



Bridging Teacher Competence and Efficacy in EMI: Evidence from Thai EMI Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study examines teacher competence and teacher efficacy in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and explores the relationship between these constructs in a Thai school context. Data were collected from 83 Thai EFL teachers in the EMI context using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation. The results indicate that teachers reported a high level of competence ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.79$), encompassing pedagogical, language-related, assessment, and inclusive practices, but only a moderate level of efficacy ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.93$), revealing a gap between perceived ability and confidence in practice. A strong and statistically significant positive relationship was found between competence and efficacy ($r = .818$, $p < .01$), suggesting that competence serves as an important foundation for teachers’ efficacy in EMI. However, the moderate level of efficacy highlights the influence of linguistic and contextual factors, particularly teachers’ self-perceived English proficiency. The findings also indicate that teacher competence and teacher efficacy in EMI extend beyond general pedagogy and involve linguistic, interactional, and translanguaging-

	related aspects of classroom practice. Furthermore, the results suggest that teacher competence and teacher efficacy in EMI are closely intertwined, highlighting the need for more context-sensitive conceptualizations of EMI teaching. Keywords: English-Medium Instruction (EMI), teacher competence, teacher efficacy, EFL teachers, quality education
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Introduction

Teacher competence and teacher efficacy are closely interconnected, and both significantly influence teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Vallente, 2025). There has been rapid growth of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in non-English-speaking academic settings in recent years, placing a demand on teachers who are required to teach subject content through English (Dearden, 2014; Macaro et al., 2018). Within EMI settings, teaching goes beyond general instructional skills, as teachers must combine language proficiency, pedagogical expertise, and intercultural awareness while managing multilingual and multimodal classroom environments (Airey, 2024; Tang & Trent, 2026). In many cases, teachers are also required to implement EMI without adequate institutional support or specialized training (Airey, 2024; Dearden, 2014; Macaro et al., 2018). As a result, teaching through EMI has become more complex, especially in linguistically demanding contexts where teachers must handle both subject content and linguistic challenges.

Recent studies have demonstrated that professional competence can strongly predict teacher efficacy, reinforcing teachers' confidence in providing instruction and managing classrooms effectively. Subsequently, teacher efficacy influences teaching quality and teachers' commitment to their profession (Kim, 2019). Teacher competence and teacher efficacy together significantly contribute to student academic success, particularly by enhancing student learning motivation (Safitri et al., 2025; Wang, 2021). However, EMI settings involve additional linguistic, pedagogical, and contextual complexities, including the need to integrate subject content with language support, manage multilingual classrooms, and adapt instruction across different disciplines and educational levels (Airey, 2024; Dearden, 2014; Khamkhien, 2025; Tang & Trent, 2026).

Although previous studies (e.g., Kim, 2019; Safitri et al., 2025; Vallente, 2025; Wang, 2021) have examined the links between teacher competence, efficacy, and student outcomes in general contexts, little attention has been given to how EMI-specific competence relates to teacher efficacy in school-based multilingual EFL contexts with teachers of varying proficiency levels. In addition, although EMI research has widely explored

classroom challenges, teacher preparedness, and language-related issues, it has also focused mainly on higher education, with less attention paid to primary and secondary contexts across different subjects. Furthermore, discussions of EMI competence and efficacy have often emphasized general pedagogy while overlooking EMI-specific dimensions such as language use, interaction, and translanguaging. As a result, the relationship between teacher competence and efficacy in school-based EMI contexts remains insufficiently understood.

Therefore, this study examines the levels of teacher competence and teacher efficacy in EMI and explores the relationship between them among Thai teachers implementing EMI in school contexts. It extends current discussions beyond general educational settings by focusing on EMI-specific linguistic, interactional, and translanguaging dimensions in multilingual EFL classrooms. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) What is the level of competence in EMI among Thai school teachers implementing EMI?
- 2) What is the level of efficacy in EMI among Thai school teachers implementing EMI?
- 3) What is the relationship between competence and efficacy in EMI among Thai school teachers implementing EMI?

Literature Review

In the EMI context, teacher communicative competence in English is a prerequisite; however, effective EMI teachers must possess broader practical understanding and proficiency. This review examines interconnected areas that establish a comprehensive framework for EMI teacher competence and efficacy: disciplinary literacy, pedagogical competence, intercultural and inclusive competence, assessment literacy, classroom management, technology integration in EMI settings, and reflective practice and professional development.

This study treats EMI teacher competence as a construct comprising the knowledge and skills required to facilitate both content and language learning in multilingual classrooms. Drawing on prior EMI research, the study focuses on the linguistic, pedagogical, assessment, and interactional competencies typically linked to EMI teaching (Airey, 2024; Macaro et al., 2018). In contrast, teacher efficacy refers to teachers' perceived confidence in applying these competencies in linguistically demanding classrooms (Tsui, 2018; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The dimensions examined here are not intended to represent a validated EMI-specific framework, but rather conceptually relevant areas drawn from prior EMI research that may shape teachers' experiences and perceptions in Thai school-based EMI contexts.

