

SURVIVING IN A PROVISIONAL WORKPLACE: FOREIGN LECTURERS' PRACTICES IN AN ASIAN HEI

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ABSTRACT

Aim. Drawing upon the foundational principles of the ethnomethodological perspective, the present study delves into the viewpoints of English as a foreign language (EFL) lecturer concerning teaching as a discipline and their corresponding teaching practices within the context of a provisional workplace in an Asian university.

Methods. Five conveniently and purposively sampled participants were subjected to in-depth interviews to seek answers to the following research questions: (a) What are the views of the participants on their temporary appointments as EFL lecturers? (b) How do these views define their teaching practices in the classroom to survive in a provisional environment? The analysis brings to the surface recurring themes and patterns, providing valuable insights into how the participants survived in an academic environment that gave them non-executive positions.

Results. Results indicated a multiplicity of views on their temporary appointments as EFL lecturers: Temporary appointments as *a policy and student-centered position*, *a venue for professional standards*, and *a venue for career advancement*. These views prompted them to blend with the local culture and accordingly to perform culturally appropriate teaching practices.

Conclusion. It can be concluded that fostering cultural awareness, building strong interpersonal relationships, and pursuing continuous professional development are essential components for EFL teachers to excel in their roles. Additionally, institutions and stakeholders play a crucial role in creating an environment that acknowledges and bolsters the significant contributions of temporary EFL lecturers, thereby enabling them to make a lasting and positive impact within the academic community. Additional implications are discussed.

Keywords: EFL teaching, provisional workplace, pedagogical views and practices, ethnomethodology

INTRODUCTION

English has emerged as the dominant language for global communication, and as such, its importance has become paramount in various industries, including business, tourism, and education, thus making it highly valued (Howard, 2019; Ulla, 2021; Zhiyong et al., 2020). Hence, in an era of more heightened globalisation and internationalisation, the education sector, encompassing Asian higher education institutions (HEIs), has recognised the importance of diversity and the evolving nature of English as a global language (Doan et al., 2018; Zein et al., 2020). As a result, there is a growing trend among Asian HEIs to actively hire foreign lecturers, both native and non-native speakers, who are proficient in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) (Ulla, 2018; Yuan, 2019). These foreign lecturers are crucial in providing high-quality English language instruction (Bostancıoğlu, 2022), developing students' global competence (Ozer, 2020), fostering internationalisation efforts (Adriano et al., 2015), facilitating research collaborations (Hoque et al., 2018; Singh & Jamil, 2021), and enhancing the institutions' overall reputation (Hawawini, 2016; Tatar, 2019). However, it is essential to acknowledge that foreign lecturers in the academic setting are still considered contractual or provisional workers despite their significant contributions and roles.

Foreign workers (also known as migrant workers) are considered provisional workers/employees abroad due to fixed-term contracts or agreements that specify the duration of their employment abroad (Fassani & Mazza, 2020). These contracts typically have a defined start and end date, indicating the temporary nature of their employment. Moreover, workers require specific visas and work permits to work legally in a foreign country (Musikawong, 2022). These permits are often tied to their employment contract and are issued for a limited period (Bossavie et al., 2021). Put differently, the duration of their

work permits aligns with the temporary and short-term nature of their employment, further reinforcing their provisional status.

In academia, studies show that hiring contractual or provisional teachers has been prevalent (Nagatomo, 2014; Troudi et al, 2009). Amanda Bowen (2016) states that since many language schools and universities worldwide often hire foreign English language teachers at low wages and through part-time agreements subject to renewal on a per-course or annual basis, many teachers have been dissatisfied with their employment. In effect, many teachers take up multiple jobs or work additional hours during evenings and weekends to make ends meet. From the same perspective, Mariya Aleksynska (2018) observed that individuals with temporary employment contracts had lower levels of job satisfaction than those with open-ended contracts. The study concludes that such a phenomenon directly affects job satisfaction and indirectly impacts working conditions and work quality. In the same vein, the findings of Pooja Verma and PP Arya's (2021) study indicate that temporary teachers are experiencing job dissatisfaction due to unequal treatment within the organisation, which leads to lower levels of job commitment.

Consequently, teachers working in a provisional workplace have been found vulnerable to discouragement, frustration, and insecurity, leading to heightened stress levels; contractual employment for teachers creates instability and uncertainty, leading to increased stress, anxiety, and job insecurity. As the study of Pratik Adhikary et al. (2018) found, migrant contractual workers faced poor health conditions, with approximately 25% experiencing mental health issues. These health concerns were linked to unfavourable work conditions/environments and perceived health risks. Additionally, according to Ramon Cladellas-Pros et al. (2018), full-time professors with uncertain contracts exhibited poorer physical and mental health outcomes. These individuals experienced more pronounced symptoms of stress and reported lower levels of job satisfaction compared to their counterparts with stable contracts. Furthermore, even when compared to part-time professors, those with unstable contracts demonstrated inferior health and job-related well-being.

