

# Teacher Beliefs and Practices in English Language Teaching: A Gen Z Perspective

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## Abstract

Generation Z is significantly regarded as the future of the workplace, with the distinction of being the first digital natives. As rising concerns grow among educators in the academe, numerous studies have been conducted on the beliefs and practices of English Language Teachers, but there is no research study that specifically investigates the teacher beliefs and practices of ELT from a Gen Z perspective. This becomes the phenomenon of research interest through a qualitative approach using thematic analysis to identify the emerging themes that capture experiences and perspectives in language teaching. To elicit data, an in-depth interview was utilized with eight (8) Gen Z teachers as the primary data collection method. The informants were purposively and conveniently selected from different educational settings in Visayas, as the researchers aimed to have informants within reach during the conduct of the study. A student-centered approach to English language teaching (ELT) arises from the nine key concepts of teacher beliefs and practices derived from Gen Z's perspective on purpose, challenges, priorities, self-reflection, coping strategies, instructional context, progress markers, a learning paradigm shift, and the role of feedback. It implies, then, that Gen Z teachers, as new members of the academic workforce, have a clear emphasis on making English language teaching student-centric. The results of this study could lead to a better understanding of the teaching framework influencing Gen Z teachers as their unique insights are given a spotlight for real trends (Anderson, 2022), exhibiting why they cannot be ignored while workforce transformation goes on.

*Keywords: Gen Z; Teacher Beliefs and Practices; English Language Teaching; Perspective; Qualitative Approach*

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## 1. Introduction

Teachers' beliefs greatly affect their knowledge of their instructional practices, such as planning their lessons, making instructional decisions, and using their methodologies and techniques in instructional delivery, which eventually become instructional practices. According to Li (2012), the beliefs of teachers determine their real behavior towards their learners and the learners' abilities, and by that, they will be able to select and adjust their behavior and instructions properly. Research says that beliefs play a key role in teachers' classroom practices and their professional development, specifically in making decisions about their classroom teaching; hence, for English language teachers, their ability to select and adjust their language teaching from the perspective of students' learning.

Language classrooms nowadays become more dynamic as diverse learners dwell inside the classrooms. The influx of Generation Z demands education and its instructional delivery be more fitting to 21st generation modalities as this stress the diverse demands of modern-day learners. As this generation expects language classrooms to become global, social, visual, and technological, teachers as well must adopt a Generation Z perspective in the teaching and learning process, which also provides the most connected and sophisticated language teaching.

As teachers of the 21st century, understanding that Gen Z's search for efficiencies in education, along with their innate desire to lead from an empathic platform brought by society and technology, makes it noteworthy for teachers to provide the

new generation with appropriate education allowing them to learn from. Gen Z teachers need to rethink what is necessary to support new Gen Z learners in their quest to learn a second language. As asserted by Richards and Rodgers (2001), teachers' beliefs about language learning must be coupled with present demands so that learners can easily learn the target areas of learning.

Much research has been published focusing on teachers' beliefs and practices, emphasizing the impact on their aims, procedures, roles, and learners. However, there is limited research on the beliefs and practices of teachers focusing on language teaching from the perspective of Generation Z. Hence, this research was conducted.

## 2. Related Literature

Generational differences are undeniably a diverse issue that occurs in any workforce. Arsenault (2004) concluded in his extensive study that generational differences are a legitimate diversity issue requiring to be recognized and understood. Apparently, the entry of Gen Z as new members of the global workforce has been noticeably exhibiting emerging characteristics and social influence, especially on value systems and leadership styles. (Bhalla et al., 2021)

In the academe, Singh and Shakir (2019) recommend that educationists, policymakers, curriculum planners, and other stakeholders need to reconstruct and reform the teacher education program for the growth and development of the country. Teachers' beliefs have a more significant influence than their knowledge in their lesson planning, decision-making, and classroom practices, according to a British educational theorist, Pajares (as cited in Xu, 2012). It was further emphasized that teachers' beliefs are central in determining their actual approach with students and that if they can determine the level of their students' capabilities, they will try to select and adjust their behavior, approach, and teaching strategies so that they are tailored to their students. Xu (2012) makes reference to a similar study by Marion et al. (1997), which found that social constructionists also found relevance in teachers' beliefs being far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and were better predictors of how teachers behave in the classroom. They tend to be culturally bound, to be formed early in life, and to be change resistant. It is uncertain where teachers' beliefs come from; they could possibly result from their upbringing, life experience realizations, or socialization processes in schools. Nonetheless, teachers have strong beliefs about the role that education can transmit, about explanations for individual variation in academic performance, about what is right and wrong in the classroom, and in many other areas. Such convictions are used to evaluate new ideas when confronting their teaching methods. In this, teachers' beliefs and practices in English Language teaching reverberate a great impact on students' performance in English, as revealed by Xu (2012, citing Kennedy, 1997).

According to Liao (2007), an assistant professor in the Department of Applied Linguistics and Foreign Languages at National Taiwan University, successful elementary English teachers must have the following characteristics: a pleasant personality and positive attitude towards teaching, the ability to effectively utilize different classroom teaching and management skills, and a good command of the English language. Nowadays, teachers must be flexible enough and have positive views about the changing educational system. The current generation of learners is into technology, and teachers must also know how to integrate these into the teaching-learning process to make their learning sound and efficient. Moreover, they must be aware of the trends on how to effectively apply the available technology for the delivery of instructions and to have the utmost classroom management inside the learning area.

