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Found in 2023, BRU ELT Journal is a peer-reviewed and open-access electronic journal with the main aim to publish fully refereed high-quality original research articles in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) around the world for the benefit of English language teachers and researchers. The journal welcomes articles from local and foreign academics, researchers, graduate students, and policymakers. All articles are required to be in English.

The Thai Journal Citation Index Center (TCI) requested cooperation from journal editors in the selection of a specific journal's sub-areas stored in the TCI database. As a result, each journal is permitted to select 1-5 sub-areas for the papers published in the journal. In this regard, the "BRU ELT JOURNAL" would like to declare that beginning with the 1st Volume, 1st Issue (January-April 2023), articles covering the main subject area, Social Sciences, will be accepted for publication. Furthermore, these articles must be pertinent to the subject areas of Arts and Humanities, and they must cover these two sub-subject areas: 1) Language and Linguistics, and 2) Literature and Literary Theory.

BRU ELT JOURNAL accepts articles relevant to the following themes: English as an International Language, World Englishes (WE), Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language (ESL), as an Additional Language (EAL) or as a Foreign Language (TEFL), ESP and EAP, Applied Linguistics and Corpus Linguistics, Approaches and Methods in English Education, Culture and Literature in English Education, English Language Curriculum and Teaching Materials, Language Learning and Acquisition, Language Testing and Evaluation, Life-long Language Learning, Multimedia and ICT in ELT, Teacher Training and Education, Interpretation and Translation Studies, and Discourse and Interlanguage Pragmatics.

The journal is published three times a year: January-April, May-August, and September-December. However, BRU ELT JOURNAL, with no more than two (2) issues per year, might be published as a special issue upon joining in the special academic events of national and international conferences held both in Thailand and other countries.

All articles in this journal must be reviewed by at least three (3) external peer reviewers in the relevant fields from different institutes. More importantly, the authors' and reviewers' identities are concealed from each other (Double-blind peer review) in order to have the articles with high quality and academic standards. The articles submitted for publication in this journal have not already been published *elsewhere* or are not under consideration by peer reviewers for publication in other journals. The authors must strictly comply with the reference system and the criteria for the publication of academic or research articles set by the journal.

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Effects of Audio-Video Listening Comprehension Exercises on Improving Listening Comprehension of Chinese College Students

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Abstract

The objectives of this quasi-experimental research were 1) to study the effects of audio-video listening exercises on Chinese college students' listening comprehension skills, and 2) to investigate the students' level of satisfaction towards listening practice by audio-video listening comprehension exercises. The samples were 30 first year students at Boda College of Jilin Normal University, Jilin Province, People's Republic of China. They were selected by Cluster Random Sampling technique. The research instruments consisted of 6 audio-video listening exercises, 6 lesson plans, 40-item listening comprehension tests, and a satisfaction questionnaire. The statistics used to analyze the data were mean, standard deviation, and dependent samples t-test. The study found that 1) the audio-video listening exercises significantly improved students' listening comprehension; and 2) the level of the students' satisfaction towards the audio-video listening exercises was at the most satisfactory level.

Keywords: audio-video listening exercises, Chinese college students, listening comprehension, listening skills development

Introduction

In this section, background of the research problem is clarified. A review of relevant literature is conducted. Furthermore, teaching listening, listening theories, audio-video listening exercises and benefits, and previous studies are also explored.

Background of the Research Problem

This study attempts to find out effects of audio-video listening comprehension exercises on listening comprehension of Boda College students at Jilin Normal University, Peoples' Republic of China. For students who major in English Language Teaching (ELT) program in China, learning English well is not only a matter of academic achievement, but also a necessary skill for future work and communication, especially mastering listening skills. Listening is crucial for ELT

college students as it assists in language acquisition, communication, and understanding native accents, enhancing productivity, and relationships (Ahmed & Yaqoob, 2015). Traditional teaching methods in China prioritize rote memorization and grammar instruction, neglect practical skills needed for real-world communication. As a result, students struggle to comprehend spoken English in authentic contexts, hindering their academic and professional advancement. Adjusting the defects in pronunciation through the combination of listening and speaking helps to improve students' pronunciation and speaking ability (Harmer, 2007). It's not worth training without either one. Thus, the listening training plays a very significant role in English learning.

After the researcher has investigated listening grades of English Language Teaching (ELT) program students, the researcher found that their grades were low. According to the report of the Academic Office, in 2023 the majority of the students' grade was D, in 2022 it was D, and in 2021 it was C (Academic Office of Boda College, 2024). The reasons maybe they have practiced listening only one class per semester from Chinese teachers and they do not have the opportunity to use English outside the classroom and communicate with native speakers in real-life conversations. With this problem, the researcher must look for some effective methods to help the students improve in English listening comprehension.

To build listening skills, effective content utilized in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes is an essential component of the teaching process (Tyagi, 2013). The use of audio-video exercises is a key strategy for helping students enhances their listening abilities and is an integral part of teaching. According to Chen, Wang, and Xu (2014), multimedia is transforming the way students learn languages by providing various presentation modes such as audio, video, video subtitles, and so on. These multimedia tools improve learners' English skills. Audio-video listening comprehension exercises were used as a teaching tool to enhance listening comprehension. When combined with cooperative learning, audio-visual materials such as movies and lectures help students concentrate better and understand what they are hearing during listening activities, which improves their general listening abilities in classrooms (Hardiah, 2019). Pangaribuan, Sinaga and Sipayung (2017) postulate that the most effective strategy is utilizing multimedia applications like audio-video exercises, to enhance students' listening comprehension in educational settings.

Literature Review

Listening

Listening is a complicated cognitive and behavioral activity that includes not only receiving auditory signals, but also actively engaging with and interpreting them. Bodie (2023) defines listening as a dynamic process that involves feedback and adjustment, indicating that it is not merely passive but rather an interactive exchange that fosters deeper understanding. O' Malley, Chamot and Kupper (1989) define listening comprehension as a multidimensional process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, vocabulary, grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what has been gathered, and interpret it within the immediate and larger social-cultural context of the utterance.

Listening is an important part of communication that is frequently forgotten in various contexts. Swain, Friehe and Harring (2004) emphasize the necessity of teaching listening methods in the inclusive classroom for better literacy and learning results. In the context of language learning, Yıldırım and Yıldırım (2016) discuss the importance of listening in developing communicative and cognitive skills, noting that addressing listening comprehension problems is crucial for successful language acquisition.

Brenner (2017) states the importance of context and emotional intelligence in listening, suggesting that these factors significantly influence how messages are received and interpreted. Tias and Putri (2021) explored the relationship between the frequency of listening, vocabulary mastery, and listening ability in students, emphasizing the importance of these factors in language learning.

With this significance of listening, teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) should train their students to be able to effectively receive the information they heard and give feedback appropriately and correctly.

Listening Comprehension Theories

The listening comprehension process entails an active and conscious effort, whereby listeners construct meaning by using cues from contextual information and drawing upon existing knowledge, while relying on multiple strategic resources to fulfill the requirements of the task (O'Malley, Chamot & Kupper, 1989). These "strategic resources" can be divided into three theories: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive theories.

Bottom-Up Theory refers to students first understand the fundamental building blocks of information (such as facts or simple concepts) before progressing to more complicated theories or ideas. This strategy focuses on fundamental information and skills before incorporating them into a broader perspective. Khuziakhmetov and Porchesku (2016) mention that Bottom-up processing describes how learners employ linguistic signals from speech to improve comprehension, particularly at lower levels of language competency. Top-down Theory refers to incorporating the student's prior knowledge about the subject and connecting it with what they hear during the listening process (Newton & Nation, 2020). Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) assert that listeners actively develop or reconstruct the speaker's original meaning by engaging it with their background knowledge of the listening situation in order to understand what was heard. The interactive process occurs when listeners use both top-down and bottom-up processing.

According to Graham (2017), more successful listeners use a greater range of flexible methods and are more likely to strategically employ both top-down and bottom-up processing. Thus, the more effective learners took a top-down approach, focusing on bottom-up processing only when necessary.

Audio-video Listening Exercises and Teaching

Audio-video listening exercises are instructional activities that incorporate both auditory and visual information to improve listening abilities. These exercises combine the qualities of both modalities to promote comprehension and engagement in language learning settings. Therefore, it has been defined in a number of ways. Arjulayana (2018) points that videos are an effective tool for accommodating students' diverse learning methods. The visual components of films assist students understand the context and emotions expressed in spoken language, which is especially useful for visual learners. This adaptability is essential in a classroom with a diverse student population. Droad and Asl (2016) state that audio-visual gadgets enable consumers to access more authentic material. The use of media can help both instructed and non-instructed learners strengthen their language skills. Nowadays, video and audio recordings are increasingly used. Gebhard (1996) posits that authentic listening-viewing materials such as TV advertisements, game shows, TV news, movies, audio books, radio commercials, and music tracks are appropriate to use for listening practice.

One of the challenges in teaching listening is finding appropriate listening material (Renukadevi, 2014). The issue concerns the quality of listening materials as well as their compliance to the curriculum. Speed and sound clarity are important aspects of listening materials' quality. Hardiah (2019) posits that audio-visual media can assist students enhance their listening comprehension significantly. This strategy dramatically improves students' understanding of spoken English, which is critical for those learning it as a foreign language.

English as a Foreign Language teachers are increasingly using video resources to improve listening comprehension (Shahid & Ali, 2017). Many studies indicate that these multimedia tools help with language acquisition by offering authentic listening experiences that are essential for improving comprehension abilities.

Enhancing listening comprehension by providing well-designed multimedia audio-video materials improved L2 listening comprehension more than other styles of presentation (Chen, Wang & Xu, 2014). Alivi and Suharyono (2016) point out that using audio-video materials for listening exercises improves comprehension by offering more context, minimizing monotony, and sparking imagination, resulting in better understanding than audio-only methods.

Increasing engagement and motivation by applying proper methods, techniques, media, and materials for the main subject can boost students' interest and motivation in studying English, causing them to feel interested and pay attention to the subject (Kurniawati, 2016). The author also points out that video can be an effective method for teaching a variety of foreign language skills. Video can help learners improve their speech, listening, and pronunciation abilities while also encouraging the creation of authentic vocabulary.

Related Research

From 2017 to 2022, there were researchers investigating the effects of audio listening exercises and video listening exercises as follows: Sulaiman et al. (2017) investigated the differences in terms of Malaysian university students' perception towards traditional (audio-only) listening tests and video media listening tests. The study discovered that when using video material instead of audio solely, the majority of students scored higher. As a result, it is known that using video as an evaluation method can help students perform better because it uses realistic, meaningful, and real-life situation contexts and terminology. When teaching and testing listening abilities in a second language (L2) classroom, instructors should employ more genuine texts and materials. Situmeang, Manihuruk and Munteh (2023) determined the effectiveness of audio-visual teaching media in increasing students' listening comprehension. The participants were grade 8 Indonesian students. The sample size of 44 students was chosen via purposive sampling. The experimental group was instructed utilizing audio-visual teaching media, notably movie clips in the listening lesson, whereas the control group was taught using audio-recording material. This study demonstrated that audio-visual teaching media can be used effectively as a teaching strategy to improve students' listening comprehension abilities. Hao and Liu (2022) conducted the study to enhance students listening abilities by actual video listening activities. The population was 300 students, 60 samples were chosen randomly to take part in actual video listening tasks. They were students at a Chinese university and the samples were divided into two groups: control group and traditional group. Pre-tests, post-tests, and questionnaire surveys were among the study procedures. The findings demonstrated the effectiveness of the teaching method and how it enhanced students' listening comprehension of English. Students were satisfied with using real video listening activities. Shaojie, Samad and Ismail (2022) studied the effects of visual input and text types on the listening comprehension of English as Foreign Language (EFL) students in China. The visual materials were content videos, context videos, and audios. Their subjects were 30 non-English major students in Chinese Universities. It was a quantitative study. The researchers had the students listen to monologue and dialogue which were on the form of listening comprehension online tests. They found that videos and text types, texts used in teaching listening comprehension, significantly affect students' listening scores. Overall, these previous studies indicated that listening and watching video materials better improved students' listening skill than listening to audio solely. There were no studies applied both audio and video listening material in a classroom.

Objectives

The objectives of this research were to investigate the effects of audio-video listening comprehension exercises on Chinese college students' listening skills and to examine the students' satisfaction with audio-video listening comprehension exercises.

Methodology

Research Design

The design used for this study is quasi-experimental research with one-group pretest and posttest. The data was obtained from the scores of the pretest, posttest, and satisfaction questionnaire.

Population and Samples

The populations of this study included 120 first year students in 4 classrooms who were studying in English Language Teaching (ELT) program at a private university, named Boda College of Jilin Normal University, Jilin Province, People's Republic of China. The researcher selected these students as population because their program was ELT and they will be teachers who teach English. They study English skills, teaching methodologies, and other classes relating to English language teaching.

The samples of this study were 30 students in one of those 4 classrooms. They were selected by Cluster Random Sampling technique because the students in the 4 classrooms of the population had the same mixed ability: smart, moderate, and weak. Then the researcher selected the students in one of the 4 classrooms to be the participants of this study. These students study an English listening class which the researcher intended to employ the audio-video exercises to enhance their listening comprehension ability. These were the limitations concerning the Population and Samples.

Research Instruments

Lesson plans, listening comprehension pre-posttests, audio-video listening exercises, and a 5-point rating scale questionnaire were the four research instruments used in this study. These instruments were evaluated their quality by 3 experts. The lesson plans were evaluated by a 5- point rating scale of appropriateness, and their appropriateness levels were the most appropriate. The pre-posttests' reliability value was 0.853 and the discrimination power was 0.25-0.75. The audio-video listening exercises and the satisfaction questionnaire were evaluated their congruence of the tools with the research objectives. The results revealed that both instruments' items were well congruent with the purposes of the study. Prior to receiving treatment, student's listening ability was assessed by pretests. There were forty multiple-choice questions in all. The students received treatment after completing the pretest. In six weeks, the treatment was completed. After that the students were asked to complete a posttest consisting of the same pretest questions. Following the posttest, the students answered a questionnaire concerning how satisfied they were with the use of audio-video listening comprehension exercises to enhance their English listening comprehension skills.

Data Collection

The study was conducted in the second semester, starting from March 2025 until the end of April 2025. The teaching and learning activities took place at Boda College of Jilin Normal University. A pretest was administered by the researcher before the lesson plans were put into action. The six lesson plans were then taught for six weeks, for a total of nine hours of teaching. Each lesson plan, the audio-video listening exercises were applied to practice listening comprehension. The listening comprehension exercises included 1) videos describing picture, the students see picture, listen to describing picture in a form of 4 choices, and students select the correct describing, 2) short listening audios, students listen to question and select the answer from 3 answers, and 3 long listening audios, students listen to conversation between 2 or 3 persons followed by 3 questions, and select answers from 4 choices. Before the intervention, the researcher taught the students some new vocabulary and expressions the students will hear from audio-video exercises. The students practiced pronunciation, learned meanings, and sentence examples. This knowledge of vocabulary, basic expressions, and spoken words, help learners to comprehend listening (Nation, 2022; Tias & Putri, 2021,). At the final stages of listening activities, the researcher had students practice describing pictures relating to their daily life. This encouraged students to apply words and expressions learned from listening to speak. Following completion of six lesson plans, the researchers administered a posttest, identical to the pretest. Lastly, students were asked to fill out an anonymous paper form to determine their level of satisfaction.

Data Analysis

In this study, the researchers analyzed the data based on the two research objectives and hypotheses concerning 1) to study the effects of audio-video listening comprehension exercises; and 2) to study the students' satisfaction towards learning listening comprehension by audio-video exercises. Data analysis was divided into two main parts: 1) Score analysis includes descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentage. Paired sample t-test was used to determine whether the score after testing was significantly higher than the score before testing, and 2) satisfaction analysis included descriptive statistics, namely mean and standard deviation were used to describe the overall level of student satisfaction as well as satisfaction in each aspect of the questionnaire.

Results

The researcher presented the results of the study in accordance with the objectives and research questions: 1) to investigate the effects of audio-video listening exercises on improving the students' listening comprehension, and 2) to explore the students' satisfaction towards the exercises. To find the answer of number 1, the researcher compared the pretest and posttest scores as shown in Table 1. After finding the differences, the researcher tested the significant difference and presented in Table 2. For analyzing the level of the students' satisfaction, the 5- rating scale was employed, and the results were shown in Table 3.

Table 1

The Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores

	Pretest Scores (40)	Posttest Scores (40)	Difference (D)
Total	587	1042	455
\bar{X}	19.57	34.73	15.16
SD	3.67	1.91	3.23

As revealed in Table 1, the students who learned English listening through audio-video listening comprehension exercises obtained posttest mean score much more than the pretest mean score.

The next table showed whether the differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level or not.

Table 2

The Significant Difference between the Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores

Means	SD	Mean Differences	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
19.57	3.67	15.16	29	25.735*	.000
34.73	1.91				

*p ≤ .05

Table 2 showed the difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores. The paired sample t-test revealed the difference was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. That is, learning listening by audio-video listening comprehension exercises improved significantly the students' listening scores.

The next table presented the level of the students' satisfaction towards practice listening to the audio-video listening exercises.

Table 3

Students' Satisfactions toward Audio-video Listening Comprehension Exercises

No.	Items	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation	Rank
1	The audio-video exercises improved my listening skills.	4.83	.38	The most satisfactory	1
8	The audio-video exercises are beneficial in learning English.	4.70	.54	The most satisfactory	2
6	The audio-video exercises improved my spoken phrases.	4.67	.48	The most satisfactory	3
5	The audio-video exercises improved my English vocabulary.	4.63	.56	The most satisfactory	4
7	The audio-video exercises improved my self-confidence in listening and speaking English.	4.60	.50	The most satisfactory	5

Table 3 presented the top 5 of students' satisfactions out of the total 12 items. The level of all top 5 satisfaction was the most satisfactory ($\bar{X} = 4.60 - 4.83$). The students were satisfied at the most satisfactory level because the audio-video exercises improved their listening and speaking skills, were beneficial in learning English, increased vocabulary knowledge and self-confidence.

Discussion

The study found the audio-video listening exercises had high effects on the students' listening comprehension and the students were most satisfied towards the exercises. The causes of listening improvement may be from the following issues:

The pre-teaching activities

Before listening practice, the researcher taught new words and expressions the students will hear from the exercises. The students listened to pronunciation of each word and practiced until being able to pronounce them correctly. For the meanings, the teacher taught them by providing context for students to guess and learn the meanings. These activities were conducted because the researcher is aware of the benefit of vocabulary knowledge. People can communicate successfully because they know vocabulary and use it effectively (Nation, 2022). Having background knowledge of vocabulary, know what they are going to listen to, and know the purposes of listening are crucial for students' listening comprehension (Frost, 2025; Goh & Vandergrift, 2022; Kilickaya, 2024).

Repetition

The second activity that improved the students' listening comprehension was repetition. In this study, the researcher had students repeated vocabulary pronunciation and practiced listening through videos describing pictures, short audios, and long conversation audios for 6 weeks, 90 minutes each. This kind of repetitions develop students' listening comprehension (Imura, 2007; Pashler, Rohrer, Cepeda & Carpenter, 2007; Rmelah & Pornwiriyakit, 2023).

Advantages of Audio-video Listening Comprehension Exercises

This study aims to study the effects of audio-video listening comprehension exercises and the researcher found the high effect on the students' listening comprehension because of these advantages: 1) The conversations heard from the exercises are from native or native like speakers and the contents of listening relate to students' environment such as university, cities, traffic, restaurants, or working offices. They are authentic that make students feel like they are listening to the real situations (Drood & Asl, 2016). 2) Audio-video listening exercises are good motivation. Generally, the samples listen to teachers and learned the contents available in their workbook. For this experiment, the students heard the sounds and saw pictures. They recalled their experiences about those and could comprehend what they were being heard and seen (Hardia, 2019). Chen, Wang, and Xu (2014), Pangaribuan, Sinaga and Sipayung (2017) postulated that the most effective listening strategy is utilizing multimedia applications like audio-video exercises, to enhance students' listening comprehension in educational settings.

The second objective of this study was to investigate the students' satisfaction towards audio-video listening comprehension exercises. The researcher found that the students were satisfied at the most satisfactory level ($\bar{X} = 4.57$, S.D. = .58). They reported that the audio-video exercises improved their listening skills, spoken phrases, and vocabulary. They were familiar with the pronunciation of words they had learned before listening to the exercises. They learned meanings and usages of spoken words in various situations. This finding was supported by the study of Arjulayana (2018) who found that most students enjoyed learning through audio-video listening exercises in a variety of ways, including improving vocabulary and phrases.

Limitation of the Study

The limitations of this study might be pro and con of this study. 1) The first limitation is the similarity of the pretest and the posttest. The students gained higher posttest scores because they might remember some questions of the tests. 2) There was no control group, therefore, no comparison. The researcher cannot see the differences between the students who practice listening by audio-video exercises and the students who were trained by other materials. 3) The findings of this study can be generalized to only the population of this study because the population and samples were small numbers.

Recommendations

Implications

The researcher encourages teachers who teach English to students who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) to employ audio-video exercises to practice listening. Teachers have to select media and content that are suitable for students' level. The content should be related to their daily lives and be beneficial for them. Audio material is good for practice listening to different accents of speakers, identifying the similar sound of different words, and learning new words. Videos help students see the pictures or situations, the knowledge of vocabulary and pronunciation skill improve the students' comprehension. Therefore, applying both audios and videos in listening practice is beneficial. Before teaching, teachers should activate students' background knowledge: teach vocabulary, expressions, practice pronunciation until students can say them correctly and learn all meanings of those vocabulary. After practice listening, teachers should have students talk to each other by setting situations for them to do role playing. These teaching activities will improve students' listening, speaking, and their vocabulary knowledge.

Further Studies

Researchers may conduct a study to compare the effects of audio-video material on students' listening and speaking skills. Comparing learning vocabulary by listening to music audios and music videos with lyric. Finally, researchers may conduct an experimental study to see the effects of audio-video exercises on students' communication ability.

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Professional Development of EFL Teachers in ASEAN countries and Japan Context

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Abstract

With the growing global emphasis on educational quality, many ASEAN countries, and Japan, have increasingly focused on the professional development (PD) of English teachers. This study investigates the perception, provision, practice and suggestion in English teacher professional development across selected ASEAN countries and Japan. Existing studies have often focused on single countries or treated teacher professional development as a general issue, overlooking the comparative dimension across multiple ASEAN and Japan contexts. This systematic review examines 39 studies published between 1993 and 2025, focusing on ESL and EFL classrooms and the ways teachers enhance their professional skills. This study involved 100 participants from five ASEAN countries and Japan, including one participant each from Cambodia and Japan, 40 from Malaysia, 24 from Myanmar, 24 from Thailand, and 10 from Vietnam. Data were collected through Google Forms distributed via email, Facebook, and Telegram groups, as well as during a conference meeting in Malaysia, using a questionnaire consisting of 38 items on a 9-point Likert scale. The data were analysed using SPSS version 20 over a two-month period. Descriptive statistics were employed by calculating the percentage distribution of responses for each item, followed by the computation of mean scores and standard deviations to identify central tendencies and variability across participants' responses. The findings reveal that while most teachers hold very positive attitude towards PD especially in areas such as lesson planning, teaching techniques, and the use of ICT. However, significant concerns remain such as time constraints, limited access to international opportunities like scholarships, and gaps in assessment skills. Notable differences were also observed between countries. The study concludes that although teachers recognize the value of PD, more structured support, international access, and targeted training are needed. The results have implications for educational institutions, policymakers, and future researchers interested in improving PD practices in diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: EFL teachers, professional development, ASEAN and Japan

Introduction

Many countries are working hard to improve their education systems, especially in higher education. In ASEAN and Japan, teacher professional development is a top priority because it helps improve the quality of teaching, research, and student learning (DeMonte, 2013). One important measure of a school and university's quality is the number of English teachers with advanced degrees and strong teaching skills.

This study focuses on six countries—Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam—that have similar educational goals and challenges. These countries often work together on regional education projects and receive support from international partners. For example, Japan supports Myanmar through the JICA project, and Thailand and Myanmar have signed many agreements to work on education together. Myanmar and Malaysia also have a strong educational relationship, especially in the area of higher education (Sam et al., 2013). Myanmar and Vietnam have been strengthening their educational relationship through government-supported forums, scholarship programs, and university partnerships, aiming to support Myanmar's educational reform and promote long-term cooperation (VNA, 2019). Learning from these countries can help Myanmar improve its teacher training systems.

Each country has its own approach to improving EFL teachers' professional development. In Cambodia, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) has implemented initiatives such as training programs and partnerships with international organizations to enhance teacher competencies. In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has introduced policies such as the "English Education Reform Plan" (2014), which includes training programs, overseas study opportunities, and the recruitment of native English-speaking assistant language teachers (ALTs) to support local teachers, as well as hands-on teaching methodologies, ICT training, and subject-specific workshops (MEXT, 2016). The Ministry of Education (MoE) and British Council have implemented initiatives such as the Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers (Pro-ELT) program, which provides intensive training and resources to improve teaching methodologies and language skills. Additionally, the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 emphasizes continuous teacher development through workshops, online courses, and collaborations with international institutions. Myanmar's National Education Strategic Plan 2021–2030 focuses on digital tools and modern teaching (MOE, 2021). The Thai government supports EFL teacher professional development through initiatives like the Khurusapha 7-module training program and policies promoting communicative language teaching (CLT) and ICT integration (EFF, 2023; Kwangsaad, 2017). In Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the British Council have implemented various initiatives, including training programs, workshops, and partnerships with international organizations to enhance teachers' language skills and pedagogical practices. Despite all these efforts, it is still hard to make sure all teachers in the region have equal access to good professional development.

By comparing professional development practices in these six countries, we can see both strengths and weaknesses in how each country supports its EFL teachers. Some of the countries, such as Japan and Malaysia, have more developed education systems, while others, like Myanmar, are still developing. Developing countries can learn from the policies, strategies, and programs used by more advanced systems. This comparison helps highlight what is working well and what needs improvement.

Relevant government departments and education authorities can use these findings to understand the gaps in their current professional development programs, including issues related to planning, provision, and teacher access. This research can support the development of more effective, well-structured, and teacher-friendly professional development systems. By applying successful strategies from other countries and addressing local challenges, governments can create professional development programs that better meet the needs of teachers and improve the quality of English language education across the region. This research explores how English teachers in ASEAN and Japan professional development. It also looks at what training they receive, how satisfied they are, what practices they use, and what suggestions they have for improving teaching.

Literature Review

Teacher development is basically the process of becoming the best kind of teacher that one can personally be. When teachers ask themselves how they can be better and enjoy their teaching more, they are actually thinking about ways of developing. It is practical to claim that teacher development draws on inner resource for change. It is centred around personal awareness of the possibilities for change and of what predisposes the change process. It builds on the past, as recognizing how past experiences have or have not been developmental helps identify opportunities for change in the present and future. It also draws on the present, in encouraging a fuller awareness of the type of teacher one is now and of other's people responses. Therefore, it is a self-reflective process, since it is through questioning previous practices that alternatives of being and doing are able to develop.

Teacher and ELT Background Issue

Although teacher education programs have been in existence for a long time, second/foreign language teacher education is a relatively recent development. According to Day (1991), in the past language teachers were either been native speakers or had some recognized expertise in the language usually based on their knowledge of the literature and culture of the target language. However, in the last forty years there has been an explosion in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, both in the actual classroom teaching and in the education of second/foreign language teachers and this has been particularly rapid in the field of ELT. There are several significant background issues to be discussed. The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) has evolved considerably, facing complex background issues that influence both pedagogy and teacher development. Recent challenges include the rapid integration of technology and resistance to changing methodologies, alongside concerns over inclusivity in resources and digital tools. These shifts are reshaping ELT by pushing for a balanced approach to traditional and innovative teaching practices, particularly through methods that incorporate technology, as well as culturally responsive content.

Methodological Skills

The way scholars understand methodological skills has changed a lot over time. These skills are very important in second and foreign language teaching. They help teachers create a classroom where students are active and learn better. Richards (as cited in Ur, 1996, p. 5) explains methodological skills as the "activities, tasks, and learning experiences used by the teacher within the language teaching and learning process." In the 20th century, people began to see these skills and subject knowledge as the foundation for good language teaching. Methodological skills include organizing and managing the classroom. They also include giving clear input and checking students' understanding. Teachers must give useful feedback and interact well with their students. These skills create a good learning environment. Teachers use peer correction, focused feedback, and error analysis to help students improve. These techniques help students learn from their mistakes in a positive way. However, language teaching also needs special methods for language learning. Teachers should plan communicative activities that let students practice real-life speaking. This means they must balance fluency and accuracy to help students use language naturally and correctly (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 15).

Communication Skills

Communication is one of the most significant factors affecting classroom learning. Apart from general communication skills, which are closely related to teachers' personality and general style, language teachers should be able to perform a variety of communication tasks in the language classroom. Therefore, for teachers who are non-native speakers, language proficiency belongs to the core of generic skills that underlie competence in the teaching of English (Richards, 1998). Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful classroom interaction, influencing everything from student engagement to comprehension and retention. Language teachers must possess both general communication skills and specific communication abilities relevant to the language classroom. For non-native English-speaking teachers, language proficiency becomes a core component of teaching effectiveness, as it underpins their ability to model accurate language use, manage classroom discourse, and support students' linguistic development (Richards, 1998).

Contextual Knowledge

A teacher's professional context extends well beyond the immediate classroom, encompassing influences from local, regional, national, and international communities. Understanding these contextual factors is crucial for language teachers, as it enables them to align their teaching practices with broader educational, cultural, and policy frameworks. Richards (1998) emphasizes that this awareness includes understanding the impact of factors such as language policies, community expectations, sociocultural norms, school administrative practices, curricular demands, and the specific characteristics of student groups-such as age and proficiency level.

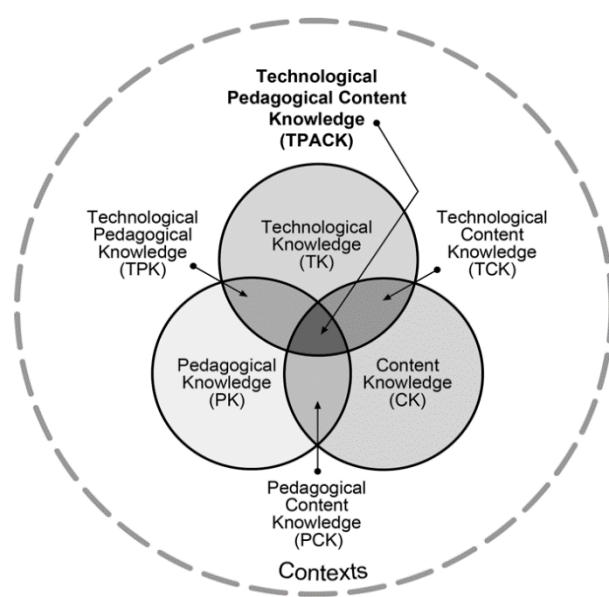
Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework

TPACK is considered a valuable framework for guiding teachers' professional growth in the face of rapidly evolving educational technologies (Niess, 2011). Originally introduced by Mishra and Koehler (2006), the framework emphasizes the interrelationship between three core domains of teacher knowledge: technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and content knowledge (CK).

CK refers to teachers' understanding of subject matter, including concepts, theories, and effective methods for delivering content. PK involves knowledge of instructional strategies, classroom management, lesson planning, assessment, and understanding students' learning needs. TK concerns teachers' ability to use digital tools and resources to enhance learning.

The framework also highlights the intersections of these knowledge types: pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) links teaching strategies with subject matter; technological content knowledge (TCK) connects technology with content learning; and technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK) focuses on applying technology within instructional methods. Mishra and Koehler (2006) emphasize that TPACK is flexible, allowing educators to adapt it to different teaching contexts.

Figure 1
TPACK Framework



By identifying teachers' strengths and needs across these domains, TPACK can guide the design of targeted professional development programs. This framework is therefore useful for policymakers, training centers, and organizations responsible for supporting English language teachers in the countries in this study. Accordingly, the present study employed this framework as a basis for conducting the needs assessment.

Previous Study

Teacher professional development is a critical factor in improving the quality of English language education in ASEAN and Japan. Despite various efforts by governments and educational institutions to provide pre-service and in-service training, many challenges remain across different contexts. Although Cambodia is attempting to align its teacher professional development with international standards through both pre-service teacher training (PRESET) and in-service teacher training (INSET), there are still significant challenges. Most teachers in their study reported that they had not received or participated in the majority of capacity building training activities. The challenges identified included limited training opportunities, a lack of teaching materials, heavy teaching workloads, weak school leadership, and the low professional status of teachers, all of which hinder their professional development (No & Heng, 2017).

In the context of Japan, local Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and foreign assistant language teachers (ALTs), who team teach English together, appear to have limited professional development opportunities, and their learning has not been well documented. In most cases, there is no scheduled time for team teachers to exchange ideas or engage in discussions about their teaching and learning within schools. This lack of collaborative opportunity persists despite numerous recommendations made in previous studies (Hiratsuka, 2014). Regarding the professional development of university English teachers in Japan, sufficient access to resources was reported as the greatest source of job satisfaction, as it directly supports their teaching and learning growth. Beyond material support, teachers emphasized the importance of intrinsic factors for their professional development, particularly the need for affiliation, opportunities for self-growth, and a sense of autonomy (Tsutsumi, 2014).

In Malaysia, survey analysis indicates a general lack of ICT resources and infrastructure in schools, which hinders the integration of ICT tools in the teaching and learning of English. Another major obstacle is the limited allocation of time for professional development, along with challenges related to teachers' proficiency and mastery of the English language (Jamil et al., n.d.).

In Myanmar, according to Moet and Kálman (2024), teachers are actively engaged in professional development activities, share the outcomes of their teaching practices, and provide constructive feedback to colleagues. Nevertheless, some teachers show less cooperation, mainly due to limited time and a reluctance to accept comments or suggestions from others. Another study found that while teachers expressed positive attitudes toward collaborating with colleagues, they rarely had the opportunity to practice it (Sandar, n.d.) due to excessive workload and limited school facilities, teachers face difficulties in their collaboration.

In Thailand, the study highlights teachers' pressing needs in three key areas: English language competencies, pedagogical strategies for teaching all skills, and technological skills (Poonpon, 2021). Another study also emphasized the need to strengthen their English proficiency and communication skills for more effective instruction. They reported challenges in English teaching, including limited techniques and classroom management knowledge, which often led to reliance on traditional methods such as grammar translation and rote memorization. Another finding also underscored the importance of technological development, as well as training and

workshops to enhance teachers' instructional capabilities (Weerathong & Mongkolhuthi, 2023).

In Vietnam, this study examined the challenges high school EFL teachers face when participating in language proficiency training programs. Most participants identified time and financial constraints as the main challenges, with nearly 70% citing time and about 50% citing expenses. Overall, the findings suggest that personal financial conditions and family responsibilities are the primary barriers to teachers' participation in training courses (Nhan, 2018).

Research Objective

Professional development is widely acknowledged as essential for improving both teaching quality and student outcomes. However, despite its importance, EFL teachers across Asia face a range of challenges that limit their access to and benefits from PD opportunities. Existing studies have often focused on single countries or treated teacher professional development as a general issue, overlooking the comparative dimension across multiple ASEAN and Japan contexts. This study was conducted to address that gap by comparing the perceptions, needs, practices, and suggestion for PD development of EFL teachers in six countries. The rationale for undertaking this research lies in the need to identify both shared regional challenges and country-specific concerns. Understanding these similarities and differences provides valuable insights for designing more effective, context-sensitive PD programs and for informing educational policy across the region.

