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

Note from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the July–December 2025 issue of the *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication*. This issue brings together research that illuminates approaches to language learning and communication, with a focus on Thai and Southeast Asian contexts. From the transformative power of AI technologies optimizing vocabulary acquisition; to the intersection of flipped classrooms and STAD enriching Thai EFL students' syntax mastery; to insightful analysis of academic writing anxiety among Thai EFL postgraduate learners; and concluding with the development of Japanese speaking skills through task-based language teaching—our contributors continue to engage in the academic dialogue with both rigor and relevance.

First, Pasara Namsaeng's comprehensive review of AI in language learning explores not only the theoretical underpinnings—from constructivism to incidental learning—but also navigates the exciting yet challenging integration of personalized, gamified, and adaptive AI tools in vocabulary education. The paper balances the promise of technology with ethical considerations—a timely reminder that in our quest for innovation, human values must remain paramount.

Next, Natthaya Boonkongsaen and colleagues present a well-researched integration of the flipped classroom and Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) methods, demonstrating significant gains in student engagement and learning outcomes in English morphology and syntax. Their quasi-experimental study offers pedagogical strategies that marry tradition and innovation, providing hope and guidance for educators seeking to inspire dynamic and collaborative classrooms.

Chonnipha Nonthakoth and Kornwipa Poonpon address the significant yet complex issue of academic writing anxiety among Thai EFL postgraduate students. Their mixed-methods approach identifies major sources of anxiety and highlights students' coping strategies. The study offers valuable insights for academic programs seeking to foster supportive and effective writing environments, especially in a graduate context.

Finally, Thanit Poonvongprasert contributes a study developing task-based lesson plans to enhance Japanese speaking skills among Thai secondary students. This work not only responds to the growing cultural and economic relevance of Japanese in Thailand but also addresses the anxiety and confidence issues that hinder oral proficiency. It is a welcome addition underscoring the value of practical, communicative language teaching.

This issue concludes with a review by Phyu Phyu Win of *Using English to Teach Content: A Practical Guide for Non-Native Teachers* by Dr. M.L. Jirapa Abhakorn. The book is a valuable resource for scholars and students alike who have an interest in English Medium Instruction (EMI) and/or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

Before we embark on the next academic adventure with these fascinating articles, please note an important announcement: starting with the next issue in 2026, the *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication* will adopt a new issue numbering system. Instead of numbering issues consecutively across volumes, each volume (year) will comprise two issues: Issue 1 and Issue 2. Consider it our version of downsizing—less counting, more clarity! We hope this streamlined system enhances both citation accuracy and journal navigation.

We extend our sincere thanks to our authors, reviewers, and readers for their continued commitment to advancing knowledge in language and communication studies. With your enthusiasm and support, the *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication* remains a vibrant platform for scholarship and exchange.

Enjoy this issue, and as always, keep questioning, learning, and communicating.

Warm regards,

Savitri Gadavanij
Editor-in-Chief
NIDA Journal of Language and Communication

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"Opinions and recommendations published in the article are the viewpoint of the author and may not represent the view of NIDA Journal of Language and Communication."

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AI Technologies in Optimizing Language Learning: A View of Vocabulary Acquisition

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Abstract

As educational paradigms shift in the digital era, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have emerged as pivotal tools in language teaching and learning. However, many educators remain unaware of the significance and components of AI technologies in education. This paper provides an overview of AI in optimizing language learning, particularly vocabulary acquisition, through four main aspects. The first aspect covers how AI aligns with theoretical language foundations, especially in constructivism, reinforcement learning, multisensory learning, and incidental learning. Second, it highlights AI features that facilitate language learning, such as personalized language learning, natural language processing, machine learning, adaptive learning, gamification, and computational thinking, with a specific focus on vocabulary acquisition. Third, three types of AI tools are discussed in facilitating vocabulary learning: asynchronous language learning, synchronous interactive platforms, and language assessment. The final aspect addresses the challenges and limitations of AI capabilities, including data privacy, bias, accessibility, over-reliance on technology, and ethical concerns. This paper underscores the potential of AI to transform vocabulary acquisition, enhancing its accessibility and effectiveness for diverse learner populations, while highlighting the need for collaborative efforts among educators, researchers, and technology developers. Ultimately, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of AI in education, providing insights into best practices and future directions for research and implementation in language learning environments.