In the study of Sugiarti (2021), the learners of generation Z are challenging. These learners have a short attention span when engaging in learning. The teacher must design the teaching-learning process contextually, where the learners will be dealing with the available materials and must be engaged in real-life settings to get their motivation for participating in the class. Since this generation is technologically advanced, in order to get their interest in the subject, appropriate utilization of technology is encouraged. By this means, the teacher will be able to promote a fun yet meaningful English class. Basically, learners in this generation will be motivated to undergo learning.

In addition, it was further highlighted in the principal findings of Gilakjani and Sabourni (2017) that beliefs form part of understanding how teachers craft their work, which is relevant to the comprehension of their teaching methods and decisions in the classroom as they provide interesting inputs for the improvement of English language teaching and learning. It was determined that teachers' beliefs have a direct positive impact on their classroom principles, teaching strategies for coping with learners' challenges, conditioning the learning environment, learners' motivation, and language ability, and that understanding the outcome of investigating teachers' beliefs is necessary to bring about change and improvement in their teaching and learning methods over time, which is directed towards the improvement of language learners.

Also, Maqbool et al. (2020) highlighted that the reason English language learning has been one of the most discussed topics in many researches, according to Rahman (1997), is that it has been taught at all levels of education, starting from primary school up to the university level, either as a compulsory or elective subject right from the creation of the country. On the whole, this prompts the researchers to conduct this study and directs us to better understand the emerging views and important insights from the experiences of the informants and contribute to the ongoing exploration of what Gen Z could potentially set for productive collaborations in language learning and why they cannot be ignored as the transformation of the workforce goes on.

### 2.1. Domain of Inquiry

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the teacher beliefs and practices in English Language Teaching from a Gen Z perspective, using thematic analysis to identify the themes that capture experiences and perspectives in English Language Teaching.

Specifically, this study aims to discover the answers to the following key questions:

1. What are the beliefs and practices in English language teaching from a Gen Z perspective?
2. What common themes could represent the shared experiences and perspectives of the Gen Z teachers?
3. What theory will emerge from the significant themes of teacher beliefs and practices from the Gen Z perspective?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design using in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. Interviews are considered the most intricate and effective, especially if done face-to-face. This method involves a series of questions that the informants answer either in person or over any reasonable communication platform when the informants are few in number (Primary Data Collection, n.d.). Showkat and Parveen (2017) also clearly indicated that in providing a more relaxed atmosphere for the needed data, this discovery-oriented method is utilized for the study.

### 3.2. Research Setting and Sampling

A purposive and convenient sampling technique was used to select eight Gen Z teachers from different educational settings in Visayas, which lies between Luzon and Mindanao of the Philippines (Herrington, n.d.), as the researchers aimed at having informants within reach during the conduct of the study for prompt and economical results (Convenience Sampling St., n.d.; David, 2023). The primary considerations of the informants include their present affiliation with any public or private school or organization, an age range of 22–28 years old, having completed a college education, presently working in the field, and having experience with English language teaching.

The demographic characteristics of the informants are shown below.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Eight Visayan Gen Z Teacher Informants

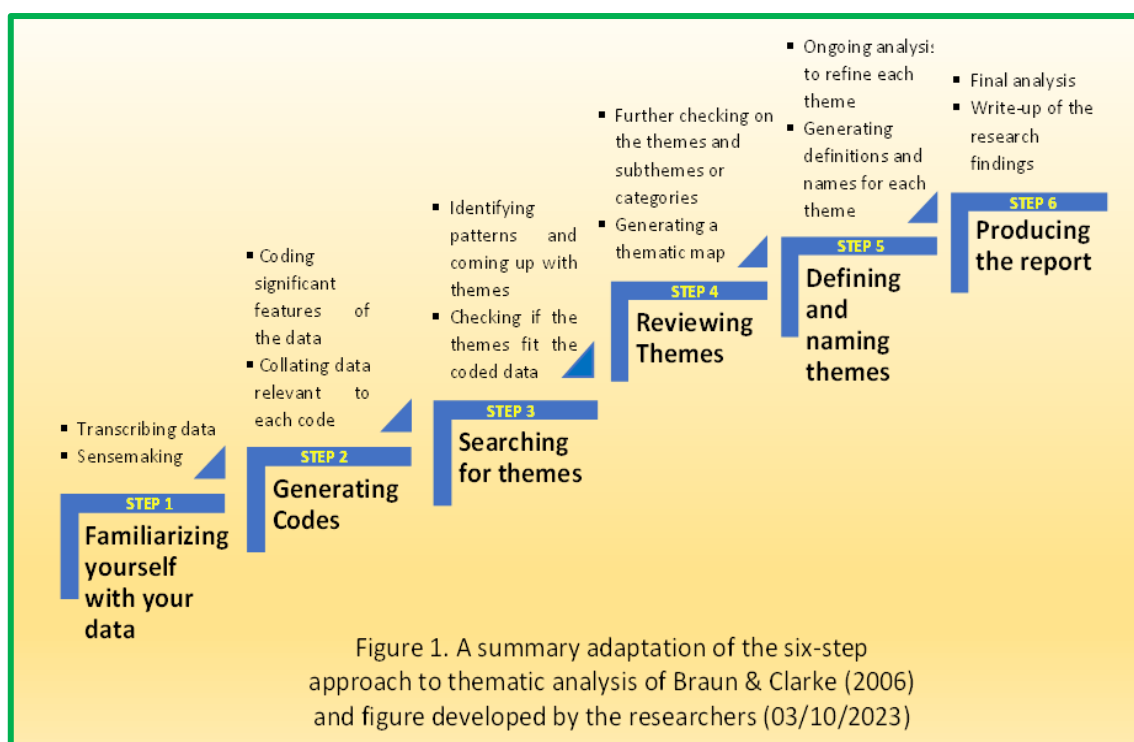
| Informant | Age | Gender | Educational Level                             | Residence                  | Occupation              | Work Address                | Years in Service |
|-----------|-----|--------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1         | 27  | F      | College Graduate with ongoing Master's degree | Zaragosa, Aloguinsan, Cebu | Public School Teacher 1 | Esperanza, Aloguinsan, Cebu | 1 year 9 months  |
| 2         | 25  | F      | Master's degree holder                        | Angilan, Aloguinsan, Cebu  | Public School Teacher 1 | Esperanza, Aloguinsan, Cebu | 3 years          |
| 3         | 27  | F      | College Graduate                              | Barili, Cebu               | Public School Teacher 1 | Bonbon, Aloguinsan          | 3 years          |
| 4         | 25  | F      | College Graduate                              | Colawin, Argao, Cebu       | Online English Teacher  | Cebu IT Park                | 4 years          |