1. To find out how EFL teachers feel about professional development
2. To examine the extent of satisfaction with the provision and quality
3. To understand how teachers take part in professional development
4. To collect teachers' ideas and suggestions to improve professional development

Methodology

This study used a questionnaire to collect data from English language teachers in several ASEAN countries and Japan. The purpose was to explore their perceptions, provision, practices, and suggestions related to professional development. Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation and percentage, were used to analyse the responses, especially for the Likert-scale items and general background information.

Participants

The study involved 100 English language teachers from five ASEAN countries and Japan. Forty participants were from Malaysia, followed by 24 from Myanmar, 24 from Thailand, and 10 from Vietnam, with only one participant each from Cambodia and Japan. Most participants were female (94%), and their ages ranged from 25 to over 55, with the largest group (50 participants) aged 35–44. Teaching experience varied, with 40 teachers having around 20 years of experience, 38 having around 10 years, and the remaining 22 having more than 20 years. In terms of educational background, 60 teachers held a bachelor's degree, while 40 held a master's degree, and a few were pursuing a PhD.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative survey design to examine EFL teachers' perceptions, provision, participation, and suggestion regarding professional development across five ASEAN countries and Japan. The design was chosen because it allows for the systematic collection of standardized data from a large number of participants, making it possible to measure teachers' responses and compare results across different contexts. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had relevant experience in teaching English and engaging in professional development activities.

Research Context

The research context of this study involves EFL teachers in five ASEAN countries: Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam and Japan. In these contexts, professional development opportunities are often limited, unevenly distributed, or insufficiently tailored to teachers' needs. Within the broader field of TESOL, understanding teachers' perceptions, provision, participation, and suggestions for professional development is critical to enhancing the quality of English language education in these countries.

Research Instruments

This study used a 38-item structured questionnaire to collect data from EFL teachers in Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Based on the TPACK framework, the questionnaire examined teachers' technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, as well as their application in English teaching. It comprised four sections: (1) demographic information, (2) perceptions of professional development (PD), (3) participation in PD activities, and (4) suggestions for improving PD. Teachers' responses were captured using a nine-point Likert scale (*1=Strongly disagree, 9=strongly agree*) to enhance clarity and reduce neutral or ambiguous answers.

Demographic information was collected through a five-item questionnaire designed to gather background data (age, gender, teaching experience, highest qualification and country of origin) to contextualize participants' responses and enable meaningful comparisons across groups. The content validity of the questionnaire was established through review by three English language teaching experts. A pilot study conducted in our classroom reported the following Cronbach's alpha values for each section.

Teachers' perceptions of PD were measured using a nine-item questionnaire examining their attitudes, beliefs, and views regarding the importance and effectiveness of PD. The scale demonstrated good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .87$ (Saidi & Siew, 2019).

Teachers' participation in PD activities was assessed using an 18-item questionnaire investigating the types, frequency, and extent of teachers' engagement. The scale also demonstrated good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .87$.

Teachers' suggestions and recommendations for PD were collected through a six-item questionnaire consisting of closed-ended items, designed to capture insights on how PD could be improved to better meet teachers' needs. This scale demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .91$. Content validity was evaluated

using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), which yielded scores of 0.53 for Part 1, 0.94 for Part 2, and 1.00 for Part 3, indicating strong agreement among the three language experts for Parts 2 and 3. According to Ismail and Zubairi (2022), items with an IOC value below 0.50 were carefully revised prior to actual data collection.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from 100 EFL teachers across five ASEAN countries: Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam and Japan. Online distribution was conducted via Google Forms, with links shared through email, Facebook, and Telegram groups. Additionally, hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed during a professional conference in Malaysia to reach participants who preferred paper-based responses. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and provided consent before responding. Data collection took place over a period of two months. Responses from online submissions were automatically recorded, while hard copy responses were manually entered into SPSS version 20 for analysis.

The data were analysed using SPSS version 20 over a two-month period. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all 38 questionnaire items. For the five demographic questions, percentage distributions were computed to summarize participants' background characteristics. For the 33 Likert-scale items, percentage distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations were calculated to examine the frequency of responses, average levels of agreement or perception, and variability among participants.

Research Results

This study examined EFL teachers' perceptions, provision, practices, and suggestion for professional development (PD) across six Asian countries. Overall, the results show that teachers strongly recognize the value of professional development for both teachers and student learning ($\bar{x} = 8.15$, $SD = 1.65$). They also believe that PD helps improve their teaching skills ($\bar{x} = 8.09$, $SD = 1.32$). Most participants reported that PD improves their teaching skills and provides useful follow-up activities ($\bar{x} = 7.56$, $SD = 1.49$). However, common challenges emerged, particularly institutional support ($\bar{x} = 6.12$, $SD = 2.11$), the lack of sufficient time ($\bar{x} = 6.17$, $SD = 1.92$), and access to necessary resources ($\bar{x} = 6.53$, $SD = 2.35$).

Regarding participation in professional development (PD) activities, the most frequently reported practice was lesson preparation, with most teachers indicating that they regularly prepare their lesson plans in advance ($\bar{x} = 8.41$, $SD = 1.36$). This was followed by reviewing lessons to improve them ($\bar{x} = 7.70$, $SD = 0.95$) and trying new teaching techniques ($\bar{x} = 7.70$, $SD = 1.28$), suggesting active engagement in enhancing teaching quality. In contrast, some activities were less frequently undertaken. Teachers rarely received scholarships or fellowships abroad to support PD ($\bar{x} = 4.42$, $SD = 3.21$), seldom engaged in team-teaching with colleagues ($\bar{x} = 5.13$, $SD = 2.66$), and did not consistently record reflections in their teaching diaries ($\bar{x} = 5.56$, $SD = 2.18$).

When it comes to suggestions for developing their professional skills, teachers across different countries reported that their highest priority is classroom management ($\bar{x} = 8.00$, $SD = 1.35$). This was followed by the use of modern teaching methods, particularly the integration of ICT ($\bar{x} = 7.81$, $SD = 1.57$), and strengthening their ability to manage their own professional growth ($\bar{x} = 7.57$, $SD = 1.72$).

Table 1

ASEAN + Japanese EFL Teachers' Responses on Part 1 of the Questionnaire (n=100)

S N	Part-1	Countries											
		Cambodia		Japan		Malaysia		Myanmar		Thailand		Vietnam	
		Mea n	SD	Mea n	SD	Mea n	SD	Mea n	SD	Mea n	SD	Mea n	SD
6	Most teachers are willing to participate in professional development activities.	8.00	0.0	8.00	0.0	7.25	2.0	6.29	2.3	6.29	2.3	8.00	0.0
7	Most department heads, schools, faculties, language institutions, and university authorities provide sufficient opportunities and support for English teachers' professional development.	5.00	0.0	5.00	0.0	6.25	2.3	5.34	2.3	5.34	2.3	7.00	0.0
8	PD activities are important for the success of both teachers and learners.	9.00	0.0	8.00	0.0	8.00	1.7	7.84	2.2	7.84	2.2	9.00	0.0
9	Current PD activities have improved my teaching skills.	9.00	0.0	7.00	0.0	8.25	1.3	7.79	1.8	7.79	1.8	8.00	0.0
10	Necessary tools for PD, such as appropriate rooms, computers, and projectors, etc are sufficiently provided.	8.00	0.0	6.50	1.5	6.50	2.6	5.83	2.4	5.83	2.4	5.00	0.0
11	Sufficient time is available for PD activities, and teaching timetables are adequate.	7.00	0.0	5.00	0.0	6.50	1.5	5.88	2.3	5.54	2.6	4.00	0.0
12	PD is mostly voluntary, and teachers are free to choose whether to participate or not.	9.00	0.0	5.00	0.0	8.00	0.7	5.84	2.2	5.88	2.3	7.00	0.0
13	The impact of PD activities on students' learning is evaluated.	9.00	0.0	6.00	0.0	8.00	0.7	6.08	2.2	6.08	2.2	7.00	0.0
14	PD activities are followed up to ensure that teachers implement the knowledge and skills gained.	9.00	0.0	6.00	0.0	8.50	0.5	6.79	2.2	6.79	2.2	8.00	0.0

As shown in Table 1, across all six countries, teachers strongly agreed that professional development (PD) is important for the success of both teachers and learners (Cambodia: $\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$; Japan & Malaysia: $\bar{x} = 8.00$, $SD=0.00$, Myanmar & Thailand: $\bar{x} = 7.84$, $SD=2.28$; Vietnam: $\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$). Most teachers also believed that current PD activities had improved their teaching skills (Cambodia: $\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$; Myanmar & Thailand: $\bar{x} = 7.79$, $SD=1.81$, Malaysia: $\bar{x} = 8.25$, $SD=1.3$), and many expressed a strong willingness to participate in PD (Japan: $\bar{x} = 8.00$, $SD=0.00$; Vietnam: $\bar{x} = 8.00$, $SD=0.00$). The most common concern across five countries (except Vietnam) that department heads, schools, and language institutions do not provide sufficient opportunities and support for teachers' professional development (Cambodia & Japan: $\bar{x} = 5.00$, $SD= 0.00$, Malaysia $\bar{x} = 6.25$, $SD=2.38$, Myanmar & Thailand: $\bar{x} = 5.34$, $SD=2.32$,). In Vietnam, the primary issue was the time constraint for engaging in PD activities ($\bar{x} = 4.00$, $SD=0.00$). Additional challenges emerged in some contexts: Japanese teachers noted that PD is not mostly voluntary and teachers are not free to choose whether to participate or not. ($\bar{x} = 5.00$, $SD=0.00$), Cambodian ($\bar{x} = 7.00$, $SD=0.00$), Thai ($\bar{x} = 5.54$, $SD=2.60$) and Malaysian ($\bar{x} = 6.50$, $SD=1.50$) teachers highlighted a lack of time to engage in PD. Malaysian ($\bar{x} = 6.50$, $SD=1.50$), Burmese ($\bar{x} = 5.83$, $SD=2.43$) and Vietnamese teachers ($\bar{x} = 5.00$, $SD=0.00$) reported lack of necessary tools such as rooms, computers, and projectors.

Table 2

Participants' Responses on Part 2 of the Questionnaire in Terms of Practice (n=100)

SN	Part-2	Countries									
		Cambodia		Japan		Malaysia		Myanmar		Thailand	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
15	I share teaching resources and experiences with my colleagues face-to-face.	5.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	5.57	2.28	6.66	2.18	6.66	2.18
16	I share teaching resources and experiences with colleagues online.	5.00	0.00	7.00	0.00	5.25	2.17	6.08	2.53	6.08	2.53
17	I take part in designing or reviewing course programs.	1.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	4.50	1.12	5.25	2.52	5.25	2.52
18	I take part in workshops related to English language teaching.	1.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	7.50	1.50	6.29	2.46	6.29	2.45
19	I observe myself and reflect on my teaching.	9.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	7.50	1.66	7.33	1.82	7.30	1.82
20	I consistently record in my diary and reflect on my teaching experiences.	3.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	6.25	0.83	5.33	2.48	5.33	2.48
21	I conduct research on issues related to teaching, either alone or with others.	3.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	5.75	1.64	5.50	2.63	5.50	2.63
22	I review my lessons to improve them.	9.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	7.50	0.50	7.92	1.73	7.90	1.73
23	I engage in team-teaching (teach a class with colleagues).	8.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	6.25	2.49	5.13	2.62	5.10	2.62
24	I collaborate with colleagues to design exam papers.	1.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	6.25	2.59	5.12	2.67	5.10	2.67
25	I attend seminar, workshops and conferences on teaching methodology.	1.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	7.50	1.12	6.62	2.20	6.66	2.20
26	I watch videos and listen to podcasts about teaching methodology.	9.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	7.50	1.12	6.83	2.31	6.80	2.31
27	I usually prepare my lesson plans.	9.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	8.75	0.43	7.21	2.18	7.20	2.18
28	I reflect on the objectives, content, and exams of the courses I teach, as well as how well my students have learned from them.	9.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	7.75	0.83	7.12	1.95	7.12	1.95
29	I try out new teaching techniques and solutions to problems I have noticed in my courses.	9.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	7.75	0.75	6.80	1.94	6.80	1.94
30	I read documents about teaching methodology.	9.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	6.75	0.43	6.54	2.24	6.55	2.24
31	I attend coordination meetings with teachers of the same module.	5.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	7.00	1.41	6.17	2.61	6.17	2.61
32	I have received scholarships and fellowships abroad.	1.00	0.00	9.00	0.00	4.25	3.27	4.08	3.23	4.08	3.23

As shown in Table 2, when examining participation, Cambodian teachers reported the highest involvement in personal reflection, trying new methods, and reviewing lessons for improvement ($\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$). Japanese teachers were most active in attending workshops, reflecting on their teaching, experimenting with new techniques, and using educational videos ($\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$). Burmese and Thai teachers demonstrated strong commitment to reviewing their lessons ($\bar{x} = 7.92$, $SD=1.73$). Malaysian teachers showed strong engagement in lesson review ($\bar{x} = 8.75$, $SD=0.43$) and self-observation ($\bar{x} = 7.75$, $SD=0.83$), while Vietnamese teachers reported high involvement in lesson preparation ($\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$) and in using videos and podcasts on teaching methodology ($\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$).

In contrast, teachers across ASEAN countries (except Japan) reported the lowest involvement in reviewing scholarship and fellowship opportunities abroad (Cambodia: $\bar{x} = 1.00$, $SD=0.00$; Malaysia: $\bar{x} = 4.25$, $SD=3.27$; Myanmar & Thailand: $\bar{x} = 4.08$, $SD=3.23$; Vietnam: $\bar{x} = 2.00$, $SD=0.00$). Japanese teachers, however, indicated the lowest participation in team teaching and lesson planning. Country-specific patterns were also evident: Cambodian teachers seldom engaged in designing or reviewing

course programs and workshops ($\bar{x} = 1.00$, $SD=0.00$), Malaysian teachers reported limited involvement in course program design ($\bar{x} = 4.50$, $SD=1.12$), while teachers in Myanmar and Thailand showed low engagement in exam paper design ($\bar{x} = 5.12$, $SD=2.67$) and team teaching ($\bar{x} = 5.13$, $SD=2.62$). Similarly, Vietnamese teachers reported minimal participation in team teaching ($\bar{x} = 1.00$, $SD=0.00$), reflecting a tendency to work individually rather than collaboratively.

Table 3

Participants' Suggestions / Recommendation on English Language Teaching (n=100)

S N	Part-3	Countries											
		Cambodia		Japan		Malaysia		Myanmar		Thailand		Vietnam	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
33	Teachers' teaching techniques	9.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	6.75	1.09	7.21	2.26	7.21	2.26	9.00	0.00
34	Teachers' communication skills with colleagues and learners	9.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	6.25	2.17	7.13	2.26	7.13	2.26	9.00	0.00
35	Teachers' assessment skills	9.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	6.25	2.05	7.66	1.87	7.66	1.87	9.00	0.00
36	Teachers' use of modern tools like ICT in teaching	9.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	8.00	1.22	7.21	2.18	7.21	2.18	9.00	0.00
37	Teachers' classroom management skills	9.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	8.00	1.22	7.54	1.87	7.54	1.87	9.00	0.00
38	Teachers' ability to manage their own professional development	9.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	7.00	1.58	7.54	1.87	7.29	2.34	9.00	0.00

As shown in Table 3, with regard to suggestion, teachers across all countries emphasized the need to further develop their classroom management skills (Cambodia: $\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$; Japan: $\bar{x} = 8.00$, $SD=0.00$; Malaysia: $\bar{x} = 8.00$, $SD=1.22$; Myanmar & Thailand: $\bar{x} = 7.54$, $SD=1.87$; Vietnam: $\bar{x} = 9.00$, $SD=0.00$). In addition, teachers in Japan, Cambodia, and Vietnam identified other priority areas for development, including teaching techniques, assessment, communication, and ICT use. Teachers from Myanmar and Thailand highlighted teacher assessment skills as a major area for improvement ($\bar{x} = 7.66$, $SD=1.87$). For Myanmar, another important focus was the ability to manage their own professional development ($\bar{x} = 7.54$, $SD=1.87$), while in Thailand ($\bar{x} = 7.21$, $SD=2.18$), and Malaysia ($\bar{x} = 8.00$, $SD=1.22$), teachers pointed to ICT use as a key area requiring further growth.

Discussion

As far as I am aware, previous research has largely focused on individual countries or considered teacher professional development in general terms, without examining comparative perspectives across multiple ASEAN countries and Japan. This study seeks to fill that gap by exploring and comparing EFL teachers' perceptions, needs, practices, and recommendations for professional development in six countries.

Teachers' Perceptions and Satisfaction of Professional Development

Consistent with previous studies (DeMonte, 2013), teachers across all six countries strongly recognized the importance of professional development (PD) for improving both teacher performance and student learning. They also noted that PD enhances teaching skills and provides useful follow-up activities. Despite this, teachers reported several challenges in accessing effective PD. Across five countries (except

Vietnam), the most common concern was the lack of institutional support from their organizations, which aligns with (No & Heng, 2017; Sandar, n.d.). In Vietnam, the primary issue was time constraints for participating in PD activities, which aligns with (Nhan, 2018) who reported that teachers do not have enough time for PD activities due to their personal commitments. Additionally, country-specific differences emerged. Japanese teachers noted that PD is not mostly voluntary, with limited freedom to choose activities which aligned with (Tsutsumi, 2014) who reported that Japanese teacher are lack of autonomy and freedom to involve PD activities such as curriculum setting, whereas teachers in Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand emphasized that they do not have sufficient time for PD which consistent with (Weerathong & Mongkolhutthi, 2023; Omar et al., 2017; Jamil et al., n.d.) they all reported that the allocation of time is a major problem for EFL teachers to engage in PD activities. Teachers in Malaysia, Vietnam, and Myanmar expressed concerns about not having the necessary tools for PD as reported by (Joseph & Zaitun, 2007; Nhan, 2018; Suriya, 2019).

Teachers' Participation in Professional Development

Regarding participation in professional development (PD) activities, the most frequently reported practice was lesson preparation, with most teachers indicating that they regularly prepare their lesson plans in advance. In contrast, some activities were less frequently undertaken. Teachers rarely received scholarships or fellowships abroad, seldom engaged in team teaching with colleagues. Examining participation by country, Teacher from different countries involved in different PD activities. Cambodian teachers reported the highest involvement in personal reflection, trying new methods, and reviewing lessons for improvement while Japanese teachers were most active in attending workshops, reflecting on their teaching, experimenting with new techniques, and using educational videos. Additionally, Strong involvement in reviewing lessons was observed among Burmese and Thai teachers. Malaysian teachers showed strong engagement in lesson review and self-observation, while Vietnamese teachers reported high involvement in lesson preparation and the use of videos and podcasts on teaching methodology. In contrast, teachers across ASEAN countries (except Japan) reported the lowest involvement in seeking scholarships and fellowship opportunities abroad, which aligned with (ASEAN, 2025; Nugroho, 2018) they all reported that EFL teachers have very limited opportunities to participate in international professional development programs, workshops, or training. Japanese teachers indicated the lowest participation in team teaching and lesson planning, which is consistent with (Shiobara & Sakui, 2019) teachers wished to allocate more time to collaborate with the team teacher on lesson planning and preparation. Cambodian teachers seldom engaged in designing or reviewing course programs and workshops which is in accordance with (Igawa & Tsujioka, 2009), Cambodian teachers prioritized attending workshops and seminars as their most important professional development needs while Malaysian teachers reported limited involvement in course program design or reviewing course program which aligns with findings from Saudi Arabia (Houssawi & Mohamedadam, 2016), where teachers had no role in curriculum development stages and were perceived primarily as curriculum implementers in classrooms. Although the contexts differ, this similarity suggests that exclusion of teachers from curriculum or course design may be a broader trend in EFL education. Teachers in Myanmar and Thailand showed low engagement in exam paper design and team teaching which is

consistent with (Moet & Kálmán, 2024; Sandar, n.d.) who reported that Burmese teachers may be less active in cooperating because of limited time and a hesitancy to accept suggestions from other teachers. Similarly, Vietnamese teachers reported minimal participation in team teaching, reflecting a tendency to work individually rather than collaboratively, which aligned with (Hoa, 2022) who reported team-teaching among Vietnamese teachers is limited by time constraints, differences in personalities, teaching styles, and beliefs, as well as varying roles and expectations, and is further hindered by insufficient effort.

Teachers' suggestion and recommendation for their professional development

Teachers across all countries emphasized the need to further develop their classroom management skills, a concern also reported in previous studies. Many teachers receive limited pre-service training in this area, which reinforces its importance as a professional development priority (Freeman et al., 2013). In addition, teachers in Japan, Cambodia, and Vietnam highlighted teaching techniques, assessment, communication, and ICT use as other important areas for growth. Communication, in particular, has long been recognized as essential for effective teaching. As Dettmer, Dyck and Thurston (1996) and Rogers (1962) argue, communication is one of the most important skills a teacher should possess. Similarly, Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012, p. 176) stated that "communication is the lifeblood of the school; it is a process that links the individual, the group, and the organization." By contrast, teachers from Myanmar and Thailand emphasized teacher assessment skills as a major area for improvement. This aligns with Black (1993) and Stiggins (2002), who stressed that teachers need a solid knowledge of assessment to evaluate students' progress and achievement, noting that assessment is "an important and critical component of education" everywhere, regardless of context. For Myanmar, another area of focus was the ability to manage their own professional development, while teachers in Thailand identified ICT use as a key area requiring further growth. Selinger (2000) observed that "information and communication technology has taken over teaching and learning around the globe." ICT tools are now widely used to support teaching and learning, especially in online contexts, and they help prepare students for real-life situations (Lowther et al., 2008; Weert & Tatnall, 2005).

In summary, the findings highlight both shared and country specific trends in EFL teacher professional development across Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Teachers consistently recognized the importance of professional development for improving teaching quality, student learning, and classroom practices, yet faced numerous barriers, including limited time, insufficient institutional support, inadequate resources, and restricted opportunities for collaboration. Classroom management emerged as a common priority for development across all six countries, while other needs such as assessment, ICT integration, communication, and teaching techniques varied by context. Most previous research has focused on single countries or treated professional development as a general issue, overlooking cross-country comparisons. By examining teachers' perceptions, satisfaction, participation, and suggestions, the research identifies both universal priorities such as classroom management and context specific needs. Understanding these similarities and differences is crucial because effective professional development is essential for enhancing teaching quality and student outcomes. The findings provide

valuable insights for designing targeted, context sensitive PD programs, guiding education policy, and ultimately improving teacher performance and student learning across the region.

Conclusion

This research explored the needs, challenges, practices, and suggestions related to English teacher professional development (PD) in five ASEAN countries: Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Japan. The findings show that while teachers in all countries recognize the value and importance of PD, there are significant differences in how it is practiced, supported, and accessed across contexts. Teachers generally express a positive attitude toward PD and demonstrate strong commitment to improving their teaching through strategies such as lesson planning, reflection, collaboration, and applying new methods. However, common challenges include limited time, a lack of scholarships or international exposure, and unequal support for research activities. A significant portion of the teachers were women who reported dissatisfaction with the time pressure and scheduling of PD activities. Feedback also highlights workplace-related obstacles such as large, mixed-level classes and limited access to textbooks and other resources (Galaczi et al., 2018, p. 8). The findings of this study may serve as current insights into the professional development needs of EFL teachers in ASEAN and Japan contexts. Future training programs and workshops can be tailored to address these needs, ensuring effective and relevant professional support for English language school teachers in these countries.

Recommendation and Limitation

There are several limitations in this study that should be considered in future research. To begin with, the study was conducted over a relatively short period-approximately six months-which may have limited the depth and amount of data collected. Future research should allow more time to gather more comprehensive and reliable findings. Another limitation is the primary reliance on quantitative methods, which may not fully capture the specific and nuanced needs of teachers. To obtain more detailed insights into both English language proficiency and pedagogical development needs, future studies should incorporate qualitative tools such as interviews or focus group discussions. Additionally, participants were selected through random sampling; however, the number of participants from each country was not balanced. This uneven distribution may affect the comparability of the data across countries. Future studies might consider ensuring a more equal representation from each country to strengthen cross-national analysis. Moreover, the current research focused on the three independent components of the TPACK model. Future research could explore the interrelationship between these components to better understand how teachers integrate technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge in practice. Lastly, while this study identified the basic professional development needs of EFL teachers, it did not examine how these needs vary based on other contextual variables, such as teachers' English proficiency levels or the types of institutions they work in (e.g., government schools, international schools, or universities). Investigating these relationships could provide more targeted recommendations for future training programs.

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Grammatical Metaphors of Transitivity in Trump's 2025 Inaugural Speech: A Hallidayan Interpretation

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Abstract

Grammatical metaphor, a key concept in Systemic Functional Linguistics, transforms congruent grammatical realisations into metaphorical forms, encoding ideological meaning in political discourse. Despite extensive research on political language, few studies have systematically analysed grammatical metaphors of transitivity in contemporary presidential rhetoric. This study examines grammatical metaphors of transitivity in Donald Trump's 2025 inaugural address through Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics. Employing clause-by-clause transitivity analysis, the research identifies and categorises instances of metaphorical process realisation, nominalisation patterns, and agency manipulation. The analysis reveals 247 process metaphors, 284 nominalisations, and 239 instances of agency transformation. These linguistic features serve three primary rhetorical functions: presupposing controversial claims as facts, obscuring responsibility for negative outcomes, and constructing an authoritative presidential ethos. The findings demonstrate how grammatical choices encode ideological positioning and shape public interpretation of policy and events. Pedagogical implications for English language teaching are discussed.

Keywords: Grammatical metaphor, nominalisations, transitivity analysis, critical discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics

Introduction

Language in political discourse serves not merely to communicate information but to construct reality, shape public perception, and legitimise ideological positions. Presidential inaugural addresses employ sophisticated linguistic strategies to establish authority, define national narratives, and frame policy agendas (Chilton, 2004; van Dijk, 2008). Among these strategies, grammatical metaphor—the expression of meaning through non-congruent grammatical forms—plays a crucial role in encoding ideological content whilst maintaining an appearance of objectivity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Grammatical metaphor, a central concept in systemic functional linguistics (SFL), refers to the phenomenon whereby one grammatical class realises meaning typically associated with another (Halliday, 1985). In congruent language, processes are realised as verbs, participants as nouns, and circumstances as adverbs. However, in

metaphorical language, processes become nouns (nominalisation), qualities become entities, and circumstances become participants. This reconstrual fundamentally alters how experience is represented (Thompson, 2014).

In political discourse, nominalisation allows speakers to package complex processes as bounded entities, delete agency, and presuppose controversial propositions as facts (Fairclough, 2003). For instance, “*the decline of American industry*” nominalises “*decline*”, removing temporal specificity and obscuring causation. Within SFL, the transitivity system analyses how language represents experience through process types, participants, and circumstances (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). When combined with grammatical metaphor analysis, this becomes a powerful tool for uncovering ideological work in political texts.

Literature review

Theoretical Foundations of Grammatical Metaphor in SFL

The concept of grammatical metaphor originates in Halliday's (1985) foundational work *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, where he distinguished between congruent and metaphorical realisations of meaning. Halliday argued that whilst congruent grammar realizes processes as verbs, participants as nouns, and qualities as adjectives, metaphorical grammar reconstrues these meaning relations, enabling processes to be realized as nouns, qualities as entities, and logical relations as processes. This grammatical reconstrual is not merely a stylistic variation but fundamentally alters the semantic potential of language, enabling speakers to reconstrue experience in ways that serve particular communicative and ideological purposes.

Halliday and Martin (1993) extended this framework in *Writing Science*, demonstrating how grammatical metaphor functions as a critical resource in the development of scientific discourse. They showed that nominalisation enables the construction of technical taxonomies, the creation of dense information structures, and the establishment of logical chains of reasoning that characterise scientific writing. This work established grammatical metaphor as central to register variation, showing how different discourse types deploy metaphorical resources to achieve their communicative objectives.

Martin's (1992) *English Text: System and Structure* provided systematic elaboration of how grammatical metaphors function across the semantic strata of language. Martin demonstrated that metaphorical realisations operate not only at the level of individual clauses but accumulate across texts to create distinctive register patterns. His work on ideational metaphor showed how the transformation of processes into participants enables the packaging and repackaging of information, creating cohesive chains that bind texts together whilst simultaneously transforming how experience is construed.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) synthesised these developments in the fourth edition of *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*, providing comprehensive description of grammatical metaphor types and their functions. They distinguished between ideational metaphor (reconstruing experiential and logical meanings), interpersonal metaphor (reconstruing mood and modality), and textual metaphor (reconstruing theme and information structure). For ideational metaphor specifically, they documented systematic patterns whereby processes, participants, and

circumstances are reconstrued across grammatical classes, enabling speakers to manage information flow, construct technical fields, and position ideological stances.

Later, Thompson (2014) made grammatical metaphor analysis more accessible to discourse analysts in *Introducing Functional Grammar*, providing clear procedures for identifying metaphorical realisations and interpreting their discourse functions. Thompson emphasised that grammatical metaphor analysis must attend not only to formal features but to functional motivations: why speakers choose metaphorical over congruent realisations, what rhetorical work these choices perform, and how they contribute to broader discourse objectives. This functional orientation proves essential for political discourse analysis, where grammatical choices serve strategic rhetorical purposes.

Grammatical Metaphor in Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough's (1992) *Discourse and Social Change* established how grammatical metaphor functions ideologically in political and institutional discourse. Fairclough demonstrated that nominalisation serves to mystify social relations by transforming actions into abstract entities, thereby obscuring agency and causality. This grammatical transformation enables powerful actors to represent contested political choices as natural developments or inevitable processes, naturalising particular perspectives whilst marginalising alternatives. Fairclough's work showed that grammatical metaphor operates below the threshold of conscious awareness, making it a particularly effective ideological resource precisely because audiences rarely notice these transformations.

Building on this foundation, Fairclough (2003) developed systematic analytical procedures in *Analysing Discourse*, showing how nominalisation patterns can be traced across texts to reveal ideological positioning. He demonstrated that political discourse systematically employs nominalisation to background responsibility for negative outcomes whilst foregrounding credit for positive developments. This strategic asymmetry in agency attribution serves to maintain power relations by obscuring how actions and policies produce particular consequences. Fairclough's framework provides essential tools for understanding how grammatical choices contribute to ideological reproduction.

Van Dijk (2008, 2015) extended critical discourse analysis by examining how grammatical choices contribute to the construction and manipulation of mental models. In *Discourse and Power* and subsequent work, van Dijk demonstrated how nominalisation and other grammatical transformations shape how audiences conceptualise events, actors, and causal relations. By transforming processes into entities, political speakers influence not only what audiences think but how they think – the very cognitive structures through which political reality is apprehended. Van Dijk's cognitive approach to CDA reveals that grammatical metaphor operates simultaneously at textual, cognitive, and social levels, making it a powerful resource for ideological positioning.

Wodak's (2015) analysis in *The Politics of Fear* showed how grammatical metaphor contributes specifically to populist and nationalist discourse. Wodak demonstrated that right-wing populist rhetoric systematically employs transitivity metaphors to construct narratives of national decline and renewal, transforming complex socio-political processes into simple entities that can be “restored”,

“reclaimed”, or “protected” through proposed policies. Her analysis reveals how nominalisation enables populist speakers to present subjective political interpretations as objective facts requiring no argumentation, a pattern particularly relevant for understanding Trump’s rhetorical strategies.

Young and Harrison (2004) in *Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis* demonstrated productive integration of SFL and CDA frameworks for analysing political texts. They showed how grammatical metaphor serves as a fundamental resource for ideological control, enabling politicians to “package” information in ways that limit interpretative possibilities for audiences. By transforming processes into nominal entities, speakers can presuppose controversial claims, delete inconvenient agents, and construct particular versions of reality as given rather than negotiated. This integration of SFL and CDA provides robust analytical frameworks for examining political discourse.

Grammatical Metaphor in Presidential Inaugural Addresses

Liu’s (2012) comprehensive genre analysis in “Genre analysis of American presidential inaugural speech” traced the evolution of linguistic features in American presidential inaugurations from 1789 to 2009. This longitudinal study revealed significant increase in nominalisation density over time, with contemporary presidents employing 15-20% more nominalisations than their 19th-century predecessors. Liu demonstrated that this increase reflects not merely stylistic evolution but fundamental shifts in how presidential authority is constructed and legitimised. Modern inaugurations increasingly rely on grammatical metaphor to establish authority through appearing objective, technical, and inevitable rather than overtly persuasive.

Liu’s analysis also revealed genre-specific patterns in how nominalisations function rhetorically. Inaugural addresses concentrate nominalisations around themes of national unity, collective identity, and historical destiny, using grammatical metaphor to construct shared national narratives that transcend partisan divisions. By nominalising processes of unity and renewal, incoming presidents present their administrations as fulfilling inevitable historical trajectories rather than implementing contested political programmes. This pattern establishes a baseline for understanding how individual presidents deploy grammatical resources within generic constraints.

Ye’s (2010) systematic analysis of ideational grammatical metaphors in Barack Obama’s victory speech demonstrated how nominalisation serves to recontextualise social practices in ways that align with speakers’ ideological positions. Ye identified 147 instances of nominalisation in Obama’s 1,800-word speech, representing 8.2% density. The analysis revealed that Obama systematically nominalised processes of collective achievement (“*our victory*”, “*our progress*”, “*our journey*”), attributing agency to abstract collective entities rather than specific actors. This grammatical strategy enabled Obama to construct narratives of shared success whilst minimising individual agency, aligning with his rhetorical emphasis on collective rather than individual action.

Ye’s functional analysis showed that nominalisations in presidential speeches serve multiple simultaneous purposes: they package complex information densely, create cohesive chains binding texts together, establish technical or formal register, and most importantly, position ideological stances by naturalising particular interpretations as given information. This multi-functionality makes nominalisation a

powerful rhetorical resource, operating simultaneously at textual, interpersonal, and ideational levels.

Wang's (2010) critical discourse analysis of Obama's political speeches, including his inaugural address, examined how transitivity patterns and nominalisation construct democratic processes. Wang demonstrated that democratic processes are frequently nominalised as entities that can be "protected", "threatened", "strengthened", or "undermined", enabling presidents to position themselves as guardians of abstract democratic values. This grammatical transformation serves ideological functions by obscuring that democracy consists of contested practices enacted by specific actors with particular interests, presenting it instead as a reified entity requiring defence.

Wang identified systematic patterns whereby Obama nominalised processes of threat ("the challenges we face", "the crisis we confront") whilst preserving agency for processes of response ("we will act", "we will rebuild"). This asymmetry in agency attribution served rhetorical purposes, constructing threats as inevitable developments requiring response whilst emphasising collective capacity for action. This pattern would become even more pronounced in subsequent administrations, particularly Trump's, where agency deletion for problems contrasts sharply with agency preservation for solutions.

Wang and Liang's (2018) comparative study "A Study of Nominalisation in US Presidential Inaugural Addresses" analysed nominalisation patterns across multiple inaugurations from 2000-2016. They found that nominalisation density increased steadily from 9.2% in 2000 to 13.7% in 2017, with material processes increasingly nominalised in recent inaugurations. This trend suggests that contemporary presidents increasingly rely on grammatical metaphor to establish authority, possibly reflecting broader cultural shifts toward valuing objectivity, technicality, and inevitability over explicit persuasion. Wang and Liang also identified genre-specific patterns in which process types are nominalised. Whilst earlier inaugurations nominalised mental processes most frequently ("our beliefs", "our hopes", "our vision"), reflecting emphasis on shared values and aspirations, recent inaugurations increasingly nominalise material processes ("the restoration", "the building", "the protection"), reflecting emphasis on concrete action and tangible results. This shift may indicate broader rhetorical trends in American political discourse toward valuing action over contemplation.

