



Trends in English Language Teaching Research among Thai Scholars: A Bibliometric Analysis of Scopus-Indexed Publications from 2010 to 2024

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ABSTRACT	
Received 02/05/2024	This bibliometric study reveals the dominant research topics, methodologies, contexts, and publication outlets utilized by researchers in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Thailand from 2010 to 2024. Bibliometric analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel 2019 and VOSviewer 1.6.19 as research tools. The dataset was retrieved from 428 documents indexed in the SCOPUS database. The findings revealed that in addition to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English Language Teaching (ELT), the popular researched keywords include English for Specific Purposes (ESP), global Englishes, perceptions, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Covid-19, and Conversation Analysis (CA). The predominant research methodologies employed were qualitative and mixed-methods. The primary context of the study was higher education, followed by secondary and primary education. The top three publication outlets were LEARN Journal, rEFlections, and 3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature. These findings offer insights into the prevalent
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	<p>themes, methodologies, contexts, and publication outlets in the ELT research landscape in Thailand, providing essential information for educators, researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders in the ELT community.</p> <p>Keywords: Bibliometric study, English language teaching, ELT trends, ELT research, SCOPUS-indexed journals</p>
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Introduction

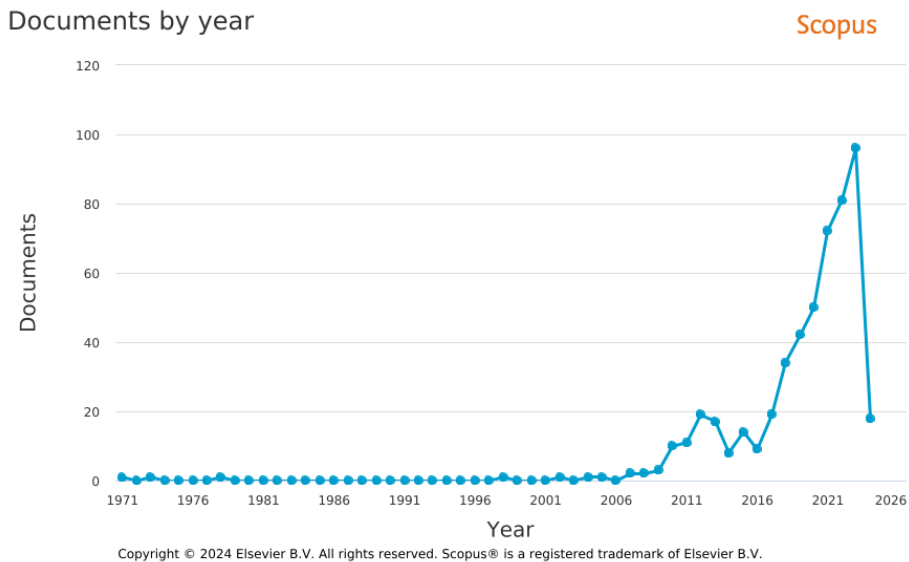
English Language Teaching (ELT) research in Thailand has gained more interest in recent years as a result of the escalating significance of English proficiency in local and global settings (Baker, 2008). Similar to other nations, Thailand acknowledges the importance of English as a means of communication, education, economic progress, and cultural interaction. Consequently, educational institutions, policymakers, and interested parties have jointly strived to improve English language teaching and learning approaches throughout the nation (Wongkumsai, 2023). ELT research conducted in Thailand may have several aims to address, such as the specific needs, challenges, and interests of English language learners and educators in the country. This may involve qualitative or quantitative methodologies, such as surveys, interviews, classroom observations, experimental studies, or case studies, to investigate various aspects of English language teaching and learning. ELT might be practiced in a variety of settings, including schools, language institutes, universities, community centers, online platforms, and corporate training programs, catering to learners of all ages and proficiency levels.

Since the research landscape tends to shift frequently (Lin et al., 2014), understanding the trend of ELT in Thailand over the last five years offers updated insights into the current state of ELT research among Thai scholars. Hence, this study aims to: 1) Investigate the prevalent research topics explored by scholars in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Thailand. 2) Identify the methodologies frequently employed by scholars in the field of ELT in Thailand. 3) Discover the common contexts in which scholars in the field of ELT in Thailand conduct their research. 4) Determine the primary publication outlets for scholars in the field of ELT in Thailand. This study accordingly investigated research conducted by ELT scholars within the educational milieu of Thailand. It is pertinent to note that this investigation was confined to research published in the English language within the Thai educational context. This research utilized data exclusively from the SCOPUS database from 2010 to 2024. The researchers selected this

timeframe due to the significant volume of documents published in 2010. In 2010, the number of documents rose to 10, compared to the usual range of 1-3 documents in previous years, as indicated by the preliminary data search. The preliminary data search (Figure 1) of the dataset assisted in identifying the optimal starting point for the research, ensuring accurate information retrieval.

Figure 1

The Preliminary Data Search



Note. Figure 2 shows the volume of documents published from 1971 to 2024, retrieved from the SCOPUS database.

Literature

Studies on ELT Research Trends

Many studies have been conducted to develop a better understanding of ELT trends at various levels, i.e., regional, country, and university levels. At the regional level, Ngoc and Barrot (2022) investigated the current landscape of ELT research in Southeast Asia. The paper described the key features, growth patterns, impact, trends, and distribution of ELT research over the past six years. It also identified common research themes and how they have changed over time. Additionally, it examined the level of collaboration among ELT scholars in the SEA region. This examination,

which covers a six-year period, highlights the wide range of research that has been conducted recently. Overall, research productivity and citations have been increasing in recent years, with Singapore, Vietnam, and Malaysia leading in various measures. Popular research areas include understanding teacher beliefs and actions, effective teaching methods, using technology in language learning, and improving overall language skills. While collaboration among Southeast Asian countries is limited, there has been more extensive collaboration with Western countries, particularly evident in Vietnam and Singapore. The study also discusses policy implications and suggests future research directions.

At the country level, Phoocharoensil (2022) conducted a study on ELT and AL research trends in Thai SCOPUS-indexed journals to investigate the current trends in ELT/AL publications using 180 articles from three Thai SCOPUS-indexed journals, namely PASAA, LEARN, and rEFlections, published between 2019 and 2021. The findings revealed that the majority of studies in these fields focused on second/foreign language learning and teaching, with vocabulary ranking first in popularity, and the survey study was the most frequent research design.

Jaroongkhongdach (2014) conducted a content analysis of Thai master's theses in ELT from 2003 to 2011, aiming to explore the prevalent research topics and methods during that period. The study analyzed 194 theses from graduates of seven Thai universities using content analysis, focusing on six categories: research focus, educational levels in a research context, type of research design, data source, type of research instrument, and analytical method. The findings indicated that the majority of ELT master's theses primarily focused on student performance (60.82%), particularly at the undergraduate level (25.64%). Most theses utilized a quantitative research design (61.34%) with students as the primary data source (80.41%). The commonly used research instruments were a combination of a questionnaire and a test, and the analytical methods predominantly employed were descriptive and inferential statistics.

