# Perceptions of In-Service Teachers Towards CLIL and CLIL Teachers' Target Language and Intercultural Competences: The Context of English-Medium Instruction Schools in Thailand

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## Abstract

This study is aimed at investigating the perceptions of in-service English-medium instruction (EMI) teachers towards CLIL and CLIL teachers' target language and intercultural competences. The participants were 59 Thai/local and international native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) at EMI schools in Thailand. The participants attended the one-day CLIL teacher training workshop used as the research context of the study. Questionnaire and audio recordings of the workshop were used as instruments in collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Results indicated that Thai teachers generally perceived their CLIL knowledge and competences as the lowest in all areas. International NNESTs, by contrast, ranked themselves the highest in most areas, except for overall target language competence, where their perceived competence was slightly lower than international NESTs. These results can raise question of whether NESTs are more competent in EMI classrooms.

Through thematic analysis, it was found that opportunities to learn and share about CLIL, to use English in intercultural settings, and to learn about intercultural awareness can contribute to EMI/CLIL teacher competences. Recommendations are provided regarding CLIL teachers' professional development for local and international teachers in the Thai EMI school contexts and alike.

## Introduction

The trend of internationalisation in education has resulted in increasing numbers of international schools, and international programmes, also known as English-medium instruction (EMI) programmes which educational institutions offer as part of their academic offerings. While EMI is often linked with higher education research, the term EMI has begun to emerge largely in both European and Asian school contexts in forms of bilingual education and CLIL (An et al., 2021). For the Thai school context in particular, EMI programmes can also be referred to as English programmes (EP), mini-English programmes (MEP), integrated English programmes (IEP), bilingual programmes, trilingual programmes, as well as international programmes. Many of these programmes are partial EMI provision. For instance, students will study at least 4 subjects in English in EP and at least 2 English-medium subjects in MEP. Since 1999, the number of Thai students participating in EMI schools has continuously increased (Boonprasop et al., 2018), and with the reform of Thailand's Ministry of Education in 2014 to integrate English in content classrooms, 'EMI' seems to be unstoppable in schools in Thailand.

The provision of content knowledge in English in EMI is closely linked with CLIL or Content and Language Integrated Learning, 'an educational approach where curricular content is taught through the medium of a foreign language, typically to students participating in some form of mainstream education at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level' (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p. 183). Although CLIL is not only restricted to teaching content in the English language, the status of English as an international language has enforced the use of English in CLIL classrooms, which is also regarded as CEIL or content-and-English integrated learning (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). In the Thai school education context, CLIL was introduced in teacher training programmes in 2006 by the Ministry of Education in

collaboration with the British Council. Despite the benefits gained from CLIL such as improved language skills and students' positive attitudes towards English language learning (British Council, 2006), there are still some challenges regarding the implementation of CLIL in Thailand. One significant issue is CLIL teachers and their abilities to implement CLIL in classrooms. In other words, 'CLIL teacher competences' (Marsh et al., 2010) are necessary for effective CLIL provision.

CLIL teacher competence frameworks such as Marsh et al.'s (2010) EFFCTE model and Bertaux et al.'s (2010) CLIL Teacher's Competences Grid have been used in research to explore CLIL teachers' perceived competences, both amongst in-service teachers (Vilkancienė & Rozgienė, 2017) and pre-service teachers (Cortina-Pérez & Pino Rodríguez, 2021). Teachers' perceptions of their own competence are useful for policy makers, school/programme administrators and teacher trainers to develop teachers' profile for effective professional development programmes (Cortina-Pérez & Pino Rodríguez, 2021). In the Thai EMI school context, however, studies of CLIL teachers' perceived competences are rare. There are studies investigating pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of their ability to implement CLIL (Tachaiyaphum & Sukying, 2017) and in-service content teachers' CLIL pedagogical practices in teacher development programmes, yet none directly focuses on EMI school teachers' voice and their perceptions of their CLIL teacher competence. More importantly, Thai EMI school research places an emphasis on mostly Thai teachers, which neglects the reality of Thai EMI schools. While the majority of teachers are local (i.e., Thai), many schools prefer to hire international (i.e., non-Thai) teachers to fulfil the needs to provide teachers with good command of English, as well as to possibly enhance their international status (Tanielian, 2014). Preferably, employed teachers are native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), but on the other hand there is also an increasing number of non-native English-speaking teachers (or NNESTs) from non-Anglophone countries, especially the Philippines (Ulla, 2019).