Teacher Competence in EMI

In non-Anglophone contexts where English is used to teach different subjects, the rapid global expansion of EMI has become a significant educational phenomenon (Curle et al., 2024; Dearden, 2014). This swift expansion signifies the important implications of teacher competence, which is considered a complex and multifaceted concept incorporating linguistic, pedagogical, disciplinary, and sociocultural competence. EMI educators are required to integrate both subject content and language while handling demanding and complex institutional, linguistic and ideological matters.

Disciplinary Literacy

According to Airey (2024), EMI teacher competence is the integration of content and language knowledge, known as disciplinary literacy. EMI teachers are expected to demonstrate high levels of subject expertise and, at the same time, effectively communicate knowledge constructed and taught through English (Dearden, 2014). The scope encompasses more than general language proficiency. It includes the ability to scaffold thinking, reading, and communicating across disciplines, and considers language an integral part of meaning-making rather than an individual skill (Airey, 2024; McKinley, 2025). Further empirical research shows that academic English literacy has a substantial impact on learning outcomes despite other factors such as prior knowledge and learning experience (Aizawa et al., 2025).

As opposed to conforming to monolingual norms, translanguaging serves as scaffolding for cognitive and social learning, and allows students to explain concepts, negotiate meanings, and link previous knowledge with novel disciplinary content (Ashari et al., 2025). With students' mixed levels of English proficiency, EMI teachers must modify their teaching strategies, including simplified language, explicit instruction of key terminology, and multimodal resources, to increase students' comprehension. Accordingly, to create effective EMI practices, translanguaging acts as a flexible language strategy enabling students to leverage their entire linguistic background to help their comprehension and to construct meaning (Ashari et al., 2025; Gu et al., 2022, 2025). Gu et al. (2025) also mention that, in STEM classrooms with multilingual learners, translanguaging strategies can help teachers to visualize abstract concepts, localize subject content, and support the collaborative construction of meaning.

Additionally, translanguaging practices can serve as a form of pedagogical resistance to rigid English-only policies, promoting more inclusive and equitable learning environments (Rauteda & Luitel, 2025). Although translanguaging offers several benefits, its implementation is

restricted by institutions and teacher beliefs, emphasizing the importance of pedagogical support and policy alignment (Macaro, 2024).

Pedagogical Competence

The ability to create and apply teaching strategies that reinforce both subject content and linguistic development is involved in EMI pedagogical competence. In contrast to conventional ways of teaching content, EMI demands that teachers create more interactive, student-centered approaches that scaffold understanding and promote engagement among linguistically diverse learners (Gu et al., 2022; Hoang & Tran, 2022; Khamkhien, 2025; Tang & Trent, 2026). However, as mentioned in the recent study by Bedeker and Kerimkulova (2025), teachers often experience difficulties balancing the delivery of disciplinary knowledge with facilitating active learning, particularly when students' English proficiency levels are diverse. In EMI contexts, this is further intensified by the lack of pedagogical training and institutional support (Dearden, 2014; Bedeker & Kerimkulova, 2025).

In Thailand's educational setting, how Thai teachers implement EMI in the classroom is greatly influenced by their beliefs, contextual constraints, and students' language proficiency (Khamkhien, 2025). To support students' comprehension and classroom participation, teachers frequently adjust their teaching methods by providing scaffolding, simplifying language, and drawing on students' first language. In addition, teaching methods vary from one subject to another, calling for different teaching approaches across disciplines (Tang & Trent, 2026). These findings highlight that EMI pedagogical competence is context-dependent and requires teachers to integrate content, language, and local realities in a flexible manner.

Intercultural and Inclusive Competence

Intercultural and inclusive competence is a key dimension of teacher competence in EMI, as classrooms are naturally multilingual and multicultural. As argued by Curle et al. (2024), the forces of globalization and internationalization that drive EMI settings demand that teachers navigate different linguistic backgrounds and cultural norms while ensuring students receive equitable access to education. Kurt and Bayyurt (2023) further contend that this requires a shift away from monolingual, native-speaker-centered perspectives toward inclusive approaches that acknowledge English as a lingua franca and value students' multilingual resources. Although EMI has the potential to increase students' intercultural competence through exposure to diverse viewpoints, Curle et al. (2024) observed that this benefit tends to remain implicit rather than being embedded in classroom practice.

Moreover, teachers report feeling inadequately equipped to manage linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms and express a need for stronger institutional as well as discipline-specific language support to help students engage effectively in EMI environments (Gallagher & Hopkyns, 2025; Tsai, 2025). In settings such as Thailand, where student language proficiency and cultural expectations differ considerably, Khamkhien (2025) emphasizes that inclusive practices, including flexible language use and sensitivity to local learning norms, are essential for promoting engagement and meaningful learning.