As earlier reported by Barbara Mullock (2009), many educators have reported bullying in the workplace due to the contractual nature of employment in the industry, in which educational institutions can quickly terminate teachers and replace them with new ones. Hence, for these teachers, contractual employment is seen as a factor in eroding confidence between teachers and school administrators and diminishing teacher dedication, loyalty, and even professional identity.

A study conducted in Japan, Bjorn Fuisting (2017) aimed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the professional identities of English teachers employed on limited-term contracts in higher education institutions in Japan. The study yielded noteworthy results, indicating significant findings. There is a notable discrepancy between teachers' conceptualisation of proficient educators and the expectations imposed upon them as contracted instructors. This incongruity engenders a disconnection between the perceived value teachers attribute to their profession and their dedication to it. More-

over, discernible disparities emerge in how Japanese and non-Japanese teachers perceive their professional identity transformation after assuming full-time contracted positions.

With affected professional competence due to stress and unfair treatment as contractual workers, temporary teachers are associated with a detrimental influence on student academic performance. In a study by Luana Marotta (2019), it has been observed that temporary teachers exhibit lower levels of engagement in school activities and offer students comparatively limited support and feedback compared to their counterparts on permanent contracts. Likewise, these teachers are less inclined to participate in the decision-making processes within the school.

Several quantitative studies have been conducted about the relationship between job conditions (type of contract), job satisfaction, job condition, and work quality. However, little attention has been given to delving into this matter in a qualitative sense that could more deeply capture professionals' perspectives and the implications of such on their professional practice and performance. Moreover, the existing literature offers many studies examining the lived experiences of foreign EFL teachers and lecturers working abroad (e.g., Hidayati, 2018; Lemana, 2022; Rose & Montakantiwong, 2018; Ulla, 2018). These studies have explored various aspects, such as the motivators that attract them to work overseas, the personal and professional challenges they encounter, their coping strategies, and their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of working in a foreign context. Additionally, studies have investigated how foreign EFL teachers navigate the process of cultural adaptation in their host country. This includes understanding and adapting to cultural norms, values, customs, and communication styles and constructing their professional and personal identities while working abroad.

Nevertheless, despite the abundance of research in EFL teaching abroad, there is a notable gap when it comes to qualitatively understanding the views of foreign teaching professionals on this field when viewed as a job in a "provisional workplace" and how these views shape their pedagogical approaches, strategies, and overall teaching practices. Hence, it is of profound scholarly interest to explore whether individuals, cognisant of their engagement in a transient work environment, persist in demonstrating their utmost dedication and attaining exemplary performance therein, as it is believed that "the pivotal responsibility of educating and nurturing students in any society is on the shoulders of teachers, whose knowledge, affection, and commitment exert a great influence over students' lives" (Sadeghi et al., 2021, p. 1).

Conducted in a non-English-speaking Asian country, this ethnomethodological research aims to bridge the gap in the existing literature and contribute to our understanding of how surviving in a provisional workplace abroad can define teachers' practices. The findings of this study are relevant not only to currently working EFL teachers but also to those planning to pursue their teaching careers in non-English-speaking countries where temporary jobs are abundant for foreign EFL lecturers. The study also offers implications for HEIs, policymakers, and educational institutions in providing better support and addressing the needs of foreign EFL teachers working in temporary workplaces.

In pursuance of the purpose of this study, the following research questions were constructed:

- What are the views of the participants on their temporary appointments as EFL lecturers?
- How do these views define their teaching practices in the classroom to survive in a provisional environment?

It is assumed that the participants' views on their temporary appointments as EFL lecturers constitute the meaning behind the teachers' actions—their teaching practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To examine the participants' views on their temporary appointment as EFL lecturers and how such views define their teaching practices in the classroom to survive in a provisional environment, this study employed ethnomethodology as a theoretical framework.

Ethnomethodology is a sociological perspective developed by Harold Garfinkel in the 1960s. It focuses on studying social order, interaction, and how people create and maintain meaningful social realities in their everyday lives (Rawls, 2008). It challenges traditional sociological approaches that rely on preconceived categories and assumptions about social behaviour (Vom Lehn, 2014). At its core, ethnomethodology seeks to uncover the underlying rules, norms, and methods people use to make sense of their social world. It emphasises individuals' active role in constructing and interpreting social reality rather than assuming that social order is predetermined or objectively given (Bowers, 1992; Holstein et al., 2013). Hence, with this framework, the researchers explored the participants' subjective perspectives, understand how they make sense of their work environment, and uncover their strategies to navigate challenges. Further, the study contributes to our understanding of foreign lecturers' lived experiences and practices and provides insights for improving support and addressing the needs of these teachers in temporary workplaces.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This ethnomethodological inquiry investigated the experiences of foreign EFL teachers in an Asian university and how such experiences have contributed to the change in their teaching views and practices. The following research questions guided our study: What is the view of the participants on their temporary appointment as EFL lecturers? How does this view define their teaching practices in the classroom to survive in a provisional environment?