Keywords: AI technology, language learning, vocabulary acquisition, educational technology

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become an indispensable educational tool in the digital era, profoundly impacting language teaching and learning. This study defines AI technologies as a mix of traditional and generative AIs. It represents a shift from being

strictly programmed by humans to being able to adapt its behavior based on the patterns it learns (Gonzalez-Rodriguez & Hernandez-Carrion, 2018). Currently, the adoption of AI-powered tools in language education introduces innovative and effective methods for language learning. These technologies employ sophisticated algorithms and machine learning approaches to provide personalized and adaptive learning experiences, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of vocabulary instruction (Qin & Zhong, 2024; Wang, 2019; Wei-Xun & Jia-Ying, 2024; Zhang, 2023). Unlike traditional vocabulary instruction methods, which often rely on rote memorization and repetitive practice (Nation, 2013), AI tools provide a more engaging and customized learning experience. While traditional methods have been foundational in language learning for decades, they often fail to address individual learner needs and adapt to diverse learning styles. In contrast, AI technologies offer a dynamic approach to vocabulary acquisition by leveraging data-driven insights to tailor learning experiences to each learner's unique strengths and weaknesses (Schulz et al., 2020).

AI technologies offer a wide range of functions that enhance language learning, including personalized learning, adaptive learning systems, gamification, and computational thinking (Al-Said, 2024; Polyzi & Moussiades, 2023; Wang et al., 2024; Wei-Xun & Jia-Ying, 2024). They also provide both asynchronous and synchronous learning support, as well as assessment tools that promote flexibility, real-time feedback, and improved vocabulary acquisition, along with tracking progress in vocabulary development (Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi, 2023; Dujardin et al., 2021; Feng & Ng, 2024; Kayra, 2024; Yildiz, 2023). Despite these advancements, the integration of AI technologies in education is not without its challenges. AI could be biased, difficult to access, untransparent in terms of privacy, a risk of over-reliance, and unethical (Adeleye et al., 2024; Gao et al., 2024; Goldenthal et al., 2021; Ijaiya & Adeniyi, 2024; Li, 2023; Novikov & Kiseleva, 2024; Osorio et al., 2024; Shrivastav & Hiltz, 2013; Siau & Wang, 2020).

Despite the growing presence of AI technologies in education, many educators remain unaware of their significance, scope, and components (Ahmad et al., 2021). Moreover, educators frequently emphasize sociocultural and technical knowledge of AI rather than application-oriented skills, often acknowledging a deficiency in their comprehension of instructional materials, best practices, examples, and tools pertinent to artificial intelligence. (Lindner & Romeike, 2019). To fill these gaps, this article offers a comprehensive review of AI-assisted language learning, specifically emphasizing vocabulary acquisition. It examines several key areas: 1) the relationship between AI technologies and foundational language theories; 2) the roles and features of AI in educational settings; 3) the various AI applications that support language learning, particularly in vocabulary development; and 4) the current challenges in implementing AI technologies in education.

AI and the Theoretical Foundations of Language Acquisition

Several theories of language learning provide a foundational framework for understanding AI applications in this field. The first theory is constructivism, which

asserts that social co-construction shapes the nature of knowledge acquisition (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015). Constructivism posits that learners actively construct knowledge through interactions and experiences rather than passively receiving information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Peggy, 2023; Schwandt, 1997). AI applications in language learning often align with constructivist principles by promoting personalized and student-centered approaches. These approaches cater to individual learning needs and preferences, thereby increasing engagement and effectiveness (Wang, 2019). Another pertinent theory is reinforcement learning. Reinforcement learning interacts with the environment and adjusts its strategies, making it a flexible tool for educational settings. This adaptability aligns well with the constructivist approach in modern education, where technology plays a crucial role in instructional design and feedback mechanisms (Memarian & Doleck, 2024). AI chatbots utilizing reinforcement learning techniques have shown effectiveness in vocabulary acquisition by providing tailored support. Research shows that chatbots like Dialogflow significantly enhance the acquisition of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) vocabulary (Silitonga et al., 2024). This is due to their well-designed content, which includes synonyms and clear definitions. Additionally, chatbots foster an engaging environment that promotes positive interactions and explicit negotiation of meaning, greatly supporting learners' vocabulary development in a second language (Jia Min, 2024; Silitonga et al., 2024). Another study suggests that AI chatbots reinforce learners to gain both productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge, proving that AI chatbots are beneficial for long-term memory retention (Zhang, 2023).