Assessment Literacy in EMI

According to Dearden (2014) and Inbar-Lourie (2022), assessment literacy is a crucial dimension of teacher competence in EMI, as it requires teachers to evaluate students' content knowledge while accounting for the influence of language proficiency. A significant issue in the EMI context is determining whether assessments should prioritize content mastery, language ability, or both, as students' performance may be affected by linguistic limitations rather than conceptual understanding (Custodio-Espinar & López-Hernández, 2023). As highlighted in Thippayacharoen et al. (2023) and Shahzadi and Ducasse (2022), this tension remains a core dilemma in EMI research, with ongoing debate over the role of language in content assessment.

Empirical evidence from the study of Thippayacharoen et al. (2023) suggests that, although EMI is not primarily intended to teach English, language assessment is often embedded in both formative and summative practices, reflecting the interconnected nature of language and content learning. However, many teachers lack formal training in EMI-specific assessment and tend to rely on conventional approaches that may not adequately address linguistic diversity (Li & Wu, 2025; Shahzadi & Ducasse, 2022). Inbar-Lourie (2022) and Thippayacharoen et al. (2023) both emphasize the critical need for developing more balanced and context-sensitive assessment practices, particularly through the use of formative assessment to support both content understanding and language development. These findings highlight that assessment literacy in EMI requires not only technical competence but also a critical awareness of how language shapes learning outcomes.

Classroom Management

As conceptualized by Macaro et al. (2018), classroom management in EMI classrooms extends beyond routine classroom management to the

creation of a linguistically supportive and inclusive learning environment that addresses the additional cognitive and communicative demands of studying through a second language. Lestari et al. (2024) and Liu and Yuan (2024) further indicate that effective classroom management in this context requires clear and structured instructional frameworks, explicit language-focused support, and positive teacher–student relationships to enhance engagement and reduce anxiety. Moreover, EMI classrooms are influenced by broader sociolinguistic and institutional contexts, placing teachers in the position to balance academic rigor with accessibility while adapting responsively to learners’ diverse linguistic needs (Hillman et al., 2023).

Technology Integration in EMI

Technology integration supports both content learning and language development in multilingual classrooms. Digital tools and interactive platforms enhance engagement and facilitate multimodal learning, making complex disciplinary concepts more accessible (Yan et al., 2023). Emerging technologies such as virtual reality further provide immersive learning experiences that can improve understanding and student outcomes (Li, 2026). Beyond engagement, Yan et al. (2023) argued that technology plays a valuable role in supporting students’ self-regulated learning by enabling them to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning through online resources and learning management systems, which is particularly beneficial in linguistically demanding EMI contexts. Gallagher and Hopkyns (2025) additionally note that technology also allows teachers to provide flexible and inclusive instruction while offering targeted language support to meet diverse learner needs. Despite these benefits, challenges such as unequal access to technology and varying levels of digital literacy remain, highlighting the need for context-sensitive implementation to maximize its effectiveness in EMI settings.

Reflective Practice and Professional Development

Reflective practice enables teachers to critically evaluate and adapt their teaching in response to the complex demands of integrating content and language. As noted in Farrell (2020), through reflection, teachers develop greater awareness of their instructional practices and students’ linguistic needs, allowing them to refine strategies and improve learning outcomes. Park et al. (2022) demonstrated that effective programs often incorporate reflective activities such as peer observation, mentoring, and collaborative learning, which have been shown to enhance teachers’ self-efficacy and instructional effectiveness. However, Pham (2025) cautions that constraints such as limited time and institutional support may restrict teachers’

engagement, highlighting the need for sustained and context-sensitive professional development in EMI contexts.

In summary, previous EMI research indicates that teacher competence in EMI extends well beyond pedagogical skill and involves the integration of linguistic, disciplinary, pedagogical, and interactional competencies needed to support learning in multilingual classrooms (Airey, 2024; Macaro et al., 2018). Although studies have addressed dimensions such as translanguaging, disciplinary literacy, assessment, and classroom interaction, these domains have been examined independently rather than in relation to teacher efficacy in EMI contexts. Linguistic and pedagogical competencies appear important in shaping teachers' confidence, since EMI instruction requires not only content delivery in English but also scaffolding, multilingual interaction management, and support for students with various levels of English proficiency (Tsui, 2018; Wang, 2021). The literature also highlights tensions around EMI teacher preparedness, including limited institutional support, uneven language proficiency, and different beliefs about translanguaging (Dearden, 2014; Khamkhien, 2025; Macaro, 2024). Together, these findings indicate that teacher competence and efficacy in EMI are closely connected and, at the same time, highly context-dependent. Nevertheless, few studies have explicitly examined how EMI-specific competencies relate to teacher efficacy in school-based multilingual EFL contexts. Further investigation is therefore needed to better understand the relationship between teacher competence and teacher efficacy in linguistically demanding EMI environments.