At the university level, Thumvichit (2020) investigated the specific subjects of focus and the emerging research themes within master's programs in ELT in Thailand. The analysis involved ten universities and examined 201 master's theses submitted from 2014 to 2018. The results revealed that teaching and research methodology courses were the most common, suggesting that these programs emphasize both teaching skills and research abilities. Consistent with global trends in ELT research, research on instructional effects remains prominent.

Although there has been considerable research on ELT trends at various levels, the research landscape tends to shift approximately every five years (Lin et al., 2014). Updated insights into the current state of ELT

research in Thailand, including the past five years (2019–2023), offer invaluable benefits for educators, policymakers, and researchers. Staying informed about recent developments helps researchers better understand the evolving needs and challenges in the field of ELT. This up-to-date knowledge allows educators to align their teaching methodologies with current trends and best practices, thereby enhancing the quality of English language education. Moreover, policymakers can use this information to formulate more effective policies and allocate resources strategically to address emerging issues in ELT. Researchers can also identify gaps in existing literature and prioritize areas for future research, resulting in a more robust and comprehensive understanding of ELT in the Thai context. Finally, the insights gained from recent research might contribute to improving and advancing English language teaching practices in Thailand, which benefits both educators and learners.

Bibliometric Studies

Many studies have examined the trends of ELT in Thailand (e.g., Jaroongkhongdach, 2014; Phoocharoensil, 2022; Thumvichit, 2020), but very few have employed a bibliometric approach. Bibliometric analysis is a research method that analyzes patterns and trends within academic literature. It can help examine various aspects of scholarly publications, such as citation patterns, authorship, publication trends, and collaboration networks. This can provide insights into the impact of research, the dissemination of knowledge within a particular field, and the structure of research communities (Ellegaard, 2015). Researchers often use bibliometric studies to assess the influence of individual publications, identify emerging research topics, and evaluate the productivity of researchers or institutions. Overall, bibliometric studies play a crucial role in mapping the landscape of academic research and informing decision-making in research policy and practice.

Bibliometric Studies in ELT

Wang et al. (2022) carried out a bibliometric analysis of teaching and learning English-speaking skills. This research delved into the history and present condition of English-speaking (ES) education by scrutinizing a diverse array of literature. By utilizing data from 2010 to 2021 sourced from SCOPUS, trends, emerging topics, and areas requiring additional research were identified by the researchers. They examined 361 documents under specific conditions, using Excel and VOSviewer 1.6.17 to analyze details, such as yearly publications, countries involved, authors, citations, and keywords. The findings revealed an increase in publications on ES education over the

years, but researchers didn't consistently focus on this topic. Countries with English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts showed more interest, although studies from native English-speaking countries had more influence. The research topics varied, including communication skills, language knowledge, assessment, teaching methods, technology use, and cognitive factors like motivation and anxiety.

Chen (2023) recently conducted a ten-year bibliometric analysis of e-learning in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, taking a detailed look at relevant e-learning research. It covered how many papers were published, which countries contributed the most, and who the top authors and journals were. By reviewing 602 papers from the SCOPUS database between 2013 and 2022, using tools like VOSviewer, Excel, and Tableau, the study found that there has been a significant increase in e-learning papers since 2020. China, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia have led the way in producing and collaborating on these papers. The study also pinpointed the most productive authors and journals, highlighting six main topics of interest. These include how effective e-learning is, what learners think about it, mobile learning, e-education during Covid-19, the experiences of Chinese EFL teachers, and teacher education.

Although several bibliometric studies on language and linguistics have been conducted, there is limited information available specifically focusing on ELT research trends among Thai scholars. To supplement existing studies and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the current state of ELT research in Thailand, this study adopts a bibliometric approach to analyze SCOPUS index publication data from 2010 to 2024.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs bibliometric analysis to investigate ELT research trends in Thailand. Bibliometric analysis is the use of quantitative metrics to graphically analyze a large number of published documents in specific research domains (Baker et al., 2020), such as co-authorship networks, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-occurrences of keywords (Van Eck & Waltman, 2014).

Research Instruments

Microsoft Excel 2019 and VOSviewer 1.6.19 were used to perform the visualized bibliometric analysis. VOSviewer is a software tool used for bibliometric analysis and visualization. It is designed to analyze and visualize

bibliographic data, such as co-authorship networks, co-citations, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrences, among others (Pan et al., 2022; Van Eck & Waltman, 2023). The software is commonly used to explore patterns and trends within large sets of scholarly literature and gain insights into research landscapes, collaborations, and emerging topics.

Database Selection

To achieve the research objectives, the SCOPUS database was chosen as the primary data source for this study. According to Ghani et al. (2022), SCOPUS is a comprehensive database with a large collection of high-quality, peer-reviewed scholarly literature that covers academic research from all over the world. This database boasts a variety of functions, including source titles, document types, authors and affiliations, and keywords, among others, making it ideal for performing bibliometric analyses. Although the Web of Science is a well-known bibliometric repository, it is primarily used in the natural and engineering sciences, whereas SCOPUS is more widely used in social science research (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). Ghani et al. (2022) also reported that, although WoS has similar exporting capabilities for bibliometric analysis, its coverage of educational disciplines is less extensive than SCOPUS. Hence, the use of SCOPUS is justified as it covers a broader range of topics that may not be available in WoS. Given the study's focus on EFL trends, a bibliometric analysis using the SCOPUS database was expected to yield reliable and valuable insights.

Search Criteria

The data was retrieved through the SCOPUS search engine (<https://www.scopus.com/sources>), resulting in the download of a spreadsheet containing relevant publications. A comprehensive search string was developed to explore the concept of English Language Teaching (ELT). It consisted of the main keyword, “English Language Teaching” or “ELT,” along with its associated synonyms. According to Future Learn (2017), many terms and acronyms are used when discussing teaching English to non-native speakers. As an illustration, consider TESL, TEFL, TESOL, and ELT. They frequently mean the same thing, which is to teach English to non-native speakers. In order to obtain a comprehensive overview of ELT research, it is crucial to include terms such as Teaching English as a Second Language or TESL, Teaching English as a Foreign Language or TEFL, Teaching English to speakers of other languages or TESOL, and English for Specific Purposes or ESP. Sources containing any of these terms in the title, abstract, or keywords and written exclusively in English were included. To ensure