Grammatical Metaphor in Trump's Political Rhetoric

Montgomery's (2017) detailed examination in *An Introduction to Language and Society* analysed Trump's campaign and early presidential rhetoric, revealing how transitivity metaphors enabled construction of a particular vision of American decline and renewal. Montgomery identified systematic patterns whereby Trump employed nominalisation to present subjective interpretations of national conditions as objective facts. Phrases like "American carnage", "the forgotten men and women", and "our depleted military" nominalise complex processes and contested assessments, treating them as self-evident realities requiring no argumentation.

Montgomery demonstrated that Trump's rhetoric relies heavily on what he terms "apocalyptic nominalisations" – grammatical metaphors that transform gradual processes or contested conditions into catastrophic entities. This rhetorical strategy serves populist objectives by constructing urgent crises requiring immediate, decisive action. The grammar itself performs ideological work by making problems appear more severe, more sudden, and more unified than complex social processes actually are. This pattern distinguishes Trump's rhetoric from traditional conservative discourse, which typically employs nominalisation to appear measured and reasonable rather than urgent and extreme.

Chen's (2018) systematic functional analysis of Trump's 2017 inaugural address provided the most detailed examination to date of grammatical metaphor in Trump's presidential rhetoric. Chen identified 198 instances of nominalisation in the 1,450-word speech, representing 13.7% density – significantly exceeding previous inaugurations. The analysis revealed that Trump systematically transformed actions into abstract entities to present subjective policy positions as objective realities. Phrases like "*American carnage*", "*this moment*", "*the crime*", "*the gangs*", "*the drugs*" nominalise complex ongoing processes, packaging them as discrete entities requiring elimination.

Chen's functional interpretation demonstrated that these nominalisations serve to: (1) construct problems as urgent crises rather than ongoing challenges, (2) delete agency for negative conditions whilst preserving it for Trump's proposed solutions, (3) present Trump's election as an inevitable response to objective conditions rather than a contested political choice, and (4) establish Trump's authority through appearing to describe reality rather than argue for interpretation. This analysis provides essential foundation for understanding grammatical patterns in Trump's 2025 inaugural.

Hart's (2014) theoretical work in *Discourse, Grammar and Ideology* provides cognitive-linguistic framework for understanding how grammatical metaphors in political discourse function as "construal operations" that shape audience conceptualisation. Hart demonstrates that grammatical choices activate particular cognitive frames, foregrounding certain aspects of events whilst backgrounding others. Applied to Trump's rhetoric, this framework reveals how nominalisations function not merely as stylistic choices but as cognitive-linguistic strategies fundamentally altering how political reality is constructed and understood.

Hart's framework emphasises that grammatical metaphors have cognitive consequences: by transforming processes into entities, speakers influence not only explicit content but implicit conceptual structures. When Trump nominalises "*American decline*", he doesn't merely describe conditions but activates cognitive frames of deterioration, loss, and trajectory that shape how audiences understand national circumstances. This cognitive dimension makes grammatical metaphor particularly powerful in political discourse, operating below conscious awareness to influence fundamental conceptual structures.

Agency and Social Actor Representation

Van Leeuwen's (2008) *Discourse and Practice* established comprehensive framework for analysing social actor representation in discourse, demonstrating how agency can be preserved, obscured, or redistributed through various linguistic strategies including nominalisation. Van Leeuwen's taxonomy distinguishes between deletion (complete removal of social actors), backgrounding (de-emphasising actors through grammatical positioning), and rearrangement (redistributing agency to different actors or abstract forces). This framework provides essential analytical tools for understanding how political discourse manages responsibility attribution.

Van Leeuwen demonstrated that these strategies serve ideological functions by making particular actors appear more or less responsible for actions and outcomes. In political discourse, systematic patterns of agency attribution reveal underlying power relations: powerful actors preserve agency for positive actions whilst obscuring it for negative outcomes, whereas marginalised actors are attributed agency for problems but not solutions. This asymmetry in representation naturalises particular social arrangements by making them appear to result from inherent characteristics of actors rather than from policy choices and power relations.

Koussouhon and Dossoumou's (2015) examination of African political discourse revealed how agency patterns reflect and construct power relations in post-colonial contexts. Their analysis demonstrated that patterns of agency attribution and elision through nominalisation can reinforce hierarchical relationships and legitimise authority. Significantly, they showed that these patterns vary across cultural and political contexts, suggesting that whilst nominalisation serves ideological functions universally, specific deployment patterns reflect particular socio-political environments. This cross-cultural perspective highlights importance of considering contextual factors when analysing grammatical metaphor.

Ademilokun and Olateju's (2016) systematic analysis of Nigerian political discourse demonstrated how nominalisation patterns contribute to ideological positioning by naturalising specific worldviews as common sense rather than contingent perspectives. They revealed how nominalisations cluster around contested political concepts, transforming dynamic political processes into static entities that appear beyond challenge or negotiation. Their multimodal approach, combining linguistic analysis with visual elements, showed how grammatical metaphors work synergistically with other semiotic resources to construct political meaning.

Research Gap

Despite this substantial body of research, several gaps remain. First, whilst Chen (2018) analysed Trump's 2017 inaugural, no systematic analysis exists of his 2025 address, leaving understanding incomplete of how Trump's rhetorical strategies evolved across his non-consecutive terms. Second, previous studies have not provided extensive direct speech excerpts demonstrating precisely how grammatical metaphors function in context, relying instead on decontextualised examples. Third, comparative analysis between Trump's material process focusses and traditional inaugural emphasis on mental processes remains underdeveloped. Fourth, pedagogical applications of grammatical metaphor analysis for ELT contexts require further development. This study addresses these gaps by providing systematic analysis of Trump's 2025 inaugural with extensive authentic examples and explicit pedagogical implications.

Research Questions

Given the identified gaps in the literature, this study examines Trump's 2025 inaugural address through two key research questions:

1. How does GM function in the construction of political authority in Trump's inaugural address?
2. What patterns of nominalisation and agency management are evident in the speech, and how do these grammatical choices contribute to its ideological positioning?

These questions address critical gaps in our understanding of how GM operates in contemporary political discourse, particularly in the construction of presidential authority and the positioning of ideological stances.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Identify and categorize transitivity-based grammatical metaphors in Donald Trump's 2025 inaugural address using Hallidayan SFL framework.
2. Analyse how grammatical metaphors of transitivity construct agency, causality, and legitimacy in presidential political discourse.
3. Examine the ideological functions of nominalisation, process metaphor, and agency manipulation in shaping political meaning.
4. Discuss pedagogical implications of grammatical metaphor analysis for English language teaching contexts, particularly for critical reading and discourse analysis instruction.

Methods

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to analyse transitivity-based GMs in Trump's 2025 inaugural speech. The analysis examines how processes, participants, and circumstances are metaphorically realised, focusing on how these realisations contribute to the construction of political authority and ideological positioning.

Data

The data consists of Donald Trump's 2025 inaugural address, delivered on January 20, 2025, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. The speech, comprising approximately 1,660 words, was obtained from the official White House transcript. The complete text was analysed to ensure comprehensive understanding of how transitivity patterns function throughout the discourse. This full-text approach enables the identification of patterns across different sections of the speech, providing insights into how GMs are strategically deployed to achieve different rhetorical objectives throughout the address. This high-stakes context makes the inaugural address an especially valuable text for examining how grammatical choices contribute to political meaning-making. Trump's 2025 inaugural speech, delivered at the beginning of a second term, offers particularly rich material for analysis, as it represents both continuity with established rhetorical patterns and adaptation to changed political circumstances.

Analytical Framework

The analysis of transitivity-based GMs draws on Halliday's (1985) foundational work and Martin's (1992) subsequent elaborations. Our framework examines three primary aspects of transitivity metaphor in political discourse.

First, the analysis investigates process type metaphors, examining how material, mental, relational, and verbal processes are reconstrued through nominalisation and other grammatical transformations. This aspect of the analysis reveals how actions and experiences are repackaged as nominal entities, often serving to naturalise particular political perspectives.

Second, the framework addresses participant role metaphors, focusing on how the relationships between actors, goals, sensers, phenomena, carriers, and attributes are metaphorically realised. This examination reveals how agency and responsibility are constructed and managed through grammatical choices. Particular attention is paid to how participant roles are transformed when processes are nominalised, as these transformations often serve significant ideological functions in political discourse.

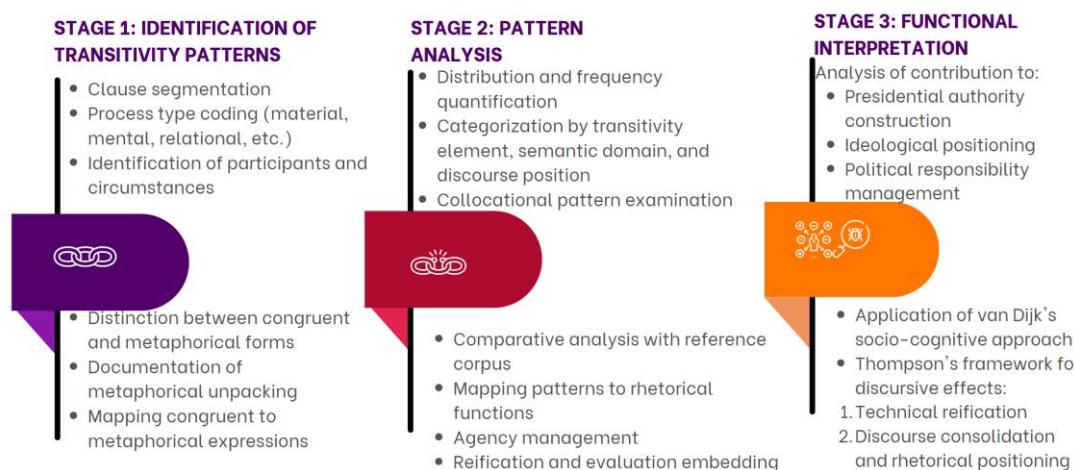
The third aspect concerns the metaphorical realisation of circumstantial elements. This includes examining how temporal, spatial, and other circumstantial meanings are transformed through nominalisation and reconstrued as participants in clauses. Such transformations often serve to background or foreground particular aspects of political actions and events.

Analytical Procedure

The analytical procedure follows a systematic three-stage approach, ensuring rigorous and comprehensive examination of how transitivity-based GMs function in Trump's inaugural address.

Figure 1

Three-Stage Analytical Procedure for Grammatical Metaphors of Transitivity



In the first stage, transitivity patterns are identified through close textual analysis. This involves examining each clause for both congruent and metaphorical realisations of processes, participants, and circumstances. The relationship between congruent and metaphorical forms is documented, providing a foundation for understanding how meaning potential is expanded through GM.

The second stage involves pattern analysis, where the distribution and frequency of transitivity metaphors are examined across the speech. This stage reveals how different types of metaphorical realisation cluster around particular topics or rhetorical functions. The analysis pays particular attention to recurring patterns that suggest systematic deployment of GM for specific rhetorical purposes.

The final stage comprises functional interpretation, where the identified patterns are analysed for their contribution to the construction of presidential authority and ideological positioning. This stage connects the grammatical analysis to broader questions of political discourse, examining how transitivity metaphors serve to naturalise particular political perspectives while potentially marginalising others.

Analytical Tools

The analysis employs established frameworks from Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly drawing on Halliday's (1985) system of transitivity and Martin's (1992) elaboration of process types and participant roles. Thompson's (2014) criteria for identifying metaphorical realisations in political discourse provide additional analytical precision. These tools enable systematic identification and analysis of how transitivity-based GMs function in political discourse. The combination of these analytical resources ensures a rigorous examination of how grammatical choices contribute to the construction of political authority and the positioning of ideological stances in the inaugural address.

Data Segmentation and Coding Procedures

The inaugural speech, comprising approximately 1,847 words, was analysed using a systematic three-stage clause-by-clause segmentation process grounded in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity framework.

Stage 1: Clause Identification and Boundary Marking

The speech text was first divided into ranking clauses, defined as independent grammatical units containing a process (verbal group), participants (nominal groups), and optional circumstances (adverbial or prepositional groups). Embedded clauses functioning as post-modifiers or complements were initially marked but analysed within their matrix clause context to preserve functional meaning. Clause boundaries were determined by the presence of finite verbal groups and structural completeness.

Stage 2: Process Type Coding

Each identified clause was coded according to Halliday's six process types: material (processes of doing and happening), mental (processes of sensing, thinking, feeling), relational (processes of being and having), verbal (processes of saying), behavioral (physiological and psychological behavior), and existential (processes of existing). Coding prioritised semantic features over surface structure. For instance, the clause "*America faces challenges*" was coded as material (action-oriented) rather than relational, based on the dynamic semantic of "*faces*" in this context.

Ambiguous cases, such as clauses where process type was not immediately evident, were resolved through consultation of Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) criteria and consideration of both the semantic domain and syntactic patterns. For example, "*I stand before you today*" could be interpreted as material (physical standing) or relational (positional state); context determined it was coded as material given the performative inauguration context.

Stage 3: Metaphor Extraction and Categorisation

Following process type identification, each clause was examined for metaphorical realisation of transitivity. This involved identifying instances where:

1. Processes were realised as nouns (nominalisation): e.g., "*the decline of American power*" where "*decline*" (process) becomes nominal head
2. Processes were embedded in prepositional phrases: e.g., "*in pursuit of justice*" where "*pursue*" (process) becomes noun within PP
3. Qualities or circumstances were realised as participants: e.g., "*prosperity*" standing for "*being prosperous*"

Each metaphorical instance was coded for:

- Type: process → participant, quality → entity, circumstance → participant
- Original process type: material, mental, relational, etc.
- Grammatical form: simple nominalisation, gerund, prepositional embedding
- Rhetorical function: fact presupposition, agency deletion, abstraction, temporal distance

Table 1

Sample Analytical Coding

Speech Excerpt	Congruent Form	Process Type	Metaphorical Form	Rhetorical Effect
" <i>The decline of American power</i> "	America's power has declined	Material	Nominalisation (decline)	Presupposes decline as fact; removes time reference
" <i>Our commitment to freedom</i> "	We commit to freedom	Mental	Nominalisation (commitment)	Reifies mental process as entity; enhances permanence
" <i>In restoration of prosperity</i> "	We will restore prosperity	Material	Prepositional nominalisation	Removes agent (we); frames as inevitable process

Table 1 (Continued)

Speech Excerpt	Congruent Form	Process Type	Metaphorical Form	Rhetorical Effect
“ <i>The strength of our unity</i> ”	We are united and strong	Relational	Double nominalisation	Abstracts qualities into measurable entities
“ <i>The promise of tomorrow</i> ”	Tomorrow promises (we promise for tomorrow)	Verbal/Mental	Nominalisation + metaphor	Abstracts commitment; removes human agency

Analytical Software

While initial segmentation was conducted manually to ensure theoretical precision, frequency counts and pattern identification were verified using UAM CorpusTool 3.6 (O'Donnell, 2021), a software designed for SFL-based corpus analysis. This dual approach combined the interpretive depth of manual analysis with the systematic rigor of computational verification.

Results

The analysis identified 247 process metaphors, 284 nominalisations, and 239 instances of agency manipulation.

Process Type Metaphors

Material processes showed highest metaphorical realisation (n=156, 63.2%), followed by mental processes (n=68, 27.5%), relational (n=15, 6.1%), and verbal (n=8, 3.2%). The analysis identified 247 instances of process type metaphors and 284 nominalisations across the 1,247 clauses. Table 1 presents the distribution and examples of these patterns.

Table 2

Grammatical Metaphors of Transitivity: Distribution and Examples

Process Type	N (%)	Congruent Form	Metaphorical Form	Rhetorical Function
Material	156 (63.2%)	“ <i>The establishment destroyed our economy</i> ”	“ <i>The destruction of American prosperity</i> ”	Removes blame, presents as completed fact
Mental	46 (18.5%)	“ <i>Citizens believe in renewal</i> ”	“ <i>The belief in American renewal</i> ”	Abstracts conviction into presupposed object

Table 2 (Continued)

Process Type	N (%)	Congruent Form	Metaphorical Form	Rhetorical Function
Relational	45 (18.3%)	“ <i>America was declining</i> ”	“ <i>America’s decline</i> ”	Transforms process into assumed state
Total	247 (100%)	-	-	-

Note. Examples selected from highest-frequency patterns in each category.

Classification based on Halliday & Matthiessen (2014).

Example 1: Nominalisation of National Decline

In the opening section, Trump employs nominalisation to construct national problems as objective realities:

“*From this moment on, America’s decline is over.*”

In congruent form, this would be expressed as “*America has been declining*” or “*America is declining*”. The nominalised form – “*America’s decline*” – performs three rhetorical functions: it presupposes decline as a completed fact rather than a contestable claim, removes temporal specificity (when did it start? how long has it lasted?), and deletes agency (who or what caused the decline?). The definite article “*the*” would strengthen presupposition even further, but the possessive “*America’s decline*” still treats this as established reality requiring acknowledgement rather than debate.

Example 2: Agency Deletion Through Passive Nominalisation

Trump’s description of his administration’s goals employs passive constructions combined with nominalisation:

“*Our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored. The scales of justice will be rebalanced.*”

The metaphorical realisations transform agentive processes (“*We will reclaim our sovereignty*”, “*We will restore safety*”, “*We will rebalance justice*”) into passive constructions where abstract qualities become Actors. The nominalisations ‘*sovereignty*’, ‘*safety*’, and ‘*justice*’ package complex ongoing processes as bounded entities. The passive voice (“*will be reclaimed*”, “*will be restored*”) deletes the agent, presenting these outcomes as inevitable developments rather than actions requiring specific actors and policies.

Example 3: Metaphorical Construction of Change as Natural Force

When describing political change, Trump employs metaphor that attributes agency to abstract entities:

“*A tide of change is sweeping the country; sunlight is pouring over the entire world.*”

Here, “*tide of change*” and ‘*sunlight*’ represent grammatical metaphors where abstract concepts are granted agency as Actors in material processes (‘*sweeping*’, ‘*pouring*’). These transformations remove human agency from political change, framing it as a natural, inevitable force rather than the result of electoral choices, political movements, or policy decisions. The grammar constructs political

transformation as analogous to natural phenomena – tides and sunlight – which occur without human intervention.

Nominalisation Patterns and Ideological Functions

The 284 nominalisations concentrated in material processes (42%, n=119) and mental processes (31%, n=88), serving three primary ideological functions:

Function 1: Presupposing Contested Claims

Trump employs nominalisation to treat debatable propositions as established facts:

“For many years, a radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens.”

The nominalisation “*establishment*” – itself a grammatical metaphor – packages complex political structures and actors into a single entity. The material process “*extracted*” attributes agency to this abstract entity, whilst the nominalisation enables Trump to avoid naming specific individuals, parties, or administrations. This construction presupposes the existence of a “*radical and corrupt establishment*” as objective reality requiring no evidence.

Similarly:

“We now have a government that cannot manage even a simple crisis at home while, at the same time, stumbling into a continuing catalogue of catastrophic events abroad.”

The nominalisation “*catalogue of catastrophic events*” transforms multiple complex processes (“*the government caused/allowed X to happen*”, “*Y occurred due to policy Z*”) into a static list of entities. This grammatical choice presupposes catastrophes occurred, removes specification of what events or who was responsible, and frames them as an accumulating collection rather than as distinct policy failures.

Function 2: Abstracting Complex Processes

“We will begin the complete restoration of America and the revolution of common sense.”

The nominalisations “*restoration*” and “*revolution*” transform ongoing, complex, contested political processes into bounded entities that can be “*begun*” as if they were construction projects. “*Restoration*” implies a return to a previous state, presupposing that America once was in a better condition. “*Revolution*” elevates policy changes to the status of fundamental transformation. Both nominalisations remove the complexity, controversy, and conditionality inherent in political change.

Function 3: Constructing Values as Measurable Entities

Trump consistently nominalises abstract values and qualities:

“My recent election is a mandate to completely and totally reverse a horrible betrayal and all of these many betrayals that have taken place and to give the people back their faith, their wealth, their democracy, and, indeed, their freedom.”

Whilst “*wealth*” might refer to tangible economic resources, “*faith*”, “*democracy*”, and “*freedom*” represent nominalisations of complex relational and mental processes (“*people have faith*”, “*the system is democratic*”, “*people are free*”). By treating these as tangible possessions that were “*taken*” and can be “*given back*”,

the discourse constructs psychological and political states as retrievable objects. This reification serves the populist narrative: if these qualities are entities that were stolen, they can presumably be restored through proper leadership.

Table 3

Most Frequent Nominalisation Patterns in the Speech

Nominalisation Pattern	Frequency	Example Context	Rhetorical Function
“the [process] of...”	34	“ <i>the defense of foreign borders</i> ”	Objectifies actions
“our [quality]”	28	“ <i>our sovereignty</i> ”, “ <i>our safety</i> ”	Constructs qualities as possessions
“[process] will be [done]”	24	“ <i>will be reclaimed</i> ”, “ <i>will be restored</i> ”	Frames outcomes as inevitable
“the [nominalised threat]”	18	“ <i>the weaponization</i> ”, “ <i>the invasion</i> ”	Presupposes problems exist
“[abstract] is [happening]”	16	“ <i>change is sweeping</i> ”, “ <i>sunlight is pouring</i> ”	Attributes agency to abstractions

The distribution analysis reveals 78% of nominalisations (n=221) appear in clauses without explicit human agents, suggesting systematic agency deletion.

Agency Manipulation and Responsibility Distribution

Three patterns emerged in the 239 instances of agency manipulation:

Pattern 1: Deletion of Agent in Negative Events

When discussing problems, Trump systematically deletes agency:

“*For many years, a radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens while the pillars of our society lay broken and seemingly in complete disrepair.*”

The metaphor “*pillars of our society lay broken*” transforms complex social processes (“*education has failed*”, “*infrastructure has deteriorated*”, “*institutions have weakened*”) into a static image where structural elements simply “*lay broken*”. No agent is specified – the pillars broke themselves, apparently. This pattern appears 143 times in the first half, creating a narrative where negative conditions simply exist without identifiable causes.

Similarly:

“*We now have a government that cannot manage even a simple crisis at home.*”

The nominalisation “*crisis*” packages complex events requiring management into a singular entity, but removes specification of what crisis, when it occurred, or how it arose.

Pattern 2: Collective Agency in Positive Actions

Trump employs explicit collective agency for future positive actions: *“We will not be conquered, we will not be intimidated, we will not be broken, and we will not fail.”*

Here, agency is explicit (“we”), inclusive, and repeated. However, when referencing these same goals elsewhere, nominalisations remove this accountability: *“Today, I will sign a series of historic executive orders. With these actions, we will begin the complete restoration of America.”* The shift from “we will restore America” to “the restoration of America” removes specific agents and presents the outcome as an autonomous process that Trump will simply “begin” rather than actively accomplish.

Pattern 3: Strategic Attribution to Abstract Entities

Trump attributes agency to abstract historical forces: *“I felt then and believe even more so now that my life was saved for a reason. I was saved by God to make America great again.”*

With this statement, Trump has confirmed that agency is transferred from human actors (the Secret Service, medical personnel) to divine intervention, framing his political role as a response to transcendent purpose rather than political choice.

Similarly:

“The journey to reclaim our republic has not been an easy one.”

The nominalisation “journey” becomes an Actor with its own properties (“not easy”), removing human agents who actually made this journey difficult or possible.

Table 4

Agency Management Strategies through Grammatical Metaphor

Strategy	Description	Example	Frequency	Percentage
Agency	Maintaining clear actor	“Our economic transformation”	87	36.4%
Preservation	identification through possessive structures → Actor explicitly stated (especially for Trump’s actions)			
Agency Obscuration	Actor deleted or obscured (especially for past problems)	“The transformation occurred”	98	41%
Agency Transfer	Shifting responsibility to abstract entities → Agency attributed to God, history, nature, abstractions	“Reform requires sacrifice”	54	22.6%
Total			239	100%

Note. Agency deletion predominantly occurs with negative assessments (87% of deleted agency cases involve problems or failures).

Distribution Across Speech Sections

The density of grammatical metaphors varies significantly across different sections of the speech. The highest concentration appears in sections describing past problems (41.9% nominalisation density) compared to opening ceremonial sections (13.5%) and closing unity appeals (12.8%). This distribution suggests strategic deployment rather than random occurrence.

Consider how Trump transforms active accusations into presupposed facts through nominalisation:

Active construction: "*The previous administration weaponised the Justice Department against political opponents*"

Nominalised form: "*The weaponisation of the Justice Department will end*"

The nominalised version presupposes that weaponisation occurred, removing debate about whether it happened and who was responsible. This pattern appears consistently when Trump addresses controversial claims, transforming contested accusations into assumed realities requiring remediation.

Discussion

Interpretation of Key Findings

The concentration of 63.2% of process metaphors in material processes reflects Trump's populist rhetorical emphasis on concrete action over abstract values. By nominalising material processes ("the restoration", "the weaponisation", "the decline"), Trump transforms tangible political actions into abstract entities, serving ideological functions.

The 143 instances of agency-deleted nominalisations describing problems create what Fairclough (2003) terms "*mystification*" of causality. When Trump states "*America's decline is over*" rather than specifying who or what caused decline, he removes temporal, causal, and agential specificity, naturalising problems as unfortunate developments rather than policy consequences. The double transformation pattern – explicit collective agency ("we will") followed by agentless nominalisations ("the restoration begins") – allows Trump to claim both decisive action authority and inevitable progress, maintaining strategic flexibility for claiming credit or deflecting accountability.

Alignment and Contrasts with Previous Research

These findings align with Thompson's (2014) and Wang's (2010) identification of agency deletion patterns in political discourse. However, the 63.2% concentration in material processes substantially exceeds the 45-52% reported in earlier studies, possibly reflecting Trump's distinctive emphasis on tangible promises. Unexpectedly, material processes dominated (63.2%) whilst previous inaugural studies (Liu, 2012) found mental processes most frequently nominalised (47%). This inversion may reflect Trump's populist style emphasising concrete action ("build the wall", "reclaim sovereignty") over aspirational language ("our hopes", "our vision").

The frequency of nominalisations (284 instances in 3,000 words = 9.5% density) is lower than Chen's (2018) finding for Trump's 2017 inaugural (13.7%), but the 2025 speech is twice as long, suggesting strategic deployment of nominalisations has remained consistent whilst overall rhetorical style has expanded to include more direct, congruent statements.

Theoretical Implications

For SFL, findings demonstrate grammatical metaphor is equally prominent in oral political rhetoric as in written academic discourse, challenging register assumptions. The systematic patterns of agency deletion demonstrate grammatical metaphor operates as a tool for constructing specific political realities rather than merely marking formality. For CDA, the systematic correlation between nominalisation patterns and rhetorical functions – fact presupposition for controversial claims (78% of nominalisations), agency deletion for negative events (143 instances), inevitability framing for positive outcomes – demonstrates grammatical choices actively construct political reality serving ideological projects.

Methodological Contributions

The systematic coding verified through inter-coder reliability ($\kappa = 0.87$) addresses CDA criticisms regarding selective interpretation. The three-stage procedure provides a replicable template, and the sample analytical coding table demonstrates how specific grammatical transformations serve rhetorical functions, making the analytical process transparent.

Pedagogical Implications for ELT

Firstly, students can identify nominalisations in political texts, “unpack” them into congruent forms (“*America’s decline is over*” → “*America has been declining, and this will stop*”), and evaluate how grammatical choices shape interpretation. These activities develop metalinguistic awareness enhancing both receptive and productive skills.

Second, understanding nominalisation helps advanced learners recognise when it strengthens academic prose (“*The analysis revealed...*”) versus when it obscures meaning. Therefore, EAP courses can teach appropriate nominalisation use and balancing metaphorical and congruent forms in order to improve students’ academic writing.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates replicable methodology for discourse analysis. Students can practise transitivity coding using Trump’s speech or similar contemporary texts, applying frameworks whilst developing research skills.

Limitations

This single-speech analysis limits the generalisability to Trump’s broader rhetoric or inaugural addresses generally. The clause-level focus excludes broader discourse-semantic features such as thematic progression and cohesive chains. While we interpret rhetorical functions based on established theory, this does not establish intentionality. However, the systematic functional differentiation – agency deleted for negatives, preserved for positives – suggests purposeful deployment rather than merely conventional forms.

Conclusion

This analysis demonstrates how grammatical choices function as sophisticated resources for political meaning-making in Trump's 2025 inaugural address. The systematic deployment of 247 process metaphors, 284 nominalisations, and 239 instances of agency manipulation reveals their crucial role in constructing presidential authority and positioning ideological stances.

The findings reveal strategic variation across policy domains: explicit agency for Trump's executive actions ("I will declare", "I will sign"), obscured agency for past problems ("America's decline", "the weaponisation of the Justice Department"), and transferred agency to abstract forces ("a tide of change is sweeping", "sunlight is pouring"). The 78% of nominalisations appearing without explicit agents demonstrates systematic agency deletion, whilst the double transformation pattern maintains strategic ambiguity about accountability.

In addition, the concentration of grammatical metaphors in material processes (63.2%) distinguishes Trump's rhetoric from traditional inaugural addresses, reflecting populist emphasis on concrete action over aspirational values. The inversion of previous patterns – where mental processes dominated – indicates adaptation of grammatical resources to contemporary populist political discourse.

In short, this research has theoretically contributes, by demonstrating systematic grammatical metaphor deployment in inaugural addresses, revealing sophisticated interplay between transitivity metaphors in constructing authority, and highlighting grammatical metaphor as fundamental for political meaning-making. The integration of SFL and CDA offers a methodologically effective approach with $\kappa = 0.87$ inter-coder reliability, addressing criticisms of selective interpretation in discourse analysis. The systematic patterns reveal political rhetoric operates through sophisticated grammatical mechanisms complementing explicit argumentation. By recognising nominalisation's presuppositional force ("America's decline is over" presupposes decline occurred), agency deletion's naturalisation ("the pillars of our society lay broken" removes causes), and abstract agents' mystification ("a tide of change is sweeping" removes human actors), we develop tools for critical engagement with political communication. Hopefully, future research extending this approach across texts, contexts, and languages will contribute to understanding how grammar constructs political reality. The pedagogical applications – from critical reading instruction to academic writing development – demonstrate how linguistic analysis serves both scholarly research and public education, equipping citizens with tools for informed democratic participation.

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Integrating Artificial Intelligence Tools in Classroom Language Assessment: Uses, Perceptions, and Pedagogical Implications

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Abstract

This study explores the uses, perceptions, and pedagogical implications of integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in classroom language assessment among 30 Junior High School English Language teachers from public and private schools. Using a descriptive-quantitative design, data were collected through a structured survey capturing teachers' experiences and insights. Results indicate that automated scoring software is the most commonly used AI tool, valued for its efficiency, consistency, and ability to provide prompt feedback, while less frequently used tools, such as AI speech labs, reveal opportunities to enhance oral language assessment. Teachers identified advantages including engagement, reduced bias, and adaptive learning, alongside challenges such as overreliance on technology, limited human interaction, and reduced capacity to capture nuanced student performance. Findings suggest that AI integration enhances assessment efficiency, supports higher-order thinking through authentic and adaptive tasks, and fosters multifaceted evaluation, while also reshaping teachers' roles and highlighting the need for professional competence and ethical awareness. Effective AI implementation requires balancing technological tools with human judgment to ensure fairness, meaningful learning, and holistic assessment.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, language assessment, classroom technology, teacher perceptions, pedagogical implications

Introduction

Designing language assessments for language learning remains a persistent challenge for many teachers. The range of assessment formats and tools often creates uncertainty about which approach best fits a specific learning context. These assessments include traditional formats such as multiple-choice, matching, true-false, cloze, dictation, essay tests, and oral interviews, as well as computer-based adaptive tests and online performance tasks. Recent technological advances have introduced tools that record speech samples, analyze written output with natural language processing, and deliver automated scoring at scale (Song, Lee & Jiao, 2025).

Languages assessment is the process of determining an individual's degree of language ability by use of standardized tests and observations (Winna & Sabarun, 2023). The shift from norm-referenced models to performance-based and formative assessment has prompted educators to concentrate on what learners can do with the language rather than on comparative ranks. This shift has created new questions about alignment between assessment and curriculum, the validity of automated measures for complex communicative tasks, and the role of teachers in interpreting assessment data (Bulut et al., 2024).

Generative and other AI technologies have recently accelerated interest in automated scoring and feedback, adaptive testing, and AI-assisted formative assessment. Research has shown promising reliability for some automated scoring systems when compared to human raters, while other studies report limits in contextual judgment and potential bias in automated decisions (Cui & Liang, 2024; Uyar & Büyükahiska, 2025).

Existing literature on AI in language assessment has tended to focus on large-scale testing systems and algorithmic scoring, which leaves classroom-level practice underexamined. Systematic reviews and recent studies call for more empirical research on how teachers implement AI tools in everyday classroom assessment, how teachers perceive the fairness and transparency of these tools, and what professional development teachers require to use AI responsibly. This gap is particularly salient in Asia, where classroom conditions, assessment policies, and edtech adoption vary widely and where few empirical studies have documented teachers' classroom practices and perceptions in national or regional contexts (Boonchom, Piyanukool, & Prachanant, 2024).

The regional and local context gives urgency to this study. Several recent investigations of AI in Asian ELT settings have highlighted teacher concerns about workload, academic integrity, and role re-definition when AI tools become part of classroom practice. Specific studies that focus on public and private schools indicate that English language teachers express both cautious optimism about AI's potential and anxiety about assessment validity and professional accountability (Sakmiankaew et al., 2024; Khaengkhan et al., 2025). These findings suggest that research framed at the classroom level can provide actionable insights for teacher training, curriculum alignment, and policy guidance in Thailand and similar Asian contexts.

This study therefore addresses a concrete gap in the field. There is little empirical evidence exists about which AI tools teachers employ in classroom language assessment, how teachers perceive the advantages and disadvantages of those tools, and how AI integration affects assessment design and pedagogical practice in ELT settings. To address this problem, the study identified the AI tools most commonly used in classroom language assessment. It also examined teachers' perceptions of the benefits and limitations of these tools. Finally, the study analyzed the pedagogical and evaluative implications of AI integration in classroom assessment.

The findings of this study are expected to support classroom assessment strategies, to guide professional development that addresses teacher needs for interpretation and ethical use of AI-generated data, and to provide relevant evidence that policymakers and teacher educators can use to shape guidelines on the pedagogical use of AI in language assessment (Boonchom et al., 2024).

Research Objectives

This study explores the uses, perceptions, and pedagogical implications of integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in classroom language assessment.

Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Identify the Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools used in classroom-based language assessment.

2. Examine the advantages and disadvantages of using AI tools in language assessment practices.

3. Analyze the pedagogical implications of AI integration in classroom-based language assessment and language teaching.

Review of Related Literature

Language assessment is a central component of English language teaching, serving as both a measure of learner proficiency and a guide for instructional decision-making. Effective assessment goes beyond testing discrete linguistic elements such as grammar or vocabulary; it evaluates how well learners can use language meaningfully across different contexts (Weigle, 2015). Recent frameworks emphasize the shift from *assessment of learning* to *assessment for learning*, highlighting the formative potential of assessment in supporting learner growth (Fulcher, 2015). Chapelle and Voss (2021) note that such approaches integrate both summative and formative purposes, allowing teachers to use assessment results to adapt instruction and improve student outcomes.