Teacher Efficacy in EMI

Grounded in Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory, teacher efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in their capability to successfully execute instructional tasks and influence student learning outcomes (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). As conceptualized by Tsui (2018), this construct encompasses teachers' confidence in managing classroom processes, applying appropriate teaching strategies, and supporting active learning engagement. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) also establish that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy tend to demonstrate greater persistence, stronger openness to innovative practices, and more effective teaching practices, which in turn positively impact student achievement and motivation. While this construct has been extensively studied in general educational contexts, its application to EMI requires further contextualization, as teaching in a second language introduces additional pedagogical and linguistic demands (Tsui, 2018).

As noted by Pham (2025), Tsui (2018), and Wang (2021), teacher efficacy in EMI settings goes beyond general instructional ability to confidence in conveying subject matter through English, coping with linguistic difficulties, and supporting multilingual classrooms. Empirical evidence indicates a strong positive relationship between classroom English proficiency and teaching self-efficacy, with the language used for classroom instruction and interaction shown to be a stronger and more effective predictor than general linguistic accuracy (Wang, 2021). Additionally, professional competence, including pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and classroom management, has been shown to significantly predict teacher efficacy, reinforcing teachers' confidence in implementing effective teaching strategies (Vallente, 2025).

Despite these strengths, Pham (2025) identifies several distinctive challenges in EMI contexts, including increased cognitive load, language-related anxiety, and diverse student proficiency levels. As also noted by Pham (2025), while teachers with lower efficacy are more likely to implement traditional teaching strategies and encounter difficulties in managing their classrooms and sustaining student engagement, those with stronger efficacy show greater resilience, adaptability, and use of innovative practices. Importantly, teacher efficacy in EMI is dynamically influenced by mastery experiences, collaborative peer learning, constructive feedback, and emotional well-being, which underline the importance of targeted professional development in strengthening both linguistic and pedagogical competencies (Pham, 2025).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative survey design with supplementary open-ended responses to explore Thai school teachers' perceived competence and efficacy in EMI contexts. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising both closed-ended and open-ended items to examine the levels of, and relationship between, teacher competence and teacher efficacy in EMI, while also providing contextual insights into teachers' experiences and perspectives in multilingual classroom settings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Participants

A total of 83 teachers from a private school in Bangkok that implements extensive EMI programs across multiple subjects participated in

this study. Purposive sampling was used to recruit teachers who were actively involved in delivering subject content through English within the school's EMI program. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants were teaching through EMI across primary and secondary levels at the time of data collection. All of the teachers used Thai as their first language and English as a foreign language. Most participants reported a beginner level of English proficiency (53.0%, $n = 44$), followed by intermediate proficiency (41.0%, $n = 34$). Only a small proportion indicated advanced (3.6%, $n = 3$) and near-native proficiency (2.4%, $n = 2$). As shown in Table 1, all participants were actively involved in delivering subject content in English across primary and secondary levels. The majority of participants were female (71.10%, $n = 59$), while 28.90% ($n = 24$) were male. Participants represented a wide range of ages and teaching experience. Most held a bachelor's degree (53.00%, $n = 44$), while 45.80% ($n = 38$) held a master's degree. In terms of teaching levels, the majority taught at the primary level (Grades 1–6), with a smaller proportion teaching at the secondary level. Regarding EMI experience, a substantial proportion of teachers had less than one year of experience (41.00%, $n = 34$), indicating that many participants were relatively new to EMI implementation. Teachers represented a diverse range of subject areas, reflecting the school's broad EMI curriculum.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Survey Participants ($n = 83$)

Demographic Information		n	%
1. Gender	Male	24	28.90
	Female	59	71.10
2. Age (years old)	21–25	12	14.50
	26–30	14	16.90
	31–35	12	14.50
	36–40	10	12.00
	41–45	15	18.10
	46–50	8	9.60
	51–55	5	6.00
	56 and above	7	8.40
3. Highest degree obtained	Bachelor's degree	44	53.0
	Master's degree	38	45.80
	Doctoral degree	1	1.20
4. Teaching level	Primary (Grades 1–3)	35	42.20
	Primary (Grades 4–6)	40	48.20
	Secondary (Grades 7–9)	7	8.40
	Secondary (Grades 10–12)	1	1.20
5. Experience in EMI (years)	Less than 1	34	41.00
	1–5	24	28.90

Demographic Information		n	%
6. Subject taught	6–10	6	7.20
	More than 10	19	22.90
	Chinese	6	7.20
	Computer	1	1.20
	Computational Thinking	2	2.40
	Developmental English	10	12.00
	Global Citizenship	1	1.20
	Home Economics	1	1.20
	Information Technology (IT)	2	2.40
	Mathematics	15	18.10
	Occupations	2	2.40
	Performing Arts	1	1.20
	Science	10	12.00
	Scouting	3	3.60
	Social Studies and History	10	12.00
	Technology	3	3.60
7. Perceived English proficiency	Thai Language	15	18.10
	Thai Music	1	1.20
	Beginner	44	53.00
	Intermediate	34	41.00
	Advanced	3	3.60
	Near-native	2	2.40

