

Interdisciplinary teacher collaboration for English for Specific Purposes in the Philippines

MARELLA THERESE TIONGSON

University of the Philippines Diliman

ABSTRACT

Interdisciplinary collaboration between language teachers and content specialists is important in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This exploratory qualitative interview study examines the perspectives on ESP teacher collaboration of five academics who fulfill TESOL-related administrative roles in a Filipino university. The study uses Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) levels of cooperation, Barron's (1992) continuum of subject specialist involvement, and D'Amour's (1997) structuring interprofessional collaboration model as analytical frameworks. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and responses were thematically coded to reveal participants' understanding of collaboration, its implementation in their departments, benefits and challenges, and ways to effectively establish and sustain it. Findings showed that the participants had similar understandings of collaboration, that they practice it themselves, and that they recognize its benefits for teachers and students, while at the same time highlighting concerns about its implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Interdisciplinary collaboration in tertiary educational settings results from the practical demands of teaching and research. Teachers within

Address for correspondence: Marella Therese Tiongson, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Room 1120, Palma Hall Pavilion 1, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 1101; Email: mtationgson@gmail.com

University of Sydney Papers in TESOL, 13, 29-62.

©2018 ISSN: 1834-4712 (Online)

and across institutions collaborate to more efficiently plan, teach, and evaluate courses (Lee, 2008). This type of collaboration is found in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses; English teachers often need to work with content specialists to describe the academic skills students need in their respective disciplines (Feak, 2017) and to integrate content with language learning (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). Additionally, collaboration helps English teachers teach unfamiliar disciplinary content (Gonzalez & Louis, 2002), leading to professional development opportunities (Belcher, 2006).

Although studies on interdisciplinary collaboration in ESP have been documented considerably (Northcott & Brown, 2006), very few are about English as a Second Language (ESL) in Southeast Asian teaching contexts. The Southeast Asian region is linguistically diverse: English functions as a lingua franca among different nations. Specifically, Ho (1998) describes the English language teaching terrain of the ten ASEAN member countries as either ESL, which includes Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore - English is an official language of the latter two - or English as a Foreign Language (EFL), namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The use and status of English as either a second or foreign language depends on the history of each country. In the case of Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, English is strongly linked to the histories of these countries as former colonies of the UK or the USA (Rubdy, Tupas, Villareal, David, & Dumanig, 2012). In these contexts, English is used widely in society as the language of business, education, media, and other major arenas (Ho, 1998). Thus, English enjoys a high status and children learn it early in school as the medium of instruction in many subjects.

The Philippines is unique in the Southeast Asian region in that the Americans rather than the British brought English to the country, and secured its elevated place in society (Martin, 2014). The Americans instituted the public school system and established English as the medium of instruction; during this time, Filipinos were taught as though they were native English speakers (Martin, 2002). However, in the 1970s, nationalists called for the more widespread use of the

national language, Filipino; thus, the bilingual education policy of Filipino and English was implemented. In the 2000s, this policy was reevaluated after Filipino students reportedly performed poorly in international tests on science, math, and national achievement tests, because the language of the tests was English. Additionally, this policy was perceived to be detrimental to Filipino students' English proficiency (Mahboob & Cruz, 2013). Thus, in 2009, the Philippine Department of Education pushed for mother tongue-based multilingual education in the early levels of primary school. However, despite such policy reforms, English is still the dominant language used in universities; thus, Filipino students are expected to be proficient in it in order to succeed academically and professionally (Martin, 2014; Valdez, 2011).

ESP has been one of the dominant English Language Teaching (ELT) practices in the Philippines since the 1990s (Martin, 2014), because the Philippine Department of Education and its teachers have believed that through ESP, Filipino students will be armed with the English language skills they need to work overseas and to promote the development of science and technology in the country. However, Filipino ESP teachers often have difficulty teaching discipline-specific content, due to their lack of familiarity with disciplinary knowledge and conventions (Carreon, 1996). In order to improve ESP teachers' knowledge and application of disciplinary conventions, collaboration with content specialists has been suggested, although it has been applied to very few contexts in the Philippines (Carreon, 1996; Vizconde, 2006). Interdisciplinary collaboration has been shown to improve ESL students' academic achievement levels and language proficiency (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998), thus it is worthwhile to explore its potential as a practice to improve students' academic and disciplinary language proficiency in an ESL context like the Philippines.

Research on collaborative teaching has often tackled single cases of teachers' own practices, has highlighted advantages and disadvantages, and has drawn from researchers' own experiences (Morelock *et al.*, 2017). While these studies have informed collaboration research and practice, there is a lack of research on the

contextual and organizational factors enabling meaningful collaboration in schools (Cha & Ham, 2012) and the influence and role of leaders in implementing effective teacher collaboration (Gumus, Bulut, & Bellibas, 2013). Additionally, current frameworks of collaboration in English teaching do not address how structural-organizational factors may influence implementation (Pawan & Ortlhoff, 2011), as these models only describe the roles of content specialists and language teachers and their pedagogical activities (Barron, 1992; Dove & Honigsfield, 2010). Thus, in order for its potential as a teaching and professional development practice to be established, more research on the perspectives on collaboration of those fulfilling leadership roles in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) related initiatives is needed, as their support is crucial in its establishment and success (Friend & Cook, 2013; Pawan & Ortlhoff, 2011).