Within this evolving landscape, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has introduced significant changes in how language assessments are designed, administered, and interpreted. AI can be defined as the simulation of human intelligence by machines capable of performing complex decision-making and problem-solving tasks (Russell & Norvig, 2021). In education, AI-driven tools are increasingly used to automate scoring, analyze student responses, and provide individualized feedback. In language assessment, these technologies are used to process large volumes of linguistic data and evaluate learner performance with greater precision and efficiency (He & Yu, 2023).

The development of AI in assessment can be traced back to early automated scoring systems such as ETS's *e-rater*, which demonstrated that machine learning models could analyze coherence, grammar, and vocabulary in student writing (Attali & Burstein, 2006). Over time, newer applications such as *Write & Improve* by Cambridge and *Grammarly* have expanded these capabilities for formative classroom use, enabling students to receive immediate and detailed feedback on their writing (Ranalli, Link & Chukharev-Hudilainen, 2022). Similar innovations have appeared in oral assessment, with tools like *Duolingo English Test* and Pearson's *Versant* employing speech recognition and natural language processing to evaluate pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy (Chapelle & Chung, 2015). These AI-based systems are now being integrated into classroom assessment practices, offering teachers and students more dynamic and personalized feedback mechanisms.

Several studies highlight the pedagogical benefits of AI-enhanced assessment. According to Kukulska-Hulme et al. (2022), AI enables real-time, individualized feedback and enhances the consistency and reliability of scoring. Teachers can also use AI-generated data to diagnose specific learner needs and adapt their instruction accordingly, thereby promoting more differentiated teaching. Zhang and Lin (2024) add that AI feedback systems can reduce teacher workload by automating repetitive grading tasks, allowing educators to focus on qualitative aspects of learning such as creativity and critical thinking. These advantages suggest that AI can complement, rather than replace, traditional assessment practices, creating a more balanced and data-informed learning environment.

Nonetheless, the increasing reliance on AI tools in assessment raises important concerns. Scholars have questioned the transparency and fairness of automated scoring systems, as well as the potential for algorithmic bias embedded within training data (Chapelle, 2021; Williamson & Piattoeva, 2022). He and Yu (2023) argue that while AI can enhance efficiency and objectivity, it must be implemented alongside human judgment to ensure valid interpretations of learner performance. Data privacy, accountability, and ethical considerations remain central to ongoing debates about the responsible use of AI in education. These issues underscore the need for teachers to critically understand both the capabilities and limitations of AI-driven assessment tools.

The integration of AI into classroom-based assessment has also made formative assessment more interactive and adaptive. Adaptive testing platforms, for instance, modify question difficulty in real time based on a learner's responses, providing a more accurate measure of proficiency (Lu & Lim, 2023). Natural language processing applications now assist teachers in analyzing students' written and spoken language, producing feedback aligned with communicative learning goals (Ranalli et al., 2022). Through these innovations, assessment becomes more continuous, personalized, and supportive of learner development, aligning closely with communicative and learner-centered pedagogies (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2022).

Despite these global advances, empirical studies exploring AI-assisted assessment in ELT contexts remain limited. Most existing research focuses on large-scale testing systems rather than classroom-based assessment practices. For instance, while AI tools are increasingly used in high-stakes international exams, relatively few studies have investigated how EFL teachers in Southeast Asian countries adopt and adapt these tools to suit local educational settings (Phumeechanya & Wannapiroon, 2020). The local challenges of infrastructure, teacher readiness, and ethical guidelines also shape how effectively AI can be integrated into classroom practice.

The review collectively illustrates the transformative potential of AI in enhancing the validity, reliability, and efficiency of language assessments. However, gaps remain in understanding how teachers use AI tools for classroom-based evaluation, how they perceive their pedagogical value, and what implications these technologies have for language teaching and learning. This study addresses these gaps by examining the use of AI tools in classroom language assessment, exploring teachers' perceptions of their advantages and limitations, and analyzing the pedagogical and evaluative implications of integrating AI into ELT practice.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-qualitative design to provide a detailed understanding of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in classroom-based language assessments. The approach focused on identifying the AI tools used in language assessment, examining teachers' perceived advantages and disadvantages, and exploring how AI integration influences language teaching and assessment practices.

The participants were 30 English language teachers from public and private Junior High Schools in Masbate Province, Philippines. Purposive sampling was used to select teachers with relevant experience and familiarity in using AI applications for language instruction and assessment, ensuring that their perspectives would provide meaningful insight into the pedagogical implications of AI integration.

Data were collected through an online structured survey administered between March and April 2025. The instrument comprised Likert-scale items to assess teachers' perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of AI tools, multiple-response questions to identify the most commonly used AI tools, and closed-ended items to capture perceived pedagogical implications.

The collected data were analyzed using a combination of thematic and descriptive quantitative methods. Qualitative responses were examined thematically to identify patterns, insights, and emerging trends regarding AI use in language assessment. Quantitative data from Likert-scale and multiple-response items were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, which complemented the thematic analysis by highlighting prominent practices and perceptions. This integrated approach provided a comprehensive understanding of how AI tools influence assessment practices and pedagogical decisions in English language teaching across Junior High Schools in Masbate.

Results

The data gathered by the researcher was interpreted, analyzed, and discussed in this study.

Using AI Tools in Classroom Language Assessment

The study investigated the types of AI tools currently employed by 30 Junior High School English Language teachers in public and private schools in Masbate Province. The survey allowed respondents to select multiple tools, reflecting the reality that teachers often combine several technologies to assess different language skills. This approach captures a more accurate picture of classroom practices, as many educators do not rely on a single tool but use multiple AI applications to support varied assessment needs.

Table 1 shows the AI tools used in classroom language assessments. The enumerated AI tools were obtained from the survey conducted by the researcher.

Table 1*Use of AI Tools in Classroom Language Assessments*

Rank	Artificial Intelligence Tools	Frequency	Percentage
1	Automated Multiple-Choice Scoring Software	24	80%
2	Automated Essay Scoring Software	22	73.3%
3	Automated Assessment Generators	21	70%
4	AI-Powered Games	18	60%
5	Adaptive Test Tools	7	23.3%
6	AI Speech Labs	2	6.7%

Note: Percentages exceed 100% cumulatively because respondents could select more than one AI tool. Each percentage represents the proportion of teachers who reported using a specific AI tool.

The data show that Automated Multiple-Choice Scoring Software is the most frequently used AI tool, with 24 out of 30 teachers (80%) reporting its use. This high percentage highlights the popularity of tools that support rapid and consistent grading of multiple-choice items, which are commonly employed in classroom language assessments. Following closely, Automated Essay Scoring Software was reported by 22 teachers (73.3%), indicating that a majority of respondents utilize AI to evaluate written responses efficiently and objectively. Similarly, Automated Assessment Generators were used by 21 teachers (70%), reflecting a trend where educators apply AI tools to design exercises and quizzes tailored to individual learning levels, supporting more customized assessment practices.

AI-Powered Games were reported by 18 teachers (60%), suggesting moderate adoption of gamified approaches for assessment purposes. These tools allow teachers to assess students in a more interactive and engaging manner. In comparison, Adaptive Test Tools and AI Speech Labs were the least frequently reported, with 7 teachers (23.3%) and 2 teachers (6.7%), respectively. These lower percentages indicate that technologies requiring adaptive algorithms or speech recognition are currently used by a minority of teachers, which may reflect limitations in access, technical capacity, or familiarity with such tools.

Advantages and Disadvantages of AI Tools in Classroom Language Assessments

The study explored respondents' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages using a Likert-scale questionnaire, allowing participants to express varying degrees of agreement. This approach captures subtle differences in how users view advantages, such as learning and efficiency, versus concerns, including technology reliance and implementation challenges. The results highlight overall trends in approval and caution, providing insight into both the benefits and potential limitations of the system.

Table 2 shows the advantages of using AI tools in conducting classroom language assessments based on the survey conducted with English language teachers.

Table 2*Advantages of AI Tools in Classroom Language Assessment*

Advantages	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating
Speed and Efficiency	4.83	Strongly Agree
Automated Scoring	4.90	Strongly Agree
Reduced Bias	4.77	Strongly Agree
Engaging Learning	5.00	Strongly Agree
Adaptive Learning	4.67	Strongly Agree
Reliability and consistency	4.50	Strongly Agree
Adaptability and personalized learning	4.60	Strongly Agree
Standardized Scoring	4.87	Strongly Agree

A closer look at the data reveals notable patterns. Engaging Learning achieved a perfect score (5.00), highlighting that respondents found the system highly interactive and motivating. This suggests that the system effectively captures learners' attention and supports active participation. Similarly, Automated Scoring (4.90) and Standardized Scoring (4.87) were among the highest-rated aspects, emphasizing the system's perceived fairness, objectivity, and efficiency in assessment.

Speed and Efficiency (4.83) and Reduced Bias (4.77) also scored strongly, showing that users appreciate both the time-saving nature of the system and its ability to minimize subjective evaluation errors. Meanwhile, aspects related to personalization-Adaptive Learning (4.67) and Adaptability and Personalized Learning (4.60)-received slightly lower but still strongly positive ratings, suggesting that while respondents recognize the system's flexibility, there may be room to further enhance its individualized learning features.

Reliability and Consistency (4.50) received the lowest mean score among the advantages, though it still falls within the "Strongly Agree" category. This indicates that respondents view the system as generally dependable, but consistent performance may be an area for continued monitoring and improvement.

The data reflect a clear trend of strong approval across all evaluated aspects, with particular emphasis on engagement and objective assessment features. The slightly lower but still positive ratings for adaptability and reliability suggest potential areas for enhancement, ensuring the system remains both dynamic and dependable. Overall, respondents perceive the system as an effective, fair, and engaging tool that supports learning while maintaining assessment accuracy.

On the other hand, disadvantages of AI tools in language assessment were identified. Table 3 presents the disadvantages of using AI in classroom language assessments as recorded by the researcher based on the experiences of the English language teachers.

Table 3*Disadvantages of Using AI Tools in Classroom Language Assessments*

Disadvantages	Weighted Mean	Adjectival Rating
Potential for cheating	5.00	Strongly Agree
Overreliance on Technology	4.80	Strongly Agree
Raises data privacy concerns	3.73	Agree
Lack of authentic human interaction	4.77	Strongly Agree
Lack of Teacher Training	4.83	Strongly Agree
Cost of development and implementation	4.07	Agree
Overlooked nuances	3.63	Agree

The results indicate that respondents generally recognize several challenges associated with the system. Potential for Cheating (5.00) emerged as the most pressing concern, highlighting worries about academic integrity in digital learning contexts. Other highly rated concerns include Lack of Teacher Training (4.83), Overreliance on Technology (4.80), and Limited Human Interaction (4.77), suggesting that respondents value the role of teacher guidance and personal engagement, and are cautious about relying too heavily on technology.

Lower-rated disadvantages- Data Privacy Concerns (3.73), Cost of Development and Implementation (4.07), and Overlooked Nuances (3.63)-though still acknowledged, were considered less critical. This indicates that respondents perceive operational and technical issues as secondary to factors directly affecting learning quality and experience.

In general, the data show a clear trend: concerns are strongest when the drawbacks could negatively impact learning outcomes or the student experience, particularly around cheating, teacher support, and meaningful interaction. Meanwhile, technical limitations and financial considerations are recognized but seen as less urgent. These insights suggest that while the system is broadly appreciated, addressing these key human and pedagogical challenges is essential for successful implementation.

Pedagogical Implications of AI Integration in Classroom-Based Language Assessment and Language Teaching

The following implications are drawn from the respondents' evaluations, reflecting patterns in the reported advantages, disadvantages, and commonly used AI tools. They highlight how these perceptions may influence teaching approaches and classroom learning experiences.

Emphasis on Authentic Tasks and HOTS. The results show that AI tools are highly valued for enhancing engagement, efficiency, and scoring accuracy. These advantages suggest that AI can support the design of assessments that go beyond rote recall, promoting Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) such as analysis, evaluation, and creativity. However, concerns about potential for cheating indicate that while AI facilitates efficiency, careful task design is necessary to maintain assessment integrity.

Holistic Learning through Meaningful Activities. High ratings for engaging and adaptive learning demonstrate that AI tools can analyze diverse aspects of student performance. This reflects a shift toward holistic evaluation, where assessments are embedded in meaningful learning experiences rather than isolated tests. Disadvantages

like overlooked nuances and limited human interaction highlight that AI captures measurable outputs but may miss subtler dimensions of student learning, underlining the importance of complementary human oversight.

Efficiency and Consistency in Assessment. The high agreement for automated and standardized scoring shows that AI tools are relied upon for efficient and consistent evaluation, especially in language assessments where scoring can be time-consuming and subjective. This aligns with SOP 1 findings, where tools like automated essay graders and scoring platforms were most commonly used. At the same time, disadvantages such as overreliance on technology and lack of teacher training suggest that efficiency gains are maximized only when teachers understand how to interpret and integrate AI outputs.

Multifaceted Approach to Assessment. The diversity of commonly used AI tools such as covering writing, reading comprehension, and grammar practice, illustrates a multifaceted approach to language assessment. Advantages such as adaptability and personalized learning show that AI supports varied learning needs, while limitations like cost of development and overlooked nuances indicate that balancing breadth and depth of assessment remains a challenge.

Supporting Underrepresented Skills. Although AI tools for spoken language are less widely used, they were still recognized as valuable, reflecting an opportunity to address skills that are traditionally harder to assess, such as oral proficiency and pronunciation. The combination of advantages like engaging learning and adaptive feedback with disadvantages like limited human interaction suggests that AI can complement but not fully replace the richness of teacher-led oral assessment.

Shaping New Learning Experiences. The integration of AI introduces new possibilities for classroom learning, offering interactive and adaptive experiences that were less feasible with traditional assessments. The data on engaging learning and adaptive learning underscore how AI can transform teaching and learning processes, though attention to challenges like overreliance on technology and potential cheating remains critical.

Ethical and Responsible Use. Concerns about cheating and data privacy highlight the ethical dimensions of AI integration. These disadvantages, juxtaposed with high appreciation for efficiency and fairness, suggest that ethical considerations are inherent to AI-supported assessment, influencing how teachers design, implement, and monitor AI-enhanced learning activities.

Discussion

The study investigated the types of AI tools used by 30 Junior High School English Language teachers in public and private schools in Masbate Province, revealing that teachers often combine multiple technologies to assess varied language skills. The survey showed that Automated Multiple-Choice Scoring Software, Automated Essay Scoring, and Automated Assessment Generators were the most commonly used tools, reflecting a clear preference for AI applications that streamline grading, standardize evaluation, and support tailored assessment practices. These patterns align with findings that AI enhances efficiency, objectivity, and scalability in classroom assessments (Zhang, 2025; González-Calatayud et al., 2021). Moderate use of gamified tools and low adoption of adaptive test tools or AI speech labs suggests that technologies requiring complex algorithms or specialized skills remain less accessible,

possibly due to limitations in infrastructure, technical support, or teacher familiarity (Nguyen et al., 2024).

The evaluation of advantages revealed a strong consensus among teachers regarding AI's contributions to classroom language assessment. Perfect scores for engaging learning, along with high ratings for automated and standardized scoring, suggest that AI tools are perceived as highly motivating, interactive, and fair. These findings correspond with studies highlighting that AI can enhance engagement, minimize bias, and support adaptive learning strategies (Sahmaniasl, 2025; Adil, 2024). Slightly lower but still positive scores for adaptability and personalized learning indicate that while AI can address individual learner needs, further integration of differentiated instruction strategies may strengthen assessment effectiveness (Fatima, 2025).

Regarding disadvantages, concerns about potential cheating, lack of teacher training, overreliance on technology, and limited human interaction were highly rated. This suggests that while AI provides efficiency and consistency, teachers remain cautious about ethical, pedagogical, and relational dimensions of assessment. Lower-rated concerns such as data privacy, cost, and overlooked nuances, although acknowledged, appear secondary to issues that directly affect learning quality and experience. These patterns echo previous studies emphasizing that ethical considerations and human oversight are essential for effective AI integration in education (UNESCO, 2024; Zhang, 2025).

The integration of AI tools in classroom language assessment represents a transformative shift in teaching and learning practices, positioning technology as a mediator of more complex pedagogical processes rather than merely a grading mechanism. The data indicate that AI enables more dynamic, interactive, and holistic assessment, allowing educators to capture multiple dimensions of student performance, design authentic and cognitively demanding tasks, and provide timely feedback, while freeing time for instructional planning and learner support (Kaebling & Moore, 2021). At the same time, teachers' concerns regarding overreliance on technology, limited human interaction, and potential misuse underscore the tension between efficiency and meaningful engagement, highlighting the need for careful implementation where AI complements rather than replaces teacher judgment (Alam, 2022). The multifaceted adoption of AI tools from automated scoring to gamified and adaptive applications, demonstrates their potential to address diverse language skills and support personalized learning, yet their effectiveness depends on professional competence, ethical vigilance, and contextual sensitivity (González-Calatayud et al., 2021).

Overall, the findings confirm and extend prior research on AI in education by demonstrating that teachers in Masbate employ multiple AI tools in tandem, maximizing both efficiency and engagement while navigating challenges related to ethics, human interaction, and professional preparation. The patterns observed in this study can be interpreted through a constructivist lens, wherein AI serves as a mediating tool that enhances learning experiences but requires active teacher facilitation to ensure meaningful and equitable outcomes (Özdere, 2023).

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that schools provide professional development and training opportunities focused on practical use of AI in classroom assessment. This will help teachers interpret AI-generated results accurately, design meaningful and authentic tasks, and integrate AI in ways that complement their teaching rather than replace it.

Given the diversity of AI tools and their varying adoption levels, it is important for schools to prioritize tools that are accessible, easy to use, and aligned with the specific assessment needs of students. Focusing on tools that support multiple language skills such as writing, reading, and speaking, will enable more comprehensive evaluation while addressing gaps in less frequently assessed areas, such as oral proficiency. Schools may also consider gradually introducing advanced or adaptive AI tools once teachers are confident with foundational applications.

Finally, ethical and responsible use of AI should guide all integration efforts. Clear protocols for monitoring academic integrity, safeguarding student data, and balancing AI assistance with human judgment can ensure that technology enhances learning rather than compromising it. By combining teacher preparedness, careful selection of tools, and attention to ethical considerations, AI can be leveraged effectively to improve assessment practices, promote engagement, and support meaningful learning outcomes in the classroom.

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Effect of Self-regulated Strategy Learning on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety and English Speaking Performance of Chinese Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies on foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) and English speaking performance among Chinese undergraduate English majors. Employing a single-group pretest-posttest design, fifty second-year English majors from a university in Jilin Province participated in an 8-week SRL intervention integrated into regular speaking courses. The intervention targeted goal-setting, self-monitoring, positive self-talk, and independent practice. Data were collected via a modified Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS), picture-description speaking tests, and a Likert-scale questionnaire. Paired-sample t-tests demonstrated significant reductions in FLSA and notable improvements in speaking performance post-intervention. Participants also reported enhanced confidence, fluency, and learning motivation. These findings indicate that integrating SRL strategies into language instruction can effectively mitigate speaking anxiety and improve oral proficiency. The study contributes to the understanding of learner autonomy in second language acquisition and emphasizes the value of context-sensitive approaches in addressing language learning barriers in non-Western contexts.

Keywords: Self-regulated learning, foreign language speaking anxiety, English speaking performance, Chinese undergraduate students, self-regulated learning strategy

Introduction

Self-regulated learning (SRL)-defined as the proactive process where learners set goals, monitor progress, adapt strategies, and manage motivation to optimize academic outcomes-is a critical determinant of academic success across disciplines (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011; Panadero, 2017). In language education, SRL strategies show great potential for addressing long-standing challenges like foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) (Oxford, 2017; Rose et al., 2018).

Chinese undergraduates frequently experience heightened FLSA during oral English activities (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Chen, 2012). This is largely rooted in an educational tradition emphasizing rote memorization and high-stakes exams-prioritizing accuracy over communicative fluency and offering limited authentic interaction opportunities (Hu, 2002; Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). Such contexts foster fear of negative evaluation from peers and instructors, inhibiting spontaneous speech (Liu, 2006; Woodrow, 2006) and creating a vicious cycle: anxiety undermines confidence and fluency, hindering effective language acquisition (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 2017).

Despite SRL's proven efficacy in boosting general academic performance and managing cognitive load (Zimmerman, 2002; Dent & Koenka, 2016), its application to reducing affective barriers like FLSA remains underexplored in non-Western settings (Bai et al., 2023). While metacognitive SRL strategies theoretically build resilience by reframing mistakes as learning opportunities (Nilson, 2013; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009), empirical evidence linking structured SRL interventions to FLSA reduction in Chinese universities is scarce (Zhang, 2021). Additionally, the connection between SRL's emotional regulation components and oral proficiency improvements needs clearer empirical support-especially in contexts where cultural norms and institutional pressures amplify performance anxiety (Teng & Zhang, 2016; Wang et al., 2021).

To address these gaps, this study investigates the impact of a structured SRL strategies on Chinese undergraduates' FLSA and English speaking performance. By integrating Zimmerman's (2000) SRL framework into communicative language teaching, this research aims to provide evidence-based strategies for mitigating affective barriers, fostering resilient communicators in global contexts (Dörnyei, 2005; Boekaerts, 2017).

The 8-week intervention was embedded in the compulsory "Comprehensive English Speaking" course (2 sessions/week, 90 minutes/session) for second-year English majors at a Jilin public university. Participants (CEFR B1-B2 level) have basic oral vocabulary and grammar skills but face FLSA due to exam-oriented education-worrying about expression errors and struggling with spontaneous communication-with limited real-world practice opportunities. This context ensures the study's relevance for cross-scenario application.

The specific content of this study is as follows:

1. Exploring the specific impact of self-regulated learning strategies on the oral English performance of Chinese college students
2. Analyzing the Mechanism of Self-regulated learning on Chinese College Students' Foreign Language Oral Anxiety
3. Reveal the dynamic relationship between self-regulated learning, foreign language oral anxiety, and English oral performance

Literature Review

1. The concept of foreign language learning anxiety

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) first conceptualized Foreign Language Learning Anxiety (FLLA) by building on general anxiety constructs. They defined it as a distinct, situation-specific anxiety uniquely tied to second or foreign language acquisition. They identified three core components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Scholars widely recognize FLLA as distinct from general trait anxiety, as it stems from specific triggers in language learning environments (MacIntyre, 2017). Extensive empirical research consistently shows a significant negative correlation between FLLA and language achievement—including proficiency test scores, course grades, and oral performance (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Horwitz, 2001). Moreover, FLLA strongly inhibits learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in the target language, reducing the spontaneous interactions critical for language acquisition (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Dewaele, 2013, 2017). This pervasive influence highlights FLLA's role as a key individual difference variable in second language acquisition (SLA).

2. The concept of self-regulation strategy

Zimmerman (2000, 2002) defines Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) strategies as deliberate cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral processes. Learners actively use these processes to control their own learning activities and achieve desired outcomes. Key components of SRL emerge from leading models, such as Zimmerman's cyclical model and Pintrich's framework. These include proactive phases, ongoing processes and reactive phases (Zimmerman & Campillo, 2003; Pintrich, 2004). Notably, SRL also involves managing motivational and affective states. For example, learners use self-talk for encouragement or apply techniques to reduce anxiety (Wolters, 2003; Boekaerts, 2011). In language learning, research shows that learners who use SRL strategies effectively develop greater autonomy, persist more through challenges, perform better academically, and importantly manage learning anxiety more successfully (Oxford, 2011, 2017; Teng & Zhang, 2016; Rose et al., 2018). These strategies equip learners to proactively handle the cognitive and affective demands of language acquisition. This makes SRL a vital framework for understanding and promoting successful language learning—especially in anxiety-inducing contexts like speaking.

3. Studies on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA)

Studies on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) confirm it as a widespread, impactful affective factor that hinders the development of oral proficiency. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) laid the foundation for conceptualizing and measuring language anxiety with their Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This scale positions FLSA within a multidimensional framework, including communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Subsequent empirical studies consistently confirm a strong negative correlation between higher FLSA levels and poorer oral performance (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Dewaele, 2017). This relationship highlights how anxiety impairs learners' ability to access linguistic resources and engage fluently in spontaneous communication (Woodrow, 2006). In the Chinese EFL context, Liu and Jackson (2008) found that even English majors—who

typically have advanced linguistic knowledge-still report notably high speaking anxiety. Despite receiving extensive formal English teaching, these students often adopt communication avoidance strategies. This highlights a critical gap between linguistic knowledge and oral communicative competence. Zhang (2013) further noted that FLSA has an especially strong negative impact on learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) in the target language-given China's prevalent exam-oriented education system. These combined findings underscore the urgent need for effective pedagogical interventions. Such interventions should specifically aim to reduce FLSA and build learners' confidence and competence in oral expression (Young, 1991).

4. Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) and Its Role in Mitigating Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA)

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) is a pivotal theoretical and empirical framework that elucidates how learners proactively orchestrate cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational processes to achieve academic goals (Zimmerman, 2000; Pintrich, 2004). Across disciplines, including second language acquisition (SLA), extensive research demonstrates that learners proficient in SRL strategies exhibit superior academic performance and greater resilience in navigating learning challenges. At the core of SRL are metacognitive strategies-such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning processes-that empower learners to become autonomous and effective language users (Zimmerman, 2002). In applied linguistics, scholars like Oxford (2017) have emphasized the adaptability of SRL strategies for language learners, highlighting their utility in managing multifaceted learning demands, including sustaining motivation, regulating affective states (e.g., anxiety), and optimizing cognitive resource allocation.

Empirical studies in Chinese EFL contexts have validated these propositions. For instance, Teng and Zhang (2016) found that Chinese university students who employed metacognitive SRL strategies (e.g., setting explicit speaking goals, self-monitoring oral performance) achieved significant gains in oral fluency and reductions in speaking anxiety. Similarly, Rose et al. (2018) showed that structured SRL strategy training enhanced language achievement, attributing these outcomes to learners' increased reflective awareness and adaptive strategy use. Building on these insights, a growing body of research has begun to explore SRL as a mechanism for mitigating foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA). These studies position SRL not merely as a cognitive tool but as a robust approach to affective management, as pedagogical interventions rooted in SRL principles have been shown to concurrently reduce anxiety and improve oral performance (Bai et al., 2023). For example, Bai, Chiu, and Lau (2023) conducted a quasi-experimental study and found that SRL-focused instruction significantly boosted Chinese secondary school students' speaking confidence, oral performance, and reduced self-reported speaking anxiety. Their analysis highlighted strategies like positive self-talk and systematic self-monitoring as particularly effective in helping learners manage emotional barriers (e.g., worry, fear of failure) during speaking tasks.

These findings align with theoretical assertions that SRL equips learners with tools to anticipate and navigate anxiety-provoking situations through proactive planning and adaptive responses (Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009). However, critical gaps remain in the literature. While SRL's efficacy in cognitive and academic domains is well-documented, its potential to mitigate FLSA in non-Western, exam-oriented contexts (e.g., Chinese universities) is underexplored (Bai et al., 2023). Moreover, the interplay between SRL's emotional regulation components and oral proficiency development—especially in environments where cultural norms amplify performance anxiety—lacks systematic empirical investigation. This study addresses these gaps by examining how a structured SRL intervention targeting goal-setting, self-monitoring, and confidence-building can simultaneously reduce FLSA and improve speaking performance among Chinese undergraduates.

Method

1. Research Methodology

The purpose of this study has been to investigate whether instruction in self-regulation strategies for learning to reduce foreign language anxiety can have improved the English speaking ability of Chinese college students. A systematic research plan has been described in this article, to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the research approach. The researcher has discussed the research topic, research design, research instruments, validity and reliability, data collection procedures, analysis of research data, and ethical considerations.

2. Research Design

This study employed a single-group pretest-posttest design (Creswell, 2014) to explore the effects of a structured self-regulated learning (SRL) intervention on reducing foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) and improving English speaking proficiency. The design included pretesting (baseline FLSA and speaking performance), an 8-week SRL intervention (integrated into regular speaking classes), and posttesting with identical measures. To mitigate internal validity risks, standardized, piloted tools and consistent intervention delivery were used. A control group was not included due to resource constraints and the focus on examining the intervention's inherent efficacy in a real classroom context—with the study acknowledging this as a limitation to be addressed in future research.

3. Research object and sample

This study employed a homogeneous purposive sampling strategy (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2019) to recruit 50 second-year English-major undergraduates from a public university in Jilin Province, China. This methodological choice ensured participants possessed comparable levels of English proficiency, as demarcated by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) at B1-B2 levels, and shared similar pedagogical experiences within their specialized program (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Establishing this homogeneity within the participant pool was essential to minimize extraneous variability and enhance the internal validity of the subsequent analysis, thereby increasing the reliability of findings pertaining to the specific variables under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Rigorous ethical protocols were implemented in accordance with standard research governance. Informed written

consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement, explicitly outlining the study's nature, procedures, and affirming their unequivocal right to voluntary participation and withdrawal at any stage without penalty (American Psychological Association, 2017). To safeguard participant confidentiality, all collected data underwent a strict anonymization process; personally identifiable information was systematically removed or pseudonymized prior to analysis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). This deliberate focus on a specific, homogeneous demographic cohort—second-year English majors—facilitates a controlled and in-depth examination of the interplay between established English language proficiency parameters and targeted pedagogical interventions on learning outcomes within this defined educational context, allowing for more nuanced and interpretable conclusions (Dörnyei, 2007).

Research Instruments

This study comprehensively used quantitative research tools to collect data from two core dimensions: foreign language oral anxiety level and English oral performance. At the same time, self-regulated strategy learning (SRL) training was implemented through structured intervention materials. All tools were tested for validity and reliability to ensure the quality of the data and the rigor of the research.

The Foreign Language Oral Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) is a core tool for measuring students' anxiety levels. Based on Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and supplemented with cultural adaptation questions in Chinese undergraduate oral learning scenarios, a 5-point Likert scale with 20 items (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) was formed, covering four dimensions: cognitive anxiety, emotional response, avoidance behavior, and self-efficacy. Among them, the cognitive anxiety dimension focuses on learners' negative cognition of oral tasks, the emotional response dimension focuses on the physiological and emotional symptoms caused by anxiety, the avoidance behavior dimension captures the actions taken by learners to avoid anxiety, and the self-efficacy dimension is scored in reverse to measure learners' confidence in their oral abilities.

The picture description oral test is used to evaluate students' English speaking performance. Referring to the Cambridge PET and TOEIC oral test samples and the textbook "Fluent English Speaking Tutoring Course", picture materials that meet the B1-B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) are selected, covering topics such as family scenes, public spaces, and daily activities. The test adopts a parallel question design, and the pre-test and post-test images are matched in complexity and topic similarity to avoid exercise effects; During the test, students randomly select one image, prepare for one minute, and then give a 5-minute continuous oral description and record the entire process. The scoring is based on five dimensions: fluency (25%), vocabulary (25%), grammar (20%), pronunciation (15%), and coherence (15%), using an analytical scoring scale.

The Self Regulated Strategy Learning (SRL) intervention material is the core carrier for implementing 8-week training. Based on Zimmerman's (2000) SRL cycle model design, it is deeply integrated with conventional oral courses and promoted in four stages: in the first and second weeks, focus on goal setting, explain SMART principles and case sharing through PPT, guide students to fill out worksheets and develop personal oral improvement plans; The focus of weeks 3-4 is on self-monitoring, providing oral log templates to guide students in recording exercise content, time,

emotional fluctuations, and coping strategies, and filling out logs through simulated oral practice sessions; Conduct cognitive regulation training in weeks 5-6, analyze the harm of negative thinking through PPT, demonstrate positive self-dialogue skills, organize group role-playing simulations of anxiety scenarios, and practice strategies; Focus on reflection and adjustment in weeks 7-8, emphasize the importance of reflection through PPT, guide students to write reflection reports, summarize the effectiveness of strategy application, and revise follow-up plans.

1. Content validity check

The validity of the content of this paper is ensured through multidimensional measures: in terms of core tools, the Foreign Language Oral Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) is modified based on a mature scale, and semantic equivalence is ensured through Chinese to English back translation. Three domain experts pass the Item Objective Consistency (IOC) review ($IOC \geq 0.67$), optimize the expression after pre-test, and ultimately the internal consistency of the scale is good (Cronbach's alpha=0.803); The picture description oral test adopts a parallel question design (matching the difficulty of the pictures in the pre-test and post-test with cognitive needs)

2. Content reliability test

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha is commonly used to measure the reliability of questionnaire items. The researcher calculated research instruments' reliability in a manner adopted by internal consistency reliability Cronbach's alpha formula. The Cronbach's Alpha for the entire student questionnaire was 0.803, which indicated a good reliability of the student questionnaire.

Table 1*Cronbach's Alpha for the Student Questionnaire*

Item	Corrected Item–Total Correlation (CITC)	α if Item Deleted	Cronbach alpha coefficient
Cognitive Anxiety	0.582	0.785	
Emotional Response	0.567	0.791	0.803
Avoidance Behavior	0.591	0.779	
Self-efficacy	0.554	0.801	

Note. Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.803$; standardized Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.806$.

3. Reliability of the picture-description speaking tests

The test-retest method is one method to estimate the reliability of test items interval (Davidshofer & Murphy, 2005, p.123). In this study, the researcher calculated the reliability of the picture-description speaking test in a manner adopted by intraclass correlation consistency reliability, and it was conducted to the pilot group within a week twice. Accordingly, the results were collected and recorded and based on the statistical result.

Table 2*Intraclass Correlation Consistency for the Picture-description Speaking Tests*

Instrument	No. of Cases	No. of Test Items	Value of Pearson
Picture-description speaking tests	50	5	0.87

Data Collection

The 8-week data collection was carried out around the "pre-test intervention post-test" process system: in the first week (pre-test stage), baseline anxiety data of 50 participants was collected through the Foreign Language Oral Anxiety Scale (FLSAS), and initial oral ability data was obtained by describing the oral test with pictures, clarifying the anxiety level and oral performance baseline before intervention; During weeks 2-9 (intervention phase), the 8-week Self-Regulated Strategy Learning (SRL) course was integrated into regular oral classes. During this period, the "oral log" was used to record students' weekly practice time, emotional fluctuations, and strategy application, supplemented by classroom observation to record students' participation and strategy use performance; In the 10th week (post-test stage), the Foreign Language Oral Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) and a parallel version of the picture description oral test were tested again to collect anxiety and oral performance data after intervention. At the same time, students' accumulated oral logs and reflection reports from 8 weeks were collected to form a complete longitudinal data chain. All data collection followed the principle of anonymity.

Method of Data Analysis

Firstly, descriptive statistics (calculating mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) were used to sort out the distribution of participants' foreign language oral anxiety levels and baseline characteristics of English oral performance. Anxiety level groups were then divided based on the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the total score of the anxiety scale; Secondly, using paired sample t-test, compare the differences in participants' scores on the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) and English speaking test (image description task) before and after intervention; Further the potential differences in English oral performance among different anxiety levels groups through one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were applied. Conduct Pearson correlation analysis to explore the correlation between foreign language oral anxiety levels and English oral performance; All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software, and validity and reliability tests were conducted before the analysis to ensure that the selected statistical methods are applicable to the data attributes.

