Research Articles

Microteaching Reflective Practices to Enhance the Teaching Efficacy of English Language Pre-Service Teachers
■ *Marilyn Fernandez Deocampo*

'I'm happy with my job, but...': Thai EFL Teacher's Well-Being and Boreout
■ *Pariwat Imsa-ard*

Overcoming Barriers: Enhancing English Adverbial Mastery among EFL Learners
■ *Tuyet Thi Tran*, Apisak Sukying*

Raising Thai EFL Primary School Teachers' Cultural Awareness through Lesson Designs
■ *Patcharin Duangsri, Wilai Phiewma**

An Analysis of Black-Owned Fashion Brands' Instagram Captions
■ *Pannada Dejaqupt*, Kittinata Rhekhalilit*

Book Review

Analysing Representation: A Corpus and Discourse Textbook
■ *Huang Fan*

Editorial Board

Administrative Committee

Editor in Chief
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Savitri Gadavanij

Co-Editor
Asst. Prof. Dr. Pattrawut Charoenroop

Editor's Assistants
Assoc. Prof. Hiroki Goto
Asst. Prof. Dr. Khwanchira Sena

Language Editor
Andrew James West

Management Advisor
Nuanchan Hassadong

Coordinator
Jareeporn Kaewsuksri

Address:
Graduate School of Language and Communication
National Institute of Development Administration
148 Serithai Road, Klongchan, Bangkapi, Bangkok
10240, Thailand   Tel. 02-727-3152

Copyright

NIDA Language and Communication Journal is the official journal of the Graduate School of Language and Communication, National Institute of Development Administration. The journal, ranked in the first tier of Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI), is currently published as a periodical, with two issues annually (June and December). The purpose of this journal is to disseminate information of interest to language and communication scholars, and others interested in related social sciences. The journal presents information on theories, researches, methods, and ideas related to language and communication as well as related interdisciplinary social sciences. The editors welcome a wide range of academic papers, including research articles, review articles, and book reviews.

Note from the Editor

Greetings from *NIDAJLC*.

First, we are pleased to announce a new feature added to our journal homepage, WebFirst Publication. In response to the growing number of submissions to the *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication*, as of October 2024, accepted articles will be published "WebFirst" on the *NIDAJLC* website as soon as they have completed the review process and are accepted for publication. Articles will be released individually in real time with volume, issue, and page number indicated. They will later be included in the corresponding issue of the biannual e-journal. In this December issue (July-December), you may notice that many of the articles appeared earlier on our WebFirst Publication page. This WebFirst model allows authors to claim authorship and enables early citation by other researchers. Recognizing the fast-changing nature of academic advancement and the value of originality, this new initiative reflects *NIDAJLC*'s aspiration to be a companion in your quest for academic success.

It is with great pleasure that we present *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication* Vol. 29, issue 46. In this issue, there are five research articles and a book review. The first four articles explore topics related to English as a Foreign Language (EFL), with three articles approach the issue from teachers' perspective. **Deocampo** analyzes reflection papers of pre-service teachers to determine their perception of micro-teaching and teaching efficacy. **Duangsri and Phiewma** investigate the development of cultural awareness of Thai EFL teachers through questionnaires and observation forms. While the first two articles focus on the teachers' performance and efficiency, a paper by **Imsa-ard** outlines the significance of teacher "boreout." Gathering data from Thai EFL teachers nationwide, the findings suggest that boreout has a significant negative impact on teacher's psychological wellbeing, which may subsequently affect their efficacy.

Tran and Sukying's research still operates within an EFL context but begins from the learner's perspective. They employ surveys and interviews to identify difficulties learners face in learning English adverbials. The last research paper, by **Dejaqupt and Rhekhalilit**, shifts focus to media discourse, analyzing Instagram captions to determine how the Black-owned fashion brand interacts with its readers. The findings reveal intriguing insights into the power dynamics and relationships between the brand and its audience. This issue concludes with **Fan**'s review of *Analysing Representation: A Corpus and Discourse Textbook*, edited by Heritage and Taylor (2024). Those interested in adopting the corpus approach to study representations in media may find the review of this recently released book helpful for their research.

Producing and upholding the quality of *NIDAJLC* requires collaborative efforts. I would like to thank all our esteemed reviewers for their meticulous work and constructive comments, the administrative committee for their insights and dedication, all the authors whose work contributes to the quality of our journal, and lastly, you, our readers. Thank you for your unwavering support.

Savitri Gadavanij

Editor

Contents

Microteaching Reflective Practices to Enhance the Teaching Efficacy of English Language Pre-Service Teachers

Marilyn Fernandez Deocampo
The Graduate School of Human Sciences
Assumption University, Thailand

Abstract

This study examines the role of microteaching reflective practices in enhancing the teaching efficacy of 22 English language pre-service teachers in the Master of Arts Program in English Language Teaching (MA. ELT) at an international university in Thailand. Twenty-two pre-service teachers' reflection papers, ranging from 350 to 500 words, were analyzed to address the research question. The study utilized a qualitative approach through thematic analysis of reflection papers and investigated how microteaching reflective practices contribute to pre-service teachers' teaching efficacy. The findings indicate several advantages of microteaching. These include pre-service teachers' awareness of the importance of feedback, their ability to reflect on and embrace teaching limitations, the development of teaching competence, the cultivation of a positive attitude toward teaching, fostering self-discipline and responsibility, learning from peers, positioning students as the heart of the lesson, understanding the importance of lesson planning, and autonomy in selecting materials. However, the study also identifies constraints and challenges associated with micro-teaching. These include concerns about the lack of authenticity in simulated teaching environments and apprehensions about classroom management issues. Pre-service teachers recognize the constructive implications of microteaching reflective practices in enhancing their teaching efficacy. Despite some reservations, the study underscores the importance of providing opportunities for reflection to improve teaching effectiveness. Pedagogically, these findings emphasize the significance of incorporating reflective practices into teaching preparation programs to prepare future educators for the complexities of real-world teaching environments.

Introduction

Teaching is a multifaceted process crucial for knowledge transfer and fostering learning. Labaree (2000, 2020) highlighted its complexity, deeply rooted in societal norms and expectations. It involves challenges such as catering to diverse student needs, adhering to policies, and working within institutional constraints. Unlike the

hard sciences, teaching relies heavily on interpersonal skills, adaptability, and empathy, making it resistant to reduction to mere theories and axioms. Understanding education's social and cultural contexts is vital, necessitating continuous research and reflection.

Similar to other methods, microteaching offers explicit training for English language pre-service teachers, providing constant feedback in controlled teaching environments (Le Maistre & Paré, 2010). Mastery in English teaching does not rely solely on subject knowledge but also on understanding context (Mann & Walsh, 2017). Teachers must navigate diverse student abilities, fostering lifelong learning (Foley & Thompson, 2017, as cited in Deocampo, 2020). Developing a reflexive relationship with context is essential. Teachers must understand situations deeply and adapt their practice accordingly (Farrell, 2018; Mann & Walsh, 2017). Thus, pre-service teachers in the English language must cultivate reflective practices from the outset of their preparation to enhance teaching efficacy.

Literature Review

The Central Notion of Microteaching

Microteaching has a long history of preparing teachers to improve their teaching skills as it deals with real teaching situations (Allen, 1966; El-Koumy, 2022; Kelleci et al., 2018). The rationale for using this particular approach is that pre-service teachers will likely develop a 'pedagogical content' that will adequately reinforce their knowledge of 'the art of teaching' (Daryamenti et al., 2019). Pre-service teachers are trained in several teaching and reflective skills in microteaching. A teacher's educator is a facilitator who guides them in preparing their lesson plan and directs them during the teaching practices (Chen, 2010). Starkey and Rawlins (2012) claimed that pre-service teachers can be well-monitored, supervised, and guided through this approach, whether in an online discussion or classroom teaching observation. Such monitoring is likely to enable them to be well-prepared in preparing their lessons and manage their classroom accordingly (Haigh et al., 2006, as cited in Akmal et al, 2019) as they develop their teaching efficacy gradually.

The central notion of microteaching is letting pre-service teachers teach in a real classroom with controlled settings. Timely feedback was provided based on each practice lesson to help them develop their self-confidence or self-efficacy in teaching English skills (Kelleci et al., 2018; Koech & Mwei, 2019). Microteaching has utilized a repeated practice cycle through the 'teaching, reviewing, reflecting, and re-teaching cycle.' A cycle is the most helpful characteristic as these enhance pre-service teachers' reflective skills (El-Koumy, 2022). The cycle involves micro-lessons and timely feedback from peers and a teacher educator, which function as a means for "reflection and improvement" (Yan & He, 2017, p. 207). This also prepares pre-service teachers to become more reflective (Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2010; Mergler & Tangen, 2010).

Teaching, especially English, is becoming more competitive in local and global settings. This means that when ELT pre-service teachers face the real world of

teaching, they must be equipped with different coping strategies they gain through experience. As there is always a teaching knowledge gap between experienced and new teachers, they need proper assistance, such as mentoring and close supervision (Sterrett & Imig, 2011), to develop their efficacy as teachers.

Nevertheless, some researchers argued that microteaching may look promising but has some shortcomings. Some of these are the artificial nature of teaching, which Bell (2007) viewed as "performance rather than teaching" and Collins and Ting (2010) called "acting rather than enacting" (p. 207). However, as teaching is an art, teaching and acting can go hand in hand. Yan and He (2017) stated this means that a good teacher needs skills that captivate their students, which s/he is acting for. In this manner, a good teachers satisfy students who learn from the teacher's satisfying performance at the end of teaching. For me, this is an art.

Consequently, being a proficient language teacher extends beyond imparting grammar and vocabulary. It requires fostering communication skills, cultural understanding, and empathy. Language teachers guide students through linguistic complexities and create environments where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities. They facilitate growth by encouraging engagement beyond the classroom and empowering students to communicate confidently and authentically (Richards, 2017). Hence, preparing pre-service teachers' teaching education using reflective practices through microteaching can enhance their teaching efficacy, as reflection is an integral part of teacher preparation (El-Koumy, 2022).

Reflective Practices and Teaching Efficacy

Understanding teaching efficacy, teacher efficacy, and self-efficacy in teacher education is crucial to reflecting on pre-service teachers' beliefs about their teaching abilities (Barni et al., 2019). These beliefs significantly impact instructional practices and student outcomes (Khanshan & Yousefi, 2020). According to McLaughlin and Marsh (1978), *teacher efficacy* is the belief in one's capacity to affect student performance. It focuses on the teacher's effectiveness in their profession and ability to influence student outcomes. *Teaching efficacy*, on the other hand, refers specifically to a teacher's belief in their capacity to implement specific instructional strategies or methods successfully. Although these concepts may sound similar, they differ in focus. Teaching efficacy concentrates on the effectiveness of teaching methods or approaches the teacher employs (Richards, 2011) rather than the teacher's overall effectiveness in the profession. Therefore, it manifests as an individual teacher's self-efficacy.

Bandura (2006) defined *self-efficacy* as a teacher's confidence in effectively teaching English and supporting student learning. This belief is influenced by teaching experience, professional knowledge, and English proficiency (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008). As Ross (1998) highlighted, teacher efficacy leads to specific behaviors such as setting attainable goals, providing extra help to struggling students, and fostering student autonomy. In contrast, according to Melby (1995), teachers with low efficacy are pessimistic, focus more on discipline, and are less focused on student development (as cited in Yazici, 2019). Positive teaching experiences reinforce this belief, contributing to a teacher's sense of competence and commitment to teaching (as cited

in Richards, 2023). Thus, teaching efficacy is the confidence teachers have in positively impacting student learning and overcoming challenges in the classroom.

As highlighted by Farrell (2018) and Farrell and Kennedy (2019), reflective practices involve teachers examining their professional actions inside and outside the classroom to understand what they do, why they do it, and how they do it. This process allows teachers to find personal meaning in their practice. This approach is also beneficial for shaping teaching skills, as it involves constant guidance and feedback. It enables teachers to reflect on their practices and offers opportunities for improvement. According to Mann and Walsh (2017), reflection is crucial for teachers to identify and address "context-specific issues" (p. 28) for improvement. Therefore, considering what works best for their situation should be a central aspect of their professional development training.

This study attempts to identify to what extent microteaching reflective practices can develop ELT pre-service teachers' teaching efficacy and contribute to better teaching performance, as reflected in their teaching reflection at the end of their teaching preparation. Throughout the microteaching period, the teaching cycle, 'teaching, reviewing, reflecting, and re-teaching cycle,' was employed as part of the reflective approach to teaching.

Rationale

Reflective practices are essential in teacher education, yet the effectiveness of microteaching in teaching preparation, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts, needs to be studied more. Despite its potential benefits, microteaching is often considered a secondary option, overshadowed by traditional classroom-based practices (Farrell, 2018; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Mann & Walsh, 2017). This study aims to address this gap by investigating the role of microteaching reflective practices in enhancing the teaching efficacy of pre-service teachers in an international university setting in Thailand.

While reflective practices are widely recognized as crucial for professional development in teacher education (Farrell, 2018; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Mann & Walsh, 2017), the specific impact of microteaching on fostering reflective teaching practices among pre-service teachers needs to be better understood. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining how microteaching reflective practices influence the teaching efficacy of English language pre-service teachers in a Master of Arts Program in English Language Teaching (MA ELT) in Thailand.

Although microteaching is often overlooked in teacher preparation, it offers distinct advantages by providing a controlled environment for pre-service teachers to practice and receive feedback on their teaching skills (Koech & Mwei, 2019). Understanding the effectiveness of microteaching reflective practices is crucial for optimizing teaching preparation programs.

Given the importance of reflective practices in teacher education (Farrell, 2018; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Mann & Walsh, 2017), this study aims to address the gap in the literature regarding the efficacy of microteaching as a reflective teaching tool, particularly in ELT programs. By examining the impact of microteaching reflective practices on the teaching efficacy of pre-service teachers in an international university

setting in Thailand, this study contributes to our understanding of effective teacher preparation methods.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach. Twenty-two English language pre-service teachers' reflection papers were used as instruments to answer the research question. Each reflection paper was approximately 350 to 500 words, collected at the end of the 15-week teaching practicum (TP) course. Throughout the 15 weeks of TP, the researcher was the teacher's educator. A research question was posed as part of the underpinnings: *To what extent does a microteaching reflective practice help English language teacher-trainees develop teaching efficacy?*

Context and Participants

This study was conducted with a master's program at one of Thailand's international universities. The MA ELT is a two-year program. The philosophy behind this program is grounded in the belief that high-quality English language teaching education is essential for personal and professional development. The program aims to cater to the needs of various stakeholders, including prospective teachers, researchers, educators, leaders, and professionals requiring English proficiency in their fields. It seeks to address the growing demand for skilled English language teachers and leaders in Thailand and neighboring countries. The three objectives reflect the program's commitment to providing advanced knowledge, contemporary theories, and practical skills necessary for effective English language teaching in diverse contexts, particularly within the regional socio-cultural and professional settings. Students who have completed the required courses must conduct a 45-hour teaching practicum (TP) in different schools, equivalent to 15 weeks, as part of their teaching preparation. Twenty-two MA ELT pre-service teachers participated in the study. This comprises 14 Chinese, four Thai, and four Myanmar nationalities. Six of the 22 pre-service teachers had only a brief experience of teaching, while 16 needed to gain experience. The researcher assumed the role of the teacher's educator in this study.

Microteaching was an intensive teaching preparation program for ELT pre-service teachers. Part of the organization of the micro-teaching was that pre-service teachers were divided into four groups, each corresponding to a skill: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each group was allowed to choose the skill they would like to teach based on their strengths. They were assigned to teach 3 hours every week for 15 weeks. The three hours were divided into two sessions. Each session was for 1 hour and 30 minutes. Thus, two pre-service teachers would teach each week. Furthermore, the 22 pre-service teachers would function as teachers and students and take turns teaching for 15 weeks. This means they would be students when it differed from a group's teaching turn.

Part of the teaching preparation was for ELT pre-service teachers to develop their lesson plans and teaching materials for the masters' level students. Part of mentorship was for teacher educators, assisting and giving them feedback. However, feedback was not only from the teacher educator but also from their peers. Feedback

is one of the essential aspects of micro-teaching and was given at the end of each session. Although all teaching preparations were done in groups, the teaching was done individually. Moreover, each ELT pre-service teacher had individual assignments such as teaching reflections. Thus, reflection papers varied as they reflected on their personal experiences throughout the teaching preparation period.

Data Collection and Analysis

Teaching reflection papers served as the primary data source for this study, with 22 papers collected after a 15-week teaching preparation. Each paper was labeled according to the corresponding pre-service teacher, TT1 through TT22. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. Drawing from Dawadi (2020), six steps of thematic analysis, including familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up, facilitated the identification of emerging themes reflecting both the importance and constraints noted in pre-service teacher reflections. Initially, familiarizing oneself with the text necessitated reading and re-reading teaching reflection texts to enhance the researcher's comprehension of the content. Subsequently, codes were identified and generated to capture the ideas or patterns within the data. These codes were then organized into potential thematic categories and "overarching themes" (Dawadi, 2020, p. 66), fundamental in encompassing and influencing the interpretation of "multiple sub-themes within the data, and identified by examining connections, similarities, and contrasts between different codes. This was followed by identifying themes. Each theme was named to represent the data accurately. Then, relevant data excerpts or quotes were extracted and interpreted through the research question's context.

Peer debriefing or evaluation was employed throughout the analysis to ensure the findings' reliability and validity. Two faculty members experienced in teacher training across countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia conducted this to validate the identified themes, confirming their alignment with the data. Ahmed (2024), Hendren et al. (2023), Morse et al. (2002), and Rose and Johnson (2020) suggested various methods to ensure the neutrality and objectivity of research findings. Peer debriefing, member checking, and reflexive journaling can enhance confirmability. Peer debriefing involves seeking input from colleagues or experts to validate interpretations and reduce researcher bias, while member checking entails participants thoroughly reviewing and confirming the accuracy of findings. In addition, the pre-service teachers reviewed the themes to mitigate biases and ensure accurate interpretation (Hendren et al., 2023; Rose & Johnson, 2020). Finally, the coherently structured report of the thematic analysis findings was presented, supported by relevant quotes or excerpts, to underscore the extent to which micro-teaching reflective practices contribute to the development of teaching efficacy among English language pre-service teachers.

Findings and Discussion

The findings are divided into two parts: the advantages of microteaching and the constraints and challenges of microteaching. They are presented from the most prominent themes in the data to the least.

One interesting aspect of this study was examining pre-service teachers' reflections to gain insight into their perspectives on reflective practices in microteaching. The findings indicated that microteaching positively affected the teaching efficacy of English language pre-service teachers, although some expressed mixed feelings about this approach, highlighting certain constraints. To address the research question, it became evident that pre-service teachers recognized the constructive implications of microteaching reflective practices in enhancing their teaching efficacy.

Advantages of Microteaching

Several advantages of microteaching have been identified. These include 'awareness of the importance of feedback,' 'being reflective and embracing teaching limitations,' 'building teaching competence,' 'teaching with a positive attitude,' 'fostering self-discipline and responsibility,' 'learning from peers,' 'positioning students as the heart of the lesson,' 'understanding the importance of lesson planning,' and 'autonomy in selecting materials.'

1. Awareness of the importance of feedback

Whether positive or negative, feedback offers valuable opportunities for self-awareness and improvement among pre-service teachers (Hamid & Mahmood, 2010). While both forms of feedback are constructive, positive feedback has been indicated to impact ELT pre-service teachers (Khan & Yildiz, 2020). Notably, lesson planning emerges as a challenging aspect of teaching preparation, underscoring the importance of effective feedback in guiding pre-service teachers through this complex process.

The excerpts from their reflection papers below illustrate pre-service teachers' awareness of the importance of feedback.

TT1: *The teacher's interesting advice and suggestions inspired me to think further and work harder* (…). *My friends' feedback made me inventive*. I tried strategies I never learned from my teachers in the past (…).

TT2: Planning a lesson plan was tedious and frustrating (…). I would not have managed my teacher training without my peers and advisor, who *gave me prompt feedback*. I tried to think a lot about not only what activities I should use for my lesson but also what activities would engage students (…). *The suggestions from my advisor and feedback from my friends helped me a lot to think further*. I was grateful for that, as that *helped me think and plan ahead*.

TT3: *Hands-on feedback helped me a lot* (…) at the end of my teaching turn; my teacher provided feedback immediately, so *I knew what part of my lesson planning did not go according to plan*. This *allowed me to modify the activities that didn't work and focus more on this area* (…).

TT10: (…) The teacher monitoring skills of each teacher-trainee were excellent. *She provided timely feedback each time each teacher's lesson ended.* Because of these, *we were able to see immediately what we had to modify*, sometimes activities, sometimes strategies, for the next round of teaching (…). *It helped me to become better and better every time I taught.*

TT12: *I have improved my skills in creating my lesson plan and teaching due to my teacher's feedback and guidance* (…). I think it is one of the best practices before entering the real classroom because as we teach, we can review our lessons, and *the teacher lets us reflect on our teaching through her feedback and other friends' feedback.*

TT19: Chinese people are always focused on accuracy, such as imitating the accents of native speakers. However, *feedback from my teacher helped me remember that it is all right if students make mistakes when they speak.* I should not stop them in the middle and tell them what to do (…). I think I am strict, but luckily, my friends did not feel offended.

Analysis of pre-service teachers' reflection papers reveals the pivotal role of feedback in enhancing their teaching efficacy during microteaching. Examples from these reflections demonstrate the varied feedback that the teachers, educators, and peers provided. Regardless of whether feedback was directive or non-directive, such as offering suggestions, it played a crucial role in raising awareness of areas needing improvement in teaching practices. With vast experience in teaching, teacher educators offered diverse suggestions to assist pre-service teachers in creating engaging activities for their students. These findings align with previous research by Mena et al. (2017) and underscore the positive effects of feedback garnered from microteaching on novice teachers' teaching ability and their students' learning performance, as emphasized by Jin et al. (2022). Moreover, feedback is perceived as beneficial for teaching efficacy and overall professional development, aligning with Hamid and Mahmood's (2010) and Shortland's (2010) studies.

2. Being reflective and embracing teaching limitations

In the area of English language teaching preparation, the practice of reflective writing is of paramount significance. Embedded within this pedagogical approach lies the opportunity for pre-service teachers to introspectively analyze and evaluate their teaching performances. As posited by Astika (2014), reflective writing is a pivotal component of teacher development, offering a platform for individuals to scrutinize their instructional methodologies and identify areas for improvement. Moreover, Deocampo (2020) and Pang (2020) emphasized the dual purpose of reflection: not only does it aid in the refinement of pedagogical skills, but it also cultivates a culture of introspection among educators. Examining pre-service teachers' teaching practices and acknowledging limitations, they embark on continual growth and self-discovery, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom. Thus, the integration of reflective writing exercises catalyzes professional development, equipping educators with the tools to navigate the complexities of English language teaching with confidence and proficiency.

The excerpts from their reflection papers below illustrate pre-service teachers' understanding of how being reflective and embracing teaching limitations has benefited them.

TT1: *Don't be afraid to make mistake*s, *as they teach me to be more motivated in what I do*. Through my advisor's feedback, I was able to see what was wrong with my activities immediately, so I was able to change them the next time I taught. *My shortcomings made me more confident in my teaching, as they challenged me to do it better*.

TT3: This micro-teaching *helped me tackle the challenges of teaching with a positive attitude*. I thought I was good, but *I realized that teaching was not about how good we are as student*s but how good we are at knowing our students' needs and integrating that into our teaching. I realized that *we only know the real teaching situation once it is in front of us*, and we cannot assume.

TT9: I fear making mistakes, so I must practice before teaching…*I realized that we are human, so we are not perfect*. Teachers, unlike other professions, we cannot practice because questions just popped up in the discussion. *I learned to embrace those shortcomings of mine*. So, upon reflection, I told myself I needed to be prepared…my teacher said *it is okay to make mistakes and let those mistakes make you a good person, in my case, a good teacher*… so next time, I know what to do and not to do.

TT13: My friends and teacher told me my voice was not loud enough, and they could not understand me…. *I realized that to become a good teacher*, *I have to work on this part*. So I practiced and practiced and practiced. My voice and how I speak are still problems, but I will try my best to improve them.

TT16: I thought I was good at teaching because I had teaching experience, but *I realized I was not*. *I saw lots of weaknesses in my teaching* because I was just following how I taught in the Chinese classroom. *I realized that MA is about finding a contemporary way to teach English… I have reflected on my lesson plan, reviewed my activities, especially the one highlighted by my teacher, and modified my strategies, so the next round I taught was more engaging*.

The excerpts from the interviews with pre-service teachers underscore the importance of reflection in English language teaching preparation. Reflective practices allow educators to assess their teaching performance and catalyze pedagogical skill development and self-awareness (Astika, 2014; Deocampo, 2020; Pang, 2020). Through reflection, pre-service teachers acknowledge their shortcomings and embrace growth opportunities, as demonstrated by their willingness to learn from mistakes and adapt their teaching approaches accordingly. Furthermore, reflection fosters a positive attitude toward challenges in teaching, encouraging individuals to prioritize the needs of their students and continually refine their instructional methods (Tompkins, 2009). Incorporating reflective practices into teaching preparation programs can lead to more effective teaching strategies and create dynamic learning environments conducive to student engagement and success.

3. Build teaching competence

Teaching competencies encompass various elements, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ross, 1998). These components are vital for educators, especially in English language education, and should be cultivated from the outset of their teaching journey (Richards, 2017; Van Werven et al., 2021). Knowledge refers to a teacher's grasp of the subject, while skills encompass lesson delivery, communication, and interpersonal abilities. Attitude reflects a teacher's professionalism and role modeling. Essentially, teaching competence is a blend of these factors, transforming a mundane learning environment into an engaging and supportive atmosphere by catering to students' needs and motivating them (Guzman & Nussbaum, 2009; Ross, 1998).

The excerpts from their reflection papers below illustrate pre-service teachers' knowledge of how microteaching builds their teaching competence.

TT5: Teaching face-to-face and online was a very good experience for me. *This training helped me anticipate what I should face in the future…* whether I teach in the classroom or online. *Having this experience built my competence to face the actual teaching situation…*

TT7: I feel anxious about my speaking ability because of the influence of my mother tongue, but *posing as a teacher and student at the same time improves my teaching confidence as I become more competent in delivering my lesson as a teacher and answering questions if I pose as a student*. I love this TP; it was fun and exciting.

TT14: Micro-teaching gave me *a profound understanding of teaching and built my competence*, especially since we had to do this training with an MA. Students. If I can teach MA, I can also teach primary and high school students.

TT22: I am so grateful for this teaching training as *it helped my competence in teaching* a great deal… I thought teaching was easy, but without good lesson planning, it is not easy. So, *reflecting on what I taught made me a more competent teacher*.

TT19: *This teaching practicum provided me with many teaching experiences*, both in the classroom and online. *It helped me see my weaknesses and think about my teaching styles, which guided me to be a competent teacher, especially in teaching English*. It was challenging, but I felt great after the term ended.

The excerpt highlights the multifaceted nature of teaching competencies, encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for effective teaching, particularly in English language education. Teacher-trainees emphasized how their experiences in face-to-face and online teaching contexts enhanced their competence, enabling them to anticipate and address challenges. This reflects the importance of reflective practices in refining teaching approaches and building confidence. Competence goes beyond mere knowledge; it includes adapting teaching methods, engaging students effectively, and reflecting on one's practice. The testimonies underscore how reflective teaching contributes to developing a dynamic and competent educator capable of navigating diverse learning environments.

4. Teaching with a positive attitude

Moskowitz (2012) posited that attitude encompasses how individuals react to stimuli, either positively or negatively, which correlates with learning outcomes (Slamento, 2015). Teachers' positive attitudes are vital for fostering a welcoming classroom environment (Richards & Bohlke, 2011) and influencing student motivation (Sarpong & Sarpong, 2020). This positive demeanor facilitates effective teaching and learning by creating a supportive atmosphere where students feel cared for academically and emotionally (Richards, 2023).

The excerpts from their reflection papers below illustrate pre-service teachers' awareness of 'teaching with a positive attitude' as one of the benefits of microteaching.

TT4: I was nervous the first time I taught in this microteaching. I started with a smile, as *I learned from my advisor that a positive attitude always makes your plan successful* (…). I think so because instead of thinking about how to teach the MA students, I just carried on teaching and handled the situation well. *(…) My positive attitude helped me to complete my turn in teaching happily.*

TT1: *My positive attitude helped me finish my TP, and I realized how vital this can be to my future teaching career.* Now I know why the teacher always told us to ask questions if we were confused (…). In teaching, knowing means 100% clear and not just so-so. That was a positive attitude (…). I appreciate her more than before.

TT6: *I learned that having a positive mindset at the heart of teaching is very important, as this influences the learning environment*. So don't be grumpy if you teach; smile, and everything will be okay.

TT7: *The most precious lesson I learned in this micro-teaching is about having a positive attitude… not letting your personal problems affect your teaching profession*…. As our teacher said, "Your personal life is your personal life; don't bring it into the classroom. I have to remember these words forever."

The excerpts from the teacher-trainees reflections align with the literature on the significance of a positive attitude in teaching. Moskowitz (2012) and Slamento (2015) emphasize attitude as a crucial predictor of learning outcomes. The trainees' experiences illustrate how maintaining a positive mindset enhances teaching performance and fosters a conducive learning environment. Their reflections highlight the importance of attitude in handling challenges and maintaining professionalism, as echoed by Richards and Bohlke (2011).

5. Fostering self-discipline and responsibility

Effective teaching entails more than just fulfilling duties; it also encompasses qualities such as self-discipline. Damrongpanit (2019) defines *self-discipline* as enhancing one's capacity to utilize reasoning and decision-making skills. Furthermore, self-discipline and responsibility align with teachers' professional standards (Richards & Bohlke, 2011) and contribute to their self-efficacy (Burton et al., 2005). These qualities are integral to creating a helpful learning environment and fostering student success.

As illustrated by the excerpts from their reflection papers below, pre-service teachers have acknowledged that 'fostering self-discipline and responsibility' is one of the advantages they have gained from microteaching.

TT7: Teaching MA students was quite an experience for me. Besides preparing lessons that were at the level of my students, I had to make sure that I learned the topic so that when students asked, I could answer. It was different from being a student in my MA course. In this training, *I became responsible, maybe because we worked in a group, so I wouldn't want my friends to feel unfair*. At the end of our teaching turn, we really were happy.

TT13: When I reflect back on this teaching practicum, *I learned a lot from it, especially about being responsible for what a teacher should do*. I have no teaching experience, so I take this training seriously. *I discipline myself to do what a teacher should do every time I teach, and it helped me become a responsible teacher*…. I read my students' writing every time we finished teaching and gave feedback immediately.

TT20: I am a sort of lazy person, but *microteaching helped me to be responsible and discipline*d. I have to remind myself that if I want to succeed as a teacher, I need to be responsible not only for doing my lesson plan but also for making sure that I can deliver the lesson well… make my students understand, and get something from it. *Responsibility comes with self-discipline, so I said I should have both to be a teacher.*

The excerpts highlight how microteaching cultivates self-discipline and responsibility among teacher trainees, essential qualities for effective teaching (El-Koumy, 2022). Trainees emphasized the need to prepare thoroughly, engage with the material, and provide timely feedback to students, showcasing a heightened sense of accountability toward their teaching roles. Through micro-teaching experiences, trainees recognized the importance of being proactive in lesson planning and delivery, demonstrating a shift from passive learners to proactive educators. This shift reflects a deeper understanding of the demands of the teaching profession. It underscores the transformative nature of reflective teaching practices in fostering professional growth and readiness for classroom challenges.

6. Learning from peers

One advantage of microteaching is group learning, which influences cooperative learning (El-Koumy, 2022). In the teaching preparation, pre-service teachers realized the importance of peer support for solving problems, sharing knowledge of materials, and practicing collaboration skills (Coyle, 2018, as cited in Strom et al., 2019).

From the excerpts of pre-service teachers' reflection papers provided below, they highlighted how 'learning from peers' helps them to be creative.

TT5: *Working in a group was the best part of this micro-teaching, as we exchanged different ideas to create our lesson plan and present our lesson*. We were lucky to have this teaching practicum, as we had a lot of passionate and creative teacher-trainees… I learned from them very much, and I would like to do the same activities next time, maybe for young students.

TT10: I learned many ideas in this micro-teaching, but *the most important aspect I am grateful for was learning from my peers, especially their explanations, demonstrations, and questioning strategies*. All of these helped me to continue the challenging classroom and online teaching activities.

TT18: I could be more creative, but *the micro-teaching helped me think differently as I observed other teacher-trainees. Their creativity helped me think beyond what I learned from my previous teachers*, and I would like to continue this way when I teach in the actual classroom (…). My friends showed me many teaching strategies I can use in the future. *Learning collaboratively with peers was a good experience*.

