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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 two (2) 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.

Turnitin is used to check all submitted manuscripts for plagiarism, and the similarity score for plagiarism check is not more than 20%. We use the American Psychological Association (APA) style citation system, 7th edition, and you can discover more information at: www.apa.org.

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Exploring Chinese Teachers' Experiences in Teaching English as a Foreign Language Focusing on Large Class Management: A Case of One Beijing Elementary School

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Abstract

This study explored Chinese primary school EFL teachers' experiences, large-class size management practices, and guidelines needs within the context of recent educational reforms. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, the research collected questionnaire responses from 43 teachers, the whole population, and conducted semi-structured interviews with 8 teachers from a school in Beijing. The quantitative findings from the questionnaire revealed that teachers reported relatively strong colleague support ($M=4.11$) and the lowest mean score for workload manageable ($M=2.91$), indicating significant stress in large-class teaching environments. Regarding management strategies for large class sizes, preventive and organizational measures (e.g., establishing classroom routines, addressing disruptions) were employed more frequently. Assessment-related findings further indicate that while the use of quick formative assessments was moderately frequent ($M=3.79$), providing timely personalized feedback in large classes was perceived as particularly challenging, scoring lowest in this domain ($M=3.08$). The qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews provided deeper insights. Teachers consistently described heavy administrative burdens and non-teaching workloads as the most prominent challenges ($N=41$). Interview data also highlighted difficulties in addressing student ability differences when class sizes frequently exceeded 40 students ($N=37$). Furthermore, teachers expressed ambivalent attitudes towards educational technology: while acknowledging its potential value, they reported inadequate instructional training and increased operational burdens that hindered effective classroom implementation. The qualitative findings contextualize statistical trends by explaining how systemic pressures, class size, and limited institutional support collectively shape teachers' instructional choices and professional confidence within the context of teaching foreign languages in large classes.

Keywords: Chinese EFL teachers, teacher experience, large-class management, teaching workload, elementary school

Introduction

English has become a core subject in Chinese basic education due to globalization, national strategic demands, and curriculum reforms emphasizing communicative competence (Ministry of Education, 2011). Beijing, as a resource-intensive and policy-driven educational hub, presents both exemplary practices and heightened complexities in elementary EFL teaching. Despite relatively strong infrastructure and teacher qualifications, EFL teachers in Beijing face persistent tensions arising from mixed-ability classrooms, large class sizes, policy expectations, and the integration of educational technologies.

The Double Reduction Policy was introduced with the aim of improving in-school learning quality and reducing students' academic burden. According to policy reports issued by the Beijing Education Commission (2023), the policy has also reshaped teachers' work conditions by increasing instructional and administrative responsibilities, while disparities in learning outcomes continue to exist as some families rely on private tutoring. Within this policy context, EFL teachers are required to balance communicative language teaching with exam-oriented demands, address differentiated learning needs in large classes, integrate digital tools, and respond to growing administrative requirements.

While existing studies have primarily examined these issues at the macro policy or systemic level, there remains a relative lack of micro-level, classroom-based empirical evidence that captures how teachers experience and respond to these pressures in their everyday teaching practices-particularly in resource-rich yet structurally complex contexts such as Beijing.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the lived experiences and instructional practices of elementary EFL teachers in a Beijing primary school education context. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study focuses on how teachers navigate daily instructional and administrative challenges, manage large class sizes, and develop coping and adaptive strategies within Beijing's distinctive educational ecology.

The specific content of this study is as follows:

1. What are the experiences of Chinese EFL teachers at this elementary school in Beijing?
2. How do the Chinese EFL teachers manage large class sizes (over 40 students) classrooms?
3. What can be guidelines for Chinese EFL teachers for improvement?

Literature Review

1. Teacher Experience and Instructional Practice in EFL Contexts

Teachers' experience is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct shaping instructional decision-making, classroom interaction, and professional development. In EFL contexts, accumulated teaching experience contributes to teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, enabling them to manage classroom dynamics, design lessons, and respond to students' diverse learning needs (Shulman, 1987). Practical experience becomes particularly critical in large-class environments, where monitoring student behavior, sustaining engagement, and allocating attention pose significant challenges (Kagan, 1992; Emmer & Sabornie, 2015).

Research indicates that experienced teachers are more adept at adapting instructional strategies to varied class sizes and learner diversity. Approaches such as group work, task-based activities, and cooperative learning have been shown to support sustained participation in large or heterogeneous classrooms (Ikolov & Dörnyei, 2002; Shamim, 1993). Moreover, experienced teachers demonstrate greater sensitivity to contextual cues and adjust their practices accordingly (Tsui, 2003). Reflective practice further enhances teachers' professional growth, as sustained reflection enables refinement of beliefs and instructional approaches over time (Schön, 1983; Guskey, 2002).

2. Classroom Management in Large EFL Classes

Classroom management remains a central concern in EFL teaching, particularly in large classes where student engagement and potential disruption are more pronounced. Kounin's (1970) Classroom Management Theory emphasizes proactive strategies over reactive discipline, highlighting concepts such as "withitness," "overlapping," and "momentum" as essential for maintaining instructional flow. In EFL classrooms, effective classroom management supports not only behavioral order but also meaningful language use and interaction.

Empirical studies suggest that teachers who demonstrate strong situational awareness and intervene early can significantly reduce off-task behavior, especially in large or multicultural classrooms (Emmer & Everson, 2016). Well-managed classrooms provide structured and supportive learning environments that facilitate language acquisition, enhance student motivation, and improve learning outcomes. As such, classroom management constitutes a foundational component of effective EFL instruction rather than a peripheral skill.

3. Policy Context and the Specificity of Chinese EFL Teaching

EFL teaching in China operates within a distinct policy and institutional context that shapes teachers' instructional practices and professional experiences. English is introduced as a compulsory subject in primary schools from Grade 3, resulting in early and intensive exposure to English learning within an examination-oriented system. This structure places considerable instructional and managerial demands on teachers, particularly in large classes where balancing curriculum requirements and learner diversity becomes complex.

In recent years, Chinese EFL teachers have increasingly adopted Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) approaches, including formative assessment and task-based evaluation (Wang, 2022). This contrasts with practices in some other EFL contexts, such as Vietnam or Thailand, where assessment remains largely summative and institutional support for CBA is limited (Nguyen, 2021). The shift toward CBA reflects broader curricular reforms positioning teachers as facilitators of learning rather than mere transmitters of knowledge.

China also demonstrates distinctive features in teacher professional development and educational technology integration. National policies promote structured professional development, including school-based inquiry and peer reflection (Li, 2023), while technological innovations such as AI- and AR-supported instruction are increasingly explored in EFL classrooms (Zhou & Yan, 2023). Additionally, Chinese

EFL instruction emphasizes cultural and emotional dimensions, encouraging teachers to integrate national and intercultural elements into language teaching (Zhang, 2021).

Method

1. Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative questionnaires and qualitative semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same research phase and analyzed separately. Integration occurred at the interpretation stage through side-by-side comparison of findings, allowing quantitative trends to be explained and contextualized by qualitative evidence. This design enabled simultaneous examination of broad teaching patterns and in-depth teacher experiences in large-class EFL contexts.

2. Research Site

This study selected one primary school in Beijing as its research site. The school was chosen for its representative characteristics, including large class sizes, diverse student backgrounds, advanced digital infrastructure (such as AI speech tools and smart whiteboards), and proactive implementation of policy-driven reforms. Focusing on a single school enables an in-depth and contextually grounded exploration of English teachers' instructional practices within large-class teaching environments.

3. Participants

The participants in this study comprised all English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from the school in Beijing. Teachers were eligible for inclusion if they:

1. Taught English to grades 3-6;
2. Had a minimum of one years of teaching experience (to ensure familiarity with post-“Double Reduction” policy adjustments).

After selection, the number of teachers in the school who were eligible for this study is 43, i.e., the research population is 43. For the qualitative phase, eight teachers were purposively selected from the questionnaire participants to represent variation in teaching experience, grade-level assignments (Grades 3-6), and professional backgrounds. This purposive sampling aimed to capture diverse instructional perspectives and classroom realities within the school's large-class teaching context.

Research Instruments

Two instruments were employed to capture both the breadth and depth of Chinese EFL teachers' experiences.

1. Questionnaire

The quantitative instrument was a structured questionnaire administered to all 43 EFL teachers. The questionnaire was adapted from previously validated scales (Hu, 2005; Liu et al., 2019; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) and consisted of 24 Likert-scale items (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The items focused on teachers' daily professional experiences, strategies for managing large-sized classes, and challenges encountered in instructional practice. Items were grouped into subscales reflecting teaching experiences, classroom management, and teachers self efficacy and assessment and feedback, which formed the basis for the quantitative variables reported in Tables 3-6.

Prior to formal administration, the questionnaire was piloted with 30 EFL teachers to ensure clarity and reliability. The pilot participants were drawn from a comparable educational context and did not overlap with the final 43 participants.

Content validity was established through 3 expert review. The questionnaire items were evaluated by domain experts in EFL education and research methodology using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) method. All items met the acceptable IOC threshold ($\text{IOC} \geq 0.67$), and no items were removed during this process.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The pilot test yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.803, indicating good internal consistency. All subscales demonstrated acceptable reliability, with alpha values exceeding 0.70.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight purposively selected teachers. The interview protocol focused on teachers' daily classroom realities, instructional decision-making, large-class management strategies, use of technology, assessment-related pressures, and emotional experiences within the evolving policy environment. The open-ended format allowed participants to elaborate on constraints and affordances shaping their teaching practices. Together, the questionnaire and interview data provided a comprehensive portrayal of EFL teachers' experiences and enabled data triangulation within the mixed-methods design.

Data Collection

1. Questionnaire Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via the Wenjuanxing platform, a widely used and secure online survey tool in China, and was collected within a 10-day period. All eligible EFL teachers from the Primary School Education Group (Grades 3-6, with at least one year of teaching experience) were invited to participate. Participants were assured of anonymity, with no identifiers (e.g., names or school affiliations) collected.

After the questionnaires were collected, the mean scores of the relevant items, standard deviations, and other descriptive statistics were calculated and analyzed.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews Data Collection

Following the analysis of the questionnaire, eight teachers participated in interviews. The interviews were conducted via online meetings in Mandarin, with each interview lasting between 10-20 minutes. During the interviews, the researcher followed a semi-structured interview outline. Preliminary patterns identified from the questionnaire results (such as commonly reported challenges in large-class management and technology use) were used to inform follow-up prompts, allowing participants to elaborate on issues that emerged frequently in the quantitative data. This approach helped enhance the trustworthiness of the qualitative data by ensuring alignment between the quantitative trends and teachers' in-depth accounts.

All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim within 48 hours. Transcripts were returned to participants for member checking to ensure accuracy and credibility. Original recordings and transcripts were stored in password-protected folders accessible only to the research team.

Table 1*Semi-structured Interview Respondents*

Teacher No.	Teaching Experience	Gender	Duration
T1	8 years	Male	11 minutes
T2	10 years	Female	17 minutes
T3	6 years	Male	12 minutes
T4	15 years	Female	11 minutes
T5	3 years	Female	17 minutes
T6	12 years	Female	13 minutes
T7	22 years	Female	16 minutes
T8	18 years	Male	12 minutes

Method of Data Analysis

For quantitative data analysis, researchers applied different techniques to different types of data. First, researchers used SPSS 28.0 software to analyze quantitative data, i.e., survey questionnaires. Then, descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, standard deviations) is used to analyze questionnaire feedback.

For qualitative data, i.e., data collected from semi-structured interviews, the researcher used Lichtman's 3Cs Model (2013) for analysis. The main steps of Lichtman's 3Cs Model are:

1. Codes: Extract meaningful information from the raw data;
2. Categories: Group related codes into higher-level categories;
3. Concepts: Extract core concepts or themes from the categories.

Results

1. Data analysis of demographic characteristics

As shown in Table 2, the sample is predominantly composed of teachers with 5-10 years of teaching experience, forming the core of the teaching staff. The distribution across taught grades is balanced, ensuring comprehensive coverage of teaching experiences across all stages. Regarding class size, over 90% of teachers teach classes exceeding 40 students, with classes of 46 students or more termed "extra-large classes"—accounting for nearly half (46.6%).

Table 2*Distribution of Sample Demographic Characteristics (N=43)*

Characteristic Items	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Teaching Experience	2-5 years	12	27.9%
	5-10 years	15	34.9%
	10-15 years	11	25.6%
	Over 15 years	5	11.6%

Table 2 (Continued)

Characteristic Items	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
2. Grade Level Taught	Grade 3	10	23.3%
	Grade 4	11	25.6%
	Grade 5	12	27.9%
	Grade 6	10	23.3%
3. Class Size	35-40 students	4	9.3%
	41-45 students	19	44.2%
	46-50 students	14	32.6%
	Over 50 students	6	14.0%

2. Data analysis of teaching experience

Analysis of items within the teaching experience dimension reveals coexisting support and pressure in teachers' professional status.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Experience (N=43)

Item	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
4. I am generally satisfied with my current English teaching work.	3.82	0.71	Moderate
5. The school's teaching resources meet classroom needs.	4.05	0.63	Agree
6. I receive support from colleagues in lesson preparation and classroom management.	4.11	0.58	Agree
7. I have sufficient opportunities to participate in primary English-related training.	3.95	0.66	Moderate

Table 3 (*Continued*)

Item	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
8. My daily workload is manageable.	2.91	0.89	Disagree
9. The "Double Reduction" and new curriculum standards' policies on assignments and evaluation help improve teaching.	3.45	0.78	Moderate
10. I can implement the core competencies emphasized by the new curriculum standards in the classroom.	3.68	0.74	Moderate

From Table 3, teachers' overall job satisfaction ($M=3.82$) is at a medium-high level. Their perceptions of school resource support ($M=4.05$) and colleague support ($M=4.11$) are the most positive, forming a solid foundation for professional identity. However, the mean score for the item "My daily workload is manageable" ($M=2.91$) is below the neutral value of 3, with a relatively large standard deviation ($SD=0.89$), indicating that teachers generally feel overburdened, with considerable individual variation. Frequency analysis shows that a high 79.1% ($n=34$) of teachers selected "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree," strongly confirming that "high workload" is a core pain point in the current teacher experience.

To explore potential differences among teachers with varying teaching experience, independent-samples t-tests were conducted on selected questionnaire items. This analysis is reported as supplementary descriptive evidence rather than as a primary research focus.

3. Data analysis of large classroom management strategies

This section focuses on the specific management behaviors and strategies teachers employ when facing large classes of over 40 students, directly responding to Research Question 2 (How do Chinese English teachers manage classrooms with large class sizes of over 40 students?)

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Frequency of Large Class Size Management Strategy Use (N=43)

Management Strategy	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Usage Frequency Rank
11. I establish and repeatedly practice classroom routines.	4.28	0.51	1
13. I use gestures/verbal cues/signals for quieting or transitions.	4.22	0.55	2
12. I use visual cues to help students follow tasks.	4.17	0.60	3
18. I circulate around the classroom and provide immediate feedback.	3.95	0.64	4
14. I often use group work to increase participation.	3.90	0.68	5
17. I use digital tools for quick checks.	3.89	0.70	6
15. I appoint student leaders to assist with classroom management.	3.75	0.73	7
16. I assign tiered tasks to meet different student needs.	3.24	0.82	8

Table 4 clearly shows the priority of large class size management strategies. The top three most frequently used strategies-establishing routines, using non-verbal signals, and using visual cues-all belong to highly structured preventive management strategies.

In stark contrast, "assigning tiered tasks to meet different student needs," a typical differentiated instruction strategy, has a significantly lower frequency of use (M=3.24) than other strategies, ranking last.

Table 5*Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Efficacy (N=43)*

Efficacy Domain	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
21. I am confident I can handle classroom disruptions promptly.	4.02	0.59	High
19. I am confident I can engage most students.	3.98	0.62	Moderate
20. I am confident I can adjust teaching based on classroom feedback.	3.85	0.65	Moderate
23. I am confident I can use classroom checks to improve teaching.	3.70	0.71	Moderate
22. I am confident I can provide support for students of different levels.	3.56	0.75	Moderate

Note. Mean scores were interpreted as follows: 1.00–2.00 = Low, 3.00–3.99 = Moderate, 4.00–5.00 = High.

From Table 5, teachers show relatively strong confidence in handling classroom disruptions and stimulating student engagement, which corroborates their relatively high levels of confidence in handling classroom disruptions and engaging students. However, their confidence level drops noticeably in "providing support for students of different levels" (M=3.56). A further analysis revealed that class size has a significant impact on teacher efficacy. Table 6 indicated that the teacher group teaching classes of over 50 students had a significantly lower total efficacy score than the group teaching classes of 41–45 students.

An in-depth analysis of efficacy among teachers with different class sizes yielded the results in the table below.

Table 6*Teacher Efficacy by Class Size (N=43)*

Class Size	Sample Size (n)	Mean Total Efficacy Score (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
41–45 students	19	19.05	1.68
46–50 students	14	18.29	1.94

Table 6 (Continued)

Class Size	Sample Size (n)	Mean Total Efficacy Score (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Over 50 students	6	17.17	2.14

Note. The total efficacy score represents the sum of responses across all efficacy-related questionnaire items.

Table 6 presents teachers' mean total efficacy scores across different class-size categories. The results show a gradual decline in teacher efficacy as class size increases. Teachers instructing classes with over 50 students reported the lowest mean efficacy score ($M=17.17$, $SD=2.14$), while those teaching classes with 35-40 students reported the highest mean score ($M=19.75$, $SD=1.50$).

Regarding assessment practices, teachers reported an mean score of 3.79 for "quick formative assessments", but the implementation difficulty of "providing individualized feedback promptly in large classes" is extremely high, with a mean of only 3.08 ($SD=0.91$). This again confirms the practical difficulty of achieving individualized attention in large class size teaching environments.

Through content analysis and word frequency statistics of responses to the open-ended question (Q28: Please write at least one suggestion for improving large-class EFL teaching in our school), we identified three core challenges recognized by teachers.

Table 7

Identification of Core Challenges Based on Open-ended Question Coding

Rank	Core Challenge	Mention Frequency	Mention Rate	Representative Teacher Statements (Summarized)
1	Heavy Administrative and Non-teaching Burden	41	95.3%	"Non-teaching tasks like meetings, forms, and material preparation take up much lesson planning time."
2	Large Student Individual Differences, Hard to Cater to All	37	86.0%	"Student levels range from zero basics to near-native. Catering to all levels during planning and teaching is exhausting."

Table 7 (*Continued*)

Rank	Core Challenge	Mention Frequency	Mention Rate	Representative Teacher Statements (Summarized)
3	Mismatch between Technology Tools and Training, Increasing Burden	31	72.1%	"Too many platforms; training only covers operation, not pedagogy, leading to use for the sake of use, increasing burden."

Table 7 clearly indicates that the challenges faced by current Beijing primary school English teachers form a complex interplay of systemic factors (administrative burden), student factors (individual differences), and tool factors (technology integration). These three challenges are intertwined, collectively constituting the main obstacles affecting the effectiveness of teachers' teaching practices and their professional well-being.

4. Data analysis of the semi-structured interview

To deeply interpret the underlying motivations, specific contexts, and individual experiences behind the quantitative data, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 8 purposively selected teachers and performed a systematic qualitative analysis of the transcribed texts. This study strictly followed Lichtman's 3C analysis process, gradually refining core themes from the raw data.

Table 8

Qualitative Interview Analysis: Responses, Codes, and Categories

Response	Categories (coding frequency)	Concepts
"One of my class has 48 students, divided into 8 groups. Each group leader is responsible for checking homework collection/distribution and reminding about discipline within their group. I only need to manage these 8 leaders effectively to maintain overall control. It's akin to managing a small company." (T4, 15 years of experience).	Procedural routine training;(8) Student leader assistance;(5) Implicit differentiation; (6) Individual differences;(7)	Large Classroom Management

Table 8 (Continued)

Response	Categories (coding frequency)	Concepts
“During the first month of school, I barely teach new content; instead, I relentlessly train various routines: how to pass out notebooks, how to form groups, how to ask questions. Sharpening the axe won't delay the job of cutting wood. Once these procedures become ingrained, the entire semester runs smoothly.”(T1, 8 years of experience). "I would not say 'Group A does the difficult problems, and Group B does the easy ones.' Instead, I design a 'task package' containing foundational exercises, challenging problems, and extended reading materials. I tell all students, 'The foundational part is mandatory; attempt the rest based on your capacity.' This way, faster learners remain engaged, while those needing more time can secure their foundational understanding." (T6, 12 years of teaching experience). "At first, it was difficult to deal with students because there were so many students, and everyone was different, and you had to know how to establish authority but also have a good relationship with students." (T5, 3 years of teaching experience).		
"The machine scores quickly, but it doesn't understand why a particular student consistently struggles with a specific pronunciation. Authentic differentiation requires a teacher's insight and interpersonal interaction; technology only scratches the surface." (T7, 22 years of teaching experience).	Performative use of technology;(4) Digital divide concerns;(3)	Teachers' Experiences

Table 8 (Continued)

Response	Categories (coding frequency)	Concepts
"During open class demonstrations, we actively use tablets for features like quick-response answers and polls, which creates great interactive dynamics. However, during regular teaching under tight schedules, these functions are used less frequently, with PowerPoint projection remaining the primary tool. Sometimes, technology is employed to satisfy inspection criteria, devolving into a 'performance'." (T5, 3 years of teaching experience).		
"Our role within the school has expanded significantly. We are not just instructors but also organizers of after-school services, psychological counselors, and even customer service agents managing parental anxieties. With many parents no longer able to send their children to tutoring centers, they transfer all their expectations onto us, sending messages at any time requesting extra coaching for their children." (T3, 6 years of teaching experience).	Emotional labor consumption;(6) Teachers' duty expand;(5) Administrative duties;(5)	Teacher's Challenges
"You must constantly modulate your own emotions. For students who are struggling, you need to offer encouragement and hope; for high-achievers, you must stimulate their desire for challenge; and you also have to reassure anxious parents worried their children aren't being sufficiently stretched. By the end of the day, you are mentally exhausted. This emotional expenditure is extensive yet largely invisible to outsiders." (T2, 10 years of teaching experience).		

Table 8 (Continued)

Response	Categories (coding frequency)	Concepts
“As a new teacher, my biggest pressure does not come from teaching but from various administrative tasks. I often have to complete forms, write reports, and prepare documents for inspections after school hours. Teaching sometimes feels like something squeezed in between administrative responsibilities. These tasks take up the time I should have spent preparing lessons or reflecting on my teaching.” (T5, 3 years of teaching experience). “Administrative burdens reduce teachers’ professional agency. Many teachers have innovative ideas, but the sheer amount of non-instructional work leaves us exhausted, making it difficult to design new instructional plans or experiment with new strategies in class.” (T7, 22 years of teaching experience).		

Note. The numbers in parentheses indicate the frequency with which each category appeared across the interview transcripts. Sample quotes were selected as representative examples illustrating commonly reported practices, while less frequent or divergent views are discussed in the text.

The interview excerpts presented in Table 8 were selected as representative examples of commonly reported practices across participants. While these themes were shared by most teachers, some variation in implementation was observed, particularly in the extent to which differentiated practices could be sustained in large-class contexts. This variation is reflected in less frequent codes and is discussed alongside the dominant themes.

Based on a comprehensive and in-depth integration of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, this study derives the following core conclusions:

First, regarding teachers' teaching experiences (RQ 1), quantitative data reveals that teachers reported moderate to high satisfaction with items including "Overall Job Satisfaction" (M=3.82), "Adequacy of School Resources" (M=4.05), "Collegial Support" (M=4.11), and "Development Opportunities" (M=3.95). However, for "Manageable Workload," 79.1% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction or strong dissatisfaction (M=2.91). In open-ended responses, 95.3% of teachers identified administrative burdens as the primary barrier, which impinged on the time and energy available for differentiated instructional design and innovative practices. Second, with

regard to large-classroom management (RQ2), the questionnaire data showed that the three most frequently used management strategies were: (1) “I establish and repeatedly practice classroom routines” ($M=4.28$), (2) “I use gestures/verbal cues/signals for quieting or transitions” ($M=4.22$), and (3) “I use visual cues to help students follow tasks” ($M=4.17$), all of which fall under preventive management strategies. In contrast, the differentiated strategy that teachers reported using least often in large classes-“I assign tiered tasks to meet different student needs” ($M=3.24$, $SD=0.82$)-received a comparatively lower mean score.

These quantitative patterns are closely reflected in the qualitative interview data. High mean scores for routine-based and signal-based strategies correspond to interview themes such as “Establishing routine rules” and “Procedural routine training,” which emphasize maintaining classroom order through standardized procedures. Meanwhile, the lower mean score for differentiated instruction aligns with interview themes including “Limited individual attention” and “Implicit differentiation,” indicating that teachers in the participating Education Group often experienced constraints in providing individualized support in large-class settings.

Discussion

1. Teachers’ Experiences on The High Identification and High Workload Paradox

This study identifies a central paradox in the teaching experiences of Beijing primary EFL teachers: they report a strong sense of professional identification while simultaneously experiencing sustained and intensifying workload pressure. This finding is consistent with Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) view that teachers’ experiences are shaped by narrative and contextual conditions, which together constitute a specific contextual landscape.

Rather than proposing new theoretical constructs, the present study foregrounds two empirically salient dimensions repeatedly reflected in both questionnaire items and interview accounts: the expansion of non-instructional duties and the accumulation of emotional labor. Interview data indicate that teachers’ daily responsibilities extend beyond classroom teaching to include after-school services, frequent parent communication, and ongoing emotional support for students. These responsibilities were described by participants as time-consuming and emotionally demanding, contributing substantially to their perceived workload.

At the same time, teachers demonstrated reflective practices consistent with Schön’s (1983) notion of reflection-in-action. However, this reflection was often directed toward negotiating policy expectations and institutional constraints, rather than solely improving pedagogical techniques. For example, several interviewees described adjusting instructional goals, pacing, or assessment practices in response to administrative requirements and class size pressures.

Taken together, these findings suggest that teacher agency in this context is exercised through continuous adjustment within existing policy and institutional structures, rather than through unrestricted professional autonomy.

2. Preventive Strategies in Large-Class Management

The finding that teachers rely heavily on preventive and structured classroom management strategies aligns with Kounin's (1970) emphasis on "withitness" and smooth classroom transitions. Questionnaire results show that routines, visual cues, and non-verbal signals were among the most frequently used strategies, while differentiated instruction was reported as less frequently implemented.

Interview data help explain this pattern. Teachers described preventive strategies as practical and sustainable under large-class conditions, whereas differentiation was viewed as desirable but difficult to implement consistently due to time constraints, student numbers, and assessment demands. In this sense, teachers' reported practices reflect strategic adjustment rather than resistance to pedagogical innovation.

Compared with earlier studies that primarily documented the challenges of large classes (e.g., limited interaction or monitoring), the present study highlights how teachers actively organize classroom space, routines, and tools to maintain instructional flow. However, these adaptations remain bounded by structural conditions, particularly class size and workload.

Regarding technology use, questionnaire data indicate a moderate positive association between technology use and perceived workload. Interview accounts clarify this mixed role: while digital tools were described as helpful for classroom management and assignment distribution, they also generated additional demands related to preparation, monitoring, and reporting. This finding complements previous research on technology integration barriers by illustrating how technology can simultaneously support instruction and intensify workload under accountability pressures.

3. Teachers' Challenges on Differentiated Instruction Under Structural Constraints

Drawing on Tomlinson's (2014) framework, the questionnaire data indicate that most teachers conceptually endorse differentiated instruction. However, the present study reveals a clear gap between instructional ideals and classroom practices, as teachers frequently reported relying on baseline-oriented strategies rather than individualized learning pathways. Structural conditions-particularly large class size, limited instructional time, uniform assessment requirements, and constrained use of technology-were consistently identified as factors shaping teachers' instructional choices more strongly than pedagogical beliefs alone.

Consistent with previous studies that documented difficulties in implementing differentiation in China (Sun & Rao, 2020; Gong, 2021), interview data in the present study further illustrate how teachers respond to these constraints in practice. Teachers described adopting menu-style tasks, implicit differentiation, and minimal tiering as pragmatic adjustments that allowed them to maintain lesson flow and classroom order. These practices were not framed by participants as resistance to differentiation, but rather as feasible responses to structural limits that restricted more sustained individualized instruction.

Interview accounts also shed light on the role of technology in this process. While teachers reported that digital tools supported task distribution and monitoring in large classes, they simultaneously noted increased demands related to preparation, data

reporting, and follow-up. This perceived dual role of technology helps explain why technology use was often discussed by participants as both supportive and workload-intensive. Rather than indicating deeper instructional differentiation, technology was often described as being used primarily to manage existing instructional structures under accountability pressures.

Recommendation

Based on the above conclusions and discussion, this study proposes the following specific recommendations at the practical, policy, and research levels.

For schools and teachers, professional development should prioritize solving concrete classroom problems identified by teachers, rather than focusing on general platform training. Interview participants expressed a need for guidance on using context-appropriate digital tools to address concrete classroom challenges, provide feedback efficiently, and reduce repetitive administrative tasks. Training that supports teachers in adapting tools to their instructional goals may help mitigate the perceived burden of technology use.

In addition, teachers emphasized the emotional demands of their work. Schools may consider providing structured opportunities for peer support and emotional regulation strategies, which teachers identified as lacking but necessary for sustaining long-term professional commitment.

For educational management departments, structural adjustments-such as more flexible scheduling or pilot forms of group-based instruction in skill-focused subjects (e.g., oral English)-may create limited but meaningful space for interaction and differentiation within large-class settings.

Several limitations of this study point to directions for future research. First, as the data were drawn from a single education group in Beijing, future studies could examine whether similar patterns emerge in other regions or school types. Second, reliance on self-reported data suggests the value of incorporating classroom observations or longitudinal designs to capture changes in teachers' practices over time.

Future research may also further explore how teachers negotiate instructional ideals and structural constraints in large classes, with particular attention to workload, emotional labor, and technology use as interconnected dimensions of teaching practice.

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Effects of Using Microsoft Flip on Undergraduate Students' Speaking Skills

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Abstract

A persistent disparity exists between EFL learners' theoretical linguistic knowledge and their practical oral proficiency—a phenomenon often described as 'mute English.' This study addresses this critical gap by examining the efficacy of integrating Microsoft Flip, an asynchronous video discussion platform, into a structured teaching-speaking cycle model based on Goh and Burns' (2012). The research aimed to (1) compare undergraduate students' speaking skill scores before and after the intervention and (2) investigate students' perceptions of the platform's utility. Using a pre-experimental, one-group pre-test/post-test design, the study employed cluster random sampling to recruit 53 first-year nursing undergraduate students at a public university in Thailand. Over an eight-week intervention, participants engaged in asynchronous speaking tasks designed to foster planning, rehearsal, and reflection across eight thematic modules. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test. Quantitative analysis revealed a statistically significant improvement in speaking proficiency, with mean scores rising from 10.23 to 16.56 ($t(52) = 30.28, p < .001$), representing a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 4.16$). All sub-skills showed growth, with vocabulary exhibiting substantial gains. Furthermore, quantitative data from questionnaires indicated positive student perceptions ($M = 3.96$), particularly regarding the platform's ability to expand vocabulary ($M = 4.17$) and encourage regular practice. These findings suggest that combining asynchronous technology with teaching-speaking cycle instruction effectively ameliorates speaking deficits, offering a scalable pedagogical model for EFL educators seeking to enhance learner autonomy and oral competence in non-native contexts.

Keywords: microsoft flip, speaking skills, teaching speaking framework, EFL, undergraduate students

Introduction

Among the four macro-skills of language acquisition, speaking is widely recognized as the most fundamental component of communication and the primary mode of oral interaction (Woodrow, 2006; Richards, 2008). It is a productive skill that enables learners to express ideas, thoughts, and emotions effectively in academic, professional, and social settings (Sudarmo, 2021). Mastery of speaking significantly boosts learner confidence, promotes active participation in discussions, and enhances employment opportunities (Gillis, 2013; Copland et al., 2024). Conversely, a lack of oral proficiency can lead to professional stagnation and exclusion from global discourse.