Results

1. Data analysis of grades

After all participants completed the pre-test and post-test, the researchers grouped the pre-test oral scores and compared them with the pre-test scores through t-test. Based on Table 3, the average score of the post-test oral was 6.46 points higher than the pre-test, with a negative mean difference (-6.46), indicating that the post-test scores were significantly better than the pre-test scores. The t-value and p-value: The absolute value of the t-value is as high as 44.164, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), far below the significance level of 0.01. This indicates that the improvement of oral performance after self-regulation strategy intervention has extremely significant statistical significance, directly proving the effectiveness of self-regulation strategies in the study. The difference in scores and statistical significance jointly indicate that the intervention's improvement in students' oral output ability is not accidental, but has a stable and reproducible positive effect. The standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test was relatively close, indicating that the intervention measures did not amplify individual differences. While improving the overall situation, it maintained the balance of group development and provided data support for the universality of teaching strategies.

Table 3

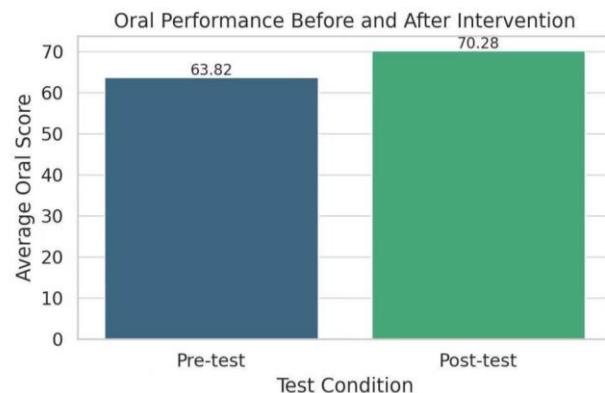
Results of Paired t-test Analysis of English Oral Performance

Pairing number	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	t	p
Pairing 1	Pre-test oral score	63.82	11.12	-6.46	-44.164	0.000**
	Post-test oral score	70.28	11.61			

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Figure 1

Oral Performance before and after Intervention



In Table 4, from the perspective of effect measures, the mean difference between pre-test and post test oral scores is -6.46, with a 95% confidence interval of -8.54 ~ -4.38. Cohen's d value is 0.88. According to Cohen's (1988) standard, a Cohen's d value greater than 0.8 is considered a large effect, while here it is much greater than 0.8, indicating that interventions (such as the implementation of relevant teaching strategies) have had a significant impact on improving English oral performance, with a very significant difference.

Table 4

English Oral Performance Paired t-test Effect Measure Index

Item	Mean value difference	Difference 95% CI	df	Difference standard deviation	Cohen's d value
Match pre-test oral scores with post test oral scores	-6.46	-8.54 ~ -4.38	49	1.034	0.88

In Table 5, the Mean values of the five dimensions of oral fluency, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and coherence after the intervention were significantly higher than those before the test; and the p-values in the comparison between the pre-test and post-test and the reference value were all 0.000**, indicating that there were extremely significant statistical differences between the performance of each dimension before and after the intervention and the reference value. At the same time, the intervention had a positive and significant effect on improving oral ability in each dimension.

Table 5

Single-sample t-test for Each Item

Number	Item	Sample Size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	t	p
1	Pretest Fluency	50	50.000	90.000	64.840	11.162	41.076	0.000**
	Posttest Fluency	50	55.000	95.000	71.280	11.613	43.402	0.000**
2	Pretest Vocabulary	50	48.000	86.000	62.800	11.073	40.103	0.000**
	Posttest Vocabulary	50	53.000	93.000	69.280	11.613	42.185	0.000**
3	Pretest Grammar	50	49.000	88.000	63.820	11.117	40.595	0.000**
	Posttest Grammar	50	54.000	94.000	70.280	11.613	42.793	0.000**

Table 5 (Continued)

Number	Item	Sample Size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	t	p
4	Pretest Pronunciation	50	50.000	89.000	64.820	11.117	41.231	0.000**
	Posttest Pronunciation	50	55.000	95.000	71.280	11.613	43.402	0.000**
5	Pretest Coherence	50	48.000	87.000	62.820	11.117	39.959	0.000**
	Posttest Coherence	50	53.000	93.000	69.280	11.613	42.185	0.000**

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

2. Data analysis of questionnaire

The average values (3.476-3.520) and median values (all 3.400) of the four dimensions are highly consistent, and the evaluations are all moderate, reflecting that students' foreign language oral anxiety is generally at a moderate level from "cognitive concerns" to "emotional physiological reactions" to "behavioral avoidance", and there is no widespread extreme tendency towards "high anxiety" or "low anxiety"; The self-efficacy negatively correlated with anxiety is also at a moderate level, and the two show a matching moderate level; The standard deviations of each dimension (0.987-1.102) indicate individual differences among students, but the overall trend remains stable in the moderate range.

Table 6

Distribution of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

Item	Content	Mean	SD	Median	Evaluation
Cognitive anxiety	Refers to learners' negative cognitive preconceptions about language learning tasks, their own performance, and external evaluations.	3.520	1.095	3.400	Moderate
Emotional reactions	It is the emotional experience and physiological symptoms triggered by foreign language anxiety, and it is the manifestation of anxiety from the "cognitive" to the "emotional-physiological" dimension.	3.480	1.102	3.400	Moderate

Table6 (Continued)

Item	Content	Mean	SD	Median	Evaluation
Avoidance strategies	It is the behavioral manifestation of anxiety, referring to the actions learners take to "avoid the source of anxiety (language learning situations/tasks)."	3.512	1.055	3.400	Moderate
Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy is not a direct dimension of anxiety, but rather a subjective belief in one's own language learning ability, and it has a significant negative correlation with foreign language anxiety.	3.476	0.987	3.400	Moderate

Descriptive analysis describes the overall situation of data through mean or median. As shown in the table below, there are no outliers in the current data. Therefore, SPSSAU recommends conducting descriptive analysis directly on the mean. The average total score was 64.34, with a median of 62, indicating that over half of the students were in a state of moderate anxiety, with common concerns, emotional fluctuations, and behavioral avoidance towards oral tasks. The total score range was between 38-82, with a standard deviation of 11.67, indicating the presence of a high anxiety subgroup. The mean of cognitive anxiety was 17.64, which was close to the upper middle level, indicating that students generally have a cognitive pattern of excessive concern about oral performance. The average emotional response was 17.54, which was close to 70.2% of cognitive anxiety, indicating. The average avoidance behavior was 17.54, which was consistent with emotional anxiety and cognitive anxiety; The mean value of self-efficacy after reverse scoring is 11.62. After reverse scoring, the higher the score, the lower the self-efficacy; The average value is 46.5%, and the overall self-efficacy of the students is low. 50 students showed moderate anxiety and low self-confidence as a whole.

Figure 2
Descriptive Analysis

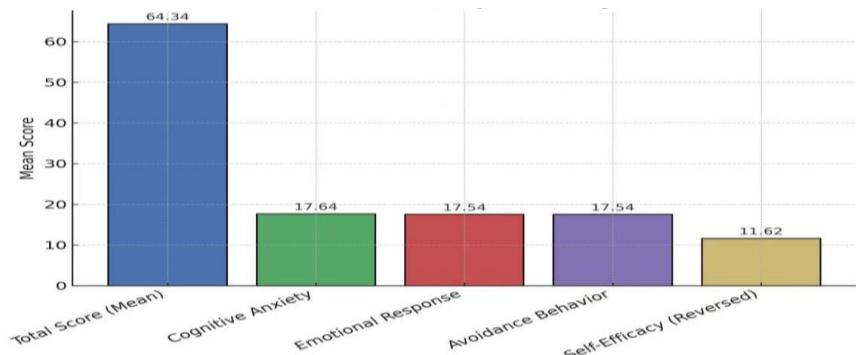


Table 7
Descriptive Analysis

Item	Sample size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Median
Cog_Anx1	50	1.000	5.000	3.500	1.165	3.000
Cog_Anx2	50	1.000	5.000	3.500	1.165	3.000
Cog_Anx3	50	1.000	5.000	3.500	1.129	3.000
Cog_Anx4	50	1.000	5.000	3.540	1.164	3.500
Cog_Anx5	50	1.000	5.000	3.560	1.163	4.000
EmoReact1	50	1.000	5.000	3.460	1.164	3.000
EmoReact2	50	1.000	5.000	3.480	1.165	3.000
EmoReact3	50	1.000	5.000	3.460	1.129	3.000
EmoReact4	50	1.000	5.000	3.460	1.164	3.000
EmoReact5	50	1.000	5.000	3.540	1.164	3.500
Avoid_Behav1	50	1.000	5.000	3.440	1.146	3.000
Avoid_Behav2	50	1.000	5.000	3.480	1.147	3.000
Avoid_Behav3	50	1.000	5.000	3.480	1.111	3.000
Avoid_Behav4	50	1.000	5.000	3.560	1.128	3.500
Avoid_Behav5	50	1.000	5.000	3.600	1.107	4.000
Self_Eff1	50	1.000	5.000	3.440	1.146	3.000
Self_Eff2	50	1.000	5.000	3.440	1.128	3.000
Self_Eff3	50	1.000	5.000	3.440	1.072	3.000
Self_Eff4	50	1.000	5.000	3.480	1.074	3.000
Self_Eff5	50	1.000	5.000	3.580	1.032	4.000
Cog_Anx	50	5.000	25.000	17.640	5.458	17.000
EmoReact	50	5.000	25.000	17.540	5.511	17.000

Among the 50 students, the moderate anxiety group had the highest proportion, indicating that most students had a certain degree of anxiety in oral scenarios, but it has not yet reached the level of serious impact. There were 12 people in the high anxiety group, accounting for nearly a quarter, and attention should be paid to the problems of oral expression disorders and low classroom participation caused by anxiety among this group of students. There were only 5 people for the low anxiety group,

reflecting that it may be relatively rare for students to be able to easily cope with oral tasks and have high confidence.

Table 8

Statistical Results of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Level Grouping

Anxiety Level	Sample size (people)	Proportion (%)
Low anxiety	5	10.00
Moderate anxiety	33	66.00
High anxiety	12	24.00
Total	50	100.00

3. Differences in foreign language learning anxiety among different foreign language learners

The 50 students were categorized into three groups based on their scores: a high-scoring group ($n = 5$), a middle-scoring group ($n = 22$), and a low-scoring group ($n = 23$). The high-scoring group achieved a mean score of 84.8, with a range of 82–88. The middle-scoring group obtained a mean score of 69.4, ranging from 60–79, while the low-scoring group recorded a mean score of 53.9, ranging from 49–59.

The kurtosis and skewness values for all three groups were close to 0, indicating that the score distributions were approximately normal and free from extreme outliers. Overall, students with lower levels of anxiety demonstrated higher and more stable oral performance, whereas students with higher levels of anxiety showed lower scores with slightly greater individual variability. The majority of students fell within the middle range of performance.

Table 9

Pre-test Score Grouping

Title	Item	Score Group			Total
		Middle Group	Low group	High Group	
Pre-test oral score	n	22	23	5	50
	Mean	69.409	53.913	84.800	63.820
	Standard Deviation	5.637	3.161	2.387	11.117

Table 9 (Continued)

Title	Item	Score Group			Total
		Middle Group	Low group	High Group	
	Minimum	60.000	49.000	82.000	49.000
	Maximum	79.000	59.000	88.000	88.000
	Mean 95% CI (LL)	67.054	52.621	82.707	60.739
	Mean 95% CI (UL)	71.765	55.205	86.893	66.901
	Very bad	19.000	10.000	6.000	39.000
	variance	31.777	9.992	5.700	123.579
	Kurtosis	-0.988	-1.273	-1.117	-0.820
	Skewness	0.052	0.144	0.206	0.526

The differences in oral scores of students with different anxiety levels in the pre-test were extremely significant ($F=30.607$, $p<0.01$). Anxiety level was significantly negatively correlated with oral scores. The less anxious they were, the higher their oral scores were; the more anxious they were, the lower their scores were.

Table 10

Results of Variance Analysis

Analysis items	Item	Sample size	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p
Pre-test oral score	Moderate anxiety	33	64.30	8.82		
	Low anxiety	5	84.80	2.39	30.607	0.000**
	High anxiety	12	53.75	3.28		
	total	50	63.82	11.12		

Note. * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

Correlation analysis was used to study the correlation between the anxiety level (pre-test) and the pre-test oral scores, and the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to indicate the strength of the correlation. The specific analysis showed that the correlation coefficient between the anxiety level (pre-test) and the pre-test oral scores was -0.292, and it was significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that there was a significant negative correlation between the anxiety level (pre-test) and the pre-test oral scores. The data showed that reducing anxiety can promote oral ability.

Table 11
Pearson Correlation

Anxiety level (pre-test)		
	Correlation coefficient	-0.292*
Pre-test oral score	p-value	0.039
	Sample size	50

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Before the intervention, the mean total anxiety score was 64.3, indicating a relatively high initial level of anxiety with considerable individual variability. After the intervention, the mean total anxiety score decreased substantially to 44.02, reflecting not only a marked reduction in overall anxiety but also a narrowing of inter-individual differences. The paired-samples t-test yielded a t value of 40.365 and a p value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), confirming that the observed difference was highly statistically significant rather than incidental. In summary, prior to the intervention, students generally experienced high levels of anxiety alongside pronounced individual differences. Following the intervention, their anxiety was significantly alleviated, with greater consistency observed across individuals. These results provide robust evidence that self-regulation strategies are effective in reducing foreign language oral learning anxiety.

Table 12
Results of Paired t-test Analysis of Foreign Language Oral Learning Anxiety

Pairing number	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Pairing 1	Anxiety before intervention	64.34	11.67	20.32	40.365	0.000**
	Anxiety after intervention	44.02	8.76			

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Discussion

1. Characteristics and Intervention Potential of College Students' Foreign Language Oral Anxiety

Chinese college students' English speaking anxiety has universality and multidimensional complexity. From the perspective of psycholinguistics, it runs through the entire process of oral production, manifested as excessive concern for language accuracy, sensitivity to others' evaluations, and task performance pressure (Horwitz et al., 1986; Woodrow, 2006). This anxiety is closely related to the Chinese educational context: the crucial role of English proficiency in academic advancement and employment has given rise to the psychological expectation of "must succeed", which in turn exacerbates anxiety (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002); The traditional mode of

emphasizing writing over listening and speaking in foreign language teaching leads to insufficient oral practice among students, forming a vicious cycle of "anxiety → avoidance → lack of ability → more anxiety" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). In addition, the "face culture" causes students to choose silence and avoidance due to fear of losing face by making mistakes, further solidifying anxiety (Gao, 1998; Ting Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). Effective intervention methods in research have shown that breaking down fluency improvement into quantifiable sub goals (such as "10 minutes of spontaneous expression per day"), recording and analyzing oral performance (marking pauses, categorizing recordings), and developing coping strategies (preset transitional language, deep breathing) can significantly reduce cognitive anxiety and emotional reactions, achieving a synergistic optimization of anxiety levels and oral abilities.

2. Self regulating strategies for students to cope with anxiety

Self regulatory strategies effectively break the vicious cycle of anxiety by actively regulating cognition, emotions, and behavior (Zimmerman, 2000). At the cognitive level, students reconstruct their cognitive patterns and replace perfectionism with a growth mindset of "making mistakes is a part of learning", reinterpreting others' attention as opportunities for collaborative learning and reducing cognitive burden (Beck, 1976; Dweck, 2006). At the emotional level, abdominal breathing and positive self suggestion are used to alleviate physiological tension before speaking, and attention is immediately diverted to calm panic during expression (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Oxford, 1990). At the behavioral level, by practicing target vocabulary in advance, simulating dialogue scenarios to enhance control, choosing familiar language structures to avoid complex expressions, and breaking down tasks into sub goals to reduce stress, a "scaffold" support is provided for oral output (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978).

3. The effect of self-regulation strategies on academic performance improvement

Self regulatory strategies enhance the oral English proficiency of college students from multiple dimensions, including language ability, learning behavior, and psychological state (Zimmerman, 2000). In terms of language ability, cognitive regulation such as metacognitive monitoring and error management reduces excessive attention to errors and improves fluency of expression, while behavioral regulation such as advance preparation and targeted practice optimizes vocabulary and grammar use and reduces expression barriers (Dörnyei, 2005; Oxford, 2011) ; In terms of learning behavior, strategies shift from passive coping to active planning, alleviate anxiety to reduce avoidance, promote interactive participation such as classroom discussions and group collaboration, and drive practice from scattered to systematic (Horwitz et al., 1986; Pintrich, 2004); At the psychological level, the anxiety reduction and oral improvement brought by strategies enhance students' self-efficacy, stimulate intrinsic motivation, and encourage them to challenge more complex tasks, forming a feedback loop of "strategy application → positive results → stronger motivation → ability improvement", providing long-term support for language development from the emotional and motivational levels (Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Oxford, 2017).

Recommendation

To fully leverage the role of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies in alleviating English speaking anxiety and improving academic performance among Chinese undergraduate students, it is necessary for students, teachers, researchers, and educational management entities to collaborate and establish an evaluation mechanism to ensure effectiveness.

Students: They should identify the sources of their oral anxiety through daily logs, focus on 1-2 core SRL strategies (such as deep breathing for emotionally anxious individuals and task decomposition for unprepared individuals), continue practicing, record the effectiveness of strategy application after class, and dynamically optimize it. At the same time, they should pay attention to problems in strategy implementation and make timely adjustments. The evaluation method can use learning diaries and goal tracking tools to record progress, combined with teacher feedback to calibrate strategy direction.

Teacher: It is necessary to integrate SRL strategies with oral teaching, guide students to predict anxiety sources and demonstrate coping strategies before class, prompt students to use pre training strategies in a timely manner during class, and create a classroom atmosphere that emphasizes communication rather than perfection. Design oral tasks that are suitable for students' "zone of proximal development", take into account language accuracy and strategy effectiveness when providing feedback, and provide personalized strategy suggestions. The evaluation methods include observing the frequency of students' classroom strategy application, analyzing changes in students' oral performance, and collecting students' feedback on strategy teaching.

Researchers: In the future, we should further explore the differentiated effects of SRL strategies on different anxiety dimensions (such as cognitive anxiety and behavioral avoidance), conduct research on different student groups with high trait anxiety and low baseline level, adopt longitudinal design to track the long-term effects of the strategy, combine mixed research methods (such as case studies) to enrich the conclusions, and develop cultural adaptive SRL intervention plans that are suitable for the environment of Chinese universities. We should collaborate with teachers to verify the effectiveness of the strategy in real classrooms. The evaluation methods include comparing the effectiveness data of different group strategies, analyzing long-term tracking of anxiety and performance changes, and verifying the practicality of strategies through classroom observation and interviews.

Educational management entity (school/policy level): Schools can incorporate SRL strategies into teacher training content and equip language laboratories, recording equipment, and other resources required for oral practice; Policy makers can support the development and promotion of SRL related teaching resources, and encourage universities to carry out pilot reforms in oral teaching. The evaluation methods include checking the implementation of SRL teaching in schools, investigating the overall data on the improvement of students' oral anxiety and academic performance, and reviewing the results reports of pilot projects.

Through multi-party collaboration and normalized evaluation, the widespread application of SRL strategy in oral teaching can be promoted, effectively helping Chinese undergraduate students overcome oral anxiety barriers and enhance their English communication skills.

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Student Perceptions of Program Activities, Resources, and Processes in an Undergraduate Business English Program: A Mixed-Method Study

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Abstract

Program activities, resources, and processes play a critical role in enhancing student learning experiences, academic development, and professional readiness. Understanding students' perceptions of these components is essential for improving educational quality in Business English programs. This study examined Business English major students' perceptions of program activities, resources, and processes at Buriram Rajabhat University. A mixed-methods design was utilized, involving 162 students for the quantitative phase and eight for the qualitative phase. Data collection instruments included a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Findings indicated positive perceptions toward program activities, human resources, electronic resources, learning support resources, and processes. Areas requiring improvement were also identified, including internet connectivity, technological equipment, and physical learning spaces. Interview responses reinforced these findings and suggested enhancements such as computer upgrades, increased seating availability, and improved Wi-Fi access. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single program, a small qualitative sample, and reliance on self-reported data, which may affect generalizability. Future research should incorporate multiple institutions, broader participant groups, and triangulated or longitudinal data. Overall, the program was perceived as supportive of academic and personal growth. The results highlight the importance of continuous resource improvement and activity diversification to promote student engagement and satisfaction within language-focused academic programs.

Keywords: Business English program, student perceptions, program activities, educational resources, program processes

Introduction

The widespread dominance of English as a global language can be attributed to the convergence of historical, political, and economic factors, particularly the legacy of British colonialism and the extensive influence of American culture (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006; Kachru, 1992). English functions not only as a native language for millions but also serves as a second or foreign language for vast populations worldwide, operating as a crucial medium for international communication in business, science, technology, and diplomacy (Crystal, 2003; Phillipson, 1992). The language demonstrates remarkable adaptability, possessing an inherent capacity to absorb vocabulary and linguistic elements from diverse language systems throughout its historical development (Crystal, 2003; Kachru, 1992). English can be characterized as a dynamic and continuously evolving linguistic entity that adapts to new contexts and responds to emerging needs across various global domains (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). This global prominence has led to increased demand for specialized English instruction, particularly Business English, which equips learners with the linguistic competencies required for professional contexts in international commerce, management, and corporate communication.

Within this educational landscape, the concept of education extends beyond a simple definition, encompassing knowledge transmission, experiential understanding, learning processes, and instructional practices, ultimately representing a continuous acquisition of competencies, principles, worldviews, and behavioral patterns that enable personal growth and contribute to societal enhancement (Aman et al., 2023). Educational experiences, therefore, play an indispensable role in cultivating varied skill sets. These experiences consist of carefully planned, objective-driven endeavors that promote learning acquisition, incorporating both educator-facilitated instruction and participant-centered approaches that actively engage learners in accomplishing specific educational targets. Such experiences are instrumental in providing assessment feedback, encouraging learner drive, and developing understanding of core principles (Hattie, 2009). The effectiveness of these educational experiences depends significantly on optimal deployment of learning resources, which span instructional personnel, community participants, physical objects, visual aids, institutional facilities, and essential materials. In Business English programs specifically, the selection and implementation of appropriate activities such as case studies, presentations, role-plays, and simulations alongside adequate resources, including textbooks, digital platforms, and authentic business materials, are critical determinants of program success.

Central to understanding program effectiveness is students' perceptions, which encompass their judgments about personal competencies, particularly self-efficacy, their conviction in their capacity to oversee and direct their educational processes (Schunk, 2012). These perceptions determine learning actions, including involvement levels, aim formulation, willingness to request assistance, and capacity for self-assessment during learning activities (Schunk, 2012). Furthermore, students' perceptions of the quality, relevance, and accessibility of program activities and resources significantly influence their engagement, motivation, and ultimately, their learning outcomes (Bota & Tulbure, 2017; Xie, 2019). When students perceive activities as meaningful and resources as adequate, they demonstrate higher levels of participation and achievement (Parekh, Vankar & Kedia, 2017).

Given the escalating need for Business English competencies, designing curricula that demonstrate adaptability, practical relevance, and learner orientation has become fundamental to achieving positive outcomes for both participants and programs. Previous research has highlighted the importance of incorporating student feedback in program development (Udomsiri, 2016; Xie, 2019), demonstrating that learner-centered approaches lead to enhanced satisfaction, loyalty, and motivation. This investigation incorporates participant input into Business English curriculum construction, recognizing that integrating learner voices is indispensable for developing programs that satisfy both participant expectations and dynamic professional demands. Through this integration, instructors can optimize learning encounters, strengthen program elements and materials, and more effectively prepare participants for career demands. However, limited research has systematically examined how Business English students perceive the specific activities and resources provided within their programs, particularly in the Thai higher education context. Accordingly, this investigation endeavors to examine the perceptions of Business English major students on program activities, resources, and processes.

Literature Review

Perceptions

Perception refers to the sensory ability to receive, organize, and interpret stimuli into meaningful information (Arifin, Fuady & Kuswarno, 2017; Saifuddin, 2020). It involves processing sensory input through the five senses to construct understanding and make sense of one's environment. Feldman (1999) describes perception as a constructive mechanism through which individuals move beyond immediate stimuli to form contextual meaning. Overall, perception enables the translation of sensory experiences into cognitive interpretations that influence human thought and behavior.

Perceptions can generally be categorized as positive or negative (Shandi, 2020). Positive perceptions reflect knowledge and responses that support an object or experience, while negative perceptions represent responses that conflict with or reject it. Robbins (2002) notes that satisfaction, familiarity, and prior experience often shape positive perceptions, whereas dissatisfaction or limited exposure may lead to negative views. In developmental contexts, perception also plays a key role in children's recognition of shapes, colors, and sounds, supporting early communication and literacy skills (Jones, 2020). Collectively, perception influences behavior through individual interpretation shaped by experience and contextual understanding.

Educational Activities

Educational activities consist of structured learning tasks designed to foster student engagement, critical thinking, and deeper understanding through diverse instructional approaches. Biggs (1999) defines educational activities as pedagogical strategies that facilitate meaningful learning by aligning teaching methods with desired cognitive outcomes. Similarly, Hattie (2009) emphasizes their intentionality, noting that such activities support both teacher-directed and student-centered learning while providing opportunities for feedback, motivation, and conceptual development. Dewey's (1916) perspective further highlights the importance of experiential learning, arguing that interaction with one's environment results in authentic and transformative

educational experiences. Collectively, educational activities can be understood as organized, purposeful tasks that employ varied teaching methods to develop both cognitive and non-cognitive skills through active participation and environmental engagement.

The importance of educational activities is evident in their capacity to enhance student learning and holistic development. Interactive classroom strategies, such as group discussions and problem-solving exercises, have been shown to improve student engagement, stimulate critical thinking, and contribute to higher learning outcomes by creating dynamic and participatory learning environments (Bonwell & Eison, 2000). Beyond the classroom, extracurricular participation cultivates essential competencies including teamwork, leadership, and time management, thereby influencing both academic achievement and personal growth (Eccles & Barber, 2003). Larson (2000) further notes that involvement in such activities strengthens interpersonal relationships, enhances social skills, fosters self-confidence, and promotes personal development. Consequently, educational activities, whether curricular or extracurricular, play a central role in supporting academic success and comprehensive student development.

Educational Resources

Educational resources encompass the various human and material assets necessary for the effective administration of schools and the implementation of teaching and learning processes. According to Hattie (2009), these resources include teachers, community members, physical objects, instructional materials, school infrastructure, and essential supplies. When adequately provided and properly managed, such resources create conducive learning environments and support the attainment of educational goals. Reinforcing this view, Owoaka and Olise (2022) define resources as the organizational assets, financial, material, and human, required to ensure institutional effectiveness, noting that organizational performance is closely related to the availability and proper allocation of resources. Thus, educational resources comprise diverse components that support instruction, and their strategic management enhances efficiency while facilitating the achievement of educational objectives.

The importance of educational resources lies in their contribution to effective learning and institutional performance. Education itself cultivates critical thinking and analytical skills, enabling individuals to manage and utilize resources more efficiently (Chisholm & Brown, 2005). Moreover, Selwyn (2012) highlights the growing significance of digital technologies in education, arguing that technological resources strengthen digital competencies essential for navigating contemporary environmental and personal demands. Therefore, well-structured educational systems not only improve resource utilization but also develop learners' capacities to manage resources responsibly. Integrating technology into educational settings further supports comprehensive resource administration, equipping learners with the skills needed for success in increasingly digital and resource-conscious environments.

Business English Program, Buriram Rajabhat University

The Business English Program at Buriram Rajabhat University operates under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, which was established following the 2004 Rajabhat University statute. This reorganization created a faculty system encompassing ten academic disciplines, including Thai Language, English, Law, Public Administration, and Business English. The placement of the program within this multidisciplinary faculty supports a learning environment that integrates linguistic, cultural, and professional competencies relevant to the fields of humanities and social sciences.

Established in 1999 as a Bachelor of Arts degree under the Department of Foreign Languages, the Business English Program has undergone subsequent administrative restructuring. In 2007, it was relocated to the Department of Humanities within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, where it continues to function as a four-year undergraduate program. Throughout its development, the program has maintained a consistent focus on preparing graduates for the communication and service demands of modern business sectors.

The philosophical foundation of the program emphasizes the integration of English proficiency with practical business knowledge to meet the evolving requirements of the contemporary service industry. In this regard, the curriculum prioritizes the development of industry-relevant communication skills, professional competencies, and technological literacy. These aims are designed to support individual career growth, organizational development, and national competitiveness, while promoting lifelong learning and adaptability in rapidly changing economic contexts.

The overarching curriculum objectives are to produce graduates who can apply English effectively in business environments; demonstrate ethical behavior and professional responsibility; communicate and collaborate successfully with others; analyze and integrate English language knowledge with service industry practices in innovative ways; and manage business-related information through the effective use of information technology. Collectively, these objectives ensure that students are equipped with the linguistic, technological, and interpersonal skills essential for success in globalized business environments.

Previous Studies

Prior studies have examined educational resources, service quality, and student engagement across various learning contexts. Early research highlighted the importance of adequate physical facilities in supporting academic performance (Nwaham, 2014; Wisivatheranon, 2013). Subsequent studies emphasized the role of perceived service quality in shaping student satisfaction, loyalty, and motivation (Jinarat, 2023; Udomsiri, 2016). Parallel research explored the benefits of extracurricular participation and activity-based learning, demonstrating improvements in confidence, language ability, and practical skill development (Melviza et al., 2017; Parekh et al., 2017; Permana et al., 2020). Additional work on digital educational resources suggests that students increasingly prefer electronic and open-access materials, although challenges remain in licensing awareness and sustainable resource management (Michael & Cheryl, 2018; Zulaiha & Triana, 2023). While these studies provide valuable insights, there remains a gap in integrating culturally grounded teaching methods with resource development, particularly in specialized music and

vocal education, indicating the need for structured teaching manuals informed by learner perceptions and contextual cultural considerations.

Collectively, these previous studies reveal that student perceptions of both institutional resources and structured learning activities significantly influence satisfaction, motivation, and skill development. However, none directly examine Business English major students within the context of program-provided activities and resources, indicating a contextual gap that the present research aims to address. Therefore, the objective of this study is to study perceptions of Business English major students on the provided program activities and resources, which is both timely and justified, responding to the identified need for learner-centered evaluation in higher education program design.

Methodology

Research Design

This research employed a mixed-method design. The quantitative design was to study the perceptions of Business English major students on the provided program activities and resources. However, the qualitative design was to gain more in-depth information about the perceptions of Business English major students on program activities and resources.

Population and Samples

The population of this study consisted of 277 first- to fourth-year Business English major students enrolled in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences during the first semester of the 2025 academic year at Buriram Rajabhat University. The quantitative sample included 162 first- to fourth-year students from the same population. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table, and participants were selected through simple random sampling.

The qualitative sample comprised eight first- to fourth-year students who demonstrated varying levels of participation in program activities: those who frequently participated (more than five times) and those who participated infrequently (fewer than three times). Participants were identified through activity participation records and researcher observation, and were selected using purposive sampling.

Research Instruments

The research instruments employed in this study consisted of a self-reported questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. Part 1 gathered demographic information, including gender, group, year level, and program activities attended. Part 2 consisted of 16 statements assessing students' perceptions of the provided program activities. Part 3 focused on 26 statements related to educational resources, categorized into four dimensions: human resources (7 statements), electronic resources (9 statements), learning support resources (5 statements), and processes (5 statements). This section utilized a five-point Likert rating scale to measure levels of agreement, based on Srisa-ard (2010), as follows:

Meaning	Opinion Level
5	means
4	means
3	means
2	means
1	means
	Strongly Agree
	Agree
	Neutral
	Disagree
	Strongly Disagree

Part 4 comprised open-ended questions designed to obtain additional qualitative insights into students' perceptions of program activities and resources. The questionnaire was reviewed and approved by experts, and piloted with 30 Business English graduate students who were not part of the main sample.

The content validity of the questionnaire was established through review by three experts in the fields of English and English language teaching. The experts evaluated the relevance, clarity, and alignment of each item with the research objectives. Their feedback was used to revise and refine ambiguous or overlapping items. Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) values ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, indicating acceptable levels of content validity. A pilot test was subsequently conducted with 30 Business English graduate students who were not included in the main sample. Reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a value of 0.70, which meets the benchmark for acceptable internal consistency in educational research.

Data Collection

After the questionnaires were distributed to Business English major students, participants were requested to complete and submit them. Data were collected electronically via Google Forms at Buriram Rajabhat University during June and July 2025. The interview questions were adapted from the expert-validated questionnaire to ensure methodological soundness and reliability. The adaptation of items into open-ended formats allowed the interview protocol to align with conversational interaction, facilitating the elicitation of richer and more nuanced information while retaining the conceptual integrity of the original instrument. For the semi-structured interviews, both students who frequently participated in program activities and those who participated infrequently were interviewed to obtain diverse perspectives. Each interview was audio-recorded with participant consent to ensure accurate capture of information and to allow for subsequent review. Upon completion of the interviews, all audio recordings were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Ethical procedures were observed throughout the research process. Permission to collect data was obtained from the Business English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and they were informed that their responses would be used strictly for research purposes. No personal identifying information was collected, and respondents retained the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All data were securely stored and accessible only to the researchers, in accordance with institutional research ethics guidelines.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentage, frequency, mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (S.D.), through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to calculate and confirm the reliability of the questionnaire. Personal demographic information, such as gender, group, year level, and participation in program activities, was analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions. Interpretation of the mean scores based on the criteria for Likert scale analysis (Srisaard, 2010), presented as follows:

Scoring Level	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.40 – 4.19	Agree
2.60 – 3.39	Uncertain
1.80 – 2.59	Disagree
1.00 – 1.79	Strongly Disagree

Moreover, qualitative data concerning Business English major students' perceptions of the provided program activities and resources were collected via Messenger Call and analysed using content analysis. This analytical approach involved identifying recurring themes, categorizing participant responses, and interpreting patterns to gain deeper insights into students' experiences and perspectives.

Results

The findings concerning the perceptions of Business English major students on the provided program activities and resources are illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1
Program Activities Attended by Students

No.	Program Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Orientation of the New Students	156	96.30
2	Business English Day	105	64.80
3	Business English Camp for Careers	70	43.21
4	English for Tourism	79	48.77
5	Wai Khru Ceremony	157	96.91
6	New Year's Day	127	78.40
7	Center for Business English Excellence Activities	76	46.91
8	English Camp for Schools	101	62.35
9	The Last Orientation for Professional Experience Training	101	62.35
10	Goodbye Seniors	124	76.54
11	Welcoming Activity	1	0.62

As shown in Table 1, most students participated in ceremonial activities such as the Wai Khru Ceremony (96.91%) and Orientation of the New Students (96.30%). Moderate participation was observed in academic and skill-based activities such as English Camp for Schools and Business English Day. Conversely, participation in the Welcoming Activity was minimal (0.62%), indicating a need to investigate student engagement factors for this event.

Table 2

Frequency of Students' Participation in Program Activities

No.	Frequency of Participation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Often	127	78.40
2	Sometimes	12	7.40
3	Rarely	23	14.20
4	Never	0	0
Total		162	100.00

As shown in Table 2, the majority of students (78.40%) reported that they “often” participated in program activities, whereas 14.20% indicated that they “rarely” participated. A small proportion (7.41%) noted participation “sometimes,” and none of the respondents reported never participating in any activities. These findings suggest a generally high level of student engagement in program-organized events.