| (ESL) |    |   |                                               |                              |                               |                          |         |
|-------|----|---|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| 5     | 27 | F | College Graduate                              | Bonbon, Aloguinsan, Cebu     | Public School Teacher 1       | Bonbon, Aloguinsan, Cebu | 4 years |
| 6     | 28 | M | Master's degree holder                        | Jaclupan, Talisay City, Cebu | Private High School Teacher   | Talisay City, Cebu       | 4 years |
| 7     | 25 | M | College Graduate                              | Dumlog, Talisay City, Cebu   | Private High School Teacher   | Talisay City, Cebu       | 1 year  |
| 8     | 26 | M | College Graduate with ongoing Master's degree | Tacloban City, Leyte         | Senior High School Instructor | Tacloban City, Leyte     | 5 years |

### 3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

To elicit the necessary information, an in-depth interview was utilized with questions that are primarily open-ended and lead to a discovery-oriented approach to gather detailed information that sheds light on an individual's perspective, experiences, feelings, and the derived meaning about a particular topic or issue (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). The framed interview protocol was peer-reviewed and validated by three QLR experts as it becomes the guide (Interview Protocol Design, n.d.) for the researchers. During the call for participants, three informants consented to an in-person interview that was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, while the rest of the five informants who could not attend the in-person interview opted to send their responses online due to considerable circumstances. Their data responses were both analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the key concepts and themes that capture experiences and perspectives that represent the overall sample. The informants' responses were differently transcribed by the researchers, such as verbatim transcription with one informant through Otter Voice Meeting Notes (n.d.), and the other informants were transcribed and encoded using a Word document, putting all the data together, tabulating it, and generating codes with their emerging themes guided by an inductive approach, which is found useful in generating inferences and developing more vibrant and intricate interpretations of a phenomenon (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, as cited in Chawla & Wood, 2011). Specifically, this study adapted the six-phase approach to the thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006, as cited in Caulfield, 2022).

Figure 1 illustrates the procedure of Thematic Analysis originally developed by Braun and Clark (2006).



### 3.4. Research Reflexivity

The researchers of this study are PhD and EdD doctorands at an internationally recognized private non-sectarian university (*About UV | University of the Visayas, n.d.*). A multidisciplinary approach was utilized in this study as the research team was composed of individuals coming from varying disciplines, building the new norm for the problem-solving orientation of the team and a clear shared goal (*Multidisciplinary Research – Academike, 2015*) of acquiring a unified cognitive and affective understanding of the phenomenon of interest derived from their own assumptions and experiences influencing the analysis.

### 3.5. Ethical Issues

The informants consented to their participation in this study. The researchers ensured to accommodate the best interests and convenience of the informants. Participation is completely voluntary and with the utmost confidentiality of the information shared during the time of inquiry, as their opinions, views, and insights related to this area are taken into account.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis process that was used to analyze the interview responses elicited key concepts that were evident in the data. The themes drawn out from the consolidated data are contemplated as essential inputs based on the phenomenological inquiry exploring the teacher beliefs and practices among the Visayan Gen Z teachers.

Figure 2 illustrates a student-centered English language teaching (ELT) perspective emerging from the nine key concepts of teacher beliefs and practices among Gen Z teachers resulting from the phenomenological inquiry.

