The Association of English Teachers in Thailand (Thailand TESOL)

Established under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra

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Key dates
Submit an Abstract (200-250 words)  1 August – 30 September 2022

Registration for Speakers
Early-Bird Registration  15 October – 15 November 2022
Regular Registration  16 November – 15 December 2022

Registration for Participants
Early-Bird Registration  15 October - 30 November 2022
Regular Registration  1 December 2022 – 25 January 2023
Notes from the President

On behalf of Thailand TESOL, I would like to congratulate all authors who have contributed their state-of-the-art papers to this e-Proceedings of the 41st International Virtual Conference under the theme “ELT in the Digital Era and Beyond: Innovation, Engagement, and Resilience” from 21st – 22nd January 2022.

Considered as one of the key academic publications of Thailand TESOL, this Proceedings has been peer-reviewed rigorously by local and international experts and reviewers to meet academic and research standards. The papers included in this Proceedings address key issues, highlight significant findings, and offer essential theoretical and pedagogical implications that can potentially lead to the betterment of English language teaching and learning to all practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and scholars in our fields and communities at national and international levels.

This publication could not have been successful without the synergy of our editors: Assistant Professor Dr. Wutthiphong Laoriandee and Assistant Professor Thanis Tangkitjaroenkun, whose valuable expertise and tremendous efforts are highly appreciated and recognized. Besides the Proceedings, those who wish to disseminate their research, they can also submit their papers to our THAITESOL Journal indexed by ERIC and TCI (Tier 2), which welcomes high-quality papers all year round.

On this last note, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all speakers, participants, reviewers, and sponsors for their contributions to our Virtual Conference 2022 amid the COVID-19 disruption. I am happy to share with all readers of this Proceedings that our onsite conference is back! Our upcoming Conference under the theme “ELT for the Future: Navigating the Possibilities” will be held at Ambassador Hotel in Bangkok from 27th – 28th January 2023!

We look forward to meeting you in person and welcoming you to Thailand once again. In the meantime, please stay safe and healthy.

Enjoy reading!

Associate Professor Dr. Singhanat Nomnian

Thailand TESOL President
Notes from the Editor

Thailand TESOL Conference Proceedings 2022 is the culmination of the 41st Thailand TESOL International Conference 2022. The Proceedings features eight papers that cover issues related to English linguistics, assessment, teaching approaches and school analyses. Interestingly, we can see the four levels from the bottom, written language used by students, up to the scale of the school analyses in one province of Thailand. All the papers, however, have an overarching aim of promoting the quality of English language education that may be applied in other contexts, not limited to Thailand or Japan, from which the contributors come.

Farrell analyzed the use of paraphrasing strategies and attitudes of undergraduate level students in Thailand. It was found that one strategy was preferred and overly used while some were not found at all in the students’ produced texts. In a more linguistic note, Oya studied the relevance of dependency distances of sentences produced by L2 learners. The findings of the studies by Farrell and Oya help ELT scholars understand more about the written English produced by language learners. These have pedagogical implications for the English writing classroom.

In the area of assessment, the Proceedings features two papers on self-assessment and peer-assessment. In his practical paper, Tomita outlines stages for self-assessment that were implemented in the context of Japan. With the CEFR Can-Do descriptors and training, students could assess their own ability of English more accurately. For the peer-assessment paper, Charles found one type of rubric for EFL presentation slightly more useful than the other. The readers can enjoy the rich details and the teaching implication in his paper.

At the level of a classroom, the Proceedings includes a paper on a teaching mode by Ponin and Thumawongsa, and a teaching approach by Mamac. Due to COVID-19, the online flipped classroom has become more relevant and of interests among EFL scholars and practitioners. Ponin and Thumawongsa reported the impact of the online flipped classroom on Thai students’ English grammatical accuracy. The positive results were found in both the linguistic accuracy and the learners’ attitudes. Mamac introduced the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach to preservice teachers in a 4-month training. The readers will learn about this SFL approach as an option in the design of their writing pedagogy.

The last pair of papers, at the educational institution level, tackles the issue of power distance and quality. Through the visual design analysis of the photos on international school websites, the interesting paper by Sangsayan and Zilli infers the level of power distance of the popular international schools in Thailand. The readers will learn more about the combination of representational meaning,
interactive meaning and compositional meaning employed in the analysis. On the side of the Thai mainstream schools, Luangkrajang investigated the situations and problems of schools in a province in Thailand. She found a clear pattern in the quality of schools under different governance. The findings may be useful for policymakers and school administrators in Thailand and other contexts.

As the editor of the Proceedings, I am delighted to see a wide range of papers in this collection. Apart from having verbally disseminating their research findings at the Conference, the authors of the papers in the Proceedings have gone beyond the verbal fleeting mode. More permanently, this e-Proceedings is hoped to have some advantages for the future decisions of ELT practitioners, researchers, administrators, and policymakers, whether it be a decision on the teaching approaches, assessment, or school administration.

I hope these papers will help guide your ELT decisions.

Wutthiphong Laoriandee
Editor
Peer Assessment in EFL Presentation: A Comparison of Two Rubrics

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Abstract

Presentation skills can be improved through peer review. During peer review, students can evaluate their peers’ presentations and then reflect on and improve their own future work. A rubric is one method of evaluation and it can help build students’ peer review skills by presenting the components of a presentation for student analysis, allow students to assess a presentation as a teacher would and increase student autonomy and transparency. This project tracks two classes of university students in Japan over the course of one 15-week semester with three presentations. One class was given a rubric with full explanation of each component while the other class was given a rubric with no explanation of the components. The data collected examine both the teacher’s and students’ use of rubrics and found the results to be erratic and somewhat inconclusive, with the “blank” rubric to be slightly more useful to students. This perhaps indicates a need for greater teacher instruction on how to conduct peer review. Suggestions for application and future research are made in this paper.

Keywords: peer review, rubric, learner agency, assessment, presentation

Introduction

Benefits of Peer Review

The use of peer review in EFL classrooms helps students learn to assess student output by analyzing their peers’ work. Ideally, this creates a positive feedback loop as students then reflect on their own work in the future. Peer review also decreases the role of the teacher and increases the role of the students as they take on a teacher-like role and develop a greater sense of agency and autonomy (Benson, 2013). Another benefit of peer review is to make the EFL classroom more interactive, as students observe and assess their peers’ presentations. Rather than being passive observers, the peer reviewers become active participants in the learning process.
Use of Rubrics

Rubrics, or a list of instructions for assessment, facilitate these goals as the rubrics present students with the criteria to be assessed as well as potential grade ranges. If the rubric used by the students is the same as the one used by the teacher, its use also serves to increase transparency in the classroom as the students will gain a greater understanding of the assessment process.

This project uses analytic rubrics exclusively. The analytic rubric format, with its itemized criteria and grade ranges, was chosen for its relative ease of use for both teachers and students. Students can break down their assessment of a classmate’s performance into discrete components with clear and concise grades ranges. The exact analytic rubrics used in this project will be explained in greater detail in the Methodology section. The holistic rubric, which “provides a single global scale that will produce a single general rating” (Brown, 2017, p. 24), was not selected as the researcher decided that the holistic rubric would be too challenging to L2 students and could potentially disrupt the assessment and the data collection process.

Issues in Peer Review

It should be noted here that peer review generally has its share of issues or potential obstacles that need to be addressed. Many students may be unfamiliar with the peer review process and thus not make effective or accurate assessments of their peers’ presentations. Hyland (2014) observed that students may focus on more surface or superficial aspects of the presentation, such as the images used rather than the content. In addition, students may not be comfortable giving critical or corrective feedback to other students and may prefer that the teacher (or “expert”) do so. Particularly with L2 students, many may think their L2 skills are insufficient to properly assess the work of other L2 students and may defer to the teacher, as the process of peer review may appear to be “blind leading the blind” (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Other possible problems with peer assessment can include favoritism, in which student assessors merely praise their friends or happen to agree with their classmate’s opinions being presented. All of these issues are potential roadblocks to accurate peer assessment and should be noted in this study. Ultimately, these issues are difficult to detect, let alone prevent, and so are not included in the interpretation that follows in this article.

Research Questions

1. Will student assessment improve over the course of three presentations?
2. Does the rubric with the explanatory text help students improve their peer review skills?
3. What variation (if any) can be observed in students' assessment when using two different
rubrics?

Assessment

This project seeks to record student progress as they learn to assess their peers’ presentations with the use of analytic rubrics. While comparing student assessment to teacher assessment, this project will attempt to demonstrate the utility of rubrics and peer assessment in an East Asian university setting and encourage other EFL educators to use and examine peer assessment in their classrooms. Despite the issues, it is believed that peer assessment is still a worthwhile activity that needs to be incorporated into the EFL classroom.

In this project, student improvement is measured by the student average assessment moving towards the assessment of the teacher. While no teacher is perfect, the experienced teacher can set the standard for student assessment in the classroom. As such, any development of peer review skills will be gauged by the relationship between teacher assessment and average students’ assessment of the presentations in order to answer the first and second research questions. The final research question will be answered by examining the potential variation between the two classes of students and their average assessments, independent of the teacher’s assessments.

Literature Review

Cultural Issues in Peer Review

As listed in the previous section, Hyland (2014) has provided numerous pros and cons of peer feedback in EFL writing, which can be applied to presentation as it also represents peer evaluation of student output. Both Hyland (2014) and Ngyuen et al. (2009) have addressed the largely Western-based ideas of peer review as a form of student-centered or even cooperative learning as being potentially unfamiliar or alien to students from the more collective Asian cultures. The anthropologist Hall (1981) stated that high-context cultures such as Japan have more clearly delineated ideas of in-group/out-group distinctions and may reject certain educational methods as being Western and foreign. Ngyuen et al. (2009) went so far as to argue that implementation of Western-based methods may be a form of neocolonialism, or imposing foreign ideas onto Asian students.

Other researchers in Asia disagree as they argue that peer review, while at times foreign to Asian students, can be successfully implemented and have value in the EFL classroom. For example, Jung (2016) found that a majority (69%) of her students in South Korea viewed peer review in a positive light. Likewise, Sato (2013) found that his Japanese students, over time and with instruction, grew more
confident with the peer review process. Likewise, this project assumes that peer review is useful to Japanese students and is an achievable goal for the Japanese L2 classroom.

Considering this disagreement, this project will examine the use of peer assessment in oral communication for the purpose of developing peer review skills and student autonomy. In addition, this research project will attempt to fit into a larger body of research on peer feedback and encourage other EFL educators, particularly those in Asian contexts, to use and examine the use of peer review.

**Use of Rubrics in Peer Review**

The use of rubrics can also be connected to previous research and literature. Rubrics, both analytic and holistic, provide “a coherent set of criteria for students’ work that includes descriptions of levels of performance quality” (Brookhart, 2013, p.4). While the holistic rubric can be easier to use for the experienced teacher, the analytic rubric produces a more comprehensive diagnosis of performance which can be easier for L2 students. Japanese researchers (Koizumi et al., 2020) documented the opposing characteristics and the strengths and weaknesses of holistic and analytic rubrics, providing instruction and inspiration to this project.

**Methodology**

This project was conducted on two third-year university classes with 14 and 18 students. The students were Japanese majors who were required to take three years of English courses with a native speaker teacher. Over the course of 15 weeks, students created and gave three solo presentations, roughly one presentation every 4–5 weeks. Leading up to each presentation, the students watched videos of mock presentations and studied the required components of a proper presentation (outline, introduction slide, figures, etc.). The three topics of these presentations included sales, technical and academic research. Each individual student presenter was responsible for choosing their topic, conducting research, and then creating PowerPoint slides for their presentation. The presentation schedule was selected at random using a random number generator on the internet, motivating students to be ready to present at any time.

The teacher and the students assessed the presentations which was then given to the presenters the following week, allowing the teacher to record the numerical data. Student feedback was given anonymously as students were instructed not to write their names on the feedback worksheets. Peer reviewers obviously knew the names of the students being observed, resulting in a single-blind study that was predicted to encourage honest feedback. Rubrics or feedback sheets were prepared by the teacher and were designed to help students shape their assessment and build peer review skills as
mentioned previously. The first class was given a rubric with four grade ranges and five criteria for students to use in their assessment. A miniature version of the rubric is shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1

No Text Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent (4)</th>
<th>Good (3)</th>
<th>Above Ave (2)</th>
<th>Average (1)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slides</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points:</strong></td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second class was given a rubric with supporting text that explains the characteristics of each grade range for each criterion. An abbreviated form is shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Supporting Text Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent (4)</th>
<th>Good (3)</th>
<th>Above Ave (2)</th>
<th>Average (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Clearly defined</td>
<td>Mostly defined</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Disorganized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Contact</td>
<td>Entire time</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>Mostly reads</td>
<td>No eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Clear, smooth</td>
<td>Mostly clear</td>
<td>Awkwardness</td>
<td>Many mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Language</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Discomfort</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slides</td>
<td>Memorable</td>
<td>Few errors</td>
<td>Serviceable</td>
<td>Many errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points:</strong></td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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The first rubric without supporting text was predicted as being easier for students to understand and use and perhaps allow them to independently create justifications for their assessments. The second rubric provides explanatory text in order to support L2 students as they assess their peers and develop peer review skills. It is possible that the explanatory text could become a hindrance to student assessment, as the foreign language text may distract or confuse students as they conduct peer review.

The three research questions presented in the introduction will be answered exclusively through quantitative analysis. Specifically, the numerical data to be examined will be the students’ assessment averaged and the teacher assessment. The relationship between these two variables will be analyzed to answer the research questions. As an aside, students often gave text feedback, both positive.
and critical. Since the text feedback was largely impromptu and not required, it will be omitted from analysis for this project.

Results

Due to the size of the classes, student assessments were averaged together for ease of analysis. The relationship between the student average and the teacher assessment was examined in order to answer the research questions and track any development of peer review skills in the students. This averaged relationship and the standard deviation of student assessments are the two variables examined in this project.

First Class

The first class with the blank rubric showed greater improvement in that the student average moved towards teacher assessment. Having said that, the three scores do not show a steady pattern, but rather seem to bounce around the teacher’s assessment. On the first presentation, the student average was 1.36 points (out of a possible 20 points) higher than the teacher’s score, indicating the students generally graded their peers’ presentation more highly than the teacher. The second presentation demonstrated a sharp change (minus 2.2 points) as the student average dropped slightly below (-0.66) the teacher’s score, indicating the students were on average more critical than the teacher. On the third and final presentation, the student average climbed up to be only slightly higher (0.26) than the teacher. The data for the first class is shown below in Figure 3.

The standard deviation of student scores was also recorded and should be explained here. The data collected on the first presentation showed the greatest (1.99) variation, indicating a rather wide distribution of student assessment. With the second and third presentations, the variation decreased slightly (1.61 and 1.66, respectively).

Second Class

The second class, using the rubric with supporting text, showed quite different data and patterns. The student average score on the first presentation was quite close (0.29) to the teacher’s assessment. With the second and third presentations, the student averages move away (-0.68 and -1.09, respectively) from the teacher’s assessment, indicating a more critical assessment of their peers. While Matsuno (2017) found that students tended to assess peers more leniently, the second class in this project showed the opposite trend. The variation in the students’ assessments exhibited a similar pattern to the first class, with the first presentation displaying noticeable variation (1.7) and gradually decreasing over
the second and third presentations (1.67 and 1.46, respectively). These data are presented below in Figure 3.

*Data From the First Class (No Text Rubric)*

![Graph of Data From the First Class (No Text Rubric)](image)

**Figure 4.**

*Data From the Second Class (Supporting Text Rubric)*

![Graph of Data From the Second Class (Supporting Text Rubric)](image)
Discussion

The assessments of the first class with the simpler rubric exhibited greater variation on the first presentation, with some reduction in variation across the whole term. The second class with the supporting text on their rubric assessed their peers with less variation on the first presentation and only a mild reduction in variation over the term. The reduction in variation over the course of three presentations does not indicate that student assessment is moving towards teacher assessment (here designated as improvement), but rather indicates that student assessment synthesized or moved closer to each other over the fifteen weeks.

In relation to teacher assessment, the first class exhibited a rather erratic pattern, with student assessment starting at 1.36 points higher than the teacher then moving to 0.66 points below the teacher and finishing 0.26 points above teacher assessment. While erratic, these data indicate that the class with less text support on the rubric moved closer overall to teacher assessment over the term, indicating development of peer review skills. The second class with the extra text support on their rubric exhibited a slightly higher assessment at 0.29 points higher than the teacher. Looking at the second and third presentations, the data demonstrated a pattern of student assessment moving away from teacher assessment with average scores of 0.68 and 1.09 points (respectively) lower than the teacher.

The first research question can be answered in the positive with the first class as student assessment moved towards teacher assessment, albeit in an erratic manner. The “blank” rubric appears to be more useful to students as they assessed their peers and developed peer review skills. The second rubric with the explanatory text appears to be less useful to students as their assessment moved away from the teacher and even displayed a more critical assessment of their peers’ presentation. This indicates that the second research question can be answered in the negative as the rubric with the explanatory text did not appear to aid in the development of peer review skills. Regarding the third research question, there appears to some variation in student assessment with the use of different rubrics. As mentioned above, the first rubric without the supporting text resulted in greater student development of peer assessment. While the second rubric, with its supporting text, did not appear to promote peer review skills in the second class, the variation among the students decreased over the course of three presentations, indicating a synthesis of peer reviewer assessment.

The possible reasons for this discrepancy are numerous and should be addressed here. As mentioned in the introduction, many students are not comfortable with the peer review process and may not see the purpose of it (Hyland, 2014). Another possible explanation is that students may lack modulation in their assessment and so will score peer presentations much higher (or lower) than the more experienced teacher. Finally, the explanatory text, although graded for the L2 students, may have
been confusing and not so useful to students during the peer assessment process, thus answering the second research question in the negative.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this research project was to examine the relationship between teacher and peer evaluation of oral presentations using two different analytic rubrics. The goal or hope of this project was to determine which rubric would be more conducive to developing peer review skills in Japanese university. If a clear pattern of development could be determined, then future classes and research could focus on the more effective rubric.

The actual results of this project were somewhat erratic and, in the case of the second class, appear to be counter-productive to the aim of increasing student peer review skills. Looking at the first class with greater improvement, EFL educators in the future can implement peer review with these data in mind. To this end, future applications of peer review should include more explicit instruction from the teacher and more recording and analysis of teacher and student comments on student presentations. This expanded and more comprehensive implementation of peer review sessions should increase students’ skills and help them develop greater critical thinking in the classroom. In turn, this will allow researchers to collect more data in the future and track potentially more significant patterns.

In order to facilitate improved future research, the limitations of this study must be presented and explained. One limitation of this project was that both teacher and student assessment was that only quantitative data was collected. Although students and the teacher wrote comments on the feedback sheets, this was entirely optional. Also, comments were neither collected nor analyzed in this study. Future research in this area could include analysis of comments in a more mixed methods form in which both quantitative and qualitative data could be gathered and subject to interpretation. Qualitative data, mainly written feedback, may present patterns of peer assessment that could run concurrently with the quantitative analysis or present new and different patterns.

Another limitation of this project is that students were given rudimentary instruction on how to conduct peer review. The grade ranges and criteria were briefly explained on the first day of presentations. It is not required of the class and was added by this researcher, both for student development and this research project. Even so, future classes could be instructed more thoroughly on how to assess their peers’ presentations. This can be done through providing examples of “good” and “bad” presentations and then asking students to practice assessing them. This form of modelling is commonly used in the ESL/EFL classroom, with the goal described by Wette (2015) as presenting “flawed or exemplary …products for analysis and discussion” (p.75).
Another issue, one more basic, is that this project only collected data on three presentations. This small data set can potentially limit the validity of any analysis, as more complex patterns in the data cannot be observed. This project was limited to two classes with three presentations each within a 15-week semester. Doubling the scope of future projects and collecting data on six presentations over a one-year period could reveal more useful patterns of student development.

To conclude, EFL teachers can use peer review in the classroom to increase student agency as they take greater control of their own learning. Peer review also decreases the role of the teacher and helps students to see the more interactive and social aspects of language learning. EFL students can thus see that they can use the L2 not only as a performance for the teacher to grade, but also to educate and even entertain their fellow students. Further actions by teachers, such as more intensive peer review instruction, can facilitate these pedagogical goals more effectively.

References


Brookhart, S. M. (2013). How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading. ASCD.


Situation and Problems in English Teaching and Learning Performance at Schools in Nakhon Nayok Province, Thailand

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to explore the situations and problems pertaining to the English teaching and learning performance of schools in Nakhon Nayok, with the purpose of identifying solutions to these problems. The sample group of quantitative data consists of students selected by a multi-stage sampling technique and the sample group of qualitative data includes management staff and English teachers from schools in Nakhon Nayok selected by a purposive sampling technique. The research tools included a questionnaire for students and a structured interview with management staff and the teachers. The collected quantitative data was analyzed by using mean, standard deviation and percentage while the qualitative data was analyzed, summarized and presented in a content analysis. The results indicate that students from schools under the governance of the Office of the Basic Education Commission gave lower scores in areas of curriculum, teaching methodology and technique, classroom and environment support and evaluation compared to those overseen by the Office of the Higher Education Commission and Office of the Private Education Commission. The most significant problems affecting English language teaching and learning as reflected by the students and the teachers are associated with the English knowledge and skills of students, the teachers’ performance and the learning environment. In addition, there are insufficient facilities to support language learning.

Keywords: situations and problems, English teaching and learning, schools in Nakhon Nayok, Education in Thailand

Introduction

The English language plays a crucial role in language education at educational institutes in Thailand. The Basic Education Core Curriculum provided a framework for enhancing capacity to maintain Thailand’s competitive position in the world community (Ministry of Education, 2001). The Ministry of Education recognized the importance of improving English communication skills and
capabilities, with policies issued and imposed to reflect this position. English class times were increased to 5 periods per week. Collaborative teaching between Thai and foreign teachers was implemented, and a Communicative Language Teaching approach was practiced. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was applied as a guideline for upskilling teachers in addition to integrating ICT, action research in the class and providing English boot camp to teachers.

Despite the fact that the Ministry of Education put tremendous efforts in reforming English teaching and learning in terms of curriculum, teachers and learners, the results were quite on the contrary. The national standardized test, namely the Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET), produced results in the 2017 academic year showing that the majority of students in the 6th, 9th and 12th grades received 20.01–30.00 scores (equivalent to 34.330%, 47.478% and 39.276% respectively). There were few students in the 6th, 9th and 12th grades that received scores between 90.01–100.00 (equivalent to 1.554%, 0.218% and 0.310% respectively) (The National Institute of Educational Testing Service, 2018). The O-NET results showed that most students were at an unsatisfactory level of language proficiency, implying the need for improvement.

Considering the O-NET results of English in Nakhon Nayok, the average scores of students in the 6th, 9th and 12th grades are at the bottom of the graph which are 31.75%, 27.59% and 24.89% respectively (The National Institute of Educational Testing Service, 2018). Nevertheless, the situation and problems found in English teaching and learning environments within Nakhon Nayok province may be different from the above analysis due to the diverse nature of the area. This research aimed to study the situation and problems of English language teaching and learning as a way to propose solutions addressing the specific problems in order to improve the quality of English teaching and learning of schools in Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand.

**Literature Review**

**Teaching and Learning Management**

Cambridge English (2019) defines the framework components of English teaching. First, learning and the learner components require understandings of general learning theories and concepts, language-teaching methodologies and concepts. Second, teaching, learning and assessment involve not only the practical application of knowledge, but also familiarity with and practice in using various teaching techniques. This component includes planning language learning, using language-learning resources and materials, managing a constructive learning environment, teaching language systems and language skills, assessing language learning, teachers’ ability to use English effectively and
appropriately, language knowledge and awareness of the teacher, and professional development and values.

The above components highlight the importance of teacher who is crucial for student learning. The teacher is placed at the top of the process to reflect that if the teacher completes quality of teaching and professional development, the quality of student learning can be attained.

**Teaching and Learning Assessment according to the Core Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2551**

**Objectives of learning assessment.**

Learning assessment is performed for the purpose of developing the learners’ capacity and for appraising their achievement. The results of the assessment reflect the learners’ major capacities and their desired characteristics prescribed in the Core Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2551. In addition, it also provides feedback to teachers on how to improve instructional approaches in order to improve the learners. Learning assessment can be divided into four levels including classroom assessment, school assessment, local assessment and national test. The classroom assessment is part of the learning process in which teachers regularly measure students’ performance by applying various assessment techniques. In addition, it must be aligned with the learning standards and indicators. The school assessment is administered by the school in order to appraise the learners’ achievement on a semester or an annual basis. The learners are evaluated for their reading, analytical thinking and writing skills in addition to desired characteristics and developmental activities. The local assessment is administered to evaluate learners’ achievement using standard examination papers prepared by the educational service area. The results are used for developing quality of education. The national test is administered on an annual basis throughout the country in order to assess learners’ quality at national level. The contents of the examination are aligned with the learning standards prescribed in the Basic Education Core Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008).