Research Instrument

Questionnaire

The instrument was developed based on aspects related to EMI discussed in previous literature and was intended to provide exploratory perspectives on teachers' perceived competence and efficacy in Thai school-based EMI contexts. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising three sections: demographic information, teacher competence in EMI, and teacher efficacy in EMI. The first section collected demographic data, including gender, age, educational background, teaching level, years of EMI experience, and subject taught. The second section initially comprised a 30-item scale developed from key constructs of teacher competence in EMI, covering pedagogical competence; content knowledge and explanatory ability; language-aware teaching; assessment literacy; intercultural and inclusive competence; reflective practice and professional development; digital/technological competence; and translanguaging or multilingual pedagogy. The third section measured teacher efficacy in EMI, adapted from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and contextualized to EMI-specific demands. The adapted 20-item scale initially included dimensions of English language proficiency, EMI pedagogy, assessment, translanguaging and linguistic flexibility, adaptive and co-learning, inclusive and language-

responsive teaching, professional development and beliefs, and interactional efficacy. All items in Sections 2 and 3 were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from very low to very high. In the last section of the questionnaire, there was an open-ended response item for teachers to further elaborate on their competence and efficacy in EMI settings.

The content validity of the instrument was evaluated using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) by three experts in the field. The results showed IOC values of 0.917 for the demographic section, 0.978 for the competence scale, and 0.967 for the efficacy scale. The overall IOC value was 0.954, indicating a high level of content validity, with all items considered relevant and appropriate for measuring the intended constructs. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha based on a try-out conducted with 14 teachers from the same school who were also involved in EMI. The competence scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .987$), and the efficacy scale also showed excellent reliability ($\alpha = .964$). Item reduction was conducted based on inter-item correlation analysis and item-total statistics. For teacher competence in EMI, items demonstrating very high inter-item correlations ($r > .90$), indicating redundancy, were carefully reviewed, and one item from each highly correlated pair was retained. In addition, items with relatively lower discrimination were considered for removal. A total of 8 items were removed, resulting in a final 22-item scale. The refined instrument maintained strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .985$). For teacher efficacy in EMI, items exhibiting very high inter-item correlations ($r > .90$), as well as items with relatively low correlations, were reviewed and removed. A total of 5 items were excluded, resulting in a final 15-item scale. The refined scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .959$).

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted during the first semester of the 2025 academic year. The questionnaire was made available in both hard-copy and Google Forms formats and distributed to participating teachers at the school through on-site coordination. However, the participants preferred to complete the hard-copy version. Prior to participation, they were provided with a brief explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights as participants, including voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participants were not required to provide any identifying information and were given the flexibility to complete the questionnaire at their convenience outside of class time. Completed questionnaires were returned to the researchers upon completion.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to examine responses in each section of the questionnaire. The levels of perceived competence and efficacy were interpreted based on the following criteria:

Range	Interpretation
4.21–5.00	Perceived at the very high level
3.41–4.20	Perceived at the high level
2.61–3.40	Perceived at the moderate level
1.81–2.60	Perceived at the low level
1.00–1.80	Perceived at the very low level

Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between teacher competence and teacher efficacy in EMI.

In addition to the quantitative results, content analysis was used to analyze the responses from the open-ended questions and identify the recurring themes related to EMI teaching practices and support for multilingual teaching environments. However, the qualitative responses related to teacher efficacy were insufficient to be separated into thematic categories.

Results

This section presents the results of the study based on the analysis of data collected from participants. The results are organized into three main parts: (1) teacher competence in EMI, (2) teacher efficacy in EMI, and (3) the relationship between teacher competence and teacher efficacy.

Teacher Competence in EMI

Table 2 presents the levels of teacher competence in EMI among the participants. Overall, teacher competence was perceived at a high level ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.79$). Most items were rated at a high level, indicating that teachers generally perceived themselves as competent in various aspects of EMI teaching. The highest-rated items included adapting teaching materials to enhance accessibility ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.06$), designing activities that promote active learning and student engagement ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.89$), and creating inclusive classroom environments ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.93$). These findings suggest strong perceived competence in pedagogical practices and inclusive teaching. However, a few areas were rated at a moderate level, including the use of scaffolding techniques ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.01$) and confidence in explaining complex concepts in English ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.07$). These results

indicate areas where further support or professional development may be beneficial. Furthermore, the findings suggest that while teachers demonstrate strong competence in EMI, certain language-related and instructional support strategies may require further development.