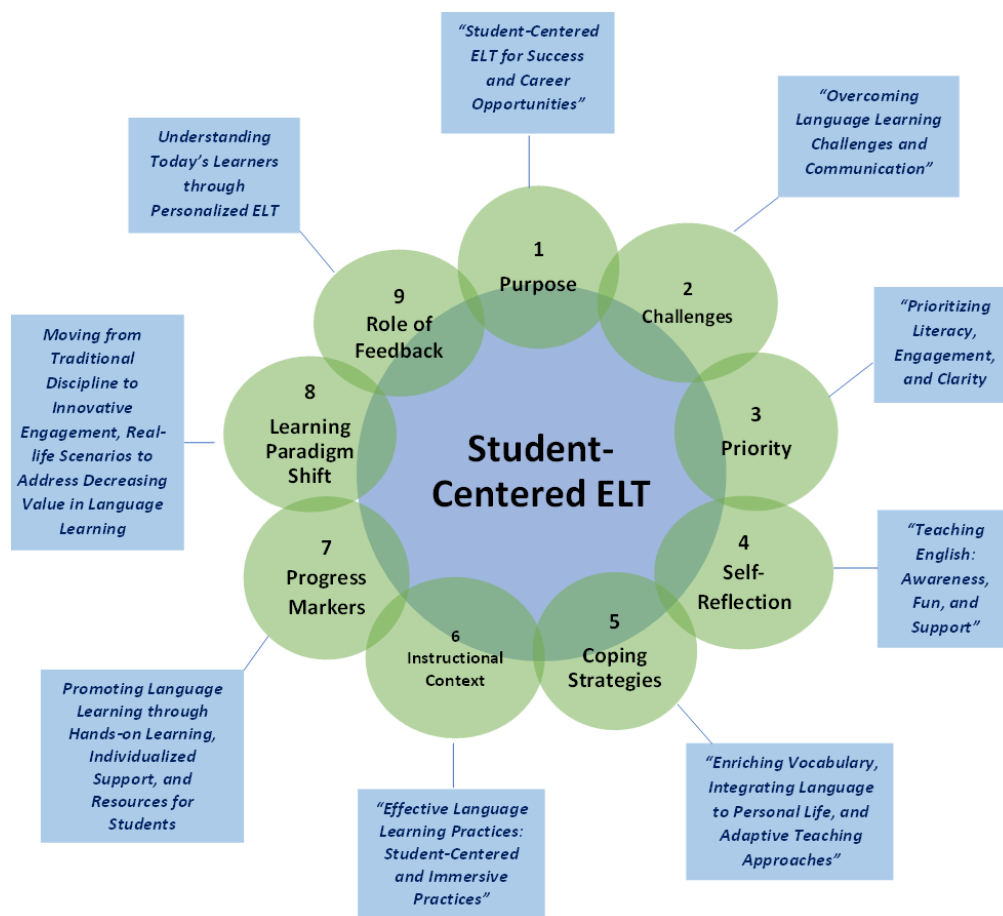


Figure 2. A Student-centered ELT emerges from the nine key concepts of Teacher Beliefs and Practices as Gen Z's Perspective resulting from the phenomenological inquiry. Developed by the researchers (04/07/2023).

### STUDENT-CENTERED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

Traditionally, teachers have been considered to play two primary functions: instructional and managerial. They perform both as an instructor and manager, complementing each other, and in practice it is difficult to separate one from the other (Martinez, 1996). However, as a result of the thematic analysis, the Gen Z teacher informants revealed a student-centered ELT perspective in their beliefs and practices for English language teaching. This reflects a more up-to-date and humanistic perspective (Moskowitz, 1973; Rogers, 1983; and Nunan, 1988, as cited in Martinez, 1996) that teaching and learning processes are the result of mutual cooperation and interaction between teachers and learners. This clearly illustrates that learners are viewed as becoming the real managers of their own learning, changing the focus from teachers to learners, according to Nunan (as cited in Martinez, 1996), who refers to this as learner-centered curriculum. Pourhosein (2017), after a thorough perusal of empirical studies of recognized theories on ELT and its correlations with other disciplines, has set a mark towards applied ELT, considering English language learning classes to be sites for dealing with issues related to life qualities and introducing a Life syllabus as a language learning setting that should do service to issues of concern in life. The emerging themes identified in this study that have pointed towards a student-centric ELT from the Gen Z teachers' perspective are likewise attributing to how language learning should be taken into account within the workplace, bearing in mind to align our instruction with the practical realities of how our students actually learn (Jacobs & Renandya, 2016).

#### 4.1 Purpose

Table 1-Theme 1: "Student-Centered ELT for Success and Career Opportunities"

| Codes                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Category                          | Theme                                                     | General Idea |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| English Language teaching is essential                                                                                                                                                                      | Teaching English is Indispensable | Student-Centered ELT for Success and Career Opportunities | Purpose      |
| Essential for success<br>Indispensable to Educators                                                                                                                                                         |                                   |                                                           |              |
| Teaching vocabularies that students can relate<br>Teacher Role<br>Communication skills; Authentic materials; Relevance<br>Strong belief on English Only Policy (EOP) but code switching is still the ideal. | Student-centered approach         |                                                           |              |
| ELT as a priority for career potentials                                                                                                                                                                     | Career opportunities              |                                                           |              |

The informants regard teaching English as indispensable for success and career opportunities, emphasizing a student-centered approach that focuses on communication skills and the use of authentic materials. While the "English Only Policy" has been firmly valued over the years, code-switching is still considered the ideal approach to language learning and a priority for career development.