Participants

A cohort of five university lecturers, who were non-native English speakers, actively participated in this study. A convenient and purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure a diverse sample, adhering to a set of inclusion criteria. Participants were required to be EFL lecturers employed in an Asian university where English is considered a foreign language. Additionally, they had to express willingness to be interviewed for the study. To promote nationality diversity among the participants, one lecturer was selected from each of the following countries: the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Bhutan, and Malaysia. To protect their anonymity throughout the study, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant (i.e., EFL1, EFL2, EFL3, EFL4, and EFL5). These EFL lecturers had accumulated teaching experience of four to five years, with varied backgrounds of EFL instruction in multiple countries across the globe.

Data Collection

Following the receipt of ethics approval from the main and corresponding authors' university, we collected the data through individual in-depth interviews with the participants. Before each interview, participants were given an orientation regarding the study's nature and objectives. They knew their liberty to withdraw participation at any point in the study. They expressed their willingness to participate by signing the consent form. The face-to-face interviews, which explored their perspectives on EFL teaching and their professional practices, had an average duration of 40 to 60 minutes and were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. To ensure the accuracy of the transcripts, copies were shared with the participants for member-checking, allowing them to review and confirm the representation of their responses. In some cases, additional interviews were conducted with select participants to clarify specific points or delve deeper into particular findings. These subsequent interviews aimed to enhance the comprehensiveness and understanding of the data.

Data Analysis

We conducted an inductive thematic analysis of the transcripts, following systematic coding, categorising, and analysing of the data (Hanafizadeh & Harati Nik, 2020). We aimed to identify recurring patterns, topics, or themes that emerged directly from the dataset without relying on any pre-existing theoretical framework. This approach allowed us to capture the richness and complexity of the data and generate new insights or theories based on emerging patterns and themes. To enhance this study's rigour,

validity, and impact, we sought the expertise of three external researchers who critically reviewed and validated our findings and interpretations.

Results

This section below discusses the answer to the first research question, “What are the views of the participants on their temporary appointments as EFL lecturers?” The analysis brings to the surface a multiplicity of views among the participants: (a) *Temporary appointment as a policy-driven and student-centered position*, (b) *Temporary appointment as a venue for upholding professional standards*, and (c) *Temporary appointment as a venue for career advancement*. The participants have further declared how these views define their teaching practices in a provisional workplace. Table 1 presents the participants’ perspectives regarding their temporary appointments as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) lecturers, along with the teaching practices delineated by these viewpoints.

Table 1

Views and Teaching Practices of EFL Lecturers with Temporary Appointments

Views of EFL Lecturers on Temporary Appointments	Teaching Practices Defined by Each View
Temporary appointment as a policy-driven and student-centered position	Treating local students nicely Enforcing a no ‘failing’ policy Promoting anxiety-free classrooms Imposing teaching standards
Temporary appointment as a venue for upholding professional standards	Practicing ‘teach-to-inspire’ approach Prioritising students’ learning needs
Temporary appointment as an opportunity for career advancement	Writing and publishing research work

Source. Own research.

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT AS A POLICY-DRIVEN AND STUDENT-CENTERED POSITION

Within the confines of this Asian university, a noteworthy observation emerges in how foreign lecturers perceive their teaching engagements, wherein an emphasis on policy-driven and student-centered pedagogy supersedes the traditional notion of a ‘teacher autonomy’ teaching position. This is how EFL4, for example, describes her teaching experience with the local administrators and students.

When the students don't submit their assignments on time, as a teacher, I could not...I am not allowed to deduct marks based on late submission, where I am going to train them about being responsible cause teacher, as a teacher, it's not only about teaching your content; it is also about making them responsible citizens, right?

EFL3, for his part, became more curious about student evaluation after the policy changed and compelled them to get high scores from students.

I didn't care about evaluation at first but because of [you know] the policies, you need to get this with the school evaluation. With my personal evaluation, I think I can say I was not pressured by the evaluation itself but the policy of the university pressured me to get this kind of thing. Because I remember when I started teaching here, they didn't care with my evaluation and when they turned into a school that was the time when the policies came in and then it [became] part of the school evaluation and all these things. So, I think at that time, I think it already changed my way of understanding the practice when it comes to evaluation.

Similar to EFL3, EFL4, another lecturer from the same university, echoes a comparable sentiment. He expresses that the constraints imposed by institutional policies hinder his ability to enforce his professional standards within the classroom, rendering this temporary appointment a position of limited influence and authority.