**Educational quality assurance.**

Quality assurance is the systematic review of education to maintain and improve quality, equity and efficiency. Educational quality assurance is for ensuring national policy and education institutional priorities to meet societal needs. It is a system for building confidence, satisfaction, and operation development, which can be monitored and self-assessed (Kadish, 2019). Teachers play an important role in quality assurance of education. They are the ones who translate learning indicators, standards and strands, desired characteristics, school’s vision and mission into practice. In addition, as stakeholder
and input of the quality assurance process, teachers design and plan learning activities and programs of study, teach and support learning, assess and give feedback to learners, and develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance.

**Related Studies**

Thitisupakul (2016) conducted a study of factors affecting teaching and learning performance of English in Bangkok Metropolitan schools. The research findings revealed that teaching and learning performance of English were at a moderate level. The factors affecting teaching and learning performance of English included those from students, teachers and administrators. Students’ learning attitudes, learning behaviors and learning participation, the teacher’s teaching, learning management and measurement and evaluation, and the administrators’ academic leadership and nondirective behavior were the key factors.

Nounlong (2017) studied the scenarios and problems of English learning and teaching for Prathomsuksa 4–6 in Dararajchawit School Group under the Uttaradit Primary Education Service Area Office 1. The research yielded that the most serious problems of English learning management were insufficient instructional media and budget. Most schools did not have enough English lab while the equipment was not in good condition. In addition, the overwhelming workload of teachers, lack of understanding of the English curriculum and skills of English teaching were considered major problems to English learning and teaching.

Binmadnee et al. (2018) studied the problem condition and the solution of English studying in the upper-secondary Islamic private school students in three southern border provinces. The research revealed that the most serious problem was students’ aptitude and the irrelevant contents of the lesson or the curriculum. Moreover, teacher’s personality had the least impacts on the problem condition in English teaching and learning. The researcher suggested to develop the curriculum which corresponded with the context, and the needs and the desire of students.

According to the literature review related to English learning and teaching, it was found that there were many factors that contributed to the situation. Such factors included the curriculum not being an appropriate match to the school environment, a severe lack of instructional media, as well as the use of outdated resources that were, in some cases, irrelevant to the learning contents. In addition to this, classroom activities tended to be lecture-based, with the teacher often relying on a direct grammar translation approach. More often than not, language activities were also not provided to students to allow them the opportunity to communicate in English. Many students were not motivated and engaged in the learning activities because they were not able to see the benefit of English language use.
Significantly, one major factor affecting the teaching and learning of English is the teacher themselves. In many cases, the teachers were assigned extra work that was not related to teaching, while in others, the teachers had not graduated with an English major. Therefore, they often lacked subject knowledge and expertise in English communication. Finally, underfunding with respect to the support of English language activities in the classroom and beyond also affected quality of the lessons (Binmadnee et al., 2018; Nounlong, 2017, Thitisupakul, 2016).

Research Methodology

Population and Sampling

To get a holistic view of the situation and problems of English teaching and learning, the quantitative data from students and the qualitative data from teachers and the school’s management staff are required. The research was conducted from July 2018–December 2019. The research implemented the following processes. First, sample size was determined based on the Yamane technique with a 95% confidence level. The schools representing each office of supervision were randomly chosen before contacting the selected schools and randomly choosing the classrooms from grades 6th, 9th and 12th for survey data collection. These class levels were required to take the national exam at the end of the academic year. The management and teachers from the selected class were invited for the interview.

Table 1

Number of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>OBEC</th>
<th>OPEC</th>
<th>OHEC</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were more female students who responded to the questionnaire, equivalent to 53.94%. Male students comprised 43.35% of the respondents. With respect to the types of school, the majority of the students that took part in the survey were from schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission, representing 66.75% of the respondents. The students from schools under the purview of the Office of the Private Education Commission comprised 14.75% of the total respondents, while 14.78% represented those from schools under the Office of the Higher Education Commission. A total of 2.71% of the respondents failed to specify the type of school.
Research Tools

In order to understand the situation of English teaching and learning at schools in Nakhon Nayok province, the questionnaire for collecting quantitative data from students asked personal information and 35 questions with the 5-rating scales about curriculum, teaching technique and approach, classroom and environment support, and evaluation and assessment. There were another 3 open-ended questions asking students to write about problems and their needs for ideal English classroom. The questionnaire was validated by three reviewers using Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). The result was equivalent to 0.60–1.00. It was then tried out. The reliability level was calculated by Cronbach’s coefficient alpha which was equivalent to 0.93.

In addition, the structured interview for qualitative data from the management and the teachers pertained to the policy on language education, human resources, teaching and learning management, problems and obstacles of teaching English, and proposed solutions to the problems. There were 21 questions in the interview form which was validated by three reviewers using IOC. The result was equivalent to 0.60–1.00. It was then tried out. The reliability level was calculated by Cronbach’s coefficient alpha which was equivalent to 0.94.

Data Collection and Analysis

Five hundred questionnaires for student-use were distributed. Of this number, 406 questionnaires were returned which was equivalent to a return-rate of 81.20%. The data was analyzed using computer software to calculate mean, standard deviation and percentage of the scores from Parts 1 and 2 in the questionnaire. The data from Part 3 was categorized into issues including problems, expectations and suggestions. All of the data were finally interpreted, summarized and presented in a descriptive analysis.

The structured interview was conducted at the targeted schools, each of which taking approximately 30–45 minutes. The data collected were analyzed, summarized and presented in a content analysis.

Results

Descriptive Analysis of Data from Questionnaire

Table 2

*Students’ Opinions on English Class*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Curriculum</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 English curriculum is appropriate for application in daily life.</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Curriculum promote students’ learning.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 English curriculum is aligned with local context.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 English curriculum responds to your needs.</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Hours of class time per week are appropriate.</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Teaching Technique an Approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Teacher uses English as medium of instruction.</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Teacher focuses on grammar and exercises more than application.</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Teacher emphasizes on practicing English conversation.</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Teacher strictly follow textbook.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Teacher communicates with students in English effectively.</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Teacher integrates other subjects with English to improve students’ language skills.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Teacher provides learning activities focusing on both listening, reading, writing and speaking throughout the academic year.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Teacher appreciates when students perform well in the class.</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Classroom and Environment

#### Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1 There are flashcards, pictures or other decorations to promote English language.</th>
<th>109 (26.85%)</th>
<th>131 (32.27%)</th>
<th>98 (24.14%)</th>
<th>34 (8.37%)</th>
<th>34 (8.37%)</th>
<th>3.61</th>
<th>1.20</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2 There are appropriate materials and seating layout for each classroom activity.</td>
<td>92 (22.66%)</td>
<td>143 (35.22%)</td>
<td>106 (26.11%)</td>
<td>39 (9.61%)</td>
<td>26 (6.40%)</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 There is English books corner in the classroom.</td>
<td>64 (15.76%)</td>
<td>104 (26.85%)</td>
<td>127 (31.28%)</td>
<td>50 (12.32%)</td>
<td>61 (15.02%)</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 There is English camp organized.</td>
<td>129 (31.77%)</td>
<td>122 (30.05%)</td>
<td>84 (20.69%)</td>
<td>28 (6.90%)</td>
<td>43 (10.59%)</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Students study English with native speakers.</td>
<td>172 (42.36%)</td>
<td>109 (26.85%)</td>
<td>85 (20.94%)</td>
<td>20 (4.93%)</td>
<td>20 (4.93%)</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Teacher can recommend other learning resources.</td>
<td>176 (43.35%)</td>
<td>140 (34.48%)</td>
<td>64 (15.76%)</td>
<td>13 (3.20%)</td>
<td>13 (3.20%)</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 There is an English sound lab.</td>
<td>106 (26.11%)</td>
<td>119 (29.31%)</td>
<td>100 (24.63%)</td>
<td>38 (9.36%)</td>
<td>43 (10.59%)</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Students have opportunity to use the English sound lab.</td>
<td>99 (24.14%)</td>
<td>110 (27.09%)</td>
<td>105 (25.86%)</td>
<td>41 (10.10%)</td>
<td>51 (12.56%)</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 There are English software available beyond class time.</td>
<td>98 (24.14%)</td>
<td>127 (31.28%)</td>
<td>112 (27.59%)</td>
<td>30 (7.39%)</td>
<td>39 (9.61%)</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 There are English books in the school’s library.</td>
<td>168 (41.38%)</td>
<td>118 (29.06%)</td>
<td>84 (20.69%)</td>
<td>23 (5.67%)</td>
<td>13 (3.20%)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Evaluation and Assessment

| 4.1 Teacher informs learning objectives before the lesson. | 156 (38.42%) | 143 (35.22%) | 74 (18.23%) | 16 (3.94%) | 17 (4.19%) | 4.00 | 1.05 | High |
4.2 Teacher evaluates/gives scores for affective domains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher evaluates/gives scores</th>
<th>156</th>
<th>152</th>
<th>73</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>4.05</th>
<th>0.98</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.3 Teacher evaluates/gives scores for the exercises.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher evaluates/gives scores for the exercises</th>
<th>181</th>
<th>130</th>
<th>71</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>4.13</th>
<th>0.97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.4 Teacher evaluates students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher evaluates students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing skills</th>
<th>177</th>
<th>129</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>4.09</th>
<th>1.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.5 Teacher mainly relies on examination paper for evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher mainly relies on examination paper for evaluation</th>
<th>127</th>
<th>142</th>
<th>99</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>3.85</th>
<th>1.03</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.6 Teacher applies authentic assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher applies authentic assessment</th>
<th>110</th>
<th>147</th>
<th>99</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>3.73</th>
<th>1.09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.7 Teacher provides opportunity for peer review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher provides opportunity for peer review</th>
<th>111</th>
<th>135</th>
<th>110</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>3.69</th>
<th>1.12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.8 Teacher clearly inform students of criteria and methods for evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher clearly inform students of criteria and methods for evaluation</th>
<th>143</th>
<th>138</th>
<th>88</th>
<th>23</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>3.92</th>
<th>1.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.9 Teacher administers pre-/while-/post-test regularly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher administers pre-/while-/post-test regularly</th>
<th>157</th>
<th>132</th>
<th>71</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>3.95</th>
<th>1.10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.10 Teacher applies appropriate evaluation to the learning objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher applies appropriate evaluation to the learning objectives</th>
<th>203</th>
<th>112</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>4.12</th>
<th>1.15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Overall | 3.86 | 0.66 | High |

According to the data presented in Table 2, all dimensions received high score (M = 3.86, 77.15%). Considering each dimension, the students were satisfied with evaluation and assessment the most (M = 3.95, SD = 0.77) followed by teaching technique and approach (M = 3.93, SD = 0.70), curriculum (M = 3.90, SD = 0.69) and classroom and environment support (M = 3.65, SD = 0.84) respectively.

Considering each statement, the top three statements receiving the highest scores were ‘Teacher appreciates when students perform well in the class’ (M = 4.18, SD = 1.00), ‘Curriculum promote students’ learning’ (M = 4.14, SD = 0.86) and ‘Teacher evaluates/gives scores for the exercises’ (M = 4.13, SD = 0.97) respectively.
Table 3  
*Number, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Students’ Opinions by Types of School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBEC</td>
<td>3.85 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.82 (0.73)</td>
<td>3.51 (0.89)</td>
<td>3.85 (0.81)</td>
<td>3.76 (0.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHEC</td>
<td>4.10 (0.75)</td>
<td>4.03 (0.63)</td>
<td>3.77 (0.76)</td>
<td>4.02 (0.71)</td>
<td>3.96 (0.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>4.07 (0.67)</td>
<td>4.30 (0.47)</td>
<td>4.14 (0.49)</td>
<td>4.40 (0.44)</td>
<td>4.23 (0.44)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data presented in Table 3, it was found that students overall gave high scores in every dimension. The highest score of curricular dimensions was given to the school under the Office of Higher Education Commission (M = 4.10, SD = 0.75) followed by the schools under the Office of Private Education Commission (M = 4.07, SD = 0.67) and those under the Office of Basic Education Commission (M= 3.85, SD = 0.67) respectively.

In terms of teaching technique and approach, the schools under the Office of Private Education Commission received the highest score (M = 4.30, SD = 0.47) followed by schools under the Office of Higher Education Commission (M = 4.03, SD = 0.63) and those under the Office of Basic Education Commission (M= 3.82, SD = 0.73) respectively.

In terms of learning and environment support, the schools under the purview of the Office of Private Education Commission received the highest score (M = 4.14, SD = 0.49) followed by schools under the Office of Higher Education Commission (M = 3.77, SD = 0.76) and those under the Office of Basic Education Commission (M= 3.51, SD = 0.89) respectively.

In terms of evaluation and assessment, the schools under the governance of the Office of Private Education Commission received the highest score (M = 4.40, SD = 0.44) followed by those under the Office of Higher Education Commission (M = 4.02, SD = 0.71) and those under the Office of Basic Education Commission (M= 3.85, SD = 0.81) respectively.

Despite the fact that the majority of the schools in Nakhon Nayok are under supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission, the students’ opinion on English class was at a moderate level. The schools under the Office of Private Education Commission received scores at a high level in every dimension while those under the Office of Higher Education Commission received scores at high levels in some dimensions and moderate levels in others.
Problems and needs of English classroom.

**Part 1: Student’s problem about English class.**

The opinions expressed by students in the questionnaire showed that the problems with English classes were mainly regarding students, teachers and the learning environment. The students lacked knowledge and a strong foundation in English language proficiency. Consequently, they lacked the confidence required to facilitate communication, as well as the motivation to learn. With respect to the teachers themselves, it was found that they often spoke at speeds well beyond students’ comprehension abilities. Lessons were also found to be ungraspable due to unclear explanations, or the teaching methods were considered obsolete. Sometimes the teacher would assign students to do exercises in the workbook only, or teachers only taught grammatical rules of English. There was also a severe lack of technological media used in class settings. Other problems included an insufficient amount of class time per week and the lack of opportunity for learning English outside the classroom for students to put theory into practice.

**Part 2: Student expectations for an ideal English class.**

The data revealed that the students would like to possess strong English skills. Respondents indicated their desire for schools to provide them with extra-curricular activities during the semester. Field trips and excursion beyond the classroom setting that would provide them an opportunity to learn and practice English in real-life contexts were also of keen interest by the students. The students also indicated they would like teachers to change their teaching approach. This included changes to teacher-student communication styles, the provision of properly graded assignments and more comprehensible explanations of class content. The teacher should not put pressure on students by assigning too much homework. The teacher should also possess more knowledge beyond the scope provided for by class textbooks to facilitate learning. In the classroom, the teacher should translate lesson contents and instructions of the exercises into Thai and focus on topics applicable to the daily life of students. The lesson should aim at helping students to be able to communicate with English-speakers. In addition, the students expected that English classes should be fun and interesting, with additional English resources provided to them.

**Part 3: Additional suggestions.**

The students proposed extra activities which should be integrated into English lessons, including language games, group activities, writing sentences utilizing previously learned vocabulary
and other activities such as charades. There should be activities outside the classroom, such as English camps, provided to the students as well. In terms of the teacher, the students would like to suggest that the teacher refrain from showing anger or being too strict, which might come across as aggressive. The teacher should provide an equal amount of attention to all students, and clear, comprehensible explanations should be provided slowly and loudly to account for a range of proficiency levels. The teacher should check understanding of the students regularly during class time. The students expected that the teacher would be more open to their opinions. It was also suggested that marking rubrics should not be too difficult for students to achieve. In addition, the students would like to learn more than what was provided in the textbook. The teacher should wrap up the contents of each class and assign vocabulary for the students to study on a weekly basis. The score proportion should be based on individual assignments more so than examinations. There should be dictation and reading pronunciation exercises assigned to the students regularly, with it also suggested that the teacher should include more conversation and dialogue in the lesson.

**Descriptive Analysis of Data from the Structured Interview**

In order to understand the situations and problems of English teaching and learning performance from the management and the teachers’ point of view, the interview was about policy on English teaching and learning, teachers’ qualifications, performance, workload, professional development, English teaching and learning activities in the classroom, obstacles in English teaching and suggested solutions as follows.

1. **Policy on English teaching and learning.**

“The teachers must follow the Basic Core Education Curriculum. I also encourage teachers to use English as the medium of instruction in the classroom. They are also supported for their professional development in many ways. ”

The data from the interview revealed that management from the schools under the governance of the Office of Basic Education Commission followed the Basic Core Education Curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education with the focus on improving the students’ English capability so that they can communicate with foreigners and achieve results as required by the national test.

The policy of schools under the Office of Private Education Commission were aligned with the requirements set by OPEC. It focused on improving students’ communicative skills. The management
at such schools encouraged the teacher to arrange extra-curricular activities for students to improve English skills as supported by this excerpt from the interview:

“Different activities are organized throughout the academic year in order to improve students’ English skills.”

The school under the Office of Higher Education Commission applied an active learning approach so that the students were engaged and actively took part in learning activities in the classroom. In addition, the policy aimed at equipping students with 21st century skills, as indicated by the below excerpt:

“Active learning approach is the key. Students must fully engage and participate in the classroom activities. They also need to improve their 21st century skills.”

Different types of schools have different focuses on the policy of English teaching and learning. While the schools under the Office of Basic Education Commission are more rigid in following the educational policy from the Ministry of Education, the schools under the Office of Private Education Commission and Office of Higher Education Commission are more flexible in terms of their educational policy as is reflected by their curricula.

2. Teachers.

“Due to limited human resource, we have to carefully plan who will teach which subjects and what levels,” voiced by a teacher. Most of the teachers at schools under the Office of Basic Education Commission held bachelor’s and master’s degrees related to English. Others, however, did not have such qualifications in English yet were assigned to teach English to the younger students. They had approximately 17–20 teaching loads per week in addition to other duties. In terms of professional development, the teachers were required to attend seminars provided by the Ministry of Education as part of their performance appraisal. Independent self-study, such as watching English video clips from the internet, was also used to develop teachers’ own skills.

All of the teachers from schools under the Office of Private Education Commission held bachelor’s degrees, with 80% of teachers possessing an English-major qualification. Nevertheless, all were found to have a good level of English skills owing to them being required to speak English with students. They had approximately 20 teaching loads per week in addition to other duties. Additionally,
teachers were required to attend seminars and workshops provided by the school and external organizations.

The school under the Office of Higher Education Commission had one teacher with a doctoral degree and two teachers with master’s degrees related to English. As such, all possessed a high level of English proficiency. They had approximately 20–22 teaching loads per week in addition to other duties. They had regular opportunities to attend workshop provided by the university. Some of them could deepen their knowledge by furthering studies at a higher level.

Considering the qualifications of the teachers, the schools under the purview of the Office of Private Education Commission had the least qualified teachers of which ultimately affected their teaching, the learning and environment support, and the evaluation and assessment of English classes. On the contrary, the teachers at the school under the Office of Higher Education Commission were the most qualified considering their educational background. This was because the school was affiliated with the university. Therefore, higher qualifications would be an advantage for the teachers when they wanted to be promoted to higher levels. Teachers with higher qualifications were also of benefit to the students due to their knowledge of the various teaching and learning approaches and resources that can be utilized in the classroom.

3. English teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

The schools under the governance of the Office of Basic Education Commission followed the Basic Core Education Curriculum as a guideline for teaching English. They strictly followed the learning standards and indicators specified in the curriculum. The additional subjects were developed according to the parents’ opinions. There were integrated activities provided to the students to improve English skills including tutoring courses and competitions, as well as bulletin boards to provide information about western cultures. In the classroom, the teachers would focus on practice so that the students could apply knowledge in their daily life. The contents of the lesson would be aligned with the learning indicators required by the national curriculum.

The schools under the Office of Private Education Commission required teachers to develop a school-based curriculum in alignment with the Basic Core Education Curriculum. The additional subjects were developed based on the opinions of the community and were approved as such by a school committee comprising community representatives working alongside experts from other organizations, as well as the school’s management. In the classroom, the teacher was required to use English and Thai as their medium of instruction, with a focus on English. The students were encouraged to use and practice all language skills. The teacher used independently created teaching materials, such as flash
cards and language games, as additional classroom resources. The students were encouraged to facilitate their own learning by utilizing learning resources outside the classroom, such as libraries and museums. At the end of the lesson, the teacher used a variety of assessment methods. The students were evaluated through class activities and worksheets, as well as through tests targeting all four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing). The teacher produced their own midterm examination paper. However, the final examination paper was sent from the Office of Private Education Commission to make sure that the students achieved the desired results.

The school under the Office of Higher Education Commission developed their own curriculum based on the learning standards and indicators specified in the Basic Core Education Curriculum. The additional subjects were developed based on the expertise of the teachers. The textbooks were carefully selected, with only those from international publishers assigned to the students. The level of difficulty of the textbooks were required to be aligned with the CEFR framework. The teacher used various multimedia in the classroom such as video clips from the internet. The students were also encouraged to utilise the internet for research purposes. In terms of evaluation and assessment, the teacher evaluated the students through classroom activities including presentations, interactive tasks, games, examinations, quizzes and project-based work.

There is a correlation between the type and the policy of the school with the instructional activities on offer in the classroom. The variety of learning activities for schools under the purview of the Office of Higher Education Commission is greater than those under the Office of Basic Education Commission and the Office of Private Education Commission, which focus more on achieving the learning indicators and standards specified in the national curriculum.

4. Obstacles in teaching English.

The schools under the Office of Basic Education Commission faced obstacles in terms of teachers, learning spaces, students and support from the parents. Some schools did not have sufficient staff, with teachers often delegated additional work that was unrelated to teaching. A teacher expressed that; “Being a teacher is not just to teach students. We have to do everything at school.” This statement clearly was in reference to the many duties required of them at school. In addition, some classes were too large and, as such, the teacher was restricted with respect to the activities they could do in the classroom. There was no language sound lab for the students to practice their listening skills.

The schools under the Office of Private Education Commission faced obstacles in their staff retention rates, with a high turnover rate of both Thai and foreign teachers. The Thai teachers who passed the central recruitment exam for the government school under the Office of Basic Education
Commission had to resign immediately in order to report and work for the new school that they are appointed to. Some of the foreign teachers had visa problems and had to return to their home country. Therefore, class instruction did not run smoothly. In addition, the students held negative attitudes towards English, with some students lacking even basic knowledge of English. This made the process of teaching much more difficult for the instructor.

“There are many activities throughout the year. It is quite stressful because I cannot follow up my teaching plan.”

The school under the Office of Higher Education Commission faced obstacles in terms of teacher workloads, as well as students’ language skills. The teachers were assigned extra work not relevant to teaching which sometimes obstructed their ability to teach. There were too many extracurricular activities at the schools which affected the students’ class time. In addition, there were mixed abilities of students all within the same class which made it difficult for the teacher to teach effectively.

The major obstacles of schools in Nakhon Nayok are the workload of the teachers and the students’ language skills. The teachers are required to do extra work which may not be related to teaching. Consequently, they have to juggle between teaching and their other duties. A teacher gave an example from her experience that, “I am acting an accountant for the school. Sometimes, I have to assign students to do exercises in the class and leave the classroom because I have to go to the bank.”

As for the students themselves, their attitude towards English affects their learning behavior in the classroom. The schools cannot be selective in terms of placing students with the same English skills within the same class. The teachers have to be creative and resourceful in order to help students learn with, and from, one another at the same time.

5. Proposed solutions and additional suggestions

“As a teacher, we must develop ourself continuously. We must do everything to help our students in order that they can improve themselves... A teacher must have his or her own standpoint in teaching. We must set the goal for our teaching that we will improve their communication skills... We must inspire students. If they have good attitude towards the teacher, they will have positive attitude towards English too.”

The teachers from schools under the supervision of the Office of Basic Education Commission
proposed the following solutions. Extra work that was not related to teaching should be removed to allow for teachers to focus on instruction. The teachers should aim for continuous professional development. The school should avoid placing students with mixed abilities in the same classroom, an approach often promoted with the intention of allowing students to help one another in the class. English-language education should also be provided to very young students at the earliest opportunity, with foreign teachers providing English communication courses to the students. In addition, the parents should provide support to student activities as offered by the school.

The teachers from schools under the Office of Private Education Commission shared that, as concerns arose related to English classes, they would raise the issue in department meetings. In turn, these would then be discussed with the school’s management team who could take immediate action to solve the problem.

The teachers from the school under the governance of the Office of Higher Education Commission proposed the following solutions. In order to handle unexpected situations, the teachers must plan and design their lessons carefully, whilst also allowing for some degree of flexibility. The lesson should focus on practical experience and helping students to develop a positive attitude towards English.

The problems and obstacles experienced in English classes was dependent on the type of school, largely due to the difference in the school’s teaching and learning environment. The schools under the Office of Basic Education Commission are government schools that provide free inclusive education for all. Like most government organizations, such schools face limitations with respect to work processes, budgets and support from stakeholders. They have to strictly follow all government procedures. A substantial amount of documentation may be required to be submitted before new initiatives can be commenced, with approval from an authorized party also necessary. The schools under the Office of Private Education Commission and the Office of Higher Education Commission are more flexible in terms of handling internal problems. The director of the school has the ability to solve problems within their scope of authority in a timely fashion. The teachers can also get involved with the work process and contribute to the proposed solution to the problem.