The complexity of local/ international teachers and NESTs/NNESTs in Thai EMI schools has led to an enquiry of how being local/international (i.e.Thai/non-Thai) or NEST/NNEST contributes to CLIL/EMI teachers' perceptions towards their CLIL teacher competence. For example, coming from other cultures rather than Thai can pose cultural challenges amongst these international teachers in addition to how they support language

learning in CLIL, balance the use of target language, as well as deal with insufficient linguistic competences (Vilkancienė & Rozgienė, 2017). By adopting a one-day CLIL teacher training workshop as a research setting, this study aims to bring together EMI school teachers who are potential CLIL teachers to learn about CLIL and CLIL pedagogy and subsequently generate both qualitative and quantitative data to achieve the research objectives to

- Investigate EMI school teachers' perceptions towards their CLIL knowledge and skills
- Investigate EMI school teachers' perceptions towards their target language competence
- Investigate EMI school teachers' perceptions towards their intercultural competence
- Explore any similarities or differences amongst these perceptions through the lens of local/international and NESTs/NNESTs

By analysing the data through the lens of local/international and NESTs/NNESTs, the study can offer another perspective of EMI school teachers' profile in Thailand in relation to their perceptions of CLIL, target language competence, and intercultural competence. It is hoped that the results can provide implications for those involved in the field.

## Literature Review

This section begins with literature relevant to CLIL teachers through the perspective of NESTs and NNESTs, followed by discussions around CLIL teacher competence in relation to target language competence and intercultural competence. To situate this study within a wider framework of CLIL teachers' perceptions and CLIL teacher competences, previous studies related will also be explored.

### CLIL Teachers: NEST and NNESTs

CLIL teachers, according to Mahan (2020), are teachers whose foci in teaching are both content and language. Nonetheless, many teachers who teach in the CLIL context struggle to perceive themselves as integrated teachers (Pham & Unaldi, 2021). While literature largely explores challenges faced by content teachers and language teachers, CLIL

teachers' challenges can also be viewed through the lens of NEST and NNESTs.

Firstly, NESTs who are content teachers, may experience difficulties when delivering English-medium lessons to non-English speaking students. As they might not have been trained to teach English as a second language or a foreign language, they might have concern over delivering the idealized CLIL classroom instruction (Pérez-Cañado 2018). Since being a native speaker of the target language does not automatically make an efficient L2 teacher, it is therefore important that CLIL teachers 'develop a language consciousness that triggers their awareness' of 'foreign language input' and 'output' and this will 'take their language competence to a new pedagogic level' (Pavon Vázquez & Ellison, 2013, p. 71).

Clearly, linguistic competence presents a significant challenge for CLIL teachers, and it also applies to NNESTs. Whereas NESTs are required to have the target language (i.e. English) awareness, NNESTs may lack sufficient command of target language (Papaja, 2013). Especially, for NNEST content teachers, they might use 'compensatory tactics' where they 'simply summarize content which has already been explained in the mother tongue' (Pavon Vázquez & Ellison, 2013, p. 71). This may help students with insufficient L2 language proficiency; however, it may impede students' L2 development in CLIL methodology which emphasizes 'the use of activities that promote the linguistic competence of students with a communicative end goal' and the objective 'not to teach things, but to teach to understand, retain and use' (Pavon Vázquez & Ellison, 2013, p. 71).

In the Thai EMI school context, there is evidence that Thai content teachers struggle with using English in CLIL lessons due to lack of confidence in their English language proficiency. According to Kewara and Prabjandee (2018), some Thai content teachers would comfortably use English for greetings and short sentences but would switch from English to Thai when involving giving task instructions and transferring knowledge. The solution which some Thai EMI schools had was parallel teaching where Thai and non-Thai teachers teach lessons in parallel, i.e. English content with some Thai input. This parallel teaching model can generally facilitate student learning; nonetheless, the success of these EMI programmes also depends on improving local/Thai teachers especially on their linguistic competence needs (Kewara & Prabjandee, 2018). As there are both Thai

and non-Thai English-speaking teachers, schools must manage 'the balance between the English-speaking content teacher and the Thai teacher' (Bax, 2010, p. 23). Thai teachers may be able to teach content in Thai but find it difficult to use English in their teaching. Non-Thai teachers, who are content teachers, on the other hand, might not have been trained to teach EMI content to non-native speakers of English or Thai students. The abilities of each respective group of teachers can raise questions about CLIL teacher competences based on such demographic profiles.