Third, multisensory learning embedded in AI technologies helps enhance vocabulary acquisition. The vision, hearing, smell, and taste are being explored to enhance educational learning (Klašnja-Milićević et al., 2018). These experiences help learners process and memorize information more effectively (Klašnja-Milićević et al., 2018). Applying this theory to vocabulary teaching underscores the value of accommodating various learning styles and complements AI tools by addressing different preferences, thereby improving learner engagement (Yao & Lee, 2023). It is also found that a multisensory instructional approach improves student vocabulary acquisition and retention (Bahari & Dost Mohammadi, 2023; D'Alesio et al., 2007). AI tools that involve multisensory learning, such as Duolingo, allow audio-visual integration in listening and reading the vocabulary and are further developed to be able to test multisensory skills of the English language such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Burstein et al., 2021). The final theory that AI technologies foster language learning is incidental learning. Incidental learning is a form of unintended learning that occurs without the learner's conscious intention to learn (Watkins & Marsick, 1992). To elaborate, the students used AI translation tools without noticing substantial language improvement (Daly, 2023). Indeed, incidental learning, which occurs naturally through everyday activities such as using mobile devices, is facilitated by AI tools. This aligns with Prandi et al. (2023); they developed a specific incidental learning approach by using a mobile application and found that incidental learning is enhanced.

In summary, the associated practices that underpin these theories include: 1) an interactive platform that engages students with AI applications (constructivism); 2) a

helpdesk that scaffolds vocabulary acquisition and engagement (reinforcement); 3) a multisensory resource that engages various senses to enhance the four skills of vocabulary learning (multisensory learning); and 4) unintentional language improvement resulting from the use of AI tools (incidental learning).

AI Features in Vocabulary Enhancement

The first key feature of AI-powered vocabulary tools is the capability to deliver highly personalized learning experiences (Narayanan & Kumaravel, 2024). Machine learning algorithms can analyze extensive data on learners' progress, preferences, and performance to tailor vocabulary exercises to individual needs. For example, adaptive learning platforms such as Quizlet and Memrise utilize AI to adjust the difficulty and content of exercises based on real-time assessments of learners' abilities, ensuring that learners are consistently challenged and engaged. This level of personalization helps maintain motivation and fosters more effective vocabulary acquisition compared to traditional one-size-fits-all approaches such as teaching everyone based on the same materials, methods, or levels of language learning (Wei-Xun & Jia-Ying, 2024). AI-driven language learning apps further enhance personalization by adapting to individual learner needs and providing immediate feedback, which is crucial for effective vocabulary acquisition for self-improvement (Wei-Xun & Jia-Ying, 2024). Additionally, AI chatbots employing machine learning algorithms offer escalating levels of support, aiding learners in understanding and retaining new vocabulary. This personalized approach benefits both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. Zhang (2023) compared the chatbot and non-chatbot groups and found that the AI Chabot group acquired both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge than the non-chatbot group while altogether promoting long-term memory retention (Zhang, 2023). The integration of intelligent learning apps in junior English vocabulary teaching also addresses the limitations of traditional methods. These apps not only facilitate personalized learning experiences but also improve teaching quality and stimulate student interest through the after-class and in-class teaching, attention paid to individual students, the improvement of teaching quality, and the decrease of pressure during teaching (Wang, 2019). Hence, AI technologies offer significant advancements in personalized learning experiences, enhancing vocabulary acquisition through adaptive learning platforms, immediate feedback mechanisms, and intelligent learning apps. These innovations reflect a move towards more individualized and effective educational practices.