I want to say something on this one—the course content because of how we are teaching is that we are just following one specific course content that is given to us. So, we really don't have liberty to use our own knowledge and more. To some extent, this may really impact the way we conduct with our students cause knowing that we are going to be evaluated by our students in the end so some of us like me I'm trying to be lenient or trying to be good with our students even though we really don't want to. So, this students' evaluation may have [an] impact on some extent, in terms of the way we conduct with our students.

When asked what he considers the most significant challenge in teaching at his current university, EFL2, another lecturer instantly points his fingers at the institutional policy.

[It's the] policy. I would say that it is the expectations of the administrators that we should always try our best by any means necessary to pass the students. I guess that is my biggest challenge in terms of me trying to stand by certain professional standards and this comes in a way.

Others, on the other hand, have reiterated their position on the difficulty of imposing their teaching standards in the classroom. EFL4 finds this concerning, but she cannot do anything about it.

There is no autonomy for teachers here. Which means we don't have the liberty to even help our students like I see my students. There is a very hardworking student right but [at] the end, the score is very low. I feel that this person deserves [better] because she has improved [and]

has shown progression from the very beginning and [she is] very responsible. I also have some students who are just good with the scores in the classroom but are poor [in terms] of learning.

While these reasons provide some potential insight into why temporary appointments might be viewed as a policy-driven and student-centered position, it is essential to note that perspectives can vary significantly among lecturers and teachers. Some of them might see temporary positions as an opportunity to gain experience but prefer the stability and benefits of a permanent position.

TEACHING PRACTICES DEFINED BY TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT AS A POLICY-DRIVEN AND STUDENT-CENTERED POSITION

The analysis yields the following practices as defined by the participants' view on EFL teaching: treating local students nicely, enforcing a no 'failing' policy, and promoting anxiety-free classrooms.

Treating Local Students Nicely

Like anyone else, foreign EFL lecturers are subjected to student evaluation in this local university. This evaluation allows the students to rate their teachers' performance after each term. The students' grades, however, could affect their teachers' teaching performance, eventually affecting their contract renewal at the end of the academic year. This makes the participants be nice to their students. When asked if this is true, EFL5 admits it is.

To some extent, this may really impact the way we conduct 'teaching' with our students [be] cause knowing that we are going to be evaluated by our students in the end. So, some of us, like me, I'm trying to be lenient or try to be good with our students even though we really don't want to. So, this students' evaluation may have [an] impact on [us] to some extent.

EFL1, on the other hand, prepares herself to be patient every time she teaches in the classroom. To her, as a foreign EFL teacher, patience is the key in order to survive. When asked what she does in the classroom, she says this.

The way [how] I deal with them is not by scolding them but I just like give them the time to try to say something. Like I mention to them, even if they make mistakes, it would be okay. By culture, I would say that the students can be approached in the way that you have to be more patient and I think that's number one that I have to do with them. When it comes to teaching, I think patience is the key.

Other teachers, however, employ other strategies in the classroom just to make the students feel comfortable with them. EFL3, for instance, speaks a little of a mixed local language and lower-level English. He further uses actions to convey what he means. When asked what he does, he shares this.

I think, [it is] the total physical response, like, I use [my] hands and low-level English. You need to dig in to the level of the students' English proficiency, then find a little bit of [the local language]. So, I did that. So, I have to learn some [local] basic words just to make them feel at ease and comfortable with me. And total physical response like we use our hands, [then] translate. So those are the things and [my] strategies.

EFL4, on the other hand, believes she needs to bend with the local culture. She makes sure she establishes good and friendly relations with her students because, at the end of the day, it is they who evaluate the teachers at the end of every term.

I always make sure that there's a good relationship between student and teachers and it is more about the learning process of the student rather than just the end product. Meaning, just [all about] the score.

Just like EFL4, EFL2 also pitched about having changed his attitude towards dealing with his students—from being a strict teacher to a considerate one.

You know I think in that sense, it made me a much more considerate or more understanding teacher and that has improved me in so many ways in terms of professional development. So, the charm of teaching here is the satisfaction that I get when I'm successful in helping students learn English. That is the best thing that I have ever had [you know] in all of my different careers in teaching.

As the participants have demonstrated, treating students nicely is an essential aspect of effective teaching and can positively impact both the students' learning experience and the lecturer's teaching effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Enforcing a No “Failing” Policy

While it is not explicitly written as a rule, the participants seem bothered by the system allowing students to pass even if some do not even deserve it. For instance, EFL2 made this comment when two of his students missed almost half of the term and suddenly showed up to ask for requirements for them to pass. The irked teacher had this to say when asked if he gave them a “failing” grade.

I did not because at that time, the dean of the school at the time has the so-called unwritten rule—which is no “F” policy. We're not going to fail the students no matter what. But in the end, I told the students if you don't submit your assignments by today [at] 5 pm, then you [are] not going to get any score for this course, which they were able to submit to me anyway.