Discussion

The results of the study can be discussed as follows:

1) The students’ opinions on English teaching and learning were at high level in every dimension: curriculum, teaching technique and approach, classroom and environment management and evaluation and assessment. However, they expressed that the problem of English teaching and learning
was associated with students’ knowledge and attitude towards English. This affects their motivation to learn which is in line with the study of Thitisupakul (2016). Only when the students satisfy and recognize the importance of English, they will learn the subject with fun. This will have direct impact on successful language learning.

2) In terms of teaching techniques and approaches, the schools that have teachers with English language qualifications are assured of successful language education. Teachers and instructional activities are crucial for classroom management. This is supported by Cambridge English (2019) which proposed that the teacher must possess knowledge, understanding and be able to apply theories related to the subject and learning management.

3) Even though many schools developed the school’s curriculum, the English commercial textbooks are used as the main instructional material. Consequently, some learning standards and indicators might not be achieved. The teacher must fully understand how to map out, allocate and translate them in the lesson which is important for the educational quality assurance as proposed by Kadish (2019).

4) Students, teachers and management recognized the importance of learning and environment support including English camp, English books corner, language laboratories and classroom decoration. They must be aligned with the topics that the students are learning at the moment. Language is skill-based subject requiring a lot of practice both individually and in group. They would like to have English language activities organized which would help students improve their English skills. This is aligned with the research conducted by Binmadnee et al. (2018) and Nounlong (2017).

5) In terms of evaluation and assessment, it is found that teachers apply various evaluation and assessment methods of English language skills. The result is aligned with the students’ opinions which reflect that the teachers provide regular evaluation and assessment throughout the academic year in a way that is aligned to the learning objectives. The alignment of evaluation was very important and could affect teaching and learning performance as proposed by Thitisupakul (2016).

Suggestions

Schools under different supervision face different situations and problems. The schools under the purview of the Office of the Basic Education Commission and Office of the Private Education Commission face problems regarding human resources both in terms of qualifications and an insufficient number of staff. Those under the Office of the Higher Education Commission face problems with respect to workload. The research suggests the following solutions to enhance English learning and teaching at schools in Nakhon Nayok:
1) Schools should have their own policy regarding English language instruction. Additional subject should be developed according to the needs of students, the community and stakeholders. There should be language activities provided to students on a regular basis to allow students the opportunity to learn and practice language in a fun environment while developing a positive attitude towards the language.

2) The teachers’ workload should be reconsidered. Irrelevant workloads should be replaced with language activities. In this way, teachers will have more time for providing extra language activities to the students outside the classroom and to plan for their own professional development.

3) In order to solve problems as they pertain to teachers’ qualifications, there must be workshops or seminars provided to teachers for the purpose of professional development. For example, an applicable workshop on instructional material and learning activities as they would pertain to the school and the students’ needs.

4) Professional Learning Community should not be limited to the school level. A network of teachers teaching English throughout schools in Nakhon Nayok should be developed and maintained in order for teachers to share their best practice and English-teaching resources amongst themselves.

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The Online Flipped Classroom Impact on Thai Students’ English Grammatical Accuracy

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Abstracts

Grammar is an essential matter for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. Unfortunately, the widespread of COVID-19 has affected Thai schools to instruct in an online platform. In addition, administering practical online English grammar lessons, this study adopted flipped classroom instruction, which aims to investigate the effects of online flipped classroom instruction on grade 10 students’ English grammatical accuracy and explore their attitudes of online flipped classroom instruction. The sample group was 28 students enrolled in English (EN31101) in 2021 and voluntarily participated in this study. The instruments were pretests, posttests, online flipped classroom lesson plans, and a questionnaire. The statistics used to analyze the data were descriptive statistics. The results illustrated that students’ grammatical accuracy was significantly different ($p < .01$), and the acquired data revealed that the participants had positive attitudes of online flipped classroom instruction. They mentioned that this instruction assisted them to study at any place and any time, enhancing their learner autonomy. Furthermore, EFL instructors may apply the flipped classroom instruction to other English language skill lessons to promote autonomous learning.

Keywords: flipped classroom, grammatical accuracy, English language teaching

Introduction

Grammar instruction plays a vital role in language acquisition (Wang, 2010). It can flourish the four basic language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Widodo, 2006). Ur (2015) suggested that English teachers instruct students to observe standard grammar to avoid communication breakdown. Yu (2008) and Zhang (2009) also stated EFL students should learn grammar because they
cannot acquire it naturally, unlike ESL students who are exposed to English-speaking environment. For these reasons, teachers in EFL contexts often emphasize grammar topics to improve students’ grammatical accuracy (Souisa & Yanuarius, 2020). This phenomenon likewise occurs in Thailand. Thai English teachers have underlined rule-oriented lessons (Phuwarat & Boonchukusol, 2020; Thep-Ackrapong, 2005). They speculate that grammar learning would help their students achieve a communicative goal which is to communicate fluently and accurately.

However, due to coronavirus (COVID-19) spread, schools across Thailand have implemented online learning formats and digital tools to substitute face-to-face learning. The unplanned pivot to online teaching seems to be an ‘emergency remote teaching (ERT)’ instead of a well-planned teaching model (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Tang et al., 2020). Students are, therefore, encountered with unpredictable dilemmas including workload, sedentary behavior, and stress (Rohitasthira, 2021). Imsaard (2020) made a similar point. He described that remote teaching contributed to student demotivation, some technical problems, and distraction while learning at home.

The researcher has attempted to adopt an innovative pedagogical approach called flipped classroom instruction in online English classes to reinforce grammar lessons and tackle these issues. The instruction offers learners the flexibility to study in a self-paced manner because they can study materials provided by their teacher anywhere and anytime. Students who encountered with electronic issues or Internet connection can, therefore, learn in their convenient time. In class-time, they can actively participate in doing class tasks which lowers their homework. Thus, during the pandemic, flipping an English classroom is most likely to ameliorate the disruption when classes have been moved fully online.

**Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the effects of the online flipped classroom on grade 10 students’ English grammatical accuracy.
2. To explore the grade 10 students’ attitudes towards the online flipped classroom.

**Review of Literature**

**Flipped Classroom Overview**

The flipped classroom is an alternative instructional approach. A traditional lecture and homework are reversed. Students are first exposed to content before class time, e.g., online video (screencast or vodcast), texts, or supplemental exercises. The pre-class activity offers opportunities for students to gain knowledge independently. When students come to class, they become active learners
who learn through hands-on activities such as a discussion, a project, or a lab. Teachers become guides who monitor students’ learning and class environment, promote collaborative learning, and provide feedback and suggestions (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Bergmann & Sams, 2012).

In 2014, Flipped Learning Network (FLN) proposed the Four Pillars of F-L-I-P™. The pillars are four essential factors of a thriving flipped learning environment. The first pillar is a flexible environment. In the flipped classroom, students learn through a variety of learning modes. Teachers accommodate a lesson to support either individual, pair, or group work. They become flexible in expectations of students’ place and pace of learning. The second pillar is learning culture. Flipped classroom shifted from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach. Class time allows students to delve deeper into topics through meaningful activities. The third pillar is intentional content. Teachers prepare materials that assist students in conceptualizing the content. This pillar aims to help students understand the content on their own and save more in-class time for hands-on activities. The last pillar is a professional educator. Teachers provide constructive feedback and conduct an ongoing formative assessment to ensure that no gaps exist in student learning. Besides, teachers need to collaborate and reflect on their practice to improve their instruction with their colleagues.

According to Slemmons et al. (2018), cognitive research asserts that multimedia enhances learning. However, certain design principles should be considered. Cambell et al. (2014) estimated that it takes approximately eight hours to produce a quality 10-minute video. Afify (2019) found that six-minute videos achieved better results than six to 12 and over 12-minute videos. He further suggested that short videos reduce the cognitive load on students and affect students’ capacity to recall information. Slemmons et al. (2018) stated that learning through videos reduces cognitive load since students can view the information in small segments, which limits the amount of data processed at any given time. Moreover, shorter videos provide more content retention rates and increase engagement and focus while viewing the video (Slemmons et al., 2018). Along the same line, Lo and Hew (2017) suggested that the length of videos is within six minutes, and teachers use an informal conversation instead of a non-personalized style of speaking. Wood et al. (2021) stated that students’ engagement in digital learning resources hinges on the ease of accessibility in the learning platform and content provided in the materials. This implies that pre-class learning platform and content in videos are essential factors for adopting the flipped classroom instruction.

Some scholars and researchers revealed certain concerns about adopting the flipped classroom. Xiu and Thompson (2020) reported students’ participation in pre-class activities was low, and giving a large number of online materials might overwhelm students. Jiang et al. (2020) stated that learner preparedness for pre-class activities is a key condition for the success of the flipped classroom. Lo and
Hew (2017) also stated that the major problems of using flipped classroom include teachers’ considerable workload of creating learning materials and students’ disengagement in pre-class activity. Jiang et al. (2020) and Wagner and Urhahne (2021) mentioned that flipped classroom is mainly implemented in higher education. Contributing research area in the context of secondary education is scarce. However, during the pandemic, Swart et al. (2021) did not found disruption when moving from a face-to-face flipped classroom to an online flipped classroom.

**Efficacy of Flipped Classroom on English Grammatical Accuracy**

Several studies have investigated the effects of flipped classroom instruction on English grammatical accuracy. The results revealed that the instruction has been effective in developing learners’ grammar competence (Ahmad & Arifin, 2021; Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016; Al-Naabi, 2020; Guo, 2017; Philippines & Tan, 2020; Nattawet, 2020; Saidah, 2019; Thaichay & Sitthitikul, 2016). Nattawet (2020) adopted flipped classroom strategy to enhance grammatical accuracy in the writing of grade 11 Thai students. She found that the participants produced fewer grammatical mistakes. Thaichay and Sitthitikul (2016) developed flipped grammar lessons for Thai high school students. They revealed that the participants significantly improved their grammatical accuracy. Moreover, studies in other EFL contexts yielded similar results. Al-Naabi (2020) found that Oman university students’ grammatical accuracy was improved after learning through the flipped classroom. However, the participants mentioned that watching videos is time-consuming and suggested a change for L1 explanation in the videos. Ahmad and Arifin (2021) reported that online flipped grammar course could develop Indonesian students’ grammar achievement within one month.

**Attitudes towards Flipped Grammar Classroom**

Many students mentioned that they had positive attitudes towards flipped grammar classrooms (Afzali & Izadpanah, 2021; Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016; Nattawet, 2020; Philippines & Tan, 2020; Santikarn & Wichadee, 2018; Singay, 2020; Thaichay & Sitthitikul, 2016). Nattawet (2020) indicated that students were satisfied with the flipped classroom. It provides a flexible learning environment, allows students to choose where and when to study, and arouses class participation. Thaichay and Sitthitikul (2016) revealed that students preferred learning through a video because they could rewind or pause it. Moreover, the students mentioned that they had more chances to communicate with their classmates than traditional instruction. Santikarn and Wichadee (2018) found that Thai university students believed the flipped classroom strongly impacted their autonomy, engagement, and motivation to learn English.
Afzali and Izadpanah (2021) stated that students were more motivated in grammar learning due to their joyful environment and preferences. They revealed that students were more engaged and the grammar lessons were more accessible when learning through the flipped classroom. Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016) found that flipped lessons improved communication skills, facilitated learning, and increased autonomous learning competence. The students expressed a strong appreciation for watching a video because they could learn at their own pace, pause to take notes, capture a screenshot for future learning resources, and review the lessons. Philippines and Tan (2020) reported that students’ autonomous learning skill was improved. The flipped lessons increased students’ confidence when doing in-class activities because they had reviewed the lessons beforehand. The lessons also allowed students to communicate with their friends. Singay (2020) stated that grade 7 students in Bhutan liked the videos in the flipped classroom, and flipping the classroom provided a conducive learning environment, technology integration, and collaborative learning. The study also asserted that students were satisfied with the use of technology outside the school and were motivated to learn grammar because they had more opportunities to interact with peers.

These previous reviews have provided some valuable snapshots of flipped classroom research. Studies suggested that students had positive attitudes towards the flipped classroom. Hence, adopting the flipped classroom in English classes during online learning might maintain effective grammar lessons.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

The research employed a one-group pre- and posttest design. The pretest was developed to evaluate students’ English grammatical accuracy before learning through the flipped classroom. After the intervention, the posttest was distributed to investigate students’ development. A questionnaire was also provided to explore students’ attitudes towards the online flipped classroom. Prior to the present study, four flipped grammar lessons were conducted to test and develop research protocol and learning procedures. Lesson plans and pre-class digital learning platform were amended according to participants’ suggestions.

**Population and Participants**

The population of this study was grade 10 students at a state school in the central part of Bangkok, Thailand of 2021 academic year. The participants were 28 students (16 males and 12 females)
studying in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program. Their age range was from 15–16 years old. They enrolled in English subject (EN31101), which CEFR B2 book was a required textbook. Their English proficiency was subject to be mapped with CEFR A2, as shown by results from the pre-test. All of the participants were informed about research procedures and asked for their consent. The 28 students volunteered to participate in the study.

Research Instruments

The instruments consisted of pre- and posttests, online flipped lesson plans, and a questionnaire. These three instruments were validated by three experts and were improved accordingly.

Tests.

The pre-test was administered via Google Form. It contained 20 multiple-choice items to examine the use of future simple, present simple, present progressive, and future continuous tenses. All items were compiled from the Oxford Practice Grammar Intermediate Tests by Eastwood (2019). The participants were given 20 minutes to answer the questions. The pretest was also used as a posttest to measure the impact of the online flipped classroom on students’ grammatical accuracy.

Lesson Plans.

Two lesson plans were designed to cover future tenses. In this study, the flipped lessons followed the Four Pillars of F-L-I-P™ model delineated by Flipped Learning Network (2014). Concerning the flexible environment, the lessons were adjusted according to students’ preferences mentioned in the interview during the previous flipped lessons. The pre-class learning platform was shifted from an application that is limited in terms of ability to access to Google Classroom, which is a readily accessed online tool for all students. Regarding learning culture, the in-class activities were student-centered. Students were encouraged to participate in activities throughout online class time. In terms of intentional content, the instructional videos were based on the lesson objectives, and English grammar content. Each video took approximately six minutes and was edited in informal formats such as adding sound effects and animations. The explanation was given in Thai to help students learn on their own. Regarding the professional educator pillar, feedback was given during activities, and formative assessment was conducted at the end of each lesson to track individual achievement.

Questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section one obtained participants’
demographic data, including gender and grade. Section two consisted of 10 items securing participants’ attitudes towards the online flipped classroom. All statements in section two were adopted from Singay (2020) because it shared a similar objective and learning context. The questionnaire was initially constructed in English and was translated into Thai to avoid misinterpretation. The 5-point Likert scale was the format of the questionnaire.

**Data Collection**

The pretest was published online via Google Classroom. Students were allowed to answer it on a voluntary basis. This phase took place one week before providing the intervention. During online flipped lessons, students were required to watch videos prior to class. In class time, hands-on activities were conducted to help students conceptualize the content they learned from the videos. After all lessons were delivered, the posttest and questionnaire were distributed to gather data on students’ grammatical accuracy and attitudes towards the online flipped classroom.

**Data Analysis**

The data from the pre- and posttests were analyzed using a paired-sample t-test to compare students’ grammatical accuracy before and after learning through the online flipped classroom. The data obtained from the questionnaire were tabulated in terms of percentages, means, and standard deviations to explore students’ attitudes towards the online flipped classroom. The data were interpreted from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

**Results**

To respond to the study’s first objective, the scores from the pre- and posttests were compared utilizing a paired sample t-test. Mean score of the pre-test was 8.89 while mean score of the posttest was 11.50. The t-test illustrates a significant improvement of participants’ English grammatical accuracy with a medium effect size ($p < 0.01$) as presented in Table 1. The results indicated that the online flipped classroom effectively enhanced the grammatical accuracy of grade 10 students.

To respond to the study’s second objective, all participants were required to complete the questionnaire regarding their attitudes towards the online flipped classroom. Table 2 reports that the participants had positive attitudes of the flipped classroom with an average of 4.11. The highest mean score was participants believed that they had to pursue their learning during the flipped lessons (mean = 4.33). The second was that they viewed that learning through the flipped classroom provided them more opportunities to communicate with their classmates (mean = 4.27). The third was that they
understood more of what the teacher explained (mean = 4.23). However, the lowest mean score was that participants had ambivalent attitudes towards learning through video (mean = 3.77).

Table 1

*A Paired Sample T-Test Results of Pre- and Post-Test Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>10.62</td>
<td>14.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized Mean Difference</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Stat</td>
<td>-2.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) two-tail</td>
<td>0.008**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical two-tail</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01

Table 2

*Students’ Attitudes towards the Online Flipped Classroom*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I feel I am more in charge of my own learning through flipped learning instruction.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Learning English grammar with flipped learning instruction gives me greater opportunities to communicate with peers.</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 I understand more when the teacher explains in class.</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I like to do homework in the class to get instant feedback from my teacher.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Flipped learning instruction allows me to prepare for my class in advance.</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 My grammar competencies are better as I have more time to apply the content in the class.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Flipped learning instruction has made it easier for me to learn English grammar lessons.</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. I feel that the flipped learning instruction has helped me to improve my English grammar. 

9. I feel that the integration of technology and multimedia has helped me learn English lessons. 

10. I like watching the lesson on the video. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the flipped learning instruction has helped me to improve my English grammar.</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the integration of technology and multimedia has helped me learn English lessons.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like watching the lesson on the video.</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 28

Discussion

The present study investigated grade 10 students’ English grammatical accuracy after learning through the online flipped classroom and explored their attitudes towards the online flipped classroom. The important results are discussed according to research objectives.

1. To investigate the effects of the online flipped classroom on grade 10 students’ English grammatical accuracy.

Overall, flipping an online classroom improved students’ grammatical accuracy. The results were in line with Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016), Al-Naabi (2020), Guo (2017), Philippines and Tan (2020), Nattawet (2020), Singay (2020), Saidah (2019), and Thaichay and Sitthitikul (2016). One assumption for the results could be attributed to the fact that students had a flexible learning environment. In flipped classroom, students can study during the pre-class activities in their convenient time. Al-Naabi (2020) revealed that students could process the pre-class activities at their own pace and repeat the video for gaining more comprehension. Singay (2020) mentioned that pre-class activities motivated students to learn grammar because they were encouraged to communicate with their friends. Moreover, Wood et al. (2021) suggested that the availability of online resources reduces cognitive workload. Students do not have to listen and take notes simultaneously. They were also able to revisit materials when they did not understand the content or make insufficient notes.

In addition, the shift to student-centered approach allowed students to explore the lessons in greater depth. According to Wood et al. (2021), flipped classroom is grounded on constructivist theories of learning which states that students actively construct knowledge. This means that in-class tasks help students reorganize their understanding through interaction while doing activities. Guo (2017) stated that during flipped lessons, students learn from both materials that have been formally assigned before class and in-class tasks. They, therefore, can apply their knowledge in a simulated or real-life situation.

Another possible explanation provided by Guo (2017) is that feedback from teachers clarifies students’ misconceptions. Wagner and Urhahne (2021) postulated that during activity, students have
gained more understanding from the feedback that their teacher provides while practicing. However, the underlying reason that the difference between scores of the pre- and posttests was a medium effect size might be due to an inadequate pre-class preparation of certain students. The study employed Google Classroom to track students’ participation in the video, and it was shown that some students did not engage in the pre-class activities. It is, therefore, important for teachers who flip their classroom to encourage students to be responsible in their learning because the success of flipping a classroom lies on students’ self-regulation competence.

2. To explore the grade 10 students’ attitudes towards the online flipped classroom.

Regarding students’ attitudes towards the flipped classroom, the responses obtained from the questionnaire revealed that students had positive attitudes towards the online flipped classroom. The results were in congruence with Afzali and Izadpanah (2021), Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016), Nattawet (2020), Philippines and Tan (2020), Singay, (2020), and Thaichay and Sithitikut (2016). The participants perceived that the development of autonomous competence was the most valuable part of the online flipped classroom. The results were corroborated by Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016), Lo and Hew (2017), Philippines and Tan (2020), and Santikarn and Wichadee (2018). The underlying reason might lie in the pre-class activities. In the flipped classroom, students have to study before they come to class. This provides resilience in their learning because they could control the pace and place of their learning. Students might pause, rewind, replay, or fast-forward the videos or read the materials repeatedly. As pointed out by Philippines and Tan (2020), flipped classroom provides independent learning owing to the freedom that students can control over their learning. They may pause and rewind the lecture video. Santikarn and Wichadee (2018) reported that the flipped classroom provides independent learning since students have more chances to manage their learning than traditional instruction. This might be advantageous if English teachers adopt flipped classroom practice in their teaching so that autonomous competence of students could be improved.

The participants also revealed that the flipped lessons provided opportunities to communicate with their classmates. This is because learning was based on a student-centered approach. Most activities are performed in pairs or groups. Didactic lecture time was decreased, and students were given collaborative tasks to do with their classmates. Hence, they could interact with each other. According to Philippines and Tan (2020) and Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016), class tasks encourage students to communicate with their peers either by writing or speaking. Along the same line, Singay (2020) stated that the flipped classroom promoted interaction among students because students were actively engaged in the activities. As such, flipping English classes might benefit students who desire to develop skills of communication. Another possible explanation could be drawn from Jiang et al. (2020). They
suggested that language courses are designed to be communicative. Language learners are, therefore, exposed to interactive activities as it is a vital portion of learning and teaching.

However, the participants showed ambivalent attitudes towards watching the lessons on the videos. The results contradict with Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016), Al-Naabi (2020), Thaichay and Sitthitikul (2016), Singay (2020), and Swart et al. (2021). Although Singay (2020) reported that students called for more use of technology in the flipped classroom and Swart et al. (2021) found that students were more engaged with educational technology during COVID-19 pandemic, the participants in the present study disagreed to some extent. This phenomenon might be explained by fatigue in online learning. During the pandemic, Thai students were to study virtually for approximately 7 hours a day. Consequently, when they have to watch online videos, they might feel that they have to spend a long time on screen. This might affect students’ preference for the use of technology in classrooms during the pandemic. In addition, pre-class digital learning resources should meet students’ requirements. Wood et al. (2021) stated that students’ choice of learning through digital resources hinges on the type of information they were exposed to and the convenience of digital access. The assumption might be proven by the number of students who watched the videos in this study outnumbered those who watched during the previous flipped lessons. To ameliorate pre-class engagement, teachers should produce concise English content videos so that students do not consider the videos as their homework (Xiu & Thompson, 2020). Afify (2019) and Lo and Hew (2017) suggested lecture videos last six minutes. Hence, adopting an online flipped classroom, teachers might provide only key content in videos in order that students can stay focused throughout the learning process.

Conclusion

The results revealed that the grammatical accuracy of grade 10 students was significantly improved after learning through the online flipped classroom. The assumptions for this phenomenon might be attributed to the Four Pillars of F-L-I-P™. As students learn in a flexible environment, they can choose when and where to learn during pre-class activities. Class time was dedicated to meaningful activities which allows students to actively engage in class and teachers could assess and provide feedback to students. Furthermore, students expressed positive attitudes towards the online flipped classroom. They believed that flipping a classroom fostered their autonomy competence. This may be useful for Thai students if teachers adopt flipped classroom instruction in their classroom because it enables students to pursue their own learning. Besides, students reported that interaction among students was improved. English teachers might have more time to engage students with communicative tasks instead of giving lectures in a traditional instruction. Another interesting result in the study was the
preference for the lessons on videos. Students showed ambivalent attitudes towards the instructional video. The underlying assumption might be that students spend time learning online throughout the semester, they, therefore, were likely to be tired of virtual learning. It can be concluded that although the instruction was transitioned to entirely online flipped lessons, it remains as effective as the traditional flipped classroom.

**Limitations of the Study**

The study underlines some limitations. The results cannot be generalized to all grade 10 students in Thailand because the study was conducted in a small-scale study. The data were solely gathered from 28 STEM students which might provide only a snapshot of the phenomenon. Moreover, due to the time constraint, the study investigated students’ grammatical development within two lessons. This appears to be inadequate to get the whole picture of an online flipped classroom. Also, the research design of this study was a quantitative design which limited qualitative data. Further research may adopt a qualitative approach to explore a deeper understanding of participants’ attitudes.

**References**


Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2012). *Flip your classroom: Reach every student in every class every day.* International Society for Technology in Education.


and VEC to reduce stress during online learning]. MOE360.


APPENDIX
Grammatical Accuracy Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
<th>Unit 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>20 items</td>
<td>10 marks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instructions:

1. This examination is made available online. Your completed answer is due within 20 minutes and must be submitted online.
2. You will need to check all your equipment to ensure that they are set up correctly.
3. You must only attempt this exam once. Any additional attempts should only be used in the event where a serious technical issue has occurred.
4. You are not permitted to obtain assistance by improper means or ask for help from or give help to any other person.
5. The test is divided into 2 parts. You should read the directions in each part carefully.

Part I: Dialogue Completion (15 items)

Directions: Read each dialogue and choose the alternative that best completes it.