As indicated from the excerpts, teacher trainees underscore the invaluable role of collaboration among peers during microteaching sessions. Working in groups facilitated the exchange of diverse ideas, fostering creativity and innovation in lesson planning and presentation. Pre-service teachers expressed gratitude for learning from their peers' teaching strategies, explanations, demonstrations, and questioning techniques, which enhanced their ability to navigate classroom and teaching challenges. Moreover, the collaborative learning environment encouraged pre-service teachers to think differently, inspiring them to explore new approaches beyond traditional teaching methods. Ultimately, this collaborative dynamic boosts confidence (Coyle, 2018, as cited in Strom et al., 2019) and cultivates a culture of experimentation and creativity among pre-service teachers, preparing them for future teaching endeavors.

7. Positioning students as the heart of the lesson

One of a teacher's most essential skills is prioritizing their students' needs. This means that the teaching should be the heart of the teacher's lesson. Acknowledging the students' different needs and learning styles may take time; thus, reflecting on lessons helps to know the diverse abilities of students (Richards & Bohlke, 2011).

Pre-service teachers' beliefs about knowing that positioning students as the heart of the lesson is one of the essential skills they have acquired through microteaching and is illustrated in the excerpts from their reflection papers below.

TT8: Before conducting this TP, I knew how to plan my lesson and choose my teaching materials. In reality, I don't, as before I decide what lesson plan I should do, I have to know my students first… In the preparation part, the teacher always said, "Know your students" … "your objectives" … *This made me realize that students are the center of everything we do as teachers.* So, *it is not about what I would like to teach, but their needs are… Everything that a teacher would do in the classroom revolves around the students…*. I realized why the objectives of the lessons are imperative.

TT11: The teacher said, "Before you create your lesson, know your students first. Part of this micro-teaching enables me to better understand what this word *means. A natural teaching environment is all about students, and our knowledge and skills guide us in dealing with our students' needs and abilities*." So, I kept this in mind, and

it became my inspiration when planning my lesson…*asking who my students are, what they need to learn, and their ability level.*

Reflecting on their reflections, pre-service teachers have realized the importance of placing their students at the heart of their lessons and finding appropriate activities practical for their students' needs. As Richards and Bohlke (2011) articulated, learners are the ones who create the direction of the lessons. This is why teacher-trainees need to be aware that it is not about how good they are but how much students learn according to their needs (Labaree, 2020).

8. Understanding the importance of lesson planning

The lesson plan mirrors the professional standards and teaching philosophy in the teaching profession, particularly as an English teacher (Richards & Bohlke, 2011). A well-crafted lesson plan facilitates effective teaching and learning and contributes to good classroom management (Iqbal et al., 2021). Therefore, pre-service teachers must grasp the entire concept of English language teaching and learning to develop lesson plans that align with students' learning objectives.

Pre-service teachers have illustrated their understanding of the importance of lesson planning. The examples from reflection papers are shown below.

TT1: I realized how useful it would be if we had more lesson plans. We will never know whether what we have prepared will work for our students, especially when dealing with graduate students. *Lesson plan preparation was the most challenging part of our micro-teaching, but it helped me think further*. I always remember what our advisor said, "You must have plan A, Plan B or whatever Plan… *just remember in every activity you do, this should support the objectives of your lesson*." After this micro-teaching, I understood why.

TT17: *I found this micro-teaching very good training* for me as I have no teaching experience. So, when I teach in a real classroom environment, *I will know what types of lessons and teaching materials I should use based on my students' needs, abilities, and culture.*

Pre-service teachers' reflections underscore the significance of effective lesson planning in microteaching experiences. TT1 highlights the importance of having multiple lesson plans to cater to diverse student needs, echoing the advisor's emphasis on aligning activities with lesson objectives. Similarly, TT17 emphasizes the value of microteaching in preparing for real classroom scenarios by considering students' needs, abilities, and cultural backgrounds. These insights align with Dornyei's (2001) emphasis on learner-centered lesson planning, highlighting how microteaching fosters awareness and preparedness in creating pedagogically sound lesson plans.

9. Autonomy in selecting materials

Autonomous teachers can instill in students a sense of responsibility for their learning and encourage independence. A crucial aspect of the professional growth of pre-service teachers involves reflection, focusing not only on students' needs but also on the lesson's objectives (Oates, 2019). The freedom to select learning materials for students can foster creativity and satisfaction, ultimately empowering teachers

(Salokangas et al., 2020). This autonomy allows educators to tailor their teaching methods to suit their students' interests and needs.

As pre-service teachers indicated in their reflection papers, another benefit they have acquired from microteaching is 'autonomy in selecting materials.' Excerpts are provided below.

TT5: I felt like I could bring out the best part of me about creativity as *we were given the freedom to choose our teaching materials and create our activities* (…). Given that we were dealing with graduate students like us, *finding a more challenging and engaging topic for discussion* was not difficult. This might not be easy to do when you teach in a real classroom where you need to follow the curriculum and use the materials given by the school (…).
TT5: *I created an exciting lesson.* At first, I was hesitant, but during the class, it was successful, as engagement among students was excellent. It was fun, and discussion kept coming, although we were already running out of time. I think *this should be teaching about to give teachers freedom to choose their teaching materials and resources for the sake of students' interest* (…). I loved the microteaching we did. *It brought back my creativity* (…)

Pre-service teachers' reflections highlight the empowering effect of autonomy in shaping teaching practices. Educators can effectively unleash their creativity and cater to students' interests by allowing the freedom to select teaching materials and design activities. The autonomy afforded during microteaching sessions led to successful and engaging lessons, fostering a collaborative learning environment where teacher-trainees directed their learning journey. This autonomy enhances professional development and encourages innovation and satisfaction among educators. However, it is essential to acknowledge that despite its benefits, microteaching may present constraints and challenges, as reflected in students' feedback, underscoring the need for a balanced approach to teacher training.

Constraints and Challenges of the Microteaching

Microteaching, a widely employed method in teacher education (El-Koumy, 2022), offers a simulated yet controlled environment for novice educators to hone their teaching skills (Allen, 1966; Kelleci et al., 2018). However, inherent constraints and challenges warrant careful consideration beneath its structured facade. Pre-service teachers frequently express concerns regarding the authenticity of microteaching simulations compared to natural classroom settings (Yan & He, 2017). Issues such as limited time for training, doubts about their readiness to handle diverse student needs, and the discrepancy between teaching peers and actual students feature prominently in their reflections. Furthermore, pre-service teachers grapple with the challenge of adapting to the rigid constraints of school curricula and prescribed teaching materials, which may differ from the flexibility in microteaching scenarios. These constraints impact the effectiveness of skill development and raise questions about how microteaching adequately prepares pre-service teachers for the dynamic and unpredictable nature of real-world teaching environments. Thus, a critical examination

of these constraints is imperative to enhance the authenticity and efficacy of teacher education programs.

Excerpts from the reflection papers of pre-service teachers are provided below to support the findings.

1. Lack of authenticity

The excerpts from the data highlight the pre-service teachers' concerns about the need for more authenticity in microteaching simulations compared to real classroom experiences. Limited time for training, doubts about their ability to handle diverse student needs, and the difference between teaching peers and actual students all contribute to this perception. Pre-service teachers prefer natural classroom environments, providing valuable opportunities to confront genuine teaching challenges and interact with authentic student dynamics. While microteaching fosters teamwork and skill development, its effectiveness in preparing trainees for real-world teaching scenarios remains questioned (Koech & Mwei, 2019). These reflections underscore the importance of incorporating more authentic teaching experiences into teacher preparation programs better to equip future educators for the complexities of classroom instruction.

TT5: … *limited time is one of the limitations of this training*. We need more time to absorb everything we do and can teach other skills. It should be great…

TT12: My understanding of teaching in a natural classroom environment has improved. But honestly, *I still question myself if I have the ability to teach students in an actual classroom*. I know that my friends motivated me to prepare my lesson plans well, but *I don't know if I would face students, especially younger ones. Will they listen to me? What if I handle students with different learning styles? I cannot imagine how actual teaching would feel*.

TT15: *Teaching in a natural classroom environment with real students is better as this prepared me to face students who are students and not just pretending to be students*.

TT21: Micro-teaching can be good if you would not like to teach in a real classroom. It was fun and lots of teamwork building. *However, if we teach in a real classroom with real students, the environment changes, so this can be a real problem in the future, especially when it comes to knowing how to handle real students, especially young students*.

TT13: It was quite strange for me to teach my fellow classmates. I found it challenging, too. Also, *I really tried findings lots of materials both online in the library but in the real teaching environment we need to follow school's curriculum and we need to use the school teaching materials*. So at the end of the day, *our teaching might differ once we face the real classroom, so I think this is one of the issues of micro-teaching*.

As indicated, the pre-service teachers' apprehension about the disparity between microteaching and natural classroom environments raises essential considerations for English language teaching programs. While microteaching is a valuable pedagogical tool for skill development and peer collaboration (El-Koumy, 2022), its limitations in

replicating authentic teaching contexts must be considered. Efforts to bridge this gap involve integrating more immersive teaching preparation experiences, such as extended teaching internships or co-teaching opportunities in actual classrooms. Additionally, mentorship programs pairing pre-service teachers with experienced teacher educators could provide invaluable guidance and support as they navigate the complexities of real-world teaching. By addressing these concerns and enhancing the authenticity of teacher training experiences, education programs can better prepare aspiring teachers to meet the diverse needs of their future students and thrive in dynamic classroom environments.

2. Classroom management issue

Practical exposure to managing diverse student behaviors would better equip pre-service teachers to navigate the complexities of real-world teaching environments. The excerpt from TT19 highlights a common concern among pre-service teachers regarding the transferability of skills learned in micro-teaching to actual classroom situations, particularly in classroom management. Pre-service teachers need to be more apprehensive about handling challenging scenarios such as unruly or disruptive behavior in an actual classroom setting.

TT19: Although microteaching was very useful, *I still have doubts about how I would transfer the knowledge I gained to classroom management*. So far, we have yet to encounter classroom management problems, especially me. *What if I deal with a real classroom where students are naughty and uncontrollable?* How do we deal with them? (…) As part of our training, we were advised different approaches, *but if you did not encounter them during your training, this can be hard in my situation. I know that one of the challenges that the teacher will face someday is managing her students.*

While they receive guidance and advice on various approaches during training, the need for firsthand experience with such situations poses a significant challenge. This underscores the importance of incorporating more authentic and diverse teaching experiences into teacher education programs, as effective classroom management is critical to successful teaching.

Pedagogical Implications

The key themes emerge, such as the importance of feedback in refining teaching performance and lesson planning and reflective practices fostering a constructive attitude toward challenges. The data highlight the role of reflective teaching in showing the significance of microteaching for the teaching profession. Pedagogically, the implication is that microteaching has positive implications in enhancing teaching efficacy among pre-service teachers, despite some expressing reservations due to identified constraints. Moreover, microteaching builds teaching competence, particularly in diverse teaching environments. Through reflective practices, the cultivation of self-discipline and responsibility and nurturing professionalism among pre-service teachers are demonstrated. Collaborative learning

with peers also emerges as beneficial for fostering creativity and confidence. However, constraints such as needing more authentic teaching environments and classroom management concerns surface. Nonetheless, the study underscores the value of reflective teaching in promoting continual improvement and professional development among future educators, highlighting microteaching as a valuable component of teaching preparation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings underscore the impact of reflective teaching practices, particularly in microteaching, on the professional development of English language pre-service teachers. Through rigorous reflection and analysis of their teaching practices, pre-service teachers could discern effective strategies from ineffective ones, enhancing their teaching efficacy. The study highlights the fundamental role of feedback, reflective practices, and collaborative learning in fostering a positive attitude toward teaching challenges and promoting continual improvement. However, identified constraints such as the need for more authentic teaching environments and concerns about classroom management underscore the ongoing need for refinement in teacher preparation programs. Despite these challenges, the study emphasizes the enduring value of reflective teaching in nurturing professionalism and self-efficacy among future educators. As pre-service teachers continue to engage in reflective practices, they are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the teaching profession and contribute meaningfully to the educational landscape.

Author

Marilyn Fernandez Deocampo is the Program Director of the English Language Teaching (ELT) department at the Graduate School of Human Sciences, Assumption University, Thailand. She instructs and supervises MA and doctoral research students in ELT. Her scholarly interests encompass Systemic Functional Linguistics, English Language Teaching, Language and Society, Language in Media, and Critical Discourse Analysis.

References

Ahmed, S. K. (2024). The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, *2*, 1-4. https//:doi.org/ 10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051

Akmal, S., Razali, K., & Ningsih, Y. S. (2019). Wonderful or awful? Students-teachers' classroom management experiences in practicum teaching. *Getsempena English Education Journal*, *6*(1), 13-22.

Allen, D. W. (1966). Micro-teaching: A new framework for in-service education. *The High School Journal*, *49*(8), 355-362.

Astika, G. (2014). Reflective teaching as alternative assessment in teacher education: A case study of pre-service teachers. *TEFLIN Journal*, *25*(1), 16-32.

Bandura, A. (2006). Guide for constructing self-efficacy scales. *Self-efficacy beliefs of Adolescents*, *5*(1), 307-337.

Barni, D., Danioni, F., & Benevene, P. (2019). Teachers' self-efficacy: The role of personal values and motivations for teaching. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. https//: doi.org/ 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01645

Bell, N. D. (2007). Microteaching: What is it that is going on here?. *Linguistics and Education*, *18*(1), 24-40.

Burton, J. P., Bamberry, N. & Harris-Boundy, J (2005). Developing personal teaching efficacy in new teachers in university settings. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *4*(2), 160-173. http//:doi.org.10.5465/AMLE.2005.17268563

Chen, R. J. (2010). Investigating models for preservice teachers' use of technology to support student-centered learning. *Computers & Education*, *55*(1), 32-42.

Collins, S., & Ting, H. (2010). Actors and act-ers: Enhancing inclusion and diversity in teaching and teacher education through the validation of quiet teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*(4), 900-905.

Coyle, D. (2018). The place of CLIL in (bilingual) education. *Theory Into Practice*, *57*(3), 166-176.

Damrongpanit, S. (2019). Factors affecting self-discipline as good citizens for the undergraduates of Chiang Mai University in Thailand: A multilevel path analysis. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *7*(2), 347-355.

Darmayenti, D., Besral, B., & Kustati, M. (2019). English skills based microteaching: An effective model in enhancing English student teachers' teaching skills. *Al-Ta Lim Journal*, *26*(1), 23-37.

Dawadi, S. (2020). Thematic analysis approach: A step by step guide for ELT research practitioners. *Journal of NELTA*, *25*(1-2), 62-71.

Deocampo, M. F. (2020). Issues and challenges of English language teacher-trainees teaching practicum performance: Looking back and going forward. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, *13*(2), 486-503.

El-Koumy, A. S. A. (2022). Building and developing core teaching skills via reflective micro-teaching. Cairo: Waad for Publication and Distribution. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4312396

Eslami, Z. R., & Fatahi, A. (2008). Teachers' sense of self-efficacy, English proficiency, and instructional strategies: A study of nonnative EFL teachers in Iran. *TESL-EJ, 11*(4). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ898136.pdf

Farrell, T. S. (2018). Reflective practice for language teachers. *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching*, 1-6.

Farrell, T. S., & Kennedy, B. (2019). Reflective practice framework for TESOL teachers: One teacher's reflective journey. *Reflective Practice*, *20*(1), 1-12.

Foley, J., & Thompson, L. (2017). *Language learning: A lifelong process*. Routledge.

Guzman, A., & Nussbaum, M. (2009). Teaching competencies for technology integration in the classroom. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *25*(5), 453-469.

Haigh, M., Pinder, H., & McDonald, L. (2006 September 6-9). *Practicum contributions to students learning to teach*. [Paper presentation]. British

Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Warwick, Coventry, England. http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/160597.htm.

Hamid, Y., & Mahmood, S. (2010). Understanding constructive feedback: A commitment between teachers and students for academic and professional development. *Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association*, *60*(3), 224-227.

Hendren, K., Newcomer, K., Pandey, S. K., Smith, M., & Sumner, N. (2023). How qualitative research methods can be leveraged to strengthen mixed methods research in public policy and public administration?. *Public Administration Review*, *83*(3), 468-485.

Iqbal, M. H., Siddiqie, S. A., & Mazid, M. A. (2021). Rethinking theories of lesson plan for effective teaching and learning. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *4*(1), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2021.100172

Jin, X., Tigelaar, D., van der Want, A., & Admiraal, W. (2022). Novice teachers' appraisal of expert feedback in a teacher professional development programme in Chinese vocational education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *112*, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103652.

Kavanoz, S., & gülru Yüksel, H. (2010). An investigation of peer-teaching technique in student teacher development. *The International Journal of Research in Teacher Education*, *1*(3), 10-19.

Kelleci, O., Kulaksiz, T. & Pala, F. K. (2018). The effect of social network-supported micro-learning on teachers' self-efficacy and teaching skills. *World Journal on Education Technology: Current Issues*, *10*(2), 115-129.

Khan, N. U. S., & Yildiz, Y. (2020). Impact of intangible characteristics of universities on student satisfaction. Amazonia Investiga, 9(26), 105-116. https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2020.26.02.12

Khanshan, S. K., & Yousefi, M. H. (2020). The relationship between self-efficacy and instructional practice of in-service soft disciplines, hard disciplines and EFL teachers. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, 5*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-020-0080-8

Koech, H. C., & Mwei, P. K. (2019). How secondary school mathematics teachers perceive the effectiveness of microteaching and teaching practice in their pre-service education. *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, *7*(1), 46-55.

Labaree, D. F. (2000). On the nature of teaching and teacher education: Difficult practices that look easy. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *51*(3), 228-233.

Labaree, D. F. (2020). *A perfect mess: The unlikely ascendancy of American higher education*. University of Chicago Press.

Le Maistre, C., & Paré, A. (2010). Whatever it takes: How beginning teachers learn to survive. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*(3), 559-564.

Mann, S., & Walsh, S. (2017). *Reflective practice in English language teaching: Research-based principles and practices*. Routledge.

McLaughlin, M. W., & Marsh, D. D. (1978). Staff development and school change. *Teachers College Record*, *80*(1), 1-18.

Melby, L. C. (1995). Teacher efficacy and classroom management: A study of teacher cognition, emotion, and strategy usage associated with externalizing student

behavior (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles). Dissertation Abstracts International, 56(10-A), 3890.

Mena, J., Hennissen, P., & Loughran, J. (2017). Developing pre-service teachers' professional knowledge of teaching: The influence of mentoring. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 66*, 47-59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.03.024

Mergler, A. G., & Tangen, D. (2010). Using microteaching to enhance teacher efficacy in pre-service teachers. *Teaching Education*, *21*(2), 199-210.

Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *1*(2), 13-22.

Moskowitz, G. B. (2012). The representation and regulation of goals. In H. Aarts & A. J. Elliot (Eds.), *Goal-directed behavior* (pp. 1-47). Psychology Press.

Oates, S. (2019). The importance of autonomous, self-regulated learning in primary initial teacher training. *Frontiers in Education, 4*, 102. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00102

Pang, N. S. K. (2022). Teachers' reflective practices in implementing assessment for learning skills in classroom teaching. *ECNU Review of Education*, *5*(3), 470-490.

Richards, J. C. (2011). Classroom observation in teaching practice. In J. C. Richards & T. S. C. Farrell (Eds.), *Practice teaching: A reflective approach* (pp. 90-106). Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2017). Teaching English through English: Proficiency, pedagogy and performance. *RELC Journal*, *48*(1), 7–30.

Richards, J. C. (2023). Teacher, learner and student-teacher identity in TESOL. *RELC Journal*, *54*(1), 252-266.

Richards, J. C., & Bohlke, D. (2011). *Creating effective language lessons*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, J., & Johnson, C. W. (2020). Contextualizing reliability and validity in qualitative research: Toward more rigorous and trustworthy qualitative social science in leisure research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *51*(4), 432-451.

Ross, J.A. (1998). The antecedents and consequences of teacher efficacy. In J. Brophy (eds). *Advances in research on teaching*, (pp. 49-74). Greenwich JAI Press.

Salokangas, M., Wermke, W., & Harvey, G. (2020). Teachers' autonomy deconstructed: Irish and Finnish teachers' perceptions of decision-making and control. *European Educational Research Journal*, *19*(4), 329-350.

Sarpong, T., & Sarpong, F. A. (2020). Student-teachers attitude in Atebubu College of education towards the teaching profession at the primary school level in Ghana. *American Journal of Educational Science*, *6*(2), 5-13.

Shortland, S. (2010). Feedback within peer observation: Continuing professional development and unexpected consequences. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *47*(3), 295-304.

Slameto, S. (2015). Implementasi penelitian tindakan kelas. *Scholaria: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, *5*(3), 47-58.

Starkey, L., & Rawlins, P. (2012). Student teacher learning during practicum experience. *Teacher Education Advancement Network Journal (TENA)*, *4*(1). https://ojs.cumbria.ac.uk/index.php/TEAN/article/view/109/191.

Sterrett, W. L., & Imig, S. (2011). Thriving as a new teacher, in a bad economy. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, *47*(2), 68-71.

Strom, P. S., Hendon, K. L., Strom, R. D., & Wang, C. H. (2019). How peers support and inhibit learning in the classroom: Assessment of high school students in collaborative groups. *School Community Journal*, *29*(2), 183-202.

Tompkins, M. L. (2009). *The Effectiveness of Learning Portfolios: A Study of Quality Assurance Programs of Selected Health Regulatory Colleges in* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation] Brock University).

Van Werven, I. M., Coelen, R. J., Jansen, E. P., & Hofman, W. H. A. (2023). Global teaching competencies in primary education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *53*(1), 37-54. http//:doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.1869520.

Yan, C., & He, C. (2017). Pair microteaching: An unrealistic pedagogy in pre-service methodology courses?. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *43*(2), 206-218.

Yazici, E. A. (2019). The role of teacher efficacy over English language teaching. *International Journal of Educational Spectrum*, *1*(1), 36-47.

'I'm happy with my job, but …': Thai EFL Teacher's Well-Being and Boreout

Pariwat Imsa-ard
Faculty of Liberal Arts
Thammasat University, Thailand

Abstract

The profession of foreign language teaching, particularly for non-native English speakers, is often acknowledged for its inherent demands and complexities, prompting a burgeoning interest in scholarly investigation into factors conducive to teacher well-being and boreout. Within EFL instruction, considerable attention has been devoted to the significance of teacher emotions. This paper attempts to examine the predictors of the psychological well-being and boreout of Thai EFL teachers. A group of 541 Thai EFL schoolteachers nationwide participated in this study. Employing two distinct instruments, namely the Index of Psychological Well-Being at Work and the Job Boreout Scale, data were collected online and analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation, regression analysis, and ANOVA. The findings revealed a significant negative impact of boreout on the psychological well-being of Thai EFL schoolteachers, with higher levels of boreout associated with lower levels of well-being. Regression analysis demonstrated that boreout accounts for 29.8% of the variability in psychological well-being ($R^2=.298$, $p < .01$), highlighting the importance of addressing boreout to improve teachers' overall well-being. This study highlights implications for practitioners, teacher educators, and policymakers, advocating for a heightened consciousness toward addressing and minimizing teachers' boreout to foster teacher well-being and enhance their efficacy within the academic context.

Keywords: English as a foreign language; job boreout; teacher emotions; teacher well-being

Introduction

In the field of education, the psychological well-being of teachers is a critical determinant of both their professional performance and the overall learning environment (Ibrahim et al., 2021). According to Hascher and Waber (2021), teacher well-being encompasses various dimensions, including job satisfaction, emotional stability, and a sense of professional fulfillment. These dimensions are crucial as they contribute to a teacher's ability to function effectively in their role, thereby impacting the learning environment and student outcomes. The importance of these factors cannot be overstated, as they directly influence the quality of instruction and student outcomes (Ortan et al., 2021). Despite this, teachers often face increasing demands,

administrative burdens, and high expectations, which contribute to elevated levels of stress, boreout, and burnout (Collie & Mansfield, 2022). These pressures detract significantly from their well-being, leading to detrimental effects not only on their personal health but also on their ability to teach effectively. While significant research has been devoted to understanding stress and burnout among teachers, boreout remains relatively underexplored. That is, the critical role that boreout may play in shaping teachers' psychological well-being has been largely overlooked in the existing literature. Most studies (e.g., Agyapong et al., 2023; Candeias et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2022) have concentrated on burnout and stress, often neglecting the subtler yet profound effects of boredom and a lack of professional growth. This oversight is particularly pronounced in the context of Thai EFL schoolteachers. In Thailand, cultural and systemic factors, such as rigid hierarchical structures and limited opportunities for professional development, may uniquely contribute to experiences of boreout, which is in line with Abubakar et al. (2022). Boreout is characterized by a state of boredom and a lack of meaningful engagement at work. Unlike burnout, which results from excessive demands and stress, boreout stems from insufficient challenges and a lack of stimulating tasks. This condition can severely impact an individual's mental health, leading to feelings of frustration, apathy, and a diminished sense of job satisfaction.

While much of the existing research has focused on burnout, a related but less frequently discussed phenomenon is boreout. Understanding how boreout manifests and affects teachers in this specific educational setting is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies aimed at promoting teacher well-being and effectiveness. Despite its potential implications, boreout has received relatively little attention in educational research, particularly within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. These educators often face unique challenges, including cultural differences, language barriers, and varying levels of student motivation, which can exacerbate feelings of disengagement and boredom.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between boreout and psychological well-being among Thai EFL schoolteachers, exploring the predictive power of boreout on psychological well-being, and examining the impact of boreout on various dimensions of psychological well-being. Addressing these objectives is important for several reasons. Firstly, understanding the relationship between boreout and psychological well-being can help in identifying the specific needs of EFL teachers and developing strategies to mitigate the negative effects of boreout. This is particularly relevant in the Thai educational context, where teacher retention and job satisfaction are ongoing concerns. Secondly, by exploring the predictive power of boreout on psychological well-being, this study can offer insights into how systemic changes and targeted support can enhance teacher engagement and satisfaction. Finally, examining the impact of boreout on various dimensions of psychological well-being can inform the design of professional development programs and administrative policies that foster a more stimulating and supportive work environment.

Thus, this research seeks to answer three key research questions:
1. What is the relationship between boreout and psychological well-being among Thai EFL schoolteachers?
2. To what extent can Thai EFL schoolteachers' psychological well-being be predicted by boreout?
3. How does boreout impact the psychological well-being of Thai EFL schoolteachers?

Literature Review

Psychological Well-Being

Critiques of pathology-focused perspectives, which highlight the adverse effects of negative emotions on individual performance, have led positive psychologists to promote a shift toward emphasizing strengths and positivity (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). MacIntyre et al. (2019) argued that positive psychology aims to enhance positive emotions, thereby fostering success, well-being, and improved performance. Similarly, Barry et al. (2017) described well-being as a multifaceted process that includes emotional regulation, goal-setting, empathy, interpersonal skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Moreover, Kamboj and Garg (2021) added that psychological well-being involves overall satisfaction with mental and physical health, lifespan, occupation, and general life contentment. In addition, Ryff and Keyes (1995) provided a comprehensive model of psychological well-being that includes autonomy, mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance.

Despite the growing interest in psychological well-being, its relationship with work-related variables has received limited attention. For example, Zeng et al. (2019) found a strong predictive relationship between teachers' growth mindset, well-being, resilience, and job engagement in the Chinese educational context. They argued that individuals with a positive outlook exhibit proactive behaviors that lead to increased vigor and absorption in their work. Furthermore, they identified well-being and grit as mediators between work engagement and growth mindset. Similarly, Sudibjo and Sutarji (2020) supported these findings, demonstrating that teachers' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and emotional intelligence significantly predict their work engagement. They suggested that engaged educators derive intrinsic satisfaction and enjoyment from their professional roles. Recognizing the critical role of teacher well-being in influencing teaching quality, learner achievement, and fostering positive teacher-student relationships, it is imperative to thoroughly understand the nature of teacher well-being and its related factors (King & Ng, 2018; MacIntyre et al., 2019). This study aims to contribute to the expanding discourse on teacher well-being in educational contexts, seeking to illuminate paths for future research and intervention.

Job Boreout

The concept of "boreout," introduced by Rothlin and Werder (2008), describes a detrimental psychological state marked by minimal work-related stimulation, pervasive job boredom, a crisis in perceived job significance, and limited opportunities for professional growth (Stock, 2015). This phenomenon encapsulates three main dimensions: (1) boredom, (2) a diminished sense of importance in one's work (Rothlin & Werder, 2008), and (3) a lack of developmental prospects (Bakker et al., 2010; Stock, 2015). That is, teachers who perceive their work as meaningless are less inclined to engage with organizational goals (Kass et al., 2001; Stock, 2015). Similarly, the absence of growth opportunities often leads to job disengagement.

Although burnout tends to garner more attention, boreout shares similar negative outcomes, such as exhaustion, demotivation, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, reduced productivity, diminished creativity, and work-life imbalance (LeCunff, 2020). Any teachers experiencing boreout may feel irritation, cynicism, and worthlessness due to insufficiently stimulating work, which impedes personal growth by confining them to a "comfort zone" (Savels, 2015). Boreout syndrome can severely impact teachers' psychological health, resulting in disengagement, absenteeism, high turnover rates, cyber-loafing, cyber-slacking, avoidance strategies, and deviant workplace behaviors (Andron, 2019).

Significantly, Rothlin and Werder (2008) outlined three primary components of boreout syndrome: inexperience (underutilization of one's capabilities), indifference, and boredom (loss of work enjoyment and a sense of helplessness). Likewise, Stock (2015) further emphasized three aspects: a crisis of work meaning (feeling that the work is senseless), tedious employment (inadequate stimulation), and restricted job growth (lack of learning and development opportunities). Importantly, while burnout results from excessive workload, boreout is triggered by underload, with stress in burnout stemming from the fear of being overwhelmed by work and in boreout from the aversion to workplace monotony.

Although boreout syndrome often affects office workers, teachers are also not immune to job boredom (Čopková, 2021). Despite the classification of teaching as a helping profession, boreout in teaching remains under-researched. In addition, Rogozinsky (2018) suggested that teachers' boredom can arise from repetitive tasks, especially for those teaching the same subjects and lessons over several years. This monotony, coupled with minimal changes in academic material, leads to a stable yet unstimulating work environment. Consequently, even experienced teachers face ennui, highlighting the need for more resources addressing boreout in the teaching profession.

'I'm happy with my job, but …': Thai EFL teacher's well-being and boreout

Methodology

Participants

In this study, the target participants were EFL schoolteachers in Thailand. While stratified sampling is recognized for its effectiveness in recruiting representative samples (Neyman, 1992), it was not feasible for this study due to the lack of detailed information about the characteristics of the EFL schoolteachers and accessibility. Consequently, snowball sampling was employed to recruit participants. According to the relevant literature, snowball sampling, particularly when facilitated through social media, has proven to be an efficient and effective recruitment method (Leighton et al., 2021). Compared to traditional sampling methods, snowball sampling allows for a larger sample size and quicker data collection. The researcher initially distributed the questionnaire to known EFL schoolteachers at various schools and teacher education programs across different universities. These initial contacts then shared the questionnaire with other EFL schoolteachers within their networks. Additionally, teacher educators were also asked to forward the questionnaire to further potential participants. Prior to completing the questionnaire, all participants were provided with an online informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study, tasks, and measures for protecting their personal information. Participants who did not meet the criteria or failed to complete the questionnaire were excluded from the data analysis.

Given the study's focus on the overall well-being and boreout among EFL schoolteachers in Thailand, a granular focus on regional or provincial data was not deemed essential in this study. The primary objective was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the shared experiences and challenges faced by EFL teachers across the entire country. The diverse teaching experiences, levels, and periods reported by participants provided sufficient variability to draw meaningful conclusions about the national context. Furthermore, by employing snowball sampling, the researcher facilitated a wide-reaching recruitment strategy (Leighton et al., 2020), which ensured participation from a diverse range of teachers throughout Thailand, without the need for pinpointing specific regions. Additionally, it acknowledged the practical constraints associated with accessing and characterizing the entire population of EFL schoolteachers in Thailand.

The study comprised 541 participants who were EFL schoolteachers. These participants possessed varying levels of teaching experience, categorized as less than 1 year, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and over 10 years, constituting 51 (9.43%), 198 (36.60%), 168 (31.05%), and 124 (22.92%) schoolteachers, respectively. Additionally, they represented diverse teaching levels, including primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools, with respective proportions of 230 (42.51%), 165 (30.50%), and 146 (26.99%) participants. Furthermore, participants were distributed across different teaching periods per week, encompassing 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, and over 25 periods, comprising 28 (5.18%), 43 (7.95%), 221 (40.85%), 193 (35.67%), and 56 (10.35%) schoolteachers, respectively. Notably, the majority of Thai EFL

schoolteachers reported an average of 16-20 teaching periods per week, followed by 21-25 periods per week. Participants were drawn from various schools across Thailand, with a significant number in the central region (227/41.96%). Demographics of participants are illustrated in Table 1. Prior to participation, all individuals were fully informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent. It is important to note that all responses were voluntary and based on participants' willingness to participate.