In Thailand, English is officially recognized and mandated throughout the national curriculum. Despite this policy emphasis, a persistent gap remains between students' theoretical understanding of the language and their practical ability to use it, especially in spoken contexts (Nithideechaiwarachok et al., 2022). This phenomenon, often termed "mute English," is characterized by learners who may excel on grammar tests but struggle to articulate simple thoughts in real-time conversation. Many Thai students find it challenging to communicate effectively due to limited opportunities to practice outside the classroom (Shen & Chiu, 2019), fundamental difficulties with English grammar (Hamilton et al., 2024), and limited lexical resources (Noom-ura, 2013).

This proficiency gap creates a significant disadvantage, hindering both individual job prospects and the country's overall economic competitiveness (Siddoo et al., 2019; Thadphoothon, 2017). The problem is particularly severe for undergraduates in rural areas, where limited exposure to English speakers creates a profound disconnect between classroom knowledge and real-world application. Furthermore, the pressure to perform often leads to high levels of communication apprehension, inhibiting students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and perpetuating a cycle of avoidance and low proficiency.

Despite the proliferation of research highlighting the benefits of technology in EFL classrooms (Gilakjani, 2017; Parvin & Salam, 2015) and the specific affordances of Microsoft Flip within the Thai context (Pornwasanying, 2023; Robillos, 2023), a critical gap remains regarding its pedagogical integration. Existing literature predominantly isolates the tool's impact on affective factors such as engagement and anxiety, largely overlooking its efficacy when operationalized within a structured instructional cycle. Specifically, there is a paucity of empirical inquiry into how the asynchronous capabilities of Microsoft Flip—such as planning, recording, and self-monitoring—synergize with the systematic stages of Goh and Burns' (2012) Teaching Speaking Cycle. This study seeks to bridge this gap by moving beyond the tool's inherent features to examine how its strategic integration with a robust framework facilitates the holistic development of speaking skills for Thai EFL learners.

This study addresses that gap by examining not only whether the tool is effective but also how it functions when combined with a framework for developing strategic skills. By integrating the asynchronous capabilities of Microsoft Flip, which allow planning, recording, and re-recording, with a pedagogical cycle that explicitly teaches learners to focus, plan, and reflect, this research proposes a comprehensive solution to the speaking challenges faced by Thai EFL learners.

Research Objectives and Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

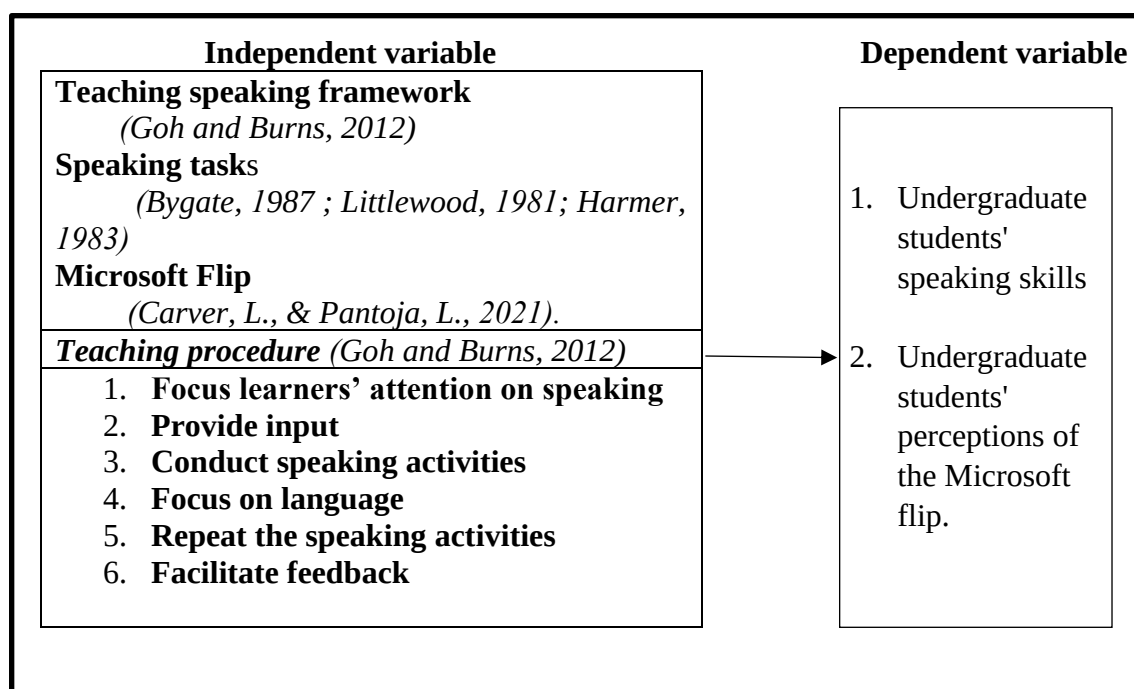
1. Does Microsoft Flip affect the speaking skills scores of undergraduate students?
2. What are the undergraduate students' perceptions of Microsoft Flip?

Conceptual Framework

This research aims to compare undergraduate students' speaking skill scores before and after using Microsoft Flip, and to investigate their perceptions of the tool. The following is the conceptual framework of this study.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Literature Review

1. Theories in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

To understand the mechanisms through which Microsoft Flip enhances speaking skills, this study is grounded in several key Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories that prioritize interaction, output, and cognitive processing. First, the *Interactionist Theory*, primarily associated with Lev Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes the social nature of learning and the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to this theory, learners achieve higher levels of proficiency when more knowledgeable others scaffold them in a social context. In the specific context of this research, the Microsoft Flip platform functions as a technological scaffold. Although asynchronous, it creates a social space in which peer interaction and teacher feedback help learners navigate their ZPD, bridging the gap between their current ability and their potential for development through guided practice.

Complementing the foundational role of Krashen's (1982) *Comprehensible Input Hypothesis*, which asserts that learners acquire language best when exposed to input that is slightly beyond their current proficiency level ($i+1$). This theory underpins the "input" stage of the instructional framework used in this study, ensuring that, before students are asked to produce language, they are provided with the necessary lexical and grammatical resources.

While the Input Hypothesis is vital, this study acknowledges that the social aspect is the *Output Hypothesis* proposed by Swain (1985), which argues that exposure to comprehensible input alone is insufficient for language acquisition. Swain posits that learners must produce "pushed output"-language that is stretched to meet communicative goals-to acquire the target language truly. Producing language forces learners to move from semantic processing, where they merely understand meaning, to syntactic processing, where they must construct grammar. The intervention in this study operationalizes this hypothesis through Microsoft Flip's video recording feature. The act of recording compels students to articulate their thoughts, thereby forcing them to notice gaps in their interlanguage and to test hypotheses about language structure in ways that passive listening does not.

Finally, the research draws upon *Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)*, as articulated by Ellis (2003). TBLT prioritizes the use of language as a tool to achieve non-linguistic outcomes, such as solving a problem or telling a story. By integrating specific speaking tasks within the Microsoft Flip environment, this study shifts the pedagogical focus from rote memorization of forms to meaningful, authentic communication.

2. Speaking Skills: Definition and Components

Oral communication has long been recognized as a fundamental component of second language acquisition, with speaking skills often regarded as the most difficult of the four macro-skills to master (Bygate, 1987; Goh & Burns, 2012). Speaking is a dynamic process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). It is an interactive, two-way process that requires the speaker to manage multiple linguistic and cognitive demands simultaneously. To operationalize speaking skills for this study, five core components are evaluated. First, fluency is the ability to speak smoothly and coherently without undue hesitation (Brown, 1994). Second, accuracy (grammar) refers to the correct use of sentence structure and word order to convey precise meaning (Thornbury, 1999). Third, vocabulary encompasses the range of lexical items a speaker can retrieve and use effectively (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Fourth, pronunciation involves producing clear, intelligible speech sounds (Harris, 1974). Finally, comprehension is the ability to understand the interlocutor and respond appropriately, facilitating interaction (Harris, 1974). In conclusion, the components of speaking-vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension-are interconnected and together define oral proficiency in a second language. Each element plays a specific yet related role in enabling effective communication: vocabulary enhances expressiveness, grammar maintains structural accuracy, pronunciation ensures clarity, fluency supports smooth speech, and comprehension enables meaningful interaction. For the purpose of this study, comprehension was explicitly evaluated through a face-to-face speaking test in which students were required to process and respond to live questions from an

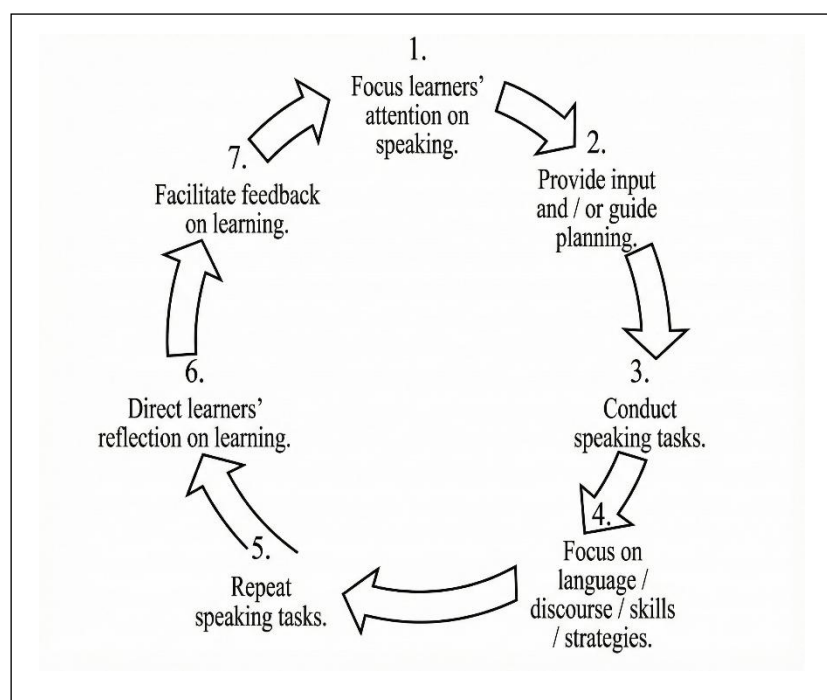
interlocutor, ensuring that their ability to interpret and respond to input was measured alongside their production skills. Addressing these components holistically is essential for developing skilled and confident speakers.

3. The Teaching-Speaking Framework (Goh & Burns, 2012)

Traditional methods such as Audio-Lingualism (drills) or PPP (Present-Practice-Produce) often fail to develop the strategies needed for autonomous speaking. To address this, Goh and Burns (2012) proposed a holistic seven-stage cycle that integrates cognitive and metacognitive instruction. The cycle begins by focusing learners' attention to raise awareness of the task and required skills, followed by providing input to supply necessary vocabulary and grammar. The third stage involves conducting speaking tasks in which students engage in the actual communicative activity, after which instruction shifts to focus on language, offering detailed guidance on linguistic form. A crucial component of this framework is the fifth stage, repeating speaking tasks, which develops fluency and accuracy through iteration. The cycle concludes with facilitating feedback to provide constructive critique and reflecting on learning to encourage self-assessment and planning for future improvement. This study adapts strategically, incorporating Microsoft Flip into a modified six-stage teaching model to facilitate the "Repeat" and "Reflect" stages. The platform's re-recording feature allows students to rehearse and self-monitor before submitting their final output.

Figure 2

Teaching Speaking Framework Cycle



Goh and Burns (2012: 151–152)

4. Speaking tasks

The historical trajectory of speaking tasks reveals a clear progression from isolated methodologies to integrated pedagogical models. Early scholarship by Harmer (1983) established a critical distinction between accuracy-focused practice and fluency-driven activities, such as role-plays. Bygate (1995) expanded this scope by applying a psycholinguistic framework, positing that tasks such as information-gap tasks are essential for developing the cognitive automaticity required for spontaneous speech. This emphasis on authentic interaction was consolidated within Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), with Nunan (2003) defining tasks by their non-linguistic outcomes and Ellis (2003) proposing a three-phase structure to enable "focus-on-form".+1

These theoretical developments are effectively synthesized in Goh and Burns' (2012) seven-stage teaching cycle. Rather than displacing earlier methodologies, their framework organizes them: fluency activities are implemented in "Stage 3," accuracy is addressed reactively in "Stage 4," and the critical role of task repetition is formalized in "Stage 5." Consequently, the Goh and Burns model serves as a robust structure that unifies fluency and accuracy instruction within a cohesive lesson cycle. Anchoring these tasks within specific stages of a teaching speaking framework ensures that speaking tasks are not isolated events but are instead aligned to scaffold the learner's progression from cognitive planning to autonomous production.

5. Web-Based Instruction and Microsoft Flip

Web-Based Instruction (WBI) uses internet technologies to create meaningful learning environments (Khan, 1997). Microsoft Flip (formerly Flipgrid) is a WBI tool designed for asynchronous video discussion. It offers a social media-like interface with video filters, emojis, and "likes," which appeal to digital-native students. Key features include the "Discovery Library" for resources, "Mixtapes" for compiling videos, and the "Immersive Reader" for accessibility. Research indicates that Flipgrid reduces anxiety by allowing students to record in private settings (Miller, 2021). It promotes "pushed output" and increases willingness to communicate (Carver, 2021; Chaisiri, 2023). Previous studies in EFL contexts (Pornwasanying, 2023; Robillos, 2023; Damayanti & Citraningrum, 2021) have consistently found improvements in fluency and confidence. However, the asynchronous nature limits real-time negotiation of meaning, a key component of interactional competence. Additionally, technical barriers and the pressure of being recorded can induce performance anxiety in some learners (Rinfret, 2023; Hammett, 2021).

Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative research approach to assess improvements in Nursing undergraduate students' speaking skills through Microsoft Flip, which supported their speaking. Quantitative data were collected from speaking tests administered before and after the Microsoft Flip intervention, as well as from a questionnaire given after the intervention to gauge students' perceptions.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of 110 first-year undergraduate students enrolled in the "English for Communication" course (GED 1101) at Roi Et Rajabhat University during the first semester of 2025. The sample was selected using cluster random sampling, with one intact classroom serving as the sampling unit. The final sample comprised 53 first-year nursing undergraduate students.

Demographically, the participants were aged 18-20 years and predominantly from rural backgrounds in Thailand. Prior to the intervention, their English proficiency was assessed at the A2 level (Basic Users) on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a level notably below the B2 target set by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation (MHESI).

Research Design

This study employed a one-group pre-test/post-test pre-experimental design, a design commonly used in educational settings to evaluate changes in a group following an intervention (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The design is represented as:

$$O1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow O2$$

O1 is the pre-test, X is the 8-week Microsoft Flip intervention, and O2 is the post-test. While this design has limitations regarding internal validity, it is practical for exploratory research within intact classroom settings.

Research Instruments

To gather comprehensive data, two primary research instruments were meticulously developed and validated for this study.

1. Speaking Test

To assess speaking skills in alignment with the first research objective, a standardized speaking test was constructed based on the theoretical frameworks of Bailey (2005) and Bachman and Palmer (1996). This assessment was structured into three distinct segments designed to elicit different aspects of speaking skills: a one-minute self-introduction to gauge basic information exchange; an interview regarding familiar topics such as family and hobbies lasting four to five minutes; and a structured monologue based on a specific prompt card, covering themes like their life experiences, memories, and opinions about the community, services, and cultures, which were designed according to the lessons, which required five to ten minutes of sustained speech. Performance was evaluated using an analytic scoring rubric that rated vocabulary, grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension on a six-band scale. The test's content validity was verified by three experts, yielding an Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) between 0.67 and 1.00. In contrast, inter-rater reliability between the researcher and an external expert proved excellent, with an Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) of 0.98.

2. Perception Questionnaire

Complementing the proficiency test, a perception questionnaire was tailored to address the second research objective by assessing students' attitudes toward the Microsoft Flip platform. Adapted from the works of Stepp-Greany (2002) and Soureshjani and Riahipour (2012), the tool was divided into two sections: demographic data collection and a thirteen-item assessment of student perceptions. The perception items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". They were categorized into three dimensions: content and lesson design, the benefits of using Microsoft Flip, and students' perceptions of usage. The instrument demonstrated high internal consistency during pilot testing, achieving a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.85, indicating high reliability.

Research Procedure

The study was conducted over 10 weeks, divided into two phases.

Phase 1: Preparation The researcher analyzed the course syllabus (GED 1101) and mapped it to CEFR standards. A needs analysis survey (N=15) was conducted to identify the 14 topics in language learning offered by the Council of Europe (2022) that were most relevant to the English for Communication course. The top eight topics selected by descriptive statistics of need analysis, as chose were: Business, Friends, Future, Education, Stories, People, Culture, and Services. The eight-week lessons were designed with an integrated teaching-speaking framework using the Microsoft Flip intervention.

Phase 2: Implementation (The Intervention) The intervention followed the adapted 7-stage Goh and Burns framework, integrated with Microsoft Flip tasks.

Week 1: Orientation to Microsoft Flip and administration of the **Pre-test**.

Weeks 2-9: Implementation of the 8 instructional units. Each unit (120 minutes). The 120-minute duration refers to the onsite (face-to-face) instructional sessions held once per week. During these sessions, the researcher facilitated Steps 1 (Focus), 2 (Input/Planning), and 4 (Language Focus). The online components-Steps 3 (Conducting Speaking Tasks), 5 (Repetition), and 6 (Feedback)-were designed as asynchronous tasks completed by students outside of class hours via the Microsoft Flip platform. This structure allowed class time to be dedicated to scaffolding and linguistic preparation, while speaking practice and peer interaction occurred independently.

1. Focus Attention (On-site): Warm-up videos and quizzes to engage interest.

2. Provide Input (On-site): Explicit teaching of vocabulary (e.g., "Entrepreneur," "Stakeholder" for the Business unit) and grammar structures (e.g., Future tense with "will/going to").

3. Conduct Speaking Tasks (Online/Asynchronous): Students recorded videos on Microsoft Flip. Tasks included:

Describing: Describing personal information (Unit 1).

Sharing: Sharing opinions on idols (Unit 2).

Presentation: Presenting local business ideas (Unit 3).

Information Gap: Comparing education systems (Unit 4)

Problem Solving: Planning future goals (Unit 5).

Spot the Difference: Discussing cultural customs (Unit6).

Storytelling: Narrating folk tales (Unit 7).

Role-play: Simulating service encounters (Unit 8).

The tasks were categorized into two distinct types based on the interactional demands:

A. *Monologic Tasks* (Units 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7): These tasks required students to produce sustained, individual speech on a given prompt. Examples include Describing personal information (Unit 1), Presenting business ideas (Unit 3), and Storytelling (Unit 7). These tasks were designed to foster fluency, complexity, and vocabulary retrieval by allowing students to plan and record their speech without the immediate pressure of real-time turn-taking.

B. *Dialogic/Interactive Tasks* (Units 4, 6, and 8): These tasks simulated social interaction and required students to engage with peer input. Examples include Information Gap activities (Unit 4) and Role-plays (Unit 8). In these units, students were required to function as interlocutors by viewing peer videos and recording appropriate responses, thereby targeting comprehension and interactional competence.

The progression of these tasks was designed with specific task design variables in mind: moving from familiar to abstract topics (e.g., from 'Friends' to 'Cultural Customs') and from structured to open-ended responses, ensuring a scaffolded development of oral proficiency.

4. Focus on Language (On-site): Reviewing common errors and teaching communication strategies (e.g., circumlocution, stalling).

5. Repeat Task (Online): Students re-recorded their videos after receiving feedback, utilizing the "rehearsal" strategy.

6. Facilitate Feedback (Online): Peer feedback and teacher evaluation were provided via the platform's comment section.

Week 10: Administration of the **Post-test** and the **a questionnaire about the perception**.

Research Findings

Effect on Speaking Skills (Research Objective 1)

The first objective was to compare undergraduate students' speaking skill scores before and after the Microsoft Flip intervention. The results of the paired-samples t-test are presented in Table 1

Table 1

Overall Scores from the Pre- and Post-speaking Tests (n=53)

Test	N	Full Score	Mean (M)	S.D.	Mean Diff	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	53	30	10.23	3.33			
Post-test	53	30	16.56	3.64			
					6.33	30.28	.001*

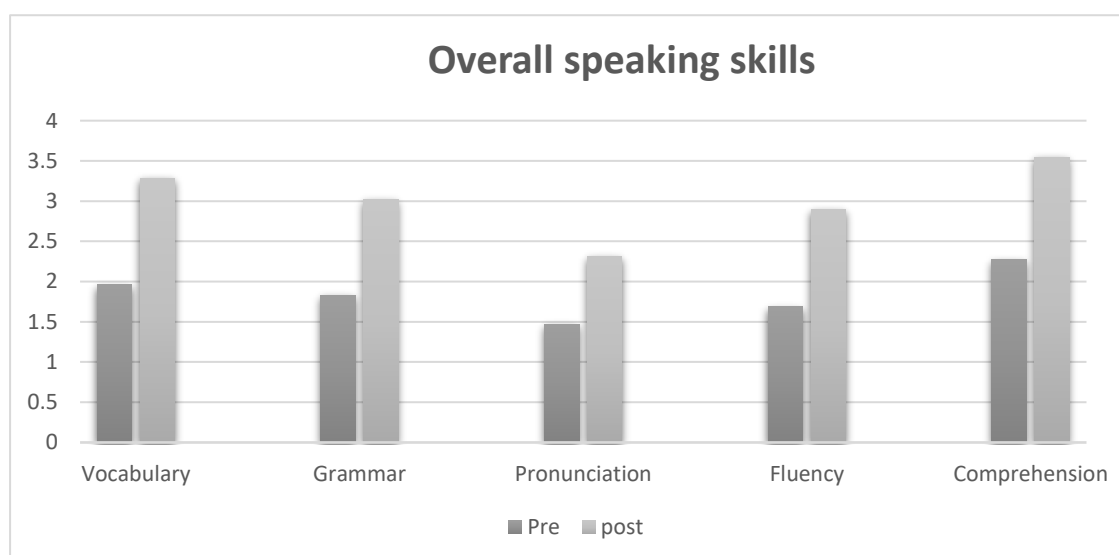
Note: Significance level $p < .05$

As shown in Table 1, the mean score for speaking skills increased significantly from the pre-test ($M = 10.23$, $SD = 3.33$) to the post-test ($M = 16.56$, $SD = 3.64$). The paired-samples t-test analysis yielded ($t(52) = 30.28, p < .001$), a p-value of .000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates a statistically significant improvement in the students' English-speaking proficiency following the intervention. The mean difference of 6.33 points represents a substantial performance gain. Additionally, Cohen's d of 4.16 indicates that Microsoft Flip had a considerable effect on the students' speaking abilities.

Sub-skill Analysis: Further analysis examined improvements across the five specific components of speaking.

Figure 3

Comparison of Pre- and Post-test Speaking Skills in Each Sub-skills



The results for the five sub-skills are presented below, organized by the magnitude of the mean score increase. Vocabulary showed the highest nominal growth across all components, rising from a pre-test mean of 1.96 to a post-test mean of 3.28. This represents a gain of 1.32 points (67.31%), indicating that the asynchronous planning time allowed students to effectively retrieve and use diverse lexical items. Comprehension followed with a gain of 1.28 points (56.02%), maintaining its position as the strongest overall skill with a post-test mean of 3.55. Fluency showed the most dramatic relative improvement; the point gain of 1.21 marked a substantial 71.51% increase over the baseline score of 1.69, indicating that the video-recording tasks significantly reduced hesitation. Grammar showed a consistent upward trend, with a gain of 1.19 points (64.95%). Finally, Pronunciation recorded the smallest point gain of 0.84, rising from 1.47 to 2.31. While this still reflects a 57.06% improvement, the lower magnitude compared to other skills suggests that phonological accuracy may require more intensive synchronous feedback to match the gains seen in fluency and vocabulary.

Student Perceptions (Research Objective 2)

The second objective investigated the students' perceptions of using Microsoft Flip. The data from the 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (where 5 = Strongly Agree) revealed generally positive attitudes. The overall mean score for perception was 4.19 (SD = 0.94), interpreted as a "High" level of positive perception. The results are categorized into three key dimensions:

Content and Lesson Design (M = 4.19). Students responded positively to the lesson structure. The highest-rated item in this category was "The instructions in the lesson are clear" (M = 4.40), indicating that the combination of on-site instruction and online tasks was easy to follow. Students also agreed that "The lesson has clearly defined learning objectives" (M = 4.30). The lowest-rated item in this section was "The exercises in the lesson are interesting" (M = 3.91). While still positive, this suggests that task design could be further diversified to maintain high engagement over 8 weeks.

The Benefits of Using Microsoft Flip (M = 4.36). This was the highest-rated dimension, reflecting strong student endorsement of the tool's utility. The highest-rated item in the entire survey was "Microsoft Flip can be further implemented in real classroom settings" (M = 4.45). This indicates a strong acceptance of the technology and a desire for its continued use. Students also firmly believed that 'Using Microsoft Flip in Enhancing English Speaking Skills' was effective (M = 4.36).

Student Perception of Usage (M = 4.06). This dimension explored the affective and autonomous aspects of learning. Students reported that "The lesson promotes independent learning" (M = 4.30). This is a critical finding, suggesting that the platform's asynchronous nature successfully shifted the locus of control to the learner. However, the item 'The lesson caters to students' varying learning abilities' received the lowest rating in the survey (M = 3.70, SD = 1.15). This lower mean score suggests that, while the intervention was viewed positively overall, participants perceived the platform as less effective at accommodating individual learning differences than its other benefits. This finding highlights a distinction between the tool's general utility and its perceived adaptability, indicating that differentiation remains a critical area for pedagogical refinement.

Discussion

Enhancement of speaking skills

Research Question 1: Does Microsoft Flip affect the speaking skills scores of undergraduate students?

The quantitative data reveal a robust and substantial gain in undergraduate speaking proficiency following the Microsoft Flip intervention. The overall mean score rose from 10.23 to 16.56 ($t(52) = 30.28, p < .000$), with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 4.16$). These findings corroborate recent computer-assisted language learning (CALL) research in the Thai EFL context, specifically aligning with Pornwasanying (2023), who observed similar advancements in learner confidence and speaking performance, and with Robillos (2023), whose work confirmed that technology-mediated metacognitive tasks significantly improve delivery and clarity. However, the distinct hierarchy of gains observed in the present study—where vocabulary and comprehension outpaced pronunciation—necessitates a multi-theoretical interpretation that draws on Input, Output, ZPD, and Task-Based Learning perspectives. The most marked improvement was observed in Vocabulary, which exhibited the highest

nominal gain of 1.32 points ($t(52) = 30.28, p < .000$). This finding is best understood through Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis. The platform's asynchronous nature facilitated a "pushed output" environment in which learners, upon reviewing their recordings, engaged in self-monitoring and hypothesis testing. This recursive process of recording and re-recording enabled the retrieval and integration of more sophisticated lexical items than are typically available in spontaneous speech, a phenomenon also noted by Robillos (2023) regarding the benefits of planned asynchronous tasks. Furthermore, Comprehension remained the strongest component overall ($M = 3.55$), showing a significant increase ($t(52) = 30.28, p < .000$). This development supports Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), as the peer feedback stage (Stage 6) required students to critically evaluate interlocutor output, thereby reinforcing receptive skills through social scaffolding. Concurrently, the gains in Fluency (+1.21 points) and Grammar (+1.19 points) reflect the efficacy of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) principles. By engaging in meaning-focused tasks such as role-plays and business presentations, students were driven by non-linguistic goals, which, combined with the Input Hypothesis ($i+1$) operationalized in the planning stages, reduced cognitive load and hesitation. Conversely, Pronunciation demonstrated the lowest gain (+0.84 points). While statistically significant, this disparity suggests a pedagogical divergence: while asynchronous video tools effectively cultivate lexical complexity and fluency through planning and repetition, phonological accuracy may require immediate, synchronous corrective feedback to achieve comparable development. Thus, while the intervention fostered holistic growth, the results indicate that asynchronous platforms are particularly well-suited for developing the cognitive and lexical dimensions of speaking, whereas phonological refinement may require supplementary synchronous instruction.

Research Question 2: What are undergraduate students' perceptions of Microsoft Flip?

The quantitative findings from the questionnaire indicate that students perceive Microsoft Flip as a highly beneficial tool for language learning. The high mean score for the domain "The Benefits of Using Microsoft Flip" ($M = 4.36$) indicates strong student endorsement of the platform's utility in enhancing their speaking abilities. This positive reception is further supported by high ratings for "Independent Learning" ($M = 4.30$), corroborating the Interactionist Theory. Although the interaction was asynchronous, the presence of a "digital audience" (peers and teacher) provided the necessary social pressure to perform, while the ability to edit provided psychological safety to take risks.

This aligns with Chaisiri's (2023) findings on Willingness to Communicate (WTC). Thai students, often culturally reticent to speak in public due to "face" concerns, found the video recording's private nature liberating. They could present their "best self," which boosted confidence. However, the finding regarding differentiation ($M = 3.70$) serves as a critical caveat. As noted by Rinfret (2023), technology is not a panacea; the lower score suggests that the platform's implementation did not fully account for varying levels of digital literacy or anxiety. For students with lower proficiency, the rigid requirement to produce video content-without sufficient scaffolding or alternative modes such as audio-only submissions-likely turned the task into a source of stress rather than a learning opportunity. This indicates that, while the tool is effective, future implementation strategies must include tiered technical support

and flexible participation options to prevent anxiety from inhibiting learning among vulnerable students.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of Microsoft Flip within a structured, adapted teaching-speaking cycle is a highly effective pedagogical strategy for the Thai EFL context. It successfully addresses the 'mute English' problem by providing a scaffolded, low-anxiety environment that compels active language production. The intervention yielded a statistically significant improvement in overall speaking proficiency ($t(52) = 30.28, p < .000$), with consistent gains observed across all five sub-skills, particularly in vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, findings from the perception questionnaire substantiate the tool's broader educational value; students reported high levels of agreement that the platform fostered learner autonomy ($M = 4.30$) and equipped them with skills applicable to real-world career contexts ($M = 4.06$).

Recommendations

Pedagogical Implications

1. *Strategy is Key*: Technology should not be used in isolation. The success of this study depended on the *framework* (Goh & Burns) rather than just the *app*. Teachers must explicitly teach strategies like planning and self-monitoring.

2. *The "Rehearsal"*: Educators should legitimize "rehearsal" as a learning activity. Allowing students to re-record assignments is not "cheating"; it is a valuable learning process of error correction.

3. *Hybrid Models*: The study suggests a blended approach is best. "Input" and "Language Focus" (grammar/pronunciation correction) may be best delivered on-site, while "Production" and "Repetition" are effectively offloaded to the asynchronous platform.

Limitations

- *Design*: First, the study employed a one-group pre-test/post-test design, which inherently limits the internal validity of the findings. Without a control group, it is difficult to attribute the observed improvements in speaking skills exclusively to the Microsoft Flip intervention. Threats to validity, such as maturation effects (students naturally improving over the eight-week period) or history effects (external exposure to English outside the classroom), cannot be entirely ruled out. Consequently, while the significant gains in test scores ($t(52) = 30.28, p < .000$) strongly suggest the intervention's efficacy, causal claims regarding the specific impact of the technology versus general instruction must be interpreted with caution the one-group pre-test/post-test design limits the ability to attribute causality strictly to the intervention, as maturation effects cannot be entirely ruled out.

- *Sample*: The study was limited to nursing students at a single university, limiting generalizability to other disciplines or proficiency levels.

- *Duration*: The 8-week period was sufficient for short-term gains, but long-term retention of these skills remains untested.