It simply shows that Gen Z teachers have a common purpose for language learning. Several studies have clearly identified student-centered classrooms, and as for English teachers, their equivalent translation is giving the students the opportunity to practice the language in situations where they will actually use it. (cf. Izumi 2002; Swain 2000; as cited in Griffith et al. 2010). Achieving success and career opportunities sets the learning purpose as we design and create student-centered classrooms, producing better students and efficient learners through the given chances to meet their educational and personal goals while also challenging teachers, developing their own professionalism, and motivating students. ("Communicative language teaching", 1991; Brown, 2003; Norman and Spohrer, 1996; Nation, 1993; Nunan, 1991; Richards and Rogers, 1986, as examined by Griffith et al., 2010).

Also, Jacobs & Renandya (2016) have reviewed such a student-centered focus and concluded that it could potentially empower students to shape the future in ways wherein the planet and its inhabitants can co-exist and thrive through lifelong learning, thinking skills, managing diversity in the environment, and the social nature of learning.

#### 4.2 Challenges

Table 2-Theme 2: “Overcoming Language Learning Challenges and Communication”

| Codes                                                                                                                         | Category                     | Theme                                                     | General Idea |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Lack of comprehension                                                                                                         | Language Barriers            | Overcoming Language Learning Challenges and Communication | Challenges   |
| Mediocrity of the learners' mindset towards language; language policy challenges                                              |                              |                                                           |              |
| Language Teaching Difficulties with Foreign Learners than Filipino Learners                                                   |                              |                                                           |              |
| Students' perception gap of English language and its importance in academic and professional field                            |                              |                                                           |              |
| Interaction with people<br>Open and listening<br>Language learner experiences;<br>Speaking practice<br>Tool for communication | Experienced-based Teaching   |                                                           |              |
| Teaching vocabulary and spelling<br>Hard to acquire basic knowledge in English<br>Reading and Listening Comprehension         | Low proficiency in English   |                                                           |              |
| Difficulty in mastery; Don't have much opportunity to use the English Language.                                               | Lack of Practice and Mastery |                                                           |              |
| Using Communication platforms;<br>Learner's culture and Learning style                                                        | Student-Teacher Connectivity |                                                           |              |
| Unwillingness to learn and lack of motivation towards language learning                                                       | Indifference                 |                                                           |              |

The challenges encountered were on language learning and effective communication, which include low proficiency in English, a lack of practice and mastery, student-teacher connectivity, indifference towards language learning, and teaching accurate English amidst social media influences, as well as the need for experience-based teaching that emphasizes interaction, active listening, and speaking practice.

Evidently, English is a necessity to learn as it is the lingua franca and the language of science (Pourhosein, 2017), and there is also a clear need for overcoming language barriers in the post-pandemic world, which is recognized as a time-consuming and mindful process (Language Barriers of Communication and How to Overcome Them: Harappa, 2021).

Teaching language to Gen Z presents unique challenges in communication, as this generation tends to have a short attention span and a preference for digital communication. To overcome these challenges, teachers can use technology to create interactive and engaging lessons that incorporate multimedia elements. Additionally, teachers can leverage social media platforms to connect with students and create a sense of community within the classroom. It is also important to incorporate real-life situations and authentic materials into lessons to make the learning experience relevant and practical for students. Also, research by Van de Pol, Volman, and Beishuizen (2010) found that authentic materials and real-life situations can increase student motivation and engagement in language learning.

Lastly, building a positive rapport with students can help to create a comfortable and supportive learning environment. This belief emerged also in a research study by Liu and Li (2021), which found that incorporating technology into language teaching can have a positive impact on student engagement and language proficiency.

#### 4.3 Priority

Table 3-Theme 3: “Prioritizing Literacy, Engagement, and Clarity”

| Codes                                                                                                                           | Category                                            | Theme                                          | General Idea |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Learners can read, write and communicate                                                                                        | High literacy rate                                  | Prioritizing Literacy, Engagement, and Clarity | Priority     |
| If learners understand the language, it is easy to teach the subject matter<br>To communicate with others; Start with the basic | Focus on literacy and vocabulary                    |                                                |              |
| Interactive lesson<br>Willingness to learn<br>Student progress and growth; Language skills and confidence                       | Active and purposeful student engagement            |                                                |              |
| Teaching approach and style                                                                                                     | The importance of clear and engaging teaching style |                                                |              |

In terms of priority, which connotes a concerned scope of focus, Gen Z teachers see achieving high literacy rates, developing a strong foundation in vocabulary and literacy, and prioritizing active and purposeful student engagement. There is also an emphasis on clear and engaging teaching styles that support student progress and growth in language skills and confidence. Setting priorities influences the set of ELT initiatives that would direct language learning.

Regarding high literacy rates, the scope of focus is on enabling language learners to read, write, and communicate. If language is understood, teaching is perceived with ease, and basic starter conversations are given as the primary step for the intended active and purposeful student engagement. MacIntyre et al. (2001) introduced that for a communicative interaction to occur, there has to be a willingness to communicate, which has been defined as the intention to initiate communication, given a choice. Likewise, in a study conducted by Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011), deciding what information is needed affects modern learning strategies for designing target content and skills. With this in mind, Gen Z teachers aim to instill the value of clarity in their students' progress and growth, language skills, and confidence, including their teaching approach and style.