For EFL5, he calls the students' attention and gives them the necessary tests and make-up quizzes. He sometimes gives them consultation hours to help them improve their scores.

We have special quizzes and make-up assignments and also consultations. So, if I think some students genuinely deserve our help if I see them as deserving ones, then I do contact them personally in a group or in the classroom [sometimes]. I call them and I give consultation and then make up quizzes and assignment so they can reach to the threshold score to get that passing score.

For some participants, chasing the students and giving them additional tasks to pass are things beyond what they could imagine. When asked what she feels about the idea of 'giving' passing scores to undeserving students, EFL4 gives this honest reply.

We give them as much encouragement to push them. But I don't think it is right, right? It is okay the way it is being carried out [but] I don't think it is the right thing to do and even after the final exam, we were asked to chase students to submit their assignment, right? That is not a normal practice of teaching and even with the test scores. I don't think it is the right way of education to spoon feed the students for everything. They're college students, you know.

EFL lecturers conveyed that they could provide constructive feedback, offer support, and assess students based on their demonstrated knowledge and skills in the subject matter. Failing grades, when appropriate, can indicate areas where students need improvement and offer an opportunity for growth and development.

Promoting Anxiety-Free Classrooms

As EFL teachers who are trained back home, understanding the local students' learning styles is something they have to consider. EFL3, for example, wants to impose his professional standards but finds them difficult to enforce, citing his students' low English proficiency level.

Here, I think, it changed [me] especially here in [X] university because students here do not speak in English. So, I think the way I deal with them is very, I would say, not so strict. I do not pressure them. I think it changed my view of teaching because I can't force them. I can't pressure them. It's like relax, chill teaching, chill teaching, you know.

For EFL4, establishing friendly relations with the students is the key to a smooth teaching-learning process. She adds that learning should be fun, and the learning environment should also be free from anxiety.

I always make sure that there's a good relationship between me and [the] students. It is more about the learning process of the student rather than just the end product meaning just the score. So, my teaching philosophy always is learning process should be fun and they

should be able to acquire some learning during the process. Yeah, overall, at the end if they can get, attain the learning outcome or the objective, that is also a must however the learning process is very important for me.

EFL5, for his part, is dealing with shy students who are most likely hesitant to ‘participate’ in the discussion. This prompts him to do his best to give his students a welcoming classroom. He does this to promote a less anxious teaching approach.

I think the [local] students are generally [I should not say] they lack confidence when they speak in the classroom. So, sometimes when we have [let us say] classroom activities where they have to really you know communicate where they have to really speak out, this kind of situation is really difficult. It’s really difficult for me personally to make them speak out loud.

Just like EFL5, EFL2 also finds another way to engage with his students to motivate them to learn more effectively—giving them an anxiety-free learning environment.

I guess the positive things I get to meet people from different background I get to understand how the students view the learning of the English language and how they view the importance of English in their lives. You know I think in that sense it made me a much more considerate or more understanding teacher and that has improved me in so many ways in terms of professional development.

As the findings show, creating an anxiety-free classroom promotes a positive learning experience, fosters academic growth, and supports students’ emotional well-being. It helps to create a nurturing and inclusive environment where students can thrive academically and personally.

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT AS A VENUE FOR UPHOLDING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

What surprised us in our analysis is that, despite feeling powerless in their appointments as EFL teachers, the participants remain committed to imposing what they think is best for their students. EFL2, a foreign lecturer in this institution for four years, said this when asked how he employs his professional standards in the classroom.

I think we should not view that in that way because professional development cannot be viewed as just a pass or fail or success or failures. We should look at it as a growth. [The] process of growing of developing ourselves you know along the way in our careers and I am happy to say that since the start of my career here I am able to grow as a professional educator.

EFL3, another lecturer here for more than five years now, suggests future lecturers work not only for money but also for the education of the students.

Come prepared and make sure that you understand the job. It's not because you know how to teach, it's also knowing what you can do, what you can bring, what you can make of the things in mind with the students. Because at the end of the day, you're teaching because you want to improve students' [skills] and make that count. Make it something that [does] not only shape the experience but improve the lives of the students.

Other participants, on the other hand, claim that despite having no control over the materials used or curriculum being followed in their teaching, EFL teachers can change the way they teach to match their students' learning needs. EFL2, for example, made this remark when pressed to comment.

I think that the curriculum has been set on the very low bar to accommodate students with low proficiency but as educators you know there are certain things that we cannot change because we're not in the position of creating the material course or designing the curriculum but we can change the way we teach we can change what we teach in the classroom to the students' learning needs.

As teachers by profession in their home country, the participants' blending with the local norms interestingly persists despite the conflict between their standards and the policy.