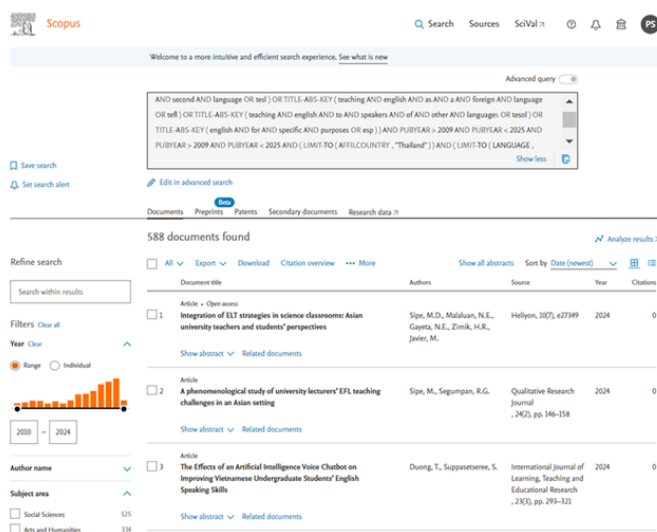
relevance, the study was limited not only by language but also by country, specifically focusing on Thailand and by timeframe from 2010 to 2024 due to the significant volume of documents published. Thus, the documents were extracted under the condition (TITLE-ABS-KEY (english AND language AND teaching OR elt) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (teaching AND english AND as AND a AND second AND language OR tesl) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (teaching AND english AND as AND a AND foreign AND language OR tefl) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (teaching AND english AND to AND speakers AND of AND other AND languages OR tesol) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (english AND for AND specific AND purposes OR esp)) AND PUBYEAR > 2009 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (AFFILCOUNTRY, "thailand")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "english")). Through this process, a total of 588 documents were retrieved.

Data Collection and Screening

The data extraction was conducted on April 6, 2024. A total of 588 sample documents were first strictly extracted under the conditions mentioned above, as shown in Figure 2 and 3. As part of the data screening, the researchers reviewed the title and abstract of all documents retrieved during the eligibility stage to ensure that only those related to ELT and its associated synonyms were included.

Figure 2

Total of 588 Sample Documents

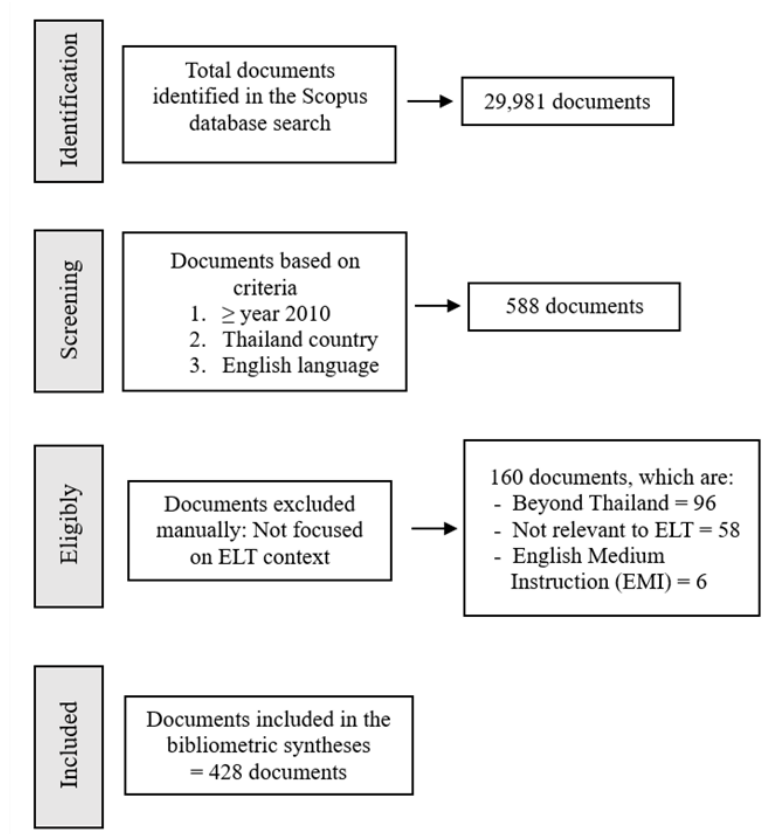


Note. Figure 2 shows the results of documents retrieved from the SCOPUS database based on the search criteria mentioned above.

In the subsequent screening phase, the researchers reviewed the abstracts of each identified document to confirm whether they contained the search terms and were relevant to ELT in Thailand. After checking, the researchers removed 160 articles. Following the filtering steps, a total of 428 documents were determined to be relevant and selected for further analysis. Figure 3 presents a visual depiction of the sequential stages involved in this process.

Figure 3

A Visual Depiction of the Data Collection Process



Data Analysis

In terms of data analysis, this study employed bibliometric analysis as the research method to identify the trends in ELT research in Thailand. The process began with the utilization of data extracted from the SCOPUS database. The selected data was exported from SCOPUS in a CSV file, ensuring the inclusion of all necessary information (as shown in Figure 4). Microsoft Excel 2019 was used to compile a listing of the most prolific authors and journals. Additionally, relevant information, such as citations, bibliographies, and keywords, was included in the analysis for a more comprehensive understanding.

Figure 4

The Selected Data Exported from SCOPUS to a CSV File

Export 588 documents to CSV ⓘ

You can export up to 20,000 documents in CSV format.

☐ All documents on this page

☒ Documents –

What information do you want to export?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citation information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bibliographical information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abstract & keywords	<input type="checkbox"/> Funding details	<input type="checkbox"/> Other information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Author(s) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document title <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Year <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EID <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Source title <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volume, issues, pages <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citation count <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Source & document type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publication stage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DOI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Affiliations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serial identifiers (e.g. ISSN) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PubMed ID <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publisher <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Editor(s) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Language of original document <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abbreviated source title	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abstract <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Author keywords <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indexed keywords	<input type="checkbox"/> Number <input type="checkbox"/> Acronym <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> Funding text	<input type="checkbox"/> Tradenames & manufacturers <input type="checkbox"/> Accession numbers & chemicals <input type="checkbox"/> Conference information <input type="checkbox"/> Include references

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Note. Figure 4 illustrates the information exported from the SCOPUS database in CSV format, which was used for bibliometric analysis.

In the next step, the network visualization maps aimed at addressing the research questions were generated using VOSviewer 1.6.19. This analysis helped uncover valuable information. Notably, to ensure the accuracy of the dataset before inputting it into VOSviewer 1.6.19, a comprehensive

refinement process was carried out to remove duplicated words and words that indicate people, places, institutions, and any other context words.

To address the first research question of the study—"What are the prevalent research topics explored by scholars in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Thailand?"—the following process was used: 1) Launch the Create Map wizard. 2) Choose "Co-Occurrence" for the type of analysis. 3) Select "Author Keywords" for the unit of analysis. 4) Choose "Full Counting" as the counting method. 5) Insert a prepared thesaurus file) Set the minimum number of occurrences of each keyword to 2. These steps facilitated the exploration and visualization of prevalent research topics in the ELT field in Thailand.