Knowing that if clarity is notably practiced by teachers, it implies that we prioritize our efforts to do less with greater focus. However, this is not simply a matter of teachers doing less. Rather, teachers need to be intentional and prioritize their efforts to develop deeper understanding among students. In doing so, prioritizing clear success criteria, intentional design, meaningful feedback, and a shared purpose, teachers can begin to clear away the curricular clutter that overwhelms the profession—and embrace the clarity that emerges. (Teaching with Clarity: How to Prioritize and Do Less so Students Understand More, n.d.).

#### 4.4 Self-Reflection

Table 4-Theme 4: “Teaching English: Awareness, Fun, and Support”

| Codes                                                                                                                                                                                      | Category                                   | Theme                                         | General Idea    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Many factors affect learners' study habits                                                                                                                                                 | Difficulty in teaching English Language    | Teaching English: Awareness, Fun, and Support | Self-Reflection |
| Communication and comprehension are more important than grammar<br>Essential; Connecting lives<br>Teaching Language is becoming a must;<br>Language as coping strategy with global changes | Language Learning Awareness                |                                               |                 |
| Difficult yet fun                                                                                                                                                                          | Fun despite Language Teaching Difficulties |                                               |                 |
| Flexibility; Adaptability;                                                                                                                                                                 | Guiding and supporting students            |                                               |                 |

Student Assistance

outside the classroom

People act on Needs

Language Learning Motivation

Teaching English is difficult due to various factors affecting learners' study habits, but there is an increasing awareness of the importance of communication and comprehension over grammar. Language is becoming a must in coping with global changes, and it can be a fun learning experience despite difficulties. Guidance and support outside the classroom through flexibility and adaptability are also crucial, as is understanding that people act on their needs for motivation in language learning.

Gen Z teachers value their insights and realizations for generating authenticity. Such a central value describes why 67 percent of those surveyed about their generation by Burke (2019) agree that 'being true to their values and beliefs makes a person cool'. Moreover, experts over time have analyzed to consider understanding what people value and what concerns them to better connect and communicate. This clearly indicates acknowledging generational diversity and determining whose perspective is arguably listened to. With the ongoing exploration of what ticks Gen Z in terms of how they think and communicate and what inspires them to change or act, our Gen Z teachers revealed that managing ELT is more about awareness of language relevance to arrive at meaningful communication and improve level of understanding than solely focusing on grammar. Despite the learners' alienation towards the target language, Gen Z teachers create a fun learning experience with the basic principle that language learning entails a personal motivation depending on need that triggers learners to be involved in the language learning process.

#### 4.5 Coping Strategies

Table 5-Theme 5: "Enriching Vocabulary, Integrating Language to Personal Life, and Adaptive Teaching Approaches"

| Codes                                                                                                                                                                                      | Category                                 | Theme                                                                                         | General Idea      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unlocking of difficulties and spelling drill                                                                                                                                               | Vocabulary enrichment and spelling drill | Enriching Vocabulary, Integrating Language to Personal Life, and Adaptive Teaching Approaches | Coping Strategies |
| Daily usage of English language<br>Language importance and its benefits                                                                                                                    | Integration to Personal Life             |                                                                                               |                   |
| Exploring teaching tools and techniques<br>Task- based language teaching; Real life tasks<br>Simplified language<br>Meeting halfway with the students;<br>Whole Class attention engagement | Adaptive teaching approach               |                                                                                               |                   |

The coping strategies from a Gen Z perspective focus on the use of vocabulary enrichment and spelling drills, integration of language learning into personal life, and an adaptive teaching approach that includes exploring teaching tools and techniques, task-based language teaching, simplified language, and meeting students halfway to engage the whole class.

Coping strategies in student-centered English language teaching involve designing curricula, classroom activities, and assessment methods that align with the needs, interests, and strengths of students. This approach to language teaching prioritizes the learners' agency, autonomy, and motivation and fosters their engagement, ownership, and mastery of the language.

The first coping strategy, enriching vocabulary, involves teaching students how to expand their lexical repertoire through explicit instruction, exposure to authentic language use, and regular practice. This strategy recognizes that vocabulary is the key component of language proficiency and that students need to learn how to recognize, understand, and use a wide range of words and phrases to communicate effectively in different contexts. This is similarly emphasized by Brown (2007) in his book "Teaching by Principle: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy," which states that "Vocabulary learning is best accomplished when it is both meaningful and memorable. Meaningful vocabulary is vocabulary that the learner wants to learn or needs to learn. Memorable vocabulary is vocabulary that the learner can recall and use productively."

The second coping strategy, integrating language into personal life, involves making the language learning experience relevant, meaningful, and applicable to students' lives and interests. This strategy recognizes that students learn best when they can connect the language to their own experiences, goals, and identities. Also, according to Burns and Richards (2012) in their book "Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching," "Personalization strategies involve

inviting learners to draw on their own experiences and knowledge and share these with others. This can be done through activities that elicit personal information or through tasks that require students to apply language in ways that reflect their own interests and perspectives."