TEACHING PRACTICES DEFINED BY TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT AS A VENUE FOR UPHOLDING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The analysis yields the following practices defined by the participants' views on EFL teaching. These practices include: Imposing teaching standards, practicing a 'teach-to-inspire' approach, and prioritising students' learning needs.

Imposing Teaching Standards

While the participants think that the institutional policy plays a role in their practices as EFL lecturers, most of them could not help but impose their teaching standards in the classroom. EFL2, for instance, draws a red line on late submissions of assignments and other tasks.

I try to impose my professional views in my students especially on punctuality on submission of assignments on plagiarism. I am quite strict about this and although there have been many underlying rules that we should try our best to help the students any means necessary right? I still try to speak professionally in the classroom. And most importantly, [you know]

I would ask the students, teach them some professional values. I tend to conduct my classes in a professional way.

As a teacher by profession, EFL4 does everything she can to keep her classroom conducive to students' learning. In her case, she employs interactive strategies to keep everyone engaged.

[What] I usually do is try to have some ice-breaking activity in the class for them to at least feel at ease to feel comfortable in the class, and then since they don't like they don't really like to talk or shy to speak up I try to deal by making them do group works and yeah like I said I used a lot of educational tools because if I don't use, they used it for their own pleasure.

On the other hand, some lecturers extend hands-on assistance to students who deserve it. EFL5, another foreign lecturer, does consultation meetings and gives make-up quizzes to his students.

If I think some students genuinely deserve our help, if I see them as deserving ones, then I do contact them personally in a group or in the classroom sometimes. I call them and I give consultation and then make up quizzes and assignments so they can reach to the threshold score to get that passing score.

The participants believe that "exposing" students to more rigorous language standards prepares them for international communication and career opportunities beyond their home country. As EFL lecturers, regardless of nationality, they attempt to bring their teaching philosophy and approach to the classroom. At the same time, some of them may believe in maintaining high standards as part of their instructional style.

Practicing a "Teach-to-Inspire" Approach

One way to motivate the students to pay attention to their teachers, at least according to some participants, is to inspire them. EFL1, in her case, tries to connect with her students.

Here, I can say that they are motivated, especially [in] my class and I don't know why. Maybe because I always encourage them about how they should not be afraid or let say start learning English even though it is already late because they always say like they cannot do [it], that they cannot speak English even though they have been learning English for like 12 years and I say 'well it's okay. Look at me. I shared [with] them my experience.

Just like EFL1, EFL5 also does his teaching style in an inspiring way. He shared that he would always explain to his students the importance of the English language in the now globally competitive world.

I usually give some notes on why they have to learn English and why it is important. I also try to change their mindset because most of them think that English is difficult and this is kind of inhibition. I think this is kind of obstacle because they think it's difficult. So, I always try to give example on my own because I'm not made to be a native speaker. I have learned English as second language and I'm feeding myself by teaching English.

For EFL2, the students need the proper motivation and guidance from their lecturers to excel.

I feel that without proper notch or proper push to the students they would never grow. The dosage or the amount of push that we give to the students is the one that we need to control. It is not just to make everything easy that you know everybody can pass but the most important thing is to give the proper motivation and proper guidance to the students so they can excel.

For EFL1, she does not really pay attention to language structures as long as her students do their best to say what they mean.

I always tell them 'Don't be afraid. It's okay to make mistakes when you speak. People will not really care about your grammar structure even if you miss a little as long as they actually can understand you in the sense of the message that you want to deliver. And that is something that I really appreciate in them if they actually speak even with the minor mistake or details.

As practiced by most participants, inspiring students was essential for creating a dynamic and thriving educational environment. They imply that it enhances their academic performance and fosters personal growth, creativity, and a sense of purpose that can impact their lives and the world around them.

Prioritizing Students' Learning Needs

In the EFL context, students need to practice using the target language in usual conversations in the classroom. EFL1 engages them in speaking activities to improve their vocabulary building and sentence construction, leading to fluency in the language.

I shared [with] them my experience. I didn't know how to speak English until I joined that English education in my bachelor degree but before that it's just like [you know] a test, that's it. But I didn't speak it out. So that was the moment that I think my students felt motivated the one that I have been teaching them. So, there's no challenge. The challenge is to make them speak more.

For EFL2, he believes that as teachers, the participants need to ensure that the students can learn the necessary skills in the English language classroom.

We have to understand that they may not have the appropriate sufficient vocabularies to understand what we are teaching but we should always understand that what we are teaching

is usually a skill not a subject. Language speaking or language writing and reading is a skill it is not a subject to memorise so what we can do when dealing with students with lower proficiency is that we can turn down our level of the materials adapt or adopt the materials according to the students' learning needs and ensure that the students are able to learn the skills necessary to self-develop even in their free time.

EFL5, for his part, wants to employ strategies that would allow students to engage in speaking activities but admits finding them hard to impose sometimes for classes with low English proficiency.