- *One size fits all*: Additionally, while the quantitative results indicated a lower perception of the platform's ability to cater to varying learning abilities ($M=3.70$), this study did not explicitly measure variables such as digital literacy levels

or communication apprehension in relation to this specific item. Therefore, it is possible that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach may not fully address the diverse needs of mixed-ability classes, particularly for students with higher anxiety, but further research is required to confirm this correlation

Recommendation For Future Studies

1. *Experimental Design*: Future studies should employ a quasi-experimental design with a control group (receiving traditional face-to-face speaking practice) to compare the efficacy of the asynchronous video-mediated framework against conventional methods. Rather than attempting to isolate the technology itself, this design would evaluate the comparative effectiveness of the technology-enhanced pedagogical model, acknowledging that the tool's impact is intrinsically linked to its instructional implementation.

2. *Longitudinal Analysis*: Research tracking students over a full academic year would provide insights into the sustainability of the motivation and skill gains.

3. *Task Design Variables*: While this study employed a scaffolded task design that integrated multiple variables-specifically, task complexity (moving from concrete to abstract topics) and interactional mode (alternating between monologic and dialogic tasks)-the specific impact of each variable on speaking performance remains aggregated. Future research should therefore aim to isolate these task design variables to determine their individual efficacy. For instance, experimental studies could compare the effects of monologic tasks (e.g., storytelling, presentations) versus dialogic tasks (e.g., information gaps, role-plays) on distinct speaking components such as fluency and accuracy. Additionally, investigating the role of topic familiarity could reveal how moving from personal to academic subjects within asynchronous video platforms specifically influences learner anxiety and willingness to communicate.

4. *Differentiation Strategies*: Research is needed into how to adapt WBI platforms for students with learning disabilities or severe communication apprehension, ensuring that technology bridges gaps rather than widening them.

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Implementing English as an International Language in EFL Contexts: A Qualitative Case Study of Teachers' Challenges in Thai Secondary Education

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Abstract

English as an International Language (EIL) emphasizes intelligibility, linguistic diversity, and intercultural communication. Yet in high-stakes secondary contexts, its integration often conflicts with examination-driven curricular structures. This qualitative case study investigates the challenges of implementing EIL in Thai secondary English classrooms, focusing on how curriculum and assessment requirements shape pedagogical practice. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, and analyzed using qualitative content analysis to identify recurring themes and structural tensions. The findings reveal that although national curricula promote communicative competence, classroom practice is strongly regulated by high-stakes examinations, prescribed textbooks, and limited instructional time. These institutional pressures restrict opportunities to integrate EIL-informed practices, such as engagement with diverse English varieties and intercultural communicative tasks. Teachers demonstrate increasing awareness of EIL principles but must negotiate these ideals within an assessment-oriented system prioritizing standardized norms. The study extends Global Englishes scholarship by showing that EIL implementation in Expanding Circle settings is mediated by systemic assessment constraints rather than teacher disposition alone. By conceptualizing teachers as pedagogical mediators, the study underscores the need for closer alignment among curriculum policy, assessment design, and teacher education to enable sustainable EIL integration.

Keywords: English as an International Language (EIL), high-stakes assessment, Thai secondary education, Global Englishes, qualitative case study

Introduction

English has become the primary global lingua franca, facilitating communication across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Traditionally, however, English language teaching (ELT) has been shaped by native-speaker norms-particularly British and American standards-with strong emphasis on grammatical accuracy and standardized pronunciation. As English increasingly functions as a medium of

international and intercultural communication, these assumptions have been challenged. The EIL perspective reconceptualizes English as a pluralistic and evolving resource, prioritizing intelligibility, flexibility, and intercultural competence over conformity to native-speaker models (Jenkins, 2015; Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Despite growing theoretical support, the integration of EIL into classroom practice remains uneven. A central tension lies between pluralistic language ideologies and institutional structures that continue to privilege standardized norms. In many examination-oriented systems, form-focused instruction and test preparation shape everyday pedagogical decisions, limiting opportunities to incorporate diverse English varieties or intercultural tasks. Thus, the challenge of EIL implementation is not merely pedagogical but structural. Thailand represents a particularly salient example of this tension. English education has historically followed English as a Foreign Language (EFL) paradigms that prioritize accuracy-based assessment and native-speaker standards (Baker, 2015; Hayes, 2016). Although national policies increasingly promote 21st-century competencies such as communication, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship (Ministry of Education, 2018; Office of the Education Council, 2018), classroom practice remains strongly influenced by high-stakes examinations and prescribed curricular materials. This creates a gap between policy aspirations aligned with EIL principles and the practical realities teachers face in secondary classrooms. Existing research indicates that teachers often recognize the relevance of EIL but encounter constraints including curriculum requirements, examination pressures, limited resources, and entrenched language ideologies (Tang, 2020; Phoocharoensil, 2020; Sung, 2023). However, much of the scholarship in Thailand has focused on higher education or learner perspectives, leaving secondary school contexts comparatively underexplored. Given the pivotal role of secondary education in shaping students' language development and examination trajectories, understanding teachers' experiences at this level is critical. Accordingly, this study investigates the challenges Thai secondary school English teachers encounter when attempting to implement EIL in classroom practice. By examining teacher perspectives and classroom realities through interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study contributes to ongoing discussions in ELT and Global Englishes by clarifying how institutional structures mediate pedagogical innovation in examination-oriented systems. The findings offer practical implications for English language teaching in Thai secondary schools and comparable EFL contexts by identifying areas where curriculum design, assessment frameworks, and teacher education programs require greater alignment with EIL principles. In doing so, the study aims to inform context-sensitive reforms that support teachers in translating global Englishes theory into sustainable classroom practice.

Literature review

EIL pedagogy

English has become a dominant global lingua franca, facilitating communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries in domains such as education, business, and technology (Selvi, Galloway & Rose, 2023). This global expansion has destabilized traditional ELT assumptions grounded in native-speaker norms, prompting the emergence of English as an International Language (EIL) as a reconceptualization

of English's role in contemporary communication. The intellectual foundations of EIL rest on the decentering of native-speaker ownership. Early work by Smith (1976) challenged the premise that successful language learning requires internalization of native-speaker cultural norms, arguing instead that an international language becomes de-nationalized and serves as a vehicle for expressing diverse identities. Building on this perspective, McKay (2002) further repositioned English as both a global medium of communication and a localized resource embedded in multilingual societies. Together, these foundational arguments shift the focus of ELT from imitation of Inner Circle norms toward communicative functionality across diverse contexts. Subsequent scholarship has refined this paradigm by articulating its pedagogical implications. While Sharifian (2009) frames EIL as a new conceptual lens for understanding global English use, Marlina (2014) emphasizes the legitimacy of all English varieties across Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles. Parallel developments in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research reinforce these claims by demonstrating that intelligibility and pragmatic negotiation, rather than native-like accuracy, are central to successful communication (Seidlhofer, 2011). Despite differences in emphasis, these strands of scholarship converge on several shared principles: prioritizing intelligibility over native-like proficiency, fostering intercultural communicative competence, recognizing linguistic diversity, and developing learners' ability to negotiate meaning in multilingual interactions (Jenkins, 2015; Matsuda, 2012; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

However, a recurring tension emerges between ideological advocacy and institutional practice. While EIL scholarship calls for pluralistic pedagogies and assessment aligned with communicative effectiveness (McKay, 2018), classroom realities in many contexts remain shaped by standardized curricula, high-stakes examinations, and entrenched native-speaker ideologies (Lu & Buripakdi, 2020; Potisuwan, Methitham & Rungrueng, 2020). Thus, the central issue is not merely theoretical acceptance of EIL but the structural conditions that constrain its enactment. It is within this gap between EIL principles and institutional realities that the present study is situated. By examining how Thai secondary school teachers interpret and negotiate EIL within assessment-driven educational structures, this study moves beyond conceptual discussion to explore the practical dynamics that enable or restrict EIL-oriented pedagogy.

EIL in Global and Thai context

EIL conceptualizes English as a shared global resource used by speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Rather than positioning native-speaker norms as the primary benchmark of proficiency, EIL emphasizes communicative effectiveness, mutual intelligibility, and intercultural understanding-competencies increasingly required in global education, mobility, and professional communication (Canagarajah, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2011; Rose, McKinley & Galloway, 2021). From this perspective, effective communication is not defined by adherence to a single "standard" variety, but by speakers' ability to negotiate meaning across linguistic and cultural differences.

A substantial body of research highlights the pedagogical value of exposing learners to diverse English varieties, including Indian, Nigerian, Singaporean, and other regional Englishes. Such exposure broadens learners' perspectives, reduces linguistic bias, and enhances intercultural awareness and communicative flexibility (Ambele,

2022; Selvi et al., 2023; Huang & Ambele, 2025). At the same time, EIL scholarship acknowledges that pluralistic views of English must operate within existing curricular and assessment frameworks. Thus, intelligibility and adaptability are framed not as replacements for linguistic accuracy but as complementary competencies aligned with communicative effectiveness (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015; Jenkins, 2015, 2020).

Across Asia, however, English education remains strongly influenced by standardized testing systems and native-speaker norms. English is frequently positioned as a gateway to global opportunity, reinforcing traditional teaching approaches and marginalizing pluralistic understandings of English use (Jenkins, 2021). Empirical research from Indonesia, Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan demonstrates a recurring pattern: teachers often express conceptual alignment with EIL but face institutional constraints—including curriculum mandates, high-stakes examinations, and parental expectations—that limit classroom implementation (Manan, 2020; Ziaabadi et al., 2023; Çetinkaya & Kayaoğlu, 2024). These findings suggest that the challenge of EIL integration is not merely ideological but structurally embedded in assessment-driven systems.

Within the ASEAN region, English functions as a regional lingua franca supporting mobility and integration. Kirkpatrick (2008, 2020) underscores the communicative relevance of ASEAN Englishes in higher education and professional contexts. Nevertheless, the incorporation of regional varieties and intercultural dimensions into formal curricula remains uneven, as high-stakes assessment structures often prioritize standardized forms over communicative diversity (Baker, 2015).

Situated within this regional and global landscape, Thailand represents a high-stakes, assessment-driven Expanding Circle setting in Kachru's (1992) framework. English use in Thailand is shaped primarily by educational policy rather than widespread societal bilingualism, positioning English as an academic and economic resource rather than a community language (Boonsuk & Fang, 2023). National standardized examinations—including the O-NET and GAT—evaluate students largely according to native-speaker norms, reinforcing standard language ideology and privileging grammatical accuracy and test performance (Jindapitak, Teo & Savski, 2022; Liu & Lee, 2025). As a result, English language teaching in Thailand has historically emphasized form-focused instruction aligned with British and American standards (McKenzie, Kitikanan & Boriboon, 2016; Rattanavich, 2019). Although recent scholarship indicates growing awareness among Thai teachers of Global Englishes perspectives, including EIL and ELF (Boonsuk & Ambele, 2021, 2023; McKinley, 2021), classroom implementation remains mediated by institutional expectations, examination pressures, and limited instructional time. Textbooks and assessments rarely incorporate explicit criteria related to intelligibility, pragmatic competence, or intercultural communication (Phoocharoensil, 2020). Consequently, teachers often negotiate between conceptual recognition of English diversity and systemic demands for standardized performance. The literature thus suggests that in high-stakes Expanding Circle contexts such as Thailand, EIL implementation is shaped less by teacher disposition alone and more by structural alignment among curriculum, assessment, and teacher education. This framing situates the present study within a broader pattern observable across similarly examination-oriented educational systems, enhancing its relevance beyond the Thai context.

Methodology

This study adopts an exploratory qualitative case study design to investigate the challenges faced by Thai secondary school English teachers in implementing EIL. A case study approach is appropriate for examining a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its institutional environment are closely interconnected. Because EIL implementation is shaped by curriculum policies, assessment structures, and classroom practices, a context-sensitive design enables in-depth analysis of how these factors interact within a bounded Thai secondary school setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather than treating beliefs or instructional practices as isolated constructs, this study conceptualizes challenges as emerging from the dynamic interplay between teacher cognition and structural constraints. Teachers' beliefs and classroom practices were therefore examined as situated responses to institutional expectations. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observations, and document analysis. Classroom observations were conducted across multiple sessions for each participating teacher to capture routine instructional patterns rather than isolated events. An observation protocol guided field note documentation, focusing on lesson objectives, instructional materials, teacher–student interactions, language use, and references to assessment requirements. Field notes were expanded immediately after each session to ensure descriptive accuracy and analytic depth. Relevant institutional documents, including curriculum guidelines and assessment materials, were reviewed to contextualize observed practices. To ensure trustworthiness, the study adhered to established qualitative criteria of credibility and dependability. Credibility was strengthened through methodological triangulation, comparing interview accounts, observational data, and documentary evidence to identify convergence and divergence across data sources. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary thematic interpretations with selected participants to confirm the accuracy of representation. Dependability was addressed through systematic coding procedures, maintenance of a detailed audit trail documenting analytic decisions, and reflexive memo-writing to monitor researcher positionality and ensure interpretive consistency. Together, these strategies enhance the rigor and transparency of the study's findings.

Context

The study was conducted at a large public secondary school in northeastern Thailand, serving approximately 3,500 students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The school follows the 2017 Revised Basic Education Core Curriculum, which emphasizes communicative competence, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship. English is a compulsory subject and is taught as a foreign language across lower and upper secondary levels. The school provides a rich EIL-oriented environment through initiatives such as the Mini English Program (MEP), collaboration with foreign teachers from various linguistic backgrounds, and participation in the American Field Service (AFS) intercultural exchange programs. These initiatives expose both teachers and students to diverse English varieties and intercultural communication contexts. At the same time, national examinations and curriculum requirements continue to emphasize grammatical accuracy and native-

speaker norms, creating tensions that form an important backdrop for the challenges examined in this study.

Participants' selection

Participants' Information

Table 1

Teacher Participants' Background Information Source: From Semi-Structured Interview Results

Pseudonyms	Grade Level	Gender	Teaching Experiences	Exact Age	Professional Training (EIL / PD)	Overseas Experience
Zandy	7	F	9	32	EIL Workshop	None
Rooney	8	F	9	34	EIL Training	1 year
Si	8	M	29	59	EIL Seminar	1 year
Su	9	F	8	31	PD Program on Intercultural EIL	None
Ploy	10	F	7	30	EIL Training	3 months
Kat	11	F	7	30	PD on 21st Century Skills	None
Ae	11	F	18	50	EIL Training	3 months
Pla	12	F	25	56	EIL Workshop	6 months
Nok	12	M	21	54	EIL Workshop	3 months
Nan	12	N	22	51	EIL Workshop	1 year

The study involved ten Thai secondary school English teachers, teaching across grades 7-12 in a large secondary school in Northeastern Thailand. As shown in Table 1, seven of the participants were female and three were male, with ages ranging from their mid-20s to late 50s. Teaching experience varied considerably, from 7 years to nearly 30 years, which provides a valuable spread of perspectives from novice to veteran teachers.

This diversity is important because prior research indicates that teachers' professional histories, training backgrounds, and generational outlooks significantly shape their beliefs about EIL (Borg, 2011; Matsuda, 2020). For example, younger teachers may be more open to incorporating digital resources and multiple English varieties, while older teachers may be influenced by more traditional ELT norms rooted

in grammar-translation or native-speaker benchmarks (e.g., Jenkins, 2020; McKay, 2018; Selvi, Galloway & Rose, 2024).

Instruments and data collection

Data collection was conducted over one academic semester and employed multiple qualitative instruments to capture teachers' experiences and challenges in implementing EIL in secondary classrooms. This qualitative approach is appropriate for exploring complex pedagogical phenomena situated within specific institutional and classroom contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Dörnyei, 2007). Ethical approval was obtained prior to the commencement of data collection. All participants were provided with detailed information about the study's aims, procedures, and ethical considerations and gave written informed consent. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned, and all identifiable information was removed from the data.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection instrument to elicit in-depth insights into teachers' perceptions and lived experiences of EIL implementation. Interviews were conducted in two phases: pre-observation and post-observation. The pre-observation interviews focused on teachers' initial understandings of EIL and their anticipated challenges in implementing EIL-oriented practices, including curriculum constraints, assessment demands, and student expectations. The post-observation interviews explored teachers' reflections on their actual classroom practices, with particular attention to challenges encountered during implementation and the strategies employed to negotiate or adapt to these constraints. This two-phase interview design allowed for a comparison between teachers' stated beliefs and their enacted practices (Bryman, 2016). Each interview lasted approximately 40-45 minutes, was audio-recorded with participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim for subsequent analysis.

Classroom observations were conducted to examine how challenges related to EIL implementation emerged during authentic instructional practices. The researcher adopted a non-participant observer role, focusing specifically on constraints shaping pedagogical decision-making, such as limited instructional time, reliance on prescribed textbooks, student resistance to non-native English varieties, and assessment-driven instruction (Mackey & Gass, 2021). Observations were guided by a structured observation protocol adapted from EIL-focused frameworks (Selvi et al., 2023) and were documented through detailed field notes. These observational data provided contextualized evidence of how institutional and classroom-level factors influenced the enactment of EIL principles in practice. In addition, document analysis was employed to examine institutional and instructional constraints related to EIL implementation. The documents analyzed included textbooks, lesson plans, assessment tasks, and curriculum guidelines. The analysis focused on identifying features that either constrained or supported EIL-oriented pedagogy, such as the prioritization of native-speaker norms, limited representation of global English varieties, and assessment criteria emphasizing linguistic accuracy over communicative effectiveness. Document analysis complemented the interview and observational data by revealing how broader curricular and policy-related structures shaped teachers' classroom practices.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012; Dörnyei, 2007). The analysis proceeded through iterative stages of data familiarization, coding, and thematic development. Initial codes were generated from interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documents, with a primary focus on institutional, pedagogical, and sociocultural challenges. Beliefs and teaching practices were coded only when they directly contributed to explaining these challenges. Through constant comparison across data sources, recurring patterns were grouped into broader themes representing key challenges, such as curriculum constraints, assessment pressures, limited resources, and student-related factors. Triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents strengthened the credibility of the findings by allowing cross-validation of themes.

Results

This section presents the findings derived from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, addressing the study's objective of examining the challenges Thai secondary school English teachers encounter in implementing EIL. The analysis identified three interrelated themes: (1) curriculum and high-stakes assessment pressures, (2) limited pedagogical resources and professional preparation, and (3) sociocultural expectations surrounding standard English norms. Each theme is supported by representative excerpts from teacher interviews, observational field notes, and institutional documents to provide triangulated empirical evidence. The findings indicate that while teachers demonstrate growing conceptual awareness of EIL principles-particularly regarding intelligibility and linguistic diversity-their classroom enactment is constrained by structural and contextual factors. Interview data reveal teachers' explicit recognition of tensions between communicative goals and examination demands, while observational data illustrate how exam-oriented instruction shapes lesson structure and task selection. Document analysis further corroborates this pattern, showing alignment between assessment criteria and native-speaker-oriented benchmarks. Together, these data sources deepen understanding of how institutional structures mediate EIL implementation in Thai secondary classrooms.

Interview Accounts

Interviews revealed that while teachers expressed growing enthusiasm for EIL principles, they also faced multiple challenges in embedding these into practice. Their accounts highlighted systemic, pedagogical, and affective barriers that limited the translation of beliefs into classroom realities.

Curriculum and Examination Pressures

A dominant theme was the influence of the national curriculum and exam system. Kat admitted that these structures constrained her ability to move beyond the textbook:

Excerpt 16

“I want to use more varieties of English in listening practice, but the exam only tests grammar and vocabulary. Students and parents want high scores, so I must focus on the textbook and test drills.” (Kat)

Nok expressed a similar frustration, pointing to the high-stakes nature of testing and parental pressure:

Excerpt 17

“Parents complain if their children don’t do well in exams. So, even if I want to add Global Englishes content, I cannot. I have to prepare them for the exam first.” (Nok)

Both excerpts highlight the systemic prioritization of accuracy over intelligibility, reinforcing the “standard language ideology” described by Holliday (2006).

Resource Limitations and Lack of Training

Teachers also cited difficulties accessing appropriate materials and the lack of professional preparation for EIL. Ae commented:

Excerpt 18

It is difficult to find listening materials with ASEAN accents or from expanding-circle countries. We mostly get British and American clips from the textbooks. I sometimes search YouTube, but it takes time, and I am not trained how to use them effectively.” (Ae)

Nan echoed this concern, linking it to gaps in teacher education:

Excerpt 19

“We never learned about world Englishes or digital English in our teacher training. So I feel unsure how to teach these things properly.” (Nan)

These accounts underscore how teacher readiness remains underdeveloped, consistent with Thai research showing inadequate professional development in Global Englishes (Boonsuk & Ambele, 2022; Euanorasetr & Suwanarak, 2023).

Student Resistance and Attitudinal Barriers

Teachers also noted that students often resisted or devalued non-inner-circle Englishes. Rooney recalled student reactions when she introduced diverse accents:

Excerpt 20

“Some students say, ‘Teacher, this accent is strange. Is this really English?’ They believe American or British English is the only correct English. At first, they don’t want to listen or they laugh.” (Rooney)

Su similarly described heightened student anxiety:

Excerpt 21

“Students get anxious when they hear unfamiliar accents. They think it will confuse them for exams. So they prefer only the textbook listening.” (Su)

These reflections illustrate how learners’ deeply embedded expectations, shaped by native-speakerist ideologies, can undermine teachers’ attempts to diversify input (Baker, 2015)

Workload and Time Constraints

Finally, teachers emphasized the heavy workload that limited their capacity to innovate. Nan admitted:

Excerpt 22

“I want to do more projects like analyzing TikTok comments, but honestly, it takes too much preparation. With many classes and paperwork, it is not possible every week.” (Nan)

This statement underscores the tension between pedagogical aspiration and institutional reality, where innovation is often constrained by time limitations and administrative demands.

Taken together, these interview accounts reveal four interconnected challenges: (1) curriculum and examination pressures, (2) limited resources and insufficient professional training, (3) resistant student attitudes, and (4) workload and time constraints. Although teachers express motivation to embrace EIL principles, these structural and contextual barriers help explain why classroom practices remain partial and inconsistently enacted.

Observation Evidence

The classroom observations provided concrete illustrations of the challenges teachers faced in implementing EIL principles. While some lessons reflected attempts to embed pluralistic and intercultural practices, others revealed how systemic and attitudinal barriers curtailed these efforts.

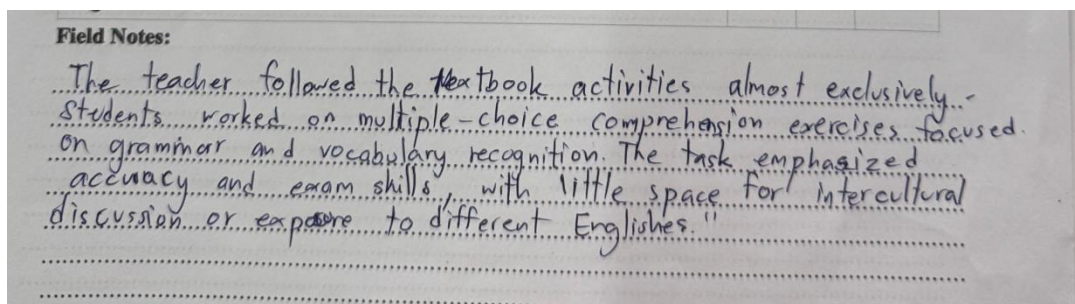
Exam-Driven Instruction

Several observed lessons demonstrated how national exam preparation overshadowed EIL-oriented goals. In Kat’s Grade 10 class, nearly the entire lesson was devoted to grammar drills and multiple-choice exercises from the Ministry-issued textbook:

“The teacher followed the Ministry’s prescribed textbook activities almost exclusively. Students worked on multiple-choice comprehension exercises focused on grammar and vocabulary recognition. The tasks emphasized accuracy and exam skills, with little space for intercultural discussion or exposure to different Englishes.” (Field Note 9, 7 August 2025)

Figure 1

As illustrated in Figure 1, the field note excerpt demonstrates an instructional emphasis on grammar and examination preparation rather than intercultural and EIL-related competencies



This observation confirmed Kat's interview account (Excerpt 16), where she admitted prioritizing exam preparation despite her interest in world Englishes. It underscores how structural assessment demands limit teachers' freedom to implement innovative approaches.

Figure 2

As shown in Figure 2, the observational data capture the teacher's instructional practices and classroom interactions

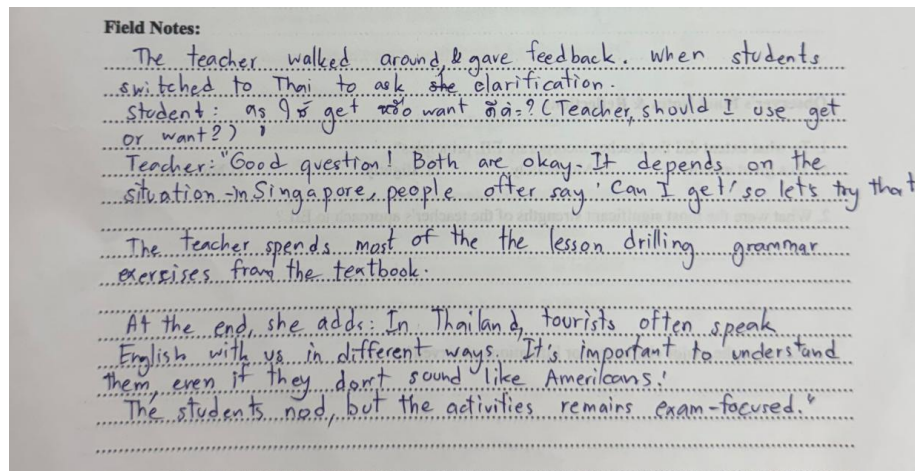
**Exam-Driven Instruction****Marginalization of Intercultural Content**

Su's Grade 9 class provided another example of how EIL principles were sidelined:

"The teacher spends most of the lesson drilling grammar exercises from the Ministry of Education textbook. Near the end, she adds: 'In Thailand, tourists often speak English with us in different ways. It's important to understand them, even if they don't sound like Americans.' The students nod, but the activity remains exam-focused." (Field Note 3, 26 July 2025)

Figure 3

Figure 3 presents a field note excerpt illustrating teacher actively de-centering the native-speaker model



Although Su's comment acknowledged the legitimacy of diverse Englishes, it was framed as a brief aside rather than a central instructional goal. This illustrates how EIL awareness is often treated as supplementary rather than integral to lesson design (Matsuda, 2017; Jenkins, 2020; McKay, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

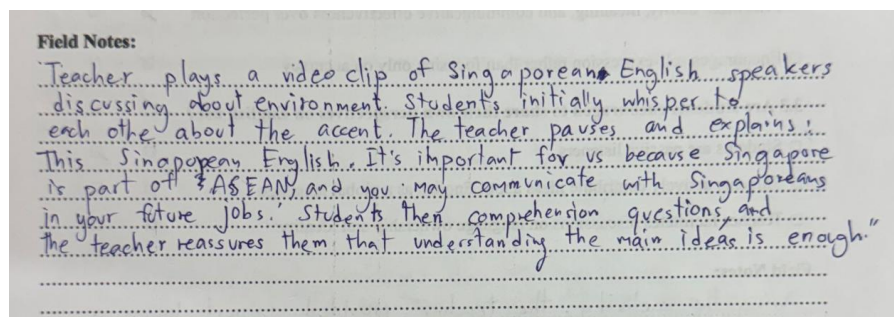
Student Resistance and Anxiety

Other challenges emerged from student reactions. In Ae's Grade 11 listening activity with a Singaporean English speaker, learners showed discomfort:

'The teacher plays an audio clip of a Singaporean English speaker discussing technology. Students initially whisper to each other about the accent. The teacher pauses and explains: 'This is Singaporean English. It's important for us because Singapore is part of ASEAN, and you may communicate with Singaporeans in your future jobs.' Students then answer comprehension questions, and the teacher reassures them that understanding the main ideas is enough.' (Field Note 4, 28 July 2025)

Figure 4

As depicted in Figure 4, the field note excerpt illustrating resistance to non-native English accents in listening practice



While Ae attempted to legitimize the accent and contextualize its importance, the students' initial resistance reflected entrenched expectations of standard English. Their whispers and hesitation suggest that exposure alone is not sufficient-teachers must also invest time in reshaping learners' attitudes (Miao & Ambele, 2023).

Innovation Undermined by Practical Constraints

Even when teachers designed creative tasks, practical constraints remained evident. For example, Nan's TikTok analysis activity engaged students actively, but she acknowledged in interviews (Excerpt 22) that such tasks required more preparation time than she could sustain regularly. Similarly, Rooney's debates, while successful in fostering intercultural competence, demanded careful scaffolding to keep students engaged and respectful, which added to her workload. The observation data confirm that teachers' attempts to enact EIL were often constrained by systemic factors (exam preparation, textbook dominance) and sociocultural factors (student resistance to unfamiliar accents). Even innovative lessons required significant effort to overcome these challenges, making them difficult to sustain consistently. These findings reinforce the interview accounts that highlighted exams, student expectations, and workload as major obstacles to fully integrating EIL into Thai classrooms.

Document Analysis (Institutional/Policy Constraints)

The analysis of teaching documents, lesson plans, and assessment materials reinforced the picture emerging from interviews and observations: teachers' attempts to incorporate EIL principles were often constrained by institutional demands, textbook structures, and assessment frameworks.

Textbook Dependence and Grammar Orientation

Ministry-issued textbooks, which formed the backbone of most teachers' lesson planning, emphasized grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension drills aligned with national exams. Su's weekly Grade 9 plan illustrates this:

'Lesson objectives: Grammar focus (reported speech, conditionals); Vocabulary focus (travel); Speaking activity (optional, 5 minutes, pair discussion).'" (Lesson Plan Extract, Su, August 2023)

Figure 5*Grammar-Focused Instruction in Su's Grade 9 Lesson Plan*

Lesson Plan

Teacher: Su
Topic: Grammar and Vocabulary Focus in Travel Theme
Grade: 9
Duration: 50 minutes

Objectives

1. Practice grammar: reported speech and conditionals
2. Learn vocabulary related to travel
3. Optional: engage in pair discussion to practice speaking

Materials

1. Textbook
2. Whiteboard/markers
3. Student worksheets

Procedure:

1. Warm-up (5 min): Quick review of previous grammar points then introduce new vocabulary related to travel.
2. Grammar Focus (15-25 min): Complete textbook exercises on reported speech and conditionals. Teacher explains rules and checks comprehension.
3. Vocabulary Practice (10-15 min): Matching or fill-in-the-blank exercises. Teacher monitors and provides corrections.
4. Optional Speaking Activity (5 min): Pair discussion: students talk about travel experiences using the new grammar and vocabulary. Teacher encourages use of English but may skip if time is short.

Assessment

1. Accuracy in exercises

Note

The intercultural element—an optional five-minute discussion was easily marginalized or skipped, reflecting how EIL content is peripheral rather than central in mandated materials.