Table 2

Teacher Competence in EMI (n = 83)

No.	Competence in EMI	M	SD	Level
1.	I adapt my teaching materials to make them more accessible to students.	3.88	1.06	High
2.	I use scaffolding techniques to support students' language and content learning.	3.39	1.01	Moderate
3.	I employ a variety of teaching strategies to engage students in an EMI setting.	3.71	1.03	High
4.	I have a strong understanding of the subject matter I teach.	3.67	1.17	High
5.	I feel confident explaining complex concepts in English.	3.13	1.07	Moderate
6.	I can relate subject content to real-world examples in English.	3.71	1.07	High
7.	I incorporate language learning strategies into my content lessons.	3.69	1.04	High
8.	I design assessments that measure both content knowledge and language proficiency.	3.51	0.90	High
9.	I provide feedback that helps students improve their English language skills.	3.64	1.01	High
10.	I use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate student learning.	3.67	1.00	High
11.	I am aware of the cultural backgrounds of my students.	3.55	1.06	High
12.	I respect and integrate students' cultural perspectives into my teaching.	3.66	0.93	High
13.	I create an inclusive classroom environment for all students.	3.76	0.93	High
14.	I seek feedback from colleagues and students to improve my teaching.	3.63	0.95	High
15.	I engage in professional development to enhance my EMI teaching skills.	3.60	1.13	High
16.	I create lesson plans that integrate language and content objectives.	3.66	1.05	High
17.	I design activities that promote active learning and student engagement.	3.86	0.89	High
18.	I manage a multilingual classroom effectively.	3.66	0.97	High
19.	I promote an inclusive environment where all students feel supported.	3.75	0.95	High

No.	Competence in EMI	M	SD	Level
20.	I incorporate online resources to support students' understanding of content.	3.75	1.01	High
21.	I am proficient in using educational technology to facilitate EMI.	3.57	1.04	High
22.	I incorporate translanguaging (using multiple languages) in my EMI classroom to support student understanding and participation.	3.57	1.01	High
Total		3.64	0.79	High

Teacher Efficacy in EMI

According to Table 3, teacher efficacy was perceived at a moderate level ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.93$). The vast majority of items were rated within the moderate range, indicating that teachers perceived their efficacy in EMI as developing rather than fully established. The highest-rated items included engaging students in co-learning activities ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.04$), managing linguistic flexibility during instruction ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.14$), and fostering classroom interactions in English ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.08$). These findings suggest relatively stronger confidence in interactive and adaptive teaching practices. In contrast, lower-rated items included participation in academic discussions in English ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.07$), understanding spoken English in academic settings ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.08$), and implementing effective EMI strategies ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.13$). These results indicate that teachers may experience greater challenges in language-related and instructional aspects of EMI.

Table 3

Teacher Efficacy in EMI (n = 83)

No.	Efficacy in EMI	M	SD	Level
1.	I am able to understand spoken English in academic settings (e.g., lectures, seminars).	3.22	1.08	Moderate
2.	I am able to participate in academic discussions in English.	2.71	1.07	Moderate
3.	I am able to understand and use academic vocabulary specific to my field in English.	3.24	1.26	Moderate
4.	I am able to implement effective EMI strategies in my classroom.	3.10	1.13	Moderate
5.	I am able to evaluate student performance and understanding in an EMI context.	3.29	1.14	Moderate
6.	I am able to use translanguaging effectively in the classroom.	3.19	1.09	Moderate

No.	Efficacy in EMI	M	SD	Level
7.	I am able to switch roles between being a teacher and a learner to facilitate co-learning with my students.	3.37	1.04	Moderate
8.	I am able to incorporate multimodal resources (e.g., gestures, intonation, facial expressions, drawings) to enhance teaching and learning.	3.36	1.13	Moderate
9.	I am able to create and use hypothetical scenarios to explain complex concepts.	3.25	1.09	Moderate
10.	I am able to manage linguistic flexibility, such as switching between languages (e.g., English and Thai) during instruction.	3.40	1.14	Moderate
11.	I am able to address and support the diverse linguistic needs of my students in an EMI classroom.	3.27	1.01	Moderate
12.	I am able to integrate language instruction with subject content effectively, ensuring students understand both the language and the subject matter.	3.34	1.04	Moderate
13.	I am able to engage students in co-learning activities involving role-switching and collaborative knowledge-building.	3.52	1.04	High
14.	I am able to foster effective student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions in English.	3.40	1.08	Moderate
15.	I am able to implement EMI effectively in my classroom.	3.25	1.12	Moderate
Total		3.26	0.93	Moderate

Relationship Between Teacher Competence and Teacher Efficacy

Table 4 presents the Pearson correlation between teacher competence and teacher efficacy in EMI. The results indicate a strong and statistically significant positive relationship ($r = .818$, $p < .01$). This suggests that higher levels of teacher competence in EMI ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.79$) are associated with higher levels of teacher efficacy ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.93$). The strength of the correlation indicates a substantial association, implying that teachers who perceive themselves as more competent in EMI are also more confident in their ability to implement EMI practices effectively. The findings highlight a close linkage between competence and efficacy, suggesting that enhancing teachers' competencies may contribute to increased self-efficacy in EMI contexts.