This paper aims to address these gaps by analyzing the perspectives of five academics involved in leading TESOL-related initiatives from a university in the Philippines regarding teacher collaboration, and its implementation in ESP course development. It aims to describe how collaboration is understood by those in leadership positions, and to investigate the contextual factors affecting its implementation, with special attention to the role of academics who are both in leadership positions and are involved in TESOL-related initiatives in implementing collaboration efforts. Overall, the paper hopes to offer new insights on how teacher collaboration is practiced in a Filipino university context, and to contribute to the literature on collaboration and TESOL leadership by highlighting the role of academics in key positions in establishing and implementing successful collaboration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Models of teacher collaboration

Teacher collaboration is, broadly, “cooperative actions for job-related purposes” (Kelchtermans, 2006, p.220) with activities ranging from informal discussions to formalized co-teaching models (DelliCarpini & Alonso, 2014). Thus, collaboration is understood as a

continuum, where collaborative activities vary depending on teachers' level of involvement and responsibility (Stewart & Perry, 2005) and the formality of collaborative structures in a particular context (DelliCarpini, 2014).

In ESP settings, interdisciplinary teacher collaboration is the "collective action undertaken by English and content area teachers to address the needs of English language learners" (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011, p.464). Collaboration is needed when language teachers are required to deal with specialized content they are unfamiliar with (Tatzl, 2013). Also, teachers need to identify language students' needs for succeeding in their discourse communities, and identifying this requires input from content specialists from these disciplines (Basturkmen, 2010). Collaboration between content specialists and language teachers may improve student achievement outcomes (DelliCarpini, 2014) because content specialists recognize students' language needs (Stewart & Perry, 2005) and language teachers prioritize teaching relevant discipline-specific skills (Craig, 2013).

The extent and nature of collaboration changes based on how language teaching is matched to content course activities (Hyland, 2006). In describing subject-specific integration in university contexts, two frameworks of collaboration are typically used: Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) levels of cooperation and Barron's (1992) continuum of subject specialist involvement.

In Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) framework, there are three levels of interaction between language teachers and content specialists: cooperation, collaboration, and team-teaching. In *cooperation*, language teachers seek information about the content course and work activities from content specialists primarily through observations, interviews, surveys, and subject discourse text analysis (Hyland, 2006). They analyze target situations and describe language skills and genres that students need in their respective disciplines. Thus, cooperation with content specialists enables language teachers to make informed choices and draw on the content subject's discursal framework when considering instructional activities.

Collaboration occurs when content specialists work more directly with language teachers outside the classroom in planning courses,

assessing tasks, or providing materials. Dudley-Evans and St. John suggest three collaboration options: (1) the language class prepares students for a subsequent content class taught in English; (2) the language class prepares students for a specific skill or task (like research writing); (3) the language class acts as an adjunct class to the content course to help students struggling with English.

Finally, *team-teaching* occurs when content and language teachers work together in the same classroom to instruct students on tasks required in their disciplinary contexts. Teachers teach, design syllabi and materials, and evaluate tasks jointly. This practice was pioneered at Birmingham University in the 1980s (Dudley-Evans, 2001), where content specialists and language teachers worked together to increase students' content lecture comprehension through follow up questions about the lecture recording, discussion of key points, and note-taking skills development.

Similarly, Barron's (1992) model presents a continuum of involvement between content specialists and language teachers that changes with the content specialist's role in language teaching. The lowest degree of involvement is as a *subject specialist informant* providing guidance and advice regarding the subject's nature of communication, so the language teacher can become better acquainted with the discipline. Next, the content specialist may serve as *consultant*, designing the course during specific stages, or offering expertise on specific content to ensure its correctness. For example, the consultant may offer writing assistance, or assess student work. Afterwards, the content specialist becomes a *collaborator* who works with the language teacher in planning, teaching, and assessing the course, but does not share the same classroom. Here, language skills become subordinate to content objectives to complete discipline-specific tasks.

Finally, the highest degree of involvement is as a *colleague*, where the content specialist works with the language teacher on all aspects of the course and team-teaches in the same classroom. Teaching efficiency is ideally achieved because both teachers are present and address students' needs according to their specializations. Barron (1992) argues that when the content specialist and language teacher

work together, they achieve a better degree of coherence between language development and academic competence. He also believes their roles may overlap considerably.

These two models illustrate the possible roles of content specialists and language teachers in an ESP class and will be used to identify collaborative activities in this study.

Benefits and challenges of teacher collaboration

Interdisciplinary collaboration benefits teachers in several ways: it accomplishes teaching efficiency through sharing expertise and duties (Barron, 1992; DelliCarpini & Alonso, 2014); provides professional development opportunities (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010) by helping teachers learn new techniques and content (Craig, 2013); reduces isolation by increasing moral support (Kelchtermans, 2006); and improves interdepartmental relations (Barron, 1992). Collaboration also benefits students because it increases their motivation and understanding (Jordan, 1997) when they see language contextualized and relevant to their field (Brinton *et al.*, 2003), and when they discover multiple teaching styles and perspectives (Stewart & Perry, 2005). For students, collaboration can be more effective when their teachers have a good relationship (Gladman, 2015) and good pedagogical skills, not only content expertise (Yanamandram & Noble, 2006).