Another case is that while doing activities like sometimes we really want to do activities in the classroom and let our students speak or instance like debating, telling stories and this kind of thing is enjoyable for students but given the lack of proficiency and we really cannot really like implement this kind of activities so there's actually a lot of challenges.

It is important to note that while imposing higher professional standards may have advantages, foreign EFL lecturers shared that they should also be mindful of their students' cultural context and individual learning needs. To them, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment is crucial for the overall success of language education in a foreign setting.

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT AS A VENUE FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

It is interesting to note that despite the challenges in the classroom, the participants view their temporary appointments as a venue for career advancement. EFL1, for example, sees working at her current university as an opportunity for her to advance professionally.

In terms of career growth, I believe [my current university] has sharpened my teaching skills in EFL field. This solidifies my teaching career wherever I'm planning to continue working as long as I want to teach. With diversity in employees' skills, our roles were rotated to be assigned as a part of coordinator-ship. Also, there are some responsibilities as a university lecturer that you have to do—ie. research and mixed services and stuff like lots of meetings. EFL3, on the other hand, believes that by engaging in research work, he can make sound judgments on what kind of teaching approaches he needs to apply in his cross-cultural classroom. The participants' common practice defines this view—writing and doing research. Research for me is very important, especially for professional development as an EFL teacher here in Thailand, because it helps me keep up with the latest teaching methods, techniques, and approaches that have been shown to help students learn languages better. By knowing what study or latest trends in language teaching is going on, I can make better decisions about how I teach in my classroom.

Just like EFL1 and EFL3, university lecturers concede they now engage themselves in doing research as it is often an essential component for career advancement in academia. Many universities have tenure and promotion systems that require faculty members to demonstrate research productivity and scholarly contributions to their field.

TEACHING PRACTICE DEFINED BY TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT AS A VENUE FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

The analysis yields the practice “Writing and publishing research work” as defined by the participants’ view on EFL teaching.

Writing and Publishing Research Work

EFL1, for example, claims that while doing research work is a requirement for university lecturers to survive, she considers the same as an advancement of one’s teaching career.

I have to research because I have to survive. That’s one thing [stated] in my employment contract. Then, when it comes to that, actually, it’s a good thing because it helps you to level up your career and the statistical record that you have that research Scopus detail on that—something will be seen by other universities too.

When pressed to comment on whether or not doing research work is an essential component of his professional career, EFL5 responded positively: “Yes, because the university’s policy demands us to publish at least one research paper in a year.”

EFL3, for his part, underscores the role doing research plays in teaching EFL courses. When asked to delineate this point, he says:

Research can give me a better idea of how to teach [the local] students in a way that considers their unique challenges and tastes. It’s important to know what the student needs to make a supportive and interesting learning setting. You need a well-thought-out programme and tools students can relate to teaching a language well, and you can only do this by doing research. In other words, research tells us how to make useful, culturally appropriate, and interesting material for learners based on their skill levels and hobbies.

In response to a follow-up question, EFL1 reiterated her desire to continue engaging in research writing and publication.

Indeed, I view research as an integral aspect of my professional journey. Engaging in research allows me to explore fresh concepts and interests, opening up new avenues in my career choices. It facilitates efficient methods for delving into pertinent literature, essential for building a solid foundation of knowledge during the initial stages of research writing. Con-

ducting research is akin to a journey of self-discovery, as I personally observe my approach towards the subjects I write about.

Examining the narratives, the findings suggest that conducting research allowed the participants to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in their field. By researching, they can discover new information, insights, and theories that can benefit society and further their understanding of various subjects. Moreover, researching and publishing scholarly articles in reputable journals can enhance their academic reputation.

Discussion

The findings, in line with existing literature, demonstrate how teachers' perspectives shape and influence their instructional practices. They underscore the interplay between teachers' perceptions of their roles, beliefs about effective teaching, and the instructional choices made in the classroom. This understanding emphasises the significance of cultivating positive teaching views and beliefs among educators to create meaningful and impactful learning experiences for their students. As the study shows, the view on temporary appointments has significantly influenced the teaching practices of the participants in the classroom, leading them to adopt various teaching practices. Existing literature (Amin & Rahimi, 2018; Lemana, 2022; Ulla, 2018) highlights the challenges EFL teachers often face when adapting to different teaching methodologies and educational systems in foreign countries. As cited by Luis Fernando Álvarez (2020) and Gita Maharaja (2018), teachers' intercultural experiences have enriched their understanding and fostered mutual appreciation between cultures, enhancing their adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and global perspectives.