Dialogue 1 (Items 1 - 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peter:</th>
<th>Hello! Where are you going?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katherine:</td>
<td>To my evening class. I'm learning Swedish. And next week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. _________ a chance to speak it for real.</td>
<td>2. _________ Sweden for three weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. _________ on Friday.</td>
<td>4. _________ some friends there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter:</td>
<td>5. _________ nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine:</td>
<td>Well, I'd better hurry. My lesson 6. _________ at half past seven, and it's twenty-five past now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter:</td>
<td>OK. Come and see me when 7. _________ back from Sweden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine:</td>
<td>Thanks. 8. _________ you all about it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.
   1. I will have
   2. I will having
   3. I going to have
   4. I am going to had

2.
   1. I will go
   2. I am going to
   3. I am going to be
   4. I am going to go

3.
   1. I will leave
   2. I will go to leave
   3. I am going to leave
   4. I am not going to leave

4.
   1. I will visit
   2. I am not visiting
   3. I am going to visit
   4. I am going to visiting

5.
   1. That will be
   2. That will being
   3. That is going to be
   4. That is not going to be

6.
   1. starts
   2. will start
   3. will starts
4. is going to start

7.
1. you get
2. you will get
3. you are getting
4. you are going to get

8.
1. I tell
2. I will tell
3. I will be telling
4. I am going to tell

Dialogue 2 (Items 9 - 15)

Amy: When will I see you again?
Simon: I do not know. 9. __________ this week. And 10. __________ London on Saturday.
Amy: Oh. But 11. __________ here for my party, won't you?
Simon: No, 12. __________ until Sunday evening.
Amy: I was going to invite you.
Simon: Well, I'm sorry I can't come.
Amy: 13. __________ in London?
Simon: Oh, I am just going to see one or two people. Look, I must go. 14. __________ something that I think 15. __________ boil over.

9.
1. I will busy
2. I shall be busy
3. I am being be busy
4. I am going to be busy

10.
1. I will not go to
2. I will be going to
3. I am not going to
4. I am not going to be

11.
1. You will be
2. You are being
3. You are going to be
4. You are not going to be

12.
1. I get back
2. I do not get back
3. I did not get back
4. I am going to get back

13.
1. What will you do
2. What will you be doing
3. What are you going to do
4. What aren't you doing to do

14.
1. I will cook
2. I am cooking
3. I am going to cook
4. I will not be cooking

15.
1. It will
2. It might
3. It about to
4. It probably

Part II: Sentence Completion (5 items)
Directions: Complete the following sentence using the MOST appropriate alternative.

16. It will be better if you do not call at one o’clock. We _________ lunch then.
   1. will have
   2. will be having
   3. will be going to have
   4. will not be having had

17. I have got loads of work. I expect I _________ all night. I am not looking forward to it.
   1. will work
   2. will not work
   3. will be working
   4. am going to work

18. By the time you receive my love letter, _________.
   1. I will not stay at your home.
   2. I am writing this letter to you.
   3. I will not write any romantic words to you.
   4. I will learn how to read and write a letter to you.

19. I will put you through my manager as soon as _________.
   1. she arrives.
   2. she will arrive.
   3. she is going to arrive.
   4. she will not be arriving.

20. I wonder when _________.
   1. will the new computer arrive.
   2. the new computer will arrive.
   3. the new computer will be arriving.
   4. will the new computer be arriving.
Implementation of the CEFR Can-DO Descriptors for Self-Assessment

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Abstract
With the prevalence of learner-centered pedagogies in language learning, the importance of developing self-assessment skills is surfacing. This practical paper articulated the concept of the CEFR and step-by-step implementation of the CEFR Can-DO descriptors in self-assessment in a Japanese university context. The implementation took place in five distinctive stages. The first two stages can be perceived as preparatory stages in the way that the author spent much time setting up the course directions and selecting Can-DO descriptors associated with the course goals. In the following stages, students engaged in self-assessment training while they were going through the semester. As the literature suggests, the paper confirmed the tendency that learners’ constant exposure to clear criteria and the provision of self-assessment training allow them to calibrate their ability to self-assess more accurately.

Keywords: CEFR, Can-DO descriptor, self-assessment

Introduction

General Overview of the Paper
In the globalized world, transnational communication has been a norm. Global languages such as English, Spanish, and Chinese, have played a crucial role in bridging communication between individuals, business sectors, and international institutions. Europe, the birthplace of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR), is no exception. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the democratization of former communist states in the 20th century, regional integration in Europe further accelerated (Lawson, 2017). This unification of European states led to producing a large-scale democratic community, now known as the European Union, for the first time in the history of human civilization. Within this large cosmopolitan society, citizens in the sovereign states have conducted transborder activities such as travel and businesses over nearly the last three decades. The influx of such international travelers necessitated the production of a
standardized benchmarking tool to which people, in particular foreign language learners, can refer to gauge their language development during their school time. Needless to say, the CEFR began its role as a reference tool in the EU and now influences various educational institutions outside of the region (Nagai et al., 2020; COE, 2018). Even after formal schooling, understanding the mechanism of gauging and evaluating own language abilities is important in this globalized world (Rocca, 2018). Therefore, acquiring a self-assessment skill by some type of evaluation scaling (for this paper is the CEFR) would be beneficial for those individuals who wish to strive for companies that require a certain language ability. Given the necessity of developing self-evaluation skills in mind, this practical paper articulated the concept of the CEFR and step-by-step implementation of the CEFR Can-DO descriptors in self-assessment in a Japanese university context. The implementation took place in five distinctive stages. The first two stages can be perceived as preparatory stages in the way that the author spent much time setting up the course directions and selecting Can-DO descriptors associated with the course goals. In the following stages, students engaged in self-assessment training while they were going through the semester.

The CEFR and the Adaptation of the Can-DO Descriptors

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) was first published in 2001 with the initiation of the Council of Europe (COE, 2018). Since the publication of the first volume, the CEFR has been implemented in a variety of contexts including educational institutions outside of Europe. Japanese tertiary institutions are no exception, and the rise of interest from Japan-based scholars in the area can be observed (Tono & Negishi, 2012).

Within the CEFR, language proficiency is streamed into six levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2). Each proficiency stage comprises a series of Can-DO descriptors to visualize the level-appropriate tasks for language learners. The types of tasks are categorized into four modes of language activities (reception, production, interaction, and mediation) with finer subcategorized activities (See Figure 1). The tasks that appear in those Can-DO descriptors are associated with the necessity of the person at the particular level. In other words, the task complexity of Can-DO descriptors gradually progresses as the proficiency level of a learner develops. For instance, the Can-DO descriptors that appear in the A1 level pertain to daily activities. On the other hand, the C1 level comprises more advanced tasks that require the learners to exercise higher cognitive capacity and language skills.

Such an extensive number of detailed descriptors are often associated with CEFR’s progressive educational philosophy—action-oriented approach. The action-oriented approach situates a language learner as an autonomous social agent rather than a student learning to learn. For the CEFR, language
learning strongly pertains to proficiency development to achieve certain communicative goals set by the learner. In other words, the detailed Can-DO descriptors become a metalanguage for students to objectively evaluate the progression of their language proficiency to achieve the goals and reflect on their language development.

The CEFR has advocated learner-centered education under the banner of an action-oriented approach and encouragement of learner agency. Ironically, the Can-DO descriptors have been criticized for missing enough flexibility to adapt themselves to the teaching and learning contexts (Foley, 2019; Savki, 2021). In one of the above cases, the Can-DO descriptors that are associated with academic discourse can rarely be seen at lower levels such as A1 and A2. This omission of reference to particular language domains is noticeable within each level. Therefore, even the CEFR restricts learners from the freedom of selecting the language skills to be learned.

Figure 1
*Modes of language Activities and Subcategorized Activities*

![Modes of language Activities and Subcategorized Activities](image)


To resolve the mismatch between the needs of learners and the descriptors, Nagai et al. (2020) propose practitioners conduct “localization.” In a simple term, localization is a process of modifying a Can-DO descriptor to adapt it to a particular educational context. The first step for localization is to divide a descriptor into two sections. The unmodifiable sections possess criterial features that “differentiate levels of proficiency in the scale” (Nagai et al., 2020, p. 64). Other peripherals within the descriptor are modifiable so that the changes would not affect level distinction. This localization process can be applied to any mode of activity, as shown in Table 1 (Nagai et al., 2020, p. 65).

Table 1 uses Can-DO descriptors associated with reading. Among the sections, “depth of
understating” (bold in Table 2) should be kept intact. Other sections, “type of texts” (underlined) and “subject of texts” (italicized) can be modified but should maintain the same complexity attributed to the level. The differentiation of Can-DO descriptors is conducted by using an Item Response Theory. For more detailed discussions and explanations on how the IRT identified the difficulty level of each descriptor, Verhelst (2004) can be a recommendation.

Table 1

Reading for information and argument (Nagai et al, 2020, p.65) (emphasis added)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Can understand the finer points and implications of a complex report or article even outside his/her area of specialization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Can understand the finer points and implications of a complex report or article even outside his/her area of specialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Can understand in detail lengthy complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of specialty provided he/she can reread difficult sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The table was originated from Council of Europe (2018, p. 63)

Traditional Formats of Assessment and Self-assessment

Assessment is the process of recording and evaluating a learner's performance through their engagement in a testing instrument (Andrich & Marais, 2019). However, testing is not limited to but also includes any type of student work such as drafts, audio recording, and in-class performance. Assessment types are categorized into summative and formative forms. Formative assessment is often associated with performance testing within a particular interval, such as midterm and final exams. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is synonymous with continuous monitoring of one’s learning progress.

Assessment tools should be set in a way to capture a specific trait of a learner while the person engages in a particular task. Therefore, the usage of a well-designed assessment instrument can allow both learners and teachers to monitor and evaluate a particular trait that is being checked during the task engagement. In this way, the instrumentation of a successful assessment tool reinforces the efficiency of language learning by making informed decisions.

Self-assessment has been identified as the opposite of the usual assessment procedure usually set up and instrumented by the teacher. Teacher-led assessment is often described as accurate and precise (Ma & Winke, 2018). On the other hand, self-assessment is labeled as inaccurate and insufficient to be
used as a summative assessment tool (Brown & Harris, 2008). Despite these criticisms, self-assessment can be a powerful tool for students to utilize in a long journey of their lifelong language learning.

Seemingly far from robustness and deliberateness, self-assessment has been proven as an effective tool to monitor the performance of students by themselves and informative for the teacher at the same time. To fulfill the accuracy expected for any language assessment tools, students need to receive an extensive amount of practice to calibrate their assessment “lens” by familiarizing them with rigorous and consistent self-assessment ratings (Brown & Harris, 2003; Ma & Winke, 2019).

As the large body of self-assessment literature suggests (Brown & Harris, 2003; Panadero et al., 2017; Topping, 2003), self-assessment training leads to quality and efficient learning experiences. Specific to language learning studies, the introduction of self-assessment helps learners to reflect on their learning (Adams & King, 2006) and develop a sense of autonomy (Little, 2009) and overall language skills (Butler & Lee, 2010; Ross, 1998). In addition, meta-analysis studies (Falchikov & Boud, 1989; Ross, 1998) along with Chen (2008) emphasize the importance of familiarity with assessment criteria and training or experience in self-assessment. In other words, studies lacking enough training or familiarization have likely been to draw unwanted consequences such as highly subjective assessments and inaccurate descriptions of performance.

According to McMillan & Hearn (2008), the development of self-assessment should be discussed in a continuum rather than all or none. As Table 2 highlights, teachers should provide their students with an adequate amount of support and training at the early stage of their “growth scheme” (Chen, 2008; Dolosic et al., 2016; McMillan & Hearn, 2008). As the training proceeds, students are given more autonomy to select their own assessment criteria and goals, and strategies for better language learning.

**Self-assessment and the CEFR**

The action-oriented approach of the CEFR presupposes the development of learner autonomy. The definition of learner autonomy has diverged into finer and more specialized areas as the various language acquisition researchers associate the concept and their fields. Essentially, learner autonomy is a capacity for control over their language learning. When learners engage in an autonomous developmental cycle—setting their goals for learning, carrying out their learning plans, reflecting and evaluating their learning—the acquisition of self-assessment skills plays a critical role in optimizing language learning experiences.
### Table 2

**Developmental Growth Scheme for Self-Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Implementation</td>
<td>Establishing Criteria</td>
<td>Teaching Students</td>
<td>Providing Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>Criteria given to students for their reaction</td>
<td>Examples of applying criteria given to students</td>
<td>Teacher provides feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Student select criteria from a menu of possibilities</td>
<td>Teacher describes how to apply criteria</td>
<td>Feedback provided by both teachers and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Students generate criteria</td>
<td>Teacher models how criteria apply</td>
<td>Teacher engages students in justifying their feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table was cited from McMillan & Hearn (2008), which they adapted from Rolheiser (1996).*

The rationale for using the CEFR Can-DO descriptors in the self-assessment process is its clarity (Brown et al., 2014). As mentioned in an earlier part, the CEFR Can-DO descriptors are categorized into six levels and accommodated by detailed language tasks. In any case that students and teachers cannot find appropriate descriptors that match their learning context, the closest Can-DO descriptors can be adapted by conducting the aforementioned “localization” process. Hence, the clear link between the Can-DO descriptors and the language tasks is intuitive enough for the learners to understand the skills necessary to progress to the next proficiency level. For teachers, specific target traits that need to be developed and assessed are clearly situated within the Can-DO descriptors, which enable them to better planning of their CEFR Can-DO aligned courses.
Application of CEFR Can-DO Aligned Self-Assessment

General Overview of the Self-Assessment Procedure

In the following section, the paper lays out an example of the practical application of Can-DO descriptors for self-assessment, which the author utilized in two language courses offered fully online at the Faculty of Engineering and Business Administration at a university in Tokyo, Japan. The author received consent from 23 students enrolled in the courses (eight from the Business Administration and 15 from the Engineering) to use their self-assessment related data. The participants’ mean English language proficiency is between A1 to A2. A 90-minute lesson was held twice a week in the spring semester (15 weeks) of 2021. Students had not had previous experiences with CEFR Can-DO aligned self-assessment.

The implementation of the Can-DO aligned self-assessment was conducted in five stages (Figure 2), which the bulk of the rest of the paper is going to explain. The first stage is the selection of the appropriate stage from the growth scheme adapted by McMillan and Hearn (2008). In the second stage, the teacher selects appropriate Can-DO descriptors that match the target language skills taught in the two courses. In the third stage, the teacher conducts a pre-unit survey to monitor and evaluate the language proficiency of the students every time before a new unit starts. The fourth stage is students’ engagement in the tasks in each lesson and summative assessment tasks (midterm and final exams) and receive feedback from the teacher for improvement. In the final stage, the students answer a final survey to assess their own language proficiency development over the spring semester.

Figure 2.
Procedure of Implementing the CEFR Can-DO Descriptors in Self-Assessment
Selection of an Appropriate Stage from the Self-assessment Growth Scheme

The self-assessment in both courses was conducted in the following manner. First, the author (the teacher) selected the “Beginning” stage of the aforementioned growth scheme (Table 2) developed by McMillan and Hearn (2008), given students’ limited experience of interacting with the CEFR Can-DO descriptors and self-assessment. In this growth scheme stage, students are not provided enough freedom to exercise their learner autonomy in selecting and adopting the Can-DO descriptors, setting goals and strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. Nonetheless, as the English language curricula are set up in the way that those students would take extra language courses in the coming academic year, the author believes that students will use the self-assessment skills acquired in the courses as a springboard.

Selection of Target Can-DO Descriptors

The next stage is the selection of the Can-DO descriptors. The overall goals and objectives of the courses were already decided globally by the course designers, so the role of the author was to select additional Can-DO descriptors that were necessary to develop the global Can-DO goals. In total, 67 Can-DO descriptors were selected to gauge the language proficiency of the students. Some descriptors were localized at the selection. The selected descriptors were first administered in English only but switched to bilingual descriptors in the middle of the semester for deeper understanding and familiarity.

In the selection stage, the author used a few CEFR-related websites based on the immediate tasks. For a global and detailed search of Can-DO descriptors, a Cyprus-based CEFR search engine became handy (STATSCY, 2019). The website has various functions to sort out and split out specific descriptors which match the given conditions from a battery of Can-DO descriptors. Another benefit that one can observe is that the website can sequence and layout specific target language descriptors by different levels. For example, Can-DO descriptors related to “email production” can be found in the following instance, which allows the learners and teachers to identify the target descriptors with more ease.

A2: Can write short, simple notes, emails and text messages (e.g., to send or reply to an invitation, to confirm or change an arrangement).

B1: Can write basic formal emails/letters, for example to make a complaint and request action.

B2: Can use formality and conventions appropriate to the context when writing personal and professional letters and emails.
The rest of the websites (Japan Foundation, 2018; DeepL, 2022) were used to prepare bilingual Can-DO descriptors. As the studies (Brown et al., 2014; Chen, 2008; Falchikov & Boud, 1989; Ross, 1998) indicate, familiarization to target criteria plays an important role. After switching from English-only descriptors to a bilingual version, an overwhelming majority of the students decided to use the Japanese language. This website called Minnano Can-DO Saito (Can-DO Website for Everyone to Use), developed by the Japan Foundation serves almost similar functions to the search engine described above. Despite its clean interface and usefulness of the website, the website misses new Can-DO descriptors, which were added after the publication of the new companion volume in 2019. Those missing Can-DO descriptors were translated on the website called DeepL (2022), and the register and wording were modified by the author to match the context.

Pre-Unit Survey

The pre-unit surveys included the Can-DO descriptors associated with the target skills for the upcoming units and were administered on Google Forms—a survey website and app. The pre-unit surveys contained all levels (A1 to C2) of Can-DO descriptors associated with the target language skills, which could have been too low or sometimes too high for the learners. Students rated each descriptor (e.g., I can present my option in simple terms, provided listeners are patient) on a five-point Likert scale (very poorly, poorly, OK, well, very well). The rationale for including all the levels was to allow the students to exercise their learner autonomy to select their goals within the given Can-DO descriptors. Being set up the surveys in this way, the course still maintains to be on the “Beginner” stage of McMillan and Hearn’s growth scheme (2008) in terms of the teacher narrowly limiting the scope of the choices and providing them to the students for selection.

The purpose of conducting the pre-unit survey was to monitor the progress of students’ language skills developed over the course of the spring semester. Since the students were streamed into the courses based on their TOEIC scores, which cannot capture their spoken and written abilities due to its testing format, preparing various levels of Can-DO descriptors enabled the author to identify slight mismatches having existed between the course goals and the needs of the individual students. Hence, the process of including a wide breadth of Can-DO descriptors was beneficial for both lower and higher level students in terms of receiving different types of additional support from the teacher to compensate for the weaknesses or strengths among the students.
Engagement in Formative and Summative Assessment Tasks

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Week, Target Discussion Skills and the Can-DO Descriptors Asked in the Pre-Unit Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- *Can describe my hometown, hobbies, things that I am good at and not good at, my educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>background, family members, place and area that I live, and my weekend plans and future holidays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 &amp; 3 Stating an opinion, reason and example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- * Can present his/her opinion in a limited way, provided listeners are patient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can give or seek personal views and opinions in discussing topics of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can demonstrate his/her understanding of the key issues in a disagreement on a topic familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to him/her and make simple requests for confirmation and/or clarification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4 Reacting to speaker’s opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can generally follow what is said and, when necessary, can repeat back part of what someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has said to confirm mutual understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can ask for confirmation that a form used is correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding and help keep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the development of ideas on course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 5 &amp; 6 Showing agreement &amp; disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can recognize when speakers agree and disagree in a conversation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can agree and disagree with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can express belief, opinion, agreement and disagreement politely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can help the parties in a disagreement better understand each other by restating and reframing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their positions more clearly and by prioritizing needs and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can outline the main points in a disagreement with reasonable precision and explain the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positions of the parties involved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Localized Can-DO descriptors are marked with an asterisk.

Since the content of the two courses differs slightly, this paper henceforth uses “discussion” as a common focus language skill that was developed in both courses. During the spring semester, six discussion skills (Table 3) were introduced and practiced in the courses. The students engaged in both in-class discussions and discussion assignments that were recorded on Flipgrid, a website and app developed for managing videos and audio recording, and received feedback from the teacher on the website. In the eighth week of the semester, the students engaged in a midterm exam. The midterm
exam consisted of discussion sections in that students had to utilize their developed skills. The grading criteria were shared with students on Google Classroom, a learning management system, to raise their awareness of the target expressions. All the discussions were recorded via Zoom, an online conference tool, and evaluated on Google Classroom with constructive feedback over the next few weeks. The discussion skills that were practiced in the first half of the semester were recycled and used in the final presentations. The procedure of evaluation and feedback was conducted in the same manner that had been done for the midterm exam. The only noticeable difference was the application of discussion skills to support ideas in their presentations rather than being asked to use the skills in a discussion.

In the fifth stage, students answered the end-of-semester survey to assess their overall performance in the spring semester. As opposed to the pre-unit surveys, the end-of-semester survey was administered with a four-point Likert scale to optimally visualize the perceived gain from students. Also, the Can-DO descriptors of the final survey asked much more global questions as opposed to the narrow-focused Can-DO descriptors that had appeared in the pre-unit surveys. The intent of replacement was to confirm the degree of students’ perceived proficiency development and achievement of the course goals. To refer to an example with regard to “discussion,” three Can-DO Descriptors in a pre-unit survey were replaced with a localized descriptor in the final survey. As Table 4 highlights, the students assessed their growth in discussion skills positively in the final survey as compared to the pre-unit survey. The remarkable difference identified in the comparison was the reduction of students who rated their performance very poorly and an increase in the number of students who were moderately and highly confident in their discussion skills. The tendency can be supported by the results of the midterm exams and final presentations, in which students consistently performed well in articulating their ideas and opinions.
Table 4

*Comparison of Students’ Perceptions on Discussion Skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can-DOs (pre-unit survey)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Very poorly</th>
<th>Poorly</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Well</th>
<th>Very well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can present his/her opinion in a limited way, provided listeners are patient.</td>
<td>2.2 (0.9)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions.</td>
<td>2.7 (0.9)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can give or seek personal views and opinions in discussing topics of interest.</td>
<td>2.6 (0.1)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can-DOs (final survey)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Very poorly</th>
<th>Poorly</th>
<th>Well</th>
<th>Very well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can provide an opinion, a reason, and an example for daily conversation topics covered in the course.</td>
<td>3.8 (0.9)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

With the prevalence of learner-centered pedagogies in language learning, the importance of developing self-assessment skills is surfacing. This practical paper articulated the concept of the CEFR and step-by-step implementation of the CEFR Can-DO descriptors in self-assessment at a Japanese university context. As the semester proceeded, participants calibrated their self-assessment skills as close to the teacher’s evaluation standard. This result can be attributed to their familiarity to self-assessment and the tasks used in the courses (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). The results of students’ survey results show that learners’ constant exposure to clear criteria and the provision of self-assessment training allow them to calibrate their ability to self-assess more accurately (Ma & Winke, 2019; McMillan & Hearn, 2008). However, many procedural flaws such as inconsistency in selecting a Likert scale and localization of Can-DO descriptors should be fixed to offer more reliable and robust self-assessment results in future courses.
References


Scaffolding preservice teachers’ knowledge about language for an SFL-based genre approach to teaching English writing

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Abstract

Thai preservice teachers’ knowledge about language (KAL) draws from traditional grammar developed from their language learning experiences in primary and tertiary education. Hence, this linguistics orientation often results in decontextualised grammar lessons. This practitioner research reports how preservice teachers’ KAL is scaffolded to apply the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)-based genre pedagogy in teaching English writing. Sixty preservice teachers at a public university in Southern Thailand underwent a 16-week training on SFL-genre pedagogy. As part of the training, their KAL was scaffolded through conducting a linguistic analysis drawing from their rich meta-language on traditional grammar. Using Humphrey and McNaught’s (2016) 4x4 Toolkit with teacher-designed guide questions, they extended the text analysis revealing the linguistic resources’ discursive functions. Moreover, they were able to use the analysis in the teaching designs. The paper demonstrates the deconstruction, joint construction, and independent construction activities to achieve the study’s goal. This study shows viable practices in scaffolding and negotiating linguistic knowledge for a robust teacher training program.