Nevertheless, there are challenges to implementing collaboration. First, it is time-consuming and labor-intensive (Jordan, 1997), and it challenges teachers' autonomy (Craig, 2013) and preference for working alone (Friend & Cook, 2013). Second, it entails overcoming disciplinary barriers and respecting other colleagues' expertise, which is difficult for teachers from different disciplinary backgrounds (Hyland, 2006). Third, it involves issues of parity amongst collaborators (Creese, 2000), especially for language teachers seen as support staff tasked to fix students' writing, since some content specialists fear that language teachers will teach watered-down content (Crandall & Kaufman, 2002). Fourth, administrative concerns such as additional costs, inconsistent communication between departments, and challenges in scheduling coordination are hurdles to

collaboration (Friend & Cook, 2013). These pragmatic concerns may discourage even willing teachers from collaborating, due to lack of available support, especially from leaders (Stewart & Perry, 2005).

To better understand how these benefits and challenges influence teacher collaboration in TESOL contexts, Pawan and Ortloff (2011) adopted D'Amour's (1997) Model of Structuring Interprofessional Collaboration to analyze perceptions of content teachers and ESL teachers on collaboration after a joint professional development program. They found D'Amour's (1997) model, developed for healthcare contexts, helpful in analyzing teacher collaboration and augmenting previous research because it situates different factors in both interpersonal and structural-organizational contexts. The first two dimensions of the model identify *interactional factors* between collaborators, seen in the indicators of *finalization* (having shared goals and a client-centered orientation) and *interiorization* (having a mutual sense of dependency, trust, respect, and knowledge). The next two dimensions pertain to *organizational factors*, determined by context and manifested in *governance* (leadership and support) and *formalization* (explicit norms and formalization of collaborative structures). In the current study, this model will be used to determine the salient organizational factors that contribute to successful collaboration.

Leaders' roles in teacher collaboration

Studies on interdisciplinary collaboration in ESP have been conducted mainly in native English-speaking countries like the UK and Australia (Davison, 2006; Dudley-Evans, 2001), due to the large number of students learning English and the presence of educational policies endorsing collaboration (Davison, 2006). In Asia, collaboration has been documented primarily in Korea, China, and Japan (Cargill, O'Connor, & Li, 2012), most often in EFL settings between native speaker and non-native speaker teachers (Carless, 2006; Fan & Lo, 2016). Such research has focused on collaborating teachers' discourse in Hong Kong (Chan, 2016) and Taiwan (Davison, 2006) and has primarily investigated relationships between collaborating teachers in the classroom context (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011) or school-university

partnerships in undertaking TESOL research in places like Hong Kong (Chan, 2016).

Leadership support from those fulfilling TESOL-related leadership roles is important in maximizing the benefits of collaboration and overcoming its constraints (Brinton *et al.*, 2003; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Pawan & Ortloff, 2011). However, research has focused more on verifying the benefits of collaboration for students and teachers (McHenry, 2009), and less on the organizational factors associated with successful collaborations (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011) or the effects of leadership on teacher collaboration (Gumus *et al.*, 2013), even though leadership influences school effectiveness and student success through its impact on teachers (Louis *et al.*, 2009). This dearth of research on leadership and collaboration echoes the lack of studies on leadership in TESOL (Christison & Murray, 2009). TESOL research has often focused on language teachers and learners, even though research on TESOL with a focus on TESOL specialists who fulfill leadership roles is growing (McGee, Haworth, & MacIntyre, 2015).

Regarding collaboration in ESP contexts, focus on leadership is discussed mostly in the implications for collaborative practice after a case has been discussed. For example, various studies recommend leaders in favor of collaboration do the following: provide structural support by institutionalizing and promoting collaboration (Lee, 2008); identify interested teachers and listen to their concerns (Stewart, Sagliano, & Sagliano, 2002); specify a clear task, defined roles, and explicit goals for the collaboration (Davison, 2006); coordinate teachers' workload and timetables (Stewart *et al.*, 2002); organize professional development workshops on collaboration (Stewart & Perry, 2005); and reward collaborations through additional remuneration, lighter teaching loads, and research grants (Brinton *et al.*, 2003).

Interestingly, while most of these suggestions target leaders, few studies, especially in an ESP context, have investigated leaders' perspectives on collaboration. Studies exploring leaders' perspectives on collaboration have mostly been conducted in basic education, such as facilitating the inclusion of special education students in general education contexts in the USA (Friend & Cook, 2013; Kamens, Susko,

& Eliot, 2013), or investigating the impact of principals' leadership on teacher collaboration in primary schools (Gumus *et al.*, 2013; Piccardi, 2005). Pawan and Ortloff's (2011) study of interdisciplinary collaboration between teachers in the USA is a unique study focusing on the impact of leadership in sustaining or challenging collaborations in ESL basic education contexts by including administrators as participants.

Although collaboration has been studied more extensively in these contexts, fewer studies have explored its implementation in the Philippines, where ESP is a dominant language teaching approach encouraged by the Philippine Department of Education (Martin, 2014). This is because of the priority placed on learning English language skills by previous governments in order to increase Filipino workers' marketability when working overseas and to satisfy the recent boom of the call center industry in the country (Valdez, 2011). However, many Filipino ESP teachers in universities have problems teaching due to the lack of ESP methodology training and understanding of specialized content (Carreon, 1996). Thus, interdisciplinary teacher collaboration in the Philippine university context needs to be explored, because it potentially addresses ESP teachers' content teaching and professional development needs.

Also, the leadership perspective on collaboration, in particular, needs to be considered for two reasons. First, school leadership is seen as a crucial factor that strongly influences student outcomes (Bush, 2007). Second, in order for such innovations like collaboration to be implemented effectively, leaders must understand, support, and feel a sense of ownership towards the practice (Waters & Vilches, 2001). It must be noted that most research on leadership practices and attitudes have focused on traditionally Western paradigms (McGee *et al.*, 2015), which may not always be appropriate to Southeast Asian contexts. Thus, it is valuable to explore leadership perspectives on collaboration to better understand and develop more appropriate frameworks to guide its implementation in a Southeast Asian context.