Assessment Practices Reinforcing Accuracy

Teachers' assessment documents also reflected the persistence of standard language ideology. Nok's Grade 11 midterm exam, for instance, included only grammar-based multiple-choice items and cloze tests:

"Section A: Choose the correct verb form; Section B: Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary word; Section C: Rewrite the sentences with accurate grammar." (Exam Paper, Nok, 2023)

Figure 6*The field Note Excerpt Illustrating Grammar-centric Assessment Practices*

NEW FRONTIERS Vocabulary Test: Units 3–4

Class Name

① Write the words from the box next to the correct definitions.

style	origin	dull	eager	conclusion
income	struggle	obligation	estimate	value

1. _____ to have a hard time doing something
2. _____ the importance or worth of something
3. _____ the place where something began, or the thing that started it
4. _____ to make a guess about the size or amount of something
5. _____ not interesting or exciting
6. _____ the last or final part of something; the ending
7. _____ having or showing lots of interest
8. _____ money someone earns from working
9. _____ a unique way a person or thing does something
10. _____ something you must do

There were no assessment criteria related to intelligibility, communicative strategies, or intercultural awareness. This reliance on discrete-item testing reinforced the focus on linguistic correctness, directly at odds with the pluralistic and communicative goals of EIL (Rose & Galloway, 2019)

Isolated EIL Innovations

Some documents revealed individual teacher efforts to push beyond these constraints, though these remained exceptions. For instance, Zandy's Grade 10 worksheet featured listening comprehension tasks using Indian and Malaysian speakers, accompanied by reflection questions such as: *"What strategies can you use if you don't understand the speaker?"* (Worksheet Excerpt, Zandy, July 2023). Similarly, Rooney's debate lesson plan explicitly listed "intercultural communication skills" as a learning objective, with reflective prompts like: *"How do people from different countries express politeness differently?"* These documents demonstrated alignment with EIL pedagogy but were framed as supplementary rather than systemic, often designed by teachers on their own initiative rather than supported by institutional policies (Matsuda, 2017).

Institutional Pressures and Performance Metrics

Teachers also noted that school-level performance indicators, tied closely to standardized exam scores, limited their ability to deviate from mandated curricula. Ae explained in her lesson notes:

"Focus on grammar for test preparation. Parents and administrators expect students to score well. Innovative tasks are good, but exams come first." (Lesson Reflection Note, Ae, 2023)

This documentation reveals how institutional accountability systems reinforce exam-driven teaching, leaving little space for experimentation with pluralistic Englishes or intercultural pedagogy (Jenkins, 2020; McKay, 2018).

Document analysis confirms the systemic challenges teachers reported in interviews and that were visible in classroom observations. Textbooks and lesson plans largely prioritize grammatical accuracy, while assessment papers exclude intelligibility or intercultural dimensions. Although some teachers designed innovative materials aligned with EIL, these remained isolated and optional rather than embedded in policy or curriculum. The evidence underscores the disconnect between teachers' EIL aspirations and the structural realities of Thai education, where institutional constraints continue to privilege exam success over communicative competence in diverse global contexts.

Discussion

This study examined the challenges Thai secondary school English teachers face in implementing EIL in classroom practice. The findings reveal a persistent gap between teachers' conceptual alignment with EIL principles and their ability to enact these principles in sustained and systematic ways. While prior research has documented similar tensions in Expanding Circle contexts, this study extends existing scholarship by demonstrating how such tensions operate specifically within a high-stakes, assessment-driven secondary school system. Rather than attributing limited EIL implementation to teacher resistance or insufficient awareness, the findings show that

structural alignment-particularly among curriculum, assessment, and teacher education-plays a decisive role in shaping pedagogical possibilities. A central contribution of this study lies in conceptualizing teachers as pedagogical mediators. Participants did not simply accept or reject EIL principles; instead, they selectively adapted, negotiated, and reframed EIL-informed practices within institutional constraints. Although teachers expressed support for intelligibility, diversity, and intercultural competence, classroom practice remained strongly influenced by high-stakes examinations emphasizing grammatical accuracy and textbook coverage. This mediation reflects a strategic balancing act rather than a belief-practice inconsistency. Teachers navigated competing demands by integrating EIL elements episodically-such as exposure to diverse English users or intercultural tasks-while maintaining alignment with assessment expectations. This reconceptualization shifts the focus from a deficit-oriented “belief-practice gap” toward a structurally embedded negotiation process. In doing so, the study refines Holliday’s (2006, 2020) critique of native-speakerism by illustrating how standard language ideology is institutionalized through assessment systems rather than solely internalized by teachers. Similarly, while previous studies have highlighted curriculum and resource constraints (Manan, 2020; Çetinkaya & Kayaoğlu, 2024), the present findings demonstrate how these constraints interact dynamically in secondary school contexts where examination performance determines academic progression. The study also contributes to EIL scholarship by situating implementation within the broader logic of high-stakes assessment cultures. In Thai classrooms, assessment priorities narrowed pedagogical space, limiting sustained engagement with pluralistic English varieties and intercultural reflection. Teachers’ efforts to justify non-native Englishes and reframe students’ language ideologies further illustrate that EIL enactment requires ideological negotiation alongside instructional adaptation. Thus, the challenge is not conceptual acceptance but institutional coherence. The findings suggest that EIL implementation in Expanding Circle settings is best understood as a mediated process shaped by systemic alignment rather than individual disposition. By foregrounding teachers as pedagogical mediators operating within structurally constrained environments, this study moves beyond confirming prior research to offer a context-sensitive conceptualization of how EIL is negotiated in high-stakes secondary education. Sustainable integration of EIL, therefore, requires coordinated reform across curriculum design, assessment practices, and teacher education, rather than relying solely on individual teacher initiative.

Conclusion

This study highlights a central lesson: the challenge of implementing EIL in Thai secondary education is not primarily a matter of teacher awareness, but of structural alignment. While teachers demonstrate growing recognition of English as a pluralistic global resource, their pedagogical decisions are shaped decisively by high-stakes examinations, standardized curricula, and entrenched language ideologies (Baker, 2015; Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017). In this assessment-driven context, EIL cannot be sustained through individual teacher initiative alone.

A second key contribution of this study is the conceptualization of teachers as pedagogical mediators rather than passive implementers of policy. Teachers selectively adapt and negotiate EIL principles within institutional constraints, producing hybrid practices that reflect strategic mediation rather than resistance or

compliance (Holliday, 2006, 2024; Phoocharoensil, 2020). By focusing specifically on the secondary school level—an underexplored yet high-stakes stage of education—the present research extends existing EIL scholarship beyond higher education contexts and provides empirically grounded insight into how systemic pressures shape everyday classroom practice. The triangulated qualitative design further strengthens the reliability of these findings by corroborating teacher perspectives with observational and documentary evidence. These findings carry important implications. At the policy level, clearer alignment between communicative goals and assessment frameworks is essential if EIL principles are to be meaningfully enacted. At the curriculum level, assessment criteria must move beyond grammar-based benchmarks to include intelligibility, pragmatic competence, and intercultural communication. For teacher education, both pre-service and in-service programs should integrate EIL-oriented pedagogical training that equips teachers with practical strategies for navigating high-stakes environments. Ultimately, without coordinated reform across policy, curriculum, assessment, and teacher education, EIL is likely to remain aspirational rather than operational in high-stakes Expanding Circle settings such as Thailand (Boonsuk & Ambele, 2023; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Marlina, 2025).

Recommendation For implication

Building on its focus on Thai secondary education—an underexplored yet high-stakes context in EIL research—this study offers empirically grounded implications derived from triangulated interview, observation, and document data. The findings demonstrate that sustainable EIL implementation depends not merely on teacher awareness, but on systemic alignment across institutional structures.

At the classroom and teacher education levels, the findings highlight the importance of equipping teachers with adaptive pedagogical strategies that balance examination demands with communicative and intercultural goals. Rather than positioning EIL as an alternative to assessment-oriented teaching, professional development programs should provide practical models for integrating intelligibility-focused tasks, exposure to diverse English varieties, and intercultural reflection within exam-aligned curricula (Jenkins, 2017; Sung, 2023). Pre-service and in-service training should therefore incorporate EIL-informed materials design, critical language awareness, and strategies for negotiating institutional constraints in context-sensitive ways.

At the curriculum level, clearer articulation of communicative competence is needed. Curriculum frameworks should explicitly integrate intelligibility, pragmatic competence, and intercultural communication as assessable learning outcomes rather than peripheral ideals. Textbook development can further support this shift by including regional and international English varieties, authentic multilingual interaction scenarios, and reflective tasks that legitimize pluralistic English use. At the policy and assessment levels, stronger coherence between curriculum objectives and examination systems is essential. Revising high-stakes assessments to value communicative effectiveness alongside grammatical accuracy would reduce the structural tension identified in this study (Baker, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2008). Without such reform, teachers' EIL-oriented efforts are likely to remain selective and episodic. System-level

coordination would therefore help move EIL from aspirational discourse to operational practice within Thai secondary education (Galloway & Rose, 2019).

For future studies

Given the bounded case study design, future research should extend beyond a single institutional context to examine how regional, socioeconomic, and school-type variations shape EIL-related challenges across educational settings. Comparative studies spanning secondary and tertiary levels would further clarify how differing assessment cultures influence implementation across stages of schooling. Longitudinal and intervention-based research is particularly needed to explore how sustained professional development initiatives and assessment reforms affect teachers' capacity to integrate EIL more systematically over time, thereby providing stronger evidence of the relationship between policy reform and classroom practice (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2020). Additionally, incorporating student perspectives and learning outcomes would deepen understanding of how EIL-oriented instruction shapes engagement, language attitudes, and communicative competence. Expanding inquiry in these directions would strengthen the empirical foundation of EIL as a context-responsive framework for English education in Thailand and comparable Expanding Circle settings (McKay, 2018; Jenkins, 2015).

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The Effects of Online Peer Feedback on Chinese University Students' English Writing Ability

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Abstract

The main purposes of this study were 1) to study the effects of online peer feedback on Chinese university students' English writing ability; and 2) to investigate the perceptions of Chinese university students towards online peer feedback in English writing. The samples were 80 first-year non-English major students at Health College from Hebei Oriental University, Hebei Province, People's Republic of China in 2025-2026 academic year. They were obtained by using cluster random sampling technique. They were divided into two groups, one control group and a experimental group according to their English scores from the College Entrance Exams. The research instruments were lesson plans, writing performance tests and semi-structured interview. The obtained data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, independent samples t-test, dependent samples t-test and content analysis. The findings revealed as follows: 1) There was statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test in the writing achievements of experimental group at $p < .001$. The students' English writing ability post-test mean score of the experimental group was higher than the post-test mean score of the control group with statistically significant difference at .00 level. 2) The experimental group students had positive perceptions towards online peer feedback for improving English writing ability with the content results from Chao Xing Platform. They found the usefulness of online peer feedback in English writing, the fairness of peers, the ease of platform usage and made emotional impact of self-motivation.

Keywords: paragraph writing, writing ability, online peer feedback, Chinese university students, perceptions

Introduction

Writing is a way to send your idea, message, and information to the targeted receiver. It is a kind of communication, especially in the 21st century. Nowadays English writing teaching in China has its own characteristics and challenges, shaped by educational systems, exam-oriented needs and language environment. A large part of teaching is centered on meeting requirements of major exams like college entrance

exam, CET-4/6 and IELTS/TOEFL. Grading standards and structured writing (e.g., argumentative writing) are prevalent. To increase exam scores, teachers can teach structured templates (for example, argumentative writing: introduction with thesis, supporting paragraphs, and conclusion) as well as language patterns. So students are lack of creative ideas and self-motivation. To solve the problems, this study concentrates on argumentative paragraph writing by using online peer feedback, which can develop students' ideas and encourage them.

There is little research on the effects of peer feedback on online (web-based) platforms on the writing skills and attitudes of English language learners (Blake, 2011; Pham, 2022; Zhang & Zou, 2022). There are gaps and discrepancies in the current findings that call for more studies.

This study seeks to address this gap by studying the effects of online peer feedback on Chinese university students' writing ability and investigate the perceptions of Chinese university students towards online peer feedback on writing ability. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study focuses on a defined set of variables to clarify the relationship between online peer feedback and writing skills among the target population (non-English major freshmen at the Health College, He Bei Oriental University).

The specific content of this study is as follows:

1. What are the effects of online peer feedback on Chinese university students' writing ability?
2. What are the perceptions of Chinese university students towards online peer feedback on writing ability?

Literature Review

1. College English Curriculum of Hebei Oriental University

College English curriculum is a general education course designed for non-art and non-sports undergraduate students (non-English majors) across the university. It is an essential component of China's higher education system. The course integrates core socialist values, emphasizing holistic development through cultivating proper values, cultural literacy, scientific thinking, critical reasoning, and self-directed learning abilities. College English focuses on language acquisition while strengthening students' listening, speaking, reading and writing competencies. The writing is centered around five thematic modules-Youth and Mission, Wealth and Prosperity, New Era and Digital Civilization, Chinese and Global Community, Sports and Social Civility, by using blended online-offline teaching model. It employs diverse approaches including task-based learning, collaborative projects, and inquiry-based methods to develop students' self-directed learning capabilities, teamwork skills, and communication proficiency. Based on this, online peer feedback is an effective way.

2. Theoretical Foundations of the Study

There were three theoretical foundations in this study, including the process-oriented approach, collaborative learning and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Online peer feedback in writing is supported by these three interrelated theories. The process-oriented approach regards writing as a recursive process, where online peer feedback provides external input during drafting and revising, promoting iterative improvement. Collaborative learning emphasizes social interaction, enabling students to evaluate texts, negotiate meaning and develop critical thinking and

metacognition through asynchronous online exchange. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) holds that peers offer scaffolding within learners' ZPD, helping them bridge the gap between independent and potential performance.

The process-oriented approach, "as a great development of traditional approaches of writing instruction" is becoming more and more prevalent and being proved to be effective and useful in improving college students' writing ability in many countries, China included. The research on the process-oriented approach began in the early 1980s and many researchers introduced it. Tribble (1997) defines it as "an approach to the input of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practice rather than the imitation of models". According to the theory of it, writing is not just final production of text but a sequence, or steps. One of the important parts of process approach to writing is feedback which can be presented in the five stages of process writing, concluded by Tompkins (2014), with prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing included. Writing is "an exciting, eventful, evolving process" (Murray, 1982), which is similar to the idea of Zamel (1982) that it is "a process of discovering and creating significance."

Collaborative Learning or cooperative learning is another backup for online peer feedback. It was firstly promoted by Slavin, in America in the 1970s. According to Slavin (1980), it is a kind of class techniques that encourages students to do all kinds of learning activities in a small group or small team, helping each other, studying some materials and rewards students for the achievements or performance of the entire group, valuing the interactions among teacher and students as well as students and students, promoting students to have a cooperative learning sufficiently. The next leading proponents of the theory is Bruffee (1983) who states collaborative learning is a type of learning that takes place through communication with peers and he says in this way, there are certain, kinds of knowledge that are best acquired, which can encourage students to pool their resources and complete tasks they could not do on their own. Bruffee (1984) holds that writing is a collaborative social activity and learning in writing group is beneficial to each other and improves students' writing proficiency, because "students in writing groups negotiate meaning as they revise peers' writings". Peer feedback, as one kind of the cooperative learning, may provide more chances for students to discuss and exchange their ideas in a group in order to help each other and learn from each other. What's more, with the help of internet, peer feedback will enhance its goodness, relaxing students and promote more interest in writing.

The theory of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is also another support for the employment of online peer feedback in the EFL writing. Vygotsky (1978: p. 86) stated "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers." Vygotsky (1978) said that social interaction with peers was necessary for the internalization of thought and language. In the study by Donato (1994), interaction in group work was investigated. In a word, it can benefit all members of a group. In addition, with the help of internet, the peers' potential development can be more developed in the process of the peers' cooperation because of the relaxed and convenient learning community offered.

Together, these theories form a coherent foundation, with the process-oriented approach providing structure, collaborative learning offering social mechanisms, and ZPD unlocking cognitive potential, jointly enhancing writing quality and learner development.

Method

1. Research Design

A mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative writing performance tests and qualitative semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed separately. Integration occurred at the interpretation stage through side-by-side comparison of findings, allowing quantitative trends to be explained and contextualized by qualitative evidence. This design enabled simultaneous examination of broad teaching patterns and in-depth student experiences in large-class EFL contexts.

2. Research Site

This study selected Hebei Oriental University in China as its research site. The school was chosen for its representative characteristics, including large class sizes, diverse student backgrounds and advanced digital infrastructure (such as Chao Xing Platform). Focusing on a single school enables an in-depth and contextually grounded exploration of online peer feedback practices within large-class teaching environments.

3. Population and Participants

The population in this study included 1,110 non-English major freshmen at the Health College, Hebei Oriental University, Hebei Province, People's Republic of China in 2025-2026 academic year.

The participants in this study consisted of 80 first-year non-English major students from the Health College, Hebei Oriental University, Hebei Province, People's Republic of China in 2025-2026 academic year. They were obtained by using cluster random sampling method, according to their English scores from the College Entrance Exams. They were divided into an experimental group and a controlled group. The experimental group included 40 participants and the control group included 40 participants. They were obtained by using simple random sampling.

For the qualitative phase, ten interviewees were selected from the experimental group. According to their proficiency levels, the researcher divided the experimental group into 10 sub-groups consisted of 4 students: one high achiever, two intermediates, one low in each sub-group. Each of the ten came from different sub-groups by purposively selecting.

Research Instruments

To achieve the goal of the study, the instruments were employed in this study, which included: 1) lesson plans; 2) writing performance tests; 3) interview. These three instruments were described in details in the following sections.

1. Lesson Plans

Lesson plans were about English writing skills lessons for both control group and experimental group. There were 5 lesson plans with 3 periods, consisting of writing performance tests, classroom orientation, teaching and learning process. Each period took 60 minutes. These were 5 topics: 1) Youth and Mission-Words and Phrases for Ordering Ideas 2) Wealth and Prosperity-Writing a Topic Sentence 3) New Era and

Digital Civilization-Writing Supporting Sentences 4) Chinese and Global Community-Writing a Concluding Sentence 5) Sports and Social Civility-Writing an Argumentative Paragraph. The control group received the traditional teacher feedback whereas online peer feedback was used in the experimental group. Content validity was established through three experts' reviews. The lesson plan items were evaluated by domain experts in EFL education and research methodology using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) method. The IOC value was 0.82, which indicated that the lesson plans were qualified.

2. Writing Performance Test

To investigate how the writing ability of the participants differed before and after the experiment, students were assigned with a pre-test and a post-test on college English writing ability. A pre-test and post-test chose the same one of the five topics. Five topics were 1) Youth and Mission 2) Wealth and Prosperity 3) New Era and Digital Civilization 4) Chinese and Global Community 5) Sports and Social Civility. The pre-test and post-test took approximately 60 minutes respectively, with a paragraph writing at least 120 words. It must include a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence. The test was administered to the samples of 80 first-year non-English major students from Health College, Hebei Oriental University, China. The test was edited and revised by the thesis advisors before proposing to the experts to examine the validity by using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) method. The IOC value was 0.82, which indicated that the test was qualified. The scoring of writing performance was given by three raters according to the rubrics and checked by administrators.

3. Semi-Structured Interviews

To complement the qualitative data, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten purposively selected students from different sub-groups, according to their English proficiency levels. The interview protocol focused on students' opinions and suggestions for online peer feedback in English writing. The open-ended format allowed participants to elaborate on issues-perceptions and suggestions on online peer feedback, including the usefulness of online peer feedback in English writing, the fairness of peers, the ease of platform use and emotional impact of self-motivation. The validity of the semi-structured interviews was examined by the three experts through analyzing the Index of Item-Objective Congruence: IOC, which was 0.80. It indicated that the interview was qualified.

Data Collection

To collect the data, the researcher used writing performance tests (pre-test and post-test) and a semi-structured interview.

The design of this study was pre-tests and post-tests of two groups, one control group and an experimental group. The design was shown as Table 3.2 below.

Table 1

Research Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Control	T1	X1	T2
Experimental	T1	X2	T2

Source: Sai-yot (1995: 248-249)

As shown in Table 1 above, T1 pre-test was given to both control group and experimental group. X1 was teaching and learning with teacher feedback, while X2 was teaching and learning with online peer feedback. T2 post-test was given to both sample groups.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews Data Collection

Ten students participated in interviews. Each of the ten came from different sub-groups according to their English proficiency level in the College Entrance Examination. The interviews were conducted via online meetings in Mandarin, with each interview lasting between 10-20 minutes. During the interviews, the researcher followed a semi-structured interview outline. Preliminary patterns were used to inform follow-up prompts, allowing participants to elaborate on issues that emerged frequently in the quantitative data. This approach helped enhance the trustworthiness of the qualitative data by ensuring alignment between the quantitative trends and teachers' in-depth accounts.

Data Analysis

For quantitative data analysis, the researcher applied different techniques to different types of data. The researcher used SPSS 28.0 software to analyze quantitative data, i.e., writing performance tests. The pre-test and post-test scores were computed to find out mean and standard deviation. Dependent samples t-test was used to compare the difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores of control group and experimental group. Independent samples t-test was used to compare the difference of pre-test and pre-test mean scores and post-test and post-test mean scores between control group and experimental group. For qualitative analysis, the researcher used the content analysis for the data of the semi-structured interview about perceptions towards online peer feedback on enhancing Chinese university students' English writing ability. Ten interviewees from experimental group were asked about the usefulness of online peer feedback, fairness of peers, ease of platform use and their emotional impact through Chaoxing platform.

Results

The results are drawn from the quantitative data of the writing performance tests and the content analysis of the interview.

Research Question One: What are the effects of online peer feedback on Chinese university students' writing ability?

This section shows the results of analysis of the quantitative data from the writing performance tests to compare Chinese university students' writing achievements before and after learning writing by using online peer feedback. To address this question, the researcher used quantitative data in terms of the comparison of the difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores. Evidently, the pre-test and post-test scores were from the control group and the experimental group. The scores were used to find out the statistically significant difference as shown in Table 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

Table 2

Comparing the Difference between Pre-test of Control Group and Pre-test of Experimental Group

Test	Group	n	Total Scores	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	p-value
1.Pre-test	Control	40	20	11.58	2.24		
2.Pre-test	Experimental	40	20	11.12	1.60	1.96**	.06

**** Statistically significant difference at .01**

As shown in Table 2, it was found that there is no significant difference between the pre-test mean scores of control group and experimental group. That means the two groups were alike in writing ability before conducting the treatment with online peer feedback.

Table 3

Comparing the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test of Experimental Group

Achievement	n	Total Scores	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	p-value
1. Pre-test	40	20	11.12	1.60		
2. Post-test	40	20	17.28	.76	24.05**	.00

**** Statistically significant difference at .01**

As shown in Table 3, it revealed that there is statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test in the writing achievements of experimental group at .00 level. That means Chinese university students had higher writing achievements after learning writing through online peer feedback.

Table 4

Comparing the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test of Control Group

Achievement	n	Total Scores	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	p-value
1. Pre-test	40	20	11.58	2.24		
2. Post-test	40	20	15.73	1.29	10.74**	.00

****Statistically significant difference at .01**

As shown in Table 4, it revealed that there is statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test in the writing achievements of control group at .00 level. That means Chinese university students had higher writing achievements after learning writing through conventional teaching.

Table 5

Comparing the Difference between Post-test of Control Group and Post-test of Experimental Group

Test	Group	n	Total Scores	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	t	p-value
1. Post-test	Control	40	20	15.73	1.29		
2. Post-test	Experimental	40	20	17.28	.76	8.91**	.00

** Statistically significant difference at .01

As shown in Table 5, it was found that there is significant difference at .00 level between the post-test mean scores of control group and experimental group. That means the two groups were different in writing ability after conducting the different treatments, whereas there was no significant difference between the two groups before the treatment. The post-test mean scores of experimental group are higher than the post-test mean scores of control group through online peer feedback.

Research Question Two: What are the perceptions of Chinese university students towards online peer feedback on writing ability?

Ten interviewees from experimental group were asked about the usefulness of online peer feedback (e.g. whether it improves your writing skills), fairness (e.g. whether peers are qualified to judge), ease of use (e.g. platform accessibility), and emotional impact (e.g. anxiety from receiving peer criticism or motivation from constructive feedback). Here are some of the results found on Chao Xing Platform.

1. Usefulness

Usefulness means the benefits of online peer feedback in English Writing. Here were the excerpts from the students 1 and 2 on Chao Xing Platform.

“I believe online peer feedback has significantly contributed to my English writing growth. By reading peers’ feedback on my word choice, I’ve learned to replace vague phrases with more precise vocabulary. This consistent input has made my writing more concise and impactful over time.” (Student 1)

“The most useful aspect of these activities, in my view, is the focus on grammatical accuracy and sentence variety. Peers frequently point out run-on sentences or incorrect verb tenses that I miss during self-editing. Their suggestions for rephrasing have helped me develop a more polished writing style.” (Student 2)

2. Fairness

Fairness means peers are qualified for feedback. Here was the excerpt from the student 3 on Chao Xing Platform.

“I think my peers are qualified to give feedback on my writing, and I generally feel the feedback is fair. They are at a similar English level and taking the same course, so they understand the requirements and common problems very well. They can notice mistakes or unclear expressions that I overlook because they read from an objective reader’s perspective. Most of my peers take peer feedback seriously and give specific, balanced comments instead of being too strict or too lenient. Even though they are not teachers, their judgments are reliable and fair for improving content, organization, and language use. I trust their evaluation and find it helpful for my revision.” (Student 3).

3. Ease of Use

Ease of use means Chao Xing platform is controllable and accessible. Here was the excerpt from the student 4 on Chao Xing Platform.

“I generally found the Chao Xing Platform easy to operate, with most able to locate the peer feedback section without difficulty after minimal instruction.” (Student 4)

4. Emotional Impact

Emotional impact means self-motivation from constructive feedback. Here were the excerpts from the students 5 and 6 on Chao Xing Platform.

“I’ve also noticed that giving feedback has improved my own analytical skills. Explaining why a certain sentence feels awkward to a peer forces me to articulate grammar rules and stylistic principles clearly. This process of teaching others has deepened my own grasp of English writing conventions.” (Student 5)

“While online peer feedback is not without its challenges-such as occasional vague comments-the overall impact on my writing has been positive. It has taught me to approach writing as a collaborative process rather than a solitary task, which has made me more confident in revising and refining my writing.” (Student 6)

The qualitative results reveal the overall positive perceptions and practical value of online peer feedback in English writing, covering four core dimensions: usefulness, fairness, ease of use, and emotional impact. Overall, the qualitative findings demonstrate that online peer feedback, supported by the user-friendly Chao Xing Platform, is effective in promoting students’ English writing ability, perceived as fair and useful, and capable of generating positive emotional and cognitive impacts on students.

Discussion

The researcher discusses the results of using online peer feedback to improve the English writing ability of Chinese university students and the positive perceptions of Chinese university students towards online peer feedback as follows:

1. A Comparison of Chinese University Students’ English Writing Ability before and after Learning through Online Peer Feedback

The result disclosed that the post-test mean score of Chinese university students’ English writing ability was higher than the pre-test mean score with statistically significant difference at .00 level. This could be explained that online peer feedback is efficient because students could improve their English writing ability after learning. Although the scores of control group improved, the scores of experimental group were higher. The students’ English writing ability is improved more after learning proficiently through online peer feedback. The researcher observed that students could write more clearly, correctly, and easy to be understood, and they were more confident. Online peer feedback could help students’ fairness and self-motivation. This is similar to Nguyen (2023) who stated peer feedback stimulated students to improve their writing skills as well as Pham (2022) who encouraged students to share their thoughts with peers.

The result showed that students performed better in their post-test after online peer feedback. The findings showed that online peer feedback is effective to improve Chinese university students’ English writing ability. But there is a limitation

that the study only involved the same writing topic, limiting the generalizability of the results across diverse topic contexts.

2. Perceptions of Chinese University Students towards Online Peer Feedback

The findings showed that Chinese university students had positive perceptions towards the online peer feedback on writing ability with the content results from Chao Xing Platform. This could be explained that the usefulness of online peer feedback in English writing could contribute to students' English writing growth. Also, the fairness of peers was qualified for feedback. Moreover, the ease of use enabled students to locate the peer feedback section without difficulty. The emotional impact improved students' self-motivation, analytical skills and students' confidence. This is similar to Li and Hebert (2024) who documented Chinese university students' positive perceptions of online peer feedback for English writing via educational platforms.

These findings further showed that online peer feedback creates a positive effect for students, where they co-construct writing knowledge and skills through equal interaction, fair evaluation and emotional support, making it an pedagogical approach for English writing teaching in Chinese higher education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, online peer feedback could improve Chinese university students' writing ability and Chinese university students had positive perceptions towards online peer feedback. This study made contributions as follows: 1) The results of the research will be as the guidelines for developing teaching, learning and research works for English teachers, other educators and persons who are interested in teaching writing by using online peer feedback; 2) The results of the research will be as the guidelines for the teachers in terms of choosing online peer feedback to improve English writing ability; 3) Hopefully, this research will be as the guideline for the novices who are investigating a research and also other people who strive for new knowledge learning, especially in colleges and universities. It can be one effective teaching approach that teacher and relevant person who are interested in this technique can apply in their careers to help their students to learn effectively.

Recommendation

Based on the above conclusions and discussion, this study proposes the following specific recommendations at the English writing courses, teachers and research levels.

In university English writing courses, teachers should integrate online peer feedback as a regular component. Since the practice has been shown to improve students' writing ability, it should not be used only occasionally but as a consistent part of the curriculum.

Teachers should provide clear training and guidelines for students on how to give and receive online peer feedback. Students' positive perceptions suggest they are receptive, but structured training can further enhance the quality and effectiveness of the feedback. Teachers should design online peer feedback tasks that are scaffolded and aligned with specific writing objectives. To maximize improvement, tasks should target particular aspects of writing (e.g., organization, coherence, grammar) rather than being overly general and choose different topics to do writing performance tests.

Teachers should use more technology platforms that are user-friendly and supportive of collaborative writing. Positive student perceptions indicate that the online environment is acceptable, so choosing intuitive tools can further increase students' engagement and participation.

After feedback is provided, teachers should encourage interaction and follow-up between peers. Since students value the process, creating opportunities for dialogues can deepen their understanding and help them apply the feedback more effectively in revision.

The future research should compare writing ability between learning through online peer feedback and other writing techniques. The further research should be employed online peer feedback with other classes in many levels of students. To see if online peer feedback works, the further research should compare with other teaching approaches with the same level in different places and different situation.

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Evaluating a Communicative Instructional Package for English Competence in Upper Secondary Education

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop a communicative-based instructional package for the learning unit Relation with Other People for upper secondary school students and to evaluate its instructional efficiency based on the 80/80 criterion. The objectives were: (1) to develop the instructional package and evaluate its efficiency, (2) to compare students' English learning achievement before and after learning through the package, (3) to investigate students' English communicative competence after the implementation of the package, and (4) to examine students' satisfaction toward learning through the package. This study employed a one-group pre-test-post-test design. The sample consisted of 30 Grade 12 students in an upper secondary school in north-eastern Thailand, selected by simple random sampling. The research instruments included the communicative-based instructional package, lesson plans, a 40-item English learning achievement test, a communicative competence assessment based on role-play performance, and a student satisfaction questionnaire. The data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, percentage, and paired-samples t-test. The results showed that the instructional package achieved an efficiency of 80.93/80.83, meeting the 80/80 criterion. The students' post-test scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores at the .05 level. The English communicative competence was at a good level overall, and students' satisfaction with learning through the package was at a high level. The findings suggest that the communicative-based instructional package may contribute to the improvement of students' English learning achievement, communicative competence, and learning satisfaction in the upper secondary school context.

Keywords: CLT, English communicative competence, task-based learning

Introduction

The fast-paced global connection and digital revolution has made English essential for worldwide communication and academic work and career advancement. English functions as a worldwide language which allows students to gain access to knowledge while they interact with people from different cultures and succeed in today's connected global environment (Crystal, 2019; Kirkpatrick, 2021). The

education system of secondary schools makes English language instruction their main priority because they teach English as a foreign language (EFL) to their students.

The EFL learning process faces ongoing communication skills development obstacles despite all curriculum changes and teaching method advancements. Research shows that secondary school students lack effective speaking abilities and interactive communication skills because their teachers use traditional methods and they receive limited real-life exposure and insufficient practice in actual communication (Littlewood, 2014; Richards, 2017; Yenphech, 2018).

The teaching method of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) stands as an established method which helps students develop their communicative abilities. The CLT framework requires students to develop functional language abilities while they learn through meaningful interactions which promote their engagement and skill integration (Savignon, 2018). Recent studies suggest that CLT-based instructional designs significantly improve learners' communication skills, motivation, and confidence (Alrabai, 2020).