## CLIL Teacher Competences

Through the lens of CLIL, competence can be regarded as 'demonstrated ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social, and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development' (Marsh et al., 2010). In CLIL literature, two prominent frameworks of CLIL teacher competences are Marsh et al.'s (2011) European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education (or EFFCTE) and Bertaux et al.'s (2010) CLIL Teacher's Competences Grid. Both of these frameworks share a similar objective of being a tool to facilitate CLIL teacher development programmes; however, the details of competences discussed are slightly different (Vilkancienė & Rozgienė, 2017).

Marsh et al.'s (2010) EFFCTE model contains professional target competences of 1) personal reflections 2) CLIL fundamentals 3) context and language awareness 4) methodology and assessment 5) research and evaluation 6) learning resources and environment 7) classroom management and 8) CLIL management. All the competences are written as can-do statements which are related to proposed professional development modules. Bertaux et al.'s (2010) CLIL Teacher's Competences Grid, on the other hand, presents more detailed competences regarding elements such as content, language and culture. As Bertaux et al.'s (2010) framework places specific foci on 'target language competences for teaching CLIL', 'second language acquisition', and 'interculturality' as key areas of CLIL teacher competences, this study adopts this framework to explore CLIL teachers' target language and intercultural competences.
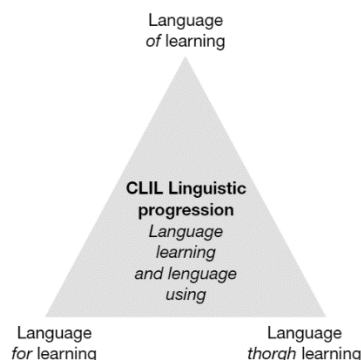
## Target Language Competence

Target language competence is one major area of CLIL teacher competence. In Bertaux et al.'s (2010) CLIL Teacher's Competences Grid,

target language competence includes CLIL teachers' ability to use everyday language and academic language in CLIL classrooms. This distinction between language is grounded in Coyle et al.'s (2010) Language Triptych Model and Cummins' (1979) BICS (Basic interpersonal communication skills) and CALP (Cognitive academic language proficiency) dichotomy. According to Coyle et al. (2010), language in CLIL classrooms can be categorised as 1) language *of* learning, or the language required to learn the subject content 2) language *for* learning, or the language required to function in a foreign language environment, and 3) language *through* learning, or the 'emerging language' where learners create new meanings of new areas of knowledge which 'needs to be captured, recycled and developed strategically by teachers and learners' (p. 37) (Figure 1). Understanding these language dimensions and applying them in CLIL classrooms are important for CLIL teachers to deliver effective CLIL lessons.

## FIGURE 1

*The Language Triptych (Coyle et al., 2010)*



In addition to language distinction, target language competence of CLIL teachers is also linked with teachers' ability to assess students' language levels and plan lessons accordingly. One interesting element in Bertaux et al.'s (2010) framework is the use of the Common European Framework for Languages, or CEFR, as a self-assessment tool. This is very much relevant to the context of Thailand where CEFR has become part of Ministry of Education's policy since 2016 to improve the English language proficiency level of Thai teachers, both English language teachers and

content subject teachers (Charttrakul & Damnet, 2021). Teacher competence related to the application of CLIL can thus provide further implications to teachers' professional development in the country.

## Intercultural Competence and Interculturality

Intercultural competence is considered another important area of CLIL teacher competence (Bertaux et al., 2010). Intercultural competence is generally referred to as communicator's ability to communicate in intercultural contexts using their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in intercultural communication (Byram et al., 2002). However, at times intercultural competence revolves around one's ability to evaluate one's culture in relation to one's country; and can thus be critiqued for its fixed view of culture. Given this essentialist view of culture, an alternative concept of 'interculturality' is also often employed in discussing intercultural competence and intercultural communication.