RESEARCH RATIONALE

This study aims to fill these gaps by exploring how such collaborations are understood and implemented by five teacher-administrators from different disciplinary departments of a university in the Philippines who are involved in TESOL-related initiatives. Additionally, this study is timely in the Philippines because of the introduction of the K-12 program in 2013, requiring universities to revise their curricula. The program has added two years to secondary school to keep up with international standards (Philippine Department of Education, 2012). In this program, postsecondary general education subjects such as academic writing have been incorporated into high school education. The program is expected to affect English instruction at universities by increasing the need to introduce more specialized writing courses. For such writing courses to respond to students' needs, collaboration with content specialists has been commenced at one university, which is the research context in this paper.

Following previous studies that have described collaboration using the aforementioned analytical frameworks, and to better understand ESL and content teacher collaboration from an organizational perspective, this exploratory qualitative study aims to answer the research question: How do university teacher-administrators understand teacher collaboration in ESP contexts, and how do their understandings of teacher collaboration affect its implementation?

METHOD

Research design

This research utilized an interpretive-qualitative approach to investigate how teacher collaboration is implemented in a natural context within a bounded system (Cresswell, 2007) of one university in the Philippines. It explores the perspectives of five university academics who fulfill administrative roles and are participating in TESOL-related initiatives, whose responses are explored to develop a rich understanding of how collaboration is practiced in the specific setting in which the study takes place.

Research setting and participants

The study is set in a large public urban Philippine university offering about 300 programs, with 25 colleges and schools, 25,000 students, and 1,500 teaching staff. The university was chosen because of its top academic ranking in the Philippines, and its influence in enacting teaching and research initiatives. Presently, its administration has mandated program reviews to update curricula as a result of the K-12 program and has suggested interdisciplinary collaboration as a pedagogical strategy to improve interdisciplinary links in general education courses. The culture of the university is collectivist, values academic freedom and critical thinking, but tends towards disciplinary insularity, making previous efforts at interdisciplinary collaboration more difficult. However, its English Department has begun developing specialized writing courses, and has initiated collaborations with other departments for ESP course development.

The participants are teacher-administrators who are tenured academics with administrative positions. Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to identify the participants, who were selected using the following criteria: 1) they are academics who fulfill administrative roles such as deans or associate deans; directors or deputy directors; chairs or deputy chairs in academic faculties or departments who are involved in TESOL-related initiatives, and have experience, or have expressed interest, in collaborative teaching with the English Department; 2) they have been personally involved in collaborative teaching or curricular development. Six participants were invited but only five were able to participate.

Background of participants

Five Filipino university teacher-administrators from different academic departments of the university were interviewed about interdisciplinary teacher collaboration for ESP course development. Pseudonyms for participants and organizations are utilized to ensure confidentiality.

Lea is an Associate Professor from the English Department. She has been the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the College of Arts for a year, and is in charge of planning and evaluating academic

programs of the College. Additionally, she heads the Writing for Engineers team.

Helen is an Associate Professor also from the English Department. She has been the Assistant Chair of the department for five years, and is also the Guidance and Evaluation Committee Coordinator, in charge of mentoring junior staff. She also leads the Writing for Scientists team, and is presently team-teaching the Writing in the Sciences course as the language expert.

Noel is an Assistant Professor from the Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Department. He has been the department's Deputy Director for facilities and resources for three years. He team-teaches the aforementioned Writing in the Sciences course as the content specialist.

Mario is a Professor from the Civil Engineering Department. He has been the Chair of the science and technology curriculum cluster of the university, which oversees programs from these disciplines, for three years. He coordinates collaborative courses at the College of Engineering, and initiates communications with other departments regarding these classes.

Glenda is a Professor from the Business Administration Department. She has been its Chair for seven years. She plans for faculty development and manages linkages with the staff. This includes liaising with the English Department in running their Business Communication course.

Data collection

The study utilized individual interviews, which allow researchers to explore people's perceptions and constructions of situations (Punch & Oancea, 2014). The interviews were semi-structured; an interview schedule was used (see Appendix A), guiding the interview flow and allowing the researcher to pursue related topics (Glesne, 2016). The questions were developed from the literature using Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) and Barron's (1992) frameworks initially, particularly in having participants do the following: define collaboration; describe its nature and the roles of teachers in their context; enumerate its benefits and challenges; and suggest ways to

sustain it. The project underwent the human ethics review process at the researcher's institution and was granted approval.

The interviews were conducted through video calling applications in order to address time and financial concerns (Cater, 2011), because the research setting is in the Philippines and the researcher was in New Zealand at the time of the study. The video call interviews allowed the researcher to see participants' verbal and non-verbal cues in real time, thus offering a level of authenticity comparable to face-to-face interviews (Sullivan, 2012). These video call interviews took about 30-45 minutes, and were conducted in April to May 2017.

Data analysis

The researcher transcribed the interviews. Data analysis followed an iterative and cyclical process using thematic analysis to make sense of the implicit and explicit themes in the data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) using meaningful speech segments (Henri & Rigault, 1996). The analysis was first undertaken using deductive means by developing a set of a priori codes (Saldaña, 2013) from the models and literature guiding this study, specifically applying Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) and Barron's (1992) frameworks to classify collaborative activities, and D'Amour's (1997) model to analyze the benefits, challenges, and supports needed in collaboration. For example, a priori codes include *cooperation*, *collaboration*, and *team-teaching* to describe collaboration examples given by informants. An example given by one participant, Glenda, was coded as one speech segment under the code *collaboration*:

We are working together directly for the course content. We make sure that we co-develop the syllabus, and then we give them feedback on how we can make this better, and then if necessary, we also provide them with the resources.