Instructional packages are learner-centered instructional innovations that organize objectives, content, activities, materials, and assessment into a coherent learning system. In EFL contexts, communicative-based instructional packages can help bridge the gap between theoretical language teaching principles and classroom practice by providing structured opportunities for meaningful language use. Such packages can support learners' active participation, promote independent and collaborative learning, and create continuity across lessons. In addition, when instructional materials are carefully designed around communicative objectives, they can enhance not only learning achievement but also learners' confidence, participation, and satisfaction. For this reason, the present study emphasizes the development of an instructional package as the main instructional innovation, while CLT serves as the underlying pedagogical framework. (Srichanyachon, 2019; Wichadee & Pattanapichet, 2018).

The Thai EFL learning environment shows English communicative abilities of students including speaking skills perform worse than expected according to national and international assessment results (OECD, 2022). The situation demonstrates that teaching methods should focus on developing students' communicative abilities instead of requiring them to memorize information. The present study therefore aimed to develop and evaluate a communicative-based instructional package grounded in CLT principles in order to enhance upper secondary school students' English learning achievement, communicative competence, and learning satisfaction.

Research Objectives

1. To develop a communicative-based instructional package for the learning unit Relation with Other People for upper secondary school students and to evaluate its instructional efficiency based on the 80/80 criterion
2. To examine the effects of the communicative-based instructional package on students' English learning achievement by comparing pre-test and *post-test* scores
3. To investigate students' English communicative competence after learning through the communicative-based instructional package

4. To explore students' satisfaction toward learning English through the communicative-based instructional package

Research Questions

1. Does the communicative-based instructional package for the learning unit Relation with Other People achieve the instructional efficiency criterion of 80/80?
2. Is there a significant difference in English learning achievement between students' *pre-test* and *post-test* scores after using the communicative-based instructional package?
3. To what extent does the communicative-based instructional package enhance students' English communicative competence?
4. What are students' levels of satisfaction toward learning English through the communicative-based instructional package?

Literature Review

1. Communicative Language Teaching and Communicative Competence

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been widely recognized as an important approach in EFL classrooms because it emphasizes meaningful language use rather than isolated grammatical knowledge. However, previous studies have shown that the success of CLT depends not only on the approach itself but also on how it is implemented through classroom materials, activity design, and assessment procedures. While some studies report positive effects of CLT on learners' speaking confidence and interaction, others suggest that communicative outcomes remain limited when classroom materials do not provide sufficient structure or continuity (Richards, 2017; Savignon, 2018). Research findings show that CLT creates positive effects on student speaking abilities and their willingness to speak and their speaking confidence when teachers create activities which help students interact with each other through natural language use (Alrabai, 2020; Goh & Burns, 2018).

2. Communicative Activities and Task-Based Learning

Task-based learning is closely related to CLT because both approaches emphasize meaning-focused communication and learner engagement in purposeful language use. In this study, task-based learning was applied as one of the instructional procedures within the CLT-based package. The instructional activities included role-plays, discussions, simulations, and pair or group tasks that required students to exchange information, negotiate meaning, and use English for communicative purposes. Thus, task-based learning was not treated as a separate framework, but as a practical means of implementing CLT principles in the instructional package. (Fernández, 2021; Nguyen & Boers, 2019).

3. Instructional Packages as Educational Innovation

Instructional packages have increasingly been used as educational innovations because they integrate learning objectives, content, activities, materials, and assessment into a systematic format that can support classroom instruction more effectively. In language education, such packages are particularly useful because they help translate broad teaching principles into concrete learning experiences. A communicative-based instructional package can provide learners with sequenced communicative tasks, opportunities for repeated language practice, and interactive

activities aligned with real-life language use. It may also help teachers maintain consistency in instruction and assessment across lessons. In EFL classrooms, where students often require structured support to engage in communication, instructional packages can function as a practical bridge between theory and classroom implementation. Therefore, the present study places instructional package development at the center of the research, with CLT serving as the theoretical basis for its design. (Srichanyachon, 2019; Wichadee & Pattanapichet, 2018).

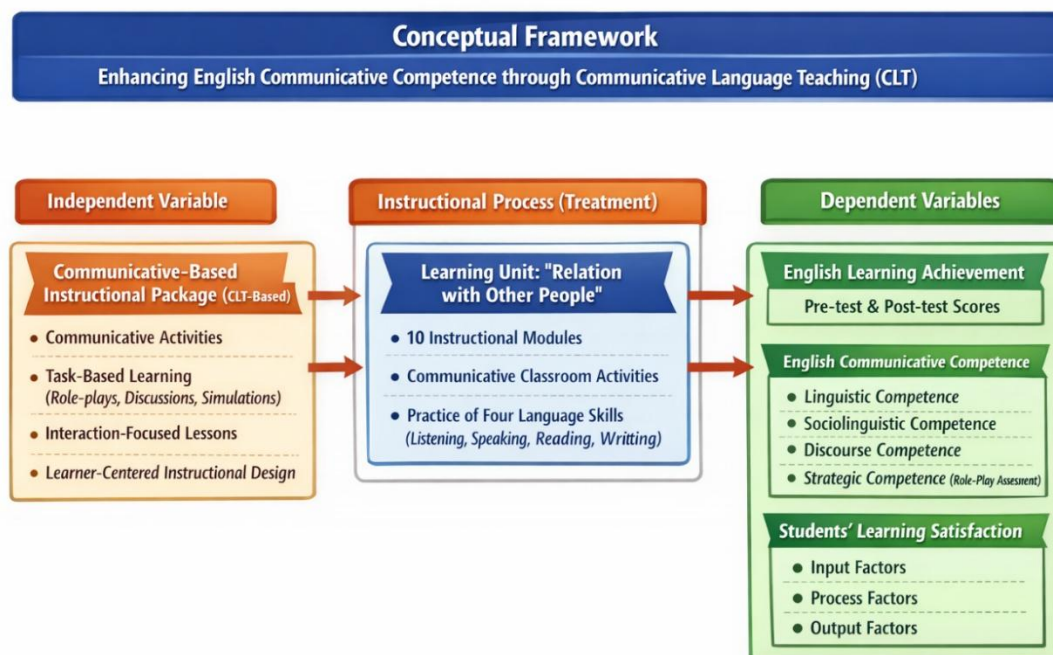
4. Learning Achievement, Communicative Skills, and Learner Satisfaction

Assessment in CLT-oriented research extends beyond traditional achievement tests to include communicative performance and affective factors. Learner satisfaction is an important indicator of instructional effectiveness (Alharbi, 2025).

Research Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

1. Research design

This study employed a one-group *pre-test-post-test* design to examine the outcomes of implementing the communicative-based instructional package. The design was suitable for the developmental and preliminary evaluative purposes of the study, particularly in assessing instructional efficiency, learning achievement, communicative competence, and learner satisfaction within one classroom context. However, because the study did not include a control group, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Improvements in *post-test* scores may not be attributed solely to the instructional package, as other factors such as familiarity with the test, classroom exposure, or maturation may also have influenced the results. Therefore, the study

provides evidence of improvement associated with the intervention rather than conclusive evidence of causality.

2. Population and Sample

The population consisted of 306 Grade 12 students enrolled in an upper secondary school in northeastern Thailand during the second semester of the academic year. From this population, 30 students were selected by simple random sampling to participate in the study. All participants were enrolled in an English course emphasizing communicative language learning.

3. Research Instruments

Four instruments were used: 1) a communicative-based instructional package for the unit “*Relation with Other People*” consisting of ten modules, 2) a 40-item English learning achievement test administered as *pre-test* and *post-test*, 3) a communicative skills assessment based on role-play performance. These components were operationalized through five assessment criteria: (1) participation in preparation and presentation, (2) role performance, (3) purposeful use of language for communication, (4) use of language and gestures, and (5) imagination and creativity. Each criterion was rated on a 4-point scale, with a total possible score of 20. The assessment rubric was reviewed by five experts for content validity, yielding IOC values ranging from 0.60 to 1.00, and 4) a learning satisfaction questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1967). All instruments were validated by five experts, with IOC values ranging from 0.60 to 1.00. The achievement test showed appropriate difficulty ($p = 0.67-0.80$), acceptable discrimination ($r = 0.204-0.541$), and high reliability ($KR-20 = 0.894$). The student satisfaction questionnaire, try-out tested with 30 non-sample students, demonstrated excellent reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.982$).

4. Data Collection

The study was conducted over 12 hours, including pretesting and *post-test*. Students completed a *pre-test*, participated in ten instructional sessions using the communicative-based instructional package, were assessed on communicative skills through role-play activities, completed a *post-test*, and responded to the satisfaction questionnaire.

5. Data Analysis

The data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, percentage, and paired-samples t-test. Mean and standard deviation were used to summarize students’ learning achievement, communicative competence, and satisfaction, while the paired-samples t-test was employed to compare pre-test and post-test achievement scores. The satisfaction questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, and the mean scores were interpreted as follows: 4.50-5.00 = very high, 3.50-4.49 = high, 2.50-3.49 = moderate, 1.50-2.49 = low, and 1.00-1.49 = very low. For the communicative competence assessment, role-play scores were interpreted according to percentage-based criteria adapted from the Office of the Basic Education Commission (2010), as follows: 77.50-100.00 = very good, 62.50-77.49 = good, 47.50-62.49 = fair, and below 47.50 = needs improvement. A score of 60 percent or above was considered passing.

Results

Phase 1: Development of the Instructional Package for the Learning Unit *Relation with Other People* Based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach for Upper Secondary Students

Table 1

Efficiency Analysis (E1/E2) of the CLT-based Instructional Package (80/80 Criterion)

Instructional Package	Number of Students (N)	E1 (Mean Score)	E2 (Mean Score)	E1/E2
Group 1 (One by One Testing)	3	77.67	77.50	77.67/77.50
Group 2 (Small Group Testing)	9	79.67	78.06	79.67/78.06
Group 3 (Field-Testing)	30	80.93	80.83	80.93/80.83

As shown in Table 1, the efficiency analysis (E1/E2) of the instructional package for the learning unit *Relation with Other People*, developed based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach, revealed that the field-testing group (Group 3) achieved an efficiency value of 80.93/80.83, which meets the 80/80 efficiency criterion.

Phase 2: Learning Achievement Results from Instruction Using the Instructional Package for the Learning Unit *Relation with Other People* Based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach for Upper Secondary Students

Table 2

Learning Achievement before and after CLT-based Instruction

Learning Achievement	N	M	SD.	t	Sig.
<i>Pre-test</i>	30	17.90	1.296	53.481	.000**
<i>Post-test</i>	30	32.33	1.605	-	-

** $p < .05$

As presented in Table 2, the students' mean post-test score ($M = 32.33$, $SD = 1.605$) was higher than their mean pre-test score ($M = 17.90$, $SD = 1.296$). The paired-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ($t = 53.481$, $p < .05$). This result indicates that students demonstrated higher English learning achievement after learning through the communicative-based instructional package.

Phase 3: Results of English Communicative Skills Assessment from Instruction Using the Instructional Package for the Learning Unit *Relation with Other People* Based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach for Upper Secondary Students

Table 3

English Communicative Skills Assessment Based on Role-Play Performance Using the CLT-based Instructional Package for the Learning Unit Relation with Other People (N = 30)

Assessment Item	Full Score	M	SD.	Percentage	Skill Level
1. Participation in preparation and presentation	4	3.29	0.12	82.13	Very Good
2. Role performance	4	2.72	0.06	68.03	Good
3. Purposeful use of language for communication	4	2.81	0.09	70.15	Good
4. Use of language and gestures	4	3.20	0.15	79.93	Very Good
5. Imagination and creativity	4	3.07	0.04	76.75	Good
Total	20	15.08	-	-	-
Overall Mean	-	3.01	0.41	75.40	Good

As shown in Table 3, the students' overall English communicative competence was at a good level ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.41$, 75.40%). Among the five assessment criteria, participation in preparation and presentation received the highest mean score ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.12$, 82.13%), which was interpreted as very good. Use of language and gestures was also rated at a very good level ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.15$, 79.93%). The remaining criteria, including role performance ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 0.06$, 68.03%), purposeful use of language for communication ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.09$, 70.15%), and imagination and creativity ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.04$, 76.75%), were rated at a good level.

Phase 4: Students' Learning Satisfaction from Instruction Using the Instructional Package for the Learning Unit *Relation with Other People* Based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach for Upper Secondary Students

Table 4

Students' Learning Satisfaction toward the CLT-based Instructional Package for the Learning Unit Relation with Other People (N = 30)

Evaluation Item	M	SD.	Satisfaction Level
1. Input Factors			
1.1 Appropriateness of instructional time	4.47	0.57	High
1.2 Appropriateness of language used	4.10	0.61	High
1.3 Appropriateness of content difficulty	4.43	0.50	High
1.4 Variety and attractiveness of instructional media	4.37	0.96	High
1.5 Appropriateness and clarity of font size	4.67	0.61	Very High
Average (Input Factors)	4.41	0.65	High
2. Process Factors			
2.1 Variety and attractiveness of learning activities	4.47	0.57	High
2.2 Appropriateness of activity difficulty	4.30	0.47	High
2.3 Participation in group communication practice	4.47	0.57	High
2.4 Participation in all learning stages	4.40	0.62	High
2.5 Practice of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills	4.60	0.56	Very High
Average (Process Factors)	4.45	0.56	High
3. Output Factors			
3.1 Enjoyment and happiness in learning	4.50	0.57	Very High
3.2 Application of knowledge in daily life	4.03	0.56	High
3.3 Increased interest in learning	4.67	0.48	Very High
3.4 Increased confidence in self-expression	4.63	0.56	Very High
3.5 Improvement of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills	4.03	0.56	High
Average (Output Factors)	4.37	0.55	High
Overall Average	4.41	0.58	High

The results indicate that students' overall satisfaction toward learning through the CLT-based instructional package was at a high level ($M = 4.41$, $SD. = 0.58$). The highest satisfaction items were related to increased learning interest, confidence in self-expression, and appropriate font size, all rated at a very high level.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated that the communicative-based instructional package for the learning unit Relation with Other People achieved the instructional efficiency criterion of 80/80, indicating satisfactory learning process and learning outcome efficiency. This result supports the theoretical framework of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction,

learner engagement, and real-life language use as essential conditions for effective language acquisition (Richards, 2017; Savignon, 2018).

The significant improvement in students' posttest scores compared to their pretest scores confirms that the developed instructional package effectively enhanced English learning achievement. Research supports the effectiveness of methods of teaching that put students into communication. This type is compared to more traditional methods where grammar rules are the main focus. Communicative tasks repeated over time enhance language skills in the learner according to Nguyen and Boers (2019). This is due to improvements in learner fluency and in the ability to interact in the language.

The students' purposeful use of language for communication reflects aspects of linguistic competence, as they were required to select and use language forms appropriately during interaction. Their role performance and use of language and gestures relate to sociolinguistic competence, since these criteria involved appropriate expression in interpersonal situations (Yenphech & Intanoo, 2022). Their ability to maintain participation in presentation and communication tasks may reflect discourse competence, as students needed to organize and sustain spoken interaction. Finally, their performance in role-play and their use of imagination and creativity may indicate strategic competence, because students had to manage communication, compensate for limited language resources, and convey meaning effectively in contextualized situations. As Goh and Burns (2018) note, communicative classroom activities, such as role-plays, discussions and simulations, aid the development of learners' communication skills when these activities are properly structured. His study's results back up the theoretical construct of communicative competence, which was developed by Ahmed in 2023, encompassing the discourse, sociolinguistic, strategic and linguistic dimensions.

Students' high levels of learning satisfaction further confirm the instructional effectiveness of the developed package. The positive emotional responses are a result of an approach to instruction that is learner-centered and which places emphasis on communication. This type of approach encourages the active participation of learners and promotes meaningful learning. In accordance with Alharbi's (2025) study, it was concluded that students learn more effectively in both communicative and blended learning environments as they lead to increased learner satisfaction, retention and motivation. Additionally, Wichadee and Pattanapichet (2018) found that instructional innovations emphasizing communicative interaction positively influence learners' motivation and learning achievement.

In the Thai EFL context, the present findings also align with national and international reports indicating a persistent need to improve learners' communicative competence (OECD, 2016, 2023). The successful implementation of the CLT-based instructional package suggests that structured communicative materials can serve as an effective pedagogical intervention to address communicative skill deficiencies in upper secondary education. In line with Vibulphol's (2021) study, the results show the relevance of teachers' comprehension of the implementation process of a curriculum to achieve communicative learning objectives.

The outcomes of this study provide context-specific evidence from Thailand, suggesting that a communicative-based instructional package grounded in CLT principles may support the development of English learning achievement,

communicative competence, and learner satisfaction among upper secondary school students. Studies into the implementation of a language teaching syllabus which is grounded in communicative principles have shown that this model of language teaching can be effective.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to formulate and assess a communicative language teaching-oriented course module in relation with other people for the twelfth standard students. This study utilized an experimental design using a one group pre-test post-test design. The study aimed to design an instructional package, measure the effects of the package on students' learning achievement, assess the students' English communicative competence, and examine the students' satisfaction levels towards the course.

This research involved 30 grade twelve students from a school in Thailand. These pupils were selected for the study through a random process. The research tools used in this study were ten-unit communication skills teaching package, the corresponding teacher lesson plans, a language skills test, a communication skills evaluation tool and a student questionnaire.

The results obtained from the instructional package indicated an efficiency level of 80.93 to 80.83 percent; this percentage fell within the predetermined 80 percent threshold. This thus demonstrated that the learning and instructional processes were effective. After starting out low, students showed major gains on the final test-differences held up when tested against a .05 cutoff. Because of this pattern, it appears the material handed out helped learners do better in English. Communicating in English showed strong proficiency-average 3.01, 75.4%. Most felt the experience met their expectations, scoring near 4.41 on a whole. This positive view concerned all aspects of the course: its organization, the activities carried out and the results obtained.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the communicative-based instructional package was associated with positive learning outcomes in this classroom context. However, because the study used a one-group pre-test-post-test design without a control group, the results should be interpreted cautiously. The study therefore provides preliminary support for the use of communicative-based instructional packages in upper secondary EFL instruction rather than definitive evidence of causal effectiveness.

Recommendations

1. Research Applicability and Expansion

Based on the findings of this study, English teachers at the upper secondary level may consider using communicative-based instructional packages to support students' English learning achievement, communicative competence, and engagement in classroom interaction. In particular, instructional materials that incorporate role-play, pair work, group communication, and real-life language situations may be appropriate for learners at this level. However, the recommendation should be applied primarily to contexts similar to that of the present study, since the participants were limited to one group of Grade 12 students in one school setting.

2. Future Research

Looking ahead, studies on communicative-based programs need longer-term observation-either through experiments or tracking over years. A broader mix of participants would help make results more reliable. Instead of small groups, bigger ones might show patterns across varied backgrounds. Motivation, stress during learning, or understanding between cultures could shape how languages grow. These factors added might reveal more about skill building. Schools differ a lot; including those at different grade levels would stretch findings further. Real-world classrooms vary widely, so testing more settings increases confidence in outcomes.

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Adaptation to AI-integrated Translation Education: A Case Study

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Abstract

Translation teaching and learning (TTL) in Vietnamese higher education, particularly within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programmes, is increasingly reshaped by the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in translation education through AI translation tools. This development has prompted lecturers, especially novices, to reconsider their teaching practices. This qualitative single-case study explores how a novice lecturer at a university in central Vietnam perceives the benefits and challenges of these tools in TTL and how she adapts her instructions in response. Collected through a semi-structured interview and video-based classroom observations of four online class sessions conducted in January 2026, the data were analyzed using an inductive thematic approach, with themes developed through iterative coding and triangulation across interview and observational sources. The findings indicate that AI translation tools are seen as an inevitable feature of contemporary TTL. While acknowledging their affordances in supporting drafting, comparison, reflective learning, and pedagogical innovation, the lecturer also raises concerns about student overreliance, assessment validity, and institutional constraints. In response, she adopts a three-step approach-independent translation, consultation of AI translation tools, and critical justification-which appears to enhance students' performance, confidence, and decision-making. The study highlights the importance of pedagogically guided AI integration in TTL and its implications for EFL and English Language Teaching.

Keywords: Translation teaching and learning (TTL),
English as a foreign language (EFL), Vietnamese higher education,
artificial intelligence (AI) translation tools, novice lecturers

Introduction

Traditionally, translation education emphasized the development of linguistic competence, cultural knowledge, and manual translation skills. However, in recent years, AI integration in translation practice has fundamentally reshaped the field (Yu & Liu, 2024), transforming translation processes (Moorkens & Guerberof Arenas, 2024) and redefining the roles of translators (Al Mudarra, 2025). AI translation tools, including neural machine translation systems (NMT) such as Google Translate, Microsoft Translator, and DeepL; computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools like SDL Trados Studio, memoQ, and Wordfast, and more recently large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, have moved from a supportive role to becoming integral

components of the translation process (Łukasik, 2024). Their influence has also extended beyond professional practice into translation education (Koka, 2024).

As a result, translation education is undergoing a shift toward a more complex model that prioritizes human-AI collaboration, post-editing practices, and higher-order cognitive skills such as critical evaluation and decision-making (Xu et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2025). This transformation is necessary to better prepare future translators for an AI-enhanced professional environment (Sun et al., 2025). Consequently, translation education programmes are increasingly expected to integrate AI and technology training, equipping learners with the practical competencies needed to navigate a rapidly evolving translation landscape, rather than focusing solely on linguistic competence and translation theory (Pym & Hao, 2025).

In this context, recent research proposes a human-AI collaboration model structured as a multi-stage process, in which AI translation tools support initial drafting and repetitive tasks, while human learners and instructors focus on evaluation, cultural interpretation, and ethical decision-making. This model highlights the complementary strengths of AI efficiency and human critical and creative expertise (Gao et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, an expanding body of literature has examined the pedagogical implications of AI translation tools in TTL. On the one hand, from the learners' perspective, these tools have been shown to enhance both the speed and efficiency of translation tasks, particularly when dealing with technical or highly repetitive texts (Tavares et al., 2023; Zhang, 2023). Regular exposure to AI-generated translations can also support vocabulary development and strengthen learners' grammatical competence (Roza & Zulhirawati, 2023; Yanti & Meka, 2019).

Furthermore, the ability of these tools to generate draft translations provides valuable opportunities for learners to engage in post-editing practices, thereby fostering analytical thinking and translation decision-making skills (Bakhov et al., 2024; Tavares et al., 2023). Their integration into classroom settings has also been associated with increased learner motivation and confidence (Omar et al., 2020; Bakhov et al., 2024), while better preparing students for the demands of professional translation practice (Al-Rumaih, 2021).

In addition, by offering immediate feedback and supporting iterative revision, these tools facilitate more reflective and personalized learning experiences (Bakhov et al., 2024; Omar & Salih, 2024). They also expand access to translation learning, particularly for learners with limited resources (Le & Dao, 2019; Yanti & Meka, 2019). Beyond the benefits for learners, AI translation tools can also enhance teaching effectiveness, especially in supporting classroom activities and enabling more timely feedback (Koka, 2024).

On the other hand, one of the most commonly reported concerns from the learners' perspective is the tendency to be over-reliant on AI-generated translations (Deng & Yu, 2022; Nguyen & Ngo, 2021; Zhang, 2023). Although these tools have improved considerably, they still struggle with more complex linguistic and cultural features, such as context, intercultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and specialized content (Tavares et al., 2023; Zhang, 2023).

Differences in infrastructure and digital skills can also directly affect how effectively AI translation tools are integrated into translation education (Al-Rumaih, 2021; Li et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the lack of systematic training in both the use of such tools and post-editing practices for lecturers and students often leads to poor

implementation and limited pedagogical direction (Al-Rumaih, 2021; Omar et al., 2020).

There are also growing concerns surrounding ethics and data privacy, particularly when academic or sensitive materials are uploaded to online AI translation platforms (Omar & Salih, 2024; Soysal, 2023). For lecturers, especially those with more teaching experience, AI translation tools can present practical challenges due to user-unfriendly interfaces and the need for a certain level of technological proficiency (Koka, 2024). In addition, many studies suggest that these tools have yet to be systematically embedded in formal curricula and are more often used as supplementary or optional resources (Al-Rumaih, 2021; Omar et al., 2020).

Given that the adoption of AI translation tools in TTL within Vietnamese higher education still lacks systematic guidance, resulting in uneven outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2025), the role of translation lecturers becomes particularly critical in shaping how these tools are integrated into classroom practice. In this evolving landscape, lecturers are expected to move beyond their traditional roles as knowledge transmitters to act as facilitators, mediators, and critical guides in TTL (Pym, 2013). They also play a key role in supporting students' ability to effectively engage with AI translation tools, critically evaluate AI-generated outputs, and make informed translation decisions (Nguyen et al., 2025; Pym & Hao, 2025).

While a growing body of research has examined AI integration in TTL within Vietnamese EFL higher education, limited attention has been paid to how novice lecturers, typically defined as those who have recently commenced their teaching careers and possess limited (usually fewer than three years) experience (Sun & Zhang, 2022), adapt their teaching practices in response. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by examining how a novice lecturer perceives the benefits and challenges of AI translation tools in TTL and how these perceptions inform her instructional adaptations.

Research Objectives and Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does a novice lecturer perceive the benefits and challenges of AI translation tools in TTL?
2. What adaptations does a novice lecturer make in response to the adoption of AI translation tools in TTL?

Methodology

1. Research design

This study adopts a qualitative single-case study design to explore how a novice lecturer perceives AI translation tools in TTL and adapts her teaching practices accordingly. A case study approach is particularly appropriate for investigating contemporary phenomena within real-life educational contexts (Yin, 2003). Rather than aiming for statistical generalization, the study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of a novice lecturer's perceptions and adaptations to AI integration in translation education. This approach aligns with the interpretive objectives of qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2014) and is particularly valuable for examining the experiences of an early-career lecturer, who is developing pedagogical approaches and

may be especially responsive to technological and institutional changes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

2. Research participant

The participant is a 27-year-old female novice lecturer at a university of foreign languages in central Vietnam. She holds a Master's degree and has less than one year of higher education teaching experience. She primarily teaches basic translation practice courses and regularly consults senior colleagues for pedagogical guidance as part of her professional development.

She teaches English majors and students enrolled in second-degree programs, including part-time and distance-learning cohorts. These groups differ considerably in academic background, language proficiency, and learner autonomy. Teaching across such varied contexts requires the lecturer to reflect carefully on her pedagogical decisions and continuously adapt her instructional approaches to meet students' diverse needs.

Regarding her technological background, the participant reports moderate familiarity with AI translation tools commonly used in TTL, such as NMT (*Google Translate*) and LLMs (*ChatGPT*). She characterizes her engagement with these tools as exploratory, emphasizing an ongoing process of learning and experimentation rather than the acquisition of expertise.

As an early-career lecturer with limited teaching experience, the participant exemplifies a group that must adapt quickly to technological innovation while concurrently developing pedagogical confidence and a professional teaching identity (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Examining such a participant, therefore, allows the study to capture perceptions and adaptations at the initial stage of an academic career, especially in the context of emerging educational technologies such as AI translation tools.

3. Data collection

3.1 Interview

Data were collected primarily through a semi-structured interview with the participant. This format was chosen to ensure coverage of key research themes while allowing the participant to elaborate on her perceptions and adaptations (Creswell, 2014). The interview focused on three main areas: (1) the participant's perceptions of the benefits and challenges of AI translation tools in TTL, (2) her adaptations to the adoption of such tools in TTL, and (3) her reflections on these instructional adaptations (see *Appendix A*).

To facilitate comfort and encourage richer responses, the interview was conducted in Vietnamese. With the participant's informed consent, the interview was audio-recorded solely for transcription and analysis purposes. The recording was stored securely, and identifying information was removed during transcription to ensure confidentiality. The interview was conducted face-to-face and lasted approximately 20 minutes. The audio recording was transcribed verbatim and subsequently translated into English for analysis. During the translation process, emphasis was placed on preserving the meaning and intent of the participant's responses rather than producing a literal translation (see *Appendix B*).

3.2 Classroom observation

Classroom observation was used as a complementary data source to enhance the study's credibility through methodological triangulation (Patton, 1999). The observation was based on recorded video footage of the Basic Translation Practice course taught online via Zoom by the participant throughout January 2026. In total, four online class sessions were analyzed, excluding the first session, which focused on course introduction. Each recording lasted approximately two and a half hours and documented instructional procedures, classroom interactions, and students' engagement with translation tasks.

Video-based observation enabled close examination of classroom events, supporting a systematic analysis of how AI translation tools were integrated into the participant's teaching practices (Derry et al., 2010). All recordings were used exclusively for research purposes and handled in accordance with ethical guidelines. Identifying information was removed during analysis to protect the anonymity of both the lecturer and the students.

4. Data analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following a qualitative and inductive approach to identify recurring patterns of meaning in the participant's accounts and classroom practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interview transcript was read several times to ensure familiarity with the participant's perspectives. Initial coding was then conducted manually, focusing on meaningful segments related to how the participant perceived the benefits and challenges of AI translation tools in TTL, the adaptations she made, and her reflections on these instructional adaptations. These initial codes were reviewed repeatedly and compared across the dataset to identify similarities, differences, and recurring ideas. Related codes were then grouped into broader categories, which were ultimately refined into higher-level themes that addressed the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Classroom observation data were analyzed alongside interview data to support thematic interpretation. The video recordings were viewed multiple times to identify instructional patterns, learning activities, and instances of student engagement with AI translation tools. Particular attention was given to classroom moments that illustrated themes emerging from the interview, including independent translation, consultation of AI translation tools, justification of translation choices and peer discussion.

To strengthen the credibility of the analysis, the coding process was iterative rather than linear. Preliminary themes were revisited and refined through repeated comparison with both interview and observation data to ensure that they accurately reflected the participant's reported perceptions and observed classroom practices. Themes were retained only when they were supported by sufficient evidence across the dataset and clearly contributed to answering the research questions. Convergences between the participant's accounts and classroom observations were used to reinforce interpretations, whereas discrepancies were examined more closely to generate deeper insights into the teaching context rather than being treated as inconsistencies to be removed.

The final themes were reviewed for internal coherence and distinctiveness to ensure that each theme captured a meaningful pattern while remaining analytically separate from the others. They were then organized and presented in the Results and Discussion sections, supported by illustrative quotations and observational evidence to anchor interpretation in the empirical data.

Results

1. Perceived benefits and challenges of AI translation tools in TTL

The participant highlights several affordances associated with the adoption of AI translation tools in TTL. From a learner's perspective, she values these tools' ability to generate "multiple translation options," which can serve as a "basis for comparison and informed decision-making." Rather than viewing AI output as a final product, she treats it as a draft that students can revise to improve their "lexical choices, grammatical accuracy, and overall expression." From a lecturer's perspective, the participant views AI integration in translation education as a catalyst for pedagogical innovation. The availability of AI-generated translations allows her to incorporate "more comparative, analytical, and critical tasks" into classroom practice.

In contrast, the participant identifies several major challenges in incorporating AI translation tools in TTL. Notably, she expresses concerns over student overreliance on such tools, as some come to "regard AI-generated output as unquestionably correct." Although many students are capable of producing "reasonable translations" on their own, frequent exposure to highly fluent AI output seems to undermine both their confidence and their critical judgment. As she explains, students who initially used AI translation tools for "convenience and speed" now rely on it because they "believe AI is always right." Beyond learner-related concerns, the participant also points to a range of structural constraints. Her remark that lecturers often have to "figure things out on [their] own" reflects a lack of institutional training and guidance for AI integration in translation education. She further stresses the difficulty of identifying AI-generated translations, particularly as paid tools produce increasingly sophisticated output. As she notes, it is "not always clear whether a translation reflects the student's own competence or AI output." In addition, while she finds it relatively manageable to incorporate AI-supported activities in online classes, she notes that "in traditional in-person classes...the institution's infrastructure still presents certain limitations." Issues such as unstable internet connectivity, restricted access to platforms, and limited classroom technology, specifically ineffective screen-sharing functions, often require her to "provide [her] own hotspot" or rely "almost entirely on PowerPoint."