Keywords: knowledge about language, ELT, scaffolding, writing pedagogy, teacher education

Introduction

Halliday (2007a) suggests that language development is threefold: learning language, learning through language, and learning about language. Learning language means primarily construing the mother tongue and then building up to construing more languages or institutionalised registers in later years. Learning through language “refers to the fact that almost all educational learning (as well as much learning outside school) takes place through language, written and spoken” (Halliday, 2007a, p. 337). Learning about language, the primary concern of this research, is linguistics (Halliday, 2007a). It means building up the knowledge about language (KAL) by making the language of the text conscious
by studying it as an object (Halliday, 2007a). Language learning will succeed with serious
consideration of adequate development of these three things (Halliday, 2007a). However, in Thailand,
KAL is a major concern. Studies have pointed out that teachers’ inadequate KAL (termed by most
research as linguistic knowledge) is one of the significant factors in the cases of failed English language
teaching (ELT) (Kanoksilpatham, 2007; Saenkhum, 2007; Wiriyachitra, 2002). In applying KAL in
teaching writing, a skill Thai ELT teachers’ primary area of concern (Noom-ura, 2013), writing lessons
typically focus on grammar accuracy (Saenkhum, 2007). Local language researchers suggested some
ways to improve teachers’ KAL. Kanoksilpatham (2007) suggested that teachers’ linguistic knowledge,
such as phonetics, lexical items, pragmatics, morphology, and sociolinguistics, should be developed.
Noom-ura (2013) suggested that teachers need a way to connect linguistic knowledge, e.g., grammar
and discourse (refers as micro-skills), to reading, writing, speaking, and listening (macro-skills).
However, one of the most significant things often overlooked in the literature is the kind of linguistics
Thai teachers’ KAL is based on. Thai ELT is based on traditional linguistics. Traditional linguistics
views language as a set of rules, labels for grammatical categories, and syntactic structures (Derewianka,
2012). The operational unit of language teaching grounded on this theory is often sentential, i.e.,
sentence-based, rather than discursive, i.e., meaning-based (Halliday, 2007b). Consequently, lessons
based on decontextualised grammar rules and vocabulary, or word level are commonly observed in Thai
ELT classrooms. Students learning under this approach often find it difficult to successfully fulfil the
reading and writing tasks because there is typically no adequate linguistic support beyond the sentence
level (Rose, 2004, 2020a). Literacy pedagogies, which include decontextualised word-level
grammatical forms, are ineffective and can hinder students’ academic performance (Derewianka, 2012,
p. 139; Mahboob, 2017a). Hence, the proactive suggestions of experts in Thailand can only do less if
teachers’ KAL does not allow for a richer and contextualised view of language. Due to these issues, the
study suggests that Thai teachers (preservice or in-service) should add functional and meaning-based
linguistics to their KAL repertoire for a contextualised and global approach to teaching English
language writing.

The paper is classroom-based research aiming to demonstrate how the preservice teachers’
KAL was developed. The project is an initial part of a 1.5-year action research project to develop an
ELT writing program for preservice teachers in Southern Thailand. The study exploited the preservice
teachers’ rich traditional linguistics metalanguage in conducting systematic text analyses and
expounding these analyses to reveal the language resources’ discursive functions. To conduct the text
analyses, the preservice teachers used Humphrey & McNaught’s (2016) 4x4 Toolkit. The toolkit is
grounded on Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth, SFL), a theory that views language as a

After this introduction, the paper proceeds with the methodology involving the context, theoretical foundations, and pedagogy deployed in the intervention. The results demonstrate the deconstruction, joint construction, and independent construction activities vital to developing the preservice teachers’ KAL. The paper concludes with some significant pointers educators and policymakers may consider.

Methodology

Participants and Context

The study is a part of a classroom-based research study that aims to develop an ELT writing program for preservice teachers. The writing program involves developing preservice teachers’ KAL through expounding on their rich traditional linguistics metalanguage. Sixty preservice teachers participated in the study. They study education major in English language teaching at the Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus. Pattani is one of the Southernmost provinces of Thailand. The students come from Southern provinces whose first languages are Pattani-Malay or Thai (Premsrirat, 2016; Chorbwhan et al., 2018).

The students were divided into two groups: thirty were second-year students, and thirty were third-year students. They received their training as a part of the course Learning Management in English Reading and Writing Skills that ran for 16 weeks, i.e., November 2020 to March 2021. Three of the total weeks with 3 contact hours per week were allotted solely to developing their KAL. The last weeks are allotted for developing their teaching practices where KAL was embedded. The mode of the lessons was hybrid—online and face-to-face.

Methods

4x4 Toolkit.

To develop the KAL of preservice teachers that draws from meaning and function, the study deployed Humphrey and McNaught’s (2016) 4x4 Toolkit (Table 1). The framework is developed specifically for teachers with a rich metalanguage of traditional grammar in a systematic analysis of texts to design teaching and assessment strategies for writing (Humphrey & McNaught, 2016; Humphrey, 2013). It is based on SFL, which views language as a meaning-making resource (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). The column of the toolkit, arranged based on text organisational layers, starts
from the word level (rightmost column). Words are organised into sentences, which are organised into paragraphs. The paragraphs are organised into the whole text. The rows are arranged into the four types of meaning drawn from SFL’s ‘metafunctions’ (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013; Martin, 1992). Experiential and logical meanings are under the umbrella of ideational metafunction, which interprets “meaning as the organisation of experience and construal of general logical relations” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 362). Interpersonal meanings are drawn from interpersonal metafunction that interprets “language as action” or “language is interactive and personal” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 30). The ideational and interpersonal meanings are “built up in sequences of discourse, organised in discursive flow creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along”, which we term textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 31).

Table 1
4x4 Toolkit for Linguistic Analysis (Humphrey & McNaught, 2016, p. 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning systems</th>
<th>Text levels</th>
<th>Whole text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language to express ideas</td>
<td>Whole text</td>
<td>Resources for constructing specialised discipline knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language to develop ideas</td>
<td>Paragraph</td>
<td>Resources for reporting ideas and reasoning logically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language to interact with audiences</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>Resources for convincing audiences in authoritative and critical ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language to organise cohesive texts</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Resources for organising clear abstract written and multimodal texts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As primary scaffolding, the teacher devised a set of guide questions that teachers can answer (Table 2). The guide questions are developed for various reasons. First, the toolkit uses some foundational SFL concepts. Therefore, the guide questions are scaffolding to shift the preservice teachers’ traditional linguistics gaze to a functional one. Second, based on my informal interview with the preservice teachers and research studies findings (e.g., Saenkhum, 2007; Kanoksilpatham, 2007), their typical understanding of language is sentential due to their previous language learning experiences. Hence, the guide questions can aid them in analysing beyond the sentence level. Lastly, limited time in developing their metalanguage means needing a faster and more effective analytical strategy. The guide questions are a straightforward strategy for text analysis.
To teach the 4x4 Toolkit, the study deployed the Teaching-Learning Cycle (TLC)—a type of pedagogy under the SFL-genre approaches developed by Sydney school linguists (Rose & Martin, 2012; Rothery & Stenglin, 1995). The model explicitly provides the researcher with a robust and systematic strategy to teach the metalanguage within the implementation’s practical limitations.

The TLC is a three-stage model of language teaching developed from Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory of learning and Halliday’s (1991) social semiotic views of language. The approach involves doing a task guided by a knowledgeable other, i.e., a teacher. Unlike the student-centred approach, where the teachers’ absence is valorised (Rose, 2004), TLC initially incorporates explicit teaching and teachers’ presence; then, it gradually shifts the teachers’ responsibility to students (Rose & Martin, 2012). Martin (1999) refers to this as “guidance through interaction in the context of shared experience” (p. 126). TLC aims for learners to have control and critical orientation to skills, knowledge, and language (Rothery, 1996). Setting the context and building the field are the key concerns of each stage (Rose & Martin, 2012). To achieve this, the TLC starts with analysing the text (deconstruction),...
then doing the task initially with an expert (joint construction), and then individually or by groups (independent construction) (Dreyfus et al., 2011).

The approach has been influential in teaching academic literacy not only in Australia but also in South Africa, Europe (Martin & Rose, 2012), the Americas (e.g., Gomez Burgos, 2017), and Asia (Shi et al., 2019; Sadeghi et al., 2013; Truong, 2017; Mastura et al., 2020; Kartika Ningsih, 2015; Adams & Lim, 2020; Dreyfus et al., 2016). However, despite the successes of some small-scale research projects in Thailand (e.g., Ramnath, 2018; Kongpetch, 2006; Sritrakarn, 2019; Sritrakarn, 2020; Chaisiri, 2010; Suksawas, 2018), the approach has not widely been used in the country. Due to this, the research can provide new insights into ELT in Thailand.

Results and Implications

The section illustrates how students’ KAL was developed through deconstructing the 4x4 Toolkit, joint analysis of a scientific report, and independent analysis of a factorial explanation and its application in the teaching design. Each stage shows the teaching process’s general features and implications for teaching.

Deconstruction

The deconstruction in teaching writing means setting the genre in its cultural context and discussing its stages and language features (Rose & Martin, 2012). Deconstruction was introduced as a response to critical theorists’ apprehension about genre-based literacy programs’ effect on students’ creative and critical abilities (Rose & Martin, 2012). Deconstructing stage aims to build learners’ knowledge in the genre teachers want the students to write in (Gibbons, 2009). Since the lesson’s aim is not writing but text analysis, the teacher sets the context by discussing the register, a model of context of situation. Register refers to what is happening, who is taking part, their social relationships, and what part language is playing, e.g., spoken, written, and multimodal (Martin & Rose, 2007; Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Teaching process general features.

The deconstruction process involved showing text examples in different registers, presenting alternative register frameworks, discussing Halliday’s three ways of meaning, and deconstructing the 4x4 Toolkit. First, the teacher showed authentic examples of texts in everyday and academic registers. The examples were abstracted through a juxtaposition of everyday and academic register discourse features to show learners how two different situations affect the discursive features of texts. The teacher
discussed Mahboob’s (2017b) three-dimensional framework, providing an alternative and more nuanced view of register grounded on SFL concepts. The framework demonstrates how text types can be arranged into register domains based on three variables: social distance, technicality, and modality. Afterwards, the teacher discussed Halliday’s (1994) three ways of meaning or the metafunctions, i.e., ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Drawing from register theories and metafunctions, the teacher introduced the 4x4 Toolkit (Humphrey & McNaught, 2016). The discussion started with columns as the terms are familiar with traditional linguistics metalanguage, then rows, arranged into metafunctions. Fulfilling the 4x4 Toolkit is a complex task. Therefore, the linguistic activity was broken down into smaller, manageable tasks comparable to Rose’s (2010; 2020) approach to reading. Particularly, instead of presenting all the guide questions at once, the teacher deconstructed the guide questions in the first row and showed how to answer the questions in each cell through a joint analysis (see Section 3.2). This cycle, i.e., deconstructing the metafunction at different text levels followed by a joint analysis, was repeated until all the metafunctions were covered. The classroom interaction below (Text 1) shows how the deconstruction of experiential meanings is negotiated in the classroom and analysed discursively into ‘moves’.

**Text 1**

*Classroom Interaction, Deconstruction of Experiential Meanings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set A</th>
<th>I created guide questions for you. Let us talk about language to express ideas first, or experiential meaning, because I don’t want to bombard you with a lot of information. Prepare: Rationalise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set B</td>
<td>So, let us first look at the first row. How does the text express ideas? You can answer these questions. Prepare In the first cell &lt;points to the first cell&gt;, <em>look at the whole text, what are the stages of the whole text?</em> Elaborate: Bridge and Exemplify For example, in descriptive reports, we have stages, right? Classification and Description stages. Direct For the whole text, you just have to put (write) the stages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set C</td>
<td>Next, the paragraph. <em>Look at each paragraph. How are the sentences arranged in a paragraph? How do the ideas develop in each paragraph?</em> Elaborate: Paraphrase This is where we will look at each paragraph and sentences in each paragraph and how do they develop. Prepare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next, sentence <points to sentence cell> look at each sentence. Are the sentences in passive voice or active voice? Look at the parts of each sentence. How do they look like? How about the noun groups, verb groups, or adjectives?

Set D

Are they extended? Are they contracted? Do they have a lot of adjectives? Are they long nouns or short nouns? How about the verbs? Are the verbs phrasal verbs like long verbs or short verbs? And how about the phrases?... What are the phrases doing?

Set E

Next, word <points to word cell> Look at each word. What kinds of words are they? Are they technical words? Everyday words? Are the verbs past tense? Present? Future?

And you can also look at adjectives or adverbs. You know. What kind of adverbs are they? Are they adverbs of time? Are they adverbs of manner? You can also look at that in word level.

In TLC, the control of knowledge starts with the knowledgeable other (Martin & Rose, 2012). Hence, the discursive domination of the teacher is noticeable in the excerpt. The aim is to create a shared deeper understanding of text analysis revealing experiential meaning resources and building it up in the joint construction stage. Initially, the teacher started with the rationalisation of guide questions and moved to the discussion of each text level. Each text-level deconstruction started with preparation by directing the students where to look and reading each guide question. After preparing the whole text level (Set B), the teacher exemplified a possible response to the questions by bridging it with the students’ background knowledge of the stages of descriptive reports. The same pattern emerged at the paragraph level (Set C), but the teacher explained the questions by paraphrasing them. At the level of sentences and words (Sets D and E), the teacher elaborated the guide questions by adding more specific and concrete questions for the text analysis.

**Implications for teaching.**

The teaching style presented previously may be referred to as the lecture-based approach, typically against the principles of progressivist educators. However, the approach was performed with the understanding that the topic is highly technical and theoretical, and it was the first time the learners interpreted language this way. Thus, it worked well at the tertiary level of education, as the teacher monologue was performed systematically with the consciousness of how scaffolding works discursively. There are two things worth noticing in the monologue. First, it consistently started with preparation, which enabled the students to focus on concepts one at a time. Second, each section was consistently elaborated in different ways, i.e., bridge/exemplify, paraphrase, extend. The interaction is an example
of what is known as ‘overt instruction’ (Bernstein, 1990, 1996). The teacher, an expert in language science, explicitly and systematically discussed a highly specialised topic. The teacher explicitly communicated what to do to fulfil each analysis cell. TLC does not use the student-centred approach in the initial stages of teaching as it can only serve students with the cognitive skills and background in linguistic analysis, leaving the low-performing ones confused (Rose & Martin, 2012; Rose, 2004). The lecture-based approach gave the learners equal access to the specialised knowledge overtly taught, not leaving any student guessing how to respond to each guide question.

**Joint Analysis**

The power and control the teacher initially possessed in the deconstruction were slowly released to the learners until they could conduct the analysis independently. Moreover, the teacher was aware that the toolkit could remain abstract even with the systematic preparation and guide questions elaborations. Thus, its concretisation can be achieved in the joint construction stage.

Joint construction enables the learners’ literacy development through supported dialogic exchanges to create the target text (Rothery & Stenglin, 1995). Traditional or progressive paradigms often miss this stage but are considered an integral part of the TLC (Rose & Martin, 2012). Joint construction draws from Vygotsky’s (1978) notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the difference between the tasks students can achieve independently and jointly with expert support. The required tasks can be achieved through consistent support of the knowledgeable other, known as ‘scaffolding’ (Wood et al., 1976). This subsection shows how this scaffolding happened. Since the lesson is not focused on writing a genre but linguistic analysis, we will re-term this stage ‘joint analysis’.

**Teaching process features.**

After deconstructing the experiential meanings row of the 4x4 Toolkit, the teacher proceeded to the joint analysis. This procedure was repeated until all meanings were analysed. It ensures that the complex linguistic analysis procedure is broken down into smaller tasks for easy understanding. An example of the teacher-student interaction is demonstrated below.
**Online Class Interaction during Joint Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set A</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Let us look this (second) sentence. Covid 19 affects people and can spread easily, but it can be prevented.</th>
<th>Prepare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Let us tear these up &lt;enclosed affects people, can spread easily, and can be prevented in separate squares&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do they pertain to? You can look at the other paragraphs. What is their relationship with the other paragraphs?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Maybe idea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Yeah, the idea.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Affirm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set B</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Here &lt;points&gt; affects people – where is it related to? What paragraph?</th>
<th>Prepare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>uhmm... the second paragraph</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Okay, very good.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How about can spread easily &lt;points&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where is it related?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>The second one... ay the third one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Yes, the third one. Very good.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How about this one? &lt;points&gt; but it can be prevented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Last one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Okay, it’s the last one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set C</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Now, let us go back to the paragraph cell. How are the sentences arranged in the paragraph? The first paragraph is a Classification. &lt;types Classification&gt;</th>
<th>Prepare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It provides what?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>identification</td>
<td></td>
<td>Propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Yes, it provides identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or what kind of information?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>definition</td>
<td></td>
<td>Propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Definition which is general information about the topic &lt;types provides general information about the topic in the paragraph cell&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dialogue shows a teacher and students’ analysis of a scientific descriptive report from the World Health Organisation about the COVID19 by filling out the experiential meanings row at the

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1 Italic words are the actual text examples; items enclosed in <> are paralinguistic actions; items enclosed in () are linguistic items not expressed in the actual discourse but filled in the dialogue for readers’ understanding.

2 Descriptive reports aim to classify and describe the features of a thing or phenomenon (Martin & Rose, 2008).
paragraph level of the 4x4 Toolkit. The teacher demonstrated how each cell’s guide questions could be answered by shaping learners’ cognitive analytical frameworks. The goal was to help the learners analyse the meaning of the first sentence of the first paragraph and show how the second sentence is related (preview of topics in each paragraph) to the subsequent paragraphs. To do this, the teacher negotiated the background information, i.e., main ideas, with the students (Set A), proceeded to identifications of the paragraph-by-paragraph textual organisation (Set B), and then elicited another background information, i.e., the function of the Classification stage, discussed in week 1 (Set C).

Image 1

**Teacher-student Text Annotations**

The interactional pattern is similar to Rose’s (2004) scaffolding interaction cycle, a discursive scaffolding strategy to enable the successful performance of classroom tasks. It starts with preparation, where the ‘teacher gives or points information to enable successful responses’ (Rose, 2020a, p. 3). The teacher then asks a question, i.e., focus, to which the students respond by either identifying elements in the text or proposing something based on their previous knowledge (Rose, 2020a). The teacher either affirms or rejects the learners’ response and elaborates it by providing additional information (Rose, 2020a) to fulfil the analysis cell (as per the excerpt, see Image 1 above). Although the scaffolding interaction cycle is primarily demonstrated in reading activities and is a proven effective strategy in teaching reading (Rose, 2004, 2020a, 2020b), it was also shown to be effective in doing joint analysis.
Implications for teaching.

To interpret the exchange’s significant implications for teaching, it is paramount to note the characteristics of the exchange. The exchange carefully considered Rose’s (2004) scaffolding interaction cycle. Teachers using this cycle need to ensure that the task is always prepared, students’ responses are always affirmed, and information is elaborated (Rose, 2004). For example, in Set A, the teacher prepared the students by pointing out which sentence to focus on and asking for the second sentence’s meaning. The student then proposed an answer *maybe idea* derived from their Week 1 knowledge about the stages of descriptive reports. In non-TLC classroom practice, teachers typically ask questions without preparation (Rose, 2020a, 2004). Rose (2020a, 2004) warns that the absence of preparation may lead to the engagement of solely high achieving students as they have more robust background knowledge about the genre, leaving the low achieving students behind. Rose (2004) suggests that disengaged students typically do not receive teachers’ affirmations. It is because typical classroom interactions under hidden curriculum instructions (Bernstein, 1990, 1996), e.g., student-centred, teach them that only “some students are regularly more successful than others”3 (Rose, 2004, p. 7). Due to the discursive preparation in the exchange, learners of various achievement levels could propose knowledge and identify the elements successfully, constantly receiving the teacher’s affirmations. Once the students successfully understood the relationship of the first paragraph sentences to other paragraphs through a couple of cyclic interaction patterns, the student response was affirmed and elaborated. The response was accepted and written on the analysis cell.

It is paramount for teachers to see how scaffolding is embedded in the discursive strategies during the joint analysis stage. Learners need these dialogic interactions to analyse and think linguistically, which is rarely developed in their preservice education training.

Independent Construction

The early versions of TLC designed independent construction into subprocesses involving “writing the text, submitting it for consultation with the teacher, and editing and publishing” (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 64). It can be done through group or individual work (Dreyfus et al., 2011). Since the lesson of the study focussed on text analysis, independent construction was designed for preservice teachers to analyse texts and apply the analysis in their teaching designs successfully.

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Teaching process features.

The teacher grouped the students and assigned an academic genre to analyse. Learners needed to choose three texts under the genre. They analysed the texts using the 4x4 Toolkit 1) to reveal the linguistic resources and their functions to achieve the purpose of the genre, and 2) to use the linguistic resources in grammar teaching for their final teaching demonstration performance. The students were given constant feedback from the teacher in the entire independent construction. Due to space concerns, I will only show a representative example of text analysis (Table 3) and how a group of students used it in their teaching and learning programming (Image 2).

Table 3

Independent Text Analysis of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language to...</th>
<th>Whole text</th>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Express ideas (EXPERIENTIAL) How does the text express ideas?</td>
<td>Ideas relate to text and themes and unfolded via stages of: Phases of identification in first paragraph then preview and elaboration of factors - Topic sentence in each paragraph then expanded</td>
<td>Mostly using active voice in sentences rather than passive voice. Long noun groups, prepositional phrases, and adverb phrases to make things specific.</td>
<td>-Technical terms: Simple past tense verbs to tell us about something that has already happened and ended which are the causes that lead to Renaissance first take place in Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ideas (LOGICAL) How does the text develop ideas logically?</td>
<td>Ideas are arranged logically e.g. phases of identification and introduction of factors &gt; the possession of Roman remains &gt; the presence of many rich merchants &gt; the existence of many independent governments &gt; the effects on Italy of Greek scholars together with the Greek civilization.</td>
<td>Conjunctions express clear logical meanings. Add e.g. and Elaborate e.g. for example, such as Enhance e.g. from, during, with, for, of, about Cause and effect e.g. - Contrast e.g. unlike Reason e.g. since, as</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact with audience (INTERPERSONAL) How does the text interact with the audience?</td>
<td>The text has high social distance. The writer takes an expert role to illustrate multiple factors. The text explains the causes on one factor.</td>
<td>It uses declarative sentences to give information. No words express opinions or feelings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise cohesive text (TEXTUAL) How is the text organised to be cohesive?</td>
<td>The text has an introduction and body but no conclusion. The text is divided into paragraphs.</td>
<td>Pronouns are easy to retrieve because references are clear. Nouns (article) are retrievable and used properly.</td>
<td>Spelling and punctuation are clear and not distracting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
from the factorial explanation group is shown in Image 2.

Image 2

*Factorial Explanation Group Teaching Design*

Image 2 shows the lessons and objectives for the 5-day factorial explanations writing program. The first day focuses on building learners’ background knowledge of factorial explanations through deconstructing their purpose and uses. The second day is focused on developing learners’ linguistic understanding through analysing the text semantically. They drew from their linguistic analysis of logical meanings in factorial explanations. Drawing again from the linguistic analysis, they moved to a more concrete language lesson: the stages and language features on the third day. The fourth day is focused on joint construction, whereas day five is reserved for independent construction. These days focus on how the linguistic features can be used to create new texts to achieve the purpose of the target genre.

**Implications for teaching.**

In teaching practice, linguistic analysis using the 4x4 Toolkit allowed for semiotic and functional understanding of language, adding to preservice teachers’ traditional KAL. The independent construction activities allowed a more profound understanding of how the linguistic resources are used to achieve the text’s purpose. Their previous decontextualised KAL was enhanced by looking at language at the discourse level. Additionally, their new KAL enabled them to evaluate the text’s quality and choose which text is appropriate as a model of the target genre.
Furthermore, the newly developed KAL was applied in their teaching designs. The independent construction activity made the text analysis tasks meaningful and purposeful. Educators need to consider a critical idea in this activity. Since the text analysis tasks were specialised and abstract in orientation, they need adequate scaffolding to bridge theory and practice successfully. The specialised knowledge is embedded in what Bernstein (1999) defines as vertical discourses. Preservice teachers need to transform it into everyday practice, which operates in horizontal discourses (Bernstein, 1999). The transformation of vertical into horizontal discourses can only be possible with teachers’ modelling, intervention, and involvement in the discourse (Harju & Akerblom, 2017). These supports are often overlooked in covert instructions. Therefore, constant teacher-student negotiations and feedback through a straightforward approach in the independent construction stage were done for the bridging.

Conclusion

I will end this paper with some pointers educators and policymakers may consider. We should be aware of the nature of KAL the language teaching is based on, as it affects how the ELT pedagogy is done and how language learners view and use language. We need a KAL that draws from meaning, not decontextualised grammar, to make language learning meaningful. Teacher education is the ideal stage to develop this. Moreover, preservice teachers need tools to teach language and writing successfully. A powerful tool combines a meaning-based language theory with a systematic teaching approach. The research demonstrated that SFL, through text analysis using the 4x4 Toolkit and the TLC, allowed the preservice teachers to design and perform a more contextualised and meaningful teaching. If used in large-scale action-based research, these approaches can potentially change the ELT in Thailand. Furthermore, our awareness and practice of how scaffolding is done in discourse are paramount. Preservice teacher education has a myriad of potential to develop Thai teachers’ KAL.

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in the Sydney school. Equinox.


Investigating the Use of Paraphrasing Strategies and Attitudes Towards English Writing of EFL Undergraduate Students

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Abstract
Paraphrasing is an important technique for academic writing and is often used to change original texts or to condense texts for better comprehension. Most academic writing, such as reports and theses, require this important technique. Therefore, paraphrasing is a key factor in education. This study aims to investigate the paraphrasing strategies of undergraduate students and observe the attitudes of students towards paraphrasing. The participants comprised 23 undergraduate students majoring in English. The instruments used to collect the data in this study included 15 paraphrasing items and a questionnaire in two parts. The abilities of the participants were assessed through the paraphrasing items and their attitudes towards paraphrasing were evaluated through the questionnaire. The results were then analysed to determine the mean scores, standard deviations and percentages. The findings of this study revealed that the most frequently used paraphrasing method was the semantic paraphrase strategy, which occurred at 90.93%, followed by 7.75% who used the syntactic paraphrase strategy. Conversely, no participants used an organisation paraphrasing strategy. Interestingly, the frequency of copying directly as a strategy occurred at 1.32% while the students’ attitudes towards paraphrasing demonstrated a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.69$, $SD = 0.46$).