In Bertaux et al.'s (2010) CLIL Teacher's Competences Grid, 'interculturality' is regarded as one area of teacher competences. CLIL teachers, for instance, should be able to facilitate students' intercultural awareness and help students to move beyond superficial cultural stereotypes. Intercultural awareness has recently become central to investigating intercultural competence and intercultural communication in EMI contexts where English is viewed as a lingua franca not owned by native speakers including NESTs. There is evidence that NESTs are perceived to have a lower level of intercultural competence than NNESTs who shared the same mother tongue with their Chinese students (Qiu & Fang, 2019). Despite its seemingly biased conceptualisation of NESTs and NNESTs, understanding intercultural competence, and specifically intercultural awareness of such groups of teachers can provide further implications for teachers' professional development.

## Previous Related Studies

CLIL teachers' perceptions are largely explored in CLIL literature; however, most studies examine teachers' perceptions towards CLIL as a concept in general, or benefits and challenges of CLIL implementation. As challenges of CLIL often revolves around tensions between content and language, teachers' perceptions are also often derived from teachers'

identity as content teachers and language teachers. Pham and Unaldi's (2021) study of teachers in a CLIL bilingual education programme in Vietnam, for instance, demonstrated that despite positive views towards the benefits of CLIL, teachers still limited their pedagogic roles only to their own disciplines, leading to difficulties in adopting the dual focus of content and language in CLIL lessons. In the Thai context, little has been fully investigated in this area. A study by Tachaiyaphum and Sukying (2017) examined Thai EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of CLIL and found that teachers experienced difficulties with integrating content, and culture aspects into a CLIL lesson. Although this study sheds light on teachers' perceptions towards CLIL in the Thai context, there is still a tremendous research gap in perceptions research in terms of in-service teachers in Thai EMI schools.

Specific to perceptions of CLIL teachers' competence, a recent study by Cortina-Pérez and Pino Rodríguez (2021) examined Spanish pre-service teachers' self-assessment of their CLIL teacher competence based on Bertaux et al.'s (2010) CLIL Teacher's Competence Grid. The results illustrated that pre-service teachers had positive views of CLIL but felt unprepared to become CLIL practitioners due to their communicative competence and English language proficiency. The study calls for 'CLIL English proficiency' which accompanies CLIL knowledge in pre-service teacher training. Clearly, target language competence is an issue perceived by (potential) CLIL teachers who are NNESTs, and thus has become an area concerned in CLIL teacher training. Interestingly, however, Pérez Cañado (2016) conducted a needs analysis of CLIL teachers across the whole Europe and found that linguistic and intercultural competences were less needed than theoretical underpinnings and ongoing professional development. Nonetheless, levels of needs of linguistic and intercultural competences also depend on nationality, type of teachers (content/ language), language level, and experience to work or study abroad. It was found in the study that teachers who had never worked or studied abroad had higher level of needs for linguistic competence training. Clearly, various factors must be taken into consideration when understanding CLIL teachers' perceptions and perceived competence.

## Methodology

### Research Context and Participants

This study was conducted in a one-day workshop setting specifically catering for in-service teachers teaching in EMI programmes in the Thai school context. As workshops can bring a group of professionals to acquire new knowledge together, exchange experiences, and find solutions to various problems (Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017), they can help facilitate our understanding of workshop participants' opinions, attitudes, and feelings.

**Table 1**

*The Demographics of EMI School Teachers in the Workshop*

| local vs International | Country of origin | Number of teachers | School subjects |
|---|---|---|---|
| Local (n=29) | Thailand | 29 | 1 arts teacher<br>2 social studies teachers<br>5 multi-subject teachers<br>21 English language teachers |
| International, non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) (n = 14) | The Philippines | 10 | 2 social studies teachers<br>3 multi-subject teachers<br>5 English language teachers |
| | Myanmar | 1 | 1 English language teacher |
| | Bhutan | 1 | 1 English language teacher |
| | Turkey | 1 | 1 science teacher |
| | China | 1 | 1 Chinese language teacher |
| International, native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) (n = 16) | USA | 10 | 6 multi-subject teachers<br>4 English language teachers |
| | UK | 2 | 2 English language teachers |
| | South Africa | 2 | 1 computer teacher<br>1 multi-subject teacher |
| | Australia | 1 | 1 English language teacher |
| | Canada | 1 | 1 multi-subject teacher |
| TOTAL number of participants | | 59 | |

In recruiting research participants, the workshop was advertised as a free-of-charge one-day CLIL professional workshop for in-service

teachers who work in Thai EMI schools. The workshop covered fundamental CLIL knowledge and skills. After recruitment, 59 in-service teachers in EMI programmes in Thailand voluntarily participated in the workshop. There were 29 Thai/ local teachers and 30 international teachers, 16 of whom were native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) (i.e., the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, and South Africa) and 14 were non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) (i.e., the Philippines, China, Turkey, Bhutan, and Myanmar) (Table 1). In terms of subjects taught, 35 participants were English language teachers (59.3%), 16 multi-subject teachers (27.1%), and 8 single-subject teachers of arts, science, social studies, computer, and the Chinese language (13.6%). (The Chinese language teacher was included in the study due to her pedagogical responsibilities of teaching content about China and the Chinese language in English.) 45 out of 59 EMI teachers in the study had less than 5 years' experience working in the Thai EMI school context.