(Glenda, personal communication, 3 May 2017)

The researcher read through the transcripts and manually coded them, accommodating themes that emerged from the data through the addition of open codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), such as *differences*

in academic culture that form a challenge to successful collaboration, as mentioned by Lea:

What if ... the different domains are at odds with each other? Then collaboration will be very difficult to do ... if the STEM faculty ... and the humanities faculty [do not see] eye-to-eye, then they may not actually be willing to work with each other.

(Lea, personal communication, 14 May 2017)

Afterwards, axial coding was applied, in which categories were formed while continually reviewing coded data (Cresswell, 2007). Next, the categories were selectively coded through rereading the data to ensure codes and categories were adequately analyzed by comparing the similarities and differences in participants' answers (Creswell, 2007) and determining the relationships between codes and categories (Guest *et al.*, 2012). For example, the code *differences in academic culture* was categorized as a sub-theme under *interiorization* and classified under challenges of collaboration due to its frequent reoccurrence in the data. Finally, from these, salient themes were identified and analyzed against the research question (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

RESULTS

Understandings of collaboration

All the leaders defined collaboration as working together to develop a course. Lea, Mario, Glenda, and Noel described interdisciplinary collaboration as entailing various collective actions, like planning a course, teaching, and evaluating students' performance. Helen also pointed out that collaborations can be both formal and informal, and can involve teachers teaching together in the same classroom at the same time or teaching separate sessions one after another. Overall, they conceptualized collaboration as a continuum in which collaborative activities differ depending on the level of involvement of teachers and their duties, and how formalized or structured such activities are.

Lea, Mario, and Glenda highlighted the need for collaboration if the course would benefit from an interdisciplinary approach, and if it

requires expertise they do not have. Mario mentioned the disaster management course he coordinates, which draws on expertise from different fields such as engineering, social sciences, and humanities. Glenda concurred, saying the Business Communication course is “better handled” from an interdisciplinary approach especially since they lack teachers with language expertise. Lea also believed in collaboration benefitting an ESP course, because “you’re dealing with not just communication skills, but a particular profession.” Such instances reveal the need to collaborate to discover learners’ needs and improve their communication skills in their disciplines.

Additionally, three participants emphasized the importance of having shared goals and understandings. Noel responded: “Everyone involved should be clear about what they want ... and willing to work towards achieving those goals.” Lea agreed, saying this is essential to successful collaborations.

The teacher-administrators also provided examples of their departments’ collaborations. The examples related to content and language collaboration will be presented first using the models of Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) and Barron (1992). Where applicable, D’Amour’s (1997) model will be used to explain the organizational and interactional dynamics of the collaboration.

First, no informant mentioned an example that falls under *cooperation*. It seems as though participants’ ideas of collaboration pertain to more formal and involved manifestations.

Second, Glenda, Helen, and Lea described the Business Administration Department’s collaboration with the English Department in the Business Communication course, which was initiated by the Business Administration Department, and has been ongoing for more than five years. They mention how the content specialists are involved in planning the course design, but only the language teacher implements the teaching. Additionally, Glenda mentioned that they give the language experts the students’ feedback, offer input on assessments, and provide resources as needed. “[The course allows teachers] to do their work independently,” she said. This is an example of *collaboration* because the business lecturer as a *collaborator* only works with the language teacher on the syllabus,

provides valuable input on business discourse, and suggests materials and activities outside the classroom.

Third, Helen and Noel described the English Department and Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Department's four-year-old collaboration, the Writing in the Sciences course, in which they teach students how to read and write technical papers. When teaching, Noel introduces students to the scientific papers used in the field, and then Helen tackles linguistic aspects of technical writing. Afterwards, both teachers provide feedback on students' drafts of scientific articles. Both teachers mentioned how they observe the other's classes, even though they are not required to. Helen uses it to become more familiar with scientific communication, while Noel is present to clarify any questions Helen or students may have. This collaboration can be classified as a kind of *team-teaching*, because Noel and Helen are *colleagues* who build on each other's expertise to teach the same group of students a specific skill (i.e., writing scientific papers). Notably, Noel has observed students' improvement in writing during the course, to which he credits Helen's contribution.

Because this collaboration shows the most involvement from both teachers, and both speak positively of their experience and have high regard for their colleague, it is also the example that strongly manifests D'Amour's *interiorization* dimension, which indicates that mutual acquaintanceship and trust must be present for strong collaboration to be possible.

Finally, when asked about their respective department's willingness to continue collaborating, all participants reacted positively. The extent of their collaborations varied, however. Glenda foresaw their involvement mainly in the course design, while Noel and Helen affirmed their departments' continuing collaboration. Meanwhile, Mario and Lea are negotiating plans for the Writing for Engineers course. This is related to the dimension of *finalization* in D'Amour's model, because some teacher-administrators have different interpretations and expectations regarding the extent of the collaboration and the roles of their teachers.