Table 1
Demographics of Participants

Types		No. (Percentage)
Years of teaching experience	less than 1 year	51 (9.43%)
	1-5 years	198 (36.60%)
	6-10 years	168 (31.05%)
	over 10 years	124 (22.92%)
Teaching levels	Primary	230 (42.51%)
	Lower secondary	165 (30.50%)
	Upper secondary	146 (26.99%)
Teaching periods	6-10 periods per week	28 (5.18%)
	11-15 periods per week	43 (7.95%)
	16-20 periods per week	221 (40.85%)
	21-25 periods per week	193 (35.67%)
	over 25 periods per week	56 (10.35%)

Research Instruments
Boreout Scale

To measure boreout, this study adopted the scale of boreout developed by Stock (2015). The scale consists of three indicators, which were crisis of meaning at work (four items), job boredom (four items), and crisis of growth at work (four items). These dimensions collectively help in understanding the extent to which EFL teachers feel disengaged and unstimulated in their roles. A four-point scale was utilized with "1 (strongly disagree)" to "4 (strongly agree)" as endpoints. In this study, the boreout scale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, evidenced by a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .920$ for the entire scale.

Index of Psychological Well-Being at Work

In this investigation, the assessment of psychological well-being at work employed a measurement scale devised by Dagenais-Desmarais and Savoie (2012). At the dimensions level, this scale comprises five distinct dimensions illuminating various facets of psychological well-being in the workplace. These five dimensions encompass *Interpersonal Fit at Work*, *Perceived Recognition at Work*, *Thriving at Work, Involvement at Work*, and *Feeling of Competency at Work*. This scale explores how well EFL teachers integrate and fit within their work environment, the recognition and appreciation they receive, their overall sense of thriving and growth, their engagement and involvement in work activities, and their feelings of competence and capability in their job roles. By assessing these aspects, the study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the factors contributing to teachers' psychological well-

being in the workplace. In this study, the Psychological Well-Being at Work (PWBW) scale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, evidenced by a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .958$ for the entire questionnaire.

Data Collection

Ethical considerations were conscientiously addressed throughout the research process, particularly in securing informed consent from participants. At the onset of participation, an online consent form was provided, which clearly outlined the study's purpose, procedures, and the rights of the participants to ensure transparency. This form also emphasized that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time without any penalty. Furthermore, it assured participants that all responses would remain confidential and would only be used for research purposes. This form had to be actively agreed upon before participants could access the questionnaire, ensuring that consent was fully informed.

The data was collected using Google Forms, a platform that allows for anonymity and security of the information provided, due to its increased accessibility, rapid data collection, and cost-effectiveness. To ensure data integrity, responses were automatically recorded and timestamped by the system, minimizing human error and data manipulation. Regular data validation checks were performed to verify that the data collected adhered to the expected formats and to identify any outliers or inconsistencies. Methods for handling missing data included using statistical imputation techniques where appropriate, which helped maintain the robustness of the dataset.

Data collected were stored securely on encrypted servers with access restricted to the research team only. During the analysis phase, all data were anonymized, with any potentially identifying information removed or altered before analysis to prevent any breach of confidentiality. This rigorous process ensured that the integrity and confidentiality of the data were maintained throughout the study, from collection through to storage and analysis.

Data Analyses

The collected data was initially scored and organized using Microsoft Excel. Subsequently, statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS to address the research questions. To address the first research question, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was employed. This statistical test measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables, specifically boreout and well-being, allowed the extent to which boreout is associated with psychological well-being among Thai EFL schoolteachers to be determined. For the second research question, multiple regression analysis was utilized. This method enables the prediction of psychological well-being (dependent variable) based on the levels of boreout (independent variable). Multiple regression provides coefficients that indicate the strength and direction of the prediction, thereby quantifying the extent to which

'I'm happy with my job, but …': Thai EFL teacher's well-being and boreout

boreout influences psychological well-being. Similarly, the third research question was examined through multiple regression analysis. This approach was chosen to understand the impact of boreout on various aspects of psychological well-being. Multiple regression analysis is particularly suitable for exploring the direct relationships between boreout and different dimensions of well-being. Lastly, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of three or more independent groups to determine if there were statistically significant differences among them. This test ensures that the observed differences in means are not due to random chance and is especially useful in educational research for comparing different levels and categories of teaching loads to understand their impact on outcomes such as boreout and psychological well-being. Using these statistical methods provided a comprehensive analysis of the relationships and impacts of boreout and psychological well-being, contributing valuable insights into the experiences of Thai EFL schoolteachers.

Ethical Considerations

While a formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was inadvertently missed, it is important to emphasize that all research procedures strictly adhered to established ethical principles in social science research. This aligns with guidelines that exempt survey projects from requiring formal approval by the institutional human research ethics committee (Document No. MHESI: 6309.FB 6.1/1/2564). Additionally, the Head of Research at the institution was fully informed about the study.

Findings

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics in terms of Teaching Levels

Factors	Teaching Levels	Mean	Std. Deviation
Boreout 1: Boredom at work	Primary	2.215	.893
	Lower secondary	2.275	.723
	Upper secondary	2.178	.759
Boreout 2: Crisis of meaning at work	Primary	1.782	.997
	Lower secondary	1.987	.769
	Upper secondary	1.751	.884
Boreout 3: Crisis of growth at work	Primary	1.751	.769
	Lower secondary	2.024	.661
	Upper secondary	1.902	.816
Overall Boreout	Primary	1.916	.794
	Lower secondary	2.096	.573
	Upper secondary	1.944	.692
Well-being 1: Interpersonal fit at work	Primary	3.119	.634
	Lower secondary	3.122	.626
	Upper secondary	3.237	.702
Well-being 2: Perceived recognition at work	Primary	2.988	.705
	Lower secondary	2.877	.573

	Upper secondary	3.058	.721
Well-being 3: Thriving at work	Primary	2.858	.806
	Lower secondary	2.923	.682
	Upper secondary	3.084	.848
Well-being 4: Involvement at work	Primary	2.875	.769
	Lower secondary	3.027	.585
	Upper secondary	2.746	.878
Well-being 5: Feeling of competency at work	Primary	3.132	.665
	Lower secondary	3.169	.592
	Upper secondary	3.164	.724
Overall Well-Being	Primary	2.994	.605
	Lower secondary	3.024	.475
	Upper secondary	3.058	.684

Table 2 offers valuable insights into the experiences of schoolteachers across different teaching levels, encompassing both Boreout and Well-being factors. Beginning with Boreout factors, it is notable that *boredom at work* appears to vary marginally across teaching levels, with lower secondary teachers reporting the highest mean score (*M*=2.275), followed closely by primary and upper secondary teachers. Conversely, when examining the *crisis of meaning at work*, primary teachers stand out with the highest mean score (*M*=1.782), indicating a significant struggle compared to their lower and upper secondary counterparts. Interestingly, in the *crisis of growth at work*, lower secondary teachers exhibit the highest mean score, suggesting they may face more challenges related to professional growth compared to primary and upper secondary teachers.

Transitioning to well-being factors, *interpersonal fit at work* appears relatively consistent across teaching levels, with primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary teachers reporting similar mean scores. However, *perceived recognition at work* reveals a striking trend, with primary teachers reporting the highest mean score (*M*=2.988), significantly lower than their lower and upper secondary counterparts. *Thriving at work* follows a similar pattern, with primary teachers reporting the lowest mean score compared to lower and upper secondary teachers. *Involvement at work* showcases a noteworthy difference, with lower secondary teachers reporting the highest mean score, indicating a strong sense of engagement compared to primary and upper secondary teachers. *Feeling of competency at work* demonstrates minimal variation across teaching levels, with all three groups of teachers reporting similar mean scores.

Overall well-being provides a comprehensive view, where primary teachers reported a slightly lower mean score compared to lower and upper secondary teachers, suggesting they may perceive their overall well-being slightly less positively than their secondary counterparts. These findings highlight the nuanced experiences of schoolteachers across different teaching levels, highlighting areas of strength and areas requiring attention. Understanding these variations can inform targeted interventions aimed at improving teacher well-being and effectiveness across educational settings.

To determine whether or not there is any significant difference among EFL schoolteachers' levels of teaching, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied. The ANOVA results reveal that there is a significant difference among teaching levels of EFL schoolteachers in only one factor related to boreout, namely *crisis of growth at work* ($F=6.479$, $p=.002$). In addition, there is a significant difference among teaching levels of EFL schoolteachers in only one factor related to psychological well-being, namely involvement at work ($F=5.487$, $p=.004$).

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics in terms of Numbers of Teaching Periods

Factors	Teaching Periods	Mean	Std. Deviation
Boreout 1: Boredom at work	6-10 periods per week	1.500	.509
	11-15 periods per week	1.970	.738
	16-20 periods per week	2.325	.788
	21-25 periods per week	2.260	.807
	More than 25 periods per week	2.250	.863
Boreout 2: Crisis of meaning at work	6-10 periods per week	1.285	.712
	11-15 periods per week	1.598	.617
	16-20 periods per week	1.831	.910
	21-25 periods per week	1.918	.905
	More than 25 periods per week	2.035	1.043
Boreout 3: Crisis of growth at work	6-10 periods per week	1.571	.619
	11-15 periods per week	1.668	.654
	16-20 periods per week	1.804	.688
	21-25 periods per week	2.025	.801
	More than 25 periods per week	1.946	.905
Overall Boreout	6-10 periods per week	1.452	.468
	11-15 periods per week	1.746	.583
	16-20 periods per week	1.987	.671
	21-25 periods per week	2.068	.726
	More than 25 periods per week	2.077	.835
Well-being 1: Interpersonal fit at work	6-10 periods per week	2.971	.976
	11-15 periods per week	3.297	.579
	16-20 periods per week	3.214	.627
	21-25 periods per week	3.101	.604
	More than 25 periods per week	3.057	.725
Well-being 2: Perceived recognition at work	6-10 periods per week	2.971	.970
	11-15 periods per week	2.944	.751
	16-20 periods per week	3.083	.620
	21-25 periods per week	2.897	.627
	More than 25 periods per	2.828	.754

	week		
Well-being 3: Thriving at work	6-10 periods per week	2.971	1.123
	11-15 periods per week	2.888	.713
	16-20 periods per week	2.933	.781
	21-25 periods per week	2.980	.741
	More than 25 periods per week	2.842	.832
Well-being 4: Involvement at work	6-10 periods per week	2.857	1.059
	11-15 periods per week	2.753	.741
	16-20 periods per week	2.915	.701
	21-25 periods per week	2.914	.712
	More than 25 periods per week	2.800	.940
Well-being 5: Feeling of competency at work	6-10 periods per week	3.171	.988
	11-15 periods per week	3.102	.419
	16-20 periods per week	3.219	.634
	21-25 periods per week	3.124	.657
	More than 25 periods per week	3.014	.705
Overall Well-Being	6-10 periods per week	2.988	.999
	11-15 periods per week	2.997	.483
	16-20 periods per week	3.073	.566
	21-25 periods per week	3.003	.548
	More than 25 periods per week	2.908	.636

Table 3 reveals a relationship between the number of teaching periods per week and schoolteachers' experiences of boredom, crisis of meaning at work, and crisis of growth at work, as well as their overall well-being. *Boredom* and *a crisis of meaning at work* tend to increase with more teaching periods, particularly among those with 16-20 and over 25 periods per week. However, *the crisis of growth at work* shows less consistency across teaching periods.

In terms of well-being, *interpersonal fit at work* improves with more teaching periods, peaking at 11-15 periods. *Perceived recognition at work* also increases, particularly among teachers with 16-20 periods. *Thriving at work* is highest among those with 6-10 periods per week. Interestingly, *involvement at work* peaks among teachers with fewer periods, indicating strong engagement despite fewer teaching hours. *Feeling of competency at work* remains high across all teaching period categories. Overall well-being tends to be slightly more positive among teachers with 16-20 periods per week. These insights highlight the complex interplay between teaching workload and teacher well-being, guiding targeted interventions to support educators effectively.

To explore further whether or not there is any significant difference among EFL schoolteachers' number of teaching periods, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied. The ANOVA results revealed that there are significant

differences among teaching levels of EFL schoolteachers in the following factors related to boreout, namely *boredom* ($F=8.052$, *p*=.000), *crisis of meaning at work* ($F=4.507$, *p*=.001), *crisis of growth at work* ($F=4.542$, *p*=.001), and *overall boreout* ($F=6.308$, *p*=.000). However, there are no significant differences among EFL schoolteachers' number of teaching periods in the factors related to psychological well-being.

Table 4
Pearson's Correlation between Boreout and Psychological Well-being (N=541)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1.00							
2	.780**	1.00						
3	.478**	.536**	1.00					
4	-.143**	-.270**	-.332**	1.00				
5	-.484**	-.484**	-.588**	.466**	1.00			
6	-.426**	-.483**	-.489**	.531**	.757**	1.00		
7	-.295**	-.348**	-.492**	.595**	.665**	.758**	1.00	
8	-.309**	-.258**	-.481**	.414**	.687**	.668**	.709**	1.00

Note. Boreout: 1. Boredom, 2. Crisis of meaning, 3. Crisis of growth; Well-being: 4. Interpersonal Fit, 5. Perceived Recognition, 6. Thriving at Work, 7. Involvement, 8. Feeling of Competency
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 presents Pearson's correlation coefficients between three dimensions of boreout (*Boredom*, *Crisis of Meaning at Work*, and *Crisis of Growth at Work*) and five aspects of psychological well-being (*Interpersonal Fit*, *Perceived Recognition at Work*, *Thriving at Work*, *Involvement at Work*, and *Feeling of Competency at Work*) for a sample of 541 participants. The correlations were evaluated at the 0.01 significance level (2-tailed). Using a 0.01 level (2-tailed) thus set a stricter criterion for determining significance compared to more commonly used levels (e.g., 0.05). This reduces the likelihood of type I errors, where one might incorrectly reject the null hypothesis. The analysis reported a significant and moderately strong inverse correlation ($r=$ -.546, *p*<.01) between boreout and psychological well-being. Moreover, the analysis revealed significant negative correlations between all three dimensions of boreout and the various aspects of psychological well-being, indicating that higher levels of boreout are associated with lower levels of well-being. Notably, *Perceived Recognition at Work* and *Thriving at Work* show strong negative correlations with all three dimensions of boreout, particularly with *Crisis of Growth at Work*, highlighting these areas as being most adversely affected. Moreover, *Interpersonal Fit* and *Feeling of Competency at Work* have relatively weaker but still significant negative correlations, suggesting these well-being aspects are somewhat less sensitive to boreout but still notably impacted. Overall, the findings suggest that

boreout significantly undermines various aspects of psychological well-being among teachers. These insights highlight the importance of addressing boreout to enhance teachers' overall well-being.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients of Boreout and Psychological Well-Being (N=541)

Model		β	Std. Error	*t*	*p*	Lower	Upper
		Unstandardized Coefficients				95% Confidence Interval	
1	(Constant)	3.923	.063	61.952	.000	3.798	4.047
	Boreout	-.456	.030	-15.124	.000	-.515	-.396

Table 5 presents the regression coefficients for the relationship between boreout and psychological well-being, and the model examines the impact of boreout on psychological well-being, with the following results. The analysis revealed significant values. With an R^2 value of .298, it is evident that boreout contributed to 29.8% of the variability in psychological well-being among EFL schoolteachers (F=228.738, p<.01). The constant (3.923) represents the predicted value of psychological well-being when boreout is naught. This indicates that, on average, the baseline level of psychological well-being is quite high when boreout is absent. Moreover, the negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship between boreout and psychological well-being (β=-.46, p<.01). As boreout increases, psychological well-being significantly decreases. In short, the regression analysis demonstrates a significant negative impact of boreout on psychological well-being among EFL schoolteachers. Higher levels of boreout are strongly associated with lower levels of psychological well-being, as evidenced by the significant negative coefficient and the tight confidence interval. These findings underscore the importance of addressing boreout to enhance the overall well-being of teachers.

Discussion

The findings from this study provided a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between boreout and psychological well-being among Thai EFL schoolteachers, addressing the four research questions with critical insights.

To address research question 1, the findings clearly demonstrate a significant and detrimental relationship between boreout and psychological well-being among Thai EFL schoolteachers, indicating that as boreout increases—characterized by job boredom, a crisis of meaning, and growth at work—teachers' psychological well-being significantly declines. This relationship is particularly pronounced in areas such as *Perceived Recognition at Work* and *Thriving at Work*, which exhibit strong negative correlations with all boreout dimensions, suggesting that these elements of well-being are especially vulnerable to the impacts of boreout. Concerning the relationship between boreout and psychological well-being, the analysis revealed a significant inverse relationship between boreout and psychological well-being, with a

moderately strong negative correlation ($r=-.546$, $p<.01$). This finding suggests that as boreout increases, the well-being of teachers markedly decreases (Shen, 2022). Notably, perceived recognition at work and thriving at work are most adversely affected by boreout, particularly the crisis of growth at work. This indicates that when teachers experience stagnation and lack of professional growth, their sense of recognition and vitality diminishes substantially (Qambar & Waheed, 2021). These results highlight a critical area of concern for educational administrators: the need to foster an environment that promotes constant professional development and acknowledges teachers' contributions, as suggested by Nkundabakura et al. (2024). The implications of this relationship are profound. When teachers are bored and feel their work lacks meaning or opportunities for growth, it not only impacts their psychological well-being but also their ability to deliver high-quality education. This finding is consistent with previous works (e.g., Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Bagdžiūnienė et al., 2023). This scenario highlights the importance of addressing boreout proactively. Schools must prioritize creating an engaging work environment that provides opportunities for professional growth and development (Kilag et al., 2023). Such initiatives could include targeted professional development programs, mentoring, and opportunities for career advancement.

To address research question 2, regarding the predictive power of boreout on psychological well-being, the regression analysis further highlights the significant impact of boreout on psychological well-being, with boreout accounting for 29.8% of the variance in well-being ($R^2=.298$, $p<.01$). This substantial proportion indicates that boreout is a strong predictor of teachers' psychological well-being, which corroborate Mehmood et al.'s (2024) work on the mediating role of psychological well-being. The negative coefficient ($\beta=-.46$, $p<.01$) elucidates that higher levels of boreout lead to a significant decrease in well-being. This finding is particularly alarming as it suggests that addressing boreout could potentially lead to considerable improvements in teachers' mental health and job satisfaction (Abubakar et al., 2022; Bernardi-Jowett, 2023; Relacion, 2023). The negative regression coefficient highlights a clear inverse relationship, where an increase in boreout leads to a notable decrease in psychological well-being. The predictive power of boreout on well-being highlights the urgent need for systemic interventions. Educational policymakers and school administrators should examine the root causes of boreout, which may include monotonous job roles (Abubakar et al., 2022), lack of recognition (Rothlin & Werder, 2008), and insufficient opportunities for professional growth (Stock, 2015). Given these insights, it is evident that addressing boreout could play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being of teachers, with potential benefits extending to their professional efficacy and retention. Educational administrators should consider implementing targeted strategies to mitigate the factors contributing to boreout, such as enriching job tasks, fostering a supportive work environment, and offering professional development opportunities. Thus, addressing these issues requires comprehensive changes to the educational system, including revising workload policies (McCormack & Cotter, 2013), improving teacher support systems (Tikkanen et al., 2021), and enhancing job roles to include more variety and opportunities for meaningful contributions (Capone & Petrillo, 2020).

To address research question 3, in terms of the impact of boreout on psychological well-being, the impact of boreout on various aspects of psychological well-being is profound. Teachers experiencing high levels of boreout report significantly lower levels of interpersonal fit, perceived recognition, thriving, involvement, and feeling of competency. This comprehensive detriment to well-being components highlights the multifaceted nature of boreout impact (Andron, 2019; LeCunff, 2020). Interestingly, while involvement at work was highest among teachers with fewer periods, it decreases significantly with increased teaching periods, suggesting that excessive workloads might reduce teachers' engagement and sense of purpose (Heffernan et al., 2022; Timms et al., 2007). This observation prompts a reevaluation of workload distribution and support mechanisms within schools. Finally, concerning the differences between teaching periods and teaching levels, the significant differences in boreout and well-being across teaching levels and periods suggest that contextual factors play a crucial role in shaping these experiences (Abubakar et al., 2022). Lower secondary teachers report the highest levels of crisis of growth, indicating a potential bottleneck in professional advancement opportunities at this level. The possible explanation is that lower secondary teachers are typically responsible for students in a critical developmental phase, dealing with the transition from childhood to adolescence (Hanewald, 2013). This period is often marked by increased behavioral and emotional challenges, which can be demanding and stressful for teachers, contributing to feelings of crisis and boreout. Moreover, the finding that well-being peaks at moderate teaching periods (16-20 periods) but decreases with excessive workloads (over 25 periods) challenges the current workload policies and calls for a balanced approach to teaching assignments.

Interestingly, these findings provoke several critical reflections. First, the education system needs to prioritize professional development and create clear pathways for career progression to mitigate the crisis of growth. This can be achieved by introducing structured career advancement programs, regular training sessions, and mentorship opportunities. Second, recognizing and rewarding teachers' efforts more systematically could enhance their perceived recognition and overall well-being. This could involve developing comprehensive reward systems that acknowledge teachers' achievements and contributions. Lastly, reducing excessive teaching periods and providing adequate support could maintain high levels of engagement and thriving among teachers. This requires a reevaluation of current workload policies to ensure that teachers have a balanced workload that allows for effective teaching and personal well-being.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings from this study offer critical and practical pedagogical implications that can enhance the well-being of Thai EFL schoolteachers. Addressing the significant issues of boreout and psychological well-being requires a multifaceted approach involving professional development, workload management, recognition, and creating a supportive work environment. Firstly, there is a pressing need for robust professional development and growth opportunities. The negative correlation

between boreout and well-being, particularly the crisis of growth, underscores the importance of continual professional development. Educational institutions should provide structured career progression pathways, regular training, mentorship, and professional learning communities. These measures can help teachers feel engaged and purposeful, reducing the risk of stagnation and disengagement.

Secondly, workload management is another critical area that requires attention. The study demonstrates that boreout levels increase with the number of teaching periods. Teachers with heavy workloads, especially those teaching over 25 periods per week, report higher boreout levels, which negatively impacts their well-being. Schools should implement policies to cap teaching periods at manageable levels, ensuring teachers have adequate time for preparation, reflection, and personal development. This balance is essential for sustaining teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction. Moreover, recognition and reward systems play a vital role in addressing boreout and well-being. The strong negative correlation between boreout and perceived recognition at work suggests that teachers need to feel valued and acknowledged. Schools should develop comprehensive recognition and reward systems, celebrating achievements and providing positive feedback. Tangible rewards, such as awards, professional acknowledgments, and career advancement opportunities, can significantly boost teacher morale.

Regarding practical pedagogical implications, balanced teaching schedules are a practical necessity. Schools should ensure teaching schedules are balanced to prevent overload. Implementing policies that limit the maximum number of teaching periods per week can help maintain high engagement levels and reduce boreout. Furthermore, enhancing teacher autonomy can also improve job satisfaction and mitigate boreout. Allowing teachers more control over curriculum development, classroom management, and professional development choices can empower them and increase their sense of involvement. Additionally, creating a culture of continual feedback is essential. Regular performance appraisals, peer reviews, and student feedback can provide teachers with valuable insights into their performance and areas for improvement, fostering a growth-oriented mindset. Significantly, promoting work-life balance is another practical measure. Schools should encourage teachers to take breaks, engage in recreational activities, and pursue personal interests outside of work. Offering flexible working hours, wellness programs, and mental health resources can support teachers' overall well-being. Finally, fostering professional learning communities within schools can provide ongoing support, collaborative learning opportunities, and shared experiences. These communities offer a platform for teachers to discuss challenges, share best practices, and collectively find solutions to common issues, enhancing their professional growth and well-being. By addressing these critical and practical implications, educational institutions can significantly improve the well-being of Thai EFL schoolteachers, fostering a more supportive, engaging, and effective teaching environment.

Ultimately, it is essential to also consider the mental and emotional health of Thai EFL schoolteachers, especially in preventing boreout and burnout. To support

teachers' overall well-being, educational institutions should prioritize the implementation of wellness programs and mental health resources. For example, schools should offer structured wellness programs that include activities aimed at reducing stress and enhancing physical health, such as yoga, meditation sessions, and fitness classes. These programs can help teachers manage stress, maintain physical health, and improve their overall energy levels, which are essential for coping with the demands of teaching. In addition, it is vital to provide access to mental health resources, such as counseling services, workshops on emotional resilience, and stress management techniques. These resources can equip teachers with the tools they need to handle psychological stressors effectively. Regular mental health days off could also be incorporated, allowing teachers time to recuperate from work-related stress. Significantly, integrating mental health topics into regular professional development programs can normalize discussions around mental health and well-being. This integration ensures that mental health is not seen as a taboo subject but as a crucial component of professional efficacy and personal well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study illuminates the detrimental effects of boreout on the psychological well-being of Thai EFL schoolteachers. The significant inverse relationship between boreout and well-being, coupled with the substantial predictive power of boreout, highlights the urgent need for systemic changes in the educational environment. Addressing boreout through professional development, recognition, and balanced workloads can enhance teacher well-being, ultimately leading to more effective teaching and better educational outcomes. These findings should prompt educational policymakers and administrators to critically assess and reform current practices to support the mental health and professional fulfillment of teachers.

There are some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, this study employed a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. This approach restricts the ability to infer causal relationships between boreout and psychological well-being. Longitudinal studies would be more effective in establishing causality and understanding the dynamics of these variables over time. Moreover, this study did not extensively account for contextual factors that could influence boreout and well-being, such as school environment, administrative support, socio-economic conditions, and cultural factors. These variables could play a significant role in shaping teachers' experiences and should be considered in future research. Future research should adopt qualitative studies which could provide deeper insights into teachers' personal experiences and the nuances of their professional environments. In addition, investigating the effectiveness of various interventions designed to reduce boreout and improve well-being could also provide valuable guidance for educational policymakers and administrators. Moreover, understanding these dimensions in greater depth will enable the development of more targeted and effective strategies to support teachers' professional and personal well-being.

Author

Pariwat Imsa-ard, PhD, is an assistant professor of English language teaching in the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Thailand. After receiving educational degrees from Thailand and the UK, he spent time training both novice and experienced teachers through professional development workshops in Thailand. His research interests include key aspects in ELT such as language testing and assessment, ELT methodologies, EFL teacher education, L2 emotions, and reflective practice. These areas of interest reveal his curiosity toward the multifaceted aspects of language instruction, from the technical to the pedagogical and reflective aspects. He can be reached at pariwat@tu.ac.th.

References

Abubakar, A. M., Rezapouraghdam, H., Behravesh, E., & Megeirhi, H. A. (2022). Burnout or boreout: A meta-analytic review and synthesis of burnout and boreout literature in hospitality and tourism. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *31*(4), 458-503. http://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2022.1996304

Agyapong, B., Brett-MacLean, P., Burback, L., Agyapong, V. I. O., & Wei, Y. (2023). Interventions to reduce stress and burnout among teachers: A scoping review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *20*(9), 5625. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20095625

Alam, A., & Mohanty, A. (2023). Cultural beliefs and equity in educational institutions: exploring the social and philosophical notions of ability groupings in teaching and learning of mathematics. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *28*(1), 2270662. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2023.2270662

Andron, E. (2019, April 4). *'Boreout' syndrome at work: The causes, consequences and cures*. Welcome to the Jungle. https://www.welcome tothejungle.com/en/articles/en-boreout-syndrome-the-causes-consequences-and-cures

Bagdžiūnienė, D., Kazlauskienė, A., Nasvytienė, D., & Sakadolskis, E. (2023). Resources of emotional resilience and its mediating role in teachers' well-being and intention to leave. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1305979. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1305979

Bakker, A. B., van Veldhoven, M., & Xanthopoulou, D. (2010). Beyond the demand-control model. Thriving on high job demands and resources. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, *9*(1), 3-16. https://doi.org/10.1027/1866-5888/a000006

Barry, M. M., Clarke, A. M., & Dowling, K. (2017). Promoting social and emotional well-being in schools. *Health Education*, *117*(5), 434-451. http://doi.org/10.1108/HE-11-2016-0057

Bernardi-Jowett, A. K. (2023). *Educator experience and perspective on factors leading to teacher burnout during the covid-19 pandemic in Michigan* [Doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University]. Wayne State University ProQuest Dissertation & Theses.

Candeias, A., Galindo, E., Calisto, I., Borralho, L., & Reschke, K. (2021). Stress and burnout in teaching. Study in an inclusive school workplace. *Health Psychology Report*, *9*(1), 63-75. http://doi.org/10.5114/hpr.2020.100786

Capone, V., & Petrillo, G. (2020). Mental health in teachers: Relationships with job satisfaction, efficacy beliefs, burnout and depression. *Current Psychology*, *39*(5), 1757-1766. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9878-7

Collie, R. J., & Mansfield, C. F. (2022). Teacher and school stress profiles: A multilevel examination and associations with work-related outcomes. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *116*, 103759. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103759

Copková, R. (2021). Burnout syndrome and dark triad at schools: Engineers as teachers of vocational technical subjects. *Journal on Efficiency and Responsibility in Education and Science*, *14*(3), 195-203. https://doi.org/10.7160/eriesj.2021.140306

Dagenais-Desmarais, V., & Savoie, A. (2012). What is psychological well-being, really? A grassroots approach from the organizational sciences. *Journal of Happiness Studies: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-Being*, *13*(4), 659-684. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-011-9285-3

Hanewald, R. (2013). Transition between primary and secondary school: Why it is important and how it can be supported. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, *38*(1), 62-74. https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n1.7

Hascher, T., & Waber, J. (2021). Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000–2019. *Educational Research Review*, *34*, 100411. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100411

Heffernan, A., Bright, D., Kim, M., Longmuir, F., & Magyar, B. (2022). 'I cannot sustain the workload and the emotional toll': Reasons behind Australian teachers' intentions to leave the profession. *Australian Journal of Education*, *66*(2), 196-209. https://doi.org/10.1177/00049441221086654

Ibrahim, R. Z. A. R., Zalam, W. Z. M., Foster, B., Afrizal, T., Johansyah, M. D., Saputra, J., ... & Ali, S. N. M. (2021). Psychosocial work environment and teachers' psychological well-being: The moderating role of job control and social support. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(14), 7308.

Kamboj, K. P., & Garg, P. (2021). Teachers' psychological well-being role of emotional intelligence and resilient character traits in determining the psychological well-being of Indian school teachers. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *35*(4), 768-788. http://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-08-2019-0278

Kass, S. J., Vadanovich, S. J., & Callender, A. 2001. State-trait boredom: Relationship to absenteism, tenure, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Business Psychology*, *16*(2), 317-327. https:// doi.org/10.1023/A:1011121503118

Kilag, O. K. T., Heyrosa-Malbas, M., Ibañez, D. D., Samson, G. A., & Sasan, J. M. (2023). Building leadership skills in educational leadership: A case study of successful school principals. *International Journal of Scientific Multidisciplinary Research*, *1*(8), 913-926. https://doi.org/10.55927/ijsmr.v1i8.3571

King, J., & Ng, K.Y.S. (2018). Teacher emotions and the emotional labour of second language teaching. In S. Mercer & A. Kostulas (Eds.), *Language Teacher Psychology* (pp. 141-157). Multilingual Matters.

LeCunff, A. (2020). *Is it burnout vs boreout?*. Ness Labs. https://nesslabs.com/burnout-vs-boreout

Leighton, K., Kardong-Edgren, S., Schneidereith, T., & Foisy-Doll, C. (2021). Using social media and snowball sampling as an alternative recruitment strategy for research. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, *55*, 37-42. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecns.2021.03.006

MacIntyre, P. D., Ross, J., & Clément, R. (2019). Emotions are motivating. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 183-202). Springer.

McCormack, N., & Cotter, C. (2013). *Managing burnout in the workplace: A guide for information professionals*. Chandos Publishing.

Mehmood, S., Bano, A., Khan, M. A., & Erdey, L. (2024). Effect of workplace bullying and incivility on employee performance: Mediating role of psychological well being. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*, *8*(5), 3390. http://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i5.3390

Neyman, J. (1992). On the two different aspects of the representative method: The method of stratified sampling and the method of purposive selection. In S. Kotz & N. L. Johnson (eds.), *Breakthroughs in statistics: Methodology and distribution* (pp. 123-150). Springer New York.

Ortan, F., Simut, C., & Simut, R. (2021). Self-efficacy, job satisfaction and teacher well-being in the K-12 educational system. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(23), 12763. https://doi.org/10.3390%2Fijerph182312763

Qambar, G., & Waheed, S. A. (2021). Climbing the career ladder: Understanding lived experiences of university faculty with delayed progression. *Ilkogretim Online*, *20*(2), 1139–1152. https://ilkogretim-online.org/index.php/pub/article/view/2536

Relacion, P. J. (2023). Burnout and attitude towards physical activity of public junior high school teachers: Basis for an intervention plan. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *16*(1), 91-122. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10441673

Rogozinsky, D. (2018). *Teachers: What to do if you're the one who's bored in class*. https://study.com/blog/teachers-what-to-do-if-you-re-the-one-who-s-bored-in-class.html

Rothlin, P., & Werder, P. (2008). *Boreout! Overcoming workplace demotivation*. Kogan Page Limited.

Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*(4), 719-727. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.4.719

Savels, S. (2015, February 18). *Burn-out or bore-out? Lookalikes but very different*. LinkedIn. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/exhausted-your-job-might-burn-out-something-different-steve-savels

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 5–14. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.*5*

Shen, G. (2022). Anxiety, boredom, and burnout among EFL teachers: The mediating role of emotion regulation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 842920. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.842920

Stock, R. M. (2015). Is boreout a threat to frontline employees' innovative work behavior?. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 32*(4), 574-592. https://doi.org/10.1111/jpim.12239

Sudibjo, N., & Sutarji, T. (2020). The roles of job satisfaction, well-being, and emotional intelligence in enhancing the teachers' employee engagements. *Management Science Letters*, *10*(11), 2477-2482. http://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2020.4.002

Tikkanen, L., Pyhältö, K., Soini, T., & Pietarinen, J. (2021). Crossover of burnout in the classroom–Is teacher exhaustion transmitted to students?. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, *9*(4), 326-339. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2021.1942343

Timms, C., Graham, D., & Cottrell, D. (2007). "I just want to teach" Queensland independent school teachers and their workload. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *45*(5), 569-586. http://doi.org/10.1108/09578230710778204

Zeng, G., Chen, X., Cheung, H. Y., & Peng, K. (2019). Teachers' growth mindset and work engagement in the Chinese educational context: Well-being and perseverance of effort as mediators. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, 442256. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00839

Zhao, W., Liao, X., Li, Q., Jiang, W., & Ding, W. (2022). The relationship between teacher job stress and burnout: a moderated mediation model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 784243. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.784243

Appendix: Instruments

***Job Boreout Scale* (adapted by Stock, 2015)**
Crisis of meaning at work:
- My work seems meaningless.
- I don't see any sense in my work.
- I suffer from the fact that I do not see any point in my work.
- When I think about the meaning of my work, I find only emptiness.

Job boredom: In my job . . . . . .
- I feel bored.
- I am not fascinated.
- I am frustrated.
- I am not able to concentrate.

Crisis of growth:
- My job offers me opportunities for personal growth and development (reversed).
- My work gives me the feeling that I can achieve something (reversed).
- My work offers me the possibility of independent thought and action (reversed).
- I learn new things in my work (reversed).

***Index of Psychological Well-Being at Work* (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2012)**
1. I value the people I work with.
2. I enjoy working with the people at my job.
3. I get along well with the people at my job.
4. I have a relationship of trust with the people at my job.
5. I feel that I am accepted as I am by the people I work with.
6. I find my job exciting.
7. I like my job.
8. I am proud of the job I have.
9. I find meaning in my work.
10. I have a great sense of fulfillment at work.
11. I know I am capable of doing my job.
12. I feel confident at work.
13. I feel effective and competent in my work.
14. I feel that I know what to do in my job.
15. I know my value as a worker.
16. I feel that my work efforts are appreciated.
17. I feel that my work is recognized.
18. I know that people believe in the projects I work on.
19. I feel that the people I work with recognize my abilities.
20. I feel that I am a full member of my organization.
21. I want to take initiative in my work.
22. I care about the good functioning of my organization.
23. I like to take on challenges in my work.

24. I want to contribute to achieving the goals of my organization.
25. I want to be involved in my organization beyond my work duties.

<u>Notes</u>
1. Interpersonal fit at work (items 1–5)
2. Thriving at work (items 6–10)
3. Feeling of competency at work (items 11–15)
4. Perceived recognition at work (items 16–20)
5. Desire for involvement at work (items 21–25)

Overcoming Barriers:
Enhancing English Adverbial Mastery among EFL Learners

Tuyet Thi Tran*
Mahasarakham University, Thailand/
Hanoi University of Business and Technology, Vietnam
Apisak Sukying
Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Abstract

Mastering adverbials is essential for English language proficiency, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners facing unique linguistic and cultural challenges. This study, employing a mixed-methods approach, involved a survey of 200 participants and 20 semi-structured interviews to explore these challenges. Findings indicate significant difficulties with adverbial placement, interpretation, and usage, contributing to errors in English communication. The research suggests enhancing adverbial instruction in the English curriculum through integrated technology, authentic materials, and extensive practice. These strategies aim to improve the understanding and application of adverbials, emphasizing the need for culturally responsive teaching methods tailored to EFL learners' specific contexts, thereby enhancing overall English education effectiveness.

Keywords: Adverbial Mastery; EFL Learners; Teaching Methodologies; Technology Integration; Mixed-Methods Research Approach

Introduction

Mastering adverbials in English, a skill crucial for nuanced communication, poses a significant challenge in English language education, particularly for EFL learners, including Vietnamese students. This study delves into this complex facet of language learning, focusing on the specific difficulties encountered by Vietnamese learners, as highlighted by scholars such as Le (2018), Le and Barnard (2019), Pham (2023), and To (2014). The pronounced linguistic and cultural disparities between Vietnamese and English exacerbate these challenges. In English, adverbial clauses frequently provide additional detail and context to actions (Lewis, 2020). In Vietnamese, such clauses are less prevalent, and context is often implied rather than explicitly stated (To, 2014). Le (2018) also points out that Vietnamese learners usually need help with this explicit detailing in English, resulting in incomplete or awkward sentences in their speech and writing. This challenge requires understanding and support. Moreover, English and Vietnamese differ significantly in adverbs' placement within sentences. In English, adverbs of frequency typically precede the main verb, whereas the equivalent adverbial expression in Vietnamese follows the verb (To,

*Corresponding Author

2014). This syntactic difference can cause confusion and errors for Vietnamese learners when structuring sentences in English. Le and Barnard (2019) highlight that this misplacement is a common issue observed in Vietnamese students' writing and speaking tasks.

Cultural factors also influence how adverbs are used in communication. Pham (2023) discusses how Vietnamese learners may underutilize adverbials, conveying subtle nuances for a preference for more straightforward expressions influenced by Vietnamese cultural norms. This cultural context can result in Vietnamese learners avoiding certain adverbs or misusing them in English, affecting their communication's naturalness. These examples illustrate the linguistic and cultural disparities that challenge Vietnamese learners to master English adverbials. By understanding these differences, educators can develop more targeted teaching strategies to help learners overcome these obstacles and improve their proficiency in using English adverbials effectively.

Adverbials are inherently complex and critical for articulating detailed information about actions or states, as emphasized by Huddleston and Pullum (2002). Their meanings present significant challenges for Vietnamese learners, whose native language structure differs markedly from English. Previous research by Nguyen et al. (2023), To (2014), and Tran et al. (2024) has explored the cross-linguistic challenges faced by Vietnamese learners. However, this study differs by employing a mixed-methods approach to understand adverbial instruction among EFL learners, evaluate its effectiveness, and pinpoint improvement areas. This methodology allows for a more detailed analysis and practical recommendations tailored to EFL contexts such as Vietnam. The study also examines the cultural and linguistic backgrounds influencing adverbial acquisition, drawing on research concerning cross-linguistic influence and the challenges brought by cultural differences in language learning, as observed in the works of Nguyen et al. (2023), To (2014), and Tran et al. (2024). Furthermore, it assesses the current educational materials' adequacy and teacher training programs in Vietnam, scrutinizing their effectiveness in addressing adverbial comprehension nuances. The exploration of incorporating technology and authentic materials into teaching strategies, as suggested by Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) and Nation (2009), is also included.

Central to this study are two research questions (RQs):

RQ1. What are the primary linguistic and cultural challenges Vietnamese learners face in understanding and using English adverbials, and how effective are current teaching methodologies in addressing these challenges?

RQ2. Considering the identified challenges, what innovative pedagogical strategies and materials can enhance Vietnamese learners' mastery of English adverbials?

The study aims to contribute to English language education among EFL learners by addressing these questions. It seeks to enhance the teaching and learning of adverbials, thereby improving Vietnamese learners' overall English proficiency. The research offers insights to help educators develop effective teaching strategies and materials. Ultimately, this could elevate the standard of English language education,

equipping learners with necessary and practical communication skills in an increasingly interconnected global community.

Literature Review

This section explores how the differences between Vietnamese and English language systems, particularly in adverbials, affect Vietnamese learners' spoken and written English communication.

Linguistic Differences and Communication Challenges

Vietnamese and English differ significantly in their use of adverbials, leading to substantial challenges for Vietnamese learners in mastering English. In Vietnamese, adverbial clauses are less prevalent, and context is often implied rather than explicitly stated. This contrasts sharply with English, where adverbial clauses frequently provide additional detail and context to actions. For example, in English, the sentence "She sings beautifully when she performs" uses the adverbial clause "when she performs" to offer supplementary information about the action (Lewis, 2020). In Vietnamese, such explicit detailing is uncommon, often resulting in incomplete or awkward sentences when Vietnamese learners try to construct similar sentences in English (Le, 2018).

Furthermore, the syntactic placement of adverbs within sentences differs markedly between the two languages. In English, adverbs of frequency typically precede the main verb (e.g., "She often goes to the market"). In contrast, in Vietnamese, the equivalent adverbial expression usually follows the verb (e.g., "Cô ấy đi chợ thường xuyên") (To, 2014). This syntactic difference can cause confusion and errors for Vietnamese learners when structuring sentences in English, as they may incorrectly transfer Vietnamese word order to English. Le and Barnard (2019) highlight that such misplacement is common in Vietnamese students' writing and speaking tasks.

Additionally, Vietnamese learners often need help using adverbs in different contexts, particularly distinguishing between similar adverbial forms and functions in English. For example, Nguyen et al. (2023) note that Vietnamese students frequently confuse adverbs of manner with adverbs of degree, leading to sentences like "He runs fastly" instead of "He runs fast." This confusion arises because Vietnamese need a comparable distinction, further complicating learners' acquisition of accurate English adverbial usage. Cultural influences also play a significant role in how adverbs are used in communication. Pham (2023) discusses how Vietnamese learners underutilize adverbials, conveying subtle nuances for a cultural preference more straightforwardly and directly. For instance, using adverbs such as "frankly" or "honestly" to preface opinions might be less common in Vietnamese, where directness can be perceived differently (To, 2014). This cultural context can result in Vietnamese learners avoiding certain adverbs or misusing them in English, affecting their communication's naturalness and effectiveness.

These linguistic and cultural disparities necessitate targeted teaching strategies addressing the learners' needs. Educators must develop materials explicitly teaching adverbials in various contexts, incorporating comparative linguistic analysis to highlight differences and similarities between English and Vietnamese adverbial usage. By doing so, teachers can help learners build a more robust understanding of English adverbials, improving their overall proficiency and communicative competence.

Cultural Influences and Adverbial Usage

Cultural factors also play a crucial role in how adverbs are used in communication. In Vietnamese culture, communication tends to be more context-dependent, relying heavily on shared cultural understandings and less on explicit verbal expressions (Tran et al., 2024). This implicit communication style contrasts starkly with the more explicit and detailed style often required in English, where adverbials clarify and specify meaning (Ernst, 2020). Consequently, Vietnamese learners may need help adapting to the necessity of using adverbials to achieve the same clarity and detail level expected in English communication. Moreover, the hierarchical nature of Vietnamese society influences the use of adverbials. In Vietnamese, the word and expression choice, including adverbials, often depends on the interlocutor's social status and the conversation's context (Tran et al., 2024). This nuanced social structure can make it difficult for Vietnamese learners to correctly apply English adverbials, where hierarchical considerations are less pronounced and adverbials are more standardized (Pham, 2023). For example, Vietnamese learners might avoid using adverbs that imply judgment or evaluation, such as "frankly" or "honestly," in their English communication because such expressions might be considered impolite or overly direct in Vietnamese culture (To, 2014). This avoidance can lead to communication lacking the nuance and precision found in native English speakers' usage, making their speech seem less natural or effective.

These cultural influences necessitate a pedagogical approach that teaches the grammatical rules of adverbial usage and addresses the cultural contexts in which these adverbials are used. Educators should incorporate cultural competence into their teaching strategies, helping learners understand when and how to use adverbials appropriately in different social and communicative contexts. By doing so, teachers can enhance learners' ability to use adverbials effectively, improving their English communicative competence.

Implications for Teaching Strategies and Materials

Understanding these linguistic and cultural disparities is essential for developing effective teaching strategies and materials. Traditional grammar-based methods may not adequately address Vietnamese learners' specific needs. Instead, a shift towards dynamic communicative and task-oriented approaches, as advocated by Harmer (2015) and Manda (2023), is necessary. These methods focus on real-life

applications and contextual usage, fostering a more profound understanding and accurate use of adverbials.

Incorporating technology into language instruction can also be transformative. As highlighted by Hung et al. (2022), Tran and Chau (2024), and Tran (2023), interactive platforms and language applications can make the learning process more engaging and accessible. These tools provide opportunities for learners to practice adverbial usage in varied contexts, which is crucial for overcoming the challenges posed by linguistic and cultural differences. For instance, language learning apps can simulate real-life scenarios where learners must use adverbials appropriately, helping them internalize their correct usage through repeated practice and feedback (Hung et al., 2022). Furthermore, incorporating authentic materials, such as videos, articles, and dialogues, into the curriculum can expose learners to natural adverbial usage in diverse contexts. This exposure can help learners understand how adverbials function in everyday communication, improving their correct and effective adverbial use. Tran (2023) emphasizes that authentic materials can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, making learning more relevant and effective.

Assessing Learners' Proficiency

The complexity of assessing adverbial proficiency must be addressed, especially considering contextual and idiomatic variations. Nation (2009), Appel and Golding (2023), and Eguchi and Kyle (2023) advocate for comprehensive assessments that consider learners' diverse linguistic backgrounds. Such assessments should test grammatical knowledge and practical spoken and written communication usage. This holistic approach ensures learners' familiarity with the rules governing adverbials and the ability to apply them accurately in real-life situations. For instance, assessments could include tasks that require learners to use adverbials in context, such as writing essays, engaging in dialogues, or completing fill-in-the-blank exercises where the correct adverbial form is needed. By evaluating adverbials' form and function, educators can better understand learners' proficiency and identify specific areas that need improvement (Eguchi & Kyle, 2023).

Moreover, formative assessments, which provide ongoing feedback during the learning process, can help learners gradually improve their adverbial usage. These assessments can be integrated into regular classroom activities, allowing teachers to monitor progress and adjust instruction. This continuous assessment and feedback loop can significantly enhance learners' mastery of adverbials over time (Nation, 2009).

In conclusion, addressing the linguistic and cultural disparities between Vietnamese and English through targeted teaching strategies and comprehensive assessments is crucial for improving Vietnamese learners' proficiency in using adverbials. Educators can create a more effective and engaging learning environment by adopting communicative and task-oriented approaches, leveraging technology, and incorporating authentic materials. Comprehensive assessments that consider both

grammatical knowledge and practical usage will ensure learners apply their knowledge accurately in real-world contexts, ultimately enhancing their communicative competence in English.

Addressing Research Gaps

Despite advancements in teaching methodologies and technological tools, there remains a notable gap in research concerning Vietnamese learners' challenges with English adverbials. Empirical studies are needed to uncover effective teaching strategies and understand the impact of sociocultural factors on learning. Addressing these gaps is crucial for enhancing the pedagogy of adverbials and, consequently, the overall language proficiency of learners in contexts similar to Vietnam. Much existing research focuses on general language acquisition and teaching strategies without delving deeply into Vietnamese learners' specific issues regarding adverbial usage (Tran et al., 2024). Studies exploring how Vietnamese learners acquire and use spoken and written English adverbials are essential to developing a more tailored and practical approach. Such studies should consider Vietnamese students' unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds, influencing their learning processes and outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2023).

This literature review underscores the importance of aligning teaching approaches with learners' linguistic and cultural realities. It highlights the need for integrating technology, authentic materials, and innovative pedagogical strategies to create an inclusive, effective, and responsive English language education framework. For instance, incorporating culturally relevant examples and contexts into teaching materials can help bridge the gap between learners' native language and English, making the learning process more relatable and compelling (Harmer, 2015). Further research should focus on developing and refining teaching methodologies and assessment strategies that resonate with diverse learners' linguistic and cultural nuances. Such efforts promise to transform English language education, making it more adaptable and relevant to learners from varied backgrounds. This exploration should include longitudinal studies that track learners' progress over time, providing insights into the long-term effectiveness of different teaching strategies and tools (Manda, 2023).

Moreover, research is needed to examine technology's role in supporting adverbial acquisition. Interactive platforms and language applications have the potential to provide personalized learning experiences addressing learner needs. Studies investigating how these tools can be optimized for teaching adverbials to Vietnamese learners would contribute valuable knowledge to the field (Tran, 2023).

Addressing these research gaps ultimately lays the groundwork for a more nuanced understanding of adverbial acquisition and its pedagogical implications. By focusing on the specific challenges Vietnamese learners face and developing targeted teaching strategies, educators can enhance learners' ability to master the complexities of adverbials. This, in turn, improves their overall communicative competence in

English, enabling them to participate more effectively in global communication (Pham, 2023).

In conclusion, it is imperative to align teaching methods with learners' linguistic and cultural realities to transform English language education and make it more inclusive and practical. Integrating technology, authentic materials, innovative pedagogical strategies, and focused empirical research create a robust framework for teaching adverbials. Such a framework addresses the specific needs of Vietnamese learners and provides a model that can be adapted to other contexts, ultimately contributing to the broader field of language education.

Methodology

This study investigated the intricacies of adverbial acquisition among EFL learners, particularly Vietnamese students, recognizing adverbials as a subtle aspect of English syntax. The aim was to critically scrutinize these challenges using a mixed-methods approach, offering substantial, empirically grounded insights for advancing English language education in Vietnam.

Samples

Participants were selected based on specific criteria to ensure a comprehensive and balanced representation. The sampling method was purposive to target learners with varying proficiency levels (Basic, Intermediate, Upper-intermediate), ages (16-25 years), and gender. This method was chosen to capture various experiences and challenges across different stages of English language acquisition. The sample size of 200 participants was calculated based on a desired % confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, ensuring statistical significance and representativeness. Participants included high school students, college students, and early career professionals in Vietnam, selected for their active engagement in learning English as a foreign language. Exclusion criteria included learners who had lived in English-speaking countries for an extended period, as their exposure might skew the results.

Instruments

Previous studies heavily informed the research instrument development to ensure their relevance and accuracy in capturing the specific linguistic challenges faced by Vietnamese learners. The proficiency tests and survey instruments were drawn upon validated scales previously used in similar contexts and refined through pilot testing with a small subset of the target population to adjust for cultural and linguistic appropriateness. The survey instruments were developed based on a comprehensive review of the literature on adverbial challenges in EFL contexts, incorporating constructs validated by earlier studies such as those by Nguyen et al. (2023), To (2014), and Tran et al. (2024). The selection of items was guided by their relevance to the specific linguistic features of Vietnamese learners, with adjustments made based on feedback from language education experts and pilot responses.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected through an online survey and proficiency tests on adverbials. The survey included demographic questions, items measuring familiarity and comfort with adverbials, specific challenges encountered, and perceptions of current instruction quality. It used existing validated scales to ensure reliability, and its internal consistency was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85. The survey was disseminated electronically via Google Forms to ensure broad accessibility and maintain participant confidentiality.

Complementing the quantitative data, 20 participants were selected for semi-structured interviews to provide a deeper qualitative insight into the experiences and challenges of mastering adverbials. The interviews explored learners' personal experiences, cultural and linguistic barriers, and opinions on the effectiveness of current teaching strategies. Each interview was conducted via Zoom, lasting approximately 30-45 minutes, and was audio-recorded with the participant's consent. Additionally, focus group discussions were held to facilitate interactive dialogue and uncover collective experiences among learners regarding instructional strategies and language transfer challenges.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data in the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics to effectively identify critical challenges Vietnamese learners face in mastering English adverbials, such as placement and interpretation. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, mode, range, and standard deviation, were utilized to quantify and detail how often specific issues occurred, the average difficulties learners faced, and the variability in their responses. These analyses provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges, revealing the most common errors and the extent of issues across the learner population. By pinpointing these specific areas of difficulty, the study supported a structured approach to developing targeted educational interventions to address the identified gaps.

Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, with each interview transcribed and coded by two independent researchers to ensure reliability, achieving an inter-coder reliability score of 0.87. The themes identified from the transcriptions were organized into four main categories: practical application of adverbials, understanding contextual usage, adverbial placement in sentences, and distinguishing adverbs from adjectives. These themes captured a range of issues, from difficulties applying grammatical rules in real-life contexts to confusion between adverbs and adjectives, highlighting the need for clearer grammatical differentiation in teaching materials.

The analysis provided a structured understanding of the key areas where Vietnamese learners of English face challenges, guiding the development of targeted instructional strategies to improve English language education effectively.

Findings

Quantitative Results

The quantitative analysis primarily focused on identifying Vietnamese learners' critical challenges in mastering English adverbials. Data were collected through a survey of 200 participants representing diverse proficiency levels.
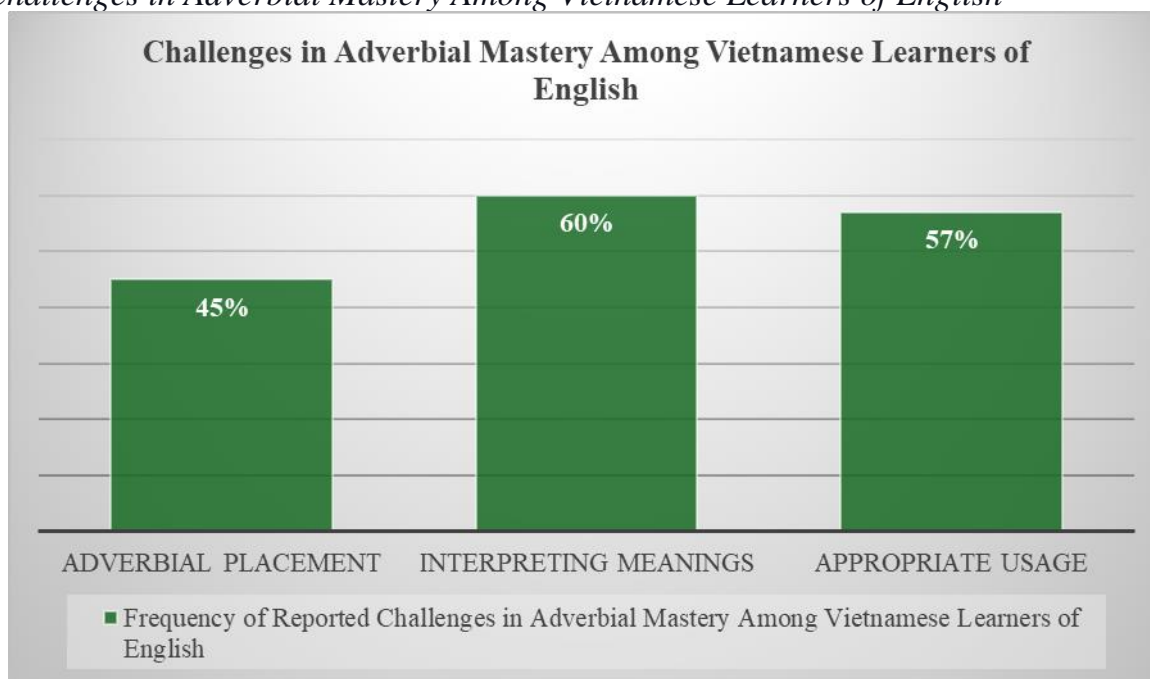
Challenges in Adverbial Mastery
Adverbial Mastery

The survey results, displayed in Figure 1, reveal three main areas of difficulty: adverbial placement (45% of participants), interpretation of meanings (60%), and appropriate usage (57%). These figures were calculated based on the percentage of participants who reported experiencing significant challenges in these areas. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they struggled with each aspect of adverbial usage on a Likert scale. The percentages reflect the proportion of learners who rated their difficulties as "high" or "very high." These findings suggest significant issues in teaching English syntax and practical language use, indicating that nearly half or more learners struggle with these fundamental aspects of language learning. Figure 1 visually represents these challenges, serving as a critical tool for educators to signal the need for pedagogical reform towards more context-based and interactive strategies to improve English proficiency among Vietnamese learners.

Figure 1

Challenges in Adverbial Mastery Among Vietnamese Learners of English

Common Errors in Adverbial Usage

Table 1 summarizes the most common errors in adverbial usage among the learners, highlighting the prevalence of specific challenges in their language

acquisition. The errors are categorized as Misplacement of Adverbs (75% frequency), Confusion between Adverbs and Adjectives (60%), and Misuse of Adverbial Clauses (50%). These percentages were calculated by identifying the number of participants who frequently made these errors based on their responses to multiple-choice and open-ended survey questions. For example, if 150 out of 200 participants reported often misplacing adverbs, this resulted in a 75% frequency for that error type. These prevalent errors highlight the need for targeted educational interventions focusing on clear grammatical explanations, practical usage, and contextual practice. The insights from Table 1 are crucial for informing more effective teaching strategies and curriculum development to improve English proficiency among learners.

Table 1
Common Errors in Adverbial Usage
in Adverbial Usage

Error Type	Frequency	Percentage of Total Responses
Misplacement of Adverbs	150	75%
Confusion between Adverbs/Adjectives	120	60%
Misuse of Adverbial Clauses	100	50%

Significance of Adverbials in English Education for Vietnamese Learners

Figure 2 analyzes opinions on the role of adverbials in teaching English to Vietnamese learners, with data categorized into agreement levels. This data was collected through survey questions asking participants to rate the importance of various aspects of adverbial instruction on a Likert scale. Statistics showed that 73.10% of participants recognized the importance of adverbial understanding, while only 12.80% felt it was well-emphasized in classrooms. These percentages reflect the proportion of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements provided in the survey. Most participants (72.70%) perceived learners' adverbial knowledge as moderate to none, and 66.70% considered their usage challenging. Additional statistics showed that 68.50% deemed textbook coverage insufficient, 93.60% supported more practical exercises, and 88.40% viewed the neglect of adverbials as detrimental to communication skills. Cultural considerations were essential for 92.30%, while 70.90% rated teachers' understanding and methods as moderate to inadequate. Additionally, 64.90% believed teachers' ability to teach adverbials was mild at best, suggesting better teacher training. Technology integration was favored by 90.70%, and the relevance of adverbial mastery for academic and professional success was acknowledged by 92.30%. These consensus data points call for improved teaching strategies, teacher training, and curriculum development to enhance English adverbial mastery in Vietnam.

Figure 2

Significance of Adverbials in English Education for Vietnamese Learners
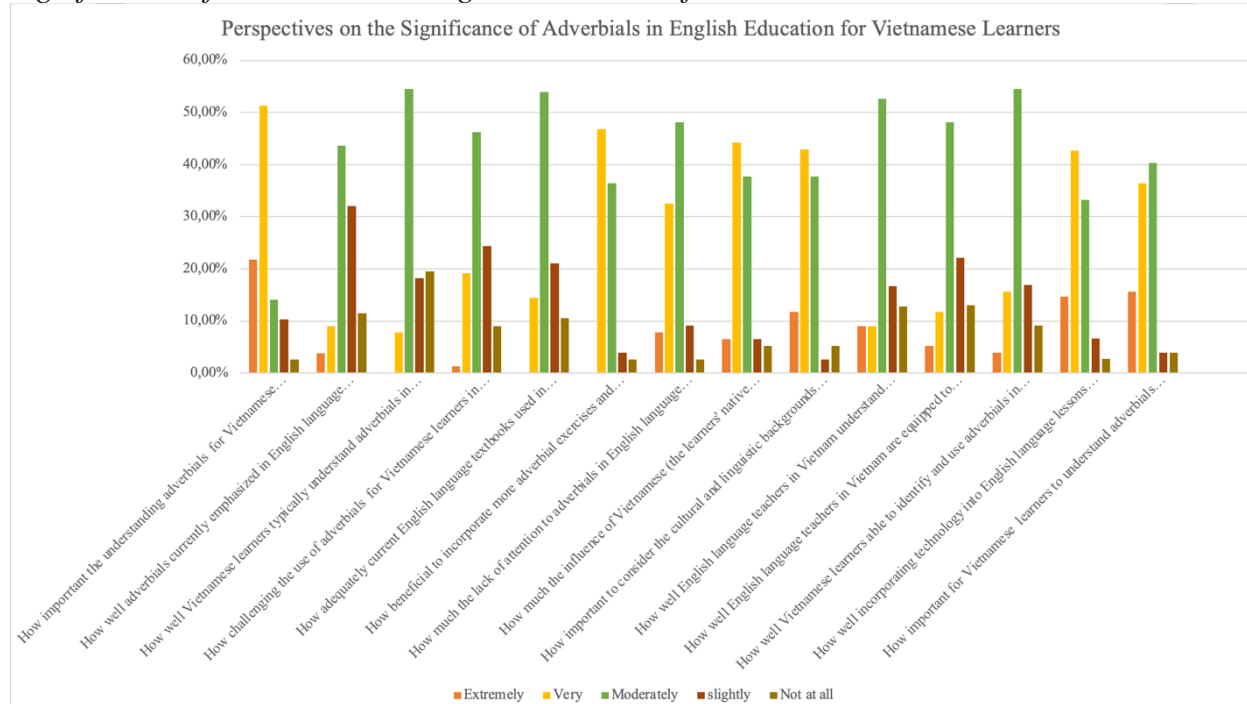

Perspectives on Enhancing English Language Proficiency in Vietnam

The coverage of adverbials in current textbooks yielded varied opinions among participants, as illustrated in Figure 3. A substantial 53.9% remained neutral regarding the adequacy of adverbial coverage, while 31.6% expressed dissatisfaction, either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the coverage extent. In contrast, only 14.5% were content with the current materials, highlighting a perceived gap in the resources available for teaching adverbials. Regarding including real-life examples in teaching, a significant majority (69%) advocated for this approach, believing it would greatly assist learners in comprehending and effectively using adverbials. This majority includes 35.1% who agreed and 33.8% who strongly agreed with the importance of practical examples. Only a small fraction, 5.2%, held opposing views, while 26% remained neutral. These findings underscore a strong consensus on the value of real-life contexts in language learning.

The study revealed diverse opinions regarding collaboration between teachers and students. While 39% of participants agreed and 22.1% strongly agreed that cooperation enhances the learning experience, 35.1% remained neutral, reflecting differing perspectives on the impact of collaborative learning methods in the classroom. Peer support and collaboration among learners were generally viewed positively, with 38.2% finding it very helpful, 36.8% considering it moderately beneficial, and 18.4% considering it constructive for understanding adverbials. Only a minority, 6.6%, found it slightly helpful, emphasizing the perceived importance of collaborative learning among peers. Regarding the impact of incorporating adverbials into lessons, 55.1% of participants believed it would moderately improve overall English proficiency, while 29.5% expected a significant improvement. A smaller portion, 9%, thought it would slightly enhance proficiency, and 2.6% believed in a

high level of improvement. Conversely, only 3.8% saw no benefit, indicating a strong belief in the positive impact of focusing on adverbials as a teaching priority.

Figure 3
*Perspectives on Enhancing English Language Proficiency in Vietnam*

Perspectives on Enhancing English Language Proficiency in Vietnam
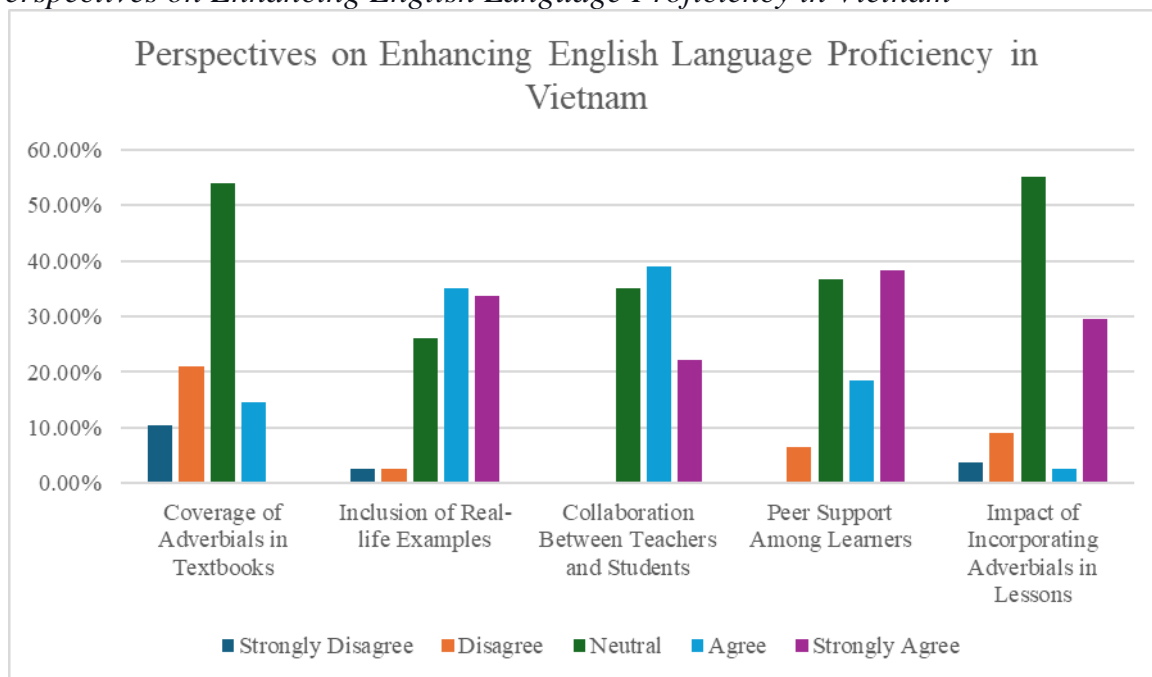
Correlation between Proficiency Level and Adverbial Mastery

Figure 4 illustrates the correlation between proficiency levels and adverbial mastery. Basic-level learners scored an average of 43, Intermediate learners 67, and Upper-intermediate learners 85. These scores were derived from a proficiency test assessing adverbial use. The increasing trend in scores indicates that as English proficiency improves, so does adverbial mastery. This correlation reflects the RQ1 by identifying specific linguistic challenges at different proficiency levels, highlighting the need for adaptive teaching methodologies.