Following these steps, keywords occurring more than two times were identified. The software then generated a Network Visualization Map, an Overlay Visualization Map, a Density Visualization Map, and highlighted the most frequently occurring keywords related to ELT research trends in Thailand based on the SCOPUS database.

For the second research question, the researchers collected data from the article abstracts and the Research Methodology section using Microsoft Excel to automatically count the data and then double-checked them by manually counting. The research methods were categorized into three main categories: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods. The quantitative category consisted of surveys, close-ended questionnaires, statistical analysis, quasi-experiments, etc. The qualitative category consisted of interviews, focus groups, participant observations, content analysis, open-ended questionnaires, narrative analysis, etc., while mixed-methods is an integration of quantitative and qualitative data, which involves collecting and analyzing both numerical data (quantitative) and non-numeric data (qualitative) within the same study.

In order to answer the third research question, the researchers downloaded the selected database from SCOPUS using Microsoft Excel, and then manually and automatically counted the data. Two viewpoints are used to present the results: 1) research participants and 2) research contexts. Note that multiple participant categories may be involved in some studies. For example, a single survey study might collect data from both instructors and students. In such cases, double counting is permitted, which means the total number of participants may exceed the total number of other aspects being investigated.

To answer the fourth research question, the researchers performed both manual and automated data counting. The results are presented in two perspectives: (1) publication outputs and (2) distribution of institutions. Note that studies conducted by two or more authors from various institutes were fully assigned to those respective institutes. For instance, a study co-authored

by four authors from four institutes counts as a full publication for each institute.

Findings

Research Topics

In order to investigate the research topics explored by scholars in the field of ELT in Thailand, bibliographic data from 428 SCOPUS indexed documents was input into VOSviewer 1.6.19 to visualize the ELT trends. The analysis focused on the co-occurrence of author keywords, using the full counting method. A prepared thesaurus file was inserted, and a minimum number of occurrences for each keyword was set to "2". A comprehensive refinement process was then conducted to remove duplicate words and terms related to people, places, institutions, and other contextual references. After merging synonyms and deleting extraneous words, the researchers found 350 keywords among the 428 documents in the data set. A total of 85.43% (299 keywords) appeared only once, 5.71% (20 keywords) appeared twice, and only 11 keywords (3.14%) appeared thrice. The results revealed that 51 out of 350 keywords (14.57%) met the minimum threshold of appearing at least two times.

Keyword Occurrences

Analyzing keywords is a valuable resource for researchers aiming to pinpoint emerging trends within particular scientific domains (Guo et al., 2016). The study focused on author keywords that occurred at least twice to identify emerging areas of research interest. The top 20 frequently used keywords by scholars in the field of ELT in Thailand are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Top 20 Keywords Frequently Explored by Scholars in the Field of ELT in Thailand

Rank	Keywords	Occurrence	Percentage
	English for Specific Purposes (esp)	8	0.94%
	English as a Foreign Language (efl)	6	0.16%
	English Language Teaching (elt)	7	.64%
	global Englishes	2	.69%

Rank	Keywords	Occurrence	Percentage
	perceptions	2	.69%
	English as a Lingua Franca (elf)	0	.91%
	Covid-19		.52%
	conversation analysis (ca)		.13%
	content and language integrated learning (clil)		.73%
0	speaking skills		.73%
1	teacher education program		.73%
2	teaching practices		.95%
3	computer assisted language learning (call)		.95%
4	flipped classrooms		.95%
5	systemic functional linguistics (sfl)		.95%
6	collocations		.56%
7	gamification		.56%
8	English as a Second Language (esl)		.56%
9	English for Academic Purposes (eap)		.56%
0	Teaching English as a Foreign Language (tefl)		.56%

The most frequently explored keyword by scholars in the field of ELT in Thailand was "English for Specific Purposes (ESP)," with 28 occurrences, accounting for 10.94%. This was followed by "English as a Foreign Language (EFL)" with 26 occurrences, or 10.16%, and "English Language Teaching (ELT)" with 17 occurrences, making up 6.64%. The next top keywords were "global Englishes" and "perceptions," each with 12 occurrences (4.69%), and "English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)" with 10 occurrences (3.91%). Keywords occurring fewer than 10 times included "Covid-19," "conversation analysis (CA)," "content and language integrated learning (CLIL)," "speaking skills," "teacher education program," "teaching practices," "computer-assisted language learning (CALL)," "flipped classrooms," "Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)," "collocations," "gamification," "English as a Second Language (ESL)," "English for Academic Purposes (EAP)," and "Teaching

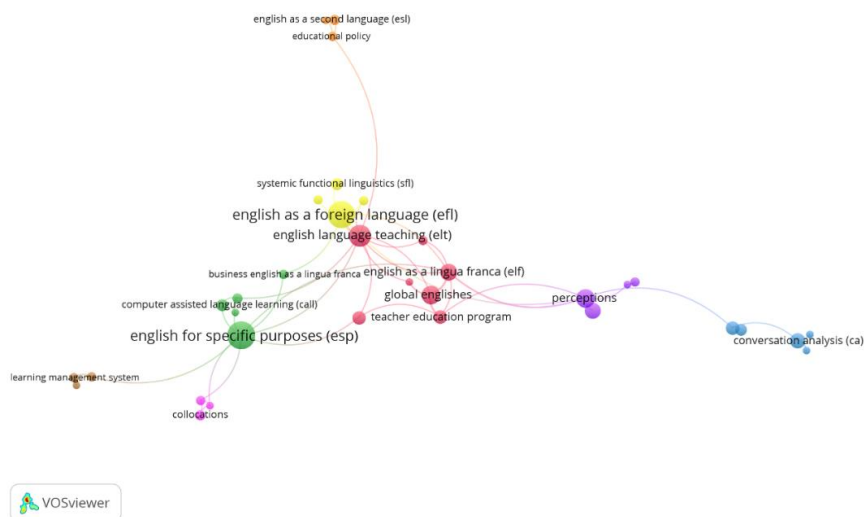
English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)." The frequency gap among these less common keywords is relatively small.

Network Visualization

According to Van Eck and Waltman (2023), a cluster is a group of objects shown on a map. Two clusters in VOSviewer do not overlap. Stated differently, an object can be a part of only one cluster. As seen in Figure 5, the keywords were methodically divided into eight clusters. Each cluster represents a different research topic and is distinguished by a different color.