Implementing collaboration

Collaboration encourages growth for teachers and students

When asked to enumerate the benefits of teacher collaboration, everyone emphasized how it increases students' motivation. First, Helen said students "appreciate and enjoy the variety" of having two teachers. Glenda believed students' exposure to feedback from different perspectives "enriches the content of the program." Lea and Noel linked this benefit to students' writing, with Noel saying, "students write better now" through increased audience awareness and better understanding of form and content. Second, Mario and Helen observed students relating better with their teachers, especially if they know their teacher is not a content expert in the course she is collaborating in; students are empowered to familiarize their teacher with the content.

Next, four participants stated teachers' professional development as a key affordance. "[Through collaboration], even professors continue their education," Helen said. Similarly, Mario commented on how collaboration "broadens ... intellectual understanding of other fields ... because ... you grow out of your comfort zone [and] you're really forced to study what you'd normally not."

Finally, Helen, Mario, and Lea mentioned how collaboration strengthens relationships between teachers. "It teaches you to get along with people," Mario noted. Lea believes this is beneficial for universities, because "[professors from different disciplines] don't really talk to each other very much."

These responses reveal the strong characteristic of "client-centeredness" that belongs to the *finalization* dimension of D'Amour's (1997) model, because they recognize that the collaboration is mainly undertaken to help students succeed, and that it is beneficial to them. However, they may also conceive of teachers as the clients of this collaboration, especially if it is undertaken for professional learning.

Collaboration involves numerous challenges

When asked to name challenges of teacher collaboration, four teacher-administrators remarked that it was time consuming. Noel and

Mario noted that because teachers have other duties, some of them are unable to accomplish their tasks in the collaboration. And Helen discussed the difficulty of covering all assigned topics, especially with limited sessions allocated.

Another challenge is the difficulty of encouraging teachers to collaborate. Helen expressed how hard this is for other English teachers, because they fear the “unfamiliarity of the field.” Glenda spoke about teachers being used to working alone. And Lea believed more assessment regarding the academic value of collaboration is needed in order to better convince teachers of its value.

Next, four teacher-administrators pointed out the challenge of overcoming disciplinary barriers. Mario mentioned “turfing,” where some teachers think “it’s more of their purview” to teach content they know. Lea agreed, observing “most universities work this way” because of their tendency to be more specialized. Glenda highlighted how challenging it is for professors from different fields to agree with others, because they have their own “disciplinary kingdoms” with their own culture and values.

Similarly, Helen and Lea mentioned how disciplinary barriers would make creating ESP courses more difficult. Lea said different disciplines have different ideas on how writing should be taught, and these differences could significantly affect their willingness to work with each other. She mentioned, for example, how some disciplines view English teachers merely as grammar checkers, which may relegate them to a lower status in the collaboration. However, Helen remained optimistic that these differences could be bridged through communication.

Finally, all participants agreed that administrative issues were a significant challenge to collaboration. First, Noel and Lea voiced the difficulty of assigning teaching loads to collaborating teachers and coordinating schedules, especially when different departments are involved. Mario also mentioned how assigning heavy workloads to teachers may lead to “conflicts of commitment.” Meanwhile, Glenda expressed how administrative issues regarding a course’s place in their curriculum has affected staffing decisions in collaborations, because they have a limited number of lecturers. Additionally, Noel

and Glenda raised the difficulty of maintaining continuity and assuring teachers' compatibility in these collaborations, especially if administrators had no control over selecting teachers to collaborate. Helen stressed the importance of funding in supporting and incentivizing collaborative activities. Finally, Lea stressed the need for teacher-administrators to clearly articulate their policies regarding collaboration to facilitate smoother implementation.

It seems that the most challenging aspects of collaboration can be categorized under the *governance* dimension of D'Amour's (1997) model. Governance pertains to the following indicators: leadership necessary for collaboration, support for this innovation, and communication between collaborators. The leaders' concerns involving allocating enough time, promoting collaboration, and solving administration issues are governance concerns, because these are matters that administrators deal with. However, the challenge pertaining to differences in disciplinary culture are more interactional in nature and therefore fall under the *interiorization* aspect. Here, it appears that achieving trust, respect, and interdependency is difficult if teachers are unable to overcome their disciplinary barriers.

Collaboration needs communication and leadership support to be successful

When asked how to strengthen collaboration in the university, all participants highlighted the need for clear and consistent communication between departments. Helen pointed out the need to communicate openly during all aspects of collaboration. Glenda agreed, saying this was vital in overcoming some administrative challenges. Glenda, Mario, and Noel expressed the importance of having regular consultations between departments, and noted their own departments should increase their efforts in coordinating such meetings. Meanwhile, Lea suggested learning about other departments' collaborative engagements could improve the English Department's collaborations.

Finally, most participants underscored the importance of stronger administrative support for collaboration in different ways. Helen and Noel mentioned increasing the pool of teachers teaching Writing in

the Sciences through teacher training. Lea brought up the need to pilot collaborative efforts and publicize their results. She also suggested the importance of cultivating a culture of collaboration, and posited that a school's context may make collaboration harder if no existing structures are in place. Additionally, Helen and Glenda emphasized the need to provide better incentives for collaborative work, such as funding. Finally, Lea and Helen highlighted the need to institutionalize collaboration so that support for it, as Lea remarked, "won't just be lip service ... actual action should follow."

It appears that most of the informants' responses emphasize the *governance* dimension of D'Amour's (1997) model, which pertains to the role of leadership support in successful collaborations, and the *formalization* aspect of the model, which refers to the formalization of structures and articulation of policy and procedures. This shows that leaders are aware of the importance of leadership in successful collaboration, but they seem to expect central university administration or people in higher positions to provide such support and structures, instead of initiating these themselves.