## Research Instruments

This study employs two main research instruments of a questionnaire and audio recordings of the workshop. The data from the questionnaire provides both quantitative and qualitative data about teachers' perceptions towards CLIL knowledge and skills and their target language and intercultural competences, whereas the audio recordings provide qualitative data of what happened in the workshop.

The questionnaire used in the study was adapted from by Bertaux et al.'s (2010) CLIL Teacher's Competences Grid and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD, 2018) teacher questionnaire in OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). The questionnaire is divided into three main parts of 1) general background information 2) background regarding content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and 3) perceptions towards CLIL teachers' target language and intercultural competences. For Part 3, there are two sub-sections of 3.1) Area of competence: Target language competences for teaching CLIL and 3.2) Area of competence: Interculturality. The questionnaire was also be piloted before use.

Another research instrument was audio recordings of the workshop, which were later transcribed in verbatim and saved as audio transcripts. Being the workshop instructor and having 'first-hand

knowledge' in the data collection process and expertise in the subject, the researcher transcribed the data herself in order to help reduce error in verbatim transcription (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). The qualitative data generated from audio recordings of the workshop were used in data analysis and triangulated with the data from the questionnaires.

## Data Collection

Data collection in this research project involved conducting the workshop during which the data were collected. During the workshop, the researcher acted as the instructor who led the workshop. The workshop was recorded using a digital voice recorder. Audio files were digitally saved and transcribed for data analysis purposes. Self-administered, paper-based questionnaires were distributed to participants and returned at the end of the workshop.

## Data Analysis

This study integrated the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected from the participants who attended the one-day CLIL teacher training workshop. The analysis of the questionnaire was in the form of descriptive statistical analysis. On the other hand, the qualitative data from the audio transcripts and questionnaires was coded via the method of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes were assigned based on the literature review concerning CLIL teachers' knowledge and skills, target language competence, and intercultural competence. Through data and method triangulation, the researcher then reported the results of the study.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents results and discussion on EMI teachers' perceptions towards their CLIL knowledge and skills, their target language competence, and their intercultural competence.

## Teacher's Perceived CLIL Knowledge and Skills

The questionnaire results demonstrate that in-service EMI teachers in the workshop generally had little knowledge and skills about

CLIL. Based on the 0-10 scale (*0 = I have little or no knowledge, 10 = I am a CLIL expert*), the overall mean score was 1.80 (n= 59) before attending the workshop and 5.43 after attending the workshop. Overall, content teachers felt they knew more about CLIL than English language teachers. However, when analysing through the lens of teachers based on local/ international hire, international NNESTs rated their CLIL knowledge and skills at the highest level (mean = 2.86 before the workshop, 6.93 after the workshop), followed by international NESTs (mean = 1.44 before the workshop, 4.69 after the workshop) and local/ Thai teachers (mean = 1.10 before the workshop, 4.66 after the workshop) (Table 2). When looking at the responses in detail none of the Thai teachers scored their CLIL knowledge and skills at 10 out of 10, whereas 2-3 participants from each group of the international NESTs and NNESTs rated their CLIL knowledge and skills at 10.