The challenges identified were further analyzed across proficiency levels, showing that Basic learners reported the highest frequency of errors, which decreased as proficiency increased. However, more complex adverbial usage challenges became pronounced at higher levels. This correlation suggests that different stages of language learning present distinct difficulties, emphasizing the need for innovative pedagogical strategies tailored to each proficiency level.

These findings underscore the need for pedagogical reforms that incorporate practical examples, collaborative learning, and technology integration to enhance the English proficiency of Vietnamese learners.

Figure 4
Correlation between Proficiency Level and Adverbial Mastery
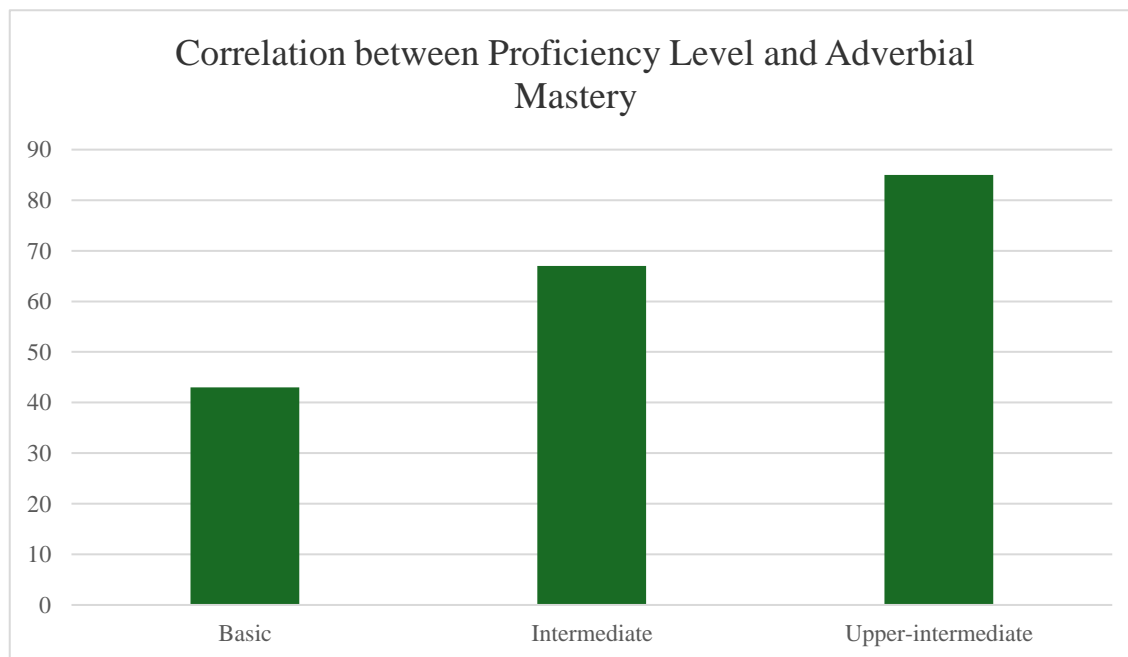
Qualitative Findings

The qualitative aspect involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 participants from the survey respondents. These interviews offered insights into learners' challenges in applying their adverbial knowledge to practical language use. The main themes identified from these interviews are summarized below, supported by relevant figures and tables for a clearer understanding.

The process of categorizing the challenges faced by learners, as presented in Figure 5, involved a systematic coding approach. Each interview was transcribed and coded for recurring themes related to adverbial mastery challenges. Two independent researchers performed the coding process to ensure reliability, with an inter-coder reliability score of 0.87, indicating a high level of agreement. The themes were categorized into four main areas: practical application of adverbials, understanding contextual usage, adverbial placement in sentences, and distinguishing adverbs from adjectives.

Figure 5 displays the distribution of challenges Vietnamese learners face in mastering English adverbials. The chart indicates that 30% of learners need help with the practical application of adverbials, while the largest segment, 40%, needs help understanding contextual usage. Additionally, 20% need help with adverbial placement in sentences, and 10% find it challenging to distinguish adverbs from adjectives. These insights suggest the need for a pedagogical shift towards more practical, context-rich learning and a stronger focus on functional grammar, pointing to the necessity of evolving English education to address these areas better and enhance overall proficiency.

Figure 5

Distribution of Adverbial Mastery Challenges Among Vietnamese Learners
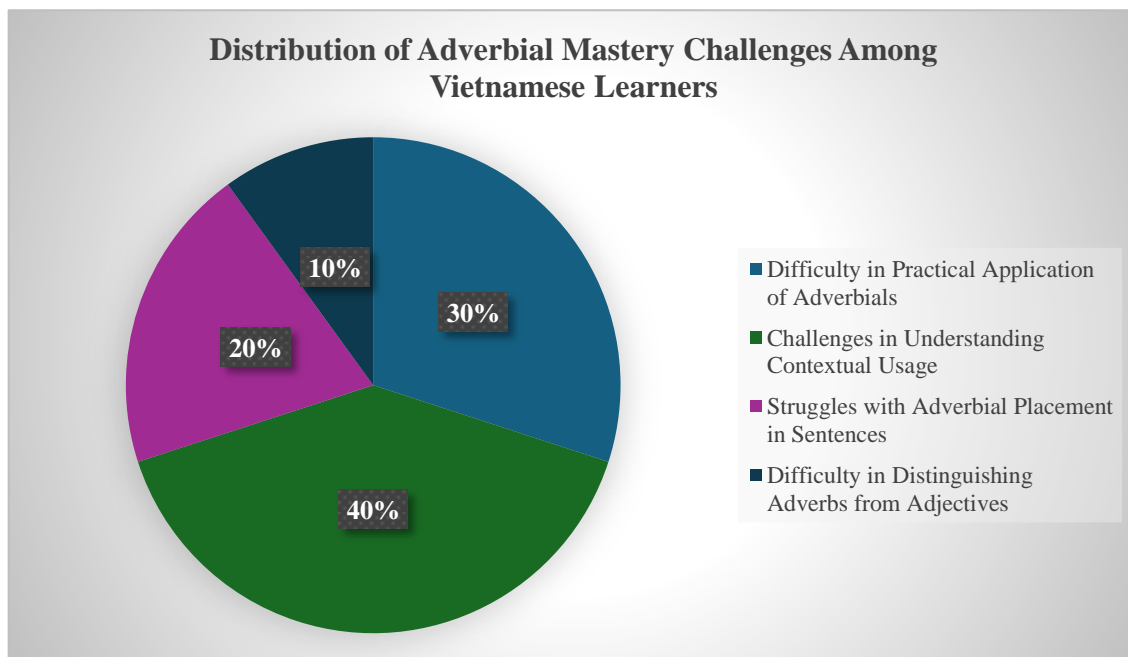
The qualitative findings are further enriched by direct quotes from participants, providing a deeper understanding of the specific areas where learners struggle. Table 2 presents these qualitative insights, complementing the quantitative data from Figure 5. These direct quotes illustrate learners' varied and nuanced challenges, offering crucial insights for educators and curriculum developers. Addressing these challenges through targeted pedagogical strategies is key to enhancing the effectiveness of teaching English to Vietnamese learners.

Table 2

Learners' Responses on Distribution of Adverbial Mastery Challenges

Theme	Participant ID	Quote Excerpt
Practical Application	P5, P10	"I understand the rules, but it's hard to use them naturally in conversation." – P5 "I get the theory, but when speaking, it's hard to apply these adverbial rules correctly." – P10
Contextual Usage	P9, P17	"Sometimes I know the word, but I don't know when to use it correctly." – P9 "Recognizing when and how to use different adverbials in various situations is confusing for me." – P17

| Adverbial Placement | P16, P20 | "I often put adverbs in the wrong place, and it changes the meaning." – P16
"Placing adverbials correctly in sentences is tricky; I often mess up the sentence meaning." – P20 |
| Distinguishing Adverbs/Adjectives | P3, P12 | "I confuse adverbs and adjectives, especially with similar words." – P3
"I frequently mix up adverbs and adjectives, especially when they are similar in form." – P12 |

Figure 6 shows the relationship between English proficiency levels and adverbial mastery challenges among learners, which was further analyzed. The bar graph illustrates a descending trend in the difficulty of practical application of adverbials, with basic level learners facing a 35% challenge rate, which decreases to 15% at the upper intermediate level. Similarly, challenges in understanding contextual usage peak at the Intermediate level (45%) and decrease at the Upper-intermediate level (30%). The graph also highlights reduced difficulties with adverbial placement and distinguishing adverbs from adjectives as proficiency increases. This data underscores the importance of tailored instructional strategies at each proficiency level and guides educators to adapt language instruction to the evolving needs of Vietnamese learners.

Figure 6

Correlation between Challenges and Proficiency Levels

These findings advocate for a more nuanced and practical approach to teaching English in Vietnam, emphasizing real-world application, contextual usage, more

Overcoming Barriers: Enhancing English Adverbial Mastery among EFL Learners

explicit grammatical instruction, and syntax-focused learning. Addressing these challenges through targeted pedagogical strategies is critical to enhancing the effectiveness of teaching English to Vietnamese learners.
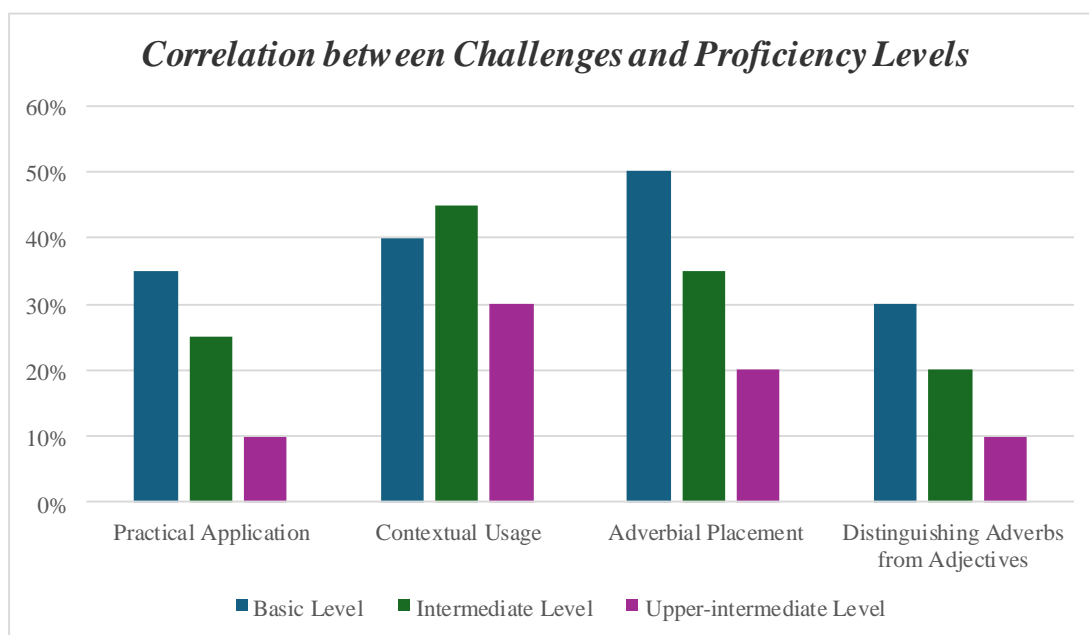
Discussion

Response to Research Question 1

What are the primary linguistic and cultural challenges Vietnamese learners face in understanding and using English adverbials, and how effective are current teaching methodologies in addressing these challenges?

This study examines the primary linguistic and cultural challenges Vietnamese learners encounter in understanding and using English adverbials and evaluates the effectiveness of current teaching methodologies in addressing these challenges. The quantitative analysis highlights substantial difficulties in adverbial mastery, notably in placement (45%), interpretation of meanings (60%), and usage (57%). These challenges stem from the significant structural differences between Vietnamese and English, leading to prevalent errors such as misplacement of adverbs (75%), confusion between adverbs and adjectives (60%), and misuse of adverbial clauses (50%).

These findings resonate with earlier research by Nguyen et al. (2023), To (2014), and Tran et al. (2024), which extensively explored the cross-linguistic challenges Vietnamese learners face. Nguyen et al. highlighted how structural differences between Vietnamese and English hinder the understanding of syntax and semantics, directly relating to the challenges of adverbial placement and interpretation identified in this study. To's critique of Vietnamese educational approaches suggests that traditional methods need to be revised to address these linguistic transfer issues. Later, Tran et al.'s work, which detailed specific errors in adverbial use, corroborates the error patterns found in our analysis. This study advances these discussions by employing a mixed-methods approach that not only reaffirms these linguistic challenges but also critically evaluates and suggests improvements to adverbial instruction.

The inherent complexity of adverbials, essential for detailed communication about actions or states, as noted by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), presents significant obstacles due to the linguistic disparities between Vietnamese and English. This study bridges theoretical research with practical educational strategies, offering substantial improvements to English language education for Vietnamese learners by making it more responsive to their unique linguistic backgrounds.

Current teaching methodologies in Vietnam, primarily traditional and grammar-focused, often fail to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, which is crucial for mastering adverbials. This has prompted calls for a shift towards more communicative and task-based approaches, as advocated by Le and Barnard (2019), and a greater integration of technology in language education, supported by findings from Celce-Murcia et al. (2014). Such integration helps learners

overcome adverbial complexities and is complemented by the inclusion of authentic materials, vital for practical instruction and a deeper understanding of adverbials. Furthermore, this study underscores the need for significant pedagogical changes, emphasizing real-world application and contextual comprehension of adverbials. There is also a critical need for professional development among educators to implement new teaching strategies and technologies effectively. A comprehensive review of current curricula is essential to ensure that adverbial instruction aligns with these advanced pedagogical approaches.

In conclusion, this research substantiates and expands upon existing literature, highlighting the unique challenges Vietnamese learners face with English adverbials. It advocates for pedagogical shifts towards practical, context-driven, and technology-enhanced methods that could significantly enhance English language education in Vietnam. This approach addresses immediate linguistic challenges and opens avenues for further research into the sociocultural factors influencing language learning, aiming to refine teaching strategies and enhance language proficiency in similar educational contexts.

Response to Research Question 2

Considering the identified challenges, what innovative pedagogical strategies and materials can enhance Vietnamese learners' mastery of English adverbials?

This study advocates integrating innovative pedagogical strategies incorporating technology and authentic materials to address the identified challenges. The quantitative data reveals a strong preference among participants (90.70%) for using technology in language learning and an overwhelming consensus (93.60%) on the need for more practical exercises. These insights align with Celce-Murcia et al. (2014) and Tran (2023), suggesting that interactive platforms, language applications, and digital games can significantly enhance learner engagement and provide opportunities to practice adverbial usage in varied, realistic contexts. Furthermore, the inclusion of real-life examples in teaching adverbials is supported by 69% of participants. This approach is consistent with Gilmore's (2007) recommendation to use authentic materials, such as news articles, podcasts, and videos, to expose learners to the natural use of adverbials in different contexts. Authentic materials help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, facilitating a deeper understanding and more effective usage of adverbials (Hasnain & Halder, 2023). Professional development for educators is also crucial. Continuous training enables teachers to stay proficient in the latest methodologies and technological tools essential for effectively implementing innovative strategies. Le (2018) and Le and Barnard (2019) emphasize the importance of ongoing professional growth to equip educators with supportive skills to overcome the challenges in adverbial mastery.

Educators can create a more effective and inclusive learning environment by combining context-based learning, technology integration, and ongoing teacher training. This holistic strategy aims to enhance EFL learners' proficiency in using English adverbials, ultimately improving their overall communicative competence.

The emphasis on practical, context-driven, and technology-enhanced methods reflects the evolving nature of language education and the need for pedagogical strategies adaptable to learners' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2007).

In summary, integrating technology, authentic materials, and continual professional development is a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges of mastering English adverbials. This multifaceted strategy promises to improve the practical use of adverbials among Vietnamese learners, enhance their ability to communicate effectively in English, and contribute to the broader goals of language education.

Pedagogical Implications and Conclusion

This study has uncovered significant findings, necessitating a rethinking of current teaching approaches. The unique challenges Vietnamese learners face stem from the complexities of mastering adverbials and linguistic and cultural nuances, calling for a tailored approach that traditional teaching methods may need to address fully. These findings have substantial implications for pedagogy and education, particularly in instructing adverbials to EFL learners, highlighting the need for a critical reassessment of pedagogical approaches and educational strategies.

A key implication is the need to reconceptualize the methods employed by English language educators in Vietnam for teaching adverbials. The study highlights the limitations of traditional, grammar-centric approaches and emphasizes the effectiveness of communicative and task-based methods (Klímová et al., 2023; Sukying, 2021). This underscores the need for a paradigm shift in pedagogical thinking towards more dynamic, interactive approaches prioritizing real-world application and contextual comprehension of adverbials. Moreover, integrating technology plays a pivotal role in language instruction. Educators are strongly urged to incorporate multimedia tools, interactive platforms, and educational applications to create engaging, context-rich learning experiences, as observed in studies by Tran and Chau (2024), Tran (2023), and Hung et al. (2022). Simultaneously, learners are encouraged to immerse themselves in authentic online materials to contextualize their understanding of adverbial usage in diverse settings.

The deliberate inclusion of authentic materials is also paramount for effective adverbial instruction. Systematic incorporation of real-life texts, multimedia content, and genuine language sources is essential for exposing learners to authentic language usage (Nguyen et al., 2023). Interacting with such materials significantly narrows the theoretical-practical gap, facilitating a more profound understanding of adverbials. Furthermore, the study underscores the necessity for professional development among English language educators. Establishing focused training programs is imperative to equip educators with the skills and strategies to implement technology effectively, harness authentic materials, and apply communicative teaching methods (Nguyen et al., 2023). Additionally, a thorough review of existing curricula is indispensable.

Curriculum designers must ensure that adverbial instruction aligns with the study's recommendations, potentially requiring substantial revisions to lesson plans, assessments, and learning objectives. This approach should seamlessly integrate technology, authentic materials, and communicative methodologies (Manda, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023).

This study provides an exhaustive analysis of the intricacies involved in adverbial acquisition among Vietnamese learners of English, influenced by linguistic and cultural factors. The identified challenges demand a shift in adverbial instruction, moving from conventional grammar-focused methods to more pragmatic and communicative methodologies. The study highlights the transformative potential of integrating technology, utilizing authentic materials, and adopting communicative pedagogies. When effectively implemented, these approaches can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, equipping learners with essential skills for proficient communication in English.

Looking ahead, educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers must embrace these insights to elevate the quality of English language education in Vietnam. Cultivating proficiency in adverbials transcends merely an academic objective; it is a practical necessity in our increasingly globalized world. This study advances our understanding of adverbial acquisition and catalyzes a significant evolution in pedagogy within English language education. The implications delineated here are poised to inspire innovative practices, ultimately empowering Vietnamese learners of English to navigate the intricacies of adverbials with confidence and precision. By adopting these recommendations, Vietnam's English education can experience substantial improvement, effectively preparing learners for seamless communication and success in the interconnected global community.

Authors

Tuyet Thi Tran (EdD) ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1221-6015
Dr. Tuyet Thi Tran is the division head of English theoretical linguistics in the Faculty of English Language Studies at Hanoi University of Business and Technology, Vietnam. Additionally, she serves as an academic manager at Vietnam Golden Generation, JSC.
Thi Tuyet Tran has worked for various universities and institutions in Vietnam, focusing on TESOL, teacher training, curriculum design, and online training solutions. She is pursuing a second doctoral degree in English language teaching in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mahasarakham University, Thailand.
Her research interests encompass various areas, including vocabulary acquisition, teacher well-being, and TESOL. She can be contacted via emails: tuyettran.edd@gmail.com/ 66010161003@msu.ac.th

Apisak Sukying
Dr. Apisak Sukying is an Associate Professor of TESOL at Mahasarakham University. His academic focus includes L2 vocabulary acquisition, second language

acquisition (SLA), L2 writing, and English language teaching (ELT) research. Dr. Sukying has extensively published on the effectiveness of language learning strategies, the impact of musical and physical response techniques on vocabulary acquisition among young learners, and the exploration of morphological awareness in EFL contexts. He can be contacted via his university email address: apisak.s@msu.ac.th

References

Appel, R., & Golding, C. (2023). An exploratory analysis of linking adverbials used by Filipino, Pakistani, and Thai writers of English. *Journal of Modern Languages*, *33*(1), 50-73. https://doi.org/10.22452/jml.vol33no1.3

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Snow, M. A. (2014). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed.). National Geographic Learning.

Eguchi, M., & Kyle, K. (2023). L2 collocation profiles and their relationship with vocabulary proficiency: A learner corpus approach. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *60*, 100975. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2023.100975

Ernst, T. (2020). The syntax of adverbials. *Annual Review of Linguistics*, *6*(1), 89-109. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-linguistics-011619-030334

Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, *40*(2), 97-118. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444807004144

Harmer, J. (2015). *The practice of English language teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.

Hasnain, S., & Halder, S. (2023). Exploring the impediments for successful implementation of the task-based language teaching approach: A review of studies on teachers' perceptions. *The Language Learning Journal*, *51*(2), 208-222. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1989015

Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge University Press.

Hung. B. P, Pham, A. T. D., & Purohit, P. (2022). Computer-mediated communication in second language education. *Intelligent Systems Reference Library*, 45-60. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99329-0_4

Klímová, B., Pikhart, M., Poláková, P., Černá, M., Yayilgan, S. Y., & Shaikh, S. (2023). A systematic review on the use of emerging technologies in teaching English as an applied language at the university level. *Systems*, *11*(1), 42. https://doi.org/10.3390/systems11010042

Le, V. C. (2018). Remapping the teacher knowledgebase of language teacher education: a Vietnamese perspective. *Language Teaching Research*, *24*(1), 71-81. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818777525

Le, V. C., & Barnard, R. (2019). Building teacher capacity for ELT in Vietnam. In V. C. Le, H. T. M. Nguyen, & T. T. M. Nguyen (Eds.), *Building teacher capacity in English language teaching in Vietnam: Research, policy and practice*. (pp.184-186) Routledge.

Lewis, D. M. (2020). Speaker stance and evaluative -ly adverbs in the modern English period. *Language Sciences*, *82*, 101332. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2020.101332

Manda, M. M. (2023). *An examination of the implementation of active learning strategies that enhance active learning of secondary school English grammar* [Doctoral dissertation, Mzuzu University]. http://repository.mzuni.ac.mw/handle/123456789/493

Nation, I. S. P. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge.

Nguyen, T. A., Le, T. T., Vang, M. D., Phuong, Y. H., Huynh, T. T. A., Nguyen, T. H. & Pham, T. T. (2023). Vietnamese EFL high school teachers' perceptions of difficulties when implementing competency-based English teaching curriculum and their proposed solutions. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.59400/fls.v5i2.1863

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-Based Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Pham, A. H. V. (2023). *EFL teacher development through teacher research in Vietnam.* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Wellington]. Open Access the Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington. https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.23982819

Sukying, A. (2021). Choices of language learning strategies and English proficiency of EFL university learners. LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 14(2), 59-87. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1310896

To, T. M. (2014). The English adverbial of time vs. the Vietnamese range topic of time. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, *2*(6), 348-355. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijll.20140206.12

Tran, T. T. (2023). Online-merge-offline model for distance learning in English language education: A case study. *Vietnam Journal of Education*, *7*(3), 215-226. https://doi.org/10.52296/vje.2023.251

Tran, T. T., & Chau, T. H. H. (2024). Impacts of a blended learning model on EFL students' engagement and English proficiency: Evidence from IELTS preparation courses. *Innovations and Applications of Technology in Language Education*, 183-197. https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003473916-14

Tran, T. T., Quach, T. P. A., & Nguyen, T. D. T. (2024). Linguistic and cultural challenges in mastering English adverbials among Vietnamese young adults: A Quantitative analysis. *Vietnam Journal of Educational Sciences*, *20* (1), 18-31. http://vjes.edu.vn/sites/default/files/vjes_-_vol_20_-_is_01_-18-31.pdf

Willis, J., & Willis, D. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Raising Thai EFL Primary School Teachers' Cultural Awareness through Lesson Designs

Patcharin Duangsri
Wilai Phiewma*
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Loei Rajabhat University, Thailand

Abstract

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is essential in a world characterized by cultural diversity. EFL teachers have played a major role in developing this competence. Therefore, the research objectives were: to study Thai EFL teachers' perception of the characteristics of culture, the roles of culture in ELT, and ICC before and after lesson design activities, and to study their cultural awareness after those activities. The participants were 30 Thai EFL primary school teachers from Loei province. The data collection was conducted using a rating scale questionnaire and an observation form. The findings revealed changes in the participants' perceptions of the aforementioned issues, reflecting more flexible and realistic perspectives. They rated the belief that culture was the core knowledge to be incorporated in ELT at the highest level, and expressed a higher agreement that cultural aspects were key elements for developing intercultural competence. The changes were also reflected through their lesson designs, showing that the topics related to little-c cultural aspects with cultural awareness indicators covering the four criteria: intercultural attitudes, cultural knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery or interaction. The latter indicator was found at the highest degree among all of them. Thus, the Thai EFL primary school teachers' cultural awareness was raised significantly and resulted in their increased understanding of how to cultivate learners' ICC with cultural awareness.

Keywords: Cultural Awareness; EFL Teachers; Lesson Design; Primary School; Teaching Culture

Introduction

The concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has become increasingly influential to the nature of foreign language teaching and learning (Byram, 2014; Hakimi et al., 2024; Kramsch, 2006; Meadows, 2016). As pointed out by Byram (1997), besides communication skills, the objective of foreign language learning is also to develop the learners' ability to communicate with consideration of cultural differences. In 1997, Byram (1997) introduced a model of ICC that has been widely used as a theoretical framework to address questions related to teaching and learning a foreign language for effective communication across cultures. According to Byram (1997), ICC refers to "the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language" (p. 71). In addition, the person who possesses ICC is

Corresponding Author

able to build relationships by using a foreign language to communicate effectively and interact appropriately with people whose cultural backgrounds, viewpoints, and needs are different from their own and that person also has an inner drive to enhance their communication skills. The ICC concept is in agreement with Hymes (1972) and Kramsch (1993), who argue that culture is an integral part of foreign language learning. Thus, the cultural aspect is one of the essential elements to be incorporated into a foreign language classroom to help improve learners' cultural knowledge as well as their communication skills appropriate to a particular socio-cultural context.

In order to develop ICC, Byram (1997) proposed five factors to be considered: 1) cultural knowledge of self and others; of individual and societal interaction, 2) intercultural attitudes toward relativising self and valuing others, 3) skills of interpreting and relating things from other cultures, 4) skills of discovering and/or interacting to acquire new knowledge and practices from other cultures, and 5) critical cultural awareness. For Byram, critical cultural awareness is a crucial educational aim for foreign language teaching. Thus, it can be said that cultural awareness is an expected learning outcome after acquiring the first four elements and is considered the first step towards understanding the differences between one's own culture and that of others.

In foreign language classrooms, teachers' knowledge and instructional strategies play a significant role in English language learning as the learners have limited exposure to English in their day-to-day lives. According to Duangsri (2023), it was found that Thai EFL student teachers viewed the role of culture in ELT as not particularly significant (N = 30, x̄ = 3.17, S.D.= 0.56). Based on their interviews, they planned to teach linguistic knowledge, particularly vocabulary, as the first priority, while cultural aspects tended to be deferred and considered optional for teaching. Consequently, it was likely that cultural aspects were not to be integrated into the lesson plan. As a result, the learners' awareness of culture in the lessons was unlikely to be raised. The study also indicated that the cultural aspects in the Thai EFL teaching context were mainly related to community perspectives: perceptions, values, attitudes, beliefs, and worldviews (e.g., thinking patterns) rather than cultural products and social practices (e.g., everyday practices habitually performed in a society). Furthermore, the acquisition of cultural knowledge was more effective through explicit teaching through classroom interaction rather than through implicit learning. This finding was in line with the result of the study by Abd Rahman et al. (2022) that Malaysian learners' socio-cultural linguistic competence was developed through explicit methods and classroom interaction.

Compared to student teachers, the professionals demonstrated a higher level of professionalism with greater pedagogical content knowledge and more extensive experience in teaching English. Additionally, according to previous studies, it was more likely that teachers' pedagogical beliefs or their theoretical views shaped how they characterized the teaching of culture in English classrooms (Chung, 2022; Pajares, 1992; Součková, 2020; Wolf & Brown, 2023). Furthermore, lesson design activities were found to be an effective method for raising teachers' cultural awareness (Chien, 2022; Öztürk & Yangın Ekşi, 2022). In other words, lesson plan designs serve as evidence reflecting how teachers teach culture in their classrooms. However, Abdelhalim and Aldaghri (2024) found that, in some cases, teachers' beliefs or attitudes did not have an

effect on their teaching of culture. Several potential factors were related to cultural values (e.g., an individual's thinking pattern, and the respect and obedience towards the seniors in society), and classroom and institutional contexts (e.g., teachers' workload, assessment systems, learners' thinking styles, and levels of language proficiency). Given the strong professional capacity and the role of full-time mentors, it was likely that the in-service teachers' instructional guidance influenced student teachers' pedagogical content knowledge regarding culture teaching. Thus, it was interesting to study their perceptions of culture as well as their awareness of cultural aspects in English lessons through lesson design activity emphasizing the language and culture strand specified in the basic education core curriculum B. E. 2551 (2008). The purposes of the present study were, therefore, to describe Thai EFL primary school teachers' perceptions of characteristics of culture, the roles of culture in ELT, and intercultural competence before and after participating in lesson design activities focusing on language and culture, and to study their cultural awareness in terms of cultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction to acquire new cultural knowledge.

Research Questions

1) Were there any differences in Thai EFL primary school teachers' perceptions of characteristics of culture, the roles of culture in ELT, and intercultural competence, before and after participating in lesson design activities?

2) To what extent was those teachers' cultural awareness raised after participating in lesson design activities?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Characteristics of Culture

There are several explanations for the characteristics of culture such as those of Geertz (1973), Hall (1976), Kramsch (2015), and Scollon and Scollon (2000). Five characteristics in common were found, as described below.

First, culture is developed through the socialization of a particular social group. It is normative, symbolic, and changeable over time. It can encompass community practices or community perspectives. It is shared, learned, and passed down from generation to generation within a cultural group. Second, culture is a core concept affecting how people within a cultural community interpret actions or situations. It involves the ways of thought navigated by social values, shared beliefs, and the shared history of the community. Third, culture is often compared to an iceberg. It consists of two parts: the tip and the bottom. The tip is on the surface of the water, while the bottom is submerged. According to this metaphor, the above-water part of the iceberg represents visible culture—such as music, food, clothes, language, verbal and non-verbal communication—and the underwater part represents invisible culture—such as community perspectives, traditions, myths, celebrations, rituals, cultural beliefs, values, and norms. Lastly, there are two types of cultural knowledge: subjective and objective. Subjective knowledge is interpretable based on individual experiences, while objective knowledge is factual and observable.

Since culture can be both seen and unseen, to be aware of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviors in other cultures and to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the message while communicating across cultures, it is essential to understand the counterpart's culture; especially the invisible part. To teach culture, teachers should be aware of the aforementioned characteristics of culture. These characteristics were used as a conceptual framework to design a questionnaire and analyze the participants' perspective about culture.

Roles of Culture in ELT

Culture as an Essential Component of Communication

As culture involves ways of social practice, behaviors, and perspectives that are different among social groups, cultural knowledge is crucial for EFL learners to understand and be aware of the differences. In this view, culture plays its role by signaling rules or norms for the appropriate use of language. It also contributes to the meaning of the message delivered both by speech (verbal and non-verbal languages such as gestures and facial expressions) and non-speech communications (e.g., sign language, pictures, or icons) (Hymes, 1972; Scollon & Scollon, 2000). Thus, both literal meaning and cultural meaning create successful communication across cultures.