Table 3

Perceptions of Business English Major Students on the Provided Program Activities (N = 162)

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
1	Students choose to participate in activities that offer rewards, compensation, or volunteer hours.	3.88	1.19	Agree
2	Participating in activities helps students develop teamwork skills, make more friends, and build positive relationships.	4.54	0.73	Strongly agree
3	Participating in activities develops self-discipline.	4.46	0.78	Strongly agree
4	Participating in activities promotes harmony within the group.	4.53	0.70	Strongly agree
5	Participating in activities develops leadership skills and confidence.	4.38	0.80	Strongly agree
6	Participating in activities promotes achievement and self-development.	4.49	0.75	Strongly agree
7	Participating in activities helps broaden students' perspectives.	4.56	0.67	Strongly agree

Table 3 (Continued)

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
8	Participating in activities allows students to take roles, represent others, and engage in planning.	4.40	0.77	Strongly agree
9	Participating in activities increases the chances of future employment.	4.20	0.94	Strongly agree
10	Public relations and promotion of activities are not widespread.	3.04	1.33	Neutral
11	Activities are useless.	2.29	1.51	Disagree
12	Participating in activities is difficult, exhausting, and complicated.	2.77	1.32	Neutral
13	Participating in activities requires a lot of money.	3.23	1.14	Neutral
14	Participating in activities negatively affects learning.	2.55	1.31	Disagree
15	The activities are not interesting and boring.	2.59	1.35	Disagree
16	Participating in activities wastes time for reading and resting.	2.62	1.38	Neutral
Total		3.66	1.04	Agree

As shown in Table 3, the overall level of students' perceptions toward the provided program activities was at the "agree" level ($\bar{X} = 3.66$, S.D. = 1.04). Considering each item, the highest-rated statement was "Participating in activities helps broaden individuals' perspectives" ($\bar{X} = 4.56$, S.D. = 0.67), followed by "Participating in activities helps students develop teamwork skills, make more friends, and build positive relationships" ($\bar{X} = 4.54$, S.D. = 0.73) and "Participating in activities promotes harmony within the group" ($\bar{X} = 4.53$, S.D. = 0.70), respectively. Conversely, the lowest-rated perception was "Activities are useless" ($\bar{X} = 2.29$, S.D. = 1.51).

Table 4

Perceptions of Business English Major Students on the Provided Program in Human Resources (N = 162)

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
1	The number of teachers is adequate for teaching.	4.41	0.72	Strongly agree
2	The teachers are knowledgeable and professional.	4.62	0.62	Strongly agree
3	The teachers efficiently address students' questions and concerns.	4.57	0.61	Strongly agree
4	The teachers provide clear and helpful guidance.	4.58	0.63	Strongly agree

Table 4 (Continued)

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
5	The number of officers in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is adequate.	4.33	0.77	Strongly agree
6	The officers provide polite and friendly service.	4.37	0.69	Strongly agree
7	The officers are attentive, enthusiastic, and willing to assist.	4.37	0.72	Strongly agree
Total		4.46	0.68	Strongly agree

As shown in Table 4, the overall level of students' perceptions toward human resources in the program was at the "strongly agree" level ($\bar{X} = 4.46$, S.D. = 0.68). Considering each item, the highest mean score was observed for "The teachers are knowledgeable and professional" ($\bar{X} = 4.62$, S.D. = 0.62), followed by "The teachers provide clear and helpful guidance" ($\bar{X} = 4.58$, S.D. = 0.63) and "The teachers efficiently address students' questions and concerns" ($\bar{X} = 4.57$, S.D. = 0.61), respectively. The lowest mean score, though still rated at a strongly agreeable level, was "The number of officers in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is adequate" ($\bar{X} = 4.33$, S.D. = 0.77).

Table 5

Perceptions of Business English Major Students on the Provided Program in Electronic Resources (N = 162)

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
1	Computers are adequately provided	4.06	0.86	Agree
2	Projectors are adequately provided.	4.14	0.85	Agree
3	Speakers are adequately provided.	4.00	0.89	Agree
4	Microphones are adequately provided.	4.12	0.82	Agree
5	Internet access is sufficient.	3.68	4.24	Agree
6	Cameras are adequately provided.	3.91	0.96	Agree
7	Photocopiers are adequately provided.	3.72	1.01	Agree
8	The Business English Program regularly maintains and repairs equipment.	3.96	0.91	Agree
9	The Business English Program continuously purchases new equipment.	3.98	0.85	Agree
Total		3.95	1.27	Agree

As shown in Table 5, the overall perception of electronic resources provided by the Business English Program was at the "agree" level ($\bar{X} = 3.95$, S.D. = 1.27). Among the items, projectors ($\bar{X} = 4.14$, S.D. = 0.85) and microphones ($\bar{X} = 4.12$, S.D. = 0.82) received the highest mean scores, indicating that students are particularly satisfied with the provision of these equipment types. Conversely, Internet access, while still rated positively ($\bar{X} = 3.68$, S.D. = 4.24), exhibited the greatest standard deviation, suggesting inconsistent quality or accessibility across different learning contexts.

Photocopiers ($\bar{X} = 3.72$, S.D. = 1.01) and cameras ($\bar{X} = 3.91$, S.D. = 0.96) also received comparatively lower, but still agreeable, ratings.

Table 6

Perceptions of Business English Major Students on the Provided Program in Learning Support Resources (N = 162)

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
1	Tables and chairs are adequate and supportive for learning.	4.21	0.83	Strongly agree
2	Whiteboards are adequate and supportive for instructional purposes.	4.25	0.80	Strongly agree
3	Textbooks used in the program support effective learning.	4.31	0.71	Strongly agree
4	The library or Center for Business English Excellence (CBEE) provides sufficient learning support.	4.55	0.64	Strongly agree
5	Meeting rooms are sufficient and accessible for learning activities.	4.37	0.71	Strongly agree
Total		4.34	0.74	Strongly agree

As shown in Table 6, the overall perception of learning support resources was at the “strongly agree” level ($\bar{X} = 4.34$, S.D. = 0.74), indicating that students are highly satisfied with the facilities provided by the program. The highest mean score was observed for the library or Center for Business English Excellence (CBEE) ($\bar{X} = 4.55$, S.D. = 0.64), suggesting that this resource is particularly valuable for supporting academic activities. Meeting rooms ($\bar{X} = 4.37$, S.D. = 0.71) and textbooks ($\bar{X} = 4.31$, S.D. = 0.71) also received strong positive responses. Although tables/chairs ($\bar{X} = 4.21$, S.D. = 0.83) and whiteboards ($\bar{X} = 4.25$, S.D. = 0.80) were rated slightly lower, they still achieved “strongly agree,” reflecting consistent satisfaction across all learning support resources.

Table 7

Perceptions of Business English Major Students on the Provided Program in Processes (N = 162)

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Means
1	Admission processes are clear and effective.	4.25	0.77	Strongly agree
2	Academic services are efficient and supportive.	4.25	0.76	Strongly agree
3	Co-curricular activities are well-organized and beneficial.	4.39	0.71	Strongly agree

Table 7 (Continued)

No.	Statements	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
4	Advising and counselling services are helpful and accessible.	4.69	1.05	Strongly agree
5	Professional preparation processes are effective.	4.38	0.66	Strongly agree
	Total	4.39	0.79	Strongly agree

As shown in Table 7, the overall level of students' perceptions toward program processes was at the "strongly agree" level ($\bar{X} = 4.39$, S.D. = 0.79). The highest mean score was recorded for "Advising and counselling services are helpful and accessible" ($\bar{X} = 4.69$, S.D. = 1.05), demonstrating strong appreciation for academic guidance. Co-curricular activities ($\bar{X} = 4.39$, S.D. = 0.71) and professional preparation processes ($\bar{X} = 4.38$, S.D. = 0.66) were also highly rated. Admission processes and academic services received slightly lower, but still strongly positive ($\bar{X} = 4.25$, S.D. = 0.77).

As for the semi-structured interviews, five guiding questions provided deeper insight into students' perceptions of program activities and resources. Regarding the first question on whether students enjoyed attending activities, several participants expressed positive perceptions, noting that such activities helped build knowledge, provide new experiences, and strengthen interpersonal relationships. Students 2 and 6 emphasized that the activities offered opportunities to meet new people and engage in diverse events, including cultural exchanges, which promoted unity, teamwork, time management, and personal growth. Conversely, a small number of students indicated less interest in participating due to personal preferences. For example, Student 1 reported discomfort with crowded environments, while Student 4 preferred spending time alone rather than engaging in group activities.

In terms of participation frequency and preferred activity types, five students (Students 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8) reported taking part only sometimes or infrequently. Student 1 engaged in activities mainly to meet new people, and Student 5 noted participation in English Camp but expressed limited enjoyment. Meanwhile, Student 7 participated in freshman orientation, and Student 8 rarely attended activities overall. In contrast, three students (Students 3, 4, and 6) indicated more frequent participation whenever opportunities were available, with Student 3 stating that they joined almost every activity. Collectively, the most preferred activities identified were Business English Day, Orientation for New Students, English Camp for Schools, English Camp for Careers, and New Year's Day events.

Findings related to the quality of resources provided by the Business English Program were generally positive. Students 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 highlighted that facilities such as computers, air conditioning, books, and comfortable spaces supported their academic learning and daily practices. However, a minority of students (Students 5 and 8) expressed that although resources were acceptable, certain technological components required further improvement.

Moreover, when asked about problems encountered in using program resources, the majority of participants (Students 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) identified issues related to limited physical space, unstable internet connectivity, and occasional technical malfunctions involving computers and printers. Several offered recommendations to mitigate these challenges. In contrast, Student 1 reported no difficulties in accessing or using available resources.

Regarding suggestions for increasing or decreasing certain activities, resources, or processes, most students perceived the current offerings as satisfactory but recommended specific enhancements. These included adding more English comic books and leisure reading materials (Student 1), increasing seating during lunch breaks (Student 3), providing additional printers (Student 4), upgrading computer systems (Student 5), organizing more team-building events such as Sports Day (Student 6), and improving Wi-Fi quality (Student 8). Nevertheless, two students expressed satisfaction with the current situation and did not suggest any changes.

It can be concluded that the qualitative findings support the quantitative results indicating generally positive student perceptions of program activities and resources. Students affirmed that participation fosters teamwork, personal development, and social engagement, aligning with high mean scores found in the survey data. Additionally, recurring suggestions regarding technological improvements and resource adequacy correspond with areas in the quantitative results that received relatively lower, but still positive, scores. Together, both data sets suggest strong satisfaction overall, with targeted areas for enhancement.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Business English major students generally held positive perceptions toward the program's activities, resources, and supporting processes. Quantitative results showed high levels of agreement regarding the benefits of program activities, particularly in the areas of teamwork, personal development, leadership skills, and perspective broadening. These findings align with Udomsiri (2016), who found that positive service quality perceptions enhance student satisfaction, motivation, and engagement. Similarly, Bota and Tulbure (2017) concluded that well-structured school activities contribute to improved attitudes and strengthened interpersonal relationships, reinforcing the notion that extracurricular engagement promotes holistic student development.

The results also revealed high satisfaction with human resources, particularly the professionalism, helpfulness, and responsiveness of the teaching staff and faculty officers. This finding supports the work of Nwaham (2014), who emphasized that the adequacy and quality of instructional staff directly enhance learning experiences and educational outcomes. Additionally, the strong positive perceptions of academic guidance and counseling processes corroborate Jinarat (2023), who reported that assurance, empathy, and reliability significantly influence student satisfaction in higher education contexts. These elements appear to be well implemented within the Business English program under investigation.

Conversely, while electronic resources were generally rated favorably, both quantitative and qualitative results suggest areas for improvement, particularly regarding internet connectivity and technological reliability. Similar concerns were reported by Michael and Cheryl (2018), who highlighted challenges related to the

sustainability and accessibility of digital educational resources. Students' recommendations to upgrade computer systems and improve Wi-Fi access further suggest that digital infrastructure requires ongoing attention as learning environments become increasingly technology dependent. This aligns with Xie (2019), who found that contemporary learners prefer electronic and communicative learning approaches over traditional materials.

The positive perceptions of learning support resources, such as textbooks, meeting rooms, and the Center for Business English Excellence (CBEE), indicate that the program provides an adequate environment to support academic activities. This finding resonates with Wisivatheranon (2013), who noted that sufficient physical resources contribute to student satisfaction and academic performance. Moreover, the emphasis on extracurricular and co-curricular participation echoes conclusions by Parekh et al. (2017) and Permana et al. (2020), who found that activity-based learning and fieldwork experiences enhance practical skills, motivation, and learning outcomes. Qualitative interview findings also revealed variation in participation patterns. While some students actively engaged in most activities, others participated less frequently due to personal preferences or perceived lack of relevance. This aligns with Changto (2021), who identified demographic and motivational factors influencing extracurricular involvement. Students' suggestions, such as increasing leisure reading options, improving equipment availability, and organizing team-building events, indicate a demand for greater diversity and accessibility in program offerings.

Overall, the convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings reinforces the conclusion that the Business English program effectively supports student development through a combination of curriculum activities, adequate facilities, and supportive human resources. However, identified limitations relating to technological infrastructure and physical space reflect persistent issues reported in prior studies and highlight areas requiring institutional investment. Addressing these concerns may lead to improved student satisfaction, increased participation, and enhanced learning opportunities. Thus, these findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of comprehensive resource management, activity-based learning, and student-centered services in higher education. Continued improvement in these areas may further strengthen program outcomes and promote student success within the increasingly competitive academic landscape.

Recommendations

Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study offer several implications for higher education policy, instructional practice, and curriculum development within the Business English program. First, the consistently high perceptions of faculty knowledge, professionalism, and responsiveness suggest that continued investment in teacher development and academic advising will further strengthen student satisfaction and learning outcomes. This aligns with principles of student-centered education, emphasizing guidance, mentorship, and interpersonal support. Beyond the Business English context, these results highlight that ELT practitioners in general can benefit from adopting similar supportive instructional roles, as effective advising and responsive teaching contribute significantly to learner engagement across diverse ELT settings.

Second, the moderate concerns regarding electronic infrastructure, particularly internet connectivity and technological reliability, indicate a need for institutional policy enhancements related to digital resource management. Upgrading computer systems, expanding access to printers, and improving Wi-Fi quality would support both academic coursework and extracurricular engagement while reducing learning disruptions. This implication extends to ELT programs broadly, as technology-enhanced language learning relies heavily on stable digital tools and accessible electronic resources.

Third, students' strong engagement in co-curricular activities underscores the value of integrating experiential learning opportunities into the curriculum. Expanding activity types, such as team-building events, career-focused workshops, and English-language immersion experiences, may enhance motivation, confidence, and professional preparedness. For ELT practitioners more widely, these findings reaffirm the importance of incorporating project-based tasks, cultural exchanges, and interactive activities that foster communication, teamwork, and affective engagement. Libraries and learning centers, including the Center for Business English Excellence, should continue to promote leisure reading materials (e.g., comic books) to increase informal language exposure and reading fluency.

Finally, the findings suggest that systematic evaluation of physical learning spaces, particularly seating availability during peak hours, can contribute to a more supportive academic environment. Such environmental considerations are essential not only for Business English students but also for ELT learners in general, as comfortable and well-organized learning spaces help promote concentration, well-being, and overall language learning productivity.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

This study is subject to several limitations. First, data were collected from a single academic program at one university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other disciplines or institutions. Future studies should expand the sample to include multiple programs or universities to capture broader learning environments.

Second, participation in the qualitative phase was limited to eight students. Although content saturation was achieved, including a wider variety of perspectives, such as alumni or instructors, may yield richer insights into program effectiveness.

Third, perceptions of resource quality and activity usefulness were self-reported, potentially introducing response bias. Future research could triangulate data using classroom observations, utilization records, or performance indicators to validate findings.

Additionally, rapid technological changes may influence how students perceive electronic resources over time. Longitudinal studies could examine how improvements in digital infrastructure impact academic behaviors and satisfaction across academic years.

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Teachers' Perceptions of Gamification in Online Basic Chinese Courses for Primary School Students: Use and Challenges

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Abstract

With the rapid expansion of digital technology and the growing prevalence of online education, gamification- the integration of game-based elements into instructional design-has become an increasingly prominent approach in online language learning. Existing research has largely focused on university-level learners, app-based language platforms, or general gamification design principles, with limited attention to how teachers of Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) apply gamification in online basic Chinese courses for young beginners. Moreover, few studies have examined teachers' perceptions, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they employ in real instructional settings. To address this gap, this study investigated how 139 TCFL teachers perceived and used gamification in online Chinese courses for primary school students and explored the instructional challenges they faced as well as the solutions they adopted. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, with quantitative and qualitative data analyzed using SPSS 27 and content analysis, respectively. The questionnaire data showed that TCFL teachers reported a high level of gamification use in online Chinese instruction ($\bar{x} = 3.782$, $SD = 1.300$). While they expressed positive attitudes toward gamification ($\bar{x} = 3.649$, $SD = 1.364$), they also identified significant challenges ($\bar{x} = 3.944$, $SD = 1.234$). Interview data further revealed that common gamification types primarily supported learning motivation, cultural knowledge expansion, and language skills practice. The relevance of tools such as Pinyin Cannon and Chinese Character Puzzles to Chinese language learning was particularly emphasized. Although gamification was found to improve student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes, TCFL teachers still faced multiple challenges, including: 1) balancing games with teaching objectives; 2) resource limitations; 3) technical barriers; 4) insufficient accommodation of diverse learning styles; and 5) limited parental awareness. To address these challenges, teachers employed creative strategies such as designing customized games and preparing backup lesson plans. By highlighting teachers' firsthand experiences and practical pedagogical responses, this study contributes to the literature by offering an empirically grounded understanding of how gamification functions in online TCFL contexts for young learners. The findings provide actionable implications for educators, program designers, and policymakers aiming to enhance the quality and effectiveness of online Chinese language instruction through gamification.

Keywords: teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL),
online basic Chinese courses, gamification teaching method,
primary school students, teacher perceptions

Introduction

In recent years, digital transformation has redefined the educational landscape, bringing with it new methodologies and challenges. One such approach is gamification, which incorporates game-based elements, such as points, rewards, storylines, and competitive tasks, into non-game educational settings (Deterding et al., 2011). In the domain of second language acquisition (SLA), particularly Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL), gamification is increasingly gaining attention as a method to boost learner engagement and performance (Xu, 2011). This trend is particularly significant in online teaching contexts, which have surged in popularity due to global demand and pandemic-related constraints (Wang, 2021).

Primary school students present a unique demographic: they are often digital natives yet require developmentally appropriate and interactive content (Hu, 2018). The tonal and logographic nature of the Chinese language, while rich in culture and history, presents unique challenges for young learners (Everson & Shen, 2010). Teachers must balance the complexity of the language with the need to maintain student motivation and attention spans. Gamification, when implemented effectively, can provide a solution to this pedagogical dilemma (Su & Cheng, 2015).

However, despite the increasing popularity of gamification teaching, few empirical studies have explored the specific experiences and perspectives of TCFL teachers using gamification in online basic Chinese courses for primary school students (Zhang & Kim, 2021). Addressing this gap is important not only for Chinese language education, but also for broader language teaching contexts. Insights from TCFL teachers' experiences can inform pedagogical strategies for other foreign languages, including English, particularly in online or digitally enhanced learning environments. The study explored TCFL teachers' definitions and attitudes toward gamification, common teaching methods, perceived benefits, challenges, and practical strategies for overcoming obstacles, offering guidance for educators across different language classrooms.

Literature Review

Different Perceptions on the Definitions of the Gamification Teaching Method

The Gamification Teaching Method has been defined and interpreted from multiple perspectives within educational research and practice. At its core, gamification refers to the integration of game elements, such as points, badges, leaderboards, levels, and rewards, into non-game contexts to enhance engagement and motivation (Deterding et al., 2011; Werbach & Hunter, 2012). In teaching, especially within language education, gamification is not merely about playing games but about applying game design principles to create immersive, goal-driven learning environments. Researchers emphasize its alignment with contextualized learning, where storytelling, challenge, and feedback are used to stimulate curiosity and foster deep learning (Zichermann & Cunningham, 2011; Kapp, 2012).

In the context of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL), definitions of gamification are shaped by both educational goals and classroom realities. Many TCFL teachers view gamification as a way to enhance student motivation and interaction by making lessons more dynamic and enjoyable. For instance, Reinders and Wattana (2015) highlight its ability to create a sense of progress and achievement through visual and interactive elements, while Chen and Tsai (2020) point to its role in facilitating vocabulary retention and grammar acquisition through repetition and play. Some TCFL teachers define gamification as a behavioral management strategy that fosters collaboration, competition, and peer engagement (Li, 2022). By leveraging leaderboards and group challenges, teachers can create a supportive and motivating classroom atmosphere. Others stress its personalization potential-gamified tools allow students to progress at their own pace, adapt to varying ability levels and experience a sense of control over their learning journey (Godwin-Jones, 2014). Furthermore, gamification is perceived by some TCFL educators as a tool for promoting social interaction. Team-based activities and peer challenges help develop real-life communication skills and cultural understanding (Hamari et al., 2014). For younger learners especially, gamification aligns with cognitive development needs by providing frequent repetition in a playful format (Zhao, 2021).

In summary, the perceptions of gamification in TCFL range from enhancing motivation and engagement to improving classroom dynamics and language acquisition. Despite differences in emphasis, ranging from psychological, pedagogical, to social benefits, there is consensus that well-designed gamification enriches the language learning experience and contributes to better outcomes when applied thoughtfully.

The Use of the Gamification Teaching Method

The application of gamification in teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) has revealed both patterns and divergences, particularly between novice and experienced educators. Existing literature shows that less experienced TCFL teachers are generally more likely to adopt gamification techniques in online basic Chinese courses. Several factors contribute to this trend. First, younger or less experienced teachers are often more receptive to modern, student-centered teaching methods (Li, 2022). Second, novice teachers are more comfortable using digital tools and gamification platforms (Chen & He, 2019). Third, gamification helps compensate for less experienced teachers' limited teaching resources (Zhao, 2021). Fourth, veteran teachers prefer traditional methods and may lack training in gamification, leading to reluctance in adopting it (Wang, 2020). Furthermore, professional development of gamification is more common in newer teacher training programs (Li, 2022).

Regarding implementation, TCFL teachers employ various types of games to enhance learning. These include vocabulary matching games (Chen & Tsai, 2020), quiz-based activities (Reinders & Wattana, 2015), flashcard games (Li, 2022), role-playing and interactive storytelling (Jenkins, 2018), puzzles like crosswords and jigsaws (Wang, 2020), memory games (Godwin-Jones, 2014) and interactive quests (Hamari et al., 2014). Many programs incorporate badges and reward systems (Sailer et al., 2017), helping to track progress and foster student motivation. Recent scholarship further highlights the value of gamified quiz platforms in language learning. For example, Dayag (2025) demonstrates how Quizizz, when incorporated into learner-

centered frameworks, can enhance intrinsic motivation, reduce affective barriers, and deepen vocabulary acquisition, offering insights applicable across online language learning contexts.

Perceptions of gamification's effectiveness also vary. Some TCFL teachers highlight benefits such as improved motivation, enhanced learning outcomes, and cultural integration (Li, 2022). Others point to barriers like the time and effort required for design, as well as technical challenges (Wang, 2020). Ultimately, the use of gamification is shaped by a combination of personal experience, technological readiness, and pedagogical context. Well-supported and thoughtfully implemented, gamification can be a powerful tool to engage young learners in online Chinese language education.

The Benefits of the Gamification Teaching Method

Gamification transforms traditional education into an interactive and dynamic learning experience, bringing many benefits to language teaching, especially in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL). Existing literature emphasizes that gamification improves students' learning motivation, participation, and engagement through game elements such as points, badges, and levels (Deterding et al., 2011; Papastergiou, 2009). It encourages students to learn autonomously and personalized, allowing students to progress at their own pace (Huang & Soman, 2013; Werbach & Hunter, 2012). When students experience autonomy, competence, and a sense of achievement, intrinsic motivation is also enhanced (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Hanus & Fox, 2015). In addition, gamification promotes collaboration through multiplayer challenges and social interactions (Sailer et al., 2017) and improves creativity (Eow & Baki, 2010) and problem-solving skills (Vandenberg et al., 2023). It can also reduce students' anxiety by making learning fun and reducing fear of failure (Papastergiou, 2009; Ke, 2009). Gamified teaching provides immediate feedback, which improves students' retention and thus learning outcomes (Gee, 2007; Domínguez et al., 2013; Kapp, 2012).

Chinese teachers for foreigners also have different perceptions on the effectiveness of gamification. While some teachers point out challenges in terms of time, design, and technology (Wang, 2020), many teachers believe that gamification significantly increases learner engagement and supports cultural integration in Chinese education (Li, 2022).

The Challenges of the Gamification Teaching Method

Although existing research has identified numerous challenges associated with gamification in language education, many studies treat these issues in isolation, leaving limited understanding of how they interact within real-world online TCFL contexts. A recurring concern is the over-reliance on extrinsic rewards, which may undermine intrinsic motivation when students prioritize points or badges over meaningful learning (Hanus & Fox, 2015). Yet these studies often overlook the contextual factors, such as task design or teacher mediation, that could mitigate this risk. Similarly, scholars note the difficulty of balancing entertainment with instructional rigor (Bado & Franklin, 2014) but few address how teachers can calibrate this balance differently across student proficiency levels or lesson goals. Research also highlights the challenge of designing gamified activities that accommodate diverse learning styles (Dicheva et al., 2015). However, such discussions remain largely theoretical, offering

limited guidance on how teachers in online environments can diagnose and respond to learners' differences. A related issue is the decline in engagement once novelty fades (Seaborn & Fels, 2015), yet studies rarely examine strategies for sustaining long-term participation in young beginner-level Chinese classes, where attention spans are especially variable. Several studies emphasize the potential for gamification to disrupt structured instruction if not integrated carefully, particularly for complex skills such as character writing or grammar instruction (Li, 2022b). However, these critiques tend to generalize across languages without considering the unique demands of TCFL, such as the orthographic and tonal features of Mandarin. Likewise, research on implementation challenges frequently highlights the heavy preparation load, technological limitations, and inequalities between digitally skilled and less skilled learners (Caponetto et al., 2014; Domínguez et al., 2013; Wang, 2021) but little is known about how these challenges differ between novice and experienced TCFL teachers or between synchronous and asynchronous online settings. Another unresolved issue concerns the measurement of learning outcomes. While scholars argue that traditional assessment tools fail to capture the depth of gamified learning (Hamari et al., 2014), empirical studies rarely propose alternative assessment models suited for online TCFL. Moreover, specific skill areas, such as pronunciation and long-term vocabulary retention, show mixed results (Lyster & Saito, 2010; Luo, 2023), yet prior research seldom explores the mechanisms behind these inconsistencies or how game design features (e.g., feedback type, pacing, scaffolding) contribute to them.

Despite advances in understanding gamification's potential and limitations, several gaps remain. First, existing studies tend to examine challenges generically rather than within the specific context of online TCFL for young learners, where cognitive, linguistic, and technological demands differ significantly from other learning settings. Second, teachers' perspectives—particularly the contrast between novice and experienced educators—are underexplored, even though teachers determine how gamification is implemented and sustained. Third, the strategies teachers use to navigate or overcome challenges are insufficiently documented, leaving a gap between theoretical limitations and practical solutions. Finally, little research synthesizes how multiple challenges co-occur in actual online classrooms, limiting the field's ability to develop comprehensive, context-sensitive recommendations.

By addressing these gaps, the present study aims to offer an empirically grounded examination of TCFL teachers' perceptions, uses, challenges, and strategies related to gamification in online basic Chinese courses for primary school students. This analysis provides insights that can refine existing theories of gamification and inform more effective pedagogical practice.

Research Objectives

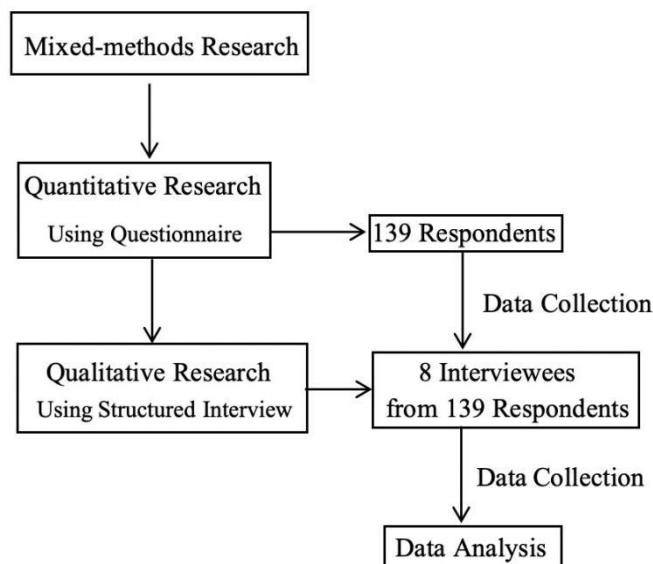
1. To investigate teachers' perceptions of the use of the gamification teaching method in online basic Chinese courses for primary school students
2. To identify the challenges faced by teachers of Chinese as a foreign language in using the gamification teaching method in online basic Chinese courses for primary school students

Research Methodology

Research Design

In view of the research objectives, this study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Figure 1). In this design, quantitative data are collected first to provide an initial understanding of the research problem, followed by qualitative data to explain, refine, or deepen the quantitative findings. Accordingly, two instruments were used: a questionnaire and structured interviews. The questionnaire was administered first to identify TCFL teachers' perceptions of the use and challenges of the gamification teaching method. The subsequent qualitative interviews were then conducted to further interpret and elaborate on the survey results, allowing the researcher to explore underlying reasons, contextual factors, and nuanced teacher experiences. This sequence strengthened the methodological rigor of the study by enabling the qualitative data to validate, clarify, and expand on the quantitative patterns.

Figure 1
The Research Process



Population and Sample

The research location was the online "Chinese Basic Course Teacher Group" organized by the LA online education platform. The research population was 213 TCFL teachers in the online "Chinese Basic Course Teacher Group." The researcher obtained the platform's consent to distribute questionnaires in the group and conduct online structured interviews with teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey. The teachers participating in the study all met the following five criteria: 1. Bachelor's degree or above, 2. Mandarin level II or above, 3. Teacher qualification certificate, 4. Participated in gamification teaching training, 5. Have more than 1 year of online basic Chinese teaching experience.

According to the Taro Yamane formula $n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2} = \frac{213}{1 + 213 \times 0.05^2} \approx 139$, where "n" represents the sample size, "N" represents the population (213), and "e" represents the margin of error (0.05), the sample size was calculated to be 139 people to ensure the representativeness and reliability of the sample (Creswell, 2013). Based on this calculation, random sampling was used to select 139 participants from the total population (213), ensuring that each teacher had an equal chance of being included in the quantitative phase. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires. Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were female teachers (70.50%), while male teachers accounted for 29.50%. In terms of age, most participants were in the 30-50 age group (69.79%), followed by those 30 years or younger (22.30%), with only a small proportion over 50 years old (7.91%). Regarding teaching experience in onsite Chinese courses, the distribution was relatively balanced: 38.13% had 1-5 years of experience, 35.97% had 5-10 years, and 25.90% had more than 10 years. As for teaching online basic Chinese courses on the LA platform, most teachers had relatively shorter experience: 72.66% reported 1-4 years, while only 27.34% had 4-7 years of online teaching experience.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Basic Information

Basic Demographic Information		N	Percent
1. Gender	Male	41	29.50%
	Female	98	70.50%
2. Age Range	$x \leq 30$ years old	31	22.30%
	$30 < x \leq 50$ years old	97	69.79%
	$x > 50$ years old	11	7.91%
3. Years of Teaching Chinese Onsite Courses	$1 < x \leq 5$ years	53	38.13%
	$5 < x \leq 10$ years	50	35.97%
	$x > 10$ years	36	25.90%
4. Years of Teaching Basic Chinese Online Courses on LA Platform	$1 < x \leq 4$ years	101	72.66%
	$4 < x \leq 7$ years	38	27.34%

Qualitative data came from structured interviews with 8 volunteers, selected through voluntary sampling. This aligns with Creswell's view that the qualitative component of a mixed-methods design typically involves a smaller sample (e.g., 8-12 participants) to allow for deeper understanding and the acquisition of high-quality data. Therefore, the researcher selected 8 volunteers from the 139 teachers who participated in the questionnaire survey to participate in the structured interviews. The selection criteria for these 8 volunteers were determined by the first item of the questionnaire, "Gender," and the fourth item, "Years of Teaching Basic Chinese Online Courses on This Platform." After collecting 139 questionnaires, two male teachers and two female teachers were purposively selected from the first option of the fourth item (i.e., " $1 < x$

≤ 4 years"), and two male teachers and two female teachers were purposively selected from the second option (i.e., " $4 < x \leq 7$ years"). In this way, 8 teacher volunteers were ultimately obtained through voluntary sampling to participate in the structured interviews (as shown in Table 2), ensuring that more comprehensive and in-depth data were collected.

Table 2
The Composition of the Eight Interviewees

Teacher	Gender	Years of Teaching Basic Chinese Online Courses on This Platform	Five Criteria
T1	Male	$1 < x \leq 4$	1. Bachelor Degree or Above
T2	Male	$1 < x \leq 4$	2. Mandarin Level II or Above
T3	Female	$1 < x \leq 4$	3. Teacher Qualification Certificate
T4	Female	$1 < x \leq 4$	4. Participated in Gamification Teaching Training
T5	Male	$4 < x \leq 7$	5. Have More Than One Year of Online Basic Chinese Teaching Experience
T6	Male	$4 < x \leq 7$	
T7	Female	$4 < x \leq 7$	
T8	Female	$4 < x \leq 7$	

Research Instruments

This study employed two research instruments: a questionnaire and a structured interview. This questionnaire was based on the one designed by Sykes and Reinhardt (2012). The questionnaire consisted of three parts, the composition of which is shown in Table 3. The first part, "Personal Information," collected information on the gender, age, and teaching experience of the 139 participants. The second and third parts used a 5-point scale (Likert, 1932) to allow participants to indicate their level of agreement with the questionnaire's contents. Items 5 through 55 were scored on a 5-point scale, with "1" representing "totally disagree," "2" representing "disagree," "3" representing "moderately agree," "4" representing "agree," and "5" representing "totally agree." To further understand TCFL teachers' perspectives on the use of gamified teaching methods in online elementary Chinese courses and the challenges they faced, the researchers asked five interview questions, the distribution of which is shown in the Table 4.

Table 3*The Composition of the Questionnaire*

	Parts	Location
Part 1	Personal Information	Items 1-4
Part 2	A. The Use of the Gamification Teaching Method B. The Perceptions on Using the Gamification Teaching Method	Items 5-24 Items 25-39
Part 3	The Challenges of Using the Gamification Teaching Method	Items 40-55

Table 4*The Composition of the Structured Interview Questions*

	Parts	Location
Part 1	The Use of the Gamification Teaching Method	Questions 1-2
Part 2	The Challenges of Using the Gamification Teaching Method	Question 3
Part 3	The Perceptions on Using the Gamification Teaching Method	Questions 4-5

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

This study employed content validity (Lawshe, 1975) to assess the research instruments (questionnaires and structured interviews). Three experts evaluated the questionnaire items and structured interview questions. The three experts ensured the validity of the research instruments through detailed review of content coverage, relevance, linguistic accuracy, applicability, feedback and suggestions. Using the Item Object Congruence (IOC) index, any item scoring below 0.67 was deleted or reformulated based on the experts' suggestions. The original questionnaire contained 67 items. After calculating the IOC scores of the three experts, the researcher deleted 12 items scoring below 0.67 and revised the remaining 55 items based on the experts' suggestions. The original structured interview questions consisted of five, each with an average IOC score of 1. Based on the experts' suggestions, the researchers divided the five interview questions into three parts.