Keywords: paraphrasing strategies, attitudes, academic writing
Introduction

Background of the Study

Writing is a key factor in education. However, almost all types of academic writing, such as reports, essays and theses, require an important technique known as paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is often adopted when writing academic papers. Fundamentally, it eliminates plagiarism amongst authors, which is something that is often overlooked. This method can help authors to strengthen their arguments more effectively by quoting, using citations and so on. Bailey (2011) suggested that paraphrasing is a technique to restate words in a text without changing the meaning of the original text in order to avoid plagiarism. Furthermore, Shi (2012) defined paraphrasing as an essential strategy to rewrite original texts in our own words or to change the structure of the sentences, but still citing the original authors’ names. In addition, Dung (2010) stated that paraphrasing involves borrowing texts or ideas from an original source and rewriting them in the new author’s own words but still crediting the owner of the original text. Once students understand how paraphrasing works, it can help them to create more effective writing. Rahmayani (2018) pointed out, however, that the vast majority of students still have problems with paraphrasing, which can become an obstacle when writing academically; thus, it is necessary to understand students’ attitudes towards paraphrasing to comprehend their thoughts, attitudes and comprehension of paraphrasing.

There is a need for effective paraphrasing that supports academic writing skills. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the paraphrasing strategies of the students and study their attitudes towards paraphrasing. The purpose of the study is to answer the two following questions:
1. To what extent do undergraduate students use paraphrasing strategies?
2. What are the attitudes of undergraduate students towards paraphrasing?

Scope of the Study

The participants of the study consisted of 23 fourth-year students majoring in English in the academic year 2020, at the English for International Communication, Faculty of Technical Education. The research was completed over one semester. The paraphrasing tasks used in the study were obtained from the British Council and Learn English Teens websites and the questionnaire was adapted from Liao and Tseng (2010) and Rahmayani (2018).
Literature Review

The Definition of Paraphrasing

Bailey (2011) stated that paraphrasing is a strategy to change the words in a text. Therefore, the new text is essentially different from the original text, but the meaning remains the same. Paraphrasing also shows your understanding of the original text. Moreover, it is a technique that significantly reduces—or completely removes—the risk of plagiarism. In addition, Burnell et al. (2018) noted that paraphrasing is a technique that involves the rewriting of passages, texts and ideas from the original text without changing the meaning and is different from summarising, which is something the new author has to write in their own words. Once paraphrased, the text remains roughly the same length as the source text.

The University of South Australia (n.d.) defined paraphrasing as a technique to present existing information in our own words and still cite the original texts. Paraphrasing shows the author’s comprehension and ability to express this knowledge by using their own language. In addition, Nordquist (2020) stated that paraphrasing is a strategy that restates the original text in order to simplify or explain its meaning, in another style or in different words. Furthermore, Willcutt and Stankey (2018) defined paraphrasing as a way to rewrite texts or passages in our own words without changing the meaning and requires focusing on the main point of the text.

The Importance of Paraphrasing for EFL Learners

Paraphrasing is one of the most important skills in academic writing, especially when writing reports, papers or theses, which almost always require citing other authors’ work to strengthen their arguments. Moreover, paraphrasing is a tool that helps to express the ideas and thoughts of other writings in the words of the new author to ensure the readers understand what has been written. Therefore, there is the need to use our own words to describe other authors’ ideas which may have different writing styles to make it more effective. Hans (n.d.) stated that “paraphrasing plays an important role in enhancing students’ reading comprehension skills” (p. 13). In addition, Clark (2012) stated that paraphrasing is one of the most important skills that writers must comprehend when writing any kind of academic work. This skill could be the link that relates to how learners use data contained in external sources to support their claims where the source texts need to be referenced in each case.

Moreover, La Trobe University (n.d.) suggested that paraphrasing is an important way to check the understanding of the writers when borrowing original texts and rewriting them in their own words. Furthermore, it offers the writers a strong option to using direct quotes, which should be used
infrequently. In addition, paraphrasing is an effective way to use the source texts when academic writing.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

Pieterick (as cited in Dung, 2010) classifies paraphrasing into three types: syntactic paraphrase, semantic paraphrase and organization paraphrase (changing the structure of ideas).

**Syntactic paraphrase.**

This paraphrase type is achieved by changing the word order in sentences or paragraphs and there are several techniques to achieve this strategy (changing active to passive, changing positive to negative).

*Changing active to passive*

**Original:** Jones donated his money to the orphanage.

**Paraphrased:** Money was donated to the orphanage by Jones.

**Semantic paraphrase.**

This type requires changing the keywords in sentences by using synonyms or by changing the keywords in texts that are to be paraphrased and incorporates several strategies (changing word order, changing parts of speech, using synonyms, changing numbers and percentages). Some examples of changing word order are shown below.

*Changing word order*

**Original:** Sam did not understand the math homework because it was difficult.

**Paraphrased:** Because the math homework was challenging, Sam could not comprehend it.

**Organization paraphrase (changing the structure of ideas).**

It is a technique of paraphrasing which changing the structure of the idea within a given text. An example of this is shown below.

**Original:** “The generation born after the second world war, sometimes called baby-boomers, is now reaching retirement age, and businesses are starting to realize that they are a wealthier market than any previous retirement group” (Bailey, 2011, p. 45).
Paraphrased: Businesses are beginning to notice that the baby-boomer generation is a more prosperous market than other retirement communities.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is often discovered in academic writing as many researchers may lack paraphrasing skills to avoid plagiarism detection. Gardner (1999) explained that “copying in a way that makes ideas appear to be your own is plagiarism” (p. 3). The Cambridge Dictionary (2020) defined plagiarism as “impersonating other people’s ideas as your own work or copying the work of others and claiming that as their own”. Additionally, the University of Oxford stated that plagiarism means copying or using the compositions of others and rewriting them in their own words without adding any credit, even though the works are already published. Therefore, to avoid plagiarism, authors must understand the original text before writing it in their own words.

Table 1

Theoretical Framework from Pieterick’s Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paraphrasing Type</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic Paraphrase</td>
<td>• Changing active to passive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Changing positive to negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Separating long sentences into short sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expanding phrases for clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Condensing the original text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Combining sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using varied sentence structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic Paraphrases</td>
<td>• Changing the word order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Changing parts of speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using synonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Changing numbers and percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Paraphrase</td>
<td>• Changing the structure of the idea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cited in Dung (2010, pp. 12–16) and Injai (2015, p. 17)

Methodology

Participants of the Study

The participants for this study comprised 23 undergraduate English for International Communication students in the academic year 2020, Faculty of Technical Education. The age of the
participants was 20 to 25 years and included five males and 18 females. The participants in the study were selected from a purposive sampling method. In the present study, the study selected fourth-year students as they had previously studied paraphrasing in report writing and argumentative and persuasive writing, by studying one semester in the third year and one semester in the fourth year.

**Research Designs**

The study was carried out using quantitative research to investigate the use of paraphrasing strategies and attitudes of students towards paraphrasing. The paraphrasing tasks consisted of 15 items. Following the paraphrasing tasks, participants were asked to complete a 22-item questionnaire to survey their attitudes.

For the questionnaire, the study used the Likert’s scale which scored each degree from one to five as follows (Mueller, 1986):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00–1.80</td>
<td>Very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.81–2.60</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.61–3.40</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.41–4.20</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.21–5.00</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Instruments**

The study consisted of two research instruments: a) a series of paraphrasing tasks (15 items), and b) a questionnaire.

**Paraphrasing tasks.**

The primary instrument used in the study was a set of paraphrasing texts, which included 15 items that the participants had to complete within 60 minutes. According to the requirements of the Office of the Basic Education Commission, the Ministry of Education (2014) indicated that undergraduate students must be able to reach the minimum requirement of level B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Therefore, the writing tasks were set at B2 level reading, taken from the British Council and Learn English Teens websites, which grouped each reading task by level, are based on CEFR. The texts were taken from various topics (see Table 2).
The questionnaire.

The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire in order to investigate undergraduate students’ attitudes towards paraphrasing, from which data was collected. The questionnaire was adapted from the work by Liao and Tseng (2010) and Rahmayani (2018) and divided into two parts to include a demographic profile and attitudes towards paraphrasing.

The first part of the questionnaire covered the demographic profiles of the participants and included gender, age, the number of years studying English and the number of English study hours per week. The second part of the questionnaire covered three sections. The first section incorporated the importance of paraphrasing, which included six questions (1–6). The next section was based on paraphrasing strategies that consisted of seven questions (7–13). The last section is a reflection of the students’ satisfaction towards paraphrasing and included nine questions (14–22), based on the 5-point Likert scale to collect data.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Texts Chosen for the Paraphrasing Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
simply wrong.

**Economy**
In the consumerist society we live in today, the increased opportunities to sell on our unwanted and underused goods can lean to a lesser impact on our environment.

**Digital Literacy**
Don’t put too much personal information online and always think carefully before you post something.

---

**Data Collection**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of the study and the government’s social distancing measures being deployed, the 23 fourth-year English for International Communication students carried out the paraphrasing tasks by using Google Form. The study allowed each participant 60 minutes to complete the 15 paraphrasing tasks. Once completed, the participants were then asked to complete the questionnaire.

The researchers analysed the participants’ paraphrased texts based on Pieterick’s framework (as cited in Dung, 2010) and indicated the results of the study as a percentage. Additionally, a questionnaire was used to analyse the attitudes of the students towards paraphrasing. Furthermore, the standard deviation (SD) and mean score ($\bar{x}$) were used in the study.

**Results**

The study was designed to satisfy two research questions:
1. To what extent do undergraduate students use paraphrasing strategies?
2. What are the attitudes of undergraduate students towards paraphrasing?

The research objectives were to evaluate the paraphrasing strategies used by the participants and to examine the attitude of students towards paraphrasing. Thus, the results of the study are described below:

**To What Extent Do Undergraduate Students Use Paraphrasing Strategies?**

To answer research question 1, the study used 15 paraphrasing tasks in order to investigate paraphrasing strategies amongst students (as shown in Table 3). Here are some examples of students’ paraphrasing tasks during the study.

1. **Syntactic paraphrase.**

   **Original:** I went from London to Prague to set up a new regional office there.

   **Student A:** The regional office in Prague was set up by myself once I travelled from London.
2. Semantic paraphrase.

Original: In Britain, the average person spends more than £1,000 on new clothes a year, which is around four per cent of their income.

Student B: Most people in Britain spent over £1,000 on their outfits per year, which is approximately four percent of their salary.

3. Organization Paraphrase

Original: Don’t put too much personal information online and always think carefully before you post something.

Student C: Before you post anything online, think carefully and don’t post information that is personal.

Table 3

The Frequency of Usage of Paraphrasing Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paraphrasing Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntactic Paraphrase</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changing active to passive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changing positive to negative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Separating long sentences into short sentences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expanding phrases for clarity</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Condensing the original text</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Combining sentences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using varied sentence structures</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semantic Paraphrase</strong></td>
<td>481</td>
<td>90.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changing word order</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>31.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changing parts of speech</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using synonyms</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>54.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changing numbers and percentages</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Paraphrase</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changing the structure of the idea</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Strategies</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Direct copy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>529</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Injai (2015, p. 37)
According to Table 3, the results show that most of the participants (90.93%) used semantic paraphrasing as a strategy in paraphrasing the texts. In this strategy, using synonyms was most frequently used by the participants at 54.82%. The study shows that the participants considered changing the key vocabulary with other words but still retained the same meaning, followed by 31.00% of the participants who changed the word order or the clauses in the text. Next, 4.54% of the participants changed the parts of speech, by changing the words in the original text to other parts of speech. Only 0.57% of the participants changed the numbers and percentages while paraphrasing.

Additionally, 7.75% of the participants used syntactic paraphrasing as a strategy. With syntactic paraphrasing, most participants (3.02%) frequently condensed the original text when paraphrasing. This was followed by 1.70% who used expanding phrases for clarity. The third most commonly used strategy was changing the text from active to passive at 1.13%.

However, the participants rarely used several paraphrasing strategies, including separating long sentences into short sentences at 0.95%, using various sentence structures at 0.76% and combining sentences at 0.19%. Furthermore, none of the participants changed positive texts to negative ones as a strategy for paraphrasing. The study also found that no participants used organization paraphrasing by changing the structure of the idea. Additionally, few participants (1.32%) copied the original text. Based on the results presented in Table 3, the study shows that semantic paraphrasing was used most frequently at 90.93%. The second most frequently used strategy was syntactic paraphrasing at 7.75%, with none of the participants opting for the organization paraphrase strategy. The results of the study show that using synonyms, changing the word order and changing parts of speech were most frequently used by the participants.

**What are the Attitudes of Undergraduate Students Towards Paraphrasing?**

To answer research question 2, the study created a questionnaire to understand the attitudes of students towards paraphrasing. The research aimed to examine the attitudes of the participants towards paraphrasing. The questionnaire included two sections, as presented in Table 4.

Based on the demographic profile in Table 4, the 23 participants who were asked to complete a questionnaire comprised 21.74% male students and 78.26% female students. The majority of the participants (86.96%) had an age range between 20 and 22 years, followed by 23 to 25 years (8.69%), and only 4.35% of the participants were 26 or above. All of the participants had learned English for more than 10 years. Additionally, 86.96% of the participants studied English between seven and nine hours per week, with some (13.04%) studying English more than 10 hours per week.
Table 4

Demographic Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Profile</th>
<th>Number (N=23)</th>
<th>Percentage (100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 20–22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>86.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 23–25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 26+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The duration of learning English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More than 10 years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number of English study hours per week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7–9 hours</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>86.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More than 10 hours</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.1 Attitudes of the students towards paraphrasing

This section shows the results of the questionnaire (see Table 5).

Table 5

The Importance of Paraphrasing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>(\bar{x})</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 1: The Importance of Paraphrasing</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Paraphrasing is a strategy that academic writers use to rephrase original texts in order to avoid plagiarism.</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Paraphrasing is very useful in academic writing.</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Paraphrasing helps me to avoid plagiarism.</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Paraphrasing helps me to avoid quoting constantly.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Paraphrasing helps me to better understand original texts.</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Paraphrasing is necessary for learning English.</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of Table 5 show participants who thought paraphrasing was a technique used to rewrite original texts when authors wanted to avoid plagiarism at a very high level (\(\bar{x} = 4.26, SD = 0.62\)).
Participants who thought paraphrasing was helpful when writing academically was also at a very high level ($\bar{x} = 4.48$, SD = 0.67).

Furthermore, participants suggesting that paraphrasing was very useful to help avoid plagiarism was at a very high level ($\bar{x} = 4.42$, SD = 0.80). The results also show that participants agreeing that paraphrasing could help them to better comprehend the texts at a very high level ($\bar{x} = 4.26$, SD = 0.69). Participants who also accepted that, for EFL learners in particular, paraphrasing was important was at a very high level ($\bar{x} = 4.30$, SD = 0.70). Additionally, participants suggesting that many strategies in paraphrasing helped them to avoid quoting too much was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.74$, SD = 0.81).

The overall results show that participants who thought that paraphrasing was important at a very high level ($\bar{x} = 4.21$, SD = 0.07).

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>(\bar{x})</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 2: Paraphrasing Strategies</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I understand how to paraphrase by using different strategies appropriately.</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I change grammar and sentence structures when I paraphrase.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I change the word class when I paraphrase.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I change the structure and idea of the text when I paraphrase.</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>When I want to obtain ideas from various sources, I always paraphrase other authors’ work and provide proper citations and references.</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Whenever I am unable to paraphrase a particular text, I plagiarise the original text.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>When I have limited time to paraphrase, I often plagiarise the work.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 6, the results show that participants paraphrasing by changing the structure and grammar of texts was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.65$, SD = 0.78). Furthermore, participants being familiar with paraphrasing by using various techniques was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.43$, SD = 0.51). Participants paraphrasing the original text by changing the word class ($\bar{x} = 4.00$, SD = 0.74) and changing the
structure and idea of the original text ($\bar{x} = 3.48$, SD = 0.85) were also at a high level. Likewise, participants who always paraphrase the work of other authors and provide appropriate citations and references when different sources are required was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.61$, SD = 0.72). Conversely, participants copying the work from original texts due to limited time ($\bar{x} = 3.22$, SD = 1.13) or could not understand the source text ($\bar{x} = 3.09$, SD = 0.90) were at a moderate level. The overall results found that the participants who were able to use paraphrasing techniques was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.50$, SD = 0.19).

Table 7

A Reflection of the Students’ Satisfaction towards Paraphrasing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 3: A reflection of the students’ satisfaction towards paraphrasing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I like paraphrasing.</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Paraphrasing is easy.</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I feel confident when I paraphrase.</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I paraphrase texts instead of plagiarising, as it is wrong to steal the work of other authors.</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I always paraphrase when I write research papers.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I understand an original text more when I paraphrase it into my own words.</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Knowing a lot of words supports my paraphrasing skills.</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A lack of academic writing skills affects paraphrasing.</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Inadequacy in academic reading skills affects my paraphrasing skills.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows that participants like to paraphrase ($\bar{x} = 2.83$, SD = 1.11) and feel confident when they do paraphrase ($\bar{x} = 2.78$, SD = 1.17) at a moderate level. Likewise, when writing academically, participants who always paraphrase was at a moderate level ($\bar{x} = 3.35$, SD = 0.98). Moreover, participants who knew that plagiarism was wrong so always tried to paraphrase ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, SD = 1.04) and participants who could understand the source text before paraphrasing were at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.48$, SD = 1.04).

Participants who agreed that having a broad vocabulary base would improve their paraphrasing skills was a high level ($\bar{x} = 4.17$, SD = 0.78) and participants accepting that, if they had fewer academic writing skills, it would affect their paraphrasing abilities, was also at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.87$, SD = 0.76). Similarly, having a lack of reading skills would affect the participants’ skills was shown at a high level.
(\(\bar{x} = 3.65, \text{SD} = 0.71\)). Conversely, participants who thought that paraphrasing was easy was at a low level (\(\bar{x} = 2.52, \text{SD} = 1.04\)). The overall results show that the reflection of students’ attitudes towards paraphrasing at a moderate level (\(\bar{x} = 3.36, \text{SD} = 0.17\)).

As shown in Table 8, participants who realised the importance of paraphrasing was at a very high level (\(\bar{x} = 4.21, \text{SD} = 0.07\)) and also those who have a high comprehension of paraphrasing strategies at a high level (\(\bar{x} = 3.50, \text{SD} = 0.19\)). Conversely, the questionnaire shows the reflection of the students’ satisfaction towards paraphrasing at a moderate level (\(\bar{x} = 3.36, \text{SD} = 0.17\)).

Table 8

The Summary of Attitudes of Students towards Paraphrasing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>(\bar{x})</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The importance of paraphrasing</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Very high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Paraphrasing strategies</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A reflection of the students’ satisfaction towards paraphrasing</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conclusion, it may be said that paraphrasing strategies are some of the most significant tools for effective academic writing. Results show the attitudes of the participants towards paraphrasing at a high level (\(\bar{x} = 3.69, \text{SD} = 0.46\)).

Discussion

This part discusses 1) the use of students’ paraphrasing strategies, and 2) the level of students’ attitudes towards paraphrasing. The limitations of the study, the recommendations for further studies and the conclusion are presented below.

Discussion

To what extent do undergraduate students use paraphrasing strategies?

The study was conducted using paraphrasing tasks in order to examine the paraphrasing strategies used by the students. The test was adapted from the reading part of Learn English British Council and Learn English Teens websites. The results of the study show that the majority of participants (54.82%) used synonyms as a technique for paraphrasing (see Table 3). This is similar to the findings of Injai (2015) where it was found that most of the participants used synonyms while none of the participants changed the structure of the idea as a technique when paraphrasing. Moreover, the results of the study can be related to the findings of Khrismawan and Widiati (2013) in that most of the
participants were likely to use synonyms when they paraphrased (see Table 3).

Interestingly, what can be seen from the results of the first question, is that the most frequently used strategy by the participants is to use synonyms. This suggests that the participants agree that using synonyms is more straightforward than other techniques.

**To what extent are the attitudes of undergraduate students towards paraphrasing?**

The second part used a questionnaire in order to investigate the attitudes of students towards paraphrasing. The questionnaire was adapted from the work of Liao and Tseng (2010) and Rahmayani (2018). The study found that the attitudes of the students towards paraphrasing was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.69$, $SD = 0.46$). The findings of the current study also confirm the work of Liao and Tseng (2010) who pointed out that the participants always paraphrase when doing research papers to support their ideas, which shows a similar standard deviation (see Table 7). However, the study shows that some participants plagiarise or copy the original texts (see Table 6) as a lack of understanding the original texts is at a moderate level, which also supports the work of Liao and Tseng (2010).

In contrast, the study found a disparity between the results of the paraphrasing tasks and the questionnaire. According to Table 6, in the questionnaire, participants agreeing that they changed the structure and idea of the text when paraphrasing was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.48$, $SD = 0.85$) while in the paraphrasing tasks, none of the participants used the organization paraphrasing as a strategy by changing structure of the idea when they paraphrased (see Table 3).

**Limitations of the Study**

Due to the COVID-19 situation at the time of the study, Thailand was observing social distancing so the research was carried out by using Google Form for both the paraphrasing tasks and the questionnaire, instead of conducting them in a more controlled classroom environment. Furthermore, several participants suffered from slow Internet speeds at home or from mobile phones. As a result, they struggled to complete the test and questionnaire as smoothly as they would have hoped.

**Recommendations for Further Studies**

Recommendations for further studies are stated as follows:

1. Further studies should consider creating paraphrasing tasks at paragraph level instead of at sentence level to analyse the skills of the participants more accurately.

2. The study recommends that the paraphrasing tasks and the questionnaire should be explained thoroughly before forwarding them to the participants.
3. Further studies could provide more time or cover a whole semester so that participants have more time to practice during lessons.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study reveal that the majority of the participants are likely to use different paraphrasing strategies while writing academically. The most frequently used strategy by the participants was semantic paraphrasing. With this strategy, the participants mostly used synonyms by replacing the key vocabulary with new words of the same or very similar meanings while few participants changed the numbers and percentages. Furthermore, the participants used syntactic paraphrasing as the second most frequently used strategy when paraphrasing. With this strategy, condensing the original text was most frequently used by the participants. Conversely, none of the participants changed the structure of the idea when they paraphrase.

The study also indicates that the participants who view paraphrasing as important was at a very high level. Furthermore, participants who also understand and can use paraphrasing strategies was at a high level. This suggests that students’ attitudes towards paraphrasing is at a high level.

The results of the present research are beneficial to anyone who wants to comprehend paraphrasing strategies as well as understand the attitudes of students towards paraphrasing techniques.

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A Multimodal Analysis of Power Distance: A Study of Thai International School Websites

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Abstract

The number of international schools in Thailand has recently grown rapidly as a result of the increasing demand from parents to have their children receive a prestigious education and competitive advantages for their future. International schools in Thailand differ greatly from regular Thai schools. International schools provide relatively good facilities, maintain high educational standards, and favor modern-world educational philosophies. Most of them conduct multilingual instruction and can, in turn, offer learners diverse perspectives on learning. Through the lens of Hofstede’s power distances, we investigate the representation of Western education on international schools’ websites in a “high-power distance” society like Thailand. The data to be utilized consists of 10 pictures used on five websites of international schools in Bangkok. Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), based on the theory of the grammar of visual design by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen (2006), is utilized. They include descriptions of, for example, eye lines, body language, positions of the teacher and the pupils, the margin zones (ideal-real and the given-new), and left/right composition. The representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning of each of the pictures can lead us to a clear realization of the concepts of power distance and differing perspectives on the compatibility/incompatibility of power and distance/closeness in these major international schools.

Keywords: multimodal discourse analysis, Hofstede’s power distance, analysis of websites
Introduction

The investigation was inspired by two social changes taking place in Thailand. First, the number of international schools around the country has increased over the last two decades. The rise of international schools in Thai society is significant, as many of the elite of the country are educated in international schools, a point noted by Hayden and Thompson (2008, as cited in Martin & Lynch, 2017). Second, Thai parents have recently given more attention to international schools in Thailand since globalization has driven Thai people to develop their ability in international languages to communicate their business transactions. As a result, these occurrences may suggest some societal changes in the field of education.

International schools in Thailand have a variety of characteristics that distinguish them from Thai schools. One of the notable characteristics is the relationship between teachers and students. In the international school sphere, many Thai parents presume that teachers are expected to treat pupils on an equal basis and students are expected to find their own intellectual paths; that is the concept of “low-power distance” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 101). These interactions between teachers and students seem to disclose crucial behaviors inside the setting of international schools. Consequently, Hofstede’s concept of power distance was chosen to examine the interactions between instructors and pupils.

Recently, people increasingly rely on the internet as a critical mode of communication. This phenomenon has impacted every society. Also, academic institutions express their aims and educational goals on their website. The site’s homepage is the key means of communication for any institution. For this reason, the research focused on the homepages of international schools.