As English is used for international communication among people with different first languages and cultural backgrounds, cultural differences and similarities become foundational knowledge for successful intercultural communication. EFL learners should pay attention to the differences and be able to apply this knowledge to engage in communication with the actual use of English in different contexts. Thus, in this sense, culture is an essential component of intercultural communication.

Culture as Knowledge in Lesson Content

The second role of culture, in relation to its characteristics, is related to how a cultural group perceives the meaning of an experience, and this perception is generally affected by the group's social values, beliefs, and history (Geertz, 1973; Kroeber & Parsons, 1958). Viewed through this lens, culture functions as knowledge in lesson content (Hua, 2014; Iswandari & Ardi, 2022) to provide cultural knowledge to learners. Cultural knowledge refers to values, beliefs, and worldviews or thinking patterns and there are two types of cultural knowledge: subjective and objective. Subjective knowledge is related to big-C culture, which is invisible and mainly reflects humanistic concepts such as the arts, literature, history, and important institutions of the nation. Thus, it is mostly delivered through passages or messages for reading, listening, and watching (both for comprehension and interpretation or inferences). The interpretive nature of the subjective knowledge encourages learners to gain insight into others' language and culture with a deeper understanding of different mindsets in comparison with their own. On the other hand, objective knowledge relates to little-c culture, which is naturally visible and concerned with cultural practices, for example, food, public holidays, ways of life, traditions, customs, hobbies, gestures, and body language (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Xiao, 2010). The related lesson content, therefore, involves factual and observable knowledge which

Raising Thai EFL Primary School Teachers' Cultural Awareness   through Lesson Designs

includes appropriate behaviors and practices in daily life, such as expressing politeness, greeting, asking for permission, responding to a request, expressing appreciation, agreeing, reflecting understanding, cooking, celebrating holidays, and festivals.

The main objectives of lesson content in this aspect are to provide learners with general knowledge of language and culture and to promote their ability to select an appropriate verbal strategy for cross-cultural communication within context, which is the first step in developing intercultural communication skills.

Cultural Awareness

As a consequence of the important status of English in the world and in Thailand as well as the current conceptualization reflecting the ELT trend in teaching little-c culture or social values in using language situationally responsive to the globalization era, EFL learners need to acquire ICC and the ICC concept has continuously influenced ELT since 1990 (Byram, 2014; Hakimi et al., 2024; Kramsch, 2006; Meadows, 2016). ELT for ICC emphasizes how speakers communicate with people whose cultural backgrounds are different from theirs by considering the impacts that might occur because of the cultural differences (Byram, 2014). According to Byram (2013), cultural competence and intercultural competence are different. *Cultural competence* refers to the ability to know the culture, act appropriately according to the culture, and maintain cultural sensitivity in decision-making. Therefore, the counterpart's culture is the major concern. *Intercultural competence* refers to an awareness of cultural factors that potentially impact the interrelation between speakers from different languages and cultures. Those factors, which serve as a foundation for intercultural communication, include attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In other words, ICC is the ultimate goal for teaching culture and has become one of the main learning objectives in ELT (Byram, 1997; Byram, 2013; Jiang et al., 2022). This theoretical view forms the basis for establishing several internationally accredited assessment frameworks for foreign language proficiency skills (Dolmaci & Sezgin, 2021), such as The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The framework has also been adopted for assessing the English skills of Thai EFL learners and teachers, and has influenced the direction of ELT in Thailand.

Referring to Byram (1997), Byram et al. (2002), Deardorff (2011), and Fenner (2008), ICC involves the capabilities to use the second language to successfully interact with people with different language and cultural backgrounds. The capabilities consist of five linked elements as follows:

1) *Attitudes*: Intercultural attitudes involve appreciating and respecting others' cultures as well as one's own, valuing cultural diversity with open-mindedness, and having curiosity to learn and gain a new cultural experience.

2) *Knowledge*: Understanding cultures of a particular country or community, general knowledge about important cultural thought patterns that influence how people with different languages and cultures understand each other's ways of communication.

3) *Skills of interpreting and relating*: The ability to notice, listen, compare, evaluate, and analyze a thought or a circumstance from different cultural perspectives to achieve a correct interpretation of a communication.

4) *Skills of discovery or interaction*: The ability to acquire new cultural experiences and integrate them into existing ones, while operating with knowledge, attitudes, and skills in real-time communication and interaction.

5) *Critical cultural awareness*: The ability to critically evaluate one's own worldview and cultural products in comparison with those of others using explicit evaluating criteria.

It can be concluded that the goal of learning a foreign language is to possess communicative competence for communicating across cultures appropriately with awareness of the values and positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. For the present study, the five above-mentioned elements of ICC were applied to assess the teachers' cultural awareness and the definitions of cultural awareness and its indicators as reference for the present study were as follows.

Cultural awareness refers to the ability to evaluate cultural worldviews, perspectives, products, and practices both in one's own culture and in others by critically analyzing them on the basis of cultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery or interaction. This enables one to communicate a message meaningfully as intended while considering limitations that may cause misunderstandings when communicating with people whose languages and cultures differ from one's own.   As concluded from the aforementioned ICC concepts of Byram (1997), Byram et al. (2002), Deardorff (2011), and Fenner, (2008), the indicators of cultural awareness in teachers for this study were:

1) *Intercultural attitudes*: Teachers designed a teaching and learning activity related to the language and culture domain. The activity helped promote the learners' attitudes toward appreciating and respecting their own and others' cultures, valuing cultural diversity, being open-minded and curious about learning new cultural experiences, and sharing a sense of belonging to a cultural group.

2) *Cultural knowledge*: Teachers correctly explained the characteristics of language and culture and the factors potentially influencing both a successful and/or misunderstanding of intercultural communication through English.

3) *Skills of interpreting and relating*: Teachers chose teaching-learning materials or resources suitable for stimulating the learners to compare, analyze, and relate the new and the existing knowledge of language and culture in the lesson through different cultural perspectives, considering the factors that might affect the success in communication.

4) *Skills of discovery or interaction*: Teachers chose teaching-learning materials or resources suitable for stimulating the learners to collaboratively seek new knowledge on language and culture in the lesson and learn how to integrate the existing knowledge, and apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills in real-time communication and interaction.

Teaching of Culture in Thai EFL Context

The Focused Culture

English in Thailand is a foreign language as it is not the nation's official nor another language commonly used in daily life. To comply with the national core curriculum for basic education, cultures of the UK and the US, the main native-English-speaking countries, are presented in Thai EFL classrooms and the majority of English textbooks in schools are produced by publishers in the UK and the US (Chareonkul & Wijitsopon, 2020). Given that English is a global language, the purpose of ELT is mainly to promote intercultural communication. This aligns with the goal of the learners who are speakers of other languages (Kachru,1985). Most of them tend to pay less attention to the UK or the US culture but learn to use English as a lingua franca in context. Similarly, Thai EFL learners need knowledge of a variety of cultures beyond the UK or the US culture. Thus, cultural contents from other foreign countries demonstrated in the participants' lesson plan were acceptable for the present study.

Instructional Pedagogy

The previous studies (Bunmak, 2023; Nilubol, 2020; Obod et al., 2020) revealed that teaching culture in English classrooms using the learners' first language as a medium helped them learn by comparing the differences and the similarities between two cultures and resulted in positive attitudes towards language learning along with more cultural awareness. Such a strategy has been reported to be effective for the learners at the lower and the higher levels. As a result, teachers were likely to view translation as the most effective way to illustrate the new language and culture and promote the learners' cultural awareness from different cultural perspectives. This can be a foundation for their further improvement in communication across cultures in a more appropriate and successful manner.

Regarding the teaching materials and activities, Thai EFL teachers commonly adopt Western-published textbooks rather than adapting them to be relevant to Thai learners, citing that they provide a reliable model of correct use of the English language and are practical for classrooms (Baker, 2008; Ulla, 2019). In addition, videos, documentaries, Hollywood films, English songs, self-study projects on ICC for class presentation, extra-curricular activities allowing learners to mingle with foreigners (e.g., short overseas trips, study tours, and short training courses), and learning-by-doing activities are recommended for teaching culture in EFL classrooms (Cheewasukthaworn & Suwanarak, 2017).

The teaching materials and activities mentioned above suggested that authentic materials, experiential knowledge, and project-based learning are effective in developing Thai EFL learners' intercultural communication skills. However, Cheewasukthaworn and Suwanarak (2017) pointed out that although Thai EFL teachers were aware of the relationship between language and culture, their conceptualization of ICC for implementation in their English classrooms was found to be insufficient.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study was conducted using a mixed-methods design to address the two research questions (RQs) posed, based on the assumption that teachers' theoretical views of culture influence how they characterized the teaching of culture in their EFL classrooms. RQ1 was closed-ended and required quantitative data to determine the teachers' perceptions regarding the hypothesized independent variable's effect on the level of teachers' cultural awareness, the dependent variable, was reflected in the teachers' subsequent perception after the treatment. RQ2 was open-ended and required qualitative data to assess the teachers' level of cultural awareness demonstrated through their lesson designs. The findings from RQ1 were compared and contrasted with those generated from RQ2 to enhance the validity of the results and the conclusions regarding the extent to which the teachers' cultural awareness increased after the treatment. Data collection for the two types occurred in parallel. The procedural framework is illustrated in Figure 1.
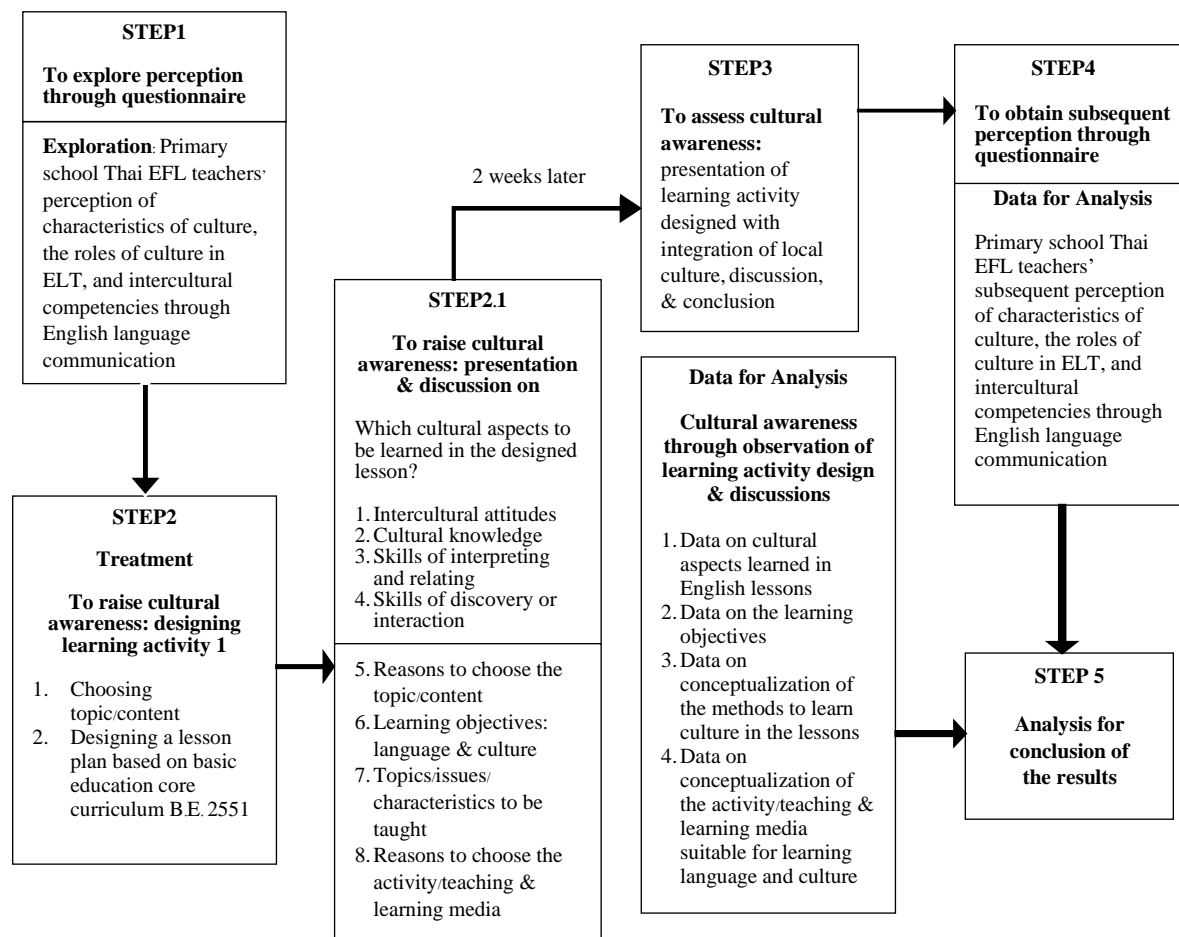
Participants

The participants consisted of 30 volunteers selected from the population of 154 Thai EFL teachers in primary schools under the Primary Education English Resource Center (Peer Center) supervised by the Office of Loei Primary Educational Service Area 2, Loei province. The criteria for the sample size were based on Srisa-ard (1992): 15-30% of the population of approximately hundreds. The size of 30 represented 19.48% of the population with similar qualifications. Therefore, the number was deemed appropriate for providing reliable results for the study.

Instruments

Two types of instruments were used for the data collection: a questionnaire, and an observation form. The questionnaire was adapted from Duangsri (2023) for two reasons: 1) the research question of the present study was similar to that posed by Duangsri (2023) focusing on the same construct: perceptions towards the characteristics of culture and cultural aspects for English language learning; and 2) to gain a clear understanding of the problems in incorporating culture into EFL classroom that might exist along the continuum from teacher preparation to in-service teacher professional development. The five-point rating scale questionnaire was used to obtain the quantitative data on the participants' perception regarding the characteristics of culture, the roles of culture in ELT, and intercultural competencies in English language communication, before and after the learning design activities.

Figure 1

Procedural Framework

The observations were conducted to obtain qualitative data on the participants' cultural awareness. The form contained criteria designed based on the ICC concepts of Byram (1997), Byram et al. (2002), Deardorff (2011), and Fenner (2008), which were defined as the indicators of cultural awareness: intercultural attitudes, cultural knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery or interaction as explained earlier. The elements in the lessons to be observed included cultural aspects to be learned, learning objectives, teaching methods, activities, teaching and learning media suitable for learning language and culture. The observation protocol is shown in Steps 2 and 3 of Figure 1.

The validation results of the two instruments showed that the Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC) scores of the questionnaire and the observation form were acceptable: between 0.80 and 1.00 with good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$), and between 0.60 and 1.00, respectively. Thus, the items in the questionnaire were deemed suitable to elicit the participants' perceptions as required. Similarly, the questions and criteria were deemed appropriate to assess the participants' cultural awareness.

Data Collection

1. *Step 1*: Exploring the participants' perception of characteristics of culture, the roles of culture in ELT, and intercultural competencies through the questionnaire

2. *Step 2*: Selecting a topic or content and designing English lesson plans on the topic following the basic education core curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008).

3. *Step 2.1*: Making presentations on a group basis, explaining, and discussing the cultural aspects to be learned in the designed lesson in terms of intercultural attitudes, cultural knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction, as well as the reasons for choosing the topic/ content, learning objectives, topics/ issues/ characteristics to be taught, and reasons for choosing a particular activity/teaching and learning media. The researchers' roles were to provide feedback on the design and to ask questions to help the participants demonstrate their knowledge of the specified cultural aspects. Then, the participants summarized the lesson learned for the day. They were asked to design an English learning activity integrating local culture to present in the following 2 weeks.

4. *Step 3:* Making presentations of their English learning activity design, explaining, and discussing following the discussion points from Step 2. The researchers observed their designed lessons, discussion, and checked on the observation form according to the indicators of cultural awareness.

5. *Step 4*: Obtaining the participants' subsequent perception of the same points explored in Step 1.

6. *Step 5*: Comparing and analyzing the data statistically. Qualitative data were analyzed using a content analysis approach. The quantitative and the qualitative results were compared and contrasted to draw conclusions.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed for means ($\bar{x}$), standard deviations (S.D.), and coefficient of variation (CV) using SPSS statistical software to identify any statistical differences between the participants' perceptions before and after the lesson design activities. The results of the perception assessment were reported in terms of the degree of agreement towards each issue shown in Table 1-3. The analysis results indicated if the participants' perceptions changed after the lesson design activities.

The qualitative data were examined using the content analysis method. For consistency purposes, the data were coded by three raters (two researchers and one educational supervisor) independently according to four criteria to assess cultural awareness: intercultural attitudes (ICA), cultural knowledge (CK), skills of interpreting and relating (Itpr & Rlt), and skills of discovery or interaction (Dscv/Interac). The data were then categorized following the indicators for assessing the degree of cultural awareness displayed by the participants (see Table 4). The analysis revealed the participants' degree of cultural awareness. The analysis of both the quantitative and the qualitative data were compared and contrasted to identify whether they were consistent and reflected any changes in the participants' cultural awareness.

Results

The findings are presented in relation to each research question as follows.

Finding 1: Changes in the Participants' Perceptions

The answer to RQ1 was derived from the quantitative data which were categorized into three main topics with subtopics for each one. The results are reported in Tables 1-3.

Table 1 indicates that there were some similar changes in the participants' perceptions of the characteristics of culture: 1) they agreed to a higher degree, with higher means $\bar{x}$ and low frequencies of data distribution (low CV values), that culture involved social practices, social values, and social products, and 2) their perceptions became more flexible (with lower $\bar{x}$ and low CV value) with the awareness that culture could be invisible and visible, difficult and also easy to change in some aspects, and achieving the acquisition of cultural knowledge could be conducted in different ways other than through implicit learning.

Table 1

Comparison of Perceptions toward Characteristics of Culture

Perception Issues	Perception before Treatment			Perception after Treatment		
	$\bar{x} \pm$ S.D.	CV (%)	Interpretatio	$\bar{x} \pm$ S.D.	CV (%)	Interpretatio
1. Characteristics of						
1.1 Social practices	4.43 ±	16	Agree	4.47 ± 0.79	18	Agree
1.2 Social values	4.26 ±	23	Agree	4.49 ± 0.71	16	Agree
1.3 Social products	3.77 ±	25	Agree	4.17 ± 1.10	26	Agree
1.4 Invisible	3.97 ±	24	Agree	2.91 ± 1.28	44	Neutral
1.5 Difficult to change	4.69 ±	13	Fully agree	3.57 ± 1.21	34	Agree
1.6 Acquired through implicit learning	4.66 ±	15	Fully agree	3.26 ± 1.20	37	Neutral

Table 2 suggests that the roles of culture in ELT were known to the participants but the weights of importance placed were different. There were two points of change: 1) they agreed in a higher degree (higher $\bar{x}$ and low CV values) that culture played an important role as a core of language learning, a core factor enabling language proficiency, an outcome of higher language proficiency, and a primary learning domain in ELT, and 2) the decline (lower $\bar{x}$ and low CV values) in their perception of culture as a piece of information delivered through language and learned as an option revealed their increased awareness of the importance of culture in ELT. It was in line with their perception that culture was an integral part of language, and the perception remained the same (fully agreeing with low CV values).

Raising Thai EFL Primary School Teachers' Cultural Awareness   through Lesson Designs

Table 2

Comparison of Perceptions of the Roles of Culture in ELT

Perception Issues	Perception before Treatment			Perception after Treatment		
	x̄ ± S.D.	CV (%	Interpretatio	x̄ ± S.D.	CV (%	Interpretatio
2. Roles of culture in						
2.1 An integral part of	4.69±0.5	13	Fully agree	4.69±0.7	15	Fully agree
2.2 A core of language	3.85±0.8	22	Agree	4.40±0.7	16	Agree
2.3 A core factor language proficiency	3.57±1.2	34	Agree	4.80±0.7	16	Fully agree
2.4 An outcome of language proficiency	4.57±0.7	15	Fully agree	4.88±0.7	15	Fully agree
2.5 An additional feature as an option	4.56±0.7	16	Fully agree	3.26±1.2	37	Neutral
2.6 A piece of delivered through	4.45±0.7	16	Agree	3.34±1.1	33	Neutral
2.7 A primary learning	3.86±0.7	20	Agree	4.33±0.7	16	Agree

Table 3 reveals that the participants' perceptions of the intercultural competence (IC) through English language communication for all issues changed to a higher degree of agreement (higher x̄ and low CV values). They fully agreed that using nonverbal language, verbal language, and tone of voice appropriately in a particular context indicated the learners' IC, and agreed in a higher degree that knowledge of culture and awareness of the interlocutor's culture were factors influencing mutual understanding through intercultural communication. The awareness of others' cultural attitudes shifted from neutral to agreement at a much higher degree with a very low CV values.

Table 3

Comparison of Perceptions of Intercultural Competence (IC) through English Language (EL) Communication

Perception Issues	Perception before Treatment			Perception after Treatment		
	x̄ ± S.D.	CV (%	Interpretati	x̄ ± S.D.	CV (%	Interpretation
3. IC through EL communication						
3.1 Using non-verbal language appropriately to a particular context is a part of IC	4.66±0.	11	Fully agree	4.69±0.	10	Fully agree
3.2 Using verbal language appropriately to a particular context is a part of IC	4.43±0.	15	Agree	4.89±0.	7	Fully agree
3.3 Using a tone of voice appropriately to a particular context is a part of IC	4.26±0.	14	Agree	4.66±0.	12	Fully agree
3.4 Intercultural communication requires knowledge on factors mutual understandings	3.57±1.	34	Agree	4.17±0.	6	Agree
3.5 Awareness of the culture helps reduce a chance a miscommunication	4.11±0.	21	Agree	4.43±0.	12	Agree

Raising Thai EFL Primary School Teachers' Cultural Awareness   through Lesson Designs

3.6 Awareness of English culture helps promote a successful communication across	3.57±1.	30	Agree	4.26±0.	10	Agree
3.7 Awareness of others' cultural attitudes is necessary for intercultural communication	2.91±0.	1	Neutral	3.70±0.	8	Agree

In conclusion, after the treatment, the participants' view changed and reflected a more flexible and realistic perspective of culture: both visible and invisible, not static, acquired naturally without being taught, and also formally learned through education or in formal contexts. The teachers were fully aware that culture was a core knowledge to be incorporated into ELT, and cultural aspects were key elements to develop intercultural competence.

Finding 2: The Participants' Cultural Awareness IncreasedTo answer RQ2, the qualitative data on cultural aspects to be learned, learning objectives, teaching methods, activities, and teaching and learning media suitable for learning language and culture were observed during the participants' presentations. The data were assessed to identify the level of cultural awareness using the criteria and indicators in Table 4.

Table 4
Criteria and Indicators for Assessing Cultural Awareness

Indicators of Cultural Awareness	Degree of Cultural Awareness
Intercultural Attitudes (ICA)	
4 Sharing a sense of a cultural group member	1-4 = Highest
3 Open-minded and curious in learning a new cultural experience	1-3 = Moderate
2 Valuing cultural diversity	1 = Low
1 Appreciating and respecting Thai and other cultures	
Cultural Knowledge (CK)	
3 Correctly explained the factors potentially influences a well-**and** a misunderstanding of intercultural communication through English	1-3 = Highest
2 Correctly explained the factors potentially influences a well- **or** a misunderstanding of intercultural communication through English	1-2 = Moderate
1 Correctly explained the characteristics of language and culture	1 = Low
Skills of Interpreting and Relating (Itpr & Rlt)	
3 Choosing a teaching-learning materials or resources suitable to stimulate the learners to relate the new and the existing knowledge of language and culture in the lesson through different cultural **with consideration of the factors possibly affected the success in**	1-3 = Highest
2 Choosing a teaching-learning materials or resources suitable to the learners to **analyze**, and relate the new and the existing language and culture in the lesson through different cultural	1-2 = Moderate
1 Choosing a teaching-learning materials or resources suitable to the learners to **compare** the new and the existing knowledge of and culture in the lesson through different cultural perspectives	1 = Low

Raising Thai EFL Primary School Teachers' Cultural Awareness   through Lesson Designs

Skills of Discovery or Interaction (Dscv/Interac)	
3 Being able to operate cultural knowledge, cultural attitudes, and skills real- time communication and interaction	1-3 = Highest
2 Promoting the integration of the new into the existing cultural	1-2 = Moderate
1 Choosing a teaching-learning materials or resources suitable to the	1 = Low
to collaboratively seek a new knowledge on language and culture in the lesson	

Table 5 shows that all five groups expressed cultural awareness covering all criteria, with 100% of them showing the highest degree on skills of discovery or interaction, and moderate degree on cultural knowledge. Meanwhile, 60% and 40% of them communicated moderate degree, and low degree, respectively, for skills of interpreting and relating. Moreover, 60%, 20%, and 20% placed moderate degree, the highest degree, and low degree, respectively, on intercultural attitudes.

The answer to RQ2, which indicated that the teachers' degree of cultural awareness increased, supports the answer to RQ1, which statistically indicated the changes.

Table 5 *The Participants' Degree of Cultural Awareness after Lesson Design Activities Focusing on Language and Culture*

Topics	Reasons	Learning objectives	Cultural aspects to be taught	Reasons to use the media	Cultural awareness
Group 1 Food	-Ways of life, -Knowledge of Thai and international dishes	*K**: Correct pronunciation, word order, punctuation, use of words, meanings *P**: Communication using Y&N questions appropriately *A**: Curious in learning	-English names of Thai menu -Food tastes, texture, -Politeness in communication	*Strategy*: to identify food nationality to raise knowledge on food i.e., tastes, texture, appearance, cooking	CA* at moderate level CK* at moderate level Itpr & Rlt* at moderate level Dscv/Interac* at the highest level
Group 2 Thai Herbs- Thai Food	-Popular local menu: mango spicy salad (Ma Muang Yum) with Thai herbs as ingredients -Mango trees and Thai herbs as ingredients are commonly found in every house of Thai people in Thailand	*K*:* Correct pronunciation, word order, use of words for ingredients, usage of grammar *P*:* Speaking with appropriate gestures, & tone of voice *A*:* Curious in learning	-Introducing cooking using correct words, sentences, & pronunciation -Thai culture: mango spicy recipe, Thai herbs for cooking	Strategy: how to make Ma Muang Yum valuable around the world: to local Thai mango spicy for foreigners	CA* at moderate level CK* at moderate level Itpr & Rlt* at low level Dscv/Interac* at the highest level
Group 3 Foods and Drinks	-Thai vs English food -Cultural practices/ international social manners in ordering	*K*:* Correct spellings, meanings pronunciation, grammar, correctly telling cultural practices/international Social manners in food *P*:* Appropriate use of language for short conversation in ordering food *A*:* Correctly tell the result of impolite manners	-Vocabulary, sentence for -Function of idiom: "here you" -Function of "thank you" -Famous traditional Thai F&B -Famous traditional British -International social manners in ordering food	*Strategy*1: role playing >to raise the learners' awareness of culture practices/international manners in ordering food *Strategy2*: activity what >to tell more about famous traditional Thai/British F&B the learners know	CA* at the highest CK* at moderate level Itpr & Rlt* at low level Dscv/Interac* at the highest level

*K = Knowledge, *P= Psychomotor (Skills), *A=Attitudes

*ICA = Intercultural Attitudes, *CK= Cultural Knowledge, *Itpr & Rlt = Skills of Interpreting and Relating , *Dscv/Interac = Skills of Discovery or Interaction

Table 5 *The Participants' Degree of Cultural Awareness after Lesson Design Activities Focusing on Language and Culture (continued)*

Topics	Reasons	*Learning objectives*	Cultural aspects to be taught	Reasons to use the media	Cultural awareness
Group 4 Giving the Directions	-Hometown tourist attractions -Giving directions to important places in town -Hometown appreciation	*K*:* Correct use of words for direction, names & info of places, correct word order & pronunciation *P*:* Asking & giving directions to places in town correctly *A*:* Eager to expressing knowledge of the famous places in hometown	-Vocabulary, politeness in asking & giving directions -Knowledge on the famous places in hometown	*Strategy1*: role playing >to create a sense of belonging in hometown famous places *Strategy2*: discussion >how to introduce our hometown to the world	CA* at low level CK* at moderate level Itpr & Rlt* at moderate level Dscv/Interac* at the highest level
Group 5 How to make Thai Pink milk (sweetened iced milk with red syrup)	-Thai wisdom: popular soft drink -Cultural knowledge -Sala fruit : native to Southeast Asia	*K*:* Correct use of words for making Thai Pink milk, pronunciation, word order, correct information on the origin of Sala syrup *P*:* Correctly speaking how to make the milk step by step *A*:* Enthusiastic to participate in seeking/introducing new knowledge	-Appropriate word choice, gestures, tone of voice -Thai wisdom of making cold drinks on a hot summer day -Natural food color of red from Sala fruit -The origin of Sala fruit	*Strategy1:* Let' make iced Pink Milk activity >to provide an opportunity for students to translate information from Thai to English and make oral presentation *Strategy2*: Search More >What are the natural sources of food colors in other countries?	CA* at moderate level CK* at moderate level Itpr & Rlt* at moderate level Dscv/Interac* at the highest level

*K = Knowledge, *P= Psychomotor (Skills), *A=Attitudes

*ICA = Intercultural Attitudes, *CK= Cultural Knowledge, *Itpr & Rlt = Skills of Interpreting and Relating , *Dscv/Interac = Skills of Discovery or Interaction

Conclusion

The findings can be summed up as follows:

1. The teachers' perceptions of characteristics of culture, the roles of culture in ELT, and intercultural competence changed after participating in lesson design activities changed. They developed a more realistic view that culture as dimensional, understanding it as closely related to a community's social practices, values, and products. Thus, they recognized it as core knowledge necessary to be incorporated into a language learning lesson to enhance intercultural competence for learners.

2. The teachers' cultural awareness increased after the lesson design activities. The findings revealed that all the teachers possessed cultural knowledge and skills of discovery or interaction to the highest degree. They correctly explained the factors potentially influencing both effective and ineffective intercultural communication. They were also able to operate cultural knowledge, cultural attitudes, and skills during real-time communication and interaction.

Most of them maintained skills of interpreting and relating and intercultural attitudes at the moderate level, demonstrating open-mindedness and curiosity in learning about a new cultural experience. They selected teaching-learning materials or resources that stimulated the learners to analyze and relate the new and existing knowledge of language and culture in the lesson through different cultural perspectives.

Discussion

Discussions on the main findings are presented with respect to each RQ.

RQ1: The changes in the teachers' perceptions reflected a more flexible conceptualization of culture in terms of its nature, understanding of its roles in ELT and in intercultural communication. After the lesson design activity, their focused topics varied widely from big-C or invisible cultures (i.e., the history of Christmas) to little-c or visible cultures dealing with social practices, values, and products: Food, Thai Herbs-Thai Food, Foods and Drinks, Giving Directions, and How to Make Thai Pink Milk. Additionally, their view of culture as lesson content was modified to include different cultural perspectives by comparing self and other cultures, specifically Thainess and British or American cultures. This view was demonstrated through their topic selection criteria: 1) relevant to the learners' backgrounds, 2) connected to specific Thainess or local lifestyle, 3) comparable between Thai and UK/ US cultures, 4) suitable teaching materials, and 5) aligned with Thailand basic education core curriculum in use. Criteria 1-3 reflected the teachers' concern with the role of culture as knowledge in lesson contents and the criteria 4-5 indicated their awareness of the approach to successfully incorporate cultural aspects into EFL classrooms.

RQ2: The teachers' level of cultural awareness increased. From the discussion of the teachers' lesson designs, their cultural awareness was reflected as follows.

Cultural knowledge and skills of discovery or interaction at the highest degree

The teachers were able to explain the factors that may cause a misunderstanding of intercultural communication such as verbal and non-verbal languages used in different contexts, which varied according to the selected topic, learning objectives, and activities. The designed lessons and the discussion indicated that, through their perspective, the teaching of culture tended to be effective when teachers provided the learners with linguistic and cultural knowledge through explicit teaching followed by implicit learning: role-playing, demonstration, and comparison of cultures. Thus, they were able to operate cultural knowledge, intercultural attitudes, and skills in real-time communication and interaction.

Skills of interpreting and relating and intercultural attitudes at a moderate degree

The teachers demonstrated open-mindedness and curiosity in bridging a new and existing cultural experience by choosing teaching resources suitable to stimulate the learners to compare and analyze the knowledge through different cultural perspectives. As observed, the teachers maintained a theoretical view in selecting a topic for teaching of culture. Each lesson plan was initiated based on their cultural knowledge and ELT experiences rather than textbooks, in order to be suitable to the learners. This finding was different from the studies by Baker (2008)　and Ulla (2019), which reported that Western-published textbooks were popular among Thai EFL teachers as they contained a reliable model of correct English and were more practical for teaching. However, the difference possibly arose from the complexity of the contents and language designed for different education levels: primary, secondary, and higher.

Moreover, to help learners to achieve the learning goals, both non-authentic and authentic materials were applied. The authentic materials were primarily used, such as all ingredients for cooking, while the non-authentic were provided only when it was costly or not commonly available in their contexts, such as pizza and spaghetti. Additionally, activity-based learning was considered the most suitable approach to developing intercultural communication skills contextually, and appropriate use of language was an integral part of the learning. Thus, the teachers' skills of interpreting and relating and intercultural attitudes were evident.