## Table 2

*Local and International Teachers' Perceptions on their CLIL Knowledge and Skills*

| Teachers, based on hire and NEST/NNEST status | Before attending the workshop (mean) | After attending workshop (mean) |
|---|---|---|
| Local, THAI teachers (n=29) | 1.10 | 4.66 |
| International NNESTs  (n=14) | 2.86 | 6.93 |
| International NESTs (n= 16) | 1.44 | 4.69 |
| Overall participants (n= 59) | 1.80 | 5.43 |

International teachers' questionnaire responses were in line with the findings from the audio transcripts of the workshop where these 'experts' talked about their knowledge and experience in CLIL training. One Filipino English language teacher, Harry (pseudonym), for instance, seemed to have a prevalent role in answering questions about CLIL in the teacher training workshop in this study. He later revealed that he had attended CLIL teacher training before and then become a teacher trainer at the EMI school he was working at, noting that almost all the international teachers at his school were NNESTs, i.e. Filipinos. Another international research participant, Alex (pseudonym), an Australian English language teacher, also emerged as a CLIL 'expert' in the study. He spoke

out in the workshop that he had taken part in 'British Council's CLIL training' many times and wrote in the questionnaire that 'there's nothing I didn't already know'. Having had the opportunity to previously attend CLIL formal training programmes is clearly a reason why these EMI teachers felt they were CLIL experts.

Despite their perceptions as a CLIL expert, Harry and Alex held different CLIL expert roles. It was found during the workshop that Harry attended the research setting with other Filipino colleagues who worked with him in the same school. By contrast, Alex was in the workshop on his own. At a closer investigation, the findings revealed that Harry was a teacher trainer/ leader at his school where part of the training programme was CLIL. Alex, on the other hand, did not have this trainer role at his school nor did he disseminate his knowledge much within his school community. These findings suggest school's roles in disseminating CLIL knowledge and supporting ongoing professional development, which are vital for developing CLIL teachers. This ongoing professional development is also evident in the training needs of in-service teachers (Pérez Cañado, 2016).

While Thai schools usually give a greater emphasis on training Thai teachers, Thai EMI teachers in this study appeared to have the view that they did not know much about CLIL. Although the findings did not reveal clear reasons of this perception, it may be claimed that it was due to lack of CLIL teacher training. As one Thai teacher, Joy (pseudonym) mentioned, 'it's not very often that we get to learn this'. This statement implies infrequent training, which is also mentioned in Kewara and Prabjandee (2018)'s study which points out a lack of official training or school policy to manage EMI or EP teachers in Thai schools. According Kewara and Prabjandee (2018), CLIL teachers' professional development programmes should be placed on the school policy agenda, as it is 'a long-term goal that requires eminent collaboration among stakeholders' (p. 104). Nonetheless, due to the complexity of local/international and NESTs/NNESTs, schools must find the right balance to answer to EMI teachers' specific needs (Bax, 2010).

In relation to CLIL knowledge and skills, CLIL teachers should also understand their roles of being both content and language teachers (Papaja, 2013). In this study, there were 35 English language teachers and 24 content subject or multi-subject teachers who attended the workshop. At the end of the workshop, however, 25 English language teachers still

viewed themselves as English language teachers, whereas 30 participants perceived themselves as both content and language teachers, and 4 as content teachers. EFL teachers' views of their role as English language teachers, not content and language teachers, are critical for CLIL pedagogy. This is in conjunction with Pham and Unaldi's (2021) study which also presents teachers who viewed their pedagogic responsibilities mainly based on their disciplines. In addition, literature also suggests that EFL teachers perceived that they lacked the content knowledge to teach CLIL lessons (Tachaiyaphum & Sukying, 2017), and this perception can be discouraging for many language teachers for applying CLIL in their classrooms.

## Teacher's Perceived Target Language Competences

Based on the 1-5 Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree), the questionnaire results indicated that international NESTs had the highest perceived target language competence amongst the three groups of local and international teachers (mean = 4.12) (Table 3). Interestingly, international NNESTs also ranked their target language competence almost as high as international NESTs (mean = 4.08). Thai teachers, on the other hand, rated their target language competence at the lowest (mean = 3.03). While literature presents linguistic challenges possibly faced by non-native CLIL teachers (Papaja, 2013), the results here suggest that target language competence of CLIL teachers in EMI schools can be linked with teachers' belief in their English language ability. Thai teachers in EMI programmes might view themselves as not as highly competent as their international counterparts. Almost all of them responded in the questionnaire that they had not studied in an English-speaking country. The lack of 'opportunity' to take part in the Anglophone experience or international experience and little exposure to the English language outside classrooms could contribute to the perceptions of their low level of English language competence, when compared with their international counterparts who have opportunities to work or travel abroad, and use English to communicate most of the time. As Pérez Cañado's (2016) study shows, previous work or study in the target language country is a factor in higher level of perceived linguistic competence of CLIL teachers.