2. The participant's adaptations to the adoption of AI translation tools in TTL

The participant regards AI translation tools as an inevitable feature of contemporary TTL. Although she expresses discomfort with students' overuse of such tools, she acknowledges that prohibiting or fully controlling their use is unrealistic, noting that "it is neither feasible to completely prohibit students from using AI nor to exercise full control over their behavior." Accordingly, she adopts an adaptive stance that prioritizes pedagogical guidance over restriction, and encourages students to use AI translation tools "as a means for practice rather than a last-minute solution."

Correspondingly, the participant adopted structured classroom strategies designed to balance student autonomy with purposeful use of technology. Recognizing the difficulty of controlling students' use of AI translation tools outside the classroom, she prioritizes designing guided in-class activities that encourage reflective and critical engagement with such tools.

Correspondingly, the participant adopts structured classroom strategies designed to balance student autonomy with the purposeful use of technology. Recognizing the difficulty of controlling students' use of AI translation tools outside the classroom, she prioritizes the design of guided in-class activities that foster reflective and critical engagement with such tools. Central to her approach is a three-step procedure: students first translate independently, then consult AI translation tools for "an additional translation option," and finally "critically evaluate and justify" their translation decisions. She further reinforces this approach through pairwork activities that facilitate comparison between "human-to-human" and "human-to-machine" translations.

3. The participant's reflections on her instructional adaptations

The participant reports encouraging signs that her adaptations positively influence students' performance, particularly in their ability to justify choices and engage in reflective decision-making. She observes that students are now able to "articulate why one word or expression is more appropriate than another." Importantly, video-recorded classroom observations of four online class sessions support her account. These recordings show students actively participating in comparison and discussion, especially during tasks that required independent translation followed by analysis of AI output. Rather than accepting AI-generated translations uncritically, students were seen explaining and defending their lexical and stylistic decisions in peer interactions.

The participant also notes a "greater investment and effort" in students' work. However, she remains cautious, acknowledging that the adaptations have been implemented in only "one distance-learning class" and that she does "not yet have quantitative data." Nevertheless, the convergence between interview insights and video-based observations suggests improvements in students' performance and engagement, particularly among distance-learning students who "possess domain-specific knowledge" and demonstrate stronger justification of specialized terminology.

Discussion

The findings of this study both support and extend existing literature on the affordances and challenges of AI translation tools in TTL, particularly within the Vietnamese EFL higher education context.

In line with prior research, the participant acknowledges the pedagogical value of AI translation tools in supporting drafting, comparison, and reflective learning. Her emphasis on using AI outputs as a basis for comparison aligns with previous studies demonstrating that such tools can enhance learners' analytical thinking and translation decision-making through post-editing practices (Bakhov et al., 2024; Tavares et al., 2023). Similarly, her observation that students can improve lexical choices and grammatical accuracy through engagement with AI-generated translations echoes earlier findings on vocabulary development and linguistic competence (Roza & Zulhirawati, 2023; Yanti & Meka, 2019).

More importantly, this study adds nuance to existing research by showing that the benefits of AI translation tools are not inherent to the technology but depend on how they are deliberately and thoughtfully integrated in TTL. While previous studies often highlight their efficiency and motivational value (Omar et al., 2020; Bakhov et al., 2024), the participant's experience suggests that their value lies not in the output itself but in how it is used to shape learning processes. Her shift toward more comparative, analytical, and critical classroom activities reflects a move away from traditional teacher-centered correction toward more student-engaged learning, supporting claims that AI translation tools can facilitate more interactive and reflective pedagogies (Koka, 2024). In this respect, her practices resonate strongly with the human–AI collaboration model proposed by Gao et al. (2025), in which AI translation tools support initial drafting while human learners engage in evaluation, interpretation, and decision-making.

Meanwhile, the participant's concerns about student overreliance strongly resonate with existing literature that identifies dependency as a major risk of AI integration (Deng & Yu, 2022; Nguyen & Ngo, 2021; Zhang, 2023). Her observation that students increasingly treat AI-generated output as “always right” points to a deeper shift in which AI translation tools move from being supportive tools to becoming benchmarks for correctness. This finding extends prior research by showing that overreliance is not only a matter of usage patterns but also a cognitive shift that may weaken learners' confidence and critical evaluative skills. From this perspective, the issue is less about how often students use AI translation tools and more about how they position and trust such tools in their decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the participant's account brings attention to persistent structural constraints that have been widely acknowledged but insufficiently addressed in the literature. Consistent with previous studies (Al-Rumaih, 2021; Li et al., 2024), limitations in infrastructure and digital access continue to shape the feasibility of integrating AI into TTL. Her need to rely on personal resources, such as providing her own internet hotspot, underscores the uneven conditions under which AI integration occurs in the Vietnamese higher education context.

In addition, the lack of systematic training for lecturers reflects broader concerns about insufficient institutional support and pedagogical guidance (Omar et al., 2020; Al-Rumaih, 2021). Without such support, AI integration in translation education risks becoming a matter of individual trial and error rather than a well-supported educational approach.

The findings also highlight concerns regarding assessment validity, which remains relatively underexplored in the existing literature. The participant's difficulty in distinguishing between student-generated and AI-generated translations raises important questions about authorship, academic integrity, and the reliability of current assessment practices. As AI outputs become increasingly sophisticated, traditional product-based assessment may no longer adequately reflect students' actual translation competence. This highlights the need to rethink assessment design in TTL, moving toward more process-oriented approaches that place greater emphasis on learners' reasoning, justification, and decision-making—key components highlighted in human–AI collaboration frameworks—rather than final products.

The findings of this study also provide empirical support for the growing body of literature that positions AI translation tools as both an inevitable and transformative element in TTL (Yu & Liu, 2024; Koka, 2024). The participant's recognition that prohibiting the use of these tools is neither feasible nor effective aligns with broader scholarly consensus that such tools have become deeply embedded in both professional practice and educational contexts (Łukasik, 2024; Pym & Hao, 2025). Rather than resisting this shift, her adaptive stance reflects an emerging pedagogical orientation that prioritizes guided integration over restriction, an approach increasingly advocated in recent research (Nguyen et al., 2025).

Notably, the participant's adaptations directly address one of the most frequently cited challenges in the literature, namely student overreliance on AI-generated translations (Deng & Yu, 2022; Zhang, 2023). By requiring students to first produce independent translations before consulting AI output, her three-step procedure effectively mitigates passive dependence and encourages active engagement. This aligns closely with the multi-stage collaboration model (Gao et al., 2025), where AI contributes to efficiency while human learners retain responsibility for evaluation.

This approach also resonates with prior research highlighting the value of post-editing and comparison tasks in fostering analytical thinking and translation decision-making skills (Bakhov et al., 2024; Tavares et al., 2023). Furthermore, positioning AI output as "an additional translation option" rather than an authoritative model reflects a pedagogical shift toward treating AI as a tool for reflection rather than substitution, which aligns with calls for human-AI collaboration in translation education (Xu et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2025).

The use of pairwork activities further reinforces this pedagogical approach by fostering dialogic learning and peer-based evaluation. This finding extends existing literature that highlights the role of AI translation tools in promoting reflective and interactive learning environments (Bakhov et al., 2024; Omar & Salih, 2024). By encouraging students to compare "human-to-human" and "human-to-machine" translations, the participant not only enhances learners' evaluative skills but also cultivates critical awareness of the limitations of such tools, particularly in relation to contextual and cultural nuances (Tavares et al., 2023; Zhang, 2023).

The participant's reflections on her instructional adaptations provide further insight into the pedagogical potential of AI translation tools when thoughtfully integrated. Her observation that students are increasingly able to justify lexical and stylistic choices points to the development of higher-order cognitive skills, such as critical evaluation and decision-making, which are widely recognized as essential competencies for translators in AI-enhanced environments (Xu et al., 2024; Pym & Hao, 2025). This finding challenges concerns that AI integration may undermine learner autonomy (Deng & Yu, 2022). Instead, it supports the view that, when pedagogically structured, AI translation tools can enhance students' sense of ownership and agency in the translation process.

In the meantime, the participant's cautious stance highlights ongoing limitations and contextual constraints. Her acknowledgment that the adaptations were implemented in a single distance-learning class and lack quantitative validation reflects a broader issue identified in the literature – the absence of systematic, large-scale pedagogical frameworks for AI integration in higher education (Al-Rumaih, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the observed improvements among distance-

learning students, particularly those with domain-specific knowledge, suggest that learner characteristics and learning contexts may influence the effectiveness of AI-supported pedagogies.

Overall, the participant's practices exemplify the evolving role of translation lecturers as facilitators and critical guides who shape students' interaction with AI translation tools (Pym, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2025). Her approach demonstrates that a controlled, pedagogically guided integration of AI can transform potential risks such as overreliance into opportunities for developing critical, reflective, and autonomous translators. These insights are particularly relevant to EFL contexts and English Language Teaching more broadly, where AI tools are increasingly used to support language learning. They suggest that similar pedagogical approaches may help foster learners' critical engagement with AI-generated language outputs.

Conclusion

The study sheds light on how AI translation tools are being integrated in everyday teaching practices in Vietnamese EFL higher education, particularly from the perspective of an early-career lecturer. Her experience reflects a broader shift in translation education, where engagement with such tools is no longer optional but requires continuous adaptation and critical reflection.

Her adaptations to the adoption of AI translation tools in TTL reveal an ongoing tension between leveraging their benefits and addressing emerging challenges. While these tools can facilitate drafting, comparison, and reflective learning, their use also raises concerns about student overdependence and assessment validity. These issues are further exacerbated by limited institutional support, particularly in terms of insufficient professional training and inadequate technological infrastructure.

The lecturer's structured approach, moving from independent work to consultation of AI translation tools and then to critical justification, demonstrates a practical way of integrating these tools in TTL without undermining the development of learners' critical thinking and evaluative skills. This approach suggests that AI translation tools can serve as a valuable learning resource when their use is carefully scaffolded rather than left uncontrolled.

Overall, the study points to the need for more systematic integration of AI in translation education in Vietnam. Beyond individual classroom practices, Vietnamese higher education institutions need to support lecturers through professional training, curriculum redesign that incorporates AI literacy and post-editing skills, and efforts to address infrastructural disparities that may hinder effective implementation.

Recommendations

Although this study focuses on a single novice lecturer within one institutional context, it provides a valuable starting point for further inquiry. Future research could extend this work by involving multiple lecturers across different institutions to examine whether similar perceptions and adaptations emerge in diverse educational settings. Future studies may also incorporate students' perspectives, compare the approaches of novice and experienced lecturers, and investigate how institutional policies influence the integration of AI in translation education.

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Appendices

A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Question 1. Can you briefly describe your teaching background, including your experience in translation education and the context in which you teach?

Question 2. How familiar are you with AI translation tools (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL, ChatGPT), and how have you used them in your teaching practices?

Question 3. How do you perceive the role of AI translation tools in contemporary translation teaching and learning?

Question 4. Based on your experience, what are the benefits of AI translation tools in translation teaching and learning?

Question 5. What challenges or concerns do you associate with the adoption of AI translation tools in translation teaching and learning?

Question 6. How have you adapted your teaching practices in response to the adoption of AI translation tools in translation teaching and learning?

Question 7. From your classroom observation, what effects have these adaptations had on students' performance?

B. THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Researcher	Good morning, and thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this interview today. Before we begin, I would like to confirm that you have agreed to take part in this study and that you understand its purpose. Please be assured that all the information you share will be kept confidential and used only for academic research. Your identity will be anonymized in all reports and publications. For your convenience, the interview will be conducted in Vietnamese, and your responses will later be translated into English for analysis. With your permission, the interview will also be audio-recorded for transcription and research purposes only, and the recording will not be shared with any third parties. If at any point you feel uncomfortable or would prefer not to answer a question, you are free to skip it or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. To begin, could you briefly describe your teaching background, including your experience in translation education and the context in which you teach?
Participant	Yes, of course. I'm a relatively novice lecturer, and I've been teaching in higher education for less than a year.
Researcher	Thank you. What kinds of students do you usually teach?
Participant	My students include English-major undergraduates and students in second-degree programs, including part-time and distance-learning students.
Researcher	I see. And what types of translation courses do you teach (e.g., general, specialized)?
Participant	At the moment, I'm mainly responsible for teaching basic translation practice courses.
Researcher	Thank you. Turning now to technology, how familiar are you with AI translation tools (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL, ChatGPT) and how have you used them in your teaching practice?
Participant	I would say that I'm somewhat familiar with them. I regularly use tools like Google Translate and ChatGPT, but I don't consider myself an expert. Most of the time, I learn how these tools work through my own exploration rather than any formal training.
Researcher	That's helpful to know. So, from your perspective, how do you perceive the role of AI translation tools in contemporary translation teaching and learning?
Participant	In my view, the first thing that must be acknowledged is the inevitability of AI translation tool use. I am aware that some lecturers do not favor students' use of these tools, and personally, I am also uncomfortable when students overuse or abuse AI. However, I believe that AI is a global phenomenon, and its adoption is unavoidable.

	In reality, it is neither feasible to completely prohibit students from using AI nor to exercise full control over their behavior. Even in the classroom, students may use AI discreetly without being detected 100 percent of the time, and outside classroom, monitoring becomes virtually impossible. Therefore, rather than attempting to restrict the use of AI translation tools, I choose to accept it as an inevitable development. What matters more is how we manage and guide its use in ways that are beneficial to translation teaching and learning. Therefore, I encourage students to view AI translation tools as a means for practice rather than as a last-minute solution or a tool solely for checking final answers. I guide students to use these tools regularly and purposefully in order to enhance their translation competence, rather than relying passively on AI-generated translations.
Researcher	Thank you for sharing your perspective. Based on your experience, what are the benefits of AI translation tools in translation teaching and learning?
Participant	In practice, AI translation tools can provide basic suggestions, and even at this level, they offer certain benefits to students. They allow students to access multiple translation options, which gives them a basis for comparison and informed decision-making. For instance, students can reflect on why one version is preferable to another. AI translations tools also help students generate an initial draft. Through revising and refining this draft, students can gradually improve their lexical choices, grammatical accuracy, and overall expression. I believe that tools such as ChatGPT provide multiple perspectives on the same word or grammatical structure, thereby broadening students' approaches to translation rather than limiting them to a single solution.
Researcher	You've just mentioned several benefits for students. From the teacher's perspective, what advantages do you see?
Participant	From a teaching perspective, AI translation tools enable greater diversity and flexibility in the design of learning activities. With the support of these tools, I can incorporate more comparative, analytical, and critical tasks into classroom practice, rather than limiting instruction to student translation followed by teacher correction.
Researcher	Thank you for your insights. On the other hand, what challenges or concerns do you associate with the adoption of AI translation tools in translation teaching and learning?
Participant	One major concern is students' overreliance on AI-generated translations. If not used properly, this dependence may undermine students' translation competence, particularly their ability to make decisions and think critically. In some cases, students produce reasonable translations of their own but lack confidence in defending their lexical or stylistic choices when compared with ChatGPT's output. Even when students ask follow-up questions such as "why

	one word should be used instead of another”, ChatGPT often provides highly persuasive explanations. Over time, this can lead students to doubt their own abilities and regard AI output as unquestionably correct. Whereas students initially used AI translation tools for convenience and speed, many now use it because they believe AI is always right.
Researcher	That’s an important point. Apart from student-related issues, are there any challenges you face as a lecturer?
Participant	Personally, I feel that there are two main gaps. First, there is a lack of systematic training on how to use AI translation tools effectively. At present, very few formal seminars or resources focus specifically on integrating these tools into translation teaching, so I often have to figure things out on my own. Second, as AI translation tools become increasingly sophisticated, especially paid versions that can produce very high-quality translations, it has become more difficult to identify AI output. This creates challenges for translation teaching and assessment, as it is not always clear whether a translation reflects the student’s own competence ability or the output of AI translation tools. At the same time, as I mentioned earlier, during the teaching process I often integrate various activities into the classroom. This does not pose many difficulties when I teach online classes. However, if I want to incorporate these activities into traditional in-person classes with students at the university, the institution’s infrastructure still presents certain limitations. The first issue is the network system. The current network is not very stable, and for most teaching activities I have conducted that require internet access, I usually have to provide my own hotspot or prepare my own equipment. When students are involved, I often advise them to use their personal internet connections and limit their use of the university’s Wi-Fi, as it is relatively slow and sometimes does not allow access to certain platforms. In reality, there have been quite a few cases of Wi-Fi-related problems during teaching sessions. The second issue concerns the university’s computer systems. In some situations, I am only able to use PowerPoint, while other functions such as screen sharing do not work effectively. For example, when I try to access YouTube or use other applications to share content, it is not possible, which means that the lesson ends up relying almost entirely on PowerPoint.
Researcher	Based on what you’ve just shared, these challenges seem to affect both learning and teaching. Given that, how have you adapted your teaching practices in response to the adoption of AI translation tools in translation teaching and learning?
Participant	The solutions I apply are mainly classroom-based, as it is difficult to control students’ use of AI translation tools outside classroom. Specifically, I require students to follow a three-step process. First, they must complete a translation independently without using these

	tools. Second, they may consult ChatGPT to obtain an additional translation option. Third, they are required to critically evaluate and justify why their own translation is better than, or different from, the AI-generated version. I also organize pairwork activities in which students compare their translations not only with those of their peers but also with ChatGPT's output. This allows students to compare "human-to-human" and "human-to-machine" translations, fostering deeper evaluation of translation quality. The goal is to enhance students' confidence while simultaneously developing their critical thinking and decision-making skills in translation.
Researcher	From your classroom experience, what effects have these adaptations had on students' performance?
Participant	At present, I have applied these approaches in one distance-learning class. Based on classroom observations, I have noticed clear improvements in students' ability to justify their translation choices. Previously, many students struggled to explain their decisions, but now they can articulate why one word or expression is more appropriate than another. Although I do not yet have quantitative data, ongoing monitoring of classroom activities indicates positive development in both translation quality and critical reflection. Students' translations show greater investment and effort, rather than simple reliance on AI output. This is particularly evident among distance-learning students, who often possess domain-specific knowledge and can justify specialized terminology more effectively.
Researcher	Thank you very much for your valuable sharing today. Your insights will contribute greatly to this research. If you have no further comments, we will conclude the interview here. Thank you once again for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. I truly appreciate your contribution, and I wish you all the best in your teaching and professional work.
Participant	Thank you. I hope my responses can be helpful, and I wish you success with your research.

Implementing CLIL Materials to Promote Intercultural Competence in an English Program in Thailand

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Abstract

This study aimed to design and implement CLIL lesson plans based on Coyle's 4Cs framework and Byram's (1997) model to promote intercultural competence (IC), and to examine the observed development of IC through four types of materials: ready-made, authentic, teacher-brought, and student-brought. The participants were 35 Grade 12 students at a secondary school in eastern Thailand. The study adopted a qualitative research design, employing classroom video recordings and the researcher's reflections as data sources. Thematic Analysis was used to analyze the researcher's reflective journals and the classroom video recordings. The analysis followed a systematic coding process to identify patterns related to IC. The findings revealed that all four types of CLIL materials contributed to students' intercultural competence, particularly in developing attitudes of openness and curiosity. Among these, student-brought materials were found to be the most effective in fostering intercultural engagement, as they encouraged learners to research, present, and reflect on cultural behaviors and practices. The study concludes that integrating diverse materials within the CLIL framework can promote IC and provide meaningful, context-rich language learning experiences in secondary classrooms.

Keywords: content and language integrated learning, intercultural competence, CLIL materials, secondary school students

Introduction

In the 21st century, English has become a global means of communication and is widely used as a lingua franca among speakers from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2011). As English increasingly functions beyond national and native-speaker contexts, the goals of English language education have expanded (Jenkins & Panero, 2025). Preparing students to adhere to native-speaker norms, such as attaining native-like proficiency, might not sufficiently support their use of English outside the classroom. Rather, educators are responsible for preparing students to use English in international settings where interlocutors come from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Prabjandee, 2020, 2025). In these situations, learners are

expected not only to develop linguistic proficiency but also to communicate appropriately and effectively across cultures (Deardorff, 2006). This ability, commonly referred to as intercultural competence (IC) or intercultural communicative competence (ICC), involves understanding cultural differences, demonstrating openness and respect, and interacting successfully with people from multiple cultural backgrounds (Byram, 1997).

In Thailand, the importance of intercultural competence has become particularly evident in regions experiencing rapid globalization. This need is especially relevant in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), a key economic development zone that has attracted international investment, tourism, and a multicultural workforce (Eastern Economic Corridor Office, 2023). As a result, students in this region are increasingly likely to encounter linguistic and cultural diversity in both academic and everyday contexts. However, English language instruction in Thai secondary schools has traditionally emphasized grammatical accuracy and examination preparation, often with limited integration of cultural content (Baker, 2012). Consequently, although students may acquire linguistic knowledge, they may still lack the intercultural awareness and skills required for meaningful communication in global contexts. This situation highlights the need for pedagogical approaches that can integrate language learning with intercultural development in more meaningful and contextualized ways.

One promising approach to addressing this need is *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL). CLIL integrates language learning with subject content, allowing learners to develop linguistic competence while engaging with meaningful, context-rich topics (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). More importantly, CLIL emphasizes culture as a core component of learning through Coyle's 4Cs framework: content, communication, cognition, and culture, which aligns closely with the goals of intercultural education (Coyle, 2007). Through this integration, CLIL offers strong potential for promoting intercultural competence alongside language development.

Despite increased attention to CLIL's integration of language, content, cognition, and culture, there is a specific research gap regarding its use to foster intercultural competence in Thai secondary schools. In particular, how various types of teaching materials within CLIL lessons support students' intercultural development remains largely unexplored (Tongwanchai & Sritong 2025). Most existing studies in Thailand focus on general CLIL implementation or language outcomes, rather than on the particular contribution of teaching materials to intercultural competence. This is especially true in regions like the EEC, where global engagement heightens the need for these skills.

To address these gaps, this study examines the design and implementation of CLIL lesson plans to promote intercultural competence among secondary school students. It also examines which types of teaching materials, including ready-made, authentic, teacher-brought, and student-brought materials, are most effectively supporting students' intercultural development. In doing so, the study contributes to the literature by providing contextualized evidence from a Thai secondary school in the EEC, delivering practical knowledge of CLIL lesson design, and highlighting the pedagogical value of different material types in developing students' intercultural competence.

Research Objectives

- 1.To design and implement CLIL lesson plans that promote intercultural competence
- 2.To examine the effectiveness of the implemented lesson plans in promoting intercultural competence.

Literature Review

Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence has been widely recognized as an essential outcome of English language education in an increasingly interconnected world. Although the concept has been defined in several ways, most scholars agree that it involves the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultural and linguistic differences. Byram (1997) conceptualized intercultural communicative competence as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness, while Deardorff (2006) emphasized effective and appropriate communication in intercultural situations. These definitions suggest that intercultural competence is not limited to learning about other cultures, but also includes the ability to interpret, compare, reflect, and engage critically with cultural differences.

Byram's (1997) model remains one of the most influential frameworks in language education because it provides a clear structure for understanding intercultural learning. The model includes five dimensions or *savoirs*: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. Attitudes refer to curiosity and openness toward other cultures, while knowledge involves understanding social practices and cultural groups. The skills dimensions enable learners to interpret cultural meanings, relate them to their own experiences, and interact appropriately in new situations. Critical cultural awareness, the final dimension, encourages learners to evaluate cultural practices and perspectives based on explicit criteria. Together, these components present intercultural competence as a developmental and reflective process rather than a fixed body of cultural facts.

Why is IC important in the English classroom?

In English language classrooms, intercultural competence has become increasingly important because English is now used as a global lingua franca rather than as the property of a single native-speaker community (Jenkins & Panero, 2025). Baker (2011) argues that learners need more than grammatical accuracy or native-like pronunciation; they must also be able to communicate respectfully and appropriately with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. UNESCO (2013) likewise emphasizes that intercultural understanding is central to building inclusive and peaceful societies. However, despite broad agreement on its importance, intercultural competence is still often treated as an additional topic rather than a central learning goal in English instruction, partly because of uncertainty about how to teach and assess it systematically. However, integrating IC into the classroom presents a significant pedagogical challenge due to "conceptual ambiguity" in its definition and assessment (Sincicrope et al., 2007; (Tran & Pham, 2017). To address this, many researchers adopt Byram's (1997) framework of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which defines the construct as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different backgrounds using a second language. This involves a strategic

blend of linguistic knowledge and paralinguistic strategies to achieve specific communicative goals. Despite this clear theoretical foundation, the practical application of IC in ESL/EFL curricula remains fragmented, often treated as an elective add-on rather than a core competence required for global citizenship.

Implementing CLIL to Promote Intercultural Competence

The development of intercultural competence within CLIL classrooms is distinctive because it integrates linguistic learning with the negotiation of cultural meanings embedded in academic subject matter (Cenoz et al., 2014). Unlike traditional language teaching, CLIL shifts the focus from isolated linguistic forms to context-rich and meaningful communication, in which cultural awareness is not an optional addition but a central dimension of learning (Coyle, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010). The integration of intercultural competence in this study is grounded in the synergy between Coyle's 4Cs Framework and Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence. Within the CLIL paradigm, the four dimensions of Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture create conditions in which intercultural learning becomes intellectually demanding and pedagogically purposeful. This aligns with Deardorff's (2006) Process Model, which views intercultural competence as an ongoing developmental process requiring reflection, adaptability, and critical thinking rather than the accumulation of surface-level knowledge. In this sense, CLIL provides a meaningful context for learners to move beyond factual awareness toward deeper understanding of social, cultural, and political perspectives.

CLIL environments are also well suited to fostering Byram's five *savoirs*. As students engage with diverse subject matter, they develop skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) as well as skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*). At the same time, collaborative tasks and classroom discussion can support the development of attitudes of openness and curiosity (*savoir être*), which are essential for negotiating meaning across cultural boundaries (Sudhoff, 2010). When designed deliberately, CLIL lessons can therefore create opportunities for learners to compare perspectives, question assumptions, and engage critically with cultural content.

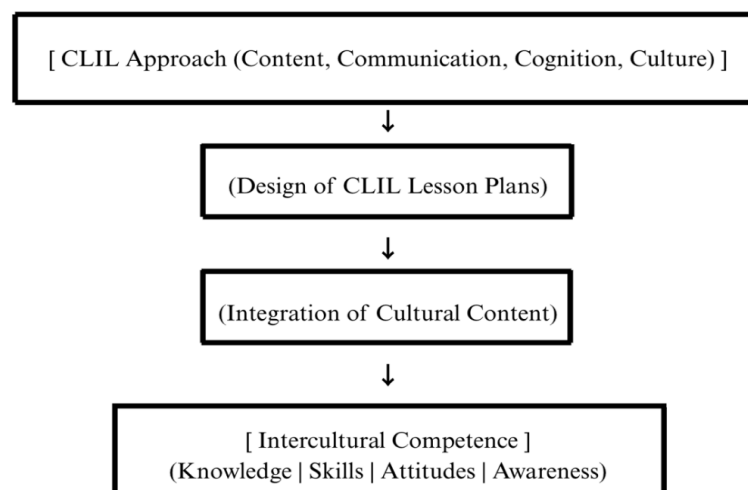
Previous studies highlight both the promise and the limitations of CLIL implementation. For example, the CulCLIL model shows that integrating cultural heritage content can strengthen students' analytical understanding of their own and others' identities while encouraging introspection and meaningful dialogue (Lemut Bajec et al., 2025). However, Koro (2018) points to a persistent challenge: instructional materials often function merely as triggers for cultural discussion, but the discussion itself may remain at a superficial level. This suggests that exposure to cultural content alone is insufficient to ensure the development of intercultural competence.

A key issue in the literature is the degree of intentionality in fostering intercultural competence. Although Coyle et al. (2010) emphasizes the value of authentic materials and multicultural texts, Koro (2018) argues that intercultural learning is often incidental rather than systematically planned. This tension highlights the importance of teacher scaffolding and curriculum design. Without explicit intercultural objectives, carefully sequenced tasks, and structured reflection, the full potential of CLIL may remain unrealized. In globalized contexts such as Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor, therefore, CLIL should be implemented as a deliberate

pedagogical space that nurtures critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) and moves learners from initial curiosity toward informed, evaluative, and reflective global perspectives.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework Integrating Coyle's (2010) 4Cs Framework and Byram's (1997) Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence



Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the development of intercultural competence (IC) in a CLIL classroom, using systematic video-recorded observations to capture real-time intercultural awareness (Deardorff, 2006). Data were processed through thematic analysis, involving inductive coding of student interactions and the subsequent mapping of these codes onto Byram's (1997) IC framework. To ensure research trustworthiness, the study utilized data triangulation by cross-referencing video recordings with reflective journals and observation notes, while peer review and consistent coding procedures were employed to strengthen the credibility and dependability of the findings.

Context of the study

This study was situated in a secondary school within Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), a strategic industrial zone characterized by rapid globalization and a multicultural social landscape. While the current English language curriculum in this context effectively develops the four macro-skills through active learning and textbook-based instruction, it often lacks the depth required to address the intercultural dimensions of language use. The school's location in a primary economic and tourism hub necessitates more than linguistic proficiency; students frequently interact with a diverse international population, including expatriates and tourists from China, Japan, and Europe. Consequently, traditional pedagogy is insufficient for preparing learners for these complex intercultural encounters.

Participants

The study employed purposive sampling to select 35 Grade 12 students (10 males, 25 females) from an English Program in Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). The sample was selected primarily for its linguistic and cognitive suitability for the CLIL framework (Coyle et al., 2010). With the majority of students at a CEFR B1 level and a small group at B2, the cohort possesses the necessary linguistic threshold to engage in the cognitively demanding and reflective tasks required to cultivate Intercultural Competence (Byram, 1997). This proficiency ensures that the participants can navigate the dual demands of content learning and intercultural analysis, which are central to the study's objectives.

Research instruments

The researcher used three research instruments to collect the data and find the outcomes following the purposes of the study: CLIL lesson plans based on the 4Cs Framework and Byram's IC model, using four different types of materials: ready-made, teacher-brought, authentic, and student-brought. Video recordings of classroom lessons and researcher reflections. The descriptions of each instrument are as follows.

Lesson plans

The CLIL lesson plans were designed for an optional English course consisting of 100-minute sessions. The researcher developed the lesson plans using four types of materials ready-made, teacher-brought, authentic, and student-brought materials based on the 4Cs Framework adapted from (Coyle et al., 2010) and the concept of intercultural competence proposed by Byram (1997). In line with these theoretical foundations, each lesson was systematically designed to integrate the four core CLIL dimensions of content, communication, cognition, and culture while simultaneously fostering students' intercultural understanding. The lesson plans specified learning aims, intended outcomes, language objectives, cultural focus, classroom procedures, scaffolding strategies, and assessment methods, thereby demonstrating that CLIL was implemented as a structured pedagogical approach rather than as an incidental addition to language instruction. Across the four instructional units, students engaged with intercultural topics through reading, viewing, discussion, comparison, presentation, and reflection, using English as a medium for exploring cultural perspectives, interpreting meanings, and expressing informed opinions. The lessons generally followed a sequence of lead-in, input, language support, task, output, and reflection, which enabled learners to activate prior knowledge, develop target language, engage critically with cultural content, and reflect on cultural similarities and differences. In this way, the lesson plans operationalized CLIL in a coherent instructional design that promoted language development, higher-order thinking, and intercultural competence.