The findings were in line with Cheewasukthaworn and Suwanarak (2017), which stated that authentic materials and learning-by-doing activities were effective for developing Thai EFL learners' ICC since the use of authentic materials helped learners develop intercultural attitudes through their own interpretation (Byram, 1997). Thus, promoting the development of local-culture-oriented English lessons was one of the effective ways to encourage the teachers to understand the nature of culture and be able to incorporate cultural aspects into their EFL classroom with cultural awareness and ICC skills.

Implications

Since most of the participating teachers typically established learning objectives based solely on the core curriculum indicators for language for communication strand, the other three were often overlooked. Consequently, the concept of intercultural communication within a culturally diverse world was less likely to be incorporated into ELT. Furthermore, intercultural competence involves not only linguistic and cultural knowledge but also intercultural attitudes, intercultural skills, and cultural awareness (Byram, 1997). Thus, the ICC concept should be an essential part of Thai EFL teaching. These observations suggest that the teachers' intercultural attitudes, knowledge of cultural diversity, and skills of interpreting and relating need to be promoted.

Authors

Patcharin Duangsri is an assistant professor of English for English Education Program, Faculty of Education, Loei Rajabhat University. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in English from Naresuan University. Her areas of interest include ELT and Applied Linguistics.

Wilai Phiewma is a lecturer for Master of Arts Program in English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Loei Rajabhat University. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in English from Naresuan University. Her areas of expertise include ELT and EFL writing.

References

Abdelhalim, S. M., & Aldaghri. A. A. (2024). Creating culture of thinking in language classrooms: An interpretive inquiry into Saudi University EFL instructors' beliefs and practices. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *15*(2), 396-407.

Abd Rahman, S. N., Razali, A. B., Abd Samad, A., Jeyaraj, J. J., & Abdullah, N. S. (2022). Developing sociolinguistic competence in the ESL classroom: A case study of ESL instructors in a Malaysian university. *Asian Journal of University Education*, *18*(4), 1156-1170. https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v18i4.20038

Baker, W. (2008). A critical examination of ELT in Thailand: The role of cultural awareness.*RELC Journal*, *39*(1), 131-146. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688208091144

Bunmak, N. (2023). The effectiveness of mother tongue-based language teaching in facilitating English language skills for Thai university undergraduates and their perceptions on L1 use in English classrooms. *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication*, *28*(44), 43-60.

Byram, M. (1997*). Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. (2013). Language teaching and its contexts. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, *1*(1), 1-26.

Raising Thai EFL Primary School Teachers' Cultural Awareness   through Lesson Designs

Byram, M. (2014). Twenty-five years on – from cultural studies to intercultural citizenship. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *27*(3), 209-225. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2014.974329

Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). *Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: A practical introduction for teachers*. Language Policy Division: Council of Europe, Stasbourg. https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1c3

Chareonkul, C., & Wijitsopon, R. (2020). The English present perfect in authentic use and textbooks: A corpus-driven study. *PASAA*, *60*(1), 275-308.

Cheewasukthaworn, K., & Suwanarak, K. (2017). Exploring Thai EFL teachers' perceptions of how intercultural communicative competence is important for their students. *PASAA*, *54*, 177-204.

Chien, C. W. (2022). Fostering pre-service English teachers' intercultural awareness through lesson designs. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, *24*(1), 88-112. https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v24i1.2803

Chung, E. (2022). Effecting change in teachers' epistemological and pedagogical beliefs about vocabulary learning and teaching: The role of dialogic reflection. *SAGE Open*, *12*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211071084

Deardorff, D. K. (2011). Assessing intercultural competence. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, *2011*(149), 65-79. https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.381

Dolmaci, M., & Sezgin, H. (2021). Culture and the Common European Framework for Languages: A comparative corpus analysis of 2011, 2018 and 2020 texts. *European Journal of Educational Sciences*, *8*(4), 15-27. http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/ejes.v8no4a15

Duangsri, P. (2023). An investigation of student teachers' conceptions on cultural aspects for English language learning: The Thai EFL context. *Journal of Education, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus*, *34*(2), 219-233.

Fenner, A. B. (2008). Cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom. In J. Cenoz & N. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 273-285). Springer. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02325-0_16-1

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.

Hakimi, M., Shahidzay, A. K., Fazi, A. W., & Qarizada, A. (2024). Empirical assessment of ICT impact on teaching and learning in high schools: A study in the context of Balkh, Afghanistan. *EIKI Journal of Effective Teaching Methods*, *2*(1), 6-17. https://doi.org/10.59652/jetm.v2i1.96

Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Press.

Hua, Z. (2014). *Exploring intercultural communication: Language in action*. Routledge Publishing.

Hymes, D. H. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings* (pp. 269-293). Penguin Books.

Iswandari, Y. A., & Ardi, P. (2022). Intercultural communicative competence in EFL setting: A systematic review. *REFLections*, *29*(2), 361-380. https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v29i2.260249

Jiang, B., Liu, L., Guo, Z. W., & Wang, Y. F. (2022). A study of intercultural communicative competence in ELT. *Advances in Journalism and Communication, 10*(3), 297-306. https://doi.org/10.4236/ajc.2022.103018

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the Outer Circle. In R. Quirk & H. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp. 11-30). Cambridge University Press.

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Kramsch, C. (2006). From communicative competence to symbolic competence. *The Modern Language Journal*, *90*(2), 249-252.

Kramsch, C. (2015). Language and culture in second language learning. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and culture* (pp. 403-416). Routledge.

Kroeber, A., & Parsons, T. (1958). The concept of culture and of social system. *American Sociological Review*, *23*(1), 582-583.

Meadows, B. (2016). Culture teaching in historical review: On the occasion of ASOCOPI's fiftieth anniversary. *HOW*, *23*(2), 148-169. https://doi.org/10.19183/how.23.2.294

Nilubol, K. (2020). The impacts of L1 integration towards general English classroom of Thai public university undergraduate students: An account of learning motivation perspective. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, *13*(2), 426-444.

Morales-obod, M., Remirez, M. N. V., Satria, E., Indriani, D. E. (2020). Effectiveness on the use of mother tongue in teaching the concepts of fraction among second grade of elementary school pupils. *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists*, *8*(1), 291-304. https://doi.org/10.17478/jegys.637002

Öztürk, S. Y., & Ekşi, G. (2022). Fostering critical cultural awareness among prospective teachers of English via virtual exchange project. *Journal of Social Sciences of Mus Alparslan University*, *10*(1) 491-502. https://doi.org/10.18506/anemon.1052025

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research*, *62*(3), 307-332. http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00346543062003307

Scollon, S., & Scollon, R. (2000). *The construction of agency and action in anticipatory discourse: Positioning ourselves against neo-liberalism.* [Paper presentation]. 3rd Conference for Sociocultural Research, UNICAMP, Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil. https://www.academia.edu/9566507/The_Construction_of_Agency_and_Action_in_

Součková, Z. (2020). Teacher beliefs and their manifestation in teaching from the perspective of pre-service teacher trainees. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, *8*(2), 114-126. http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/jolace-2020-0016

Srisa-ard, B. (1992). *Lak karn wichai buang ton* [Basic Research Principles] (3rd ed.). Suviriyasarn.

Tomalin, B., & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural awareness*. Oxford University Press.

Ulla, M. B. (2019). Western-published ELT textbooks: Teacher perceptions and use in Thai classrooms. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, *16*(3), 970-977. http://dx.doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.3.13.970

Wolf, S., & Brown, A. (2023). Teacher beliefs and student learning. *Human Development*, *67*(1), 37-54. https://doi.org/10.1159/000529450

Xiao, J. (2010). *Cultural contents of an in-use EFL textbook and English major students'attitudes and perceptions towards culture learning at Jiangxi University of Science and Technology, China.* (Publication No. 151863361) [Master's thesis, Prince of Songkla University]. PSU Knowledge Bank. https://kb.psu.ac.th/psukb/bitstream/2010/7836/1/326069.pdf

An Analysis of Black-Owned Fashion Brands' Instagram Captions

Pannada Dejaqupt*
Kittinata Rhekhalilit
Kasetsart University, Thailand

Abstract

The study aims to analyze the mood structure and mood types used in Instagram captions of Black-owned fashion brands, investigating how these linguistic choices contribute to speech function, power, and identity construction within the mass media. Twenty Instagram posts from 10 brands (two posts from each brand) were used to compile the data. The interpersonal metafunction of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) was applied during data analysis. The findings show a frequent use of declarative (48.98%) and imperative (38.78%) moods while the interrogative mood accounts for 6.12%. From the findings, the predominant speech functions of these captions are statements and commands respectively. Furthermore, power is conveyed through the imperative mood. Additionally, the identity of Black people, which includes the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), is not expressed in the advertising captions of these brands. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how the mood choice shapes the interaction between brands and readers in advertisements of fashion brands owned by Black people.

Keywords: systemic functional grammar, interpersonal metafunction, Black-owned fashion, Instagram, captions

Introduction

Social media is an essential tool for communication in the digital age (Beaudoin, 2023). Instagram, an online application for sharing photos and videos, has grown in popularity among the various social media platforms. Beyond entertainment, it is used for political purposes, including promoting the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement which is the political campaign founded to combat racism and inequality (Chang et al., 2022). It is also recognized as one of the most effective platforms for marketing (Kuligowski, 2023). As a result, Instagram users are likely to encounter various forms of advertising while browsing their accounts.

Previously, many researchers used Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to analyze the verbal language of online advertisements, including Chaisomkun (2017) and Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019). Their results varied depending on the subjects and objectives of the studies. To elaborate, Chaisomkun's (2017) study aimed to analyze the systems of THEME, MOOD, and TRANSITIVITY of nouns and verbs in advertising texts of *Chewajit* lifestyle and wellness magazine. Meanwhile,

Corresponding Author

Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta's (2019) study explored advertising strategies adopted in insurance advertisements and "to reveal the manipulation of customers' needs for annuity policies" (p. 69).

In addition to the goal of selling products, advertisements represent brand identity. Brand identity is how customers perceive a brand, and it can be undeniably influenced by the product itself, the advertising message, and other factors (Mindrut et al., 2015). Especially in the fashion industry, brand identity is important for increasing brand recognition (Conti et al., 2020). Thus, owners of fashion brands must create strategies to make their brands recognizable and visible as a social media platform like Instagram is driving the fashion industry forward (Casaló et al., 2021). Due to the potential of Instagram, brand owners use this application to promote racial equality. Though the equality of Black people has been promoted on various platforms, this topic remains a significant challenge faced by this group, including in the fashion industry (Segran, 2020). An example of a fashion brand that supports Black people through its Instagram advertisements is Polo Ralph Lauren. In 2022, it collaborated with two historically Black colleges, Spelman and Morehouse, after the case of George Floyd in 2020 (Tounsel, 2022). The collaboration was initiated by two alumni, and it resulted in the Morehouse and Spelman Collection (Tounsel, 2022). On the Instagram account of Polo Ralph Lauren, the company shared posts featuring images of Black models and used captions highlighting the importance, contribution, and history of the two colleges. From the above discussion, it can be inferred that when examining advertisements related to Black-owned fashion brands, their importance lies in their role in promoting and propagating Black identities.

Since fashion represents the cultural and socioeconomic values of a society (GreenSuggest, 2023), some ideologies of fashion brands involve promoting social justice, enhancing economic empowerment, and embracing diversity (Forbes Staff, 2024). To provide further clarification, the following descriptions of these concepts are presented. Initially, the promotion of social justice was a term that denoted the manner in which Black-owned fashion companies prioritized the equality of Black people within the fashion industry (Forbes Staff, 2024). It may entail equitable treatment or equal rights and opportunities (San Diego Foundation, 2024). Subsequently, economic empowerment involved providing support to Black entrepreneurs, leading to increased opportunities for a variety of stakeholders in the fashion industry (Forbes Staff, 2024). Lastly, diversity was associated with the fact that Black-owned companies do not restrict their representation to exclusively Black models; rather, they showcase models of various ethnicities and characteristics in their advertisements (Forbes Staff, 2024).

As indicated earlier, advertisements can reflect the identities of Black people. By adopting SFG to analyze advertisements, readers can understand how verbal language reflects cultural identities and the interpersonal relationships between brands and customers. Even though the studies adopting SFG are pervasive among English-speaking countries, the number of studies adopting SFG to analyze advertisements remains limited in Thailand (Chaisomkun, 2017). For this reason, this study aims to analyze the mood structure and mood types used in Instagram captions of Black-owned fashion brands to investigate how these linguistic choices contribute to speech function, power, and identity construction within the mass media. Even though the captions might not be written only by Black people, it can be assumed that they must

be approved of by the brand owners, founders, or marketing teams before being uploaded online as these captions serve as the representatives of the brands. Based on the findings of Chaisomkun (2017), Chueasuai (2017), and Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019) and the researchers' observations, the researchers hypothesized that the prominent mood types found in the captions are declarative and imperative. Moreover, the hypothesis regarding the fact that these brands are Black-owned is that the concepts of social justice, economic empowerment, and diversity are embedded in the selection of mood structures and mood types.

Literature Review

In this section, the researchers provide readers with some background knowledge related to the research topic, the theoretical framework, and previous studies.

Communication, Identity, and Online Advertising

Communication involves generating meanings through various linguistic forms (Joseph, 2004). In addition to conveying meaning, communication also transfers identity (Beauchamp & Baran, 2017), meaning that individuals reveal their identities while they act or speak. To illustrate, Molnár and Lamont (2002) provided an example of how Black people use clothing to express their identities. Furthermore, Sidnell (2002) revealed how Black people use English differently from other native speakers. Accordingly, gaining insight into how individuals communicate can facilitate a deeper understanding of identity (Joseph, 2004).

Regarding the meaning of advertising, Laurie et al. (2019) explained that it is a type of communication that encompasses all marketing processes and production. Qader et al. (2022) divided advertising into five types based on the media used: online advertising, broadcast advertising, product placement advertising, outdoor advertising, and print advertising. Incidentally, online advertising is the most common type of communication among business owners (Farooqi & Ahmad, 2018), and social media has become another means of online communication (Jamil et al., 2021). Business owners use social media platforms, including Instagram, as a major tool for conducting business (Qader et al., 2022). What makes Instagram advertisements compelling is that they are visually appealing to the audience due to the features available on the application. Furthermore, brand owners can benefit from using a relevant caption for the advertising images or videos as it can enhance the post's engagement (Kratsas, 2013). Hence, Instagram is becoming an influential platform for doing business (Kuligowski, 2023). In brief, communication allows people to reveal their identities, and Instagram advertising enables brands to communicate with individuals who have a variety of preferences or identities.

Media Representation and Convergence in Instagram Advertising Captions

The representation of Black people remains problematic in the media. To give an example, Black people are often segregated from the mass media in the United States (Castañeda, 2018). Also, Black people encounter the same situation in social

media (Cai, 2021). To reveal their identities, Black American English or African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is used on social media and other marketing platforms (Feminuity Team, n.d.). Nonetheless, their specific way of using English is viewed as a minor language (Cai, 2021). In addition, it is regarded as the language of uneducated people (Cai, 2021). Thus, Black businesses must adjust their language to connect with a diverse audience. One of the strategies introduced in the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) of Giles and Ogay (2007) is convergence. The convergence strategy occurs when speakers modify their languages to blend in with their interlocutors (Giles & Ogay, 2007). In addition to speech, convergence can also be applied to written language though the audience is not specified during the process of communicating through media (Giles & Ogay, 2007). This kind of linguistic accommodation reflects how social media plays an important role in shaping language use in the context of online marketing. In summary, media representation and language convergence are connected by the ways in which Black-owned fashion brands use language to express their identity and interact with their audience.

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

To examine the language used in the selected Instagram posts, the SFG of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) was adopted. Michael Halliday made a significant contribution to the linguistic field, specifically systemic functional linguistics (Pakir, 2019). His theory explains the connection between language and social roles, and the three types of meanings categorized by their language functions are ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). However, the focus will be on interpersonal metafunction because mood types can explain the relationship between the speaker and the listener as well as the speech function of the captions. Therefore, advertisers would be unable to communicate effectively with their customers without adopting the interpersonal metafunction. By selecting the appropriate language, advertisers can attract potential customers and arouse interest in their products or services (Pizarro, 2017).
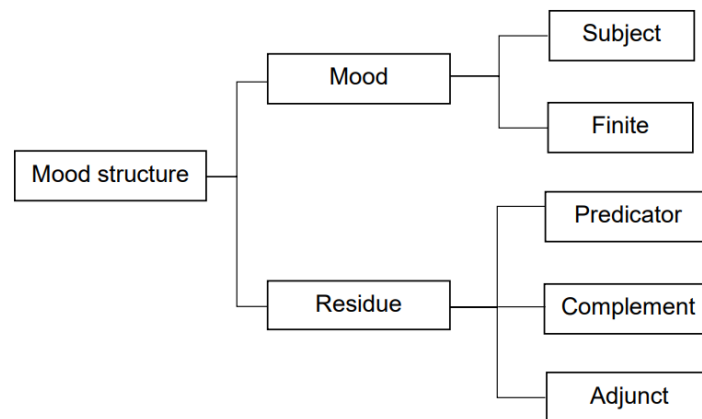
The interpersonal metafunction emphasizes the interaction between the speaker and the listener. Besides human interaction, interpersonal metafunction concerns the meaning of a clause, which serves as the exchange of commodities between speakers and listeners (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Based on the theory, the two types of commodities are information and goods-&-services. Importantly, the indicative mood deals with the exchange of information. However, there are differences in the roles in the exchange between the two subtypes of the indicative mood: declarative and interrogative. The role in the exchange of a declarative mood is giving information, which corresponds with the speech function of a statement. In contrast, the role in the exchange of an interrogative mood is demanding information, which corresponds with the speech function of a question. Unlike the indicative mood, the imperative mood involves the exchange of goods-&-services. Accordingly, the role in the exchange of an imperative mood is demanding goods-&-services, which corresponds with the speech function of a command. In this study, the analysis of the MOOD system, which identifies the mood structure and mood types, was employed to reveal the interpersonal meaning of Instagram captions. Within the mood structure, the Mood element and

Residue are two major components. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) stated that the Mood element comprises Subject and Finite as its components. Grammatically, a Subject component refers to the doer of an action mentioned in the clause. Next, a Finite component is the first element in the verbal group that deals with indicating tenses (past, present, and future) and modality (e.g., may, will). Additionally, the Finite component can be either negative or positive. For the negative Finite component, the word 'not' is used to indicate the negative polarity. Secondly, another component in the mood structure is the Residue, which includes three elements. Firstly, a Predicator is another verbal element, except the first one in the verbal group. If there is only one verb in a declarative clause, that verb functions as both Finite and Predicator. Furthermore, a Complement can be any nominal group that can function as the object or an element that can potentially function as the Subject. Lastly, an Adjunct is added to give extra meaning to the clause such as an "adverbial group or a prepositional phrase" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 155). For instance, the Adjunct of the clause 'She sat in the living room' is the prepositional phrase 'in the living room' indicating the location. Figure 1 presents a summary of mood structure.

Figure 1

Summary of Mood Structure Adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2014)
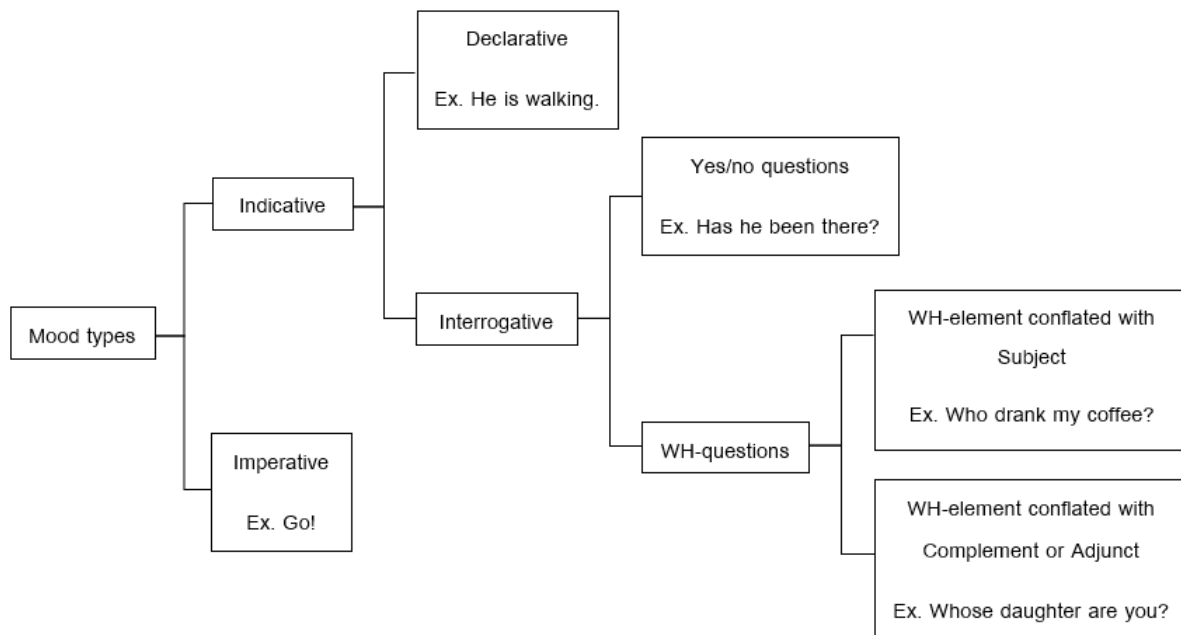

Another element in the interpersonal metafunction that should be considered is the mood type (see Figure 2). There are two main types of mood, namely indicative and imperative. It should be noted that bound clauses (dependent clauses) do not represent mood types such as free clauses (independent clauses). The difference between these two types of clauses is that free clauses "realize either propositions or proposals, serving to develop exchanges in dialogue either by initiating new exchanges or by responding to ones that have already been initiated" while bound clauses cannot do so (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 170). Another concern is that the order of Mood elements can denote a mood type. Within the indicative mood, there are two subtypes. Firstly, the declarative mood is commonly used to express statements (Butt et al., 2003). The order of its Mood elements is Subject, followed by Finite. For example, in the clause 'He is walking,' the Subject is the pronoun 'he,' and the Finite is the word 'is.' Secondly, the interrogative mood can be further categorized into yes/no questions (or polar interrogative) and WH- questions (questions beginning with who, what, where, when, which, whom, whose, how, or why). For the yes/no interrogative, the order of its Mood elements is Finite, followed by Subject. For instance, the clause 'Has he been there?' consists of the word 'has' serving as the

An Analysis of Black-Owned Fashion Brands' Instagram Captions

Finite and the word 'he' serving as the Subject. However, the elements in the WH-interrogative may differ case by case as there are two subtypes of WH- interrogatives. The first is the WH- element conflated with the Subject. This means that the WH-element itself serves as the Subject. For example, the Subject of the interrogative clause 'Who drank my coffee?' is 'who,' and the word 'drank' is both the Finite and the Predicator. Thus, the order of its Mood elements is Subject, followed by Finite. Next, the second subtype of WH- interrogatives is the WH- element conflated with Complement or Adjunct. To demonstrate, the WH- element conflated with Complement of the interrogative clause 'Whose daughter are you?' is 'whose daughter.' Also, the WH- element conflated with Adjunct of the interrogative clause 'Where has the lady gone?' is 'where' as it provides additional information about the location. The order of these interrogatives' Mood elements is Finite, followed by Subject. Finally, the last type is the imperative mood. If an imperative clause begins with a main verb, that verb itself is the Predicator (e.g., Go!). For the negative imperative, the Finite 'do' is presented at the beginning of the clause. Then, the word 'not' is added to make the imperative clause negative as in 'do not' or 'don't.' For instance, the imperative clause 'do not eat' consists of the words 'do' functioning as the Finite, 'not' functioning as part of the Finite that shows the negative polarity, and 'eat' functioning as the Predicator.

Figure 2

Summary of Mood Types Adapted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2014)

Conclusively, the differences between the analysis of the mood structure and mood types of interpersonal metafunction are that the analysis of the mood structure focuses on the organization of grammatical elements within a clause while the analysis of mood types focuses on the communicative function of a clause. The analysis of mood structure and mood types is related to the present study since it illuminates how Black-owned fashion brands use language to communicate with their customers. Additionally, it can reflect the ideologies of Black-owned fashion brands, including social justice, economic empowerment, and diversity (Forbes Staff, 2024). For instance, using the declarative mood is associated with social justice, particularly

An Analysis of Black-Owned Fashion Brands' Instagram Captions

equality, as it does not imply any power. Moreover, using the imperative mood is related to economic empowerment because it often contains messages urging readers to support the brands. Since the study focuses on written language, analyzing mood structure can reveal diversity through linguistic choices, such as grammatical features that differ from the standardized forms. The hypothesis proposing that declarative and imperative moods are prominent in the captions is supported by the statements above, which demonstrate the connection between the mood choice and the ideologies of Black-owned fashion brands.

Previous Studies

In the studies of Chaisomkun (2017) and Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019), the systems of THEME, MOOD, and TRANSIVITY were analyzed. Concerning the system of THEME, the findings of Chaisomkun (2017) revealed that the topical theme, especially the unmarked topical one, prevails in texts. Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019), on the other hand, focused on the Rhemes which mainly involve the average ages of Thai people, definitions of longevity, and details confirming the effectiveness of the BLA Unit Pension. Next, the results regarding the system of MOOD of both studies correspond since the declarative mood is by far the most common type of mood in their studies. While all mood types are found in the findings of Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019), the interrogative mood is absent in the findings of Chaisomkun (2017). For the system of TRANSIVITY, Chaisomkun (2017) showed that the material processes are most commonly found, followed by relational, mental, and verbal processes. Likewise, Punkasirikul and Singhakowinta (2019) indicated that all types of processes such as material, relational, mental, verbal, behavioral, and existential are employed.

In addition to the two studies analyzing three aspects of language, Ajepe (2021) also adopted SFG to explore the language used in television advertisements of banks in Nigeria with a focus on interpersonal meanings. The researcher reported that the declarative mood is the most prominent, followed by the interrogative and imperative moods. In terms of interpersonal metafunction, the frequent use of a declarative mood shows that the messages function to provide information. Moreover, it creates a sense of harmonious interaction as it neither conveys any sense of command nor demands responses from readers. In addition, the analysis of the theme shows that the marked theme is prominent in the indicative mood, which includes declarative and interrogative moods.

To summarize, previous studies examined the use of language from three systems: THEME, MOOD, and TRANSITIVITY. However, the data in this study is restricted to interpersonal metafunction as advertising involves interaction between people. Hence, focusing solely on the interpersonal metafunction allows for a more complete examination within a limited scope and can lead to clearer interpretation of findings. The study aims to contribute to the linguistic field, providing another example of SFG analysis in the context of Black-owned brands that other researchers can adapt. Next, this study sheds light on the topic of language and race, particularly the language used by people of color. Apart from the contributions to the linguistic field, this study may be beneficial to people who would like to advertise their products

on Instagram, as they can study how other brands use different mood structures and mood types to communicate with their audience through captions.

Methodology

This section describes the research subject, the process of subject selection, the methods of data collection, and the procedures for data analysis.

Subjects

The subjects included 20 advertisement posts from 10 Black-owned fashion brands. Since the total number of posts from all brands was more than 20,000, the researchers decided to select only two posts from each brand to reduce data overload and allow them to focus on the most relevant information, thus making the data collection process more manageable. This study focuses on fashion advertisements because fashion has long been intertwined with human lives. Fashion has been used to express preferences, personalities, or identities for an extended duration (Priedel, 2022). Even in the present era, fashion has been an interesting topic that has gained a great deal of engagement on social media, especially on Instagram (Conant, 2023). Regrettably, it is not widely recognized that many fashion trends originate from Black communities. Thus, the scope of the study is restricted to Black-owned fashion brands' advertisements since the researchers would like to highlight the contributions of the Black community to the fashion industry. The 10 selected brands are Andrea Iyamah, CISE, Fe Noel, Kai Collective, lemlem, LITA by Ciara, Pantora Bridal, Simone I. Smith, Thebe Magugu, and Wales Bonner (see Appendix A). The advertisement posts of these brands can reveal their social media strategies on Instagram, including the use of high-quality and relevant images, promotional offerings, and reader-friendly captions to capture the viewers' attention. The names of these brands were sourced from *Oprah Daily* (https://www.oprahdaily.com/style/a35191214/black-owned-clothing-brands/), a website founded by Oprah Winfrey, an African-American billionaire renowned for her work in various industries, including entertainment and fashion (Bloomenthal, 2023; Mercer, 2024).

Subject Selection

The posts were purposefully selected based on two sets of criteria: criteria for selecting brands and criteria for selecting posts. Three criteria were used for selecting the brands. Firstly, the brands were classified as mid-tier influencers, meaning their Instagram accounts had between 50,000 and 500,000 followers. These brands are more approachable to customers since they are popular but less so than celebrities; therefore, brands with Instagram followers in this range should possess high level of skills in producing content to promote their products online (Sanders, 2023). Secondly, the brands had to display the number of likes on their Instagram posts. Lastly, they could not rely solely on phrases for their captions. Next, two criteria were applied for selecting posts. Firstly, advertisement posts had to be uploaded in 2023, the year that the research was conducted, to ensure the data was current and minimize potential biases during data collection. Secondly, all advertising images had to include at least
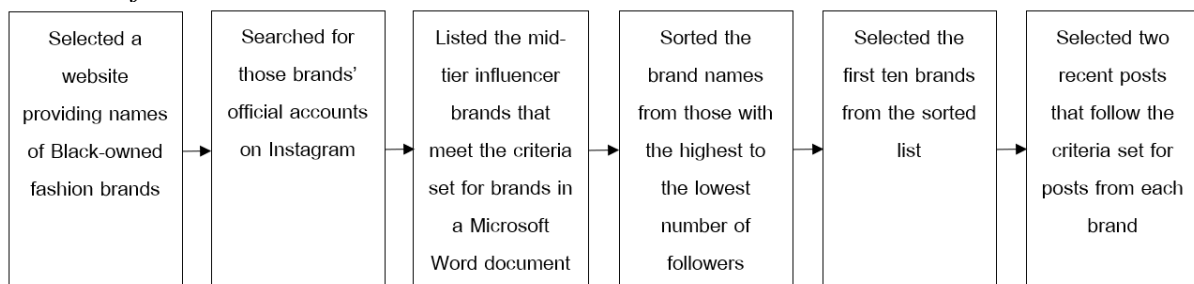
An Analysis of Black-Owned Fashion Brands' Instagram Captions

one represented participant defined as "people, places and things" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 48).

Data Collection

A qualitative approach was applied to this research. From the outset, the researchers limited the scope of the data by focusing solely on fashion brands' advertisements. The term 'fashion' encompasses various trends, including clothes, shoes, bags, and accessories. Since the focus is on Black-owned brands, the researchers eliminated irrelevant information by selecting a website focusing solely on Black-owned businesses. After searching for a website providing names of Black-owned fashion brands, data from the *Oprah Daily* website was selected as the website creator also works in the realm of fashion (Mercer, 2024). Thus, the website should be able to provide accurate information relevant to Black-owned fashion brands as the website owner has extensive experience working in this industry. To clarify, the Black-owned brands in this study refer to brands whose founders are Black people. During this stage, information was sourced regarding the founders of the 10 brands, available on many websites. Next, the researchers searched for the name of each brand on Instagram to locate their official Instagram accounts. If Instagram accounts were found, the researchers listed mid-tier influencer brands meeting the criteria in a Microsoft Word document. Subsequently, the list of brands was sorted from those with the highest to the lowest number of followers. Then, only the first 10 brands were selected. Lastly, two of the most recent posts (between October and November 2023) that meet the criteria were selected from each brand. Figure 3 presents the summary of the data collection process.

Figure 3

Process of Data Collection

| Selected a website providing names of Black-owned fashion brands | Searched for those brands' official accounts on Instagram | Listed the mid-tier influencer brands that meet the criteria set for brands in a Microsoft Word document | Sorted the brand names from those with the highest to the lowest number of followers | Selected the first ten brands from the sorted list | Selected two recent posts that follow the criteria set for posts from each brand |

Data Analysis

Captions were analyzed using Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) interpersonal metafunction framework. Each caption was examined by splitting sentences into individual clauses for analysis. This process resulted in 46 free clauses and three bound clauses, totaling 49 clauses.

An example of the caption analysis from an advertisement post is provided in Figure 4, which represents one of the subjects in this study, was presented in Table 1.

Figure 4

Example of an Advertising Image from Kai Collective's Post

Table 1

Sample of Caption Analysis from Kai Collective's Post

Shop	her	now	at kaicollective.com
Predicator	Complement	Adjunct	Adjunct
Residue			

From Table 1, the caption's mood type is Imperative, which only consists of the elements in the Residue. The word 'shop' is the Predicator as it is the only verbal group. Furthermore, the noun 'her' is recognized as the Complement. Finally, the adverb of time 'now' and the prepositional phrase 'at kaicollective.com' are Adjuncts as they denote time and the website location.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study. Through a clause level analysis of the captions, it was determined that the most frequently used mood type was declarative, followed by imperative and interrogative moods. Table 5 shows that each mood type consists of different elements in the mood structure (see Appendix B for examples). By categorizing clauses into two types, which are free clauses and bound clauses, the findings reveal 46 free clauses and three bound clauses. This indicates that the total number of identifiable mood types is 46, as SFG specifies that only the mood types of free clauses can be identified. The findings supported the hypothesis that both declarative and imperative moods are prevalent in the captions of Black-owned brands' advertisements.