Table 3

*Teachers' Perceptions on their Target Language Competence*

| Items (I can descriptors) | Local, Thai teachers (n=29) mean | International NNESTs (n = 14) mean | International NESTs (n= 16) mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) I can communicate using everyday language in the classroom target language. | 3.10 | 4.14 | 4.44 |
| 2) I can adjust social and academic language to communicate with my students. | 3.21 | 4.29 | 4.06 |
| 3) I can read subject material and theoretical texts. | 3.10 | 4.86 | 4.81 |
| 4) I can use appropriate subject-specific terminology and grammar structures. | 2.83 | 4.21 | 4.56 |
| 5) I can use target language to manage classroom such as group management, time management, noise management, giving instructions. | 3.17 | 4.36 | 3.81 |
| 6) I can use target language to for teaching-related tasks, such as explaining, presenting information, giving instructions, clarifying and checking understanding. | 3.17 | 4.43 | 4.19 |
| 7) I can use the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) to define students' proficiency level of target language. | 2.28 | 2.07 | 3.31 |
| 8) I can call on the CEFR to define language targets in the CLIL class. | 2.31 | 2.79 | 2.75 |
| 9) I can select language input which suits my students' level. | 3.17 | 4.36 | 4.19 |
| 10) I can identify language components (e.g. words, terms, idioms and sentence structures) that are new for the students in text, audio or audio-visual materials. | 3.24 | 4.14 | 4.88 |
| 11) I can support students in navigating and learning new words, terms, idioms and sentence structures. | 3.45 | 4.64 | 4.44 |
| 12) I can decide when to allow students or myself to speak Thai or their mother tongue. | 3.45 | 4.43 | 3.81 |
| 13) I can decide whether production errors are linked to language or content | 2.93 | 4.21 | 4.31 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14) I can use a wide range of language correction strategies with appropriate frequency, ensuring language growth without demotivating students | 2.79 | 4.07 | 4.25 |
| 15) I can develop a classroom culture where language learning is supported through peers and learner autonomy. | 3.31 | 4.21 | 4.06 |
| TOTAL | 3.03 | 4.08 | 4.12 |

When analysing questionnaire items in detail, it can be also seen that unlike international teachers who scored themselves rather high, Thai teachers scored themselves very low for their ability to 'use appropriate subject-specific terminology and grammar structures' (item 4, Table 3) (mean = 2.83). For the subject-specific terminology issue, we may trace back to Thailand's teacher qualification programmes where pre-service subject teachers are trained to teach content subject in Thai. There could be, for example, a mismatch between the Thai terms learned during pre-service training and the English terms required for in-service classroom teaching. This aspect of pre-service teacher training is also discussed in Cortina-Pérez and Pino Rodríguez's (2021) study which calls for 'CLIL English proficiency' accompanying CLIL knowledge in pre-service teacher training programmes.

Another issue of target language competence which all groups of in-service teachers perceived as critical was their ability to use CEFR in CLIL, with the lowest mean scores amongst all items under the area of target language competence. These questionnaire results were in line with the workshop findings where many teachers asked the instructor what exactly CEFR was. One American content teacher, David (pseudonym), expressed his concern stating that he was 'a math teacher', and CEFR was not a framework he was familiar with. While many CLIL teacher competence frameworks recommend CEFR as a useful tool in planning CLIL lessons (e.g. Bertaux et al., 2010), CEFR is mostly introduced in English language teacher or foreign teacher training programmes. Content teachers, despite being NESTs, are neither trained to use CEFR nor trained to teach content in a second language, and as a result could struggle in delivering idealised CLIL lessons (Pérez Cañado 2018).

## Teacher's Perceived Intercultural Competence

Overall, the questionnaire results showed that in-service EMI teachers in the study perceived that they possessed lower intercultural competence than target language competence. Whereas Thai teachers ranked themselves the lowest (mean = 3.19), international NNESTs rated their intercultural competence the highest (mean = 4.03) (Table 4). Unlike international NESTs who mentioned that they could not speak Thai and were not willing to use Thai words in their EMI class, international NNESTs responded differently. Workshop evidence was when Harry, the Filipino teacher trainer, asked the workshop instructor and other workshop participants, 'what is your opinion of using Thai in class?'. He, later, added on that the 'glocal' perspective was what EMI teachers should adhere to. By 'glocal', Harry meant the convergence of global and local knowledge, or in this context, using English and Thai, in order to enhance teaching and learning, as well as foster good relationships between the non-Thai teachers and the Thai students. Unlike Harry who had the 'opportunity' to attend CLIL and intercultural awareness training, James (pseudonym), a British teacher, wondered how he could develop his students' intercultural competence. James' situation is in conjunction with questionnaire results of international NESTs who perceived their low ability to 'initiate or support virtual or physical exchanges with students from other regions/countries' (item 6, Table 4).