CLIL Lesson 1: Cultures around the world

In the first CLIL lesson, the researcher implemented ready-made materials to promote intercultural competence. These materials consisted of students' textbooks typically used for fundamental subjects. The selected textbook presents updated information on current events, with each unit divided into four parts: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Each section integrates vocabulary, grammar, and

content specific to that skill. The researcher selected the reading section as the primary material to develop students' intercultural competence. The passage, titled 'From My Culture to Yours,' explores the experiences of a Japanese girl studying in the USA. Through this text, students examined differences in personality traits between Americans and Japanese, as well as school activities and culture shock.

CLIL Lesson 2: The differences of cultures between Korean and American cultures

In the second CLIL lesson, the researcher implemented Teacher-brought material to promote intercultural competence. The lesson began with a digital gamification tool, Bamboozle, to review film-related vocabulary, followed by a pre-viewing worksheet to scaffold linguistic and conceptual understanding. The core instructional medium was the film *Minari*, which portrays a Korean-American family's pursuit of the "American Dream." This authentic material served as a vehicle for students to analyze and compare American and Korean cultural values. Specifically, the lesson focused on intergenerational conflict between the grandmother, representing traditional Korean heritage, and her grandchildren, who embody American cultural norms. Despite the linguistic complexity of navigating bilingual dialogue with English subtitles, this material challenged students to engage in active interpretation, moving beyond surface-level language to achieve a more nuanced critical cultural awareness.

CLIL Lesson 3: Table manners

The third CLIL lesson the researcher used authentic material which is a video about table manners in Western culture and authentic cutlery. The video "Dining Etiquette: How to Master the Basic Table Manners" by Jamila Musayeva offers a practical and elegant guide to Western dining etiquette, covering posture, napkin use, proper handling of cutlery, polite table behaviour, and how to navigate unfamiliar foods. Through clear demonstrations and explanations, Jamila emphasizes how good table manners reflect respect, confidence, and social awareness. Connecting this to intercultural competence, understanding and practicing these dining customs can foster more respectful and effective communication in multicultural settings. When individuals are aware of and adapt to diverse cultural expectations, such as dining cutlery, they demonstrate sensitivity, openness, and the ability to navigate social norms across cultures, which is essential in both global professional and social interactions.

CLIL Lesson 4: The dos and don'ts of this country

In the third CLIL lesson, the researcher had students bring materials, such as posters or presentations, that they had prepared in advance by researching cultural behaviours and practices from various countries. These materials focused on gestures and actions that are considered polite or impolite in specific cultural contexts. In addition to gestures, students were encouraged to include related cultural elements such as greetings, traditional foods, national symbols, and their personal reflections or opinions. The purpose of this activity was to help students become more aware of cultural differences and the varying meanings that gestures and nonverbal communication can hold across cultures. By presenting their materials to the class, students practiced communication skills, deepened their intercultural understanding,

and engaged in meaningful discussions about respect and sensitivity in global interactions.

Video records

The video records were used to observe the classroom environment while implementing CLIL lessons, materials in the English classroom and to observe the phenomenon in each activity. They were recorded in every session of implementing CLIL lessons and materials in the classroom to see learners' feedback and any struggles found along the way of teaching. The videos were recorded using a phone camera. The camera was put at the back of the classroom to see the environment while integrating each activity. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school director, and informed consent was secured from all participants. The aims of the study, research procedures, and duration of data collection were clearly explained, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, and participants were assured that the recordings would be used solely for research purposes and would not affect their English course grades.

Expert Validation

Prior to implementation, the CLIL lesson plans underwent a rigorous validation process to ensure content validity and pedagogical appropriateness. Three experts specializing in English Language Teaching (ELT), Intercultural Communication, and CLIL methodology reviewed the materials using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The validation focused on the alignment of the lessons with Coyle's 4Cs Framework and Byram's ICC model, specifically evaluating the relevance of intercultural themes and the clarity of language objectives. Based on the experts' feedback, minor revisions were made to enhance instructional flow and cultural sensitivity. The final evaluation confirmed that the lesson plans were pedagogically sound and suitable for the cognitive and linguistic levels of Grade 12 students.

Ethical Consideration

Strict ethical protocols were followed to ensure the protection and privacy of all participants. Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the school administration, followed by the acquisition of informed consent from all 12th-grade participants. The students were provided with a comprehensive explanation regarding the study's objectives, the four-week duration, and the nature of the video-recorded sessions. To ensure voluntary participation, students were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. To mitigate potential bias or pressure, the researcher guaranteed that the findings would remain confidential and would have no impact on the students' formal academic grades or school records. This approach created a safe environment for learners to express their cultural perspectives freely, ensuring that the pedagogical intervention remained separate from summative academic assessment.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted during the first semester of the 2023 academic year over the course of the CLIL implementation. The process consisted of several steps. First, the researcher designed and implemented CLIL lesson plans based on the 4Cs Framework and Byram's model of intercultural competence, incorporating four types of materials: ready-made materials, authentic materials, teacher-brought materials, and student-brought materials. Second, each classroom session was video recorded using a phone camera positioned at the back of the classroom to capture the overall classroom environment, including instructional delivery, student engagement, peer interaction, and significant classroom events. After each lesson, the researcher wrote reflective notes on classroom dynamics, student responses, and the pedagogical effectiveness of the lesson plans and materials in promoting intercultural competence. These reflections focused on four intercultural dimensions: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness. For data analysis, all video recordings, field notes, and researcher reflections were reviewed repeatedly and analyzed using thematic analysis. Initial codes were generated from recurring patterns in students' behaviors, interactions, and responses related to intercultural competence. These codes were then grouped into broader categories and interpreted according to the study's conceptual framework, particularly Byram's dimensions of intercultural competence. Through this process, the researcher identified how each type of material contributed to students' intercultural development within the CLIL classroom.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study in relation to the two research objectives: 1) to design and implement CLIL lesson plans that promote intercultural competence 2) to examine the effectiveness of the implemented lesson plans in promoting intercultural competence. Rather than reporting the findings lesson by lesson, the results are organized into themes to provide a more holistic account of patterns that emerged across the four lessons. This thematic organization also allows the findings to be linked more explicitly to the research objectives. The findings are drawn from classroom observations, video recordings, students' worksheets and presentations, and the researcher's reflective journals.

Characteristics of CLIL lesson plans that promoted intercultural competence

To address the first research objective, the findings revealed that CLIL lesson plans that effectively promoted intercultural competence shared four major characteristics: 1) the integration of content, communication, cognition, and culture; 2) the use of culturally meaningful and varied materials; 3) opportunities for intercultural comparison, interpretation, and reflection; and 4) active student participation through collaborative and expressive tasks. These characteristics were observed across the four lessons despite differences in topics and materials.

Integration of content, communication, cognition, and culture

A key characteristic of the lesson plans was the integration of the four dimensions of CLIL: content, communication, cognition, and culture. In all four lessons, students were not only asked to learn English vocabulary or grammar but also to use language as a tool for understanding cultural practices and perspectives. For

example, in the lesson based on the textbook passage *From My Culture to Yours*, students learned comparative structures while discussing differences between American and Japanese culture. They produced sentences such as “Japanese are more reserved than Americans” and “Americans are more outgoing than Japanese,” showing that language learning and cultural understanding were developed simultaneously.

Similarly, in the lesson based on *Minari*, students used English to summarize the film, describe cultural conflicts, and express opinions about adaptation and identity. In the table manners lesson, students learned vocabulary related to utensils and dining etiquette and then applied this language to compare practices across countries. In the gestures lesson, grammatical structures such as *do/don't + infinitive* and modal expressions supported students in explaining appropriate and inappropriate non-verbal behaviors in different cultural contexts. Across lessons, language was consistently embedded in meaningful cultural content rather than taught in isolation.

Use of culturally meaningful and varied materials

Another important characteristic was the use of materials that exposed students to culturally rich content in different forms. The lesson plans incorporated ready-made, teacher-brought, authentic, and student-brought materials, each of which contributed differently to intercultural learning. The textbook passage introduced cultural comparison in a structured and accessible way. The film *Minari* offered students an emotionally engaging representation of migration, family, and cultural adaptation. The dining etiquette video and real cutlery provided direct exposure to Western table manners, while student-created posters and presentations on gestures enabled learners to bring culturally relevant content into the classroom themselves.

The findings suggest that the effectiveness of these lesson plans did not depend on a single material type, but rather on how materials were used to connect language learning with cultural exploration. For example, students responded actively when discussing culture through familiar and concrete topics such as food, greetings, gestures, and family behavior. The materials made intercultural content visible, discussable, and personally relevant.

Opportunities for comparison, interpretation, and reflection

The lesson plans also promoted intercultural competence by creating opportunities for students to compare cultures, interpret meanings, and reflect on differences without judgment. In the first lesson, students were encouraged to compare the United States and Japan in terms of language, beliefs, values, cuisine, religion, and traditional clothing. Their group presentations demonstrated that they could identify cultural similarities and differences and explain them using comparative forms. In the teacher-led discussion, students were also asked what they would do if they experienced culture shock, and some responded that they would “adapt to that culture” and “try to understand that we are all different,” indicating reflective engagement with intercultural situations.

In the *Minari* lesson, students interpreted the changing relationship between David and his grandmother as a process of adaptation and acceptance. They identified issues such as financial difficulty, cultural differences, and generational conflict, and discussed how the characters gradually adjusted to one another. In the dining etiquette lesson, students explained why certain practices, such as saying *Itadakimasu* in Japan

or waiting for elders to start eating in Korea, reflect cultural values such as gratitude and respect. In the gestures lesson, students reflected on why it is important to know what one “should do and not do” in different cultures in order to avoid misunderstanding and show respect. These findings indicate that the lesson plans moved students beyond factual knowledge toward interpretation and reflection.

Active student participation and personal expression

A final shared characteristic was the strong emphasis on student participation. Across the four lessons, students were asked to discuss, search for information, present findings, answer questions, and reflect on what they had learned. Rather than being passive recipients of cultural information, they were active participants in meaning-making. For instance, in the dining etiquette and gestures lessons, students worked in groups to research a particular culture, prepare visual support, and explain cultural practices to their classmates. In the film lesson, students summarized the plot, interpreted character development, and wrote reflections. In the textbook lesson, students discussed cultural values and presented cross-cultural comparisons in groups. These tasks encouraged students to use English for authentic communicative purposes while building intercultural awareness. Overall, the findings suggest that CLIL lesson plans were most effective in promoting intercultural competence when they integrated language and culture through meaningful topics, offered varied and culturally rich materials, encouraged reflection and comparison, and engaged students actively in collaborative and expressive tasks.

Types of materials that promoted students’ intercultural competence

To address the second research objective, the findings showed that all four types of materials ready-mades, teacher-brought, authentic, and student-brought contributed to students’ intercultural competence, although in different ways. Ready-made materials provided a structured foundation for introducing cultural knowledge and supporting language practice. For example, the textbook passage and worksheets helped students understand key concepts such as culture, diversity, and culture shock, while also practicing vocabulary and comparative grammar. However, their intercultural impact became stronger when the teacher extended them through questioning and discussion.

Teacher-brought materials, especially the film *Minari*, supported empathy and interpretation. Students identified themes such as immigration, cultural conflict, adjustment, and family relationships. They discussed David’s changing relationship with his grandmother as an example of adaptation and acceptance, and several students described the film as “very sad,” suggesting emotional engagement with the characters’ experiences. These findings indicate that teacher-brought materials helped students develop intercultural attitudes and interpretive skills by engaging them with culturally and emotionally complex content.

Authentic materials promoted intercultural understanding through exposure to real-world practices. The video on Western table manners and the use of real cutlery introduced students to dining etiquette as a culturally shaped practice. Students learned about posture, napkin use, and the use of forks, spoons, and knives, and then compared these practices with their own experiences in Thailand and other Asian cultures.

Their group presentations further showed that they could explain and compare table manners across several countries, including Korea, Japan, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and China. This indicates that authentic materials supported intercultural knowledge and respectful comparison of cultural norms.

Among the four types, student-brought materials appeared to promote the most comprehensive development of intercultural competence. In the lesson on gestures and non-verbal communication, students independently researched cultural practices in Japan, Thailand, the United States, Korea, and China, selected visuals, prepared posters, presented their findings, demonstrated gestures, and responded to questions. These activities required them to identify cultural meanings, compare practices across contexts, and reflect on appropriate behavior in intercultural situations. During the reflection stage, students stated that learning about gestures is important because they need to know “what we should do and not do to show respect for other cultures.” This suggests that student-brought materials not only supported cultural knowledge, but also fostered openness, learner agency, and emerging critical awareness.

When interpreted through Byram’s (1997) model, the findings show evidence of development across all five dimensions of intercultural competence. Students demonstrated knowledge (*savoirs*) by identifying cultural practices, values, and norms; attitudes (*savoir-être*) by showing curiosity, openness, and respect toward cultural differences; skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir-comprendre*) by comparing cultures and explaining the meanings behind cultural behaviors; and skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir-apprendre/faire*) by researching, presenting, and discussing cultural information collaboratively. Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s’engager*) was present at an emerging level, particularly when students reflected on the importance of adapting behavior and avoiding misunderstanding in intercultural contexts.

Overall, the findings suggest that the integration of the 4Cs within CLIL lessons, together with the use of varied and culturally meaningful materials, effectively supported students’ intercultural competence. While all four material types contributed to this development, student-brought materials were found to be the most effective because they encouraged students to take an active role in researching, interpreting, and presenting cultural knowledge.

Discussion

What are lesson plans that promote IC like?

The findings of this study indicate that lesson plans promoting intercultural competence (IC) are those that intentionally integrate cultural content with language learning through meaningful, engaging, and reflective activities. Developed based on Coyle’s 4Cs Framework, the CLIL lesson plans supported the concurrent development of content and language learning (Coyle et al., 2010). Luprichová (2019) noted that CLIL can increase learners’ motivation to study foreign languages and promote their communicative competences for future study and work in international settings. In addition, Coyle et al. (2009) emphasized that CLIL provides an appropriate framework for exploring the relationship between language and cultural identity, as well as examining learners’ attitudes, values, and behaviours.

This study also drew on Byram's Intercultural Competence Model (1997), which highlights the development of attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for intercultural communication. The findings show that effective lesson plans included clear cultural objectives aligned with language goals, integrated diverse materials, and created opportunities for interaction, comparison, and reflection. Through activities such as discussing culturally rich films, comparing table manners across countries, and presenting gestures from different cultures, students developed curiosity, openness, and respect toward cultural differences. Overall, the findings suggest that CLIL lesson plans are most effective in promoting IC when they combine language learning with authentic cultural exploration, reflective tasks, and opportunities for personal expression.

Which types of materials bring out the most of students' IC?

Among all material types, the stronger impact of student-brought materials may be explained by the greater degree of learner agency they provided. When students selected their own cultural content, prepared posters, demonstrated gestures, and responded to peers' questions, they became active contributors to intercultural learning rather than passive recipients of teacher-selected information. This finding aligns with Simon (1996) stated that the meaning of knowing has shifted from merely remembering and repeating information to being able to locate and use it effectively. Similarly, Doyle (2023) emphasized that meaningful learning requires students to search for information, organize it, and evaluate its sources in order to construct understanding. In this study, such learner-centered processes appeared to create richer opportunities for cultural comparison, interpretation, interaction, and reflection.

By contrast, ready-made materials such as textbooks were useful for establishing a basic foundation of intercultural knowledge, but their intercultural potential depended more heavily on teacher scaffolding. Shu (2024) argued that textbooks can promote intercultural competence when they integrate linguistic content with authentic cultural knowledge, diverse intercultural contexts, reflective comparison, and interactive tasks. In this way, textbooks can foster learners' cultural understanding, empathy, respect for diversity, and ability to communicate effectively across cultures. Likewise, Amante et al. (2016) suggested that EFL textbooks can support intercultural competence when teachers use them critically and supplement them with materials that reflect cultural values and multilingual realities. However, they also noted that textbooks often need to be enriched with more international cultural content and deeper representations of intercultural interaction. This implies that teachers play a crucial role in compensating for the limitations of textbooks by incorporating additional cultural resources.

Teacher-brought materials, such as the film *Minari*, and authentic materials, such as the dining etiquette video, occupied a middle position. These materials offered emotionally and socially meaningful content that encouraged students to interpret cultural meanings and make respectful comparisons across cultures, yet they still relied substantially on teacher direction. This finding is supported by Wardhany (2022), who found that English-language films can enhance EFL learners' cultural competence, particularly in relation to attitudes, knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness. Similarly, Yue (2019) argued that foreign films are valuable resources in English language teaching because they improve language skills while also cultivating intercultural communicative competence through exposure to authentic cultural settings and human

interactions. In the same vein, Xue and Pan (2012) contended that film appreciation lessons support both language and culture learning by exposing students to authentic English use and helping them develop intercultural communication competence.

At the same time, the findings indicate that the development of intercultural competence was uneven across its dimensions. While students demonstrated strong evidence of intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills of interpreting and relating, critical cultural awareness was less prominent. Most student reflections focused on identifying what is polite or impolite and how to avoid misunderstanding, rather than critically examining deeper cultural assumptions, values, or power relations. This suggests that future CLIL lessons may need more explicit scaffolding for critical reflection if the goal is to move students beyond respectful understanding toward a fuller development of critical cultural awareness.

Implications and Conclusion

The study showed that integrating diverse material types is important for promoting intercultural competence in CLIL classrooms, as each type contributed in different but complementary ways. Ready-made materials provided structure and helped organize lessons, but their contribution to intercultural development was limited unless supported by reflection and discussion. Previous studies have similarly noted that textbooks can offer intercultural representations and support communication skills, yet they rarely foster deeper intercultural competence on their own (Haerazi & Nunez, 2022; Risager, 2018; Sobkowiak, 2015). In contrast, teacher-brought and authentic materials connected classroom learning to real-world cultural contexts, encouraging students to analyze cultural practices more critically and develop greater openness toward other societies (Bernal Pinzón, 2020). Student-brought materials, such as posters and presentations, further strengthened this process by giving learners a more active role in researching, presenting, and reflecting on cultural knowledge.

Through this combination of materials, students developed important intercultural abilities, including empathy, cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and critical thinking. These findings suggest that CLIL-based instruction becomes more effective when supported by a variety of materials rather than relying on a single source. A key contribution of this study is that it demonstrates the complementary roles of different material types in fostering intercultural competence in a secondary CLIL classroom. Among them, student-brought materials were found to be the most effective because they promoted deeper cultural exploration, learner agency, and critical reflection. By contrast, ready-made materials were useful mainly as a foundation for learning but were less effective in generating meaningful intercultural discussion on their own.

Limitations of the Study

Despite offering valuable insights into the integration of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for developing intercultural competence (IC), this study had several limitations that should be acknowledged and considered in future research. First, the sample was limited to Grade 12 students in a single secondary school, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to learners from other educational levels, regions, or cultural backgrounds. Second, the study was conducted over a one-month period, which may not have been long enough to capture the sustained development of intercultural competence, as this complex ability typically emerges

through ongoing exposure to diverse cultural experiences and repeated intercultural interaction. Third, the study relied primarily on qualitative data, including classroom observations, student worksheets, presentations, and reflective notes. While these sources provided rich and contextualized insights into students' learning processes, the absence of standardized quantitative measures, such as pre- and post-intercultural competence scales, limited the ability to assess changes in students' development more systematically and statistically.

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Epenthesis as a Hiatus Breaker: The Case of Esahie Phonology

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Abstract

This study investigates hiatus resolution in Esahie (Sehwi), a Central Comoe language, with particular focus on glide epenthesis and feature-driven conditioning. The analysis is based on primary phonological data collected from 10 native speakers through structured elicitation tasks involving approximately 100 lexical items and phrasal constructions designed to create vowel hiatus environments. Data were audio-recorded, transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and systematically coded according to vowel height, backness, and Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) features. The reliability of the data was checked using speaker validation and iterative elicitation and feedback session procedures. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach within the frameworks of Generative Phonology and Feature Geometry to examine how these features condition the selection of epenthetic glides [j] and [w]. The findings show that high-front vowels strongly favor palatal glide insertion regardless of position, providing evidence for both progressive V1 and regressive V2 spreading. This challenges the traditional assumption of V1 dominance in hiatus resolution. Additionally, [-ATR] high-back vowels consistently trigger labio-velar [w], even in environments where front vowels are present. These results support a feature hierarchy model in which palatal and ATR features determine glide selection, demonstrating that hiatus resolution in Esahie is a systematic, feature-driven process rather than a purely positional one.

Keywords: Esahie (Sehwi), hiatus, epenthesis, feature geometry, glide insertion, ATR harmony

Introduction

The occurrence of adjacent vowels across syllable or word boundaries poses a well-documented challenge in phonological systems. Many languages avoid such configurations due to constraints on syllable structure, particularly the preference for consonant-initial syllables. As a result, languages employ a range of repair strategies, including elision, coalescence, and epenthesis, to resolve hiatus and maintain phonotactic well-formedness.

Within Niger-Congo languages, hiatus resolution often reflects deeper interactions between phonological features and syllable structure constraints. In many cases, epenthesis is preferred because it preserves the segmental identity of adjacent vowels while satisfying the requirement for syllable onsets.

Previous studies, particularly those of Casali (1996, 2011), have proposed that hiatus resolution is largely governed by the first vowel (V₁), suggesting a directional asymmetry in which V₁ determines the outcome of the repair strategy. While

this assumption has been influential in phonological theory, it has not been sufficiently tested across a wide range of languages, especially within the Central Comoe subgroup.

Esahie (Sehwi) provides an important case for examining these assumptions. Preliminary observations suggest that glide epenthesis in Esahie is not strictly determined by V_1 but rather by the interaction of phonological features of the vowel. This study therefore investigates hiatus resolution in Esahie with the aim of determining the role of feature interaction in glide selection and the extent to which V_2 may override V_1 in conditioning epenthesis. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What phonological features condition glide epenthesis in Esahie?
2. To what extent is hiatus resolution governed by V_1 dominance versus V_2 influence?

Literature Review

In the study of phonology, the sequence of two vowels across a syllable boundary is frequently treated as a marked or illicit configuration. Many languages across the globe avoid vowel clusters that lack an intervening consonant (Casali, 1996/1997). While some languages, such as Greek (Devine & Stephens, 1994) or certain dialects of English, may permit hiatus in specific morphological contexts, others—including many Niger-Congo languages—enforce strict bans. Languages like Esahie (Sehwi), Ewe, Nzema, and Twi utilize various phonological strategies to ensure that the preferred CV (Consonant-Vowel) syllable structure is maintained.

The structural challenge presented by hiatus mostly arises in two distinct phonological environments. First, within words, it occurs at the junction of a vowel-final prefix and a vowel-initial root, or between a root and a suffix. Second, across word boundaries, it occurs during rapid speech where the final vowel of one word precedes the initial vowel of the next. In both cases, the language must reconcile the underlying representation (UR) with phonetic and phonotactic requirements to produce a well-formed surface representation (SR).

To resolve vowel hiatus, languages apply one of the three strategies: elision, coalescence, or epenthesis. Elision involves the deletion of one vowel, often resulting in loss of phonological information (Owusu-Ansah, 2020, Casali, 2011, Mvundura, 2015, Agyemfra & Amoh, 2025, and others). Coalescence merges two vowels into a single segment that combines features from both inputs (Youngberg, 2013, Tebay 2018: 7, Ngunga, 2000, and others). Epenthesis also works by inserting an intervening segment, thereby preserving both vowels while satisfying structure requirements.

Within Optimality Theory, these strategies reflect different rankings of faithfulness and markedness constraints. For instance, while epenthesis violates DEP-IO (which penalizes insertion), it satisfies ONSET and preserves input segments, thereby maintaining phonological contrast (McCarthy & Prince, 1995). As a result, epenthesis is often considered a relatively “faithful” strategy compared to deletion or coalescence. However, the choice among these strategies varies across languages, indicating that hiatus resolution is shaped by language-specific constraint interactions.

Typological Variations in Epenthetic Segments

Although epenthesis is a common repair strategy, the selection of the epenthetic segment is not arbitrary. As noted by Casali (1996), the inserted consonant is mostly determined by language-specific phonological patterns or by feature spreading from adjacent vowels in hiatus. In some languages, the epenthetic segment is relatively “neutral.” For example (as in example (1)), Malay employs a glottal stop [ʔ] to resolve hiatus, a segment that lacks strong place features and therefore minimizes interference with surrounding vowels.

(1) Malay

UR	SR	Gloss
a. /di + ubah/	[diʔubah]	'to change (passive)'
b. /di + ikat/	[diʔikat]	'to tie (passive)'
c. /dʒuru + atʃara/	[dʒuruʔatʃarə]	'master of ceremony'
d. /sə + indah/	[səʔindah]	'to be as beautiful as'
e. /sə + elok/	[səʔeloʔ]	'to be as pretty as'
f. /kə + ibu + an/	[kəʔibuwan]	'motherhood'
g. /kə + əmas + an/	[kəʔəmāssan]	'golden'

This dataset illustrates glottal stop insertion irrespective of the vowels in sequence. This occurs at morpheme boundaries, preventing vowel hiatus, suggesting that every syllable must have an onset. This process is consistent across different affixation types:

- i. Passive formation (e.g., di- prefix in (a-b))
- ii. Comparative constructions (e.g., sə- ‘as... as’ in (d-e))
- iii. Derivational morphology (e.g., kə- prefix in (f-g))

It is well established in the SR that a morphological process of prefixation that creates hiatus cannot be heterosyllabified as [V.V] because this will create an onsetless syllable (Ahmand, 2005). This is best accounted for by a C-epenthesis because the data suggest that the language does not tolerate onsetless syllables across morpheme boundaries. Unlike languages such as Ndebele and Axininca Campa, the hiatus is separated by a glottal stop as seen in (1). Theoretically, ONSET is compelled to violate DEP-IO, hence ONSET is ranked higher over DEP-IO.

Table 1

A Glottal Stop Epenthesis

/di + ubah/	*COMPLEX	MAX-IO	ONSET	DEP -IO
a. di.u.bah			*!	
b. du.bah		*!		
c. dju.bah	*!			
d. di diʔubah				*

The process is syllabifying hiatus in OT involves the interaction of wellformedness constraints. But potentially, there should be the possibility of ensuring that ONSET is satisfied. The first candidate remained the same and the violation is fatal. Satisfying ONSET by the process of deletion led to a fatal violation as well. The third candidate appears acceptable because hiatus is resolved but the insertion of the glide created a complex cluster. The first three candidates cannot be the optimal candidates because they violated a highly ranked constraint. The last candidate was adjourned the optimal despite violating DEP-IO constraints. This makes sense because DEP-IO is lower- ranked as against the rest of the constraints.

In other languages like isi-Ndebele and Axininca Campa, the epenthetic consonant reflects more specific phonological properties. For instance, in Ndebele, the bilabial consonant [b] may be inserted in certain morphological contexts (Sabao, 2015), while in Axininca Campa, a coronal consonant [t] is frequently used, often associated with its status as an unmarked consonant (Payne, 1981).

Beginning with isi-Ndebele, the epenthesized segment contrast with Malay but yields the same result. As Sabao (2015) explains, the presence of [b] as the epenthetic segment is triggered by the presence of the mid back vowel /o/ juxtaposed with the low central vowel /a/. This is limited to prepositional prefixes as the examples showcase. There is an interplay of morphology which determines which phonological process to be employed. As Sabao (2015) continued, when the sequence occurs in singular forms, the two sequential vowels are merged (coalesced) as can be seen in example (2). In this example, the high back rounded vowel /u/ coalesces with the preceding /a/ to form [o] in the surface form. But when it happens to be in a plural form, a segment is rather epenthesized as it is realized in example (3). A consonant /b/ is inserted to break the vowel hiatus, prioritizing the language's preference to have onsets.

(2) Coalescence form

UR	SR	Gloss
a. /la-umama/ →	[lomama]	'with a mother'
b. /la-umangoye/ →	[lomangoye]	'with a cat'

(3) Epenthesis form

UR	SR	Gloss
a. /la-o-mama/ →	[labomama]	'with mothers'
b. /la-o-mangoye/ →	[labomangoye]	'with cats'

We can account for the application of epenthesis just like Malay. The tableau shows how vowels are preserved to avoid violating ONSET. The following constraints are necessary for the application of Optimality Theory.

a. ONSET: Penalizes onsetless syllables (i.e., syllables starting with a vowel).

b. PARSE[F]: Ensures that all features in the input are preserved (no deletion of segments).

c. PARSE[F]-1seg: Ensures that features associated with at least one segment are parsed (a more specific version of PARSE[F]).

d. IDENT-IO: Penalizes changes between input and output (i.e., preserves underlying features)

e. DEP-IO: Penalizes epenthesis (insertion of new elements that is not present in the input).

f. UNIFORMITY: Penalizes coalescence (merging of two distinct elements into one).

The table (2) shows how epenthesis is preferred over deletion. Since the sequence [o.ma.ma] in (a) starts with a vowel, it violated the ONSET constraint, which is disallowed. Candidate (c) loses because of the PARSE [F] constraint. The transformation led to the deletion of the segment /a/, which is penalized. Candidate (d) is eliminated due to the coalescing process. This is a potential optimal candidate when one wants to account for singular form. But, in the case, as presented by Sabao (2015), the underlined representation is in plural, hence, priority is given to epenthesis over coalescence. This is why candidate (b) wins despite violating DEP-IO.

Table 2

A Bilabial Stop [b] Epenthesis

la-o-ma.ma	ONSET	PARSE [F]	PARSE [F]-1seg	IDENT -IO	DEP -IO	UNIFORMITY
a. /la-o.ma.ma/	*!					
b. <u>la</u> /la-bo-ma.ma/				*	*	**
c. /lo.ma.ma/		*!		*	*	**
d. /la.ma.ma/		*!	*(!)	*	*	**

Continuing with Axininca Campa, [t] which is often cited in phonological literature as the "unmarked" coronal consonant is inserted (Payne, 1981). Let us see the example (4) below.

(4) Axininca Campa (Payne, 1981 cited in Casali 2011).

UR	SR	Gloss
a. /i-N-koma-i/ >	[ɪŋkomati]	'he will paddle'
b. /i-N-koma-aa-i/ >	[ɪŋkomataati]	'he will paddle again'

Despite the application of the same phonological process, the selection of the epenthetic segments differs. The glottal stop [ʔ] employed serves as a neutral segment that avoids introducing additional place features. isi-Ndebele shows a preference for a consonant with a labial feature, aligning with the language's morphological pattern. Hence, [b] reflected as the preferential consonant. The coronal [t] demonstrated in Axininca Campa shows the tendency for coronals to be unmarked and therefore favored in epenthesis. Alignment constraints are recommended for this analysis. These constraints require that the prosodic constituents and the morphological edges coincide (McCarthy & Prince, 1995). The general alignment constraint's structure is;

ALIGN-L (Stem, Word):

The left edge of a stem must align with the left edge of the word.
Ensures that prefixes attach directly to the beginning of the root.

ALIGN-R (Suffix, Word):

The right edge of a suffix must align with the right edge of the word.
Prevents material from intervening between the suffix and the stem.

ALIGN-L (Foot, Prosodic Word):

The left edge of a metrical foot must align with the left edge of a prosodic word.
Influences stress placement and foot structure.

ALIGN-L (Vowel, Syllable):

The left edge of a vowel must align with the left edge of a syllable.
Can help explain vowel epenthesis strategies in hiatus resolution.

In the case of Axininca Campa, ALIGN-R (stem, σ) is the considered constraint in addition to DEP-IO. This constraint ensures that the rightmost segment in every stem must be the final one in the same syllable. This is what compelled consonant epenthesis in (4) and tableau (3).

Table 3

A Coronal [t] Epenthesis

/i-N-koma-i/	ALIGN-R (stem, σ)	DEP
a. in .ko.ma ti		*
b. in.ko.ma i	*!	

Synthesizing these languages, although they differ in constraint ranking and selection, they all enforce that every syllable must have an onset and therefore avoid vowel hiatus. Also, the choice of the epenthetic consonant varies reflecting language-specific preferences.