Table 4

Pearson Correlations between Competence and Efficacy in EMI (n = 83)

	M	SD	1	2
1. Competence in EMI	3.64	0.79	-	
2. Efficacy in EMI	3.26	0.93	.818**	-

** p < .01 (2-tailed).

Open-ended responses also revealed teachers' views on the competencies necessary in EMI classrooms, especially those connected to multilingual instructional support and context-sensitive teaching approaches. Several participants stressed the value of facilitating students' understanding through supplementary explanations in Thai and adaptable language use during lessons. Teachers also pointed to the importance of close instructional and emotional support for students in linguistically demanding classroom environments. These responses suggest that translanguaging and student-centered strategies are viewed as essential to EMI competence, especially when students' English proficiency varies. In addition, several participants drew attention to the role of cultural and linguistic awareness in EMI instruction. Teachers noted that effective EMI instruction requires sensitivity toward the cultural meanings and communicative differences associated with the languages employed in the classroom. These findings support the quantitative results that EMI teacher competence reaches beyond general pedagogical knowledge to include linguistic flexibility, interactional support, and context-sensitive instructional practices in multilingual educational settings.

Discussion

From Competence to Efficacy in EMI Teaching

The results of this study reveal a clear relationship between teacher competence and teacher efficacy in EMI and highlight that although these concepts share a close connection, they are not fully aligned. While teachers reported a high level of competence, their efficacy was only at a moderate level, suggesting a gap between perceived abilities and confidence in applying them in EMI contexts. The strong and statistically significant positive relationship between competence and efficacy further indicates that teachers who perceive themselves as more competent are more likely to feel confident in implementing EMI practices. This supports previous research showing that professional competence is closely associated with teacher efficacy (Vallente, 2025). However, the moderate level of efficacy suggests that this relationship

is not fully aligned and may be influenced by contextual factors such as linguistic challenges, classroom diversity, and institutional support (Dearden, 2014; Khamkhien, 2025).

The high level of competence shown in this study reflects the multilayered nature of EMI teaching. EMI teachers demonstrated strong capabilities in instructional strategies, assessment practices, and inclusive teaching, indicating their ability to integrate content and language in classroom practice (Inbar-Lourie, 2022; Li, 2026). In EMI contexts, this competence goes further than general teaching skills, encompassing the capacity to support discipline-specific literacy, where language serves as a means of constructing meaning within particular subject areas (Gallagher & Hopkyns, 2025; Rauteda & Luitel, 2025; Tang & Trent, 2026). In addition, this is in line with the studies of Ashari et al. (2025) and Gu et al. (2025), which suggest that the use of flexible language practices, such as translanguaging, further demonstrates teachers' ability to adapt instruction to support student understanding in multilingual classrooms. These results emphasize the complexity of EMI pedagogy and the need for integrated, context-sensitive pedagogical approaches.

Despite this, the moderate level of efficacy indicates that competence does not necessarily transfer into confidence. EMI teachers are required to possess additional linguistic and cognitive capabilities to manage content delivery, language use, and classroom communication at the same time (Tsui, 2018; Pham, 2025). This dual demand can increase cognitive load and create uncertainty in instructional practice (Bedeker & Kerimkulova, 2025; Macaro et al., 2018). Challenges particularly related to the use of English for explanation and interaction may limit teachers' confidence, even when they possess adequate pedagogical competence. Previous studies (e.g., Tsui, 2018; Wang, 2021) have shown that classroom English proficiency, especially the functional use of language for instruction, is a key influencing factor for teacher efficacy in EMI settings. Moreover, students' varying linguistic levels and the need to simultaneously address content and language can complicate teaching and potentially weaken teachers' confidence despite their demonstrated competence (Gallagher & Hopkyns, 2025; Khamkhien, 2025). The results, therefore, suggest that both competence and efficacy are essential for effective EMI implementation and for enhancing teaching and learning outcomes.

In the Thai EMI context, this gap between competence and efficacy may also stem from the realities of school-based EMI implementation, where teachers are often required to teach through English despite varying levels of confidence in classroom English use. Even those with strong pedagogical knowledge and content expertise may feel uncertain when explaining complex ideas, managing interaction, or responding spontaneously in

English. EMI implementation in Thailand also varies across schools, subjects, and institutions, leading to uneven training, language support, and resources (Khamkhien, 2025). These conditions may help explain why teachers view themselves as professionally competent while at the same time reporting only moderate confidence in implementing EMI effectively in practice.

Language-Related Competence, Linguistic Efficacy, and Translanguaging as a Strategy

A key dimension emerging from the results is linguistic efficacy, which distinguishes EMI from general teaching contexts. It refers to teachers' perceived ability to use English effectively for academic and instructional purposes, including understanding academic texts, explaining complex concepts, engaging in discussions, and using discipline-specific vocabulary. The moderate level of efficacy suggests that teachers may not feel fully confident in performing these language-related tasks. This interpretation is supported by participants' self-reported English proficiency, with most identifying as beginners or intermediate users (94.00%) and only a small proportion reporting advanced or near-native levels. This indicates that limited perceived language ability may restrict teachers' confidence, particularly in tasks that require explanation, interaction, and academic discourse.