## Table 4

*Teachers' Perceptions on their Intercultural Competence*

| Items<br>(I can descriptors) | Local, Thai teachers<br>(n=29)<br>mean | International NNESTs<br>(n = 14)<br>mean | International NESTs<br>(n= 16)<br>mean |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) I can select and adapt authentic material from different regions or countries. | 2.93 | 3.93 | 3.88 |
| 2) I can guide students in developing cultural awareness. | 3.48 | 4.07 | 3.25 |
| 3) I can guide students in acting in the 'right way' and saying the 'right thing' in the appropriate context. | 3.62 | 4.29 | 3.88 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4) I can raise learners' curiosity about the culture(s) related to the CLIL lesson. | 2.90 | 4.07 | 3.75 |
| 5) I can help students to move beyond superficial cultural stereotypes and learn about target language country/countries and their people(s). | 3.21 | 4.00 | 3.44 |
| 6) I can initiate or support virtual or physical exchanges with students from other regions/countries. | 2.97 | 3.79 | 2.56 |
| TOTAL | 3.19 | 4.03 | 3.46 |

In EMI literature, there is evidence that international NESTs have lower intercultural competence than local teachers (Qiu & Fang, 2019); yet there is a dearth of literature which explains international NNESTs, especially in the context of Thai EMI schools. A study by Ulla (2018) investigated Filipino EFL teachers in Thailand and found that these Filipino teachers viewed that they were no different from NESTs despite the discrepancies of salary between international NESTs and NNESTs in Thailand. According to Ulla (2018), Filipino teachers and other NNESTs who have experience working in the Southeast Asian region can have more awareness of cultural and linguistic needs of Thai students. As EFL learners themselves, they might have had a similar experience as their students, and can thus identify the needs of EFL learners, unlike NESTs who may be less experienced with and less culturally aware of EFL students.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explores the perceptions of in-service teachers in EMI schools in Thailand. Taken from the local and international teachers' perspectives, the findings revealed that Thai teachers may be in more need of CLIL training than international teachers, due to their perceptions towards their CLIL knowledge and skills, target language competence, and intercultural competence. However, the provision of CLIL teachers' professional development programmes should not mainly focus only on Thai teachers, but rather all the teachers who contribute to student learning, regardless of whether they are local or international, NESTs or NNESTs. The evidence in the study shows that being NESTs or NNESTs is not necessarily a primary factor in perceived CLIL knowledge and skills, and target language and intercultural competences of EMI teachers in Thai

schools. Higher levels of CLIL knowledge and skills seem to derive from 'opportunities' to take part in professional learning, both inside and outside school, pre-service and in-service. More importantly, the culture of ongoing professional development can foster CLIL teachers' knowledge and skill development. While individuals are a crucial element, the authority or EMI schools themselves are also significant stakeholders in the process of CLIL teachers' professional development.

In addition, this study also suggests that being a NEST does not necessarily refer to higher level of teacher competence. Instead, it is again 'opportunity' which helps to contribute to CLIL teacher competence. As can be seen, international NNESTs in this study had the opportunity to learn about CLIL and intercultural awareness, as well as the opportunity to use English and become more exposed to English in intercultural settings. Therefore, their perceptions of their CLIL teacher competence were rather satisfactory, when compared with NESTs. These positive views can help teachers feel more confident and more willing to adopt CLIL in their teaching. For this reason, Thai/local teachers who are also NNESTs, should be given these similar opportunities. Likewise, NESTs who lack some opportunities, such as learning about intercultural awareness or CLIL pedagogy, should also be equally provided with such opportunities in their professional development programmes.

This study is a small-scale study with research limitations in terms of the number of participants which may not be generalized. Future research could explore the perceptions of in-service EMI teachers on a larger scale, either through the perspectives of local/international hire or NESTs/NNESTs. Alternatively, case studies of these teachers in various schools can also provide us with more profound understandings of EMI or CLIL teachers' competence in Thailand and other similar contexts.

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