The third coping strategy, an adaptive teaching approach, involves adjusting the teaching methods and materials to meet the diverse needs, preferences, and abilities of students. This strategy recognizes that students have different learning styles, strengths, and challenges and that teachers need to be flexible, responsive, and creative in their instructional practices. It is in consonance with Schmidt and Celce-Murcia's (2014) work on "Teaching English as a Second Language or Foreign Language" that "adaptive teaching requires teachers to constantly monitor and assess their students' progress, adjust their instruction accordingly, and provide feedback that is informative, specific, and actionable."

Hence, by implementing these coping strategies, teachers can create learning environments that empower and inspire students to become proficient, confident, and independent users of the English language.

#### 4.6 Instructional Context

Table 6-Theme 6: "Effective Language Learning Practices: Student-Centered and Immersive Practices"

| Codes                                                                                                                                                                                    | Category                                      | Theme                                                                           | General Idea          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Task-based language teaching<br>Promote a positive classroom environment<br>Affective Filter; Correcting students' error abruptly; TPR<br>Listening any English platform which they like | Effective language teaching strategies        | Effective Language Learning Practices: Student-Centered and Immersive Practices | Instructional Context |
| Explicit teaching, remedial reading and spelling<br>Translation method, modeling method, TV-based videos on pronunciation and comprehension                                              | Teacher-led Literacy improvement              |                                                                                 |                       |
| Reinforcing reliance on L2                                                                                                                                                               | Teaching emphasis on context and immersion    |                                                                                 |                       |
| Repetition techniques, error correction, simplification of terms                                                                                                                         | Effective Techniques for Language Acquisition |                                                                                 |                       |

Effective language learning practices include student-centered approaches to navigating language barriers, teacher-led literacy improvement, an emphasis on context and immersion, and effective techniques for language acquisition such as repetition techniques, error correction, and simplification of terms.

Instructional context is one of the different aspects that we need to consider in the teaching-learning process. According to Guthrie et al. (2012), the behavioral engagement of the learners in the instruction fosters students' motivation and the sound learning of certain concepts. This is also related to the Cone of Experience model of Dale Edgar, which emphasizes the significance of the learners' involvement in the learning process. There is a need for them to perform various tasks in order to acquire the highest level of skills. In the instruction, the experience that they will undergo in the process has an impact on their sound learning. Moreover, a study by Khadjooi et al. (2011) highlighted Gagne's Model in Instructional Design, whose application of the nine (9) steps of this model ensures an effective and systematic way of teaching. It is stipulated in the theory that at every level of learning there are corresponding types of instruction. It must be stressed that the tasks must be organized in a hierarchy according to their complexity. This is to identify the prerequisites that should be completed by the learners in order to effectively facilitate them at each level. In addition, Gagne's model is very simple, but it can be adapted for use in a variety of classroom settings. Furthermore, the fact that all the steps of the model are sequential makes it easy for the teachers to implement and follow the procedures. Through this model, it helps each learner master the desired objective.

#### 4.7 Progress Markers

Table 7-Theme7: "Promoting Language Learning Progress through Hands-on Learning, Individualized Support and Resources for Students"

| Codes                                                                                                             | Category                                        | Theme                                                                                                     | General Idea     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Learn while doing the tasks<br>Slowly engaging in classes<br>Teaching becomes easier when students are interested | Learning by Doing                               | Promoting Language Learning through Hands-on Learning, Individualized Support, and Resources for Students | Progress Markers |
| Positive reinforcement<br>Simplified Tasks<br>Positive disposition                                                | Meeting Individual Needs in Meaningful contexts |                                                                                                           |                  |
| Promote bilingual with limitation<br>Strategic thinking of more activities                                        | Support and resources for students              |                                                                                                           |                  |

Gen Z teachers Involve learning by doing, meeting individual needs in meaningful contexts, and providing support and resources for students, including positive reinforcement, simplified tasks, and strategic thinking about more activities.

The ultimate aim should be to help learners move from external regulation to internal regulation, according to Brown (as cited in "ELT in the Time of the Coronavirus 2020 (Part 2): An Introduction," 2020). Setting progress markers allows teachers to track the improvement of the learners through hands-on learning with a conscious aim for self-directed learning while doing the tasks, enabling class engagement so that as they become interested in the learning process, teaching becomes easier while learners exhibit positive reinforcement. It is adaptable to different environments and learning styles. How language learners learn has been studied over time, and studies have concluded that they greatly benefit from interactive learning (Luca, 2014). Through this learning path, Gen Z teachers use sensible strategic thinking in conducting applicable activities that are mostly simplified tasks as a means to provide individualized support and resources for students. This indicates that the learning approach is actually improving the skills, as similarly discussed by Meredith (2017), based on the observable language learner needs, and promoting progress in language learning can set clarifications.

