept of curriculum making. There were 48 well-structured metaphors grouped in five categories, and most of these were positive ones.

In general, people connect with the world and make changes to its structures by having an objective presentation of their own inner experiences (Danesi, 2004). They assign meaning to anything by using meaning-context in the life-world (Rupp, 2016).

### Views of the English instructors towards their teaching experiences in the time of pandemic

The codes derived from the first research problem that is about their views on the benefits of distance education in delivering lessons and some quotations of teachers are presented in the succeeding tables.

**Table 3** Views towards the benefits of distance education in delivering English lessons

Codes	Benefits of Distance Education
Independent Learning	<p>"Distance education has allowed learners to independently learn the English language..."</p> <p>"...one benefit of distance education in delivering English lessons – it is giving every learner an opportunity to work on their own pace..."</p> <p>"Students will be responsible on their own learning and be independent."</p>
Flexible Learning	<p>"...students may be able to rewatch the lecture videos at their own convenience.</p> <p>"Distance education ... allows students to participate in class without having to be physically present in school."</p> <p>Also, students will scan their cellular phones for lessons and do activities at home."</p> <p>"...distance learning would suffice a student's need to learn despite the pandemic. This would guarantee that a student may continue to learn and be educated."</p>

Table 3 presents the codes derived from the participants' insights on the benefits of distance education. Based on the data collected, two codes were generated, namely: independent learning and flexible learning. Independent learning was highlighted when participants stated that students were given the opportunity to work at their own pace and that they bore responsibility of their progress with the lessons given to them. Moreover, flexible learning was observed when participants mentioned that students decide what to do in completing their lessons. They have mentioned that distance learning allows them to rewatch lecture videos or scan their cellphones to access lessons at home at their own convenience.

The codes derived from the second question that is about the limitations and problems encountered by the participants in teaching during the pandemic are presented in the succeeding table.

**Table 4** Views on limitations and problems encountered in teaching during the pandemic

Codes	Limitations and Problems Encountered
Technology	<p>"Internet connectivity is also considered a problem since majority of the students are from remote areas where internet connections are unstable."</p> <p>"...most students cannot access the internet and are living in a far-flung area."</p> <p>"Having poor internet connectivity hinders or delays the preparation of learning resources on my end, while on my students' end, they are having difficulties watching the lecture videos."</p>

Learning Quality	<p>"The tendency is that their guardian will be the one answering their activities and not being able to learn at all."</p> <p>"One of the biggest problems is ensuring the quality of learning..."</p> <p>"With distance learning, it would be a struggle in trying to learn and instill some lessons that contradicts the manner of lesson delivery."</p> <p>"...it is really hard to observe the instilled values and attitudes of students in distance education..."</p> <p>"Validity and reliability of students' responses are also considered problems."</p>
Learning Environment	<p>"They need the assistance of their teachers or guardians because they could not be able to perform the task if not being assisted."</p> <p>"...the pre-recorded lecture videos limit our live interaction which caused the students to be less engaged throughout the lesson."</p> <p>"One of the biggest problems is ... the immediacy of the response I can give to the students whenever they have questions..."</p>

Table 4 presents the limitations and problems encountered by the participants such as technology, learning quality, and learning environment. Problems encountered with technology was noticed when participants mentioned how internet connection has hindered them and their students in having smooth delivery and access of lessons, respectively. Also, learning quality was observed to be a problem. Students' outputs were questioned as to their legitimacy due to the underlying problems brought by the pandemic. In addition, there was also a problem with the learning environment, which is considered a great factor in the engagement of students in studying the lessons.

The codes derived from the third question that is about the effect of distance education towards academic success and attitude of students are presented in the succeeding table.

**Table 5** Views on the effect of distance education on academic success and attitude

Codes	Effects of Distance Education Towards Academic Success and Attitude
Positive	<p>"I do believe that distance learning education strategies and approaches are more effective in increasing academic achievement and attitude in English than conventional ones."</p> <p>"With the right technology, guidance, and cooperation, yes."</p>
Partially Positive	<p>"Distance education can be effective if the lesson is fine to be taught in a distance."</p> <p>I strongly believe that distance education will not be so effective in increasing academic achievement and attitude towards the course in English."</p>
Negative	<p>"Personally, it's difficult for students to learn English without the face-to-face intervention."</p> <p>"...with the current situation we have in our country, I honestly don't think so."</p>

Table 5 reveals the three different views of participants on the impact of distance education towards academic success and attitude. These views are categorized into three: positive, partially positive, and negative. The positive views were expressed when some participants firmly mentioned that distance education, with its strategies and approaches, is highly effective. Moreover, partially positive views were noticed when participants stated the effectiveness of distance education, but with some clauses of reservations. Further, negative views were, at the same time, observed when some participants firmly expressed that distance education can never be effective especially with the situation that the country has.

## Conclusions

The study sought to explore the insights and attitudes of the English instructors during the pandemic through identifying the positive and negative experiences, determining the embodied metaphors used to highlight these experiences, and ascertaining the views and opinions of the English instructors towards their teaching experiences in the time of pandemic. Findings reveal more themes for the positive experiences and less themes for the negative experiences despite the COVID-19 situation. These results do not support the results of the study of Van Bergen and Daniel (2022) and Karakaya, Adıgüzel, Üçüncü, Çimen, & Yılmaz (2021) showing more themes for the negative experiences of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic and less for the positive ones. This means further studies should be conducted especially on some psychological and social factors that may have influenced the thoughts of participants in teaching during the pandemic. Also, different embodied metaphors were used to highlight the positive and negative experiences just like what the study of Bas and Senturk (2021) and Kaban (2020) discovered in which the metaphors used to describe experiences fall on different categories. Results also reveal various views and opinions of participants towards distance education. Just like the results of the study of Demir et al. (2021), this study also shows flexible learning as one of the benefits of distance education, and technical problems and learning quality to be among the problems encountered. Likewise, divided insights were noted on the effectiveness of distance education towards academic achievement and attitude.

With the use of embodied metaphors, educators' inner thoughts and experiences were examined and revealed which is necessary for the educational leaders, especially in the Philippines, to give more regard and attention. It is suggested that future researchers conduct surveys of the attitudes of English instructors in teaching during the pandemic in order to have a comprehensive and deeper understanding of their positive and negative experiences. Also, other linguistic devices aside from embodied metaphors may also be studied to deeply explore what dwells deep within the hardships, and at the same time the delights of English teachers during the pandemic. In addition, the investigation of experiences of other tertiary instructors from other disciplines may also be included in future research to have a collective view of their daily encounters in the world of teaching.

## Disclosure statement

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