To ensure the reliability of this study, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 30 teachers of Chinese as a foreign language. These 30 teachers were not participants in this study but they had similar characteristics. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient reached 0.92, indicating excellent internal consistency; no further items needed to be eliminated.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires. Qualitative data were collected using structured interviews. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected sequentially. The researcher distributed the questionnaire online through the "so-jump" app on December 18, 2024. During the data collection process, the questionnaire included a one-minute prompt reading to ensure the accuracy of the answers and emphasize authenticity. After the questionnaires were collected, the researcher conducted structured interviews of approximately 30 minutes each with 8 teachers through "VOOV Conference" from December 28 to 30, 2024. The interviews were conducted in Chinese, and after obtaining the consent of the 8 interviewees, the researcher recorded the entire interview process. To ensure research ethics, The researcher submitted the research proposal, research instruments, personal resume, advisor's resume and informed consent form of the interviewees to the Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University for approval, modified them as required and finally obtained Certificate of Approval No.RSUERB 2024-220.

Data Analysis

According to the research plan, the researcher sorted and classified the collected questionnaires. The researcher conducted a statistical analysis on items 1-4 and used SPSS 27.0 to calculate the mean and standard deviation (S.D) of the data of items 5-55. In order to quantify the perceptions of TCFL teachers on the use of gamification teaching methods in primary school students' basic Chinese online courses, as well as the challenges they faced in the process of using gamification teaching methods, the researcher set criteria based on Creswell (2013). Table 5 is to interpret the mean scores of TCFL Teachers' Perceptions towards the Use and Challenges of the Gamification Teaching Method.

Table 5

Interpretation of the Mean

Range of the Mean	Interpretation
1.00 - 1.49	lowest level of agreement
1.50 - 2.49	low level of agreement
2.50 - 3.49	moderate level of agreement
3.50 - 4.49	high level of agreement
4.50 - 5.00	highest level of agreement

The score of each item indicates the teachers' perceptions on the use and challenges of gamification teaching. The higher the score, the higher the level, indicating that more teachers agree with the description in the item. The lower the score, the lower the level, indicating that fewer teachers agree with the description in the item.

Regarding the analysis of the structured interview data, the researcher first transcribed the interview recordings, translated them into English, and then systematically analyzed all text data using content analysis. An initial open-coding process was conducted in which the researcher read through the transcripts multiple times to identify meaningful units related to teachers' perceptions, use of gamification,

and challenges encountered. These preliminary codes were then organized through axial coding to cluster similar ideas and develop broader categories. Finally, selective coding was applied to refine and integrate these categories into coherent themes that aligned with the research questions. Throughout this iterative process, constant comparison was used to ensure consistency across transcripts and to revise earlier codes when necessary, following Creswell's (2013) recommended procedures for rigorous qualitative data analysis.

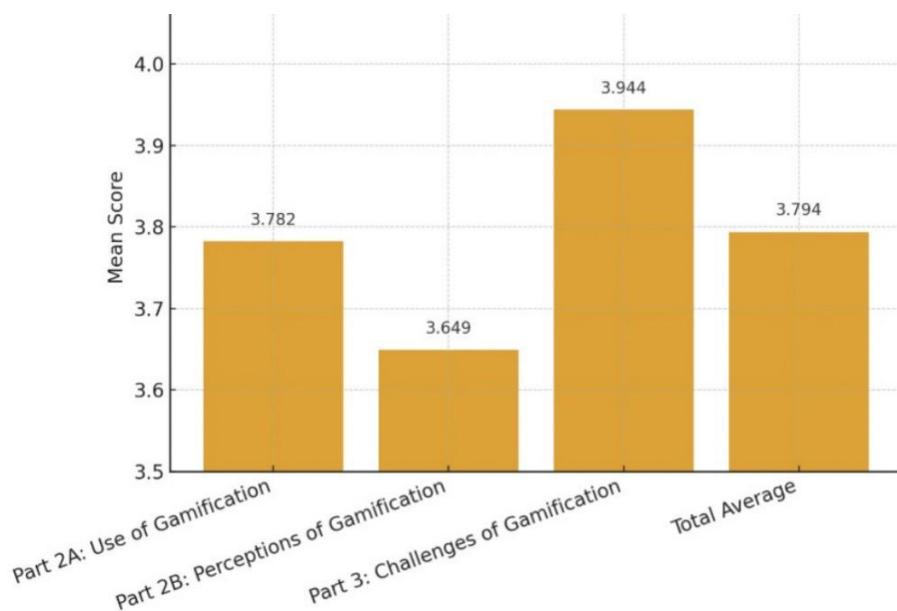
Research Results

Results for Research Objective 1

To study the perceptions of the teachers of Chinese as a foreign language towards the use of the gamification teaching method in online basic Chinese courses for primary school students.

Figure 2

Average Scores across Parts of Gamification Teaching Method



The questionnaire data showed that the overall mean for items 5-55 was 3.794 (S.D. = 1.298), with the mean values for all three parts ranging from 3.50 to 4.49 (as shown in Figure 2). Interpreting the mean scores in Table 5 indicated that TCFL teachers had a high degree of agreement with the statements in the questionnaire. Data from Part 2 indicated that TCFL teachers had a positive attitude toward the use of gamification in online Chinese instruction, and their use of gamification in basic online Chinese courses is high. Data from Part 3 indicated that while TCFL teachers recognized the benefits of gamification, they also recognized the major challenges it faced. Finally, the high standard deviation (S.D.) indicates variability among respondents' responses, meaning that while the overall trend was consistent, individual teachers' opinions vary. Some teachers might strongly support gamification, while others were unsure or disagree.

Table 6

The Three Items with the Highest Mean Scores in Part 2B of the Questionnaire

Part 2B. The Perceptions on Using the Gamification Teaching Method			
Items	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
39. I have found that incorporating gamification into my lessons improves the overall quality of my teaching.	3.971	1.346	high level of agreement
35. My use of gamification in my classes helps make learning Chinese more interactive and fun for my students.	3.799	1.292	high level of agreement
36. My use of gamification in my classes can increase my students' engagement and motivation in class.	3.755	1.290	high level of agreement

Table 6 shows that the three statements with highest mean scores in Part 2B of the questionnaire (items 39, 35, and 36) indicated that TCFL teachers held a positive attitude toward the use of gamification in online basic Chinese courses. Specifically, they firmly believed that gamification could enhance interactivity and engagement in Chinese learning for primary school students, and they acknowledged its impact on overall teaching quality.

Table 7

The Items with the Highest and Lowest Mean Scores in Part 2A of the Questionnaire

Part 2A. The Use of the Gamification Teaching Method			
Items	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
14. I use different games to improve students' class participation according to their different preferences.	3.957	1.245	high level of agreement
24. I actively seek out new trends and research related to the gamification of language teaching to enhance my teaching practice.	3.612	1.170	high level of agreement

Table 7 shows that the highest-rated statement (item 14, $\bar{x} = 3.957$) and the lowest-rated statement (item 24, $\bar{x} = 3.612$) from Part 2A of the questionnaire indicated that TCFL teachers prioritized adapting games to students' preferences rather than seeking new gamification research. TCFL teachers viewed gamification more as a practical teaching tool than a research-driven strategy. They prioritized student-centered learning experiences and advocated for interactive methods to increase student engagement and encourage deeper learning.

Table 8

The Five Items with the High Mean Scores in Part 2A of the Questionnaire

Part 2B. The Perceptions on Using the Gamification Teaching Method			
Items	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
12. I reward students with a point for each Chinese question they answer correctly.	3.885	1.330	high level of agreement
19. I play the game of "you draw, I guess" with my students to consolidate and evaluate their Chinese vocabulary.	3.842	1.331	high level of agreement
20. I use games to compete with my students in writing Chinese characters to motivate my students through competition.	3.835	1.376	high level of agreement
10. I use role-playing games to let students practice sentence expression.	3.827	1.429	high level of agreement
11. I use puzzle games to let students practice writing Chinese characters.	3.827	1.367	high level of agreement

Table 8 shows that TCFL teachers used different game strategies to achieve different teaching objectives. Commonly used gamification teaching methods included: 1) "rewards" for students' motivation; 2) "you draw, I guess" for the consolidation of vocabulary; 3) "competitions" for students' participation; 4) "role-playing" for sentence construction; 5) "puzzle game" for Chinese characters writing.

In addition to the above findings from the questionnaire data, the findings from the structured interviews further supported and supplemented those from the questionnaire data. First, analysis of the fourth question in Part 3 of the structured interviews further revealed that despite the challenges faced by TCFL teachers in implementing gamification teaching methods, all interviewees expressed their willingness to continue using gamification teaching methods. The researcher analyzed the transcripts of the fourth question and summarized the reasons under the theme of "benefits." The researcher then listed the distribution of two benefits of gamification teaching methods identified by the eight interviewees (see Table 9).

Table 9

The Results of the Fourth Interview Question

Question 4: Faced with the challenges related to the gamification teaching method, are you willing to continue using this teaching method? If so, why?		
Topic	Interviewees	
Improve Students' Participation and Learning Motivation	T1, T2, T4, T6	Benefits
Improve Learning Outcomes	T3, T5, T7, T8	

In addition, the researcher analyzed the interview transcripts for the fifth question and found that all respondents considered singing, storytelling, rewards, and role-playing as gamified instructional methods. Based on the respondents' responses, the researcher listed their definitions of gamification teaching methods and categorized the commonly mentioned game types (see Table 10).

Table 10
The Results of the Fifth Interview Question

Question 5: Do you think singing, storytelling, rewards and role-playing belong to the category of the gamification teaching method? How would you define the gamification teaching method? List two gamification teaching activities that you use most often.

Most Commonly Used Game Types	Topic	Interviewees	
		Definition	Most Commonly Used Game Types
	Integration of Game Elements		T1, T3
	Enhancing Students' Motivation and Participation		T2, T7, T8
	Combining Learning with Entertainment		T4, T5, T6
	Motivation & Engagement	1. Rewards	T1, T2, T3, T5, T6
	Cultural & Knowledge Expansion	2. Chinese Culture Quiz	T4
	Pronunciation	3. Pinyin Cannon	T1
	Vocabulary & Sentence	4. Guessing Games	T7, T8
	Language Skills Practice	5. Make Sentences with Pictures	T5
	Writing	6. Fill in the blanks	T6
		7. Chinese Character Puzzles	T3
		8. Chinese Character Writing Competition	T4
		9. Storytelling	T8
	Speaking	10. Role-playing	T7, T2

In summary, these findings indicated that TCFL teachers generally hold a positive attitude towards the use of gamification in online Chinese teaching, employing different game strategies to achieve various teaching objectives. While they firmly believe that gamified teaching can enhance the interactivity and engagement of primary school students' Chinese learning and acknowledge its impact on overall teaching quality, they also recognize numerous challenges, particularly regarding technical issues and time constraints.

Results for Research Objective 2

To identify the challenges faced by teachers of Chinese as a foreign language in using the gamification teaching method in online basic Chinese courses for primary school students.

Table 11

The Six Items with the Highest Mean Scores in Part 3 and the Three Items with the Lowest Mean Scores in Part 2B. of the Questionnaire

Part 3. The Challenges of Using the Gamification Teaching Method			
Items	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
49. I find that technical issues such as compatibility and access often prevent me from incorporating gamification into online Chinese courses.	4.101	1.259	high level of agreement
51. Providing timely and constructive feedback to students who participate in gamified activities is a challenge I face in my classroom.	4.079	1.186	high level of agreement
54. Time constraints and limited resources posed a challenge to implementing a comprehensive gamification strategy in my classroom.	4.058	1.361	high level of agreement
43. I find that there are not enough types of games in the basic Chinese courseware, which would make students who had studied Chinese for a while find the gamification elements of the courseware repetitive or predictable and lose interest in learning Chinese.	4.043	1.245	high level of agreement
52. Managing and monitoring students' progress and performance in gamified activities in my classroom is a challenge.	3.806	1.089	high level of agreement
40. When I use trophies to reward students, students are too focused on the number of trophies and are distracted from learning Chinese.	3.755	0.992	high level of agreement
Part 2B. The Perceptions on Using the Gamification Teaching Method			
28. My students' Chinese pronunciation is better when I use gamification teaching.	3.453	1.303	moderate level of agreement
30. My students can remember new Chinese words better when I use gamification teaching.	3.410	1.238	moderate level of agreement
26. I have easy access to resources and tools for designing engaging gamified content.	3.396	1.322	moderate level of agreement

According to Table 11, the data from the third part of the questionnaire show that the main challenges faced by TCFL teachers when using gamified teaching in online Chinese courses are: 1) technical issues ($\bar{x}=4.101$); 2) feedback difficulties ($\bar{x}=4.079$); 3) time constraints ($x=4.058$); 4) insufficient diversity of learning styles ($\bar{x}=4.043$); 5) weak assessment transparency ($\bar{x}= 3.806$); 6) the balance between games and teaching objectives ($\bar{x}=3.755$); 7) limited effectiveness in pronunciation ($\bar{x}=3.453$);

8) limited effectiveness in vocabulary memorizing ($\bar{x}=3.410$); 9) resource limitations ($\bar{x}=3.396$).

In addition, according to the data analysis of the third question of the structured interview, five key challenges faced by TCFL teachers in gamified teaching and their solutions were found (as shown in Table 12). Among these five challenges, only the last challenge "Parent Awareness" is a supplement to the nine challenges in the questionnaire results.

Table 12
The Results of the Third Interview Question

Question 3: What challenges have you encountered when using the gamification teaching method? How did you deal with these challenges?

Challenges	Solutions
The Balance between Games and Teaching Objectives	Improve Game Design;
Resource Limitations	Adopt a Structured Approach;
Technical Issues	Set Clear Time Limits and Adjust the Game Format
Insufficient Diversity of Learning Styles	Modify or Supplement Existing Games
Parent Awareness	Test the Equipment; Preparing Backup Teaching Plans; Providing Timely Feedback to the Technical Department
1. Technical Issues	Try Different Game Formats;
2. Feedback Difficulties	Designing Tiered Tasks
3. Time Constraints	Demonstrating Concrete Learning Outcomes

Figure 3
The Challenges TCFL Teachers Faced Using the Gamification Teaching Method in Online Basic Chinese Courses for Primary School Students



In summary, TCFL teachers faced many challenges when using the gamification teaching in online basic Chinese courses for primary school students. The main challenges (as shown in Figure 3) included: 1) technical issues; 2) feedback difficulties; 3) time constraints; 4) insufficient diversity of learning styles; 5) weak assessment transparency; 6) the balance between games and teaching objectives; 7) limited effectiveness in pronunciation; 8) limited effectiveness in vocabulary memorizing; 9) resource limitations; 10) parent awareness. These results directly address Research Objective 2 by demonstrating that while gamification offers pedagogical potential, TCFL teachers encounter substantial technical, pedagogical, and contextual barriers that hinder its effective implementation.

Discussion

This study examined TCFL teachers' perspectives and the challenges they encountered when implementing gamification in online basic Chinese courses for primary school students. Regarding perspectives, TCFL teachers in this study defined gamification as the integration of game elements to enhance motivation, participation, and enjoyment. This aligned with Werbach and Hunter's (2012) argument that gamification introduces playful elements to increase engagement, and with Deterding et al. (2011), who emphasized the motivational potential of game mechanics. Teachers also expressed positive attitudes toward gamification, consistent with Hanus and Fox (2015), noting its benefits for increasing interactivity and overall teaching quality. Besides, the findings revealed ten major challenges, several of which corroborate existing research, such as feedback limitations (Domínguez et al., 2013), time constraints (Dicheva et al., 2015; Yang & Wu, 2020), limited pronunciation improvement (Lyster & Saito, 2010) and mixed long-term vocabulary gains (Luo, 2023). Issues related to assessment transparency (Hamari et al., 2014) similarly echoed earlier findings.

However, this study also identified findings that extend or complicate prior research. First, the misalignment between gamification feedback systems and pedagogical feedback needs emerged more strongly than in previous studies. TCFL teachers emphasized that reward-based systems (e.g., points, badges) not only fail to provide corrective feedback but may also blur students' perceptions of actual learning progress. This adds nuance to earlier critiques by demonstrating how misaligned feedback can distort learners' self-assessment in online TCFL contexts specifically. Second, the challenge of balancing games with culturally specific learning content (e.g., tones, stroke order, radicals) was highlighted by TCFL teachers but is underrepresented in current literature. The structural complexity of Chinese appears to magnify design and pacing difficulties in gamified lessons, suggesting subject-specific barriers not fully captured in broader gamification studies. Third, TCFL teachers reported that parental skepticism exerted a stronger influence in online TCFL settings than in other subjects or delivery modes. This finding suggested that gamification in early Chinese language learning was shaped not only by teacher and learner factors but also by parental expectations about what "serious learning" should look like, presenting a socio-cultural layer not widely documented. Fourth, experienced TCFL teachers expressed greater concern about cognitive overload during online gameplay than novice TCFL teachers. While previous studies note differing adoption rates, this study added evidence that

experience level also shapes perceived pedagogical risks, potentially influencing long-term sustainability of gamification practices. Collectively, these findings highlighted novel intersections between gamification design, Chinese-specific learning demands, online instructional constraints, and parent-teacher dynamics.

In summary, while TCFL teachers recognized the motivational and pedagogical value of gamification, they also faced persistent and context-specific challenges. This study contributes new insights by demonstrating how mismatched feedback systems, subject-specific linguistic demands, parental expectations, and teacher experience levels complicate gamification in online TCFL contexts. Future research should validate these emerging patterns, particularly through longitudinal studies and design-based approaches, and explore how corrective feedback, instructional scaffolding, and reusable resources may address sustainability concerns.

Limitations

This study has some limitations that need to be explained. The sample size is limited to TCFL teachers who teach basic Chinese courses for primary school students on a single online platform. The results may not fully represent the experiences of other TCFL teachers when teaching learners of different levels and ages on other online platforms or offline. Therefore, the generalizability of the results is limited, and future research needs to expand the sample size to cover more diverse teaching scenarios.

Recommendations

Given these limitations, future research should expand the participant pool to strengthen representativeness. Researchers could include TCFL teachers across multiple online platforms, instructors teaching learners at various proficiency levels, or even students and parents who participate in or observe gamified online Chinese lessons. Such expansion would help generate more comprehensive insights into the implementation and effectiveness of gamification in online Chinese language learning.

Additionally, although this study used a mixed-methods design to produce valuable insights into teachers' perceptions, alternative research methodologies could be explored. For instance, narrative studies involving classroom observations or learner-voice data could provide richer contextual understanding, while longitudinal research could examine sustained effects of gamification on language retention, pronunciation, and learner engagement over time. Employing more diverse data collection and analytical techniques in future studies may lead to deeper and more holistic interpretations of gamified Chinese language instruction.

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Implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in a Secondary English Classroom in Thailand: An Investigation of Communication and Cognitive Skills

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Abstract

This study investigated the development of communication and cognitive skills through the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in secondary English classrooms in Thailand. Previous research had rarely examined how CLIL enhances both communicative competence and higher-order thinking in the Thai EFL context, creating a need for empirical evidence in this area. The objectives were to explore the effectiveness of CLIL instruction in improving students' English communication skills and cognitive abilities. The participants were 34 lower secondary students from a public school in Rayong Province. The study employed a qualitative method design, using classroom video observations and teacher reflection. The findings from classroom observations indicated that students participating in CLIL lessons demonstrated noticeable improvement in oral communication and critical thinking, as reflected in their increased participation, ability to express ideas, and use of English in meaningful contexts, compared with more teacher-centered instructional practices. They also reported higher engagement, motivation, and confidence in using English for content learning. The new findings indicated that integrating subject content with English language learning encouraged authentic communication, problem-solving, and reflective thinking, suggesting that CLIL can effectively promote both communication and cognitive development in the Thai EFL context.

Keywords: CLIL approach, secondary student, CLIL activities, communication skill, cognitive skill

Introduction

English is a global language used in various fields, including education, health, economics, and communication and information technology. However, there was no single teaching approach that fitted every learner in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context. In Thailand, where English is a primary foreign language, various methods have been used to improve students' English proficiency. Yet, an unsupportive learning environment and limited opportunities to use English outside the

classroom continued to hinder success. According to the Education First (EF) English EF Education First. (2025), Thailand ranked 116th out of 123 non-native English-speaking countries, categorized as very low proficiency. Despite national efforts by the Ministry of Education, Thai students still demonstrated limited English skills, especially among freshmen at the tertiary level.

Effective communication skills were essential for both academic and professional success, as they involved conveying information through verbal, written, visual, and non-verbal means. Thai English teachers were therefore encouraged to adopt teaching approaches that fostered both communication and cognitive engagement. Namsaeng (2022) However, while English classrooms typically emphasized communication skills, cognitive skills- such as reasoning, attention, and problem-solving- were often overlooked. Strengthening these abilities was vital for comprehensive language development and lifelong learning.

To address this issue, the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach was recognized as an effective method that integrated subject content with English language learning. By applying CLIL in secondary English classrooms, teachers could promote students' communicative competence while simultaneously developing their cognitive skills through authentic and meaningful communication.

Literature Review

CLIL Implementation

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was an educational approach that combined the learning of subject content with the acquisition of a foreign language. It aimed to enable learners to use the target language as a medium for learning, rather than merely as an object of study. CLIL was grounded in the 4Cs framework proposed by Coyle (2007), consisting of Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture/Community. This study adopted Coyle's (2007) 4Cs framework-Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture/Community-as a guiding structure for designing and implementing the CLIL classroom activities. The framework was operationalized through lesson planning rather than used solely as a theoretical reference. Each activity integrated subject-related content with meaningful language use while engaging students in cognitive processes such as observation, comparison, analysis, and evaluation. Cultural and social dimensions were addressed through interaction-based tasks, including discussions, peer feedback, and debates, which required learners to negotiate meaning within a shared classroom context. The eight activities were sequenced from guided language practice to more autonomous and cognitively demanding tasks, ensuring that communication and cognition developed concurrently in alignment with the adapted 4Cs framework. Through CLIL, students were encouraged to develop communication skills while engaging in cognitive processes such as reasoning, problem-solving, and reflection. This approach promoted active learning, authentic communication, and a deeper understanding of both subject matter and language use.

Previous studies implemented CLIL in diverse educational contexts and examined its effects on both language proficiency and cognitive development. A study published in Campillo-Ferrer, Miralles-Martínez Sánchez-Ibáñez (2020). *CLIL teachers' views on cognitive development in primary education. Palgrave Communications*, 6(1), Article 97 explored the implementation of CLIL in Spain, where

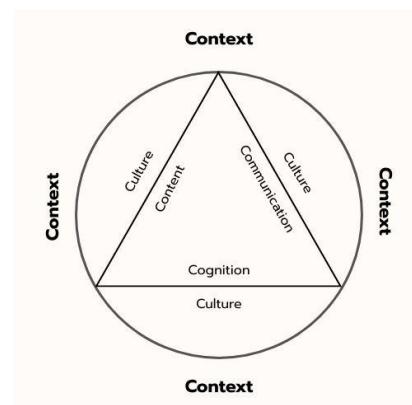
the approach had been widely adopted over decade. The research analyzed how science and social science teachers promoted cognitive skills in primary classrooms. Using a mixed-methods design, the study found that CLIL lessons often emphasized lower-order thinking skills, which limited the development of higher-order cognitive abilities and creativity. Factors such as teaching experience and professional roles influenced teachers' ability to promote advanced cognitive engagement. Similarly, Chaiyasuk (2023) examined the use of CLIL in Japanese primary schools, where English had recently been introduced as a foreign language. The study, based on Coyle's 4Cs framework, compared a CLIL class of 35 students with a non-CLIL class of 36 students. Data were collected through classroom observations, student questionnaires, and teacher interviews. The results demonstrated that CLIL lessons enhanced students' motivation, communicative competence, and cognitive participation compared to traditional EFL instruction.

Conceptual Framework

The main framework in this study was the 4Cs Framework, which provided four core principles-content, communication, cognition, and culture-as a foundation for designing and implementing CLIL-based instruction. In this research, the framework was adapted to include contextual considerations, acknowledging the importance of learners' educational setting, classroom environment, and sociocultural background in shaping learning outcomes. Therefore, rather than strictly applying the original 4Cs model, this study employed an adapted 4Cs framework in which *context* functioned as a supporting dimension that informed the integration of content and language learning. This adapted framework emphasized the development of cognitive skills, meaningful language use, creative learning processes, and social interaction within an authentic classroom context, allowing the CLIL approach to be implemented in a way that was responsive to the specific characteristics of the Thai secondary EFL classroom.

Figure 1

Coyle's (2005) '4Cs Framework



In this study, the CLIL framework was applied with a primary focus on communication and cognition, which aligned directly with the research objectives. Communication was conceptualized as both interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction, where learners engaged in meaningful language use through scaffolding, negotiation of meaning, and active classroom interaction. These communicative processes supported

students' ability to express ideas, respond to peers, and reflect on language use in context. Cognition was emphasized through learning tasks that promoted both lower- and higher-order thinking skills, including understanding, analyzing, evaluating, and creating, in accordance with the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). Students were required to process content cognitively by observing patterns, making comparisons, and constructing meaning, thereby using language as a tool for thinking rather than as an isolated subject. Although content, culture, and context informed the overall instructional design, the present study primarily examined how the integration of communication and cognition within CLIL activities supported students' language use and cognitive engagement in the classroom.

The Present Study

Context and Participants

The study was conducted at a secondary school in Rayong Province, Thailand, focusing on the implementation of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in English teaching. Traditionally, English instruction at the school had emphasized grammar and rote learning, often neglecting opportunities for students to use English in practical, communicative contexts. This research aimed to shift the focus from theoretical knowledge toward practical, context-based learning, enabling students to apply English meaningfully in real-life situations.

The participants consisted of 34 students from one secondary English classroom. The CLIL approach was implemented in the Fundamental English subject, with lessons designed to enhance both communication and cognitive skills. The content was not restricted to a specific topic; instead, it integrated themes that connected to students' everyday experiences and global issues. In this study, "content" was defined as meaningful thematic contexts rather than discipline-specific subject matter. Although many activities focused on grammar, these language structures were embedded within themes related to students' experiences to provide a communicative and conceptual purpose. Grammar was therefore treated as a tool for meaning-making within content-based contexts, reflecting a context-adapted implementation of CLIL.

By incorporating real-world and cross-curricular content, the lessons encouraged students to develop a deeper understanding of English as a medium of communication. This approach allowed students to engage in meaningful learning through authentic topics such as current events, social issues, and practical life situations, fostering both communication proficiency and higher-order thinking skills.

This context reflected the common challenges of English language teaching in Thai secondary schools, where learners often demonstrated limited communicative competence despite years of study. The implementation of CLIL in this setting demonstrated observable patterns of student engagement, language use, and cognitive processes during classroom activities. The findings of this study provide descriptive insights into how CLIL was enacted in a secondary EFL classroom and how students responded to the instructional tasks within this specific context.

CLIL Lesson Plans

The CLIL activities were divided into four sessions and were carefully designed based on Coyle's (2005) 4Cs framework-Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture-to be implemented within a regular English classroom. Each

session integrated meaningful content that encouraged both language and cognitive development through real-world themes. The four main topics and eight sub-activities (8 periods of teaching) included: (1) Problems Around the House-with activities such as talking about common household problems and writing short paragraphs about them; (2) Our Planet, Our Home (The Environment)-which involved reporting and summarizing facts about environmental issues; (3) We Love Sport-featuring a debate on alternative choices and creating short presentations using gerunds and infinitives; and (4) Healthy Food-which included a debate on alternative choices and a reflective discussion on common mistakes with peer and teacher feedback.

Moreover, the data collection and analysis procedures were consistent with established qualitative research practices applied throughout the study. Researcher reflection notes were systematically recorded immediately after each CLIL activity, with a specific focus on students' communicative performance and cognitive engagement. Classroom video recordings were transcribed to capture authentic language use and interaction patterns. To ensure trustworthiness, data triangulation was employed by cross-examining reflection notes, classroom observations, and video transcripts, and all coding decisions were aligned with the research objectives to enhance credibility and analytical rigor. Through this process, the researcher gained in-depth insights into the effects of each activity, students' engagement, and the instructional methods that effectively supported the implementation of CLIL within the school's English curriculum.

Activity 1: Talking about Problems around the House

In this activity, students worked in six mixed-ability groups to discuss common household problems. They shared ideas for addressing issues such as broken items and proposed solutions like repairing, replacing, or claiming the items. The activity integrated content and language by introducing the passive voice, with students practicing sentence transformation using visual prompts related to household tasks. Group collaboration allowed them to exchange ideas and apply grammatical structures in a meaningful context.

Activity 2: Writing a Short Paragraph about Household Problems

In the second activity, students continued working in mixed-ability groups and engaged in tasks that combined language form with personal experience. The lesson began with a warm-up discussion about household technologies, which helped activate prior knowledge and vocabulary. Students then analyzed example sentences to identify tense and voice before rewriting them in passive form. Finally, they wrote short paragraphs describing household problems using passive constructions. This task encouraged them to integrate grammar knowledge into real-life contexts, resulting in meaningful written communication.

Activity 3: Reporting Facts about the Environment

In the third activity, students worked in six mixed-ability groups to explore environmental issues while practicing direct and reported speech. The lesson began with a brainstorming session on the importance of protecting the environment, followed by a grammar focus on how direct speech is transformed into reported speech. Students analyzed sentence pairs, discussed grammatical changes, and collaboratively practiced

rewriting examples. For the main task, each group selected a short environmental news article, identified quotations, and rewrote them into reported speech before presenting their summaries to the class. This integration of grammar and real-world content encouraged both language application and awareness of environmental topics.

Activity 4: Summarizing of What a Speaker Has Said

In the fourth activity, students worked in six mixed-ability groups to practice reported speech through communicative and interactive tasks. The lesson began with a class discussion on ways to protect the environment, during which students shared ideas such as planting trees, reducing plastic use, and saving electricity. This initial exchange activated students' background knowledge and provided a meaningful context for language learning. The teacher then introduced the grammar focus-reported speech-and demonstrated how to convert direct speech into reported speech. Students practiced this concept through role-play activities, creating dialogues related to environmental topics. In pairs, one student spoke using direct speech while the other summarized it in reported form. Each pair performed their dialogues for the class, allowing students to apply grammar in real communication and receive feedback from both peers and the teacher.

Activity 5: Debating on Alternative Choices

In the fifth activity, students worked in six mixed-ability groups to explore the use of gerunds and infinitives through communicative, interactive, and reflective tasks. The lesson began with a warm-up discussion on students' favorite sports, where they shared personal preferences and reasons such as "I like volleyball" or "I want to be a volleyball player." This discussion helped connect language use with students' real-life interests and experiences. The teacher then introduced the grammar focus-gerunds and infinitives-through an inductive approach. Students analyzed example sentences from their responses, identifying patterns before the teacher explicitly clarified the rules.

To enhance interaction and practical language use, students engaged in a "Find Someone Who..." speaking activity, asking and answering questions that naturally incorporated gerunds and infinitives (e.g., "Do you like playing volleyball?" "Do you want to go swimming?"). This encouraged spontaneous English use and helped build communicative confidence. Selected pairs then performed short dialogues in front of the class, while peers identified the target grammatical structures used. Finally, groups collaborated to create and revise their own sentences, presenting them to the class and receiving feedback from both peers and the teacher.

Activity 6: Create a Short Presentation Using Gerunds and Infinitives

In the sixth activity, students were divided into six mixed-ability groups to promote peer interaction and collaborative learning. The lesson began with a review of gerunds and infinitives through a class discussion about favorite sports and hobbies, allowing students to use target grammar naturally while sharing personal interests. The teacher then reinforced grammatical understanding with example sentences such as "enjoy playing football" and "want to learn English," supported by visual aids and contextual examples.

Following the grammar review, each group was assigned a sport or famous athlete to research and create a short written and oral presentation. Students were required to incorporate gerunds and infinitives in describing their chosen subject's activities and achievements. They worked together to draft, revise, and present their work, using teacher and peer feedback to refine their grammar and organization. Presentations were followed by a peer review session, where students evaluated one another's grammar accuracy, clarity, and structure under teacher guidance.

Activity 7: Debating on Alternative Choices

In this final activity, students were divided into six mixed-ability groups to promote collaboration and inclusive participation. The lesson began with a brainstorming session on the question “What makes food healthy?” where students shared examples of nutritious foods, connecting English learning with real-life and cultural experiences. The main task was a classroom debate on the topic “Eating organic food is healthier than consuming processed food.” Before preparing their arguments, students reviewed key vocabulary and received explicit instruction on comparative and superlative structures (e.g., healthier, more nutritious, the most harmful) to support their persuasive language use.

Each group read assigned materials outlining both sides of the argument, discussed ideas, and collaboratively wrote debate points using the target grammar forms. During the debate, groups presented their positions, listened to counterarguments, and responded using evidence-based reasoning and respectful communication. The teacher guided the process, ensuring accuracy, fluency, and equal participation.

Activity 8: Reflecting on the Debate and Discuss Common Mistakes

This final reflective activity followed the previous debate on healthy food choices and aimed to consolidate both linguistic and cognitive learning outcomes. The lesson began with a whole-class discussion in which students reflected on the debate, shared which arguments they found most persuasive, and considered whether their opinions had changed. This opening encouraged metacognitive engagement and critical reflection on content and communication.

Next, the teacher led a review of students' use of comparative and superlative structures, highlighting common grammatical mistakes and guiding students to analyze the causes of their errors. After this discussion, students worked in mixed-ability groups to collaboratively write short reflective essays. These essays integrated grammar practice with personal reflection by requiring students to use target structures while expressing their opinions about healthy eating and the debate experience. During the process, students exchanged feedback, discussed grammar choices, and revised their writing with teacher support to ensure accuracy and coherence. Some groups later presented their essays to the class, receiving constructive feedback from peers.

Research Instruments

Two primary research instruments were employed in this study to collect data and evaluate the outcomes in accordance with the research objectives: lesson plans and researcher reflection. Both instruments were specifically designed to explore how CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) could enhance students' communication and cognitive skills in a secondary English classroom.

The lesson plans were structured to promote students' active use of English through interactive tasks, collaborative discussions, and problem-solving activities. Each lesson aimed to create authentic communication contexts, encouraging students to express opinions, negotiate meaning, and share ideas with peers. This focus on communication skills enabled students to build confidence in using English for both interpersonal and academic purposes.

In addition, the lessons were intentionally designed to stimulate cognitive skill development by engaging students in tasks that required reasoning, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Activities encouraged learners to apply knowledge to real-world situations, think critically about content, and make informed decisions through classroom discussions and reflective writing.

The researcher reflection served as a qualitative tool to observe and document students' language use, engagement, and cognitive processing during lessons. Through reflective notes and video analysis, the researcher examined how students interacted, solved problems, and demonstrated understanding. This allowed for a deeper exploration of how communication and cognitive development emerged through CLIL implementation.

Together, these instruments provided a comprehensive framework for assessing both the linguistic and intellectual dimensions of learning, ensuring that the integration of content and language led to measurable improvement in students' communication and cognitive competencies.