DISCUSSION

This qualitative interview study explored how interdisciplinary teacher collaboration is understood by academics who fulfill administrative roles and are involved in TESOL-related initiatives in a Philippine university, and how their views affect implementation. While this small sample cannot lead to generalizations, the findings offer useful insights for investigating this phenomenon in the Philippine context. The discussion will explore the relationship between leaders' perceptions and implementation using the analytical frameworks of this study, primarily extending the findings of Pawan and Ortloff (2011).

The informants' understandings of collaboration vary according to the level of teachers' involvement, the formality of the partnership, and the goals of the collaboration. This can be further elaborated by applying Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) and Barron's (1992) frameworks to the collaboration practices described by the informants. This has resulted in identifying the Business Communication

class as an example of collaboration, while Writing in the Sciences can be considered team-teaching.

While these frameworks were useful in identifying the type of collaboration taking place, they do not sufficiently account for how the informants' perceptions of collaboration affect its implementation. Thus, D'Amour's (1997) framework will be used to explain the interactional and organizational dimensions of these collaborations.

First, *finalization* refers to the shared goals and common values between the participants of the collaboration. In this research context, the common goal shared by content specialists and language teachers is to improve students' disciplinary language skills. While having this shared goal can increase teachers' commitment to the collaboration (Barron, 1992; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998), this goal must be negotiated between content specialists and language teachers to achieve some balance between language and content development, because language goals typically become subordinate to content objectives. When this happens, there may be a lack of parity between content specialists and language teachers, relegating the latter to a lower status (Hyland, 2006). In the case of the Business Communication course, the content specialist primarily determines the course's goals, but the language teacher is expected to deliver instruction. Thus, the content specialist may not be as hands-on in the partnership, or the language teacher may not take as much ownership over the goals because she did not have as much of a say in determining them.

Finalization is central to ESP collaborations, because shared goals influence teachers' commitment and expectations in the partnership. This is strongly supported in the literature (Davison, 2006; Friend & Cook, 2013), and can be seen in Helen and Noel's collaboration. Because they were both involved in defining a shared goal, which is to improve students' skills in writing scientific research papers, they are both more committed to the partnership and view it as successful.

Second, it appears that *interiorization*, or teachers' level of respect, trust, and interdependence on fellow collaborators, also impacts the extent of their collaboration and willingness to collaborate. This is because teachers' own personalities and beliefs

also influence finalization, since goals are determined largely by disciplinary priorities. This is reflected in the respondents' emphasis on cultural differences between disciplines and lack of knowledge of content, and in particular, content specialists' desire to ensure that subject matter is taught "correctly." For example, Glenda believes it is important for content specialists to ensure that language teachers' use of materials and activities are appropriate to the discipline. Additionally, Lea mentioned how different disciplines' conceptualizations of disciplinary writing may affect the trust content specialists and language teachers have in each other.

Studies underscore disciplinary differences as a challenge in collaborating (Craig, 2013; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998), which most of the participants also emphasized. While participants acknowledged these differences exist, they seemed less hostile because they generally recognized the value of each other's expertise, and believed it was possible to negotiate these differences. Such respect is crucial for successful collaboration (Hyland, 2006). This is particularly seen in Noel and Helen's partnership, which is effective because both teachers respect each other's contributions.

The dimensions of finalization and interiorization discussed collaboration from an interactional view. However, what is more salient in this study is the emphasis all informants placed on the organizational factors of *governance* and *formalization*.

In terms of formalization, the collaborations described at the grassroots level, like the disaster management course Mario helped institute, were undertaken due to practical reasons or teachers' own interests. Collaboration in this context is not top-down. While collaboration, like Lea says, is advocated by the administration, it is not strongly prescribed. This means that there is a lack of formal structures and streamlined policies in place, which weakens the support collaborating parties receive, thus providing only vague descriptions of teachers' responsibilities.

Notably, teachers' level of involvement is also affected by formal structures, because if teachers are only collaborating on an informal basis, they will be less involved. For example, the way the Business

Communication course is designed only requires the language teacher to teach but does not include the business lecturer as an official co-teacher, which means she does not have to be fully involved. Additionally, the teacher-administrators only considered something as collaboration if it occurred in a formalized context, since none cited any practices that can be classified as *cooperation* according to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). Cooperation would involve the language teacher only consulting with the content teacher as the subject specialist informant, and therefore not engaging in a visible form of collaboration. This further highlights the importance of official structures in this context, because formalized collaboration has a better chance of getting leadership recognition and support, and therefore of being sustained.

Governance was also a strong factor mentioned by the participants, since they highlighted leadership support for collaboration, consistent communication, and a clear direction to guide collaboration. Such concerns are echoed by the literature (Brinton *et al.*, 2003; Craig, 2013; Crandall & Kaufman, 2002; Pawan & Ortloff, 2011). However, it is interesting that the teacher-administrators cited governance as a serious challenge, especially since it is something it seems like they themselves should be responsible for. This appears to suggest that they think the responsibility for formalizing structures and supporting collaboration belongs to top university officials. This response may reflect their insider knowledge of the university's management styles and priorities (Pawan & Ortloff, 2011), since some come from more local or lower level leadership positions.