On websites, homepage photos have become a significant resource to disclose schools’ intentions, since the images are a holistic, persuasive source of information that involves the viewer on a personal and emotional level (Knight et al., 2009, p. 18). Regarding this data, multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) is an appropriate approach since the aim of MDA is to elaborate tools that can provide insight into the relationship between the meanings of a community and their semiotic manifestations (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 37). Numerous scholars (Hu & Luo, 2016; Pauwels, 2012; Rungruangsuparat, 2017; Tomaskova, 2015) have recently selected MDA because of its practical uses as well as its analytical and critical approach. Therefore, the research examined photographs on school homepages by using multimodal discourse analysis.

As mentioned above, international school websites might be able to disclose the power differences between instructors and pupils. The article uses photos from them as the primary data sources for this investigation.

The purpose of this study is to address the following two research questions:
1. How is the power distance represented in the visual modes of international school homepages in Thailand?

2. How can Hofstede’s power distance traits depict the teachers’ and students’ relationship?

**Literature Review**

**Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

With the notion of discourse analysis, Halliday (1978) contributed to the idea of exploring the meanings of language and of relating language use to social contexts, namely Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). He explained that all human activities involve choice: doing this rather than doing that (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 15). In building on his contribution, Kress and Van Leeuwen are two researchers who elaborated on his concepts by examining signs, visual grammar, semiotic resources, and mode in great detail. Multimodal discourse analysis has exploded from this step. MDA is a theory that considers people’s communication not solely through one mode but through various modes. The visual grammar of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) had a significant influence on how we interpret static and motion pictures. This framework offers a way to describe the semiotic resources of images, explained through three fundamental principles of visual grammar, which are as follows: representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning.

Representational meaning aims to define the ability of semiotic systems to represent objects and their relations in a world outside the semiotic systems of a culture (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 42). This concept involves the participants, who participate as the objects or elements inside the images. This investigation emphasizes how the significance of participants and processes affects teachers’ and students’ interactions, and it will examine the transactional process, in which the actor is the participant who generates the “vector,” and the aim is another participant or another destination.

With regard to the interactive meaning, MDA is a tool for examining the relationships between the producers and the viewers, but the purpose of this paper is to determine the relations between the teachers and the students. Therefore, the interactive meaning will be excluded.

The compositional meaning requires us to investigate not only the picture but also the layouts of images (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177). By looking at the way the images are arranged, the study will determine how participants are exercising their power toward one another. This section utilizes two interrelated systems: information value and salience.

Information value conjoins the layout of items on a page, where the arrangement reveals the significance and deeper meaning of the image. The approach will determine the given and the new: The
left is the side of the already given, something the reader is assumed to know, but the right is something new, which means that it is presented as something which is not yet known. Moreover, the central point of the image is the principal area to which viewers give their interest, and the margin is the component around the center. In addition, the idea is the top element in a polarized composition (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 209), and the upper half position describes the idealized or generalized essence of the information. The real is in the lower half of the page, which provides the present meaning.

Salience is the characteristic revealing how the elements are made to attract the viewer’s attention to different degrees, through different size, or their place in the foreground or background, including contrasts in tone value, differences in sharpness, and so on (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177).

According to previous studies, in the Thai context, Rungruangsuparat’s study (2016) used MDA because she believed that the approach could be employed as a crucial tool for analyzing online texts. Her work was about identity, analyzing how it was revealed on Thai university websites. Another study by Pruekchaikul and Marques (2017) selected the grammar of Kress and Van Leeuwen’s visual design to show images of pamphlets created by Siam Commercial Bank for advertising.

**Power Distance**

Hofstede (1991) introduced the study of power distance in schools and educational systems because of his belief that school societies are requisite. According to his findings, Thailand is a relatively high-power country, which means Thai people accept inequality in a society as a fact of life (Hofstede, 2001). In an educational context, Hallinger and Kantamara (2000) mentioned the high-power distance characteristics of Thai culture, in which the behavior of administrators, teachers, students, and parents shows unusually high degree of deference toward those of senior status. This can be seen from the fact that Thai people respect seniority (Boonnuch, 2012).

In the 1990s, there was the GLOBE project, which studied in-depth analyses of culture and leadership in 25 of 61 countries. The GLOBE researchers set nine cultural dimensions similar to Hofstede’s study, and power distance was included in their work. Therefore, the power distance point in Asian countries demonstrated a high-power distance. For example, Chinese managers are more tolerant of unequal power in society, which means that the internal forces of traditional values are still highly respected (Chhokar et al., 2008, p. 891).

Hofstede’s work made an excellent contribution to the key differences between low- and high-power distance indexes (PDI) in the school context. For this study, Table 1 presents the indicators used to investigate the power distance between teachers and students.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low PDI</th>
<th>High PDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers treat students as equals.</td>
<td>Students depend on teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students treat teachers as equals.</td>
<td>Students treat teachers with respect, even outside class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered education</td>
<td>Teacher-centered education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students initiate some communication in class.</td>
<td>Teachers initiate all communication in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are experts who transfer impersonal truths.</td>
<td>Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents may side with students against teachers.</td>
<td>Parents are supposed to side with teachers to keep students in order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of learning depends on two-way communication and excellence of students.</td>
<td>Quality of learning depends on the excellence of teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower educational levels maintain more authoritarian relations.</td>
<td>Authoritarian values independent of education levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational system focuses on middle levels.</td>
<td>Educational system focuses on the top level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Methods

The study’s objective is to detect nonverbal communication on the homepages of international schools in Thailand. In order to examine the data effectively, the study was designed to examine it in depth with explanatory data, so a small sample size was selected for analysis. To best study these concepts, this paper was conducted in the realm of qualitative research.

On the school websites, the homepages regularly contain both visual and textual data. The selected samples contain only visual communication, as this research aims to reflect the interaction between teachers and students, thus disclosing the power distance between them. Referring to earlier studies, many scholars interpret homepage images mainly by choosing multimodality as a framework for analysis (Venuti et al., 2017; Yaemwannang & Pramoolsook, 2018; Zhang, 2017). As a result, the study was conducted by utilizing MDA as the main theory. In terms of the visual grammar analytical tools, the representational and conceptual meanings were considered since the narrative process and picture elements are crucial pieces of data to investigate.

After using multimodal analytical tools, the investigation utilized Hofstede’s power distance as
a theory to interpret each image’s meaning. According to Hofstede’s power distance index values (1991), Thailand is classified under the category of high-power distances. This category gives superior status to the aged, which has an effect on the educational system, as well. To understand the hierarchy in international schools, the data must clearly show the teachers’ and students’ interactions. Consequently, the research uses photographs of only teachers and students to determine the participants’ power distance by using the low and high PDI description tables (See Table 1).

**Data Collection**

To answer the study’s research questions, the researcher collected the data by visiting many websites of organizations that rank international schools to select the most trustworthy ones. The school ranking websites were chosen by using two criteria: 1) Websites have to be based on a global context, because the characteristics of international school culture are in the multinational sphere; and 2) to avoid bias, the site should be non-profit and not for business, advertising, e-commerce, or personal use.

The two chosen websites are TheTopTens and InternationalEducators. From these two websites, their correlated schools were selected, and the study explored five international schools’ homepages, because they had images of teachers and students in the frame. The selected photos are from the following schools:

- NIST International School;
- Bangkok Patana School;
- International School Bangkok;
- Harrow International School;
- Shrewsbury International School.

The data collection procedure began in August 2019 and lasted until January 2020, to make sure the data were consistent. From five schools, 16 photos were chosen as the preliminary selections, but, in the end, only 10 photos were chosen. To select the productive data, the researcher selected the photos in which teachers and students were interacting, and both subjects can be seen in the same frame. The reasons for the selection are as follows: 1) The power distance can be comprehended when the basic behaviors of the role-pair teacher-student are carried forward from one sphere to the other (Hofstede, 2001, p. 100); and 2) using MDA as a tool, the representational meaning can be seen if the researcher examines the participant’s line of eye sight.

**Data Analysis**

With reference to the MDA framework, some researchers have discussed the concept of
accuracy or rightness in multimodal data interpretation, and the issue remains largely unsolved. For instance, in the study of Saldaña (2013), he elected to encourage researchers to trust their intuitive, holistic impressions when analyzing multimodal artifacts (Low & Pandya, 2019, p. 2). Nevertheless, to illustrate the scope of interpretation, the researcher created a table that adopted the idea of elements for analysis from Rungruangsuparat (2016).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDA Elements for Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ eye lines and gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The data analysis will be conducted in accordance with the components listed in Table 2.

Figure 1

*First Image from ISB International School*

*Note.* From *Intensive learning needs* [Photograph], by ISB International School, 2020 (*https://www.isb.ac.th/*).
Representational Meaning

This research will utilize the participants’ eye line to translate the transactional process, in which the actor emanates the vector to the goal between teachers and students. In linguistics, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) explained that, if we had to give a verbal paraphrase of a transactional process, we would probably use a transitive verb that takes an object. Referring to this transactional process, the goal is an actor’s object, impacted by the actor’s vector. This interaction can reveal the exercise of power between teachers and students through their eye lines.

As shown in Figure 1, the representational meaning reveals that the teacher plays as an actor and the student plays as a goal; the paper is the student’s goal. This interplay determines the transactional process between participants. In terms of the reaction process, the reactor and the phenomenon have been found. It reveals that a student is an object or passive participant in the teacher’s eye line. To illustrate, the goal of a teacher is the student, which the viewers may interpret as meaning that the student perceived the teacher’s influence. In Hofstede’s PDI key differences table, their interactions reveal that “students are dependent on the teacher.”

Compositional Meaning

The study will examine the compositional meaning through teachers’ and students’ zones. Beginning with the center and margin areas, the instructor and pupil are not exactly in the center of the picture, but they are rather close. It may imply the presence of a center due to its proximity to the nucleus zone. In the teacher’s position, the upper half draws the ideal assumption. Considering that the teacher’s face was placed in the ideal region, the teacher’s position can be described as showing that the teacher may carry the generalized essence of information. Additionally, the left is called the “given” and the right is called the “new.” The photo indicates that the teacher is on the left. Meanwhile, the student is on the opposite side, which is the new. As for the high-power distance, it could imply that the student is a young rookie, and the teacher initiates the communication in class.

Results

As previously stated, the data will be examined using MDA’s two functions: representational and compositional meaning.

Harrow International School First Image

Each participant takes on the role of an actor, as their eye lines radiate a vector toward a student’s phone, which is their objective. This interaction may define that the students are the ones who
persuaded the instructor to join their frame. It may demonstrate that the teacher and children are on an equal footing. Due to the relaxed situation, we can see a school experience in which the students are self-reliant and can independently make their own decisions.

Figure 2

_First Image from Harrow International School_

Note. From _Leadership for a better world_ [Photograph], by Harrow International School, 2020 (https://www.harrowschool.ac.th).

The school’s image manifests the students, placing them approximately at the focusing point. They are near the center, whereas the teacher is a bit farther away. When we consider the concept of center and margin, their positions reveal that the school may intend to give students precedence over teachers. It could be interpreted that the school desired to present the low PDI, portraying the student as the one who starts the interaction.

The left zone conveys the given, which is something that viewers already know (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 189). When we examine the picture’s composition, we see that the teacher stands in the given area. On the right hand side, the space belongs to students. It means that the students are new in terms of compositional meaning. Interestingly, the producer may prefer to blur the idea of the given by adding some students next to the teacher. The teacher’s position may support the idea of low PDI, in which teachers treat students as equals.

_Harrow International School Second Image_

The two teachers in the background and the students are the actors, and they have distinctive goals. Firstly, the teachers direct their gazes at their pupils; as a result, they are the goals of the teachers’ view, which could render the objectification meaning. Secondly, this occurrence demonstrates the reactional process in which the students’ vectors communicate their objectives to one another.
Simultaneously, the teachers are the reactors, giving their smiles of approval to the students as if they were passive participants. Based on representational meaning beliefs, we found phenomena from the teachers’ eye line, and the students were objects. According to the power distance concept, this interaction may consider students to be dependent on teachers.

Figure 3

Second Image from Harrow International School

Note. [Students practicing rugby], by Harrow International School, 2020 (https://www.harrowschool.ac.th).

As for the information value, the teachers’ location leads the viewers to focus on them. Their center area reveals the greater emphasis on the teachers. The idea of given and new is merely recognized because the students were arranged around the teacher in the margin zone. Another element of compositional meaning is the ideal and the real. The upper half of the photo is the teacher, from whom the viewer perceives the ideal (the generalized essence of the information) (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 187). The students’ places are mainly in the real zone (the more down-to-earth information) (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 187). In the realm of the high-power distance, this picture could be seen as telling us that the teachers are gurus because of their central position.

In addition, salience can create a hierarchy of importance among the elements, selecting some as more worthy of attention than others (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 201). The blurred image seen in Figure 3 is not generally displayed on the website. This objective may indicate that the school wishes to empower all participants equally. Consequently, this producer’s intention might convey the sense of low-power distance between them.

NIST International School First Image

The action of the teacher in Figure 4 reveals the strength of the school’s academic context, and she seems like the student’s advisor. In the narrative process, their eye lines emanate the vector through
the paper or laptop on the desk. It shows that their interaction is not directed toward or against anybody in particular. When we consider the representation of actions, we notice that the instructor uses her hands to elucidate on a matter of importance to the learner. Referring to the high PDI traits, it might be conceivable that the teacher started the discussion, while the student is receiving her instruction.

Figure 4
*First Image from NIST International School*

![First Image from NIST International School](https://www.nist.ac.th/)

Note. [Student and teacher discussing a lesson], by NIST International School, 2020 (https://www.nist.ac.th/).

As for the placement of the image, it is obvious that the teacher is placed in the focal point, so the photographer is giving the spotlight to her. On the other hand, the student is in a more marginal area. In the arrangement of participants, the student is on the left, which refers to the given meaning. In contrast, the teacher is in the center and a bit more to the right, which places her in the new position, according to MDA criteria. The composition of each participant may reveal some variations since most of the images place the teacher in the given, but this photo presents the student in the area of the given instead of the new. Unfortunately, there is no peculiar point between the teacher and the student because they are not different in degree, sharpness, or color.

**NIST International School Second Image**

The teacher’s vector emanates in the direction of the student and his goal, in Figure 5. In the reader’s view, the teacher can perform both roles as actor and reactor simultaneously since we cannot
clearly see her eye line. As a consequence, the reactional processes are realized by their vector paths, and this process is the phenomenon. The high-power distance perceived by her actions, the direction of her hand, and facial expression might convey the sense of the teacher’s approval, seeing the student as an object, which might suggest that the teacher is the one who transfers personal wisdom toward the student.

Figure 5

*Second Image from NIST International School*

In essence, the photographer places the student and the teacher into different zones. They are not located in the center area, but in the margin zone. The teacher stands on the left, which represents the given, and the student sits on the right, which is the new. Therefore, the choice of this photograph may lead the viewers to perceive that the teacher gets society’s recognition because of the given position in MDA compositional meaning, and the student is apparently a beginner, so this picture might represent the high PDI between both.

**ISB International School Second Image**

The study applies the vector line of the participants to examine the power distance between a student and a teacher. Figure 6 provides only the action processes; therefore, the student and the teacher do not transmit the vectors to each other. In conclusion, it seems like they are peers because their eyes
point at the student’s work (the same goal).

Figure 6
Second Image from ISB International School

![Native and World Languages](https://www.isb.ac.th/)

Note. From Native and world languages [Photograph], by ISB International School, 2020 (https://www.isb.ac.th/).

The photo shows the student in the middle point. The teacher, however, stands beside the pupil, attempting to reach into the center as well. From the viewer’s perspective, the teacher is positioned on the right, which reflects the new, which is someone that follows. On the other hand, the student’s position is on the left, indicating the given. This composition demonstrates that the photographer or the editor of the school’s website may want to give more significance to the student. To summarize, this photo displays a different composition from others, which is a salient factor not only in the layout but also in the size of the actors, and there is no headroom at the top. Otherwise, the teacher and student are not differentiated in terms of shape, clarity, or color. In this picture, it could imply that there is less of a power gap because the student and the teacher seem to interact equally.

Shrewsbury International School First Image

Since all participants in Figure 7 transmit their vectors to their work, which is placed on the desk, the teacher, in the center, and students are the actors. Their eye lines determine that no participant is a target, so this picture lacks a reaction process because the main actors’ eye lines do not give any glances to the others. As previously said, no participant plays as if they are the major process of this action. This setting reveals that they may have equal authority, representing a lower power distance.

The mode of spatial composition gives the teacher the focusing point. She is directly in the middle of the layout. Undoubtedly, the webpage editor selected a picture that shows the teacher as the essence of the scene. In contrast, two students are positioned on the left, implying that they are the given, so they take priority over the teacher’s knowledge. Consequently, this composition is quite unusual.
Some analysts may believe that the school desires to dim the status of the teacher. Additionally, this photograph establishes the precise focal point, which is one teacher and one learner, whereas the other participants are slightly blurred. This salience insists that the school aspires to shed light on the focusing point, which might be perceived as equally teacher- and student-centered.

Figure 7
First Image from Shrewsbury International School

![A caring community of exceptional people](https://www.shrewsbury.ac.th/riverside/)

Note. From *A caring community of exceptional people* [Photograph], by Shrewsbury International School, 2020 (https://www.shrewsbury.ac.th/riverside/).

**Shrewsbury International School Second Image**

Figure 8 illustrates a school that combines both the campus landscape and lively outdoor classrooms. When all participants dispatch the vectors to each other, the transactional process happens. On one hand, the teacher’s goal is the students; on the other hand, the students’ goals are the teacher. This transaction may indicate that both actors reciprocally exercise their power. Nevertheless, some viewers may see the book as being the students’ objective. In the reaction processes, if the book is the goal of the students, the teacher would be the reactor in this phenomenon. According to the high PDI characteristics, this interaction demonstrates that all classroom communication begins with the teacher.

The picture contains a unique idea of the photographer and the persons designing the page, as they place both the teacher and the students in opposite marginal regions. The layout of the participants provides the information value for which the researcher examines the zones of the image. In contrast, the center does not belong to any of the participants. For the given and the new, it is not surprising that the teacher is the master who possesses the standard; the students sit on the right. This photograph displays a large portion of the teacher’s figure, so it may imply that the teacher has more significance than the students. This prominence may imply that the teacher is the one who transfers personal wisdom
or knowledge.

Figure 8

*Second Image from Shrewsbury International School*

![Second Image from Shrewsbury International School](https://www.shrewsbury.ac.th/riverside/)

*Note.* [Teacher and group of students in an outdoor lesson], by Shrewsbury International School, 2020 (https://www.shrewsbury.ac.th/riverside/).

**Bangkok Patana School First Image**

The teacher emits his vector to the students while the students transmit their vectors to the teacher. At the same time, with regard to the eye lines, the teacher and the students exercise their dynamic forces reciprocally. The teacher is, therefore, both the actor and the objective of the students, while the students are the instructor’s goal. Their vectors may provide an example of the concept of equivalent power. This interaction is referred to as the “transactional process” in the narrative process, since both participants are each other’s objects. However, some observers may infer that the children’s target is not the instructor, as their arrows are on the school board, out of sight of the viewers. If researchers investigate the teacher’s gesture, as well, they will see that he establishes his authority by pointing to the board. With his gesture, we may observe that the instructor initiates classroom dialogue, as shown by the high PDI in Table 1.

The webpage designer distributes several key concepts to the left and right rather than the center and margin since the image clearly divides the left and right. The actors’ interactions may provide the opposite meaning between both. Since the students are on the left, the designer may portray the learners as possessing knowledge. In comparison, the instructor is located in the new region. This composition may suggest the school’s goal of reducing the teacher’s authority. Even though the teacher and the students are placed in the traditional classroom setting, the investigators may see the salience of the teacher’s image. Similar to Figure 8, the salience is uncovered since the teacher’s portion of the scene is large and the most eye-catching element.
Bangkok Patana School Second Image

Bangkok Patana’s second picture, Figure 10, illustrates the active classroom and portrays a closeness between teachers and students. Interestingly, the institution emphasizes the student standing next to the teacher as the leader in the concept of the eye-line, with the instructor serving as an assistant. The vector of the teacher emanates to the student, which is his goal. In contrast, the students’ eye lines disperse all over the area; for example, the girl who performs in the front emits her vector to her ribbon, which is her goal. Another student standing with the teacher is looking at the viewers or the girl in front, but the photo is unclear, so the readers may interpret it differently. As in the reactional processes, the teacher is the reactor who emanates a vector. Nevertheless, the boy gives his vector to other participants or outside the frame. This action is a phenomenon.

Related to the composition, the student in front is the salient point of this image. She is placed at the forefront even though she is not the center of the picture, but she is in sharper focus and is the most eye-catching actor. In addition, the foremost actor is positioned on the right, referring to the new. As a result, the photographer and the school may wish to imply that the pupil is mature and does not need much assistance from the teacher. As mentioned before, the website’s editor highlights the salient layout more than the placement of elements, such as the left and the right, the center and the margin, and top and bottom. Referring to the low PDI, this salience may suggest that the school may adopt a philosophy of student-centeredness.
Discussion

The purpose of this section is to provide answers to the research questions. Regarding the first research question, “How is the power distance represented in the visual modes of international school homepages in Thailand?” the MDA tools provide the answers, which are related to Hofstede’s concept of power distance: high-power distance and low-power distance.

High-Power Distance

The MDA tools support us in examining the power relationships between teachers and students on the homepages of international schools. From the findings, it is clear that the visual modes presented several instances of high-power distance, which is a situation in which the teacher-student inequality caters to the need for dependence that is established in the student’s mind (Hofstede, 2001, p. 100). These high-power distances were unveiled in Figures 1, 4, 5, 8, and 9, where the students are the goal of the teacher’s view and the teachers are on the left, where the “guru’s” place is. Moreover, the gestures of instructors revealed the high PDI activity; for instance, in Figures 8 and 9, the teachers begin communication in class. Not only the participant’s gestures but also the salience of each photo strengthens the high-power distance idea, as the viewers can see the differences in the participants’ share of the photograph in Figures 8 and 9.
According to other Thai school cultural studies, Hallinger and Kantamara (2000, p. 192) said that the high-power distance also creates a tendency for administrators to lead by fiat. The idea of a leader is found in some international schools, as we can see in Figures 8 and 9 that the teachers are the leaders of the communication. As a result, these visual resources showcase some aspects of Thai culture in the international school.

Low-Power Distance

The study’s findings uncovered three photos that imply a low-power distance situation: teachers are supposed to treat their students as equals and are expected to be treated as equals by them (Hofstede, 2001, p. 101). In Figures 2, 6, and 10, all images present equivalent levels between the teachers and the students. To illustrate, in Figure 2, the teacher’s and the student’s goals are the same point, in which no one is an object; they present the student’s self-confidence, and the student is someone who initiates some communication.

In Figures 6 and 10, the teacher’s and student’s eye lines point to their goals, which are not any participants. This interplay shows that no one is an object. Moreover, in Figure 6, the teacher and the student show the equality of their relationship by sharing their focusing points, and their closeness gives the feeling of equivalent classes. Lastly, in Figure 10, the student composition is the center, and she plays an outstanding role in the image. This character exhibits student-centeredness.

Regarding the rest of the images, Figures 3 and 7, both of the photos convey the notions of both high- and low-power distances. For example, Figure 3 presents the high-power distance, which can be interpreted by using the representational meaning, but the blurred image supports the low-power distance. As a consequence, the researcher will not grade either photo based on one of the traits.

To answer the second research question, “How can Hofstede’s power distance traits depict the teachers’ and students’ relationship?” the investigation found the following four relevant power distance characteristics (Hofstede, 2001, p. 107).

1. “Teachers treat students as equals, and students treat teachers as equals.”

The analysis discovered many photos depicting teachers and students as equals. For example, in Figure 2, the teacher and the students seem like peers; in Figure 6, the teacher leans down and forward to share the center point with the student. Similarly, in Figure 7, the teacher and the student share the focusing point of the image’s composition. These events exhibit the balance of power traits between teachers and students.

2. “Student-centered education”

The study uncovered the idea of student-centered education, where the student is the center,
with a premium on student initiative, and where students are expected to find their own intellectual paths (Hofstede, 2001, p. 101). Figures 2 and 10 show that the students are the center point of the image composition; furthermore, they perform the leading role in the viewers’ perspectives.

3. “Teacher-centered education”

As with Hofstede’s power distance, the photographs of schools reveal the interaction between students and teachers, and some situations expose the respect of the students. For example, in Figures 1, 8, and 9, the teachers’ places are almost in the range of the central area, or take up a large portion of the frame, and their vectors emit to the students. The teachers exercise their power as if they are the ones who control the students.

4. “Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom.”

According to the results section, the compositional meaning of MDA gives the key to perceiving the significance of the teachers as though the teachers are the gurus. The participant layout, which is on the left, can show that the teachers are those whom society has known before. A teacher’s place is shown in Figures 1, 5, and 8, where the teacher is on the left. This phenomenon may indicate that teachers are important, based on the MDA and Hofstede’s power distance theories.