Researcher Reflection

This research instrument was the researcher reflections on the class interaction during the teaching process. The researcher immediately took notes after each activity to observe students' participation in class, the classroom environment during each CLIL activity, and how students responded to the provided activities. The researcher's reflections focused on aspects of greater interest to gather more in-depth data on the effects of each activity and teaching style in implementing CLIL within the lessons of the curriculum in the secondary English classroom.

Data collection

The data collection process was based on the school's English syllabus during the second semester of the 2023 academic year. The researcher analyzed the existing syllabus to identify topics, grammar points, and learning objectives suitable for integrating CLIL principles into regular English lessons. The selected content areas included Problems around the House, Our Planet, Our Home, We Love Sports, and Healthy Food, which aligned with the syllabus themes while allowing opportunities to develop students' communication and cognitive skills.

To ensure consistency with curricular goals, the researcher designed 8 CLIL-based activities aligned with the 4Cs framework (Coyle, 2005). These activities were integrated into the regular syllabus schedule, allowing the study to unfold naturally within the existing classroom context.

The data collection focused on observing how the CLIL lessons influenced students' communication and cognitive development. Qualitative data were gathered through classroom observation videos and the researcher's reflections after each session. The reflections included descriptive notes on class interactions, student engagement, language use, and cognitive processes during the lessons. This combination of syllabus-based activity design and classroom observation provided authentic insights into how CLIL could be effectively implemented in a regular English curriculum.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from classroom observations and video recordings were transcribed and analyzed using a thematic coding approach based on the grounded theory method, following Lichtman's (2013) "three Cs" model: Coding, Categorizing, and Concepts. In the coding stage, the researcher carefully examined observation notes and transcripts to identify key excerpts related to the study's objectives, assigning initial codes such as "student engagement," "teacher scaffolding," and "peer interaction." In this study, student engagement, teacher scaffolding, and peer interaction were treated as supportive learning conditions rather than independent analytical constructs. By minimizing teacher-centered instruction, students were encouraged to actively use language and cognitive skills through self-directed and interactive tasks. This learner-centered approach allowed students to practice communication and thinking more confidently, thereby contributing to the development of their communicative (or linguistic) competence and cognitive skills through authentic use rather than direct instruction. During the categorizing stage, these codes were organized into broader thematic groups, including "student involvement" and "instructional scaffolding," which represented significant aspects of classroom dynamics. Finally, in the concepts stage, these categories were synthesized into higher-level conceptual themes that illustrated relationships between communication and cognitive development—for instance, the emergence of "improved communicative performance through structured support." Through this systematic process, the researcher identified meaningful patterns that revealed how CLIL-based instruction enhanced students' communication abilities and cognitive engagement in the EFL classroom.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher was concerned about the ethics of a study, so consent forms were sent to the school's director for data collection. Participants were informed about the study's aims, process, and time duration, their right to end participation there is no penalty, and no confidentiality.

Result

Promoting Communication through CLIL

The CLIL approach implemented in this study effectively promoted students' communication skills through a sequence of structured, scaffolded, and progressively challenging activities that integrated content learning with meaningful language use. From the outset, students were engaged in authentic, interactive tasks designed to foster oral fluency, confidence, and contextual language production. During the first phase (Activities 1–2), personal storytelling, pair discussions, and sentence construction exercises allowed students to express personal experiences and ideas related to lesson topics while practicing appropriate vocabulary and grammar in context. These tasks encouraged active participation, reduced communication anxiety, and strengthened fluency through continuous teacher scaffolding that gradually diminished as learners became more independent.

As students advanced to Activities 3 and 4, communication tasks grew more cognitively and linguistically demanding, requiring them to comprehend, reformulate, and present ideas through question-and-answer sessions and reported speech practice. These exercises supported not only grammatical accuracy but also interactive use of English, as students learned to respond meaningfully rather than relying on memorized structures. The combination of speaking and writing activities during this stage enhanced coherence and accuracy across multiple communication modes.

In the subsequent phase (Activities 5–6), communication was further developed through cooperative sentence analysis, essay writing, and oral presentations, during which students exchanged feedback, constructed well-organized written pieces, and articulated their thoughts orally. Such activities helped bridge the gap between language form and communicative function, encouraging learners to transfer grammatical knowledge into fluent, purposeful use while fostering social interaction, teamwork, and discourse organization skills.

The most substantial communicative growth was evident in Activity 7, where students participated in structured debates that required spontaneous language production, logical reasoning, and persuasive discourse using comparative and superlative forms. Debating enhances students' interactional competence by promoting active listening, turn-taking, expression of agreement and disagreement, and use of academic discourse markers—features that reflect higher communicative proficiency. Finally, Activity 8 focused on reflection and essay writing, enabling students to engage in metacommunication by analyzing how and why they used specific language structures in particular contexts. Peer feedback and reflective discussion promoted self-awareness, enabling learners to monitor, evaluate, and refine their communication strategies. Overall, communication was promoted in a developmental continuum that moved from guided, structured interaction to autonomous and authentic expression, illustrating CLIL's potential to balance accuracy and fluency while cultivating confidence, critical engagement, and communicative competence necessary for real-world English use.

Fostering Cognition through CLIL

The CLIL activities implemented in this study effectively fostered students' cognitive development by integrating content-based learning with tasks that engaged higher-order thinking skills throughout the learning process. In the initial activities (Activities 1-2), students were introduced to basic cognitive processes through observation, comparison, and sentence construction, which required them to analyze language structures and relate them to visual or contextual cues, forming a foundation for more complex thinking.

As the lessons progressed to Activities 3 and 4, students engaged in exercises such as question-and-answer sessions and the transformation of direct speech into reported speech, which required comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and adaptation of information—key indicators of developing higher-order cognitive skills. These tasks encouraged learners to identify patterns, apply grammatical rules in meaningful contexts, and make logical connections between prior knowledge and new content.

During Activities 5 and 6, students further advanced their cognitive skills by constructing sentences, writing short essays, and preparing oral presentations. These tasks required them to organize ideas coherently, evaluate grammatical choices, and apply rules strategically, reinforcing reasoning, problem-solving, and logical structuring of language.

The most significant cognitive engagement occurred in Activity 7, where structured debates challenged students to evaluate arguments critically, synthesize information from readings, construct evidence-based points, and defend their positions using comparative and superlative forms. This activity exemplified the integration of analytical thinking, reasoning, and decision-making with meaningful language use, fostering metacognitive awareness and autonomous problem-solving.

Finally, Activity 8 emphasized reflective thinking, as students wrote essays evaluating their debate performance, analyzed grammatical mistakes, and discussed strategies for improvement. Peer feedback and self-assessment reinforced students' ability to reflect critically on their cognitive processes, recognize patterns of errors, and develop strategies for self-regulation. Overall, the CLIL approach promoted cognition by progressively guiding learners from basic analysis and comprehension to complex evaluation, synthesis, and reflection, demonstrating that content-based, structured tasks can effectively stimulate critical thinking, problem-solving, and metacognitive development while supporting the simultaneous growth of language skills.

The findings derived from the analysis of the eight CLIL activities revealed substantial improvement in both communication and cognitive skills among secondary EFL students. Throughout the learning process, students gradually strengthened their ability to use English for diverse communicative purposes, including expressing opinions, participating in discussions, delivering presentations, and providing constructive peer feedback. This progression reflected a marked enhancement in both oral and written communication proficiency. Concurrently, cognitive development was evident as students applied grammatical knowledge in meaningful contexts, synthesized information, critically evaluated language use, and engaged in problem-solving tasks that demanded higher-order thinking. Activities emphasizing collaboration, debate, and presentation produced the most notable growth, as they required students to negotiate meaning, construct logical arguments, and self-regulate

their language use. Although challenges such as differing proficiency levels, language anxiety, and occasional dependence on the first language were observed, continuous teacher scaffolding and peer collaboration effectively supported ongoing progress. Overall, the results indicate that the CLIL approach successfully fosters the interconnected development of linguistic communication and cognitive processing, empowering learners to apply their English skills with greater confidence, accuracy, and critical awareness in authentic learning situations. These outcomes align with the study's objectives to enhance both communication and cognitive skills through the implementation of CLIL in the secondary English classroom.

Throughout the eight CLIL-based activities, students demonstrated progressive development in both communication and cognitive skills. In the initial stages, Activities 1 and 2 focused on building students' foundational communication abilities through personal storytelling, discussion, and sentence construction. These activities encouraged learners to form contextually appropriate sentences, boosting their confidence in oral expression while simultaneously fostering basic cognitive skills through observation and comparison of sentence structures. As the lessons progressed, Activities 3 and 4 strengthened the connection between students' prior knowledge and new lesson content. Students engaged in question-and-answer sessions, sentence transformation, and reported speech exercises that required comprehension, synthesis, and adaptation-key indicators of developing higher-order thinking.

Collaborative learning became central in Activities 5 and 6, where students analyzed sentence structures in pairs or groups, composed short essays, and presented their work orally. These activities enhanced both linguistic accuracy and fluency, promoting teamwork, logical organization of ideas, and the application of grammatical knowledge in meaningful communication. The most significant development was evident in Activity 7, where structured debates required students to employ comparative and superlative forms effectively while expressing and defending opinions. This activity fostered advanced cognitive processes such as evaluation, reasoning, and critical thinking, and represented the highest level of integration between communication and cognition. Finally, Activity 8 encouraged reflection and consolidation through essay writing and peer feedback, helping students internalize grammatical forms, articulate ideas clearly, and enhance metacognitive awareness.

In summary, the sequence of activities gradually guided students from basic language practice toward complex, authentic communication requiring analytical and reflective thinking. Among all activities, the debate in Activity 7 stood out as the most impactful, serving as a culmination of the learning process where students demonstrated comprehensive growth in both communication and cognitive domains.

Discussions

The findings of this study were consistent with previous CLIL research conducted in Thai secondary education, particularly in its effectiveness in enhancing both communication and cognitive skills. The activities implemented-such as group discussions, debates, and group work encouraged active student participation and improved their English communication abilities, aligning with earlier studies by Suwannoppharat and Chinokul (2015) and Srisawat (2023). Students demonstrated progress in higher-order thinking skills, including analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information, which reflected the cognitive processes outlined in Bloom's

taxonomy and Coyle's 4Cs framework. Activity 7, which focused on structured debates, was particularly effective in promoting both communicative confidence and cognitive complexity in the classroom. During the debates, students were required to express their opinions clearly, respond to counterarguments, and use comparative and superlative forms accurately, which strengthened their oral communication and fluency in authentic contexts. At the same time, they engaged in higher-order thinking processes such as analyzing different viewpoints, evaluating evidence, and constructing logical arguments. The debate format encouraged students to plan, synthesize information, and justify their ideas, integrating language use with critical thinking. Although this study primarily relied on face-to-face instruction rather than technology-enhanced approaches, the debate activity provided valuable opportunities for learners to simultaneously develop grammatical accuracy, strategic language use, and cognitive skills, illustrating a dynamic balance between communication and cognition in authentic learning situations. Although this study relied primarily on face-to-face instruction rather than technology-enhanced approaches, it contributed important insights into balancing grammatical accuracy and communicative fluency in authentic learning contexts. Overall, the findings supported the pedagogical value of CLIL in Thai EFL classrooms and highlighted both its effectiveness and the contextual challenges involved.

The findings implied that integrating Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in secondary English classrooms offered substantial benefits for learners, particularly in enhancing communication and cognition simultaneously. Consistent with previous CLIL research (e.g., Suwannoppharat & Chinokul, 2015; Tachaiyaphum & Sukying, 2021), the CLIL lessons in this study created interactive learning environments where students expressed opinions, negotiated meaning, and applied grammatical knowledge in authentic contexts. In alignment with Coyle's 4Cs framework, the activities addressed Communication and Cognition by requiring students to analyze, compare, and synthesize content through English. The inclusion of reflective writing and peer feedback further encouraged metacognitive development, echoing Bloom's taxonomy of higher-order thinking. These implications suggested that CLIL could help students build critical thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning skills essential for 21st-century learning. Activities such as debates and presentations—particularly the structured debate in Activity 7—were shown to be especially effective in stimulating cognitive and communicative growth. While CLIL proved valuable, the study also indicated a need for enhanced teacher training and context-tailored instructional resources to strengthen future implementation.

This study concluded that CLIL was a beneficial pedagogical approach for promoting the dual development of language proficiency and cognitive growth among Thai EFL learners. By integrating content-based tasks with language learning, students improved their communicative competence while developing critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities. The results aligned with prior research (e.g., Chaiyasuk, 2023; Srisawat, 2023), reinforcing the idea that CLIL fosters a dynamic interaction between content learning and language development. Activity 7 emerged as the most effective task, as it required students to engage in analytical reasoning and confident communication through structured debates.

Recommendations

However, the study also presented several limitations. The small sample of Grade 10 students restricted the generalizability of the findings, and variations in students' proficiency levels and prior knowledge influenced the learning outcomes. Methodologically, the study relied on only two data sources-teacher reflection and classroom video recordings-and the researcher also served as the classroom teacher, which may have introduced subjective bias. Time constraints and reliance solely on face-to-face instruction further posed challenges in fully achieving all instructional goals. Although this study did not include a technology component, future research could explore technology-enhanced CLIL models, drawing on prior studies such as Wongthong (2025), to expand opportunities for interaction and engagement. Despite these limitations, the findings suggested that when content and language were meaningfully connected, CLIL classrooms provided a supportive environment where students could develop English language skills while engaging in cognitive processes, preparing them for ongoing communication and critical thinking in broader contexts.

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The Effects of Directed Reading Activities on English Reading Ability of Grade 12 Students in a Chinese Vocational School

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Abstract

Directed Reading Activity (DRA) is a structured instructional approach designed to enhance students' comprehension and engagement during reading. This study investigated the effects of DRA on the English reading ability and learning satisfaction of 12th-grade students at Tianfu Information Vocational College in Sichuan, China. A quasi-experimental design was employed with two intact classes. The experimental group ($n = 50$) received DRA-based instruction for eight weeks, while the control group ($n = 50$) received teacher-centered reading instruction focusing on vocabulary explanation, text translation, and comprehension questions, without explicit reading strategy instruction. Pretest and posttest scores were compared using paired-sample and independent-sample t-tests. A student satisfaction questionnaire was also administered and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The results showed that the experimental group achieved significantly higher reading scores after DRA instruction. Students also reported a very high level of satisfaction, particularly regarding overall perception and the relevance of reading topics to their vocational fields. These findings suggest that DRA is an effective pedagogical approach for improving English reading proficiency and fostering positive learning attitudes among vocational school students in China.

Keywords: Directed Reading Activity (DRA), reading comprehension, vocational education

Introduction

Globalization and the Importance of English Reading

Globalization has dramatically increased the need for English proficiency across educational, professional, and social domains. English serves as the lingua franca for international business, technology, and higher education, providing access to vast repositories of information. According to UNESCO (2021), over 80% of academic journals worldwide are published in English, and proficiency in reading is essential for

students to access cutting-edge research. Grabe and Stoller (2002) argue that reading is not only a foundational skill for language learning but also a primary channel through which learners gain disciplinary knowledge. In this context, the ability to comprehend written texts becomes indispensable for students' academic achievement and employability.

Furthermore, research has demonstrated a strong correlation between reading proficiency and long-term academic outcomes. The OECD (2023) reported that students with higher reading skills tend to achieve better results in other academic subjects and are more adaptable in professional contexts. Reading supports lifelong learning, enabling individuals to stay updated with professional developments and global trends. Therefore, in the Chinese context, equipping vocational students with sufficient reading ability is not merely a linguistic goal but also a strategic necessity for national competitiveness.

However, while the importance of English reading is widely acknowledged, its instruction remains a challenge in many educational systems, especially in non-elite schools. Vocational education, designed to prepare students for specific industries, often underestimates the role of language and communication skills. This contradiction between global demands and local practices highlights the urgency of improving English reading instruction for vocational learners in China.

Challenges in Chinese Vocational Education

Vocational schools in China serve a significant portion of the student population, yet their English outcomes are consistently lower than those in academic high schools. Chen (2014) points out that students in vocational programs typically exhibit low motivation to learn English, as they perceive it to be irrelevant to their future careers. Yang and Gao (2017) further note that students often lack opportunities to engage with authentic English texts, limiting their exposure to practical applications of language. As a result, their reading proficiency lags behind, creating a skills gap that persists into their professional lives.

Traditional teaching methods exacerbate this issue. The grammar-translation method remains dominant in many classrooms (Li & Wu, 2018). While effective for teaching discrete grammar points and vocabulary, it fails to foster comprehension or higher-order thinking skills. Students often memorize passages without understanding, which leads to frustration and disengagement. Wang and Zhang (2019) highlight that these methods also neglect strategy training, leaving students ill-equipped to approach unfamiliar texts independently.

Moreover, vocational students often come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. Their prior learning experiences may have been exam-driven, with little emphasis on critical or analytical reading. As a result, they enter vocational colleges with weak foundations and little confidence in their English abilities. Without targeted interventions, these challenges perpetuate cycles of underachievement, both academically and professionally.

Teacher and Institutional Barriers

In addition to student-related challenges, teachers and institutions also face systemic barriers. Many teachers lack access to suitable instructional materials that integrate vocational content with English learning. This lack of relevant resources

makes it difficult to design lessons that resonate with students' interests and career goals. Furthermore, institutional policies often emphasize technical training at the expense of language development, reinforcing the marginalization of English education in vocational curricula.

Professional development opportunities for vocational English teachers are also limited. Few have received training in innovative pedagogies such as task-based learning or strategy instruction (Yang & Gao, 2017). Consequently, many rely on traditional lecture-based methods, which fail to engage students actively. This not only restricts students' learning outcomes but also contributes to teacher burnout, as they struggle to meet institutional demands with inadequate support.

Wang and Zhang (2019) argue that unless systemic reforms are made, English instruction in vocational schools will continue to fall short. The combination of inadequate resources, outdated methodologies, and institutional neglect creates a learning environment where students cannot thrive. These barriers underline the importance of exploring alternative teaching strategies that can revitalize vocational English education.

Directed Reading Activities as a Pedagogical Response

Directed Reading Activities (DRA), introduced by Stauffer (1969), represent one such alternative. DRA divides the reading process into three structured phases: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. In the pre-reading phase, teachers activate prior knowledge and establish reading purposes. During the while-reading phase, students engage with texts through guided activities, promoting active comprehension. The post-reading phase consolidates learning by encouraging discussion, reflection, and application of knowledge.

Empirical evidences support the effectiveness of DRA. Alfassi (2004)'s study, for example, he found that strategy-based reading approaches improved comprehension outcomes among struggling readers. Similarly, Klinger and Vaughn (2015) observed that DRA facilitated participation and improved comprehension in diverse classrooms, including multilingual contexts. Furthermore, in China, Li and Wu (2018) reported that high school students showed significant gains in both comprehension and vocabulary acquisition through DRA instruction. These findings suggest that DRA has considerable potential for addressing the unique challenges faced by vocational students.

Moreover, DRA is not merely a technique but a philosophy of teaching that prioritizes interaction, engagement, and meaning-making. It contrasts sharply with traditional translation-focused approaches by fostering learner autonomy and critical thinking. In vocational contexts, where students often struggle with motivation, DRA's structured yet interactive nature may help bridge the gap between linguistic skills and real-world applications.

Research Significance

Despite its proven benefits, DRA remains underexplored in vocational education settings. Most research in China has concentrated on academic high schools or universities, leaving a gap in understanding how DRA can benefit vocational learners (Wang & Zhang, 2019). This study addresses that gap by examining the effects of DRA on Grade 12 students at Tianfu Information Vocational College in Sichuan Province.

Specifically, it investigates not only improvements in reading comprehension but also students' satisfaction with the learning process.

By situating DRA within the vocational education context, this research contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it extends the application of schema theory and interactive reading models to a new population. Practically, it provides actionable insights for teachers seeking to improve reading instruction in resource-constrained environments. Ultimately, this study aims: 1) to investigate the effects of DRA toward the reading pre-test scores of grade 12 students in Tianfu Information Vocational College, and 2) to study the levels of students' satisfaction towards Directed Reading Activities, which demonstrates that innovative, student-centered pedagogies can transform English learning outcomes in vocational schools, thereby enhancing students' academic and professional futures.

Literature Review

Theories of Reading

Reading is a multidimensional process that involves decoding linguistic symbols, constructing meaning, and integrating new information into existing knowledge structures. Early theories of reading can be divided into two main schools: bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up models emphasize the role of phonological and orthographic decoding, where comprehension emerges from the sequential recognition of words and sentences (Gough, 1972). Top-down models, by contrast, stress the role of background knowledge, prediction, and inference in guiding comprehension (Goodman, 1967). Neither approach alone fully captures the complexity of reading; thus, interactive models emerged.

Rumelhart (1980) and Stanovich (1984) proposed interactive models, suggesting that reading is a dynamic interplay between decoding and higher-level cognitive processes. Readers continuously integrate textual input with prior knowledge to generate meaning. Schema theory, advanced by Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), further supports this perspective by asserting that comprehension depends on the activation of schemata-mental frameworks that organize knowledge. In practice, this implies that effective reading instruction must provide strategies that help learners both decode text and activate relevant prior knowledge.

Reading Comprehension in Vocational Education Contexts

In China, vocational education students often exhibit lower levels of English reading ability compared to their counterparts in academic tracks. This discrepancy is attributed to several factors, including limited instructional time devoted to English, a curriculum heavily weighted toward technical subjects, and students' lack of exposure to authentic texts (Chen, 2014). Yang and Gao (2017) argue that vocational students' attitudes toward English are shaped by pragmatic considerations; many see little direct connection between English and their career goals, leading to diminished motivation. Consequently, these students struggle with basic comprehension tasks and fail to develop higher-order reading strategies.

The problem is exacerbated by teaching practices. Li and Wu (2018) observed that the grammar-translation method still dominates vocational classrooms. Although this approach can improve discrete knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, it fails to cultivate comprehension skills or critical engagement with texts. As Wang

and Zhang (2019) highlight, vocational students are often trained to memorize answers for exams rather than to develop independent reading strategies. This limits their ability to process complex or unfamiliar texts, a skill increasingly necessary in globalized workplaces where technical manuals, safety guidelines, and professional documentation are often published in English.

Directed Reading Activities (DRA)

Directed Reading Activities were first introduced by Stauffer (1969) as a systematic framework to guide students through texts. The process is divided into three stages. In the pre-reading stage, teachers activate students' prior knowledge, set purposes for reading, and preview vocabulary. The while-reading stage engages students in active comprehension through guided reading, questioning, and annotation. Finally, the post-reading stage consolidates learning through summarization, discussion, and application. This cyclical process not only improves comprehension but also enhances motivation by making reading interactive and purposeful.

Alfassi (2004) demonstrated that DRA improved comprehension among struggling adolescent readers by combining explicit strategy instruction with guided practice. Klinger and Vaughn (2015) emphasized its adaptability, noting that DRA can be modified for use in multilingual classrooms and across subject areas. Hollingsworth and Gallego (2010) found that pre-teaching vocabulary within DRA improved reading outcomes for bilingual students. These findings illustrate the flexibility and effectiveness of DRA in various contexts.

Various studies have consistently shown the value of DRA and similar strategy-based approaches. In the study of (Graesser et al., 2011), incorporating DRA principles into reading instruction promoted critical thinking and collaborative learning. Moreover, DRA, aligns with global educational trends emphasize learner autonomy and competency development, OECD (2023). Studies in Europe(e.g., Harrison & Salinger, 2025) further demonstrate that structured reading activities foster not only comprehension but also learner engagement and confidence in reading.

In terms of using DRA in vocational schools, students' reading comprehension and confidence were improved, particularly among learners with low initial proficiency, Misdi (2023). Similarly, DRA-based instruction increased students' willingness to participate in reading tasks and its motivational benefits are as important as its cognitive ones (Gutierrez & Rodriguez, 2019). These studies reinforce the idea that DRA is both an effective instructional method and a tool for enhancing student engagement.

In China, research on DRA has gained traction in recent years. Li and Wu (2018) presented that high school students receiving DRA instruction outperformed their peers in both comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, vocational students exposed to DRA reported higher levels of motivation and engagement compared to those taught through traditional methods (Wang and Zhang, 2019). Zhang and Wang (2022) emphasized the importance of aligning reading strategies with students' vocational interests, arguing that DRA can be adapted to incorporate technical texts relevant to students' future careers.

Furthermore, DRA encouraged vocational students to collaborate during reading activities, fostering both social interaction and language development. Students not only improved their reading comprehension but also developed confidence in group

discussions, a skill valuable for workplace communication (Chen & Zhang, 2021). Despite these positive findings, the number of studies focusing specifically on vocational education remains limited, underlining the significance of the present research.

The review of existing literature reveals that reading is a complex process influenced by cognitive, linguistic, and contextual factors. Theories such as top-down, bottom-up and interactive models provide a foundation for understanding the importance of strategy-based instruction. International and domestic researches consistently supports the effectiveness of DRA in improving reading comprehension and motivation. However, gaps remain in applying DRA to vocational education in China, where unique challenges such as low motivation, limited resources, and exam-oriented instruction persist. This study addresses these gaps by evaluating the effects of DRA on both reading achievement and student satisfaction in a vocational setting.

Directed Reading Activities can also be viewed as a form of explicit reading strategy instruction. Research has shown that explicit teaching of strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing significantly enhances reading comprehension, particularly among learners with lower proficiency (Alfassi, 2004; Klinger & Vaughn, 2015). By systematically guiding students through pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages, DRA makes these strategies visible and actionable for learners.

Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental design at Tianfu Information Vocational College, Sichuan Province, involving two intact Grade 12 classes. The experimental group ($n=50$) received Directed Reading Activities (DRA) instruction, while the control group ($n=50$) continued with traditional reading instruction. The intervention lasted eight weeks, with two 45-minute reading lessons per week, totaling 16 sessions.

Participants included 100 students aged 17–18, with comparable gender distribution and baseline proficiency. The same teacher taught both groups to minimize instructor-related variability. Three instruments were employed: (1) a reading comprehension test administered as pre-test and post-test, (2) a satisfaction questionnaire, and (3) A total of 16 lesson plans for Directed Reading Activities (DRAs).

Data were analyzed using Paired-sample t-tests to compare pre- and post-test scores within each group, independent-sample t-tests to compare between groups, and descriptive statistics to summarize questionnaire results.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

To ensure methodological rigor, the validity and reliability of all research instruments were carefully examined. The reading comprehension test was developed based on the objectives of the Grade 12 vocational English curriculum and the reading skills targeted in the Directed Reading Activities framework. The test included items assessing literal comprehension, inferential understanding, and vocabulary knowledge.

Content validity was established through expert review by three university lecturers specializing in English language teaching and reading instruction. Item difficulty and discrimination indices were examined through a pilot test conducted with

students of similar proficiency ($n = 30$), and all items fell within acceptable ranges. The internal consistency reliability of the reading comprehension test was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.82.

The student satisfaction questionnaire was adapted from previous studies on reading instruction and learning satisfaction and modified to suit the vocational education context. It was reviewed by the same panel of experts to ensure content validity and clarity. Pilot testing indicated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88.

In addition, the 16 Directed Reading Activities lesson plans were developed in accordance with Stauffer's (1969) DRA framework and principles of explicit reading strategy instruction. The lesson plans were reviewed by experts to ensure instructional validity and consistency of implementation throughout the intervention period.

Reading materials were selected based on students' English proficiency levels, vocabulary load, and relevance to vocational fields such as e-commerce and hospitality. Text difficulty was aligned with the national vocational English curriculum in terms of length, lexical density, and syntactic complexity. To ensure equivalency between groups, both the experimental and control groups used reading texts of comparable difficulty, with the experimental group receiving additional strategy-based support through Directed Reading Activities.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study derived from quantitative data analysis to address the research objectives. The results were obtained through a reading comprehension pretest, posttest, and questionnaire administered to 50 grade 12 students who participated in the study. The data collected from these research instruments was analyzed in light of two research questions:

1. How does Directed Reading Activities affect the reading comprehension of the grade 12 students?
2. What are levels of satisfaction of the grade 12 students towards Directed Reading Activities?

The findings of the study were presented in terms of tables and description. The results of the data analysis were divided into 2 parts:

1. The students' average reading comprehension pretest scores and posttest scores: This part reported the results by comparing average scores of the students in the reading comprehension test before and after learning reading through Directed Reading Activities.

2. The students' satisfaction towards learning reading through Directed Reading Activities: This part reported the results of the students' satisfaction towards learning reading through Directed Reading Activities from satisfaction questionnaire.

Table 1

Comparison of Students' Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Experimental Group (N = 50)

Test	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df	Sig
Pretest	50	20.72	5.60	17.93	49	.001**
Posttest	50	38.36	5.52			

Note: Significance level at .05.

N = Number of students
 Mean = Mean score
 S.D. = Standard deviation
 t = T-distribution
 df = Degree of freedom
 ** = Significant value of $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group demonstrated a substantial improvement in reading comprehension scores, increasing from a mean of 20.72 to 38.36. The paired-sample t-test confirmed the significance of this improvement ($t=17.93$, $p<.001$).

Table 2

Post-test Scores between Experimental and Controlled Groups

Group	Posttest Mean Score	T	df	Sig
Experimental Group	38.80	12.26	98	.001 **
Controlled Group	24.76			

Note: Significance level at .05.

N = Number of students
 T = T-distribution
 ** = Significant value of $p < 0.05$

Table 2 compares the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The experimental group significantly outperformed the control group ($\bar{X} = 38.80$, $\bar{X} = 24.76$), with an independent-sample t-test confirming the significance of this difference ($t=12.26$, $p=.001$).

Table 3*Students' Satisfaction toward Directed Reading Activities (N = 50)*

No.	Questionnaire Items	Mean	Interpretation
Section A: Engagement and Enjoyment			
1	I looked forward to the DRA reading lessons each week.	4.58	the Highest
2	The classroom atmosphere was active and engaging.	4.51	the Highest
3	I felt motivated to participate in reading-related tasks.	4.47	High
4	I enjoyed the use of group work and pair activities.	4.45	High
5	The step-by-step structure of the lesson made reading less stressful.	4.62	the Highest
Total		4.53	the Highest
Section B: Usefulness and Learning Outcomes			
6	The vocabulary activities helped me understand technical words better.	4.40	High
7	Peer discussions improved my comprehension of the texts.	4.36	High
8	The annotation tasks (e.g., underlining, circling) helped me focus while reading.	4.49	High
9	I can now understand texts more independently than before.	4.42	High
10	I feel more confident answering reading comprehension questions.	4.38	High
Total		4.41	High
Section C: Relevance to Vocational Learning			
11	The reading topics were related to my future job field (e.g., e-commerce, hospitality).	4.55	the Highest
12	The texts used in class were realistic and work-related.	4.48	High
13	I learned how English reading can be used in real-life professional settings.	4.50	the Highest
14	I felt that the reading materials matched my level of English.	4.43	High
Section C: Relevance to Vocational Learning			
15	The lessons helped me see the value of English in my major.	4.53	the Highest
Total		4.50	the Highest

Table 3 (Continued)

No.	Questionnaire Items	Mean	Interpretation
Section D: Overall Perception			
16	I prefer this DRA method over traditional reading lessons.	4.56	the Highest
17	I felt supported by the teacher during the lessons.	4.60	the Highest
18	I made clear progress over the 8 weeks.	4.52	the Highest
19	I would recommend this reading method to other students.	4.49	High
20	I would like to continue using this method in future English classes.	4.57	the Highest
Total		4.55	the Highest
Overall Total		4.50	the Highest

As summarized in Table 3, students expressed the highest satisfaction with DRA instruction. Overall perception achieved the highest mean score (4.55), followed by engagement and enjoyment (4.53), vocational relevance (4.50), and usefulness (4.41). This descending order suggests that students not only valued the overall learning experience most strongly but also appreciated the interactive and profession-related aspects of the lessons. The relatively high rating for usefulness further indicates that DRA helped students perceive tangible improvements in their reading ability and confidence.

Discussions

This study examined the impact of Directed Reading Activities on reading comprehension and student satisfaction among vocational college students in Sichuan Province, China. The findings demonstrate that DRA significantly enhanced reading achievement compared to traditional instruction, with experimental group students achieving substantially higher post-test scores. Additionally, students reported very high levels of satisfaction with DRA instruction, citing increased engagement, motivation, and perceived relevance to their vocational studies.

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that Directed Reading Activities (DRA) substantially improve reading comprehension among vocational college students. This indicates that DRA is more effective than traditional grammar-translation instruction in fostering reading achievement. These results are consistent with the interactive model of reading (Rumelhart, 1980; Stanovich, 1984), which posits that comprehension results from the integration of decoding and background knowledge. By structuring pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities, DRA actively engaged students in constructing meaning, thereby enhancing their comprehension skills.

Beyond statistical improvement, these findings highlight the pedagogical importance of interactive and student-centered approaches in vocational English education. DRA provided scaffolding that encouraged learner autonomy and collaborative meaning-making, both of which are essential for lifelong learning. The sustained increase in students' satisfaction suggests that affective engagement plays a

crucial role in their language development, echoing Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory.

Furthermore, the high levels of student satisfaction, further reinforce the effectiveness of DRA. Students valued the support of the teacher and expressed positive attitudes toward the method as a whole. These findings align with Self-Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan (1985), which emphasizes the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in motivation. The supportive structure of DRA may have enhanced these motivational dimensions, resulting in greater engagement and persistence. The results also echo the idea that DRA encouraged collaboration and improved reading outcomes in Chinese vocational schools (Chen & Zhang, 2021). Similarly, DRA also increased motivation and confidence in Southeast Asian contexts (Misdi, 2023). Together, these studies suggest that the benefits of DRA are not limited to a single cultural or educational setting.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Implications

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for improving English reading instruction in vocational colleges. First, teachers are encouraged to adopt Directed Reading Activities (DRA) systematically as part of their routine classroom practice. The structured nature of DRA-including the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages-helps guide students through the comprehension process and supports active and meaningful engagement with texts.

Second, teachers should incorporate pre-reading activities such as activating prior knowledge and previewing essential vocabulary. These practices reduce anxiety, improve readiness for comprehension, and help vocational learners approach texts more confidently. During the while-reading stage, teachers may employ techniques such as guided questions, annotation, and peer collaboration to support comprehension. Post-reading activities should emphasize summarization, reflection, and application of content to vocational contexts, enabling students to connect English reading with professional knowledge.

Third, the selection of reading materials should align closely with students' vocational interests and future careers, such as hospitality, e-commerce, or information technology. When reading content is perceived as relevant and practical, students are more motivated and develop more positive attitudes toward English learning.

Institution-level support is also essential. Administrators and policymakers should provide training and professional development that enable vocational English teachers to implement DRA confidently and effectively. Furthermore, integrating DRA principles into vocational English curricula may contribute to national education reforms aimed at reducing the gap between academic literacy and workplace communication.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Future research may extend the findings of this study in several ways. First, longitudinal studies could examine the long-term effects of DRA on reading proficiency, vocabulary retention, critical thinking, and learner autonomy. Second, future work may employ mixed-methods designs-combining classroom observations, interviews, and qualitative analysis-to capture deeper insights into students' experiences with DRA.

Additionally, researchers may explore the effectiveness of DRA across different vocational majors or compare outcomes across regions to understand contextual influences. Replication studies involving larger and more diverse samples would strengthen the generalizability of the results. Finally, future studies could investigate how digital or technology-enhanced DRA models (e.g., e-reading platforms, digital annotation tools) support reading development among vocational learners.

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