The discussion thus far has revealed how, by using these frameworks, collaboration can be described more comprehensively as a complex process affected by interactional and organizational factors. It can be concluded that, based on D'Amour's (1997) model, collaboration in the university is still developing. Leaders understand its value and are aware of their discipline's possible contribution. However, implementation begins mostly only at the grassroots/individual level, because informants' understandings show how they believe supporting it on a larger scale is mostly outside of

their individual responsibilities. Thus, if collaboration is to be practiced on a wider scale, they believe it is the responsibility of higher officials. Therefore, there is a bigger gap to be bridged at the organizational level than at the interactional level if collaboration is to be more widely practiced. Thus, more attention should be paid to supporting leadership and formalizing collaboration procedures for collaboration to be more effective.

This study has highlighted how different academic administrators may influence collaboration, especially based on how they see their role, their contribution in the collaboration, and their disciplinary background. It has also accounted for how organizational factors, especially manifested in leadership, affect collaboration depending on whether it is formalized and how much support it receives. Finally, this study's findings are relevant because they situate collaboration in the Philippine context, reveal how the perspectives of university teacher-administrators from different disciplines affect this practice, and discuss more comprehensively the role organizational factors play in collaboration.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This exploratory qualitative interview study has investigated how collaboration is understood and enacted in the Philippines. This study concludes collaboration is understood by academics fulfilling administrative roles who are also involved in TESOL-related initiatives as teachers working together with varying levels of involvement and formality. Based on the application of ESP frameworks describing collaboration, partnerships between teachers can also be classified as collaboration and team-teaching forms (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) to address students' language goals. Moreover, factors related to collaboration, framed through organizational and interactional dimensions by D'Amour (1997) significantly influence the degree to which teachers are involved and the support collaborations receive.

The results of the study have implications for teaching practice and professional development in the setting in which this study was carried out and beyond. By understanding how collaboration is perceived by

different departments, teacher-administrators can work together to set clearer goals, roles, and policies to guide present and future collaborations, which will result in improved ESP courses (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). They can also concretize the university's advocacy for interdisciplinary collaboration, encouraging teachers to compete in the university's teaching innovation awards, promoting existing collaborations, and applying for research funding on collaboration (Schneider & Friedenberg, 2002). Furthermore, they can improve interdepartmental communication and coordination to facilitate better execution of collaboration. Lastly, they can also support teachers through the university's faculty improvement office by providing professional development opportunities targeted towards instructing teachers on how to collaborate, learning about each other's expertise, and negotiating disciplinary differences.

A limitation of this study is that it involved only five Filipino academics fulfilling administrative roles from one university. While some useful insights regarding collaboration have been identified, the results of the study should be seen in light of its small sample size and single context. Additionally, due to the project's exploratory nature, only one data collection method was used; thus, this study's findings would benefit from triangulation with other data collection methods. Despite the sample size and methodological constraints, the study offers valuable insights on collaboration as an ESP course development practice in universities in the Philippines. Future areas for research include analyzing more cases of interdisciplinary collaboration in more universities in the Philippines, investigating ways that the process can be formalized and better supported, theorizing the practice in light of the Filipino sociocultural context, and examining how teachers from different fields can bridge epistemological and cultural gaps in order to achieve a stronger partnership. Such efforts may help educational leaders in the Philippines and elsewhere realize that interdisciplinary collaboration, while difficult, is a favorable and feasible endeavor that helps provide better learning experiences for their students and professional development opportunities for teachers.

THE AUTHOR

Marella Therese Tionson is an assistant professor at the Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of the Philippines Diliman, where she handles courses on English teaching, language studies, and academic writing. She holds a Master of Education in TESOL Leadership (with distinction) from Massey University in New Zealand, and a Bachelor of Secondary Education (*magna cum laude*) from the University of the Philippines Diliman. Her research interests include writing in the disciplines, interdisciplinary collaboration, and genre pedagogy.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This research project will utilize six semi-structured interviews as a data collection method in order to explore the perceptions of university leaders (e.g., department chairs, curricular committee heads) towards teacher collaboration in in-depth detail. The main interview questions are enumerated, with possible prompts listed below each as bullets.

In order to provide some context before the interview, the participant will be briefed on the background of the ESP curricular revisions being done at the university. The collaboration pertained to is between content specialists and English teachers.

1. Please describe your leadership role. How long have you been in that position, and what does your work involve?
2. What do you think teacher collaboration means?
 - What do you think it involves?
3. Does teacher collaboration occur between your department and other academic departments in this university?

If yes, could you describe the nature of this collaboration? Could you give me some examples?

- For example, do your teachers conduct needs analysis with other departments' teachers, jointly plan and co-teach lessons, mark assignments and class requirements together, communicate with each other regarding students' needs, etc.?
- How did it happen or come about?
- How often does this collaboration occur?
- What is the degree of involvement of the teachers in the collaboration? For example, is it just an informal discussion, or are teachers required to co-teach a class during the whole semester?

If no, what do you think are the reasons you have not collaborated with other departments?

- For example, do you have administrative constraints (e.g. lack of budget, time, or space) or do you not see a need to collaborate?
4. What is your opinion on teacher collaboration?
 - For example, do you think it could work in our context for ESP curriculum revision?
 5. What do you think are some benefits of teacher collaboration?
 6. How could these benefits be maximized?
 7. What do you think are some challenges of teacher collaboration?
 8. How could these challenges be overcome?
 - If your department has not yet undertaken teacher collaboration, could you describe these challenges and how they can be overcome hypothetically?
 9. Do you think the teachers in your department will be willing to collaborate with the English department? Why or why not?
 - If yes, what do you think would the extent of their involvement be?
 10. What steps do you think can be taken in order to establish teacher collaboration between your (content area) department and the English department?