Conclusions

The aim of this study has been to answer the question of how much power distance between teachers and students is displayed on the websites of five of Thailand’s international schools. As mentioned in the introduction, in international schools, the concept of student-centered education is much more common than in Thai schools as a primary principle or policy. Apart from these assumptions, the study utilizes multimodal discourse analysis as the analytical tool. The interpretation of the photographs on the school’s webpages is an attempt to unveil information about the international schools.

Consequently, all issues lead to Hofstede’s theories of high-power distance and low-power distance. The research found that most international schools’ images present a high-power distance between teachers and students. According to the initial assumption, student-centered education might not be the principal characteristic of international schools in Thailand, and it reveals many points of view to consider. For example, international schools may wish to present the student as the center, but Thai context and culture, which may still shape the school society, might be an obstruction. On the other hand, it may also be that originally, international schools may not choose to use a student-centered pedagogy, but Thai parents do so themselves.

Finally, the researcher discovered that multimodal discourse analysis can be used to analyze the
pictures on international school homepages and that Hofstede’s power distance can describe the interactions between teachers and students. The findings may benefit parents in their understanding of international schools in the Thai context.

**Limitations and Recommendations**

This study has been limited, regrettably, by being able to collect only static images. The recommendation for this point is to expand the scope of data. MDA can support transcription of moving images, as well. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) discussed it and showed that its patterns of representation, interaction, and composition can be utilized in video clips (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 258). In terms of in-depth cultural examination, it would be beneficial to include more school data, such as video clips, interviews with teachers and students, or to critique international school behavior in a Thai context.

In addition, texts should be examined by using the systemic functional linguistics of Halliday or else interpreted in the realm of the identity of the institution. The lexical and syntactic data will aid in comprehending the school’s intentions and principles.

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   http://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v7n3p64
The Relevance of Dependency Distances in the Study of L2 Production

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Abstract
This study is an interim report that proposes a metric for syntactic complexity from the viewpoint of quantitative linguistics. More specifically, the idea of dependency distance and its distribution are introduced, and they are applied to the data in a learner corpus. With the idea of dependency distance introduced, the previous study (Li & Yan, 2021) on the fittingness of the distribution of dependency distances in a corpus is briefly summarized. Based on the previous study, its method is applied to the ICNALE, one of the learner corpora of English, and it is reported that the frequency distributions of dependency distances show good fit to the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution, which is the same result as the previous study. As such, the result of this study supports the idea of Li and Yan (2021) that dependency distribution can function as one of the metrics for the complexity of learner production data. However, the frequency distributions of the dependency distances of different dependency types do not necessarily show the same behavior as that found in Li and Yan (2021), indicating that a more fine-grained investigation of the distribution of dependency distances is required.

Keywords: quantitative linguistics, dependency distance, learner corpus, the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution, curve fitting

Introduction
Syntactic complexity is one of the measures for L2 proficiency, along with accuracy and fluency (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Brown, 1973; Ellis & Yuan, 2005; Hunt, 1965; Loban, 1976; Norris & Ortega, 2009; Scarborough, 1990; Scott, 1988; Skehan & Foster, 2005; Michel et al., 2007; Robinson, 2007). So far, it has been investigated from various viewpoints and with different research questions. Yet, it seems that, to date, there is no common definition of the term syntactic complexity. Different researchers rely on their own definition of syntactic complexity based on the material available to them, yet not necessarily to other researchers. Additionally, it seems that no research has assumed the existence of the upper bound of syntactic complexity, in the sense that the proficiency of an individual
learner could be evaluated in terms of how much lower it is than the upper bound. The absence of such upper bound makes the idea less transparent than it is supposed to be, making it difficult to function as a really applicable metric for L2 learners’ proficiency.

In this context, we must have a metric for syntactic complexity based on a certain linguistic law, which has been investigated scientifically in the field of quantitative linguistics to describe a variety of linguistic phenomena. Here, law has the same meaning as those in natural science. If quantitative-linguistic investigation can find a metric for syntactic complexity, it will be applicable to a variety of L2 learners in different environments with a certain level of reliability. The metric will be based on a certain linguistic law, just like a metric for a certain natural phenomenon, which can be applicable to a variety of similar phenomena, because such a metric is based on a certain natural law.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to propose a metric for syntactic complexity from the viewpoint of quantitative linguistics. More specifically, the idea of dependency distance and its distribution are introduced and applied to the data in a learner corpus. This article has the following structure: First, the idea of dependency distance is introduced. Next, the previous study on the fittingness of the distribution of dependency distances in a corpus is briefly summarized. Based on this study, its method is applied to a different set of learner-corpus data, followed by the report of the results and their analyses.

**Theoretical Background: Dependency Distance**

Dependency distance is one of the important measures of memory burden and syntactic complexity (Gibson, 1998, 2000; Gildea & Temperley, 2010; Grodner & Gibson, 2005; Li & Yan, 2021; Liu, 2007, 2008; Liu et al., 2017; Oya, 2013, 2021). The advantage of dependency distances is that it is quite simple to calculate within a sentence. For example, in the sentence *Sarah has read 30 articles for her term paper*, the noun *Sarah* depends on the auxiliary verb *has* as the subject, and the dependency distance between them is one; the noun *articles* depends on *read* as its object, and the dependency distance between them is two.

Dependency distances reflects a certain aspect of the universal properties of natural languages, which show a preference for shorter dependency distances due to the limit of short-term memory (Gibson, 2000). Additionally, the threshold of dependency distance is four across different natural languages (Liu, 2008; Oya, 2021). This means that the frequencies of individual dependency distances over four are much lower than those less than four, and the mean dependency distance of the sentences in a given text (the sum of all the dependency distances in a given text divided by the number of all dependency distances) does not go over four very often.
The preference for shorter dependency distance, along with its threshold, means that the complexity of a given set of production data can be represented in terms of their dependency distances (either as the mean dependency distance of the sentences in the data, or as the frequencies of different dependency distances in the data). More specifically, learners with higher proficiency are found to produce sentences with long dependency distances more frequently than those with lower proficiency. Yet, they do not produce sentences with dependency distances longer than four quite often. Moreover, the distribution of dependency distances in the sentences produced by learners of higher proficiency may fit well with the distribution of dependency distances in the sentences produced by native speakers of English, and the fitness may be better than those produced by learners of lower proficiencies. In short, these considerations lead us to the idea that dependency distances can be used as a measure of linguistic complexity for learner production data across different proficiencies. Among other researchers, Li and Yan (2021) applied this idea to a learner data with promising results, which I will summarize in the next section.

**Previous Study: Li & Yan 2021**

It has been discovered that the frequency distribution of dependency distances can fit well with the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution (Jiang & Liu, 2015; Liu, 2009; Ouyang & Jiang, 2017), which is represented by the following formula (1) (Ouyang & Jiang, 2017; Popescu et al., 2014; Li and Yan, 2021):

\[ y = c x^{a+b \ln x} \]

In the formula above, \( x \) means the dependency distance, \( y \) means the frequency of the dependency distance, \( a \) and \( b \) are parameters, and \( c \) is a constant. Li and Yan (2021) state that frequency distribution of dependency distances fits well with the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution across essays written by Japanese EFL learners of different proficiencies. As indicated by them, the frequencies of dependency distributions one, two, and three are much higher than the frequencies of dependency distributions four and above. These results support the idea that there is a threshold four on dependency distances (Liu, 2008; Oya, 2021).

Li and Yan (2021) state that the differences of learners’ proficiencies are represented by different parameters in the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution. The parameter \( a \) of the distribution increases from the lower proficiency learner group to the higher proficiency learner group. The parameter \( b \), on the other hand, decreases from the lower proficiency learner group to the higher proficiency learner group.
Figure 1

*Frequency Distributions of Dependency Distances of Lower, Middle and High Groups*

![Graph showing frequency distributions of dependency distances for lower, middle, and high groups.]

Table 1

*Fitting the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev to the Dependency Distances of Different Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>$P(X^2)$</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.465</td>
<td>366.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>0.698</td>
<td>0.406</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>611.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2

*Variations of the Parameters (a, b) of the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Fitting the Dependency Distances*

![Graph showing variations of parameters a and b for lower, middle, and high groups.]

*Note.* Figures 1 and 2 and Table 1 are from Li, W. & Yan, J. (2021). Probability distribution of dependency distance based on a Treebank of Japanese EFL learners’ Interlanguage. *Quantitative Linguistics*, 28:2, 172–186

**The Present Study**

**Research Questions**

This study is a replication of that of Li and Yan (2021) with the following research questions:
1. Will the frequency distribution of dependency distances in another learner corpus data fit well into the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution?

2. Will the difference of learners’ proficiences be represented by different parameters in the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution?

3. Will the frequency distribution of dependency distances of different dependency types in the learner corpus data fit into the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution?

The research questions one and two are the same as those in the previous study (Li & Yan, 2021), yet the research question three needs further explanation. The previous study (Li & Yan, 2021) treated all the dependencies among words in sentences in their learner data as the same, and calculated them as such. However, it must be pointed out that dependencies can be divided into several different categories (or types) according to their head words and dependent words, and their functions in the sentences where they appear. For example, the dependency between a verb and its subject in a sentence, and the dependency between the same verb and its object in the same sentence must have different functions, and it might be better to treat them as differently whenever possible.

The above consideration of different dependency types is the background for the third research question. It is expected that dependency distances of different dependency types will be diverse across different proficiency levels of learners, which can be represented by the fitness of their distribution to the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution. Additionally, the difference of parameters $a$ and $b$ of the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution may show different behaviors if we focus on the dependency distributions of different dependency types. In more practical terms, if we find that lower proficiency learners tend to use shorter distance dependencies for certain dependency types (e.g., the dependency between a verb and its subject or object, the dependency between a noun and the verb of the relative clause modifying the noun, etc.), then this linguistic knowledge can be introduced to the grammar instructions in such a way that they are encouraged to produce sentences, which contain longer dependencies of those dependency types.

With the above consideration in mind, this study uses Universal Dependencies (de Marneffe et al., 2021) as the set of dependency types and tries to calculate the frequencies of dependency distances for different dependency types. Among other dependency types, this study focuses on the following six dependency types: nsubj (nominal subject; the dependency between a verb and its subject noun), dobj (direct object; the dependency between a verbs and its direct object), det (determiner; the dependency between a noun and its modifier), adjmod (adjectival modification; the dependency between a noun and an adjective modifying the noun), advcl (adverbial clause; the dependency between the verb of a main clause and the verb in an adverbial clause modifying the main clause), and relcl (relative clause; the
dependency between a noun and the verb in a relative clause modifying the noun).

Data

This study is a replication of Li and Yan (2021), using the written essays in the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE; Ishikawa, 2013) as learner production data. The ICNALE has English essays written by approximately 2,800 learners of English across various Asian countries and regions with different proficiencies (A2, lower B1 [B1_1], upper B1 [B1_2], and B2), along with those written by native speakers of English (ENS). These essays written by learners are categorized into these four groups according to the result of a vocabulary test along with other English proficiency tests such as the TOEFL or the TOEIC. These learner data in the ICNALE are also categorized according to the country or region where they live, yet this study does not take this regional categorization into consideration.

Procedures

All the essays in ICNALE are parsed by Stanford Parser (de Marneffe et al., 2006). Parsed output has the format of Universal Dependencies (de Marneffe et al., 2021). For example, the parsed output of a sentence, “David read three articles yesterday” is as follows:

```
  nsubj(read-2, David-1)
  root(root-0, read-2)
  amod(articles-4, three-3)
  dobj(read-2, articles-4)
  advmod(read-2, yesterday-5)
```

We can calculate the dependency distance between two words in dependency relationship and its dependency type. The first line of the above example output tells us that this dependency is typed as nsubj, and the dependency distance is one; “read-2” means that this word is the 2nd word of the input sentence, and “David-1” means that this word is the 1st word of the same sentence, and two minus one equals one. In this way, we can obtain the dependency distance of each of all the dependencies in the parse output.

Through simple spreadsheet operations of the text file of the parse output (by Stanford Parser) of the essays in the ICNALE, we can obtain the frequencies of dependency distances of all the dependencies of the essays in each of the following groups in the ICNALE; A2, B1_1, B1_2, B2, and ENS. Then, the probabilities of dependency distances are calculated, and fitted to Zifp-Alekseev distribution by Altmann-fitter v.3.1.0 (http://www.ram-verlag.biz/altmann-fitter/), which is also used in
Lin and Yan (2021) for curve fitting of their learner data.

Results

Result 1: The Frequency Distribution of Dependency Distances in the ICNALE

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of mean dependency distances in the essays in the ICNALE. In this table, the group ENS is further divided into ENS1 (college students), ENS2 (teachers) and ENS3 (others).

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Mean Dependency Distances in the ICNALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Mdn.</th>
<th>Md.</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>2.815</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.020</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>292145</td>
<td>103770</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_1</td>
<td>2.865</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.130</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>788199</td>
<td>275112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_2</td>
<td>2.908</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.177</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>785025</td>
<td>269969</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>3.010</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.395</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>236325</td>
<td>78515</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS1</td>
<td>3.096</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.678</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>139604</td>
<td>45090</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS2</td>
<td>3.040</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.579</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60228</td>
<td>19809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS3</td>
<td>3.146</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.888</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>79743</td>
<td>25351</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 3 through 7 are the frequency distributions of the dependency distances in these five groups in the ICNALE. The shapes of their distributions are almost the same; the frequencies of dependency distributions decrease as they get longer, and there is only a fraction of instances of dependency distances four and above. These results are quite similar to those in Liu (2008), Oya (2021), and Li and Yan (2021), among others.
Figure 3

*The Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances in A2 (N=103770)*

![Graph showing the frequency distribution of dependency distances in A2.](image)

Figure 4

*The Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances in B1_1 (N=275112)*

![Graph showing the frequency distribution of dependency distances in B1_1.](image)

Figure 5

*The Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances in B1_2 (N=269969)*

![Graph showing the frequency distribution of dependency distances in B1_2.](image)
Figure 6

*The Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances in B2 (N=78515)*

![Graph showing the frequency distribution of dependency distances in B2.]

Figure 7

*The Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances in ENS (N=90250)*

![Graph showing the frequency distribution of dependency distances in ENS.]

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>P(X²)</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>0.0933</td>
<td>0.7086</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.3801</td>
<td>918.27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0088</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.9977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_1</td>
<td>0.0837</td>
<td>0.6933</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.3783</td>
<td>3269.86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0119</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.9963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_2</td>
<td>0.1586</td>
<td>0.6592</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0.3757</td>
<td>2574.91</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0095</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0.9973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>0.1214</td>
<td>0.6445</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0.3699</td>
<td>1190.36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0151</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS</td>
<td>0.1664</td>
<td>0.6096</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.3697</td>
<td>1731.81</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0192</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.9948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fitting the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution to the Frequency Distributions of the Dependency Distances of Different Groups in the ICNALE.
Table 3 summarizes the fitting results of the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution to the frequency distributions of the dependency distances of different groups in the ICNALE. In this table, the values in the columns C and $R^2$ indicate a good fit to the distribution across the different groups. The parameter $a$ shows a tendency to increase from A2 to B2, and it is the largest in ENS. The parameter $b$ shows a tendency to decrease from A2 to B2, and it is the smallest in ENS. The changes of parameters $a$ and $b$ across these different groups in the ICNALE are also shown in Figure 8 below. The results are basically the same with those in Li and Yan (2021).

Figure 8
Variations of the Parameters $a$ and $b$ of the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution Fitted to the Frequency Distributions of the Dependency Distances of Different Groups in the ICNALE

Result 2: The Frequency Distributions of Dependency Distances of Different Dependency Types in the ICNALE

This section summarizes the result of fitting the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution to the frequency distributions of the dependency distances of different dependency types.

Subjects.
First, Table 4 shows the fitting of the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution to the frequency distribution of the dependency distances of the type $nsubj$ (the dependency between a verb and its subject).
Table 4

**Fitting the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution to the Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances between Verbs and Their Subjects of Different Groups in the ICNALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Parameter a</th>
<th>Parameter b</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Parameter α</th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>P(X²)</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2_subj</td>
<td>0.318</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.389</td>
<td>173.9</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_1_subj</td>
<td>0.441</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.366</td>
<td>307.2</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.997</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_2_subj</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.324</td>
<td>280.8</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2_subj</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td>0.704</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.301</td>
<td>92.98</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS_subj</td>
<td>0.506</td>
<td>0.623</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>280.9</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this table, the values in the columns C and R² indicate good fit to the distribution across the different groups. The parameter a does not show the same tendency as that shown in Table 3 above, yet it shows a certain difference between the fitting of the frequencies of dependency distances of this type between non-native speakers (NNS) and native speakers (NS). The parameter b, on the other hand, shows the same tendency to decrease from A2 to B2, and it is the smallest in ENS. The changes of parameters a and b across these different groups in the ICNALE are also shown in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9

*The Parameters (a, b) of the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution Fitting with the Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances between Verbs and Their Subjects of Different Groups in the ICNALE*  

Direct objects.

Table 5 shows the fitting of the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution to the frequency distribution of the dependency distances of the type *dobj* (the dependency between a verb
and its direct object.

Table 5

_Fitting the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution to the Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances between Verbs and Their Objects of Different Groups in the ICNALE_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>P(X²)</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2_obj</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>0.955</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>385.15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_1_obj</td>
<td>1.046</td>
<td>0.738</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>1642.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.088</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_2_obj</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>938.15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2_obj</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td>0.815</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.257</td>
<td>373.18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS_obj</td>
<td>0.264</td>
<td>1.055</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td>213.15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this table, the values in the columns C and R² indicate a good fit for the distribution across the different groups. The parameter a does not show the same tendency as that shown in Table 3 above, yet it shows a certain difference between the fitting of the frequencies of dependency distances of this type between non-native speakers (NNS) and English native speakers (ENS). The parameter b also does not show the same tendency to decrease from A2 to B2, yet it shows a certain difference between the fitting of the frequencies of dependency distances of this type between NNS and ENS. The changes of parameters a and b across these different groups in the ICNALE are also shown in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10

_The Parameters (a, b) of the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution Fitting with the Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances between Verbs and Their Objects of Different Groups in the ICNALE_
Determiners.

Table 6 and Figure 11 summarize the fittingness of the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution to the frequency distribution of the dependency distances between nouns and their determiner of different groups in the ICNALE. The values of C and $R^2$ indicate that the frequency distribution of the dependency distances of this dependency type fits well to the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution. The parameter $a$ shows the same tendency as that shown in Table 3 above. The parameter $b$, on the other hand, does not show the same tendency to decrease from A2 to B2; rather, it is relatively constant across different groups.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>$P(X^2)$</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2_det</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.327</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.666</td>
<td>345.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_1_det</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>1.418</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.632</td>
<td>1237.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_2_det</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>1.518</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>584.21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2_det</td>
<td>0.444</td>
<td>1.446</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td>248.93</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS_det</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>1.832</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.581</td>
<td>67.81</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11

The Parameters ($a$, $b$) of the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution Fitting with the Frequency Distributions of the Dependency Distances between Nouns and Their Determiners of Different Groups in the ICNALE
Adjectives.

Table 7 and Figure 12 summarize the fittingness of the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution to the frequency distribution of the dependency distances between nouns and adjectives of different groups in the ICNALE. The values of C and $R^2$ indicate that the frequency distribution of the dependency distances of this dependency type fits quite well with the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution. The parameter $a$ increases from the lower proficiency group to the higher proficiency groups, and it is the highest in the group ENS. The parameter $b$ decreases from the lower proficiency group to the higher proficiency groups. These are the opposite of the behaviors of the parameter $a$ and $b$ in Table 3.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>$P(X^2)$</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2_adjective</td>
<td>2.445</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.862</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_1_adjective</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_2_adjective</td>
<td>3.256</td>
<td>0.151</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2_adjective</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.804</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5E-04</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS_adjective</td>
<td>3.604</td>
<td>0.182</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.828</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12

The Parameters $(a, b)$ of the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution Fitting with the Frequency Distributions of the Dependency Distances between Nouns and Adjectives of Different Groups in the ICNALE
Adverbial clauses.

Table 8 and Figure 13 summarize the fittingness of the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution to the frequency distribution of the dependency distances between the main verb of clauses and the verbs of the adverbial clauses of different groups in the ICNALE.

Table 8

| Fitting the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Distribution to the Frequency Distribution of the Dependency Distances between Verbs and Adverbial Clauses of Different Groups in the ICNALE |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | a  | b  | n  | α  | X² | P(X²) | C  | DF | R²  |
| A2_advcl | 0.687 | 0.187 | 50 | 0.003 | 1131.4 | 0 | 0.457 | 45 | 0.521 |
| B1_1_advcl | 0.02 | 0.381 | 65 | 0.004 | 1990.8 | 0 | 0.299 | 60 | 0.639 |
| B1_2_advcl | 0.709 | 0.174 | 57 | 0.004 | 2845 | 0 | 0.446 | 52 | 0.504 |
| B2_advcl | 0.831 | 0.107 | 45 | 0.003 | 706.44 | 0 | 0.359 | 40 | 0.576 |
| ENS_advcl | 0.708 | 0.172 | 56 | 0.004 | 841.07 | 0 | 0.332 | 51 | 0.578 |

The values of C and R² indicate that the frequency distribution of the dependency distances of this dependency type fits poorly to the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution. The parameters a and b show peculiar behavior, because in B1_1 the parameter a is much smaller than those in other groups, while the parameter b is relatively larger than those in other groups. The parameter b does not decrease from the lower proficiency group to the higher proficiency groups.

Figure 13

Variations of the Parameters (a, b) of the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Fitting the Dependency Distances between Verbs and Adverbial Clauses of Different Groups in ICNALE
Relative clauses.

Table 9 and Figure 14 summarize the fittingness of the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution to the frequency distribution of the dependency distances between nouns and verbs of the relative clauses of different groups in ICNALE.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>P(X²)</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2_acl_rel</td>
<td>0.656</td>
<td>0.555</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>122.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_1_acl_rel</td>
<td>0.357</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>86.65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1_2_acl_relcl</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>233.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2_acl_relcl</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.441</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS_acl_relcl</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>119.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values of C and R² indicate that the frequency distribution of the dependency distances of this dependency type fits well to the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution. Similar to the case in adverbial clauses, the parameters \( a \) and \( b \) show peculiar behavior because in B1_1 and B1_2 the parameter \( a \) is much smaller than those in other groups, while the parameter \( b \) is relatively larger than those in other groups. The parameter \( b \) seems to have the tendency to decrease from the lower proficiency group to the higher proficiency groups.

Figure 14

Variations of the Parameters (a, b) of the Right Truncated Modified Zipf-Alekseev Fitting the Dependency Distances between Nouns and Relative Clauses of Different Groups in ICNALE
Discussion

As these results indicate, the frequency distributions of dependency distances in ICNALE fit well with the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution across different levels. However, the change of parameters $a$ and $b$ in ICNALE is slightly different from that in Lin and Yan (2021). Additionally, the frequency distributions of dependency distances of different dependency types show different fittings to the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution across different levels. The distribution of dependency distances fit well to Zipf-Alekseev distribution when the dependents are non-verbal elements (nouns, determiners, or adjectives), while the distributions of dependency distances do not fit well to Zipf-Alekseev when the dependents are verbal elements (adverbial clauses, relative clauses).

Fittingness of the dependency distances of different dependency types allows us to find more fine-grained fitting behaviors than fitting of the dependency distances of all the dependency types because it is shown that the frequency distributions of the dependency distances of some dependency types fit poorly to the theoretical distribution. Poor fitting is often the result of rare cases (in this study, dependency distances much longer than the threshold), and this leads us to the issue of naturalness of learners’ production. Avoiding too long dependency distances may result not only in better fit to the theoretical distribution, but also to more natural production. That is, we may have to point out the possibility that learners of English may produce sentences in which too long dependencies are used, and that causes some unnaturalness of the production, especially it is written language. Learners may try to express their own ideas without editing what they have written and without considering its intelligibility, hence producing too long dependencies in learner data.

This analysis is based on the assumption that dependency distances shorter than the threshold four are one of the characteristics of more natural productions, and this idea has not been investigated to my knowledge. This line of argument must be verified in a different investigation, which will be one of the research goals related to dependency distances and their threshold.

Conclusion

This study is one attempt to propose a metric for syntactic complexity from a viewpoint of quantitative linguistics. More specifically, the idea of dependency distance and its distribution are introduced, and they are applied to the data in a learner corpus. After the idea of dependency distance is introduced, the previous study (Li & Yan, 2021) on the fittingness of the distribution of dependency distances in a corpus is briefly summarized. Based on this previous study, its method is applied to the ICNALE, one of the learner corpora of English, and it is reported that the frequency distributions of
dependency distances show good fit to the right truncated modified Zipf-Alekseev distribution, which is the same result as the previous study. As such, the result of this study supports the idea of Li and Yan (2021) that dependency distribution can function as one of the metrics for the complexity of learner production data. However, the frequency distributions of the dependency distances of different dependency types do not necessarily show the same behavior as that found in Li and Yan (2021), indicating that a more fine-grained investigation of the distribution of dependency distances is required.

References
Jiang, J., & H.