Figure 5

Co-Occurrence Network of Author Keywords (Occurrence Threshold ≥ 2)



The largest cluster, depicted in red, comprised seven keywords, including “English Language Teaching (elt),” “global Englishes,” “content and language integrated learning (clil),” and “massive open online course (mooc),” emphasizing the central theme of research as Innovative ELT practices. The green cluster, consisting of five keywords such as “English for Specific Purposes (esp),” “computer assisted language learning (call),” and “English for Academic Purposes (eap),” centered on Specialized Language Learning Approaches. The blue cluster, characterized by keywords like “conversation analysis (ca),” “speaking skills,” and “flipped classrooms,” converged on the subject of Analytical Perspectives in Language Education. The yellow cluster, containing keywords such as “English as a Foreign Language (efl),” “systemic functional linguistics (sfl),” and “technologies,” pertained to the theme of

EFL Methodologies and Technology Integration. In the purple cluster, the primary focus was on Perception and Research Methodologies in EFL classrooms, consisting of keywords such as “perceptions,” “Covid-19,” and “mixed-methods.” The pink cluster, including “corpus-driven approach,” and “collocations” gathered around the topic of Lexical Analysis and Corpus Studies. The orange cluster, characterized by keywords like “English as a Second Language (esl), “educational policy,” and “Thailand education” dedicated to ESL Policies and Educational Context. Lastly, the brown cluster suggested the theme of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning as evidenced by the inclusion of keywords like “learning management system,” “Moodle mobile,” and “virtual learning environments.” The cluster details are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Cluster of Keywords Occurring More Than Twice

No.	Keywords	Occurrence
	Cluster 1 Innovative ELT Practices	
	English language teaching (elt)	7
	global Englishes	2
	English as a Lingua Franca (elf)	0
	content and language integrated learning (clil)	
	teacher education program	
	English medium instruction	
	massive open online course (mooc)	
	Cluster 2 Specialized Language Learning Approaches	
	English for Specific Purposes (esp)	8
	computer assisted language learning (call)	
	English for Academic Purposes (eap)	
0	business English as a Lingua Franca	
1	academic word list (awl)	
2		
	Cluster 3 Analytical Perspectives in Language Education	
	conversation analysis (ca)	
3	speaking skills	
4		

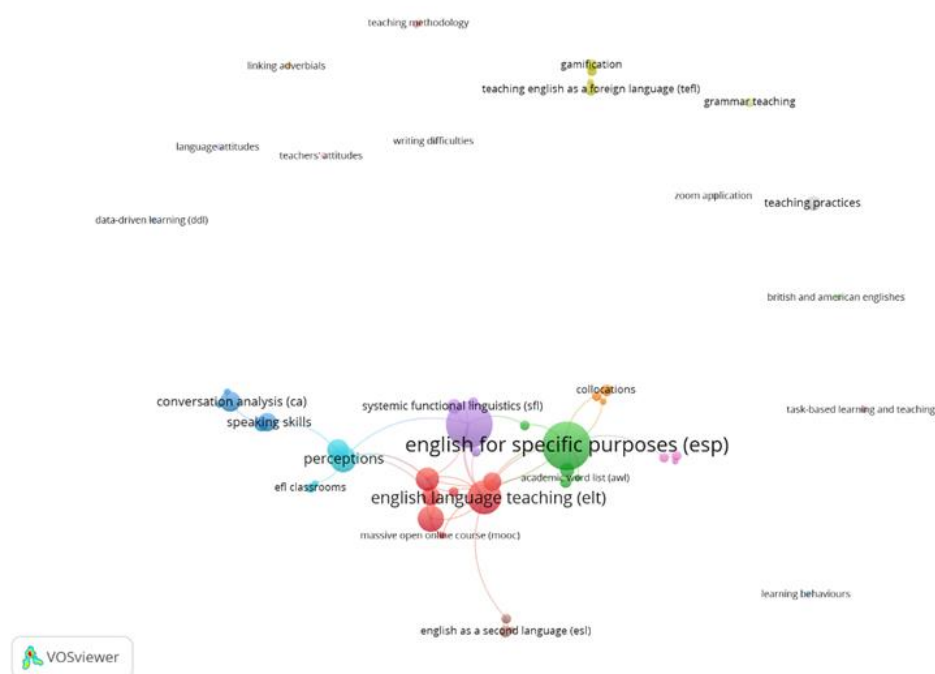
No.	Keywords	Occurrence
5	flipped classrooms	
6	autonomous learning process	
7	ca-informed language instruction	
Cluster 4 EFL Methodologies and Technology Integration		
8	English as a Foreign Language (efl)	6
9	systemic functional linguistics (sfl)	
0	materials development	
1	technologies	
Cluster 5 Perception and Research Methodologies in EFL classrooms		
2	perceptions	2
3	Covid-19	
4	efl classrooms	3
5	mixed-methods	
Cluster 6 Lexical Analysis and Corpus Studies		
6	collocations	
7	corpus-driven approach	
8	corpus-based approach	
Cluster 7 ESL Policies and Educational Context		
9	English as a Second Language (esl)	
0	educational policy	
4	Thailand education	
Cluster 8 Technology-Enhanced Language Learning		
32	learning management system	
3	Moodle mobile	
34	virtual learning environments	

Regarding the network visualization presented in Figure 6, 17 keywords (e.g., teaching practices, gamification, game-based English language learning, data-driven learning (ddl)) were identified with no connections to

each other. Subsequently, these keywords were excluded from further analysis.

Figure 6

Co-Occurrence Network of Author Keywords (Occurrence Threshold ≥ 2) Showing 17 Cut-Off Keywords



According to Van Eck and Waltman (2023), the distance between two journals in a visualization reflects their relatedness; journals that are closer to each other are more strongly related. As shown in Figure 6, 17 keywords are clearly located far from one another and have large distances between them. Therefore, the researchers decided to exclude these 17 keywords due to their minimal correlation with one another. However, it is worth noting that some of these excluded keywords appeared more than twice, and some 4-5 times, when compared to the more frequently used keywords listed by scholars in the field of ELT in Thailand in Table 1. Consequently, future researchers should consider these excluded keywords, as they may become relevant for identifying potential future trends.

Research Methodologies

Understanding the research methodologies frequently employed in the ELT field in Thailand contributes significantly to methodological rigor, innovation, collaboration, and relevance, ultimately enhancing the quality and impact of research in this domain. To obtain insightful answers, the researchers collected responses from article abstracts and the Research Methodology section, utilizing Microsoft Excel for automated data counting, which was cross-verified through manual counting. Table 3 delineates the commonly utilized research methodologies by scholars in the ELT field in Thailand.