The results also highlight the role of translanguaging and linguistic flexibility as integral to teachers' efficacy in EMI. Unlike traditional teacher efficacy models that assume adequate language proficiency, EMI requires explicit attention to language as a mediating tool in teaching and learning, as reported in Airey (2024) and Macaro et al. (2018). These findings reinforce that English in EMI settings serves as a fundamental tool through which disciplinary knowledge is constructed, not only as a medium of instruction (Liu & Yuan, 2024). Consequently, teachers' confidence in their language use directly influences instructional clarity and their ability to engage students in meaningful academic interaction (McKinley, 2025; Wilang et al., 2024). Given these demands, teachers often rely on translanguaging to support comprehension and participation. As demonstrated by Ashari et al. (2025), Gu et al. (2025), and Macaro (2024), the strategic use of multiple linguistic resources through translanguaging allows teachers to build student understanding and respond to different levels of students' proficiency. Its effective use depends not only on pedagogical knowledge but also on confidence in making real-time linguistic decisions. In addition, the results suggest that linguistic efficacy and translanguaging are closely intertwined in EMI practice. While teachers may possess the competencies to integrate content and language, their moderate efficacy suggests that they continue to

experience hesitation when applying these skills in linguistically demanding classrooms, emphasizing the need to view language as a dynamic pedagogical resource rather than a limitation.

Interactional and Engagement Efficacy in EMI

While teachers indicated strong levels of competence, the findings point out that effective classroom interaction and student engagement in EMI are directly related to teachers' perceived efficacy in handling language-mediated communication. As outlined by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), in EMI contexts, this involves promoting student interaction, supporting collaborative learning, and adopting flexible roles such as facilitator or co-learner, consistent with social constructivist perspectives on learning. Nevertheless, Wang (2021) and Khamkhien (2025) both affirm that the success of these practices is strongly dependent on teachers' confidence in employing English to manage classroom communication and provide support to students whose language proficiency levels differ.

As noted in Airey (2024) and Macaro et al. (2018), conventional models of teacher efficacy may not fully account for the demands placed on teachers in EMI settings, where effective teachers are required to integrate pedagogical, linguistic, and interactional competence. In particular, linguistic equity and inclusive pedagogy emerge as indispensable considerations, as teachers must ensure equitable participation and support learners with diverse language backgrounds (Gallagher & Hopkyns, 2025).

Drawing these results together, the findings indicate that teacher efficacy in EMI is fundamentally a multi-level construct expanding far beyond general teaching competence by incorporating linguistic, interactional, and equity-oriented dimensions. However, this proposed framework remains theoretical and requires further empirical validation.

Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

The findings offer several practical implications for EMI implementation and teacher development. Professional development programs should address not only pedagogical competence but also teachers' confidence in using English for classroom interaction, explanation, and multilingual communication. Stronger institutional support, clearer language-support policies, and context-sensitive training may enhance teachers' efficacy in delivering EMI across diverse settings. These insights can also inform future EMI curriculum planning and teacher support initiatives in multilingual EFL contexts.

There are a number of limitations that should be acknowledged in this study. First, the findings are based on teachers' self-perceptions, which may not fully illustrate how competence and efficacy are manifested in actual classroom practices, particularly in the dynamic and interactional dimensions of EMI teaching. In line with this, the study does not include observational or performance-based measures, which might limit the ability to verify whether reported competence and efficacy align with actual instructional practices. Second, EMI practices are highly context-dependent; therefore, the findings may reflect specific institutional, linguistic, and policy conditions that are not fully transferable to other EMI settings. In addition, the predominance of participants with lower self-perceived English proficiency may have influenced the results, particularly in language-related aspects of efficacy. Future research would benefit from employing classroom observations and qualitative methodologies to gain a more thorough understanding of how competence and efficacy are demonstrated and put into practice in authentic classroom settings. Future studies in more diverse settings across different EMI contexts would also help enhance the transferability of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of teacher development in EMI settings.

In addition, this study identified and highlighted several context-specific dimensions of teacher competence and teacher efficacy in EMI, including instructional competence, linguistic competence, assessment literacy, interactional and engagement efficacy, linguistic efficacy, translanguageing competence, and inclusive teaching practices. However, these constructs were examined primarily through self-reported measures and have not been empirically validated. Future research should further refine and validate these dimensions through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to establish their structural validity. Moreover, the development of context-sensitive measurement instruments that systematically integrate these pedagogical, linguistic, interactional, and equity-related elements would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of teacher development in EMI contexts.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing discussion of EMI instruction by suggesting that teacher competence and efficacy may not develop in parallel in linguistically demanding classrooms. High perceived competence does not automatically lead to high efficacy, particularly when teachers must manage instruction, interaction, and student engagement through English. The results also highlight the roles of linguistic confidence, flexible practices such as translanguageing, and interactional engagement in shaping teachers'

efficacy in EMI settings where English proficiency varies. Rather than proposing a fully validated framework, this study provides exploratory, context-sensitive insights into teachers' perceptions of competence and efficacy in school-based EMI environments.

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Ethical Statement

This research is part of a project approved by the Burapha University Institutional Review Board, under approval number IRB2-132/2567.

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