Feature Geometry and Feature Spreading in Epenthesis

The relationship between vowels and epenthetic segments can be understood within the framework of Feature Geometry (Clements, 1983/1985). This framework represents phonological segments as hierarchical bundles of features. Epenthesis, in this context, is seen as the result of feature spreading. Features from adjacent vowels extend into an empty consonantal position, leading to the insertion of an epenthetic segment. Glide insertion serves as a clear example of this process. The palatal glide [j] exhibits similarities with high-front vowels, while the labio-velar glide [w] reflects features of high-back vowels, the rounding feature. Consequently, glide epenthesis in most cases mirrors the articulatory properties of neighboring vowels. Feature spreading, while providing a compelling explanation for epenthesis, raises significant questions about the process's directionality. Specifically, it is unclear

whether feature spreading is consistently driven by the first vowel, the second vowel, or by a more intricate interaction of feature salience.

V₁ Dominance and Competing Perspectives

A widely claim in the literature on hiatus resolution is that the first vowel plays a dominant role in determining the outcome of phonological repair. Casali (1996, 2011) argues that feature spreading is mostly progressive, with V₁ influencing the form of the epenthetic segment. This V₁-dominance model has been widely applied in analyses of most languages and has shaped much of the theoretical understanding of hiatus resolution. For instance, in Faroese (Lockwood (1955), the possibility of epenthesis is contingent upon the presence of a high and non-high vowel in concatenation.

(5) Faroese glide epenthesis

	VV	Example		Stem alternations
a.	/i:a/	/mi:-aɪ/	[mi:jaɪ] 'middle-PL.FEM'	
b.	/i:ɪ/	/si:-ɪ/	[si:ɪɪ] 'lower-PST.PART'	
c.	/i:ʊ/	/si:-ʊɪ/	[si:joɪ] 'custom-NOM'	[si:lesʊɪ] 'immoral'
d.	/u:a/	/t ^h u:-a/	[t ^h u:wa] 'to say tú (thou)	
e.	/u:ɪ/	/pu:-ɪ/	[pu:wɪ] 'live-1SG.PST'	[pʊiɪt] 'live.2SG'

Esahie will suggest in the research that the second vowel may exert significant influence, particularly when it carries phonologically salient features. For example, high-front vowels are often associated with strong palatal properties, which may override competing features from V₁. Similarly, vowel harmony systems demonstrate that feature spreading can operate across segments in ways that are not strictly left-to-right. Despite these observations, the extent to which V₂ can override V₁ remains underexplored, particularly in Esahie. As a result, the assumption of V₁ dominance may oversimplify the complexity of feature interaction in hiatus resolution. This study addresses these gaps by examining hiatus resolution in Esahie, with particular focus on feature hierarchy and the potential for V₂ dominance.

Method-Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive research design. The primary goal is to provide a comprehensive mapping of the phonological rules that govern hiatus resolution in Esahie, using the frameworks of Generative Phonology and Feature Geometry.

Respondents and Data Source

Data were collected through fieldwork with native speakers of Esahie in the Western North Region of Ghana. The study involved 10 participants, who were bilingual in Esahie and English, aged 25 to 65. This demographic range helped ensure that the data captured both traditional lexemes and ongoing linguistic change.

Instruments and Procedures

Data collection involved several stages:

1. Word List Elicitation: A list of 100 potential hiatus-inducing environments was created, including noun prefixes, verb infinitives, and common phrasal combinations.
2. Recording: Participants were asked to pronounce words in isolation (to observe word-internal hiatus) and in short sentences (to observe phrasal hiatus).
3. Transcription: All recordings were transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Data reliability

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, two validation procedures were implemented throughout the data collection and analysis process. First of all, two additional native speakers of Esahie were consulted to cross-check. This helped to identify community wide patterns and idiolectal patterns. Secondly, preliminary analyses were presented informally to speakers, who were asked to judge acceptability and suggest corrections. This helped to refine interpretations and functioned as a form of community-based validation.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by comparing the Underlying Representation (UR) of the morphemes with their Surface Representation (SR). We specifically looked for:

Symmetry: Cases where the glide quality matched V_1 .

Asymmetry: Cases where the glide quality was determined by V_2 or by other features such as ATR.

Theoretical Mapping: Using Feature Geometry to draw spreading diagrams that account for the transition from a V-V sequence to a V-C-V sequence.

Results**Feature-Driven Nature of Glide Epenthesis**

The research results reveal that glide epenthesis in Esahie is not random but systematically influenced by vowel features. The high frequency of palatal glide [j] insertion, occurring in 74.4% of 39 cases, in environments involving high-front vowels, indicates that frontness and height are primary determinants of glide selection. This finding aligns with a feature-based account of epenthesis, consistent with Feature Geometry (Clements, 1983/1985), which posits that phonological processes are driven by the spreading of specific articulatory features.

Contrary to the view of epenthesis as a purely structural repair mechanism, the data suggest that it serves as a feature-preserving strategy. This aligns with the predictions of faithfulness constraints in Optimality Theory (McCarthy & Prince, 1995), where the inserted glide reflects the most prominent features of adjacent vowels

The Dominance of Front-High Vowels (V₁ Spreading)

A central finding of this study is that the high-front vowels /i/ and [ɪ] act as powerful triggers for epenthesis. When these vowels occupy the V₁ position, they consistently result in the insertion of a palatal glide [j]. This is a clear instance of progressive spreading, where the features of the first vowel spread forward to fill the empty onset slot of the second syllable.

Table 4

Progressive Palatal Spreading (V₁ Dominance)

Spelling	UR	SR	Gloss
kuanie	/kuanie/	[kijanijɛ]	farmer
awie	/awie/	[æwije]	orphan
akaatia	/akaatia/	[akæ:tija]	baboon
afia	/afia/	[æfija]	middle
mviaseɛ	/mviaseɛ/	[mvijasijɛ]	begin
sia	/sia/	[sija]	in-law
kanea	/kanea/	[kænija]	lamp
akyideɛ	/akyideɛ/	[atɛɛdijɛ]	gift
ahwea	/ahwea/	[æɸijɛ]	mongoose
atee	/atee/	[atijɛ]	spoon

The Challenge of V₂ Influence (Regressive Spreading)

High-front vowels in the second position consistently trigger [j] insertion, even when the first vowel is a back vowel as can be seen in Table (5). This finding directly challenges Casali's (1996, 2011) claims that a predominantly V₁-driven model of hiatus resolution is the most accurate. The Esahie data suggest that feature salience can override positional asymmetry, with high-front vowels exerting dominant influence regardless of their position in the vowel sequence.

This does not entirely invalidate V₁ dominance but rather refines it. Positional effects are secondary to feature strength. In this sense, hiatus resolution in Esahie is better understood as a competition between features, rather than a strictly directional process.

Table 5

Regressive Palatal Spreading (V₂ Dominance)

Spelling	UR	SR	Gloss
ɛboe	/ɛboe/	[ɛbojɪ]	shell
ɛwɛɛn	/ɛwɛɛn/	[ɛwɛjɪn]	boundary
ɛfɔɛn	/ɛfɔɛn/	[ɛfɔjɪn]	thin
ɛlɔɛn	/ɛlɔɛn/	[ɛlɔjɪn]	crowd
ɛwɔɛn	/ɛwɔɛn/	[ɛwɔjɪn]	boundary
nsusui	/nsusui/	[nsusujɪ]	suggestion
asoɛ	/asoɛ/	[asɔjɛ]	ear
mbain yɛɛ	/mbain yɛɛ/	[mbajɪn jɛɛ]	senile person
esurein	/esurein/	[esurejɪn]	fear (v)

Labio-Velar /w/ and the ATR Constraint

The distribution of labio-velar glide [w] in Table (6) provides further support for a feature hierarchy model. The results show that high-back vowels account for a significant proportion of [w] insertions 25.6%. This is where a front-high vowel is absent.

Table 6*Labio-velar /w/ Insertion and Back Vowel Patterns*

Spelling	UR	SR	Gloss
brasua	/brasua/	[bræsuwa]	woman
bua	/bua/	[buwa]	pot
mmaboa	/mmaboa/	[mabowa]	shoe
mboano	/mboano/	[mbowanɔ]	beach
asau	/asau/	[asawu]	hunting net
huwɛ	/huwɛ/	[huwɛ]	husband
ɛsue	/ɛsue/	[ɛsuwɛ]	cry, weep
ahoɔyaa	/ahoɔyaa/	[ahɔwɔja:]	jealous
anwoɔ nzue	/anwoɔ nzue/	[aɲwɔwɔ ŋzuwe]	semen
ayuo	/ayuo/	[æjuwo]	sorghum

The data from Table (6) also confirm that the low vowel /a/ functions as a neutral element in hiatus resolution. Across all observed contexts, /a/ does not independently determine the quality of the epenthetic glide. Instead, glide selection is consistently governed by the non-low vowel in the sequence. This asymmetry reflects the phonological underspecification of /a/. Unlike high vowels, which carry clear [front] or [back] features, /a/ lacks the feature specifications necessary to condition glide formation. As a result, it serves as a passive participant in the process. This finding aligns with broader phonological observations that low vowels often play a limited role in feature-driven processes, despite their high sonority.

Mid-Front Vowels

While high vowels are the primary triggers for epenthesis, mid-front vowels /e/ and /ɛ/ also participate in glide selection.

Table 7*Glide Selection with Mid-Front*

Category	Spelling	SR	Gloss
/ɛ/	asefoɛ	[asɪfɔjɛ]	descendant
	ɛwɔfoɛ	[ɛwɔfɔjɛ]	guest, visitor
	kɔmvoɛ	[kɔmvɔjɛ]	fetish priest
	awɛrɛhyɛmɛ	[awɪrɛɛɛmuwɛ]	hope
	ndeamɛ	[ndɪjamuwɛ]	shout, cry out
/e/	awue	[æwuje]	kill, murder
	hue	[huje]	chest
	sona ebue	[sona buje]	side (of body)
	ewue	[ewuje]	death
	awisea	[æwiseja]	orphan

The study brings to light the V₁-dominance models and reinforces Feature Geometry's role in modeling epenthesis. It highlights the importance of integrating ATR into analyses of segmental processes, particularly in languages with vowel harmony.

Discussions

Interpretation of V₁ Dominance Patterns

The results show that glide epenthesis in Esahie is conditioned by vowel features rather than applied randomly. Palatal glide [j] accounts for most cases, particularly in environments involving high-front vowels. In contrast, labio-velar [w] occurs in fewer cases and is primarily associated with high-back vowels.

A key issue in the literature is whether hiatus resolution is governed by the first vowel. Casali (1996, 2011) proposes that V₁ mostly determines the outcome through progressive spreading. The Esahie data partially support this claim, as [j] insertions are triggered by high-front vowels in V₁ position.

The data in Table (4) reveal that when V₁ is a front-high vowel, the epenthetic segment consistently shares the palatal feature. In the word *sia* [sija], the [palatal] node of the vowel /i/ spreads to the onset of the following syllable. This process is motivated by ease of articulation; moving from a high-front position to a low-central position (/a/) requires greater articulatory unless a transitional glide is provided. The glide [j] serves as this bridge, maintaining the articulatory trajectory.

Furthermore, in *kuanie* [kuanijɛ], two instances of hiatus resolution are observed. The second hiatus /i-ɛ/ is resolved by the expected [j]. However, the first resolution /u-a/ → [ija] is more complex. While one might expect [kuwanijɛ] due to the high-back V₁, the language opts for a palatal glide. This suggests that in certain environments, the presence of a front vowel elsewhere in the word may exert a "harmony effect" or that the language has a default preference for [j] in specific morphological categories. In this example provided, two sequential phonological derivations precede hiatus resolution, each contributing to the conditioning environment that licenses the subsequent application of glide epenthesis.

Step 1: Consonant labialization due to vowel roundness

i. Labialization

Spelling

kuanie

SR

[k^wuanijɛ]

This step involves the labialization of /k/, triggered by the influence of the following rounded vowel /u/. This yields the surface form [k^wuanijɛ]. The labialization results from regressive coarticulatory assimilation, in which the articulatory feature [+round] from the back vowel /u/ spreads to the adjacent consonant, producing the sequence [k^w]. This process is consistent with patterns in Akan, as described by Dolphyne (2006), in which CVV sequences (CUa) undergo similar coarticulatory adjustments.

The replacement of /u/ by /i/ occurs under the influence of the adjacent low vowel /a/, creating a phonetic transition between the inserted high vowel and the following low vowel. While the high front vowel /i/ is produced with a constricted glottis and without lip-rounding, it simultaneously exhibits a palatal secondary

articulation, yielding the surface form [k^{wj}ianijɛ], as observed in the subsequent derivational step.

Step 2

ii. Palatalization

Spelling

kuanie

SR

[k^wianijɛ] turns to [k^{wj}ianijɛ] (vowel and articulatory change)

However, the output in step 2 is ill-formed, as it assigns two secondary articulators to the same segment. Instead, the two secondary articulators-[w] from the original labialized consonant and [j] from the high front vowel-merge, yielding the secondary articulator [ɥ], as illustrated in step 3. (Dolphyne, 2006, p. 28) The surface form then becomes [k^ɥianijɛ].

Step 3

iii. Labial-palatalization

Spelling

kuanie

SR

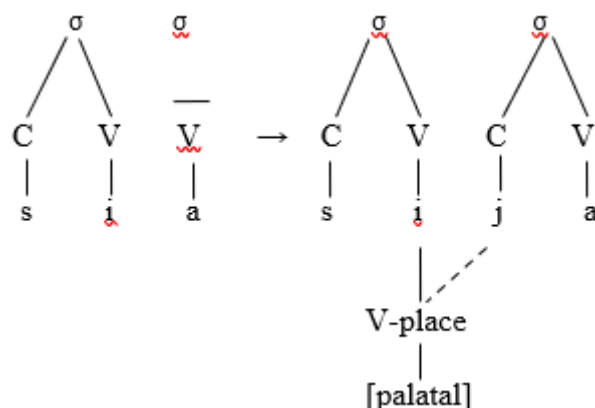
[k^ɥianijɛ]

It is important to emphasize that, although the hiatus is initially triggered by the sequence /u+a/, the intervening vowel alternation (/u/ → /i/) reconfigures the sequence as /i+a/. Consequently, the glide required for hiatus resolution is not [w], which would be appropriate for /u/, but rather [j], reflecting the phonological properties of /i/.

Additionally, as indicated, high-front vowels can propagate features beyond their syllable to the preceding syllable, as evidenced by the West Greenlandic inserted glide, which mirrors the quality of the vowels. Nonetheless, this may constitute an exception in the language, as proposed by Ortmann (1998), or potentially reflect a dialectal variation. For this study, such happening will be deferred to future research endeavors.

Figure 1

Feature Geometry for Progressive V-place Spreading



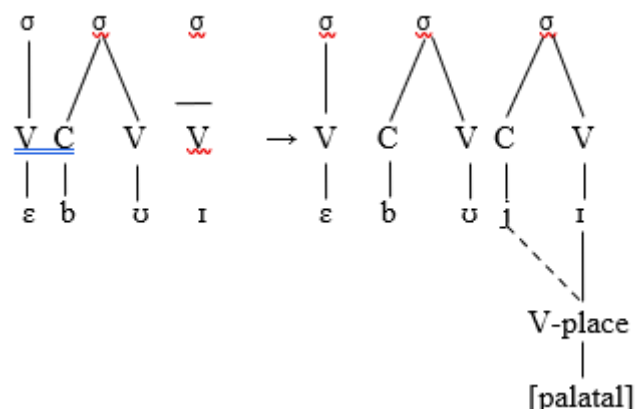
Interpretation of V₂ Dominance and Regressive Spreading

However, the results also show that a substantial proportion of [j] insertions are conditioned by V₂. In forms such as /εboe/ → [εbojɪ], the presence of a high-front vowel in V₂ leads to palatal glide insertion despite a back vowel in V₁. A strict V₁-dominance model would predict [εbowɪ]. However, the surface form is [εbojɪ]. This pattern demonstrates that V₂ can override V₁, particularly when it carries highly salient features such as [+high, +front]. Therefore, while V₁ dominance is attested, it does not fully account for the data. Instead, the findings suggest that feature strength, rather than linear position, determines the direction of spreading.

From a Feature Geometry perspective, this implies that the [palatal] feature of the V₂ is more salient than the [labial] or [round] feature of the V₁. The language system determines that the best transition into a front-high vowel is a palatal glide. This supports the argument that hiatus resolution is not merely a local rule but is part of a larger hierarchy of feature prominence.

Figure 2

Feature Geometry for Regressive V-place Spreading



From Figure (2), it is evident that the front-high vowel spreads backward, resulting in the insertion of the consonant [j], despite the coexistence of a high-back vowel. This illustrates the dominance exerted by front-high vowels over back vowels in determining epenthetic segments. Contrastingly, supposing one were to deviate from the norm and insert a labial glide due to the presence of a back vowel, as illustrated in Table (8), what would happen?

Table 8

Supposedly Progressive Spreading (ill-formed)

Spelling	SR	Gloss
a. εboe	[εbowɪ]	shell
b. εfoen	[εfowɪn]	thin
c. asoe	[asojɛ]	ear
d. nsusui	[nsusuwi]	suggestion

Table (8) example highlights the consequences of not considering the feature content of neighboring sounds while in the formation of certain words. It may look good as the sounds are well patterned, observing the CV syllable structure and one can pronounce with ease. By virtue of this, it can be assumed that the hiatus is resolved. Accepting this could generate an ill-form structure and could potentially lead to semantic ambiguity. Following the line of analysis in example (6) and (7), it can be stated that the insertion of a segment is not a random occurrence but rather depends on the feature content of the adjacent sound and its dominance. This is paramount in selecting the epenthetic segment.

Interpretation of Mid-Vowel and Low Vowel Patterns

The mid-front vowels /e/ and /ɛ/ are sufficient triggers for [j] insertion in Table (7).

However, a notable divergence occurs in words like *awerɛhyɛmuɛ*. Here, the sequence is /u-ɛ/. Despite /ɛ/ being a front vowel, the language inserts [w]. This brings us to the critical intersection of vowel quality and ATR harmony.

The low vowel /a/ consistently fails to trigger any specific glide. In sequences like /i-a/ or /u-a/, the glide is consistently determined by the non-low vowel. This is because /a/ lacks the specific height and backness features that correspond to the two glides available in the Esahie inventory. In phonological terms, /a/ is "underspecified" for the features required to trigger epenthesis.

Interpretation of Labio-Velar /w/ and ATR Effects

Further evidence for a feature-based account comes from the distribution of [w]. The data from Table (6) show that high-back vowels consistently trigger labio-velar glide insertion. It highlights the role of the Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) feature. The high-back vowels are split into [+ATR] /u/ and [-ATR] [ʊ]. The findings suggest that [-ATR] vowels are particularly strong triggers for the labio-velar glide [w].

Even when a [-ATR] back vowel interacts with a mid-front vowel (as in *ahoɔyaa*), the language favors [w] over [j]. This suggests a "Feature Salience Hierarchy" in Esahie:

1. [+palatal] is the strongest trigger (High-front).
2. [-ATR, +back] is the second strongest trigger.
3. [+ATR, +back] is the weakest of the high triggers.

This hierarchy explains why *ɛboe* (with a high-front V₂) gets [j], but *ahoɔyaa* (with a mid-front V₂) gets [w]. The [-ATR] specification of the back vowel provides a level of articulatory resistance that prevents the palatal features of a mid-vowel from spreading regressively.

$\emptyset \rightarrow w/ \quad V \text{ — } V \quad (\text{insert a labio-velar glide when the first vowel is back-high})$

$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{-low} \\ \text{+high} \end{array} \right)$

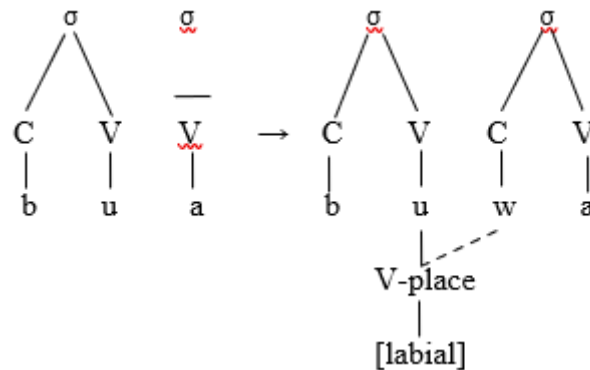
Figure 3*Feature Geometry for Progressive V-place Spreading*

Figure 3 illustrates the feature-geometric representation of progressive spreading for labio-velar glide insertion. Unlike the palatal spreading depicted in Figure 1, this diagram demonstrates how the labial feature of the high back vowels (particularly [u]) spread to the empty onset position, resulting in epenthesis. The representation shows that the node dominates in this configuration, with the tier linking the velar place of articulation. This dual articulation-labial and velar-distinguishes from the simpler palatal. The figure also captures the dependency relationship between the feature and the node, explaining why lip rounding is preserved in the epenthetic segment. Notably, the ATR feature is represented at the root node level, accounting for its system-wide influence in blocking palatal spreading even when front vowels are present in V₂ position. This geometric analysis supports the claim that back vowels constitute a distinct phonological class with enhanced triggering potential for insertion in Esahie hiatus resolution.

Mid-Front Vowels and the Neutrality of the Low Vowel /a/

The mid-front vowels /e/ and /ɛ/ demonstrate consistent triggering patterns for palatal glide [j] insertion, though with marginally reduced potency compared to their high-vowel counterparts /i/ and [ɪ]. This gradient effect reflects the articulatory proximity between mid and high vowels: both share the [+front] specification, but mid vowels lack the [+high] specification that most efficiently drives palatal epenthesis. In sequences such as /e-a/ and /ɛ-a/, the glide [j] emerges as the predictable epenthetic segment, preserving frontness trajectory while accommodating the syllable structure requirement. The data in Table (7) illustrate this pattern robustly across morphological contexts, from verbal roots *awue* [æwuje] 'kill, murder' to nominal compounds *awisea* [æwiseja] 'orphan'.

However, a critical divergence emerges in environments where mid-front vowels co-occur with [-ATR] back vowels. In *awerehyemue* [awirɛɛmuwɛ] 'hope', the underlying sequence /u-ɛ/ surfaces with [w] rather than the expected [j], despite /ɛ/ being a front vowel. This anomaly is not random but systematic: the [-ATR] specification of the back vowel [u] creates an articulatory "shield" that resists regressive palatal spreading. The reduced height of mid vowels-relative to high front vowels-renders its [palatal] feature insufficiently strong to override the combined [+round, -ATR] features of the back vowel.

The results consistently show that the low vowel /a/ does not influence glide selection. Across all examined environments-whether in V₁ position, *akaatia* [akæ:tija] 'baboon', V₂ position *sia* [sija] 'in-law', or both *kuanie* [k^hijaniɛ] 'farmer'-/a/ consistently fails to impose any glide quality. This inertness stems from /a/'s phonological under specification: as a low vowel, it lacks the [±high] feature that correlates with; as a central vowel, it lacks the [back] and [front] specifications that determines labial versus palatal orientation. Phonetically, /a/ occupies the vowel space's neutral zone, offering no directional momentum for feature spreading.

The consequences of the neutrality of /a/ are twofold. First, in /a-V/ sequences, glide selection is entirely determined by the non-low vowel: /a-i/ yields [j] *afia* [æfija] 'middle', while /a-u/ yields [w] *bua* [buwa] 'pot', with /a/ contributing no independent effect. Secondly, in V-/a/ sequences, the same asymmetry holds-the following /a/ imposes no requirements, allowing V₁ features to spread unimpeded. This creates a systematic asymmetry of influence: high and mid vowels are "active" triggers, while /a/ is a "passive" participant, merely hosting the resolution determined by its vocalic neighbours.

This pattern aligns with broader phonological principles of sonority-driven epenthesis. In Esahie, the extreme vocalic positions-high-front and high-back-represent maximal sonority contrasts, making them optimal anchors for feature spreading. The low vowel /a/, despite being maximally sonorous in traditional sonority hierarchies, is paradoxically minimized in the epenthetic system because its articulatory openness provides no specific features associated with glide formation. Thus, hiatus resolution in Esahie prioritizes articulatory precision over raw sonority, favouring vowels whose feature bundles can be most efficiently mapped onto the consonantal space occupied by glides.

Cross-linguistically, this behaviour positions Esahie within a typology where low vowels are typically inert in vowel-to-consonant assimilation processes. The neutrality of /a/ serves a functional role: it reduces phonological ambiguity by ensuring that glide selection consistently reflects a contrastive vocalic feature, thereby maintaining the integrity of morphological contrasts that might otherwise be obscured by epenthetic variation.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate hiatus resolution in Esahie with a focus on glide epenthesis and the role of phonological features in conditioning segmental outcomes. The findings demonstrate that hiatus resolution in Esahie is not a uniform or purely positional process, but rather a feature-driven system in which vowel quality plays a decisive role in determining glide selection.

The quantitative patterns show that palatal glide [j] is the dominant epenthetic outcome, while labio-velar glide [w] is strongly conditioned by high-back vowels. Importantly, the data also reveal that vowel position alone cannot fully account for glide selection. Although elements of V₁ influence are present, a substantial proportion of the data shows clear V₂ conditioning effects. This finding challenges the traditional assumption of V₁ dominance (Casali, 1996, 2011) and supports a more nuanced view in which feature salience can override linear position.

The study further demonstrates that hiatus resolution in Esahie is best captured through a feature hierarchy model, where certain vowel features systematically outrank others in determining epenthetic outcomes. This model accounts for both progressive and regressive spreading patterns observed in the data and provides a unified explanation for variation in glide insertion.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce the explanatory value of Feature Geometry (Clements, 1983/1985) in modeling segmental processes as feature spreading phenomena. They also extend existing Optimality Theory accounts by showing that constraint interactions must be sensitive not only to positional asymmetries but also to feature strength. In this regard, Esahie contributes important empirical evidence to ongoing debates on the nature of hiatus resolution and feature dominance in phonological theory.

Methodologically, the study underscores the importance of combining systematic elicitation with feature-based coding and quantitative analysis in phonological fieldwork. Such an approach allows for clearer identification of distributional patterns and reduces the risk of overgeneralized or impressionistic interpretations.

In conclusion, hiatus resolution in Esahie emerges as a structured and hierarchical process governed by feature interaction rather than linear vowel ordering alone. Future research could extend this analysis through acoustic phonetic studies and cross-dialectal comparison within the Kwa language family to further refine the proposed model of feature hierarchy in glide epenthesis.

Recommendation

There are several interrelated avenues along which future work on Epenthesis as a Hiatus Breaker in Esahie Phonology can fruitfully extend. This leads to one potential avenue of investigation: vowel hiatus may be resolved via an interaction between epenthesis and elision, a relationship which is perhaps best captured within the rule-ordering framework (Kiparsky, 1973)-we might call this feeding or alternately bleeding by epenthesis skating over elision in some environments. More generally, a theoretical re-consideration of the so-called glide formation phenomenon could serve as a test case for the hypothesis that the phenomenon is better understood in terms of sequences of epenthesis followed by elision and thus contribute to more general claims about phonological theory. In addition to Esahie, a cross-Kwa comparison such as with Akan and Ewe would offer useful typological insights into the contributions of closely related languages in addressing hiatus resolution. Future work could explore the prosodic conditioning of epenthesis; particularly how morphological boundaries and phonological domains may affect vowel insertion. Moreover, experiments and acoustic studies based on tools as PRAAT might provide insights into the perceptual and phonetic properties of epenthetic vowels to distinguish whether these processes are motivated by perceptual salience or grammatical obstructions. Finally, adding the tonal dimension of Esahie to hiatus analysis would surface a relatively unexplored area by showing how tone works in tandem with vowel insertion and deletion to generate well-formed phonological tunes. Collectively, these directions would greatly enhance our understanding of hiatus resolution in Esahie-and the thick theory more broadly.

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APPENDIX A

Spelling	SR	Gloss
abɛmua	abɛmuwa	‘a boy’
aburasia	æburasija	‘sixty (60)’
abusuanie	æbus ^u ija-nije	‘relative’
adoe	adoji	‘monkey’
adwufua	ædzufuwa	‘word’
ahurusie	æhurusije	‘to rejoice’
akatusa	akætusa [akæt ^u ija]	‘pay’
akɔniaba	akɔnijaba	‘to swing’
akyidee	ætɛidije	‘forbid’
amrokua	amrokuja [amrok ^u ija]	‘mouse, squirrel’
asoɛ	asuwɛ	‘ear’
awɛen	awɛjin	‘horn’
awisea	æwisija	‘nephew’
ayisia	ajisija	‘orphan’
bayie	bæjije	‘witchcraft’
bia nzue	bija ŋzuwe	‘to swim’
boa	bowa	‘to assemble, pack’
bodua	boduja [bod ^u ija]	‘amulet, charm’
boin	bujin	‘nose’
bokyea	buteija	‘cooking stone’
bosea	bosija	‘to lend, borrow’
brasua	bræsusa [bræs ^u ija]	‘woman’
brensua	brensusa [brens ^u ija]	‘male, man’
bu animtia	buwanimtija	‘disdain, despise’
bua	buwa	‘a pot’
bubuanie	bubuwanije	‘cripple’
bue	buwe	‘nest’
buebua	buwebuja [buweb ^u ija]	‘to cover (v)’
buluo	buluwo	‘yam’
dua	duja [d ^u ija]	‘plant, tree, tail’
dwodwo ahone	dzɔdzɔwahonɪ	‘calm (oneself)’
ebiale	ebijale	‘to wash’
esurein	esrejin	‘fear’
ewiase	ewijasi	‘world’
eyein	ejejin	‘firewood’
ɛboe	ɛboji	‘shell (groundnuts (v))’
ɛsoen	ɛsojin	‘elephant’
ɛsue	ɛsuwɛ	‘to cry’
ɛwɔfoe	ɛwɔfowɛ	‘guest, visitor’
foa	fowa	‘to chase’
gua nza	guwanza	‘to pour libation’
gyedie	dzɛdije	‘believe’
hia	hija	‘need’
hoa	howa	‘story’
hua	huja [h ^u ija]	‘smell’

hue	huwe	‘chest’
huɛ	huwɛ	‘husband’
hwie	ɛɸije	‘to pour’
hwie gua	ɛɸije guwa	‘to pour’
kotoa nyamaa	kotowa pama:	‘umbilical cord’
kuanie	k ^ɸ ija-niɛ	‘farmer’
kunanie	kunanije	‘widow’
kyiremvua	tɛiremvuwa [tɛiremv ^ɸ ija]	‘egg’
mboanoa	mbowanowa	‘beach’
moa	mowa	‘to fold, squeeze’
mviaseɛ	mvijasije	‘to start, begin’
ndeamue	ndɪjamuwɛ	‘shout, cry out’
nimdeɛ	nimdije	‘knowledge’
nɔboakoma	nɔbɔwakoma	‘maggot’
nsusui	nsusuji	‘suggestion’
nwu amanee	nwuwamanije	‘suffer’
nyɔkowa	ɲɔkowa	‘grinding stone’
nzoa pɛle	ɲzowa pɛle	‘insult’
nzoen	ɲzojin	‘ashes’
nzu ehoin	ɲzuwehoin	‘(be) thirsty’
nzua	ɲzowa	‘to insult’
nzue	ɲzuwe	‘water, dam’
obuo	obuwo	‘to obey’
pɛ yia	pɛ jija	‘to surround’
pia	pija	‘push’
prakasua	prakasuja [prakas ^ɸ ija]	‘harmattan’
sia	sija	‘in-law’
soa	sowa	‘to swell’
sɔ nea	sɔ nija	‘to try’
sua	suja [s ^ɸ ija]	‘to learn’
suesua	suwesuja [suwes ^ɸ ija]	‘imitate’
tu ate	tuwatee	‘to travel’
tua	tuja [ts ^ɸ ija]	‘to close, shut’
tui	tuji	‘gun’

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