From one perspective, the findings provide valuable insights into how temporary appointments are perceived as policy-driven and student-centered positions within this Asian university. The influence of institutional policies and student needs shapes the lecturers' teaching practices, like treating local students nicely, enforcing a no "failing" policy, and promoting anxiety-free classrooms. While existing research emphasises the significance of a student-centered approach for compelling language learning experiences in EFL settings, interestingly, the current study reveals that students' evaluations of the participants' teaching performance have significantly impacted how these lecturers perceive their temporary appointments as EFL teachers. As a result, they embrace the local culture and attempt to impose their professional standards in the classroom. As cited in Bradley Cox et al. (2011), "the literature on internal organisational characteristics and their effects focuses largely on organisational environments and cultures" (p.4). Further, according to them, while this proposition sounds theoretically interesting, its broad conceptual nature provides academic administrators with little useful guidance on how to change their faculty members' instructional attitudes and behaviour and promote a culture of teaching (p. 4). This phenomenon reflects the participants' commitment to creating a positive learning environment and meeting

the diverse needs of their students, even if it means adjusting their teaching approaches to align with the local context. Diana Nur Utami (2016) claims that teachers' belief is considered one of the key factors in how classroom instruction is planned, managed, and evaluated (p.137), saying "it gives a remarkable influence on how teachers actually teach" (p. 138). However, studies show that when teachers feel compelled to be lenient due to institutional policies or the fear of negative student evaluations, there is a risk of compromising academic rigour and standards. While student satisfaction and engagement are valuable aspects of effective teaching, educators must also challenge and support students to reach their full potential.

From another perspective, the study's findings reveal that foreign EFL lecturers in temporary appointments showcase remarkable dedication by upholding their professional standards through the imposition of teaching standards, the practice of a "teach-to-inspire" approach, and the prioritisation of students' learning needs. What makes the current study unique, is that, despite facing institutional policies and constraints and knowing they are temporary employees, these educators wholeheartedly embrace their role in shaping students' language learning experiences. This starkly contrasts the views of temporary teachers in other studies, who were reported to be less motivated and satisfied with their work conditions, possibly due to perceiving their appointment as temporary and needing long-term career prospects. However, the foreign EFL lecturers in this study challenge this notion by consistently demonstrating unwavering commitment to their students' academic growth and well-being, exemplifying their strong sense of purpose and enthusiasm for making a transformative impact during their tenure as educators. The current study, in fact, confirms Eunjeong Choi and Juhee Lee's (2017) study. According to them, "what teachers know, think, and believe is closely related to what they actually do in the classroom" (p.175). Citing an earlier study by Anita Woolfolk et al. (1990), they agreed that "highly efficacious teachers tend to emphasise student interaction and autonomy" (p.176).

Lastly, the study indicates that foreign EFL lecturers in temporary appointments perceive their roles as opportunities for career advancement. Despite facing challenges in the classroom, these educators actively engage in research work, considering it a vital component for professional development and survival in academia. The findings demonstrate that even in a provisional workplace, ELF lecturers embrace research as a pathway to growth and self-discovery, striving to contribute to the existing knowledge in their field, furthering our understanding and enriching language education. Saovapa Wichadee's (2012) investigation suggested that professional development is necessary for university teachers at all levels, as it helps to enhance teaching quality. According to her, "university teachers know that a lack of teaching competence may contribute to students' low learning achievement, so they continuously undertake a wide range of activities to improve their teaching competence" (p. 615). The evidence from this study challenges the notion that EFL lecturers in temporary appointments lack opportunities for career advancement and cannot have a lasting impact on the pedagogical and

research landscapes. Their active involvement in research while recognising temporary appointments as platforms for career growth demonstrates their potential to make substantial contributions to education.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative investigation explored how EFL lecturers managed to survive in provisional workplaces abroad. Viewed through the lens of ethnomethodology as a methodological framework, this investigation addressed the gap in the literature by seeking to answer the following research questions: What were the views of the participants on their temporary appointments as EFL lecturers, and how did these views define their teaching practices to survive in a provisional working environment? In-depth interviews were conducted with five English-speaking EFL lecturers from different Asian countries. The analysis brought to the surface a multiplicity of views among the participants—“Temporary appointment as a policy and student-centered position,” “Temporary Appointment as a venue for professional standards,” and “Temporary appointment as a venue for Career advancement.” These views explained the meaning behind their teaching practices.

EFL teachers must recognise and respect the cultural and educational context in which they teach. Building strong relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators and seeking opportunities for professional development and cultural understanding helps bridge the gap between different expectations and promotes effective teaching practices. Likewise, institutions and stakeholders should recognise and support the valuable contributions of temporary EFL lecturers, fostering an environment that nurtures their professional growth and enables them to have a lasting impact on the academic community.

Limitations of the study include a small, regionally focused sample and a qualitative approach, limiting generalisability. Future research could employ mixed methods with a larger, more diverse participant pool. Longitudinal studies and stakeholder perspectives would offer deeper insights. Exploring specific cultural influences is also recommended.

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