Table 3

Research Methods in the Field of ELT in Thailand

Method	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	Percentage
Quantitative	3	1	7	6	4	4	3	6	5	10	5	10	1	18	2	85	19.86%
Qualitative	4	6	7	4	4	3	2	6	11	12	22	27	35	30	7	180	42.06%
Mixed-methods	3	4	4	2	1	4	4	6	20	10	16	23	31	31	4	163	38.08%
Total	10	11	18	12	9	11	9	18	36	32	43	60	67	79	13	428	100.00%

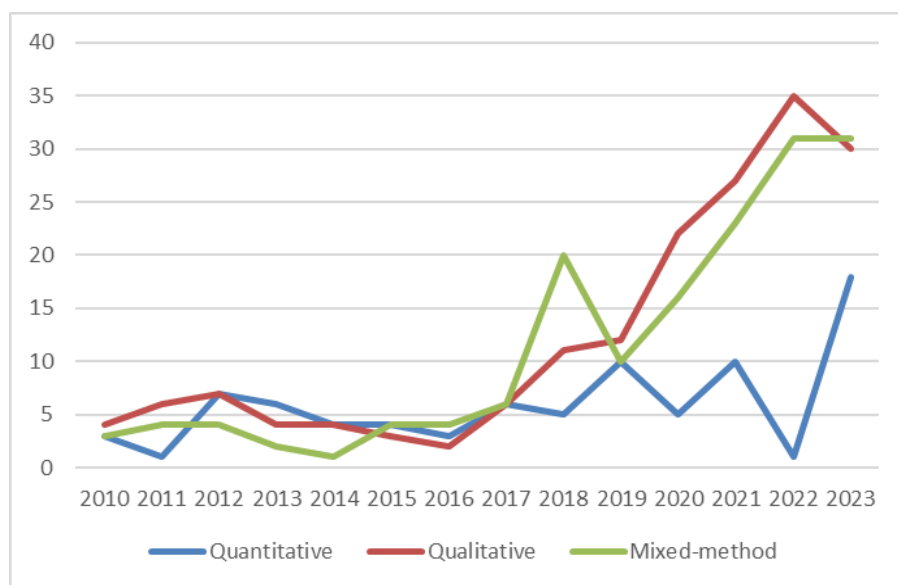
Table 3 shows that the qualitative method is the most popular method for scholars in ELT research in Thailand, with 180 (42.06%). Mixed-methods are next, with 163 (38.08%), and the least popular method is the quantitative method, with 85 (19.86%).

These findings suggest a notable preference among scholars in the ELT field in Thailand for qualitative and mixed-method approaches over purely quantitative methods. The prominence of qualitative methodologies, comprising 42.06% of the studies, indicates a strong emphasis on in-depth exploration, understanding, and interpretation of ELT phenomena. Similarly, the popularity of mixed-methods, representing 38.08% of the studies, highlights the value placed on combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of research topics. The lower representation of purely quantitative methods at 19.86% reflects a nuanced approach to research, balancing quantitative data collection with qualitative contextualization and analysis.

A particularly intriguing finding from the results is the clear shift in research methodology trends among Thai ELT studies published in the SCOPUS database. From 2020 onward, there has been a notable transition from predominantly quantitative methods to a greater emphasis on qualitative and mixed-method approaches. This trend is vividly illustrated in Figure 7, which illustrates a significant increase in the adoption of qualitative and mixed-methods. This shift underscores the growing recognition of the importance of the qualitative approach in the field of ELT in Thailand. Notably, in 2023, qualitative and mixed-method approaches were nearly equally popular, with mixed-methods particularly prominent.

Figure 7

Increase in Qualitative and Mixed-Method Approaches in Thai ELT Research



Research Contexts

In response to the third question, the researchers used Microsoft Excel to handle data downloaded from the SCOPUS database and then manually and partially automatically counted the data. The results are presented from two perspectives: participants involved in the research and contexts in which the research was conducted.

Research Participants

Based on Ma and Kim (2014), as cited in Phoocharoensil (2022), the results indicated that there are four primary groups of research participants who have contributed to the field of ELT research and have had their work published in Thai journals indexed in Scopus. The first group, the lecturers' group, comprises lecturers, teachers, and tutors. The second group, the learners' group, includes learners and students. The third group, the stakeholders' group, comprises stakeholders related to the research topics in the dataset and were included as research participants, such as engineers, pharmacists, and employers in the logistics industry. The stakeholders' group encompasses individuals such as massage shop customers, airline business customers, and other members of the general public. The fourth category, the non-human textual entities group, comprises the data or materials central to the research focus. Table 4 shows the research participants in the field of ELT in Thailand based on the SCOPUS database from 2010 to April 6, 2024.

Table 4

Research Participants' Contexts in the Field of ELT in Thailand

Participant	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	Percentage
Lecturers	5	3	2	3	4	2	1	5	10	9	16	23	22	22	2	129	26.82%
Learners	5	6	9	9	5	9	9	13	20	17	23	26	34	46	7	238	49.48%
Stakeholders	1	1	4		1			1	3	1	4	3	6	5		30	6.24%
Textual entities		1	5	1		1		3	5	7	8	12	19	17	5	84	17.46%
Total	11	11	20	13	10	12	10	22	38	34	51	64	81	90	14	481	100.00%

Table 4 reveals that around 49.48% (238 studies) of the research gathered data from the learners' group, with the lecturers' group contributing 129 studies (26.82%). The textual entities category was the next most commonly utilized, comprising 84 studies (17.46%), while the stakeholders' group was the least frequently represented, appearing in only 30 studies (6.24%).

These findings highlight the significant involvement of learners as research participants in the field of ELT in Thailand, with nearly half of the studies (49.48%) focusing on this group. This emphasis on learners reflects a growing interest in understanding their perspectives, experiences, and needs

within ELT research. Furthermore, the substantial representation of lecturers (26.82%) underscores the importance of educators' insights and contributions to the field. While the text group and stakeholders' group have lower percentages, they still play vital roles in providing valuable data and perspectives for ELT research. Overall, these results shed light on the diverse range of research participants and their contributions to advancing knowledge in ELT within the Thai context.

Contexts in which the Research was Conducted

Based on the characteristics of the selected studies regarding context and research design, the researchers categorized the context of the studies into seven groups: higher education, secondary, primary, general academic institutes, non-academic, and not clearly stated. Within the higher education category, the subcategories include undergraduate, graduate, bachelor's degree, and master's degree. General academic institutes include tutor institutes. The non-academic group encompasses areas such as social media, the pharmaceutical industry, the logistics industry, the tourism industry, etc. The "not clearly stated" category comprises studies that did not specify the education level clearly, and those stating "all levels" are also included in this group.