#### 4.8 Learning Paradigm Shift

Table 8-Theme 8: "Moving from Traditional Discipline to Innovative Engagement, Real-life Scenarios to Address Decreasing Value in Language Learning"

| Codes                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Category                                                 | Theme                                                                                                                             | General Idea            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Student-centered approach; Authentic materials; Technology<br>Military Discipline and Socratic Method before but nowadays, more on fun ways of language learning<br>New strategies;<br>English is very useful.<br>Virtual Learning | From Traditional Discipline to Innovative Engagement     | Moving from Traditional Discipline to Innovative Engagement, Real-life Scenarios to Address Decreasing Value in Language Learning | Learning Paradigm Shift |
| Outdated teachings or materials                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Call for Shift in teaching approach; real life scenarios |                                                                                                                                   |                         |
| Has less focus in language learning                                                                                                                                                                                                | Decreasing language learning value                       |                                                                                                                                   |                         |

ELT has evolved from a traditional discipline to a more innovative, student-centered approach that includes the use of authentic materials and technology. There is a need for a shift in teaching approach towards real-life scenarios and the importance of addressing the decreasing value of language learning by emphasizing the importance of new strategies, fun ways of learning, and virtual learning in modern ELT.

Moore et al. (n.d.) reported that various teaching methods accommodate preferred learning styles, and it is viewed that educators tend to use methods that reflect their own preferences for learning rather than the students' learning preferences. It is advised to consider the individual, cultural, or regional factors that may influence personal preferences. Similarly, Miller (2021) revealed a recent result from a study conducted by the training industry that learning preferences that increase comprehension and retention of information are worth the attention of trainers and educators. A revolutionary change of focus aimed at learners and how essential personalized learning is to developing work-related skills alongside technology use have been realized by teachers, as revealed in a recent study conducted by Liwanag and Del Valle (2022). This perspective

is consistent with the findings of several studies conducted in the past yet still remains true. In addition, a humanistic view of how people learn has been described by various terms such as student-centered learning (Rogers, 1969 as cited in *Shifting from Pedagogy to Heutagogy in Education*, 2015) or, more recently, learner-centered learning (Armstrong, 2012; Graves, 1993; Long, 1990 as cited in *Shifting from Pedagogy to Heutagogy in Education*, 2015). These approaches contrast with teacher-centric methods and emphasize the importance of putting the learner at the center of the learning experience.

#### 4.9 Role of Feedback

Table 9-Theme 9: “Understanding Today’s Learners through Personalized ELT”

| Codes                                                 | Category                                                         | Theme                                                   | General Idea     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Informative to educators and students                 | Enlightening Information                                         | Understanding Today’s Learners through Personalized ELT | Role of Feedback |
| Great help to future researchers                      | Beneficial for future researchers                                |                                                         |                  |
| Interesting                                           | Appreciation for one’s involvement                               |                                                         |                  |
| Importance of the study for ESL industry              |                                                                  |                                                         |                  |
| Teaching improvement                                  | Recommending cultural beliefs and feedback gathering in teaching |                                                         |                  |
| Eye opener for teachers about generation descriptions | Understanding Today’s Learners                                   |                                                         |                  |

Understanding today’s learners is important for effective teaching and appreciating their involvement in the learning process. The study provides useful information for researchers in the ESL industry and highlights the importance of cultural beliefs and feedback gathering in teaching. It also sheds light on the characteristics of the learners of the present generation, which can lead to teaching improvement.

Generating a personalized learning experience (Kerr, 2015) is an eye opener for teachers about generation descriptions that could benefit educators, students, and future researchers, as well as the ESL industry, which could contribute to teaching improvement. Valentic (n.d.) similarly stated that the choice of good strategies to teach the English language is important and possible. The concept of applied ELT, which introduces a “life syllabus” (Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2017), is also recommended. In addition, Blewett (2018) highlighted that through feedback, teachers enable meaningful communication with the learners. It improves the relationship between the teacher and students. The study by Bruney (2013) supported this claim, in which he states that validating students’ feelings will foster trust and their emotional intelligence. Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory explains that developmental changes in the learners occur in a two-way process. The first is between others, and the second is internally within an individual. He emphasizes that learning takes place through peer feedback, where learners interact with others. Carless (2022), added that to make feedback effective for the learners, they must get involved with the teacher in terms of generating, processing, and responding to feedback information. Basically, feedbacks productively influence the students’ learning since they are provided with explanations as to what is accurate and inaccurate with their works.

## 5. Conclusion and Theory Generation

A student-centered approach to English language teaching (ELT) arises from the nine key concepts of teacher beliefs and practices deriving from Gen Z’s perspective in this phenomenological inquiry. It has revealed that such a perspective is student-centric on purpose, challenges, priorities, self-reflection, coping strategies, instructional context, progress markers, a learning paradigm shift, and the role of feedback. Such perspective corroborates also the conclusion of Jacobs and Renandya (2016) that student-centered learning seems more important than ever, and to fulfill the potential of the ongoing equalizing paradigm shift towards a better world for all, educators are encouraged not to wait for top-down change but, in the spirit of the paradigm shift itself, educators should team up with colleagues and students today to do whatever they can to bring to life the student-centered learning vision. It implies, then, that Gen Z teachers, as new members of the academic workforce, have a clear emphasis on making English language teaching student-centric. The results of this study could lead to a better understanding of the teaching framework influencing Generation Z Teachers who are making potential solutions in the workforce and valuable insights to the field of language learning, including practical changes for individuals and organizations looking to learn from this generation, contribute to the ongoing exploration of the real potential of Gen Z towards productive collaborations in language learning as their unique insights are given a spotlight for real trends (Anderson, 2022), exhibiting why they cannot be ignored as transforming the workforce goes on.

## Author Note

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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