Declarative Mood and its Structure

Based on the analysis of captions, there were three obligatory elements in a declarative mood. The first two elements were Subject and Finite, which are parts of the Mood element, and the last element was the Predicator, which is part of the Residue. Upon further investigation of the mood structure, four structural patterns were revealed, which differ in terms of elements in the Residue.

Among 24 declarative clauses, the structure that contained obligatory elements solely could be found in two clauses, meaning that most clauses usually contain other optional elements in the Residue, including Complements and Adjuncts. Being the most prominent, the structure containing all elements in the mood structure was found in 11 clauses. Furthermore, there were 10 clauses containing the obligatory elements and Complements, while there was one clause containing the obligatory elements and Adjuncts. Significantly, it was clear that the positive polarity of the Finites was used more than the negative as only one negative Finite was used in the clause 'and we can't wait to say #yestothedress with future #pantorabrides this weekend.'

Apart from the presence of free clauses mentioned earlier, there was one clause serving as a bound clause used with one declarative clause. To illustrate, the bound clause was 'which features images of Thebe's late grandmother Matiego Magugu praying' shown in Table 2. No different from an independent clause, the mood structure of the dependent clause is Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Complement).

Table 2

Analysis of an Embedded Structure of a Sentence from Thebe Magugu's Post

Lloyd	wears	the Heirloom Shirt	in Ice Blue,	which	features	images of Thebe's late grandmother Matiego Magugu praying
Sub-ject	Finite	Predi-cator	Comple-ment	Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue			Mood		Residue	

To analyze the bound clause, the relative pronoun 'which' is the Subject. The verb 'features' functions as both the Finite and the Predicator, and the noun phrase 'images of Thebe's late grandmother Matiego Magugu praying' is the Complement.

Imperative Mood and its Structure

Dissimilar to the declarative mood, the only obligatory element of the imperative mood is the Predicator, which is written in its base form. There are five structural patterns. A total of 19 imperative clauses were found in the data, primarily consisting of all elements in the Residue (11 clauses). An example of a clause employing this structure is presented in Table 1. Moreover, there were three clauses consisting of a Predicator and an Adjunct. Similarly, the structure consisting of a Predicator and a Complement was adopted in three clauses. Next, the structure consisting of the Predicator alone was used in one clause, which was 'DM to purchase.' Both 'DM,' which stands for 'direct message,' and 'to purchase' are Predicators. Despite the co-occurrence of elements in the Residue mentioned above, a Finite, which is part of the Mood element, can be used in an imperative clause as shown in Table 3. However, the example given below is the only clause using this structure.

Table 3

Analysis of an Imperative Clause from LITA by Ciara's Post

Don't	miss	out	on the magic
Finite	Predicator	Adjunct	Adjunct
Mood	Residue		

In the above clause, the word 'don't' is the Finite showing the negative polarity. Unlike the other clauses, this clause is the only imperative clause that tells readers not to do something while most imperative clauses are positive. Next, the Predicator was the verb 'miss.' Nevertheless, the preposition 'out,' which is considered part of a phrasal verb, is not the Predicator, but recognized as the Adjunct. Also, the prepositional phrase 'on the magic' was the Adjunct.

Considering the bound clauses, two of these were used with the imperative clauses mentioned above. In the imperative sentence 'Shop now before they're gone,' the bound clause was 'before they're gone.' Its elements in the mood structure included the Mood element, consisting of the Subject 'they' and the Finite 'are,' and the element in the Residue, which is the Predicator 'gone.' Finally, the last bound clause was found in the sentence 'If you need a little something extra for your Thanksgiving menu, try this special cornbread recipe, inspired by my niece, Sydney.' The first clause was the bound clause. Its elements in the mood structure included the Mood elements which are the Subject 'you' and the Finite 'need' and the elements in the Residue which were the Predicator 'need,' the Complement 'a little something extra,' and the Adjunct 'for your Thanksgiving menu.'

Interrogative Mood and its Structure

All three interrogative clauses, which are WH- interrogatives use the same structure of Residue (Complement/WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct). An example of the caption using this structure is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Analysis of an Interrogative Clause from CISE's Post

What statement	are	you	making	with your looks?
Complement/WH-	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Adjunct
Residue	Mood		Residue	

In the interrogative clause 'What statement are you making with your looks,' the phrase 'what statement' is the WH- element conflated with Complement, making it part of the Residue. Next, the Mood elements include the verb 'are' serving as the Finite and the pronoun 'you' serving as the Subject. Ultimately, two more elements in the Residue are the Predicator 'making' and the Adjunct 'with your looks.'

Table 5

Distribution of Mood Structure and Types

Type of clause	Mood type	Mood structure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Free	Declarative	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)	11	22.45
		Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Complement)	10	20.41
		Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator)	2	4.08
		Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)	1	2.04
		Total	24	48.98
	Imperative	Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)	11	22.45
		Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)	3	6.12
		Residue (Predicator and Complement)	3	6.12
		Residue (Predicator)	1	2.04
		Mood (Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)	1	2.04
		Total	19	38.78
	Interrogative	Residue (Complement/ WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)	3	6.12
		Total	3	6.12
Bound	N/A	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Complement)	1	2.04
	N/A	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator)	1	2.04
	N/A	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)	1	2.04
		Total	3	6.12
		All total	49	100

In addition to the typical order of elements in the Residue which is Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), the results indicated that these elements can be placed between other elements. Consider the clause 'Sign up to join our world,' its elements consist of Predicator (sign), Adjunct (up), Predicator (to join), and Complement (our world). The Predicator appears again after the Adjunct while the Complement, which is usually placed before an Adjunct, is shown at the end of the clause. This type of interposition affects the complexity of the sentence as readers will need more time to comprehend the messages, especially when many elements are added to the same clause.

An Analysis of Black-Owned Fashion Brands' Instagram Captions

To summarize the key findings of the mood structure and mood types, the most frequently found mood type was declarative, and its most common mood structure comprised all elements. Next, the second-most prominent mood type was imperative, which predominantly employed the mood structure that included all elements in the Residue. Ultimately, the interrogative mood was found least frequently, and all clauses used the mood structure of Residue (Complement/ WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct). Concerning the elements in the mood structure, it is notable that most Subjects were human (e.g., proper names and pronouns), whereas most Complements were common nouns that are not human. Furthermore, the verbs functioning as the Predicators were related to the acts of shopping and booking more than the 'to be' verbs. Finally, most Adjuncts provided information related to the manner, time, and place or served as the particles of phrasal verbs.

Discussion and Conclusion

To sum up, this study examined the mood structure and mood types of Instagram captions of Black-owned fashion brands. Declarative mood was used far more frequently than the interrogative mood although both are subtypes of indicative mood. Next, the imperative mood was the second-most frequent mood type found in the captions. Regarding the variety of the mood structure, all interrogative clauses followed the same pattern while declarative and imperative moods used various patterns.

Interpretation of the Mood Choice in Instagram Advertising Captions

In the context of Instagram advertisements, the selection of mood types can indicate speech functions and power relations between the brands and readers. Concerning the speech function, the declarative mood indicates the speech function of statement because it is used to give information about Black-owned fashion brands' products straightforwardly. Readers are perceived as the receivers of information, and writers are recognized as the senders of information (Eggins, 2004). The most forthright way of demanding goods-&-services from readers is using the imperative mood (Butt et al., 2003). This mood type elicits a sense of urgency and demands actions. Moreover, the use of imperative clauses relates to the speech function of command. In Pennock-Speck and Fuster-Márquez's (2014) study, imperative clauses in advertisements primarily functioned as recommendations rather than direct commands. The interrogative mood, which serves as the speech function of asking questions, was found to be the least frequent. This could be due to its nature, as it requires responses from readers and prompts reflection. On the other hand, messages are more spontaneously conveyed through declarative and imperative moods. Additionally, because Instagram is a popular channel among those between the ages of 18 and 34 (Winter, 2024), keeping the captions concise with clear and encouraging messages is key (Wai, 2020). Hence, using declarative and imperative moods can fulfill this point. This results in the interrogative mood being recognized as less assertive than other mood types. Regardless of mood types, approximately 96% of these captions adopted the positive polarity of Finites. Kinney (2018) and Noemí

(2021) agree that the use of positive language is consistently more impactful than negative language, particularly when attempting to convince someone to act. Human brains are better at remembering core messages, not negative expressions like the words 'not' or 'no' (Noemí, 2021). Therefore, using messages that do not require readers to interpret them is more effective and memorable.

Apart from the speech function, power is reflected through the selection of mood types. First, the declarative mood is usually associated with conveying information in a non-coercive way. Although a modal Finite 'must,' which shows the necessity of an action, was used once in the declarative clause 'You must opt in to receive marketing and promotional SMS messages from CISE,' it does not serve as a direct command as does using an imperative clause. Hence, using this mood type results in an equal power distribution between the brands and the readers. Similarly, the interrogative mood does not reveal the writer's power over readers as it functions to engage readers and provoke their thoughts. Ultimately, the imperative mood indicates the brands' power over the readers. The advertiser's role is to guide the target audience to perform specific actions, such as clicking on a link or liking a post. Therefore, this mood type suggests a power dynamic in which the brand claims authority over customer behavior.

The findings are aligned with those of Chaisomkun (2017) in the way that the declarative mood is the most common mood type found in advertisements, followed by the imperative mood. The declarative mood is commonly used in advertising captions because it can function to describe a product, show the stance of the brand owner, or create brand credibility. Also, the imperative mood used in advertising captions functions to encourage readers to purchase a product and leave some remarks about the product. Hence, the study would seem to support the hypothesis that declarative and imperative moods are essential in advertising captions. Also, the concepts of social justice and economic empowerment are seen in the use of declarative and imperative moods, respectively. Nonetheless, the captions do not reveal the concept of diversity as only Standard English is used.

Convergence and Identity of Black People in Online Advertisements

As is widely recognized, Black people have a distinct way of using English known as AAVE. This includes features such as the use of habitual or invariant *be*, the omission of the auxiliary 'will' in the future tense, among others (Sidnell, 2002). Nevertheless, the findings of this study reveal no such linguistic features that are part of Black people's identities; all clauses used in the captions of these Black-owned brands use Standard English.

Given that the captions are presented on social media, there are several possible reasons why the brand owners choose not to use AAVE. Principally, using standard language makes captions more accessible to all groups of readers, not just Black people. As mentioned earlier, there are notable differences between AAVE and Standard English; readers who are unfamiliar with the dialect may find it difficult to fully understand the messages. In addition, the use of standard language can increase the credibility and professionalism of the brand. According to Williams (2022), dialects are often perceived as informal languages because they are used by a limited

group of people. Furthermore, the grammatical features of the dialect that differ from Standard English may be regarded as ungrammatical. Consequently, employing standard language in online advertisements may be perceived as more professional. Considering all these factors, adopting a convergence strategy allows brands to reach diverse audiences and facilitates more accessible communication, albeit at the cost of not representing the identity of Black people.

Implications of the Study

This study analyzed mood structure and mood types to shed light on how marketers use SFG to design Instagram captions. An effective Instagram advertising caption captures attention, engages the audience, encourages conversation, and strengthens the brand's relationship with its readers. Purposeful mood selections that reflect the brand's identity and resonate with the target audience achieve this efficacy.

Black-owned fashion companies commonly use a combination of declarative and imperative moods to confidently announce their brand identity and inspire their audience to take action. They promote dialogue and foster a sense of community by employing interrogative expressions. Understanding these tactics can help other brands and marketers create captions that effectively engage audiences and establish deeper connections on Instagram. This insight links the study's findings on mood selection to practical marketing applications, illustrating how language choices can improve the overall effectiveness of social media advertising.

Limitations and Recommendations

The limitations of this study include the fact that not all aspects of the three metafunctions in SFG are addressed, and the sample size may be insufficient for generalizability to the wider population. Moreover, data were collected from only one social media platform due to time constraints. For future investigations, the researchers recommend that subsequent studies should analyze how the interpersonal metafunction varies across different social media platforms and types of discourse. In addition to language analysis, it would be valuable for future research to explore multimodality in advertising media.

Authors
Pannada Dejaqupt is a master's student in the field of English for International Communication (EIC) at Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand. Her research areas include Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). She can be contacted at pannada.de@ku.th.

Kittinata Rhekhalilit is a lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand. He is also the director of KU Language Centre. His research areas include syntax, sociolinguistics, language change and variation, and linguistic landscape. He can be contacted at kittinata.r@ku.th.

References

Ajepe, I. F. (2021). An interpersonal metafunctional analysis of television advertisements of selected banks in Nigeria. *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, *9*, 29-41. https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/An-Interpersonal-Metafunctional-Analysis-of-Television-Advertisements-of-selected-Banks-in-Nigeria.pdf

Beauchamp, S., & Baran, S. (2017). *Introduction to human communication: Perception, meaning, and identity*. Oxford University Press.

Beaudoin, C. E. (2023). Do social media matter? The effects of information seeking on COVID-19 psychological and behavioral processes. *Telematics and Informatics*, *83*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2023.102027

Bloomenthal, A. (2023, September 17). *Who is Oprah Winfrey?* Investopedia. https://www.investopedia.com/articles/insights/072816/how-did-oprah-winfrey-get-rich.asp

Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., & Yallop, C. (2003). *Using functional grammar: An explorer's guide* (2nd ed.). National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. https://giadpatagonia.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/butt-et-al-using-functional-grammar-2003.pdf

Cai, J. (2021). Social media on racism of African American in USA. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, *631*, 157-163. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220105.031

Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2021). Be creative, my friend! Engaging users on Instagram by promoting positive emotions. *Journal of Business Research*, *130*, 416-425. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.02.014

Castañeda, M. (2018). *The power of (mis)representation: Why racial and ethnic stereotypes in the media matter*. University of Massachusetts Amherst. https://scholarworks.umass.edu/communication_faculty_pubs/60/

Chaisomkun, P. (2017). An analysis on narrative advertising of health products. *Humanities & Social Sciences*, *34*(3), 118-145. https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/HUSO/article/view/109821/86241

Chang, H. H., Richardson, A., & Ferrara, E. (2022). #JusticeforGeorgeFloyd: How Instagram facilitated the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. *PloS ONE*, *17*(12), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0277864

Chueasuai, P. (2017). The interpersonal metafunction and translation of power relations: A case study of Fifty Shades of Grey. *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities*, *20*(3), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-02003001

Conant, F. (2023, May 11). *Fashion hour! How social media plays a role in fashion trends and "what's hot in 2023!"* Impact. https://www.palomar.edu/impactmagazine/2023/05/11/fashion-trends-palomar-2023/

Conti, G. M., Mazzola, A., Motta, M., & Pillan, M. (2020). Fashion and brand awareness: An evidence-based approach to the analysis of distinctive elements in communication. *Journal of Textile Science and Technology*, *6*, 177-189. https://doi.org/10.4236/jtst.2020.64015

Eggins, S. (2004). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics* (2nd ed.). Continuum. https://repository.dinus.ac.id/docs/ajar/An_Introduction_to_SFL_2nd_edition_ Suzanne_Eggins.pdf

Farooqi, R., & Ahmad, F. (2018). The effectiveness of online advertising on consumers' mind - An empirical study. *International Journal of Engineering and Technology*, *7*(2), 48-51. https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i2.11.11006

Feminuity Team. (n.d.). *Black American English: A language in its own right, not anyone's to recite.* Feminuity. https://www.feminuity.org/post/using-bve-as-a-non-black-person-is-appropriation

Forbes Staff. (2024, February 19). *Empower your style: Elevate your wardrobe and support black-owned fashion brands this BHM*. Forbes. https://forbes.com.ph/world/empower-your-style-elevate-your-wardrobe-and-support-black-owned-fashion-brands-this-bhm/

Giles, H., & Ogay, T. (2007). Communication Accommodation Theory. In B. B. Whaley & W. Samter (Eds.), *Explaining communication: Contemporary theories and exemplars* (pp. 293-310). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

GreenSuggest. (2023, October 23). Why fashion is important for the youth of today. *Medium*. https://medium.com/@GreenSuggest/why-fashion-is-important-for-the-youth-of-today-7ad06ece8bb9

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge. https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4651874/mod_resource /content/1/Intro%20to%20FG.pdf

Jamil, K., Dunnan, L., Gul, R. F., Shehzad, M. U., Gillani, S. H. M., & Awan, F. H. (2021). Role of social media marketing activities in influencing customer intentions: A perspective of a new emerging era. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.808525

Joseph, J. (2004). *Language and identity: National, ethnic, religious*. Palgrave Macmillian.

Kai Collective [@kaicollective]. (2023, October 28). *Our vibrant Nova set is versatile and transitions seamlessly from day to night ♡ Shop her now at kaicollective.com* [Photograph]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cy8YJC1Mt-d/?img_index=2

Kinney, K. (2018, February 19). 3 reasons for avoiding negative language in content marketing. *Aronson Advertising*. https://www.aronsonads.com/blog/3-reasons-avoiding-negative-language-content-marketing/

Kratsas, C. (2013, April 18). Text vs. images: Reach a higher percentage of your fans? *SnapRetail*. https://snapretail.com/snapretail-blog/text-vs-images-wins-social/

Kress, G. R., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://cdn.glitch.me/05cf2253-657b-4ca7-a4fe-293daf3e7498%2Fkress%20and%20van%20leeuwen%20-%20reading%20images%20the%20grammar%20of%20visual%20design%202.pdf

Kuligowski, K. (2023, February 16). *12 reasons to use Instagram for your business*. Business. https://www.business.com/articles/10-reasons-to-use-instagram-for-business/

Laurie, S., Mortimer, K., & Beard, F. (2019). Has advertising lost its meaning? Views of UK and US millennials. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *25*(6), 765-782. https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2018.1536623

Mercer, E. (2024, September 12). Oprah Winfrey is the muse and face of Sally LaPointe's Spring 2025 Collection. *WWD*. https://wwd.com/runway/spring-2025/new-york/lapointe/review/

Mindrut, S., Manolica, A., & Roman, C. T. (2015). Building brands identity. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, *20*, 393-403. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(15)00088-X

Molnár, V., & Lamont, M. (2002). Social categorisation and group identification: How African-Americans shape their collective identity through consumption. In A. McMeekin, K. Green, M. Tomlinson & V. Walsh (Eds.), *Innovation by demand: An interdisciplinary approach to the study of demand and its role in innovation* (pp. 88-111). Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719062674.003.0007

Noemí. (2021, February 26). "We don't lock you in a contract" - Why negative language is not a good idea in advertising. *The Marketing Robin*. https://www.themarketingrobin.com/negative-language-advertising/

Pakir, A. (2019). Professor Michael Alexander Kirkwood (M.A.K.) Halliday, 1925-2018, founding father of Systemic Functional Linguistics. *Asian Englishes*, *21*(3), 324-328. https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2019.1608720

Pennock-Speck, B., & Fuster-Márquez, M. (2014). Imperatives in voice-overs in British TV commercials: 'Get this, buy that, taste the other'. *Discourse & Communication*, *8*(4), 411-426. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481314537578

Pizarro, A. D. (2017, February 6). Language in the world of marketing (advertising). *Rome Business School*. https://romebusinessschool.com/blog/language-world-marketing-advertising/

Priedel, F. (2022, August 22). 5 reasons why is fashion important & essential. *Fashinnovation*. https://fashinnovation.nyc/5-reasons-why-fashion-important-essential/

Punkasirikul, P., & Singhakowinta, J. (2019). The analysis of linguistic features in annuity advertisements. *Humanities & Social Sciences*, *36*(1), 67-106. https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/HUSO/article/view/149472/130699

Qader, K. S., Hamza, P. A., Othman, R. N., Anwer, S. A., Hamad, H. A., Gardi, B., & Ibrahim, H. K. (2022). Analyzing different types of advertising and its influence on customer choice. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development (JHED)*, *4*(6), 8-21. https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.4.6.2

Sanders, R. (2023, April 17). *The 5 types of influencers you need to know*. Simplilearn. https://www.simplilearn.com/types-of-influencers-article

San Diego Foundation. (2024, June 15). What is social justice? *San Diego Foundation*. https://www.sdfoundation.org/news-events/sdf-news/what-is-social-justice/

Segran, E. (2020, November 11). *The fashion industry is notoriously racist. Here's how to make it more inclusive*. Fast company.

https://www.fastcompany.com/90514039/the-fashion-industry-is-notoriously-racist-heres-how-to-make-it-more-inclusive

Sidnell, J. (2002). *Outline of AAVE grammar*. Center for Democracy and Technology. https://cdt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Outline_of_AAVE_grammar___Jack_Sidnell_2002_1_Afr.pdf

Tounsel, T. N. (2022, April 25). *In age of racial reckoning, Ralph Lauren partners with Morehouse and Spelman grads on vintage black fashion styles*. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/in-age-of-racial-reckoning-ralph-lauren-partners-with-morehouse-and-spelman-grads-on-vintage-black-fashion-styles-180292

Wai, S. (2020, June 15). Why Instagram captions matter and how to write them. *Tribute Media*. https://www.tributemedia.com/blog/why-instagram-captions-matter-and-how-to-write-them

Williams, S. (2022, April 5). The difference between language and dialect: Who decides and why does it matter? *Beelinguapp*. https://beelinguapp.com/blog/the-difference-between-language-and-dialect

Winter, D. (2024, June 3). Instagram marketing: Create your strategy for 2024. *Shopify*. https://www.shopify.com/blog/instagram-marketing

Appendix A
Information about the 10 Black-Owned Brands

Brand name	Year of establishment	Founder	Number of Instagram followers	Number of posts	Instagram account
Andrea Iyamah	2011	Dumebi Andrea Iyamah	417K	3,441	@andreaiyamah
Wales Bonner	2014	Grace Wales Bonner	356K	1,673	@walesbonner
Pantora Bridal	2013	Andrea Pitter	225K	5,239	@pantorabridal
Fe Noel	2011	Felisha Noel	188K	1,169	@fenoel
Thebe Magugu	2016	Thebe Magugu	177K	589	@thebemagugu
CISE	2020	Blake Van Putten	158K	1,308	@cise.store
Simone I. Smith	2011	Simone I. Smith	156K	2,258	@simoneismith
lemlem	2007	Liya Kebede	134K	3,633	@lemlemofficial
Kai Collective	2016	Fisayo Longe	132K	2,661	@kaicollective
LITA by Ciara	2021	Ciara Wilson, Russell Wilson, and Christine Day	113K	401	@litabyciara

Note. The number of Instagram followers and posts of every brand was collected in 2024, May 16. It should be noted that the sources of the abovementioned information are from the official Instagram accounts provided in the right column of the table. The data for Andrea Iyamah's year of establishment and founder are from *Black-owned swimwear brands for your next trip to the beach*, by Boitumelo Masihleho, 2022 (https://www.funtimesmagazine.com/2022/05/31/400845/black-owned-swimwear-brands-for-your-next-trip-to-the-beach). Copyright 2023 by Locable. The data for Wales Bonner's year of establishment and founder are from *Style spotlight on Grace Wales Bonner*, by Nick Remsen, 2021 (https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/wales-bonner-interview-paris-fashion-week/index.html). Copyright 2016 by Cable News Network. The data for Pantora Bridal's year of establishment and founder are from *Pantora Bridal founder Andrea Pitter gets real about lack of diversity in bridal industry*, by Angela Andaloro, 2021 (https://littlethings.com/lifestyle/andrea-pitter-pantora-bridal). Copyright 2023 by Wild Sky Media. The data for Fe Noel's year of establishment and founder are from *This Brooklyn designer is shifting the Eurocentric narrative around the Renaissance art trend*, by Brooke Bobb, 2019 (https://www.vogue.com/article/fe-noel-designer). Copyright 2023 by Condé Nast. The data for Thebe Magugu's year of establishment and founder are from *Thebe Magugu on the political power of fashion*, by Mellissa Huber, 2021 (https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/articles/2021/9/thebe-magugu-interview). Copyright 2000-2023 by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The data for CISE's year of establishment and founder are from *Inside the black-owned fashion line finding success with three simple words: 'Protect black people,'* by Jenna Caldwell, 2021

An Analysis of Black-Owned Fashion Brands' Instagram Captions

Appendix B
Examples of Clauses Elicited from the Captions

Mood type	Speech function	Example	Mood structure
Declarative	Statement	1. The NEME Fringe MIDI Dress is dance floor approved.	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator and Complement)
		2. A statement has been made.	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator)
		3. We're loading all our goodies in our PBW Patent Leather Bags this year.	Mood (Subject and Finite) + Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)
Imperative	Command	4. Dance with your heart.	Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)
		5. Embrace warmth this season with Andrea Iyamah Knitwear.	Residue (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct)
		6. Have a Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving!	Residue (Predicator and Complement)
Interrogative	Question	7. What statement are you making with your looks?	Residue (Complement/WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)
		8. Who would you upload and immortalise through cloth?	Residue (Complement/ WH-) + Mood (Finite and Subject) + Residue (Predicator and Adjunct)

Note. Only three clauses from each mood type are selected to give readers more explicit examples. Nonetheless, two out of three imperative clauses are the same. Thus, one of them has been removed from the table to prevent redundancy.
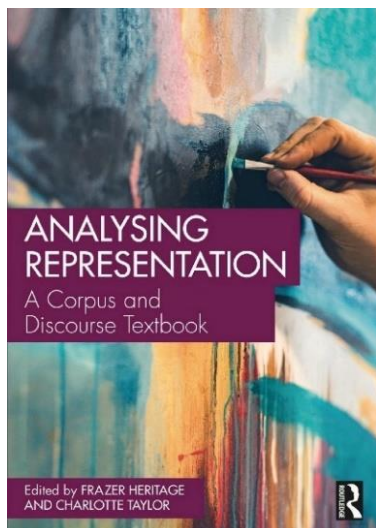
Book Review

Heritage, F., & Taylor, C. (Eds.) (2024). *Analysing Representation: A Corpus and Discourse Textbook.* Routledge.

By   Huang Fan
Chengdu University, China / Graduate School of Language and Communication, National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand

In the digital era, discourse studies frequently apply corpus linguistics as a method to analyze large text collections. These studies often share a common feature: investigating how certain entities are represented in discourse. To assist with such analyses, *Analyzing Representation: A Corpus and Discourse Textbook* edited by Frazer Heritage and Charlotte Taylor (Heritage & Taylor, 2024) offers a comprehensive guide for conducting corpus-assisted discourse analysis.

This book contains 14 chapters. The first six chapters introduce the foundational concepts of corpus linguistics and explore how key ideas of corpus linguistics—such as concordance line, collocates, frequency and keyness, choosing and building corpora, and annotation and mark up—interface with discursive analysis of representation. The next five chapters introduce common linguistic patterns of representation in CADS, alongside relevant case studies, covering topics such as social actors, transitivity and systemic functional linguistics (SFL), metaphor, indexicality, and discourse keywords. These chapters emphasize micro-level linguistic patterning in representation. The last three chapters showcase the comprehensive application and evaluation of CADS, concentrating on comparative analysis, digital discourse analysis, and criteria for evaluating CADS.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the fundamentals of discourse studies and corpus linguistics. The authors also rationalize the connection between representation and discourse, drawing on Stuart Hall's explanation and arguing that "representation is the construction of groups, concepts, things, etc. through a process of semiosis, which in turn draws on discourse(s)" (Heritage & Taylor, 2024, p. 5). Furthermore, this chapter discusses the mutual contribution of both methods to each other. Next, Chapter 2 to Chapter 6 introduce the building blocks of applying CADS to investigate representation. Chapter 2 defines a concordance or "Key Word in Context (KWIC)" as a list of all occurrences of a specific node word in a corpus and explains how concordance lines can be used to investigate representation in discourse. Chapter 3 defines the collocation as a linguistic patterning where words frequently co-occur and convey meaning through their association, revealing how words are used and represented in discourse. Chapter

4 underscores the significance of frequency and keyness in corpus linguistics for investigating how language constructs meaning and ideologies. It also introduces analytical tools such as AntConc and Sketch Engine, which are used for conducting frequency and keyword analyses. Chapter 5 explores the process of selecting and constructing corpora for discourse analysis of representation, emphasizing the importance of designing specialized corpora aligned with research questions. Chapter 6 explains annotation and mark-up in corpus linguistics, describing annotation as the process of labeling a corpus with specific categories to understand how language constructs representations of reality and frames concepts linguistically.

After covering the fundamentals of corpus linguistics in the discursive analysis of representation, Chapters 7 through 11 focus on applying CADS to analyze linguistic pattens related to representation. To investigate social actors, Van Leeuwen's framework is employed to understand the various ways they can be represented. Chapter 7 introduces how this representation is critically analyzed by using corpus linguistics concepts such as keywords and collocation. Chapter 8 demonstrates two case studies analyzing transitivity of SFL using analytical tools such as AntConc and Sketch Engine to investigate agency related to gender in children's literature. Referring to conceptual metaphor theory, Chapter 9 explores how to use CADS to investigate metaphor, providing a systematic and empirical approach to analyzing metaphorical representations. By explaining that indexicality is central to how language represents concepts and identities, Chapter 10 presents case studies that investigate how indexicality is used in discourse to index gender, nationality, and other social identities within CADS. Chapter 11 examines how discourse keywords (DKWs) shape public discourse and discusses how different groups can use DKWs to establish their preferred representation of an issue.

The final three chapters present a comprehensive application of CADS in analyzing representation. Chapter 12 explores comparative analysis to investigate representation by drawing on both intra-corpus and inter-corpus analyses. It highlights corpus construction and frequency as fundamental to comparison, elaborating on diachronic and cross-language comparison. Chapter 13 showcases various textual features related to representation in digital discourse, such as hyperlinks, hashtags, animations, and emoji, which offer a broad scope for meaning-making and can be further analyzed under CADS. Finally, Chapter 14 provides criteria to guide readers in evaluating the quality of their CADS.

After reviewing this book, several outstanding merits emerge. First, it focuses on representation, a social practice widely investigated in various discourse studies. The book meticulously elaborates on how to apply CADS to analyze representation and provides an updated definition of key concepts from both corpus linguistics and (critical) discourse studies, presenting thorough methodological frameworks that explain the interface between the two methods. Second, as an effective textbook, it outlines the full steps of CADS utilized in the discursive analysis of representation and demonstrates how theoretical concepts are operationalized in actual studies. Third, to reinforce key points, the authors recommend a wide range of relevant reading resources for readers

to explore independently. Fourth, the book identifies numerous corpus analytical software tools frequently applied in recent research and explains how to use them for analyzing representation.

In spite of these valuable insights, there are some potential limitations. First, while the book presents theories related to discourse study and corpus linguistics, it introduces a wide range of abstract concepts from corpus linguistics before demonstrating their application in actual research, which may not be accessible to beginners in discourse studies. Second, since corpus linguistics relies on the assistance of computer software, the book introduces many analytical tools used in analyzing representation that may be challenging for novices to master in a short time. Third, although the book focuses on CADS, it dedicates a larger portion of the 14 chapters to discussing key concepts and analytical steps in corpus linguistics rather than those from discourse studies. Overall, this book provides valuable opportunities for researchers interested in CADS to gain updated knowledge and guidance for conducting actual research.

Author

Huang Fan (huang.fan2@stu.nida.ac.th) is a lecturer at the College of Foreign Language and Culture, Chengdu University in China and a Ph.D. student (Language and Communication) at the Graduate School of Language and Communication (GSLC), National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) in Thailand. His research interest lies in discourse studies and translation studies.
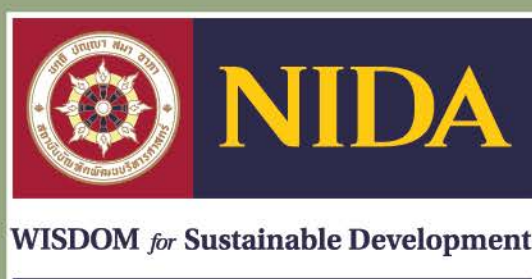
References:

Heritage, F., & Taylor, C (Eds.). (2024). *Analysing Representation: A Corpus and Discourse Textbook*. Routledge.

Ethical Guidelines on Journal Publication

- Authors must ensure that their submission is original, fully referenced and that all authors are represented accurately.
- Authors must openly disclose the source of all data and third party material, including previously unpublished work by the authors themselves. Anything that could compromise the originality of the submission should be expressly avoided.
- Authors must identify any third party material that they intend to include in their article, and obtain written permission for re-use in each instance from the relevant copyright holders.
- Authors failing to comply with the above suggestions risk accusations of plagiarism and can result in retraction of published articles.

WISDOM *for* **Sustainable Development**

GSLC

Graduate School of Language and Communication

http://lc.nida.ac.th