Table 5

Research Education Level Contexts in the Field of ELT in Thailand

Context	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	Percentage
Higher Education	7	8	6	9	6	10	8	11	21	18	25	37	37	49	4	256	58.58%
Secondary	1	2	1	1	2				4	4	5	4	7	7	4	42	9.61%
Primary	1	2	4	1			1	3	3	2	2	1	1	3		24	5.49%
Non-Academic				3	1			1	2	1	3	2	4	4		21	4.81%
General Academic Institutes										1		1				2	0.46%
Not Clearly Stated	1	1	6	1		1		3	6	6	8	15	21	18	5	92	21.05%
Total	10	13	20	12	9	11	9	18	36	32	43	60	70	81	13	437	100.00%

Table 5 unveils the predominant contexts employed by ELT researchers in Thailand. The most prevalent context is higher education, accounting for 58.58% (256 studies), followed by the secondary context with

42 studies (9.61%). Subsequently, the primary context emerges as the next most commonly utilized, representing 24 studies (5.49%). Following closely are the non-academic context with 4.81% (21 studies) and the general academic institute context with 0.46% (2 studies).

These findings provide valuable insights into the research landscape of the ELT field in Thailand, highlighting the diverse range of contexts explored by scholars. The significant emphasis on higher education contexts, comprising over half of the studies (58.58%), reflects a strong interest in investigating ELT practices and challenges within tertiary educational settings. This focus on higher education aligns with the growing importance of English language proficiency in academic and professional contexts. Additionally, the presence of secondary (9.61%) underscores the attention given to ELT issues in secondary education, including language learning strategies, curriculum design, and pedagogical approaches tailored to adolescent learners. The lower representation of primary contexts (5.49%), non-academic contexts (4.81%), and general academic institutes contexts (0.46%) suggests that while these areas are explored in ELT research in Thailand, they may not be as extensively studied compared to higher education and secondary contexts.

Table 6

Top 10 Publication Outlets for Scholars in the Field of ELT in Thailand

Rank	Publication	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total	Percentage
1	LEARN Journal										3	11	10	5	14	5	48	11.21%
2	rEFLections										4	2	5	3	7		21	4.91%
3	3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature			1	1			2	3	1			3	3	3		17	3.97%
4	PASAA									4	1		4	2	2		13	3.04%
5	RELIC Journal		1					1		2			1	4	3		12	2.80%
6	IJAL			1	1				1	2	1	2	1	1	1		11	2.57%
7	Asian EFL Journal			1		1			1	4	2	1					10	2.34%
8	ELT Journal			1	5	1	3										10	2.34%
9	Asian Englishes											2	2	2	2		8	1.87%
10	JIRSEA			1	1			1	1	1				3			8	1.87%

Primary Publication Outlets Among Thai ELT Scholars

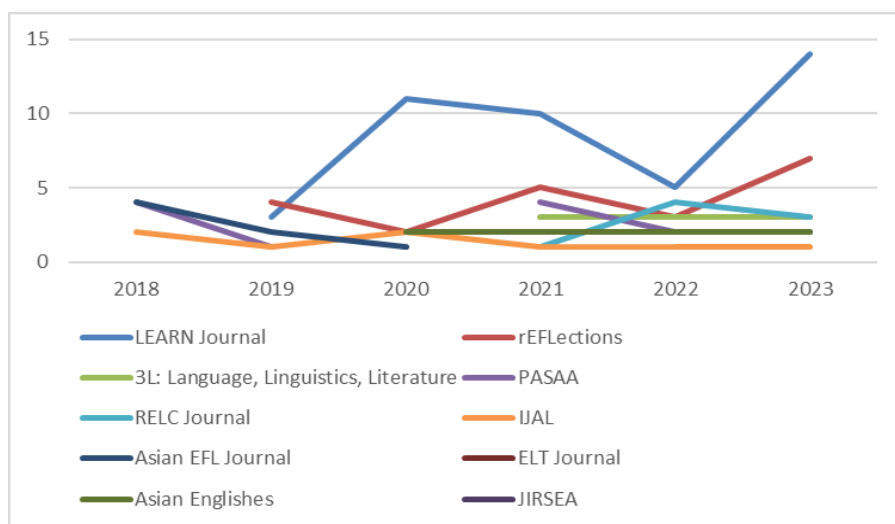
The dataset for this research consists of 428 documents published in 164 journals (from 2010 to 6 April 2024) indexed in the SCOPUS database. Among these journals, LEARN Journal had the highest number of publications with 48 (11.21%), followed by rEFLections with 21 (4.91%), and 3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature with 17 (3.97%).

It can be seen in Table 6 that the LEARN Journal is the most popular publication outlet for scholars in the field of ELT in Thailand compared to other publications indexed in the SCOPUS database. LEARN started in 2019 and has continued to be indexed, with the most recent update occurring in the first quarter of 2024. Similarly, rEFLections also began publishing in 2019 and remains indexed in the database. Among the top 10 publication outlets mentioned above, the RELC Journal has been the first to publish ELT research since 2011 and has continued publishing research until 2023.

The findings underline the significant interest in LEARN as the leading publication outlet among Thai EFL researchers. Remarkably, within just one year of its first appearance in the SCOPUS database, LEARN has consistently secured the top position for publishing Thai EFL research, as illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8

LEARN's Rise as the Top Publication Outlet for Thai EFL Researchers



Conclusion and Discussion

The research findings shed light on the prevalent themes within ELT research in Thailand. Fourteen years of bibliometric data indicated that, apart from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English Language Teaching (ELT), the commonly researched keywords encompass English for Specific Purposes (ESP), global Englishes, perceptions, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Covid-19, and conversation analysis (CA). This diversity in research topics reflects the multifaceted nature of ELT in Thailand, which seeks to address both global trends and local needs. Qualitative methods were favored in research methodologies, emphasizing in-depth exploration through interviews and case studies. Mixed-methods were also utilized to combine quantitative and qualitative insights. The primary research context was higher education, followed by the secondary and primary. LEARN Journal was the top publication outlet. The research findings are essential for designing effective research and policies that align with the needs and expectations of the community. In other words, the findings highlight the importance of preparing future educators and researchers who will continue to contribute to the field of ELT. They might help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that ELT practices are grounded in real-world experiences and viewpoints. Furthermore, knowing the top publication outlet helps researchers make appropriate publication choices; publishing in recognized journals enhances the visibility and impact of research findings, contributing to the ongoing development of the field. In summary, the significance of this research lies in its comprehensive examination of ELT trends in Thailand. By exploring a broad range of themes and employing diverse methodologies, this research contributes to a nuanced and holistic understanding of ELT. It not only addresses immediate practical concerns but also engages with broader theoretical debates. This research also provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers, guiding future directions in ELT research and enhancing the effectiveness of language teaching in Thailand.

Prevalent Research Topics

The results of this study indicate that the top three prevalent topics predominantly revolve around second/foreign language acquisition and instruction, in alignment with Phoocharoensil (2022), where the most prevalent research area was “second/foreign language learning and teaching” (44.98%), encompassing various language proficiency skills. However, an intriguing disparity emerged between these two studies. Specifically, “English

for Specific Purposes (ESP)” was identified as the least explored topic (1.67%) in the previous research, yet it emerged as the most studied topic in the present study, at 10.94%.

Another noteworthy observation regarding emerging topics is the inclusion of “world Englishes” categorized under the “Culture/Identity” area in the previous research of Thumvichit (2020), ranking at approximately 5.4% among their research themes. This aligns with the present study's findings, where “global Englishes” garnered 4.69% popularity, securing the fourth position in terms of research focus. This demonstrates that scholars maintain a consistent level of interest in the study of “global English” or “world Englishes,” indicating a sustained scholarly focus on these topics over time.

Furthermore, an intriguing trend regarding instructional materials is evident. While the instructional materials area accounted for only 1.4% of the previous research by Thumvichit (2020), it gained increased prominence in the present study. This is reflected in the emphasis on topics such as “content and language integrated learning (CLIL)” ranking at 9 with 2.73%, “computer-assisted language learning (CALL)” at 13 with 1.95%, and “flipped classrooms” at 14 with 1.95%. These three examples alone of instructional materials in the present study have a combined total of 6.63%. These results indicate that researchers are paying more attention to instructional materials to improve teaching efficacy and foster successful learning outcomes (Luangangoon, 2017; Pitak-Arnnop et al., 2012; Suranakkharin, 2017).

It should be noted that the researchers in the current study acknowledge that the distinctions between the present study's findings and other previous studies may not solely stem from a shift in ELT research trends over time. These variations could arise from differences in data size, data sources, databases, timeframes, and analysis methodology.

Dominant Research Methodology

The findings of the current study suggest that the qualitative method is the most commonly used approach (180 studies, 42.06%) by Thai ELT scholars whose research has been accepted for publication in SCOPUS-indexed journals. This trend mirrors findings in Ngoc and Barrot's study (2022), which noted that nearly half of their research investigations utilized a qualitative methodology (42.9%), while the remaining studies employed quantitative and mixed-method approaches. The notable difference lies in the second most favored method in the current study, which is a mixed-method approach, followed by the quantitative method as the least utilized. This contrasts with Ngoc and Barrot's study (2022), where the quantitative method ranked second, and the mixed-method approach was less popular.

These variations suggest that researchers are adopting a discerning approach, not only gathering data but also examining the broader context and delving into detailed analyses. However, the results from this study, based on a dataset sourced from the SCOPUS database spanning from 2010 to April 6, 2024, covering a 15-year period, diverge from the study of Phoocharoensil (2022), which focused on three Thai journals, namely PASAA, LEARN (in 2019), and rEFlections (in 2020), revealing that quantitative research designs were predominant in ELT, followed by qualitative research as the second most utilized method. Likewise, Jaroongkhongdach (2014) analyzed data from the ThaiLis Digital Collection to gather master's theses from seven Thai universities in ELT from 2003 to 2011, reporting that most theses used a quantitative research design (61.34%).

The aforementioned findings regarding research methodology suggest that the preferences of Thai ELT researchers may evolve over time. Although certain methods may experience periods of temporary popularity, the prevailing trend among ELT researchers appears to favor qualitative methodologies over extended periods. Moreover, the discrepancy between the present study and earlier research (e.g., Jaroongkhongdach, 2014; Phoocharoensil, 2022), which drew from different data sources (Thai and international journals), indicates a potential shift in methodological preferences. This may be influenced by the acceptance standards of SCOPUS-indexed international journals, which tend to prioritize qualitative research. Essentially, studies utilizing qualitative approaches seem to have a greater chance of being published in SCOPUS-indexed international journals.

Common Research Contexts

The study's findings regarding participants of the dataset reveal that the learners' participant group constituted the most common area of study at 49.48% (238 studies), resembling the results of Phoocharoensil (2022), which reported 62.5% (120 studies) collected data from learners/students. However, a notable divergence is evident in the second most favored participant group in the present study, which comprises the text group, followed by the lecturers' group, consisting of lecturers, teachers, and tutors, as the least popular. This differs from Phoocharoensil, where the lecturers' group ranked second, and the text group was less favored.

Regarding the education level context, the findings reveal that higher education was the most prevalent context at 58.58% (256 studies), consistent with the results reported by Ngoc and Barrot (2022), where nearly half of the studies were conducted within the higher education context (44.6%). Similarly, Phoocharoensil (2022) confirmed the highest popularity among undergraduate students, with 72 studies (37.5%). In line with these findings,

Jaroongkhongdach (2014) also highlights this trend, indicating that the undergraduate level was the most frequently examined context, with 40 studies (25.64%). These findings suggest a consistent preference for higher education contexts, particularly at the undergraduate level, among researchers in the ELT field, regardless of the timeframe.

Primary Publication Outlets

The bibliometric data from 2010-2024 reveals that LEARN Journal was the primary publication outlet for ELT researchers in Thailand, with 48 studies (11.21%). This aligns with the results of Phoocharoensil (2022), which also identified the LEARN Journal as the most commonly utilized outlet, accounting for 94 studies (52.22%) in their dataset. The consistency between Phoocharoensil's findings and those of the current research highlights the significant role of the LEARN Journal as a preferred publication venue for ELT researchers in Thailand.

The discussion section describes the similarities and differences between the current research findings and those of other relevant studies. Readers may observe that the results of the current study differ in several aspects from the previous one. It is important to note that these differences could be attributed to variations in data size and sources, as well as the advantages of current bibliographic data processing technologies, such as VOSviewer 1.6.19, in handling large datasets. Therefore, future researchers aiming to uncover trends in specific academic fields might benefit from employing a similar approach. In particular, bibliometric studies remain relatively rare in Thailand. Utilizing big data methods may reveal different trends compared to previous research that relied on more traditional, labor-intensive methods.

Limitations and Recommendations

Despite the meticulous procedures adopted in conducting this study and the comprehensive quantitative analysis presented, several limitations should be acknowledged, along with recommendations for future research. The first limitation pertains to the selection of the SCOPUS database as the sole data source. While Scopus is recognized as the largest and most diverse database with broad coverage across various disciplines, it may not encompass all relevant documents in this specific field. Consequently, certain crucial documents may have been excluded, potentially influencing the study's findings. Additionally, the results may not fully represent Thai scholars in general, as some may have their research published in other journals. Future

studies should consider incorporating data from additional sources, such as Web of Science, PubMed, ERIC, etc.

The second limitation concerns the criteria used in data screening. The search criteria in this study were exclusively focused on the keyword "ELT" and its synonymous terms, as outlined by Future Learn (2017). This scope is specifically delimited to the English language and its association with Thailand. Future research endeavors should expand the scope by incorporating additional keywords related to English language focus, such as English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an Additional Language (EAL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English as a medium language. This broader perspective would enable the development of more comprehensive courses tailored for successful learners.

Lastly, the final limitation is the absence of qualitative analysis in this study. Including qualitative approaches, such as qualitative content analysis and meta-analysis of the dataset, would yield more nuanced and insightful results.

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