Second, AI-powered tools provide features such as Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Machine Learning (ML), which are pivotal technologies in analyzing language patterns and enhancing vocabulary learning. NLP, a subset of artificial intelligence (AI), involves the interpretation, assessment, and translation of human languages by machines. Recent technological advancements have significantly elevated the capabilities of NLP, making it a crucial tool in language learning and communication (Chandrika et al., 2024). By leveraging NLP, AI systems can analyze linguistic patterns, perform tasks such as machine translation and speech recognition, and provide tailored learning experiences. The synergy between NLP and machine

learning further enhances these capabilities, to be more precise. Digital language resources are integral to this synergy, as they provide the data necessary for NLP algorithms to function effectively. Together, NLP and ML revolutionize human-machine communication by enabling applications that understand and generate human language, thus facilitating more efficient and personalized vocabulary learning experiences (Al-Said, 2024). Additionally, NLP techniques, such as sentiment and semantic analysis, are increasingly integrated with ML in recommendation systems. These NLP algorithms improve the accuracy of recommendations by analyzing user preferences derived from textual data. A notable advancement in this area is the knowledge graph embedding for contextual recommendation, which combines knowledge graph representations with contextual understanding to offer more personalized recommendations. This integration highlights how NLP enhances ML-based systems through advanced linguistic analysis and deep learning models, contributing to more effective and individualized vocabulary learning for different vocabulary learning users (Gao et al., 2024). In short, the combined application of machine learning and natural language processing significantly enhances the analysis of language patterns and supports personalized vocabulary learning by leveraging advanced algorithms and rich digital resources.

Third, adaptive learning systems are designed to cater to individual learners' needs to enhance vocabulary learning experiences. For example, an innovative AI-driven adaptive system for English language learning utilizes machine learning and NLP to tailor educational content based on real-time analysis of learners' performance, such as adaptive tests. This system offers targeted feedback and adjusts materials according to each learner's specific needs. The adaptive nature of these AI-based systems enables continuous monitoring and customization of learning paths, significantly enhancing efficiency, motivation, and engagement (Qin & Zhong, 2024). By bridging traditional educational methods with personalized learning approaches, these systems revolutionize language education, making English learning more accessible and effective (Qin & Zhong, 2024). Further supporting the efficacy of adaptive learning systems, a meta-analysis of studies conducted from 2010 to 2022 reveals a medium to large positive impact on cognitive learning outcomes compared to non-adaptive interventions (Wang et al., 2024). The analysis, which reviewed 45 independent research papers, demonstrated that AI-enabled adaptive systems substantially improve student outcomes by addressing cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects and optimizing navigation and assessment processes (Wang et al., 2024). In the context of vocabulary acquisition, the use of automatic speech recognition as an adaptive vocabulary learning tool could foster the development of speech-based input in students (Wilschut et al., 2024). Therefore, adaptive learning systems powered by AI and NLP offer tailored educational experiences that significantly enhance vocabulary learning and overall educational effectiveness.

Another advantageous feature is the integration of gamification into AI-powered educational apps, which plays a significant role in creating engaging and interactive environments for vocabulary practice. Gamification enhances learner motivation and engagement, which is the key factor in effective vocabulary acquisition in making the

learning process more enjoyable and interactive (Wei-Xun & Jia-Ying, 2024). For instance, the Integrated Gamification-AI Learning Theory (IGALT) demonstrates how gamification can make AI education accessible and captivating for young learners. The "TransAI" platform, featuring a Lego-Transformer-like character, uses interactive missions to teach AI concepts, fostering creativity and foundational understanding in children (Roopaei & Roopaei, 2024). A hybrid gamification framework combining AI, machine learning, and the Adaptive Neuro-Fuzzy Inference System (ANFIS) has also been developed to enhance student motivation and engagement (Narayanan & Kumaravel, 2024). They identified struggling and high achievers so practitioners can adapt assistance and training to enhance student achievement. This framework personalizes learning experiences by analyzing student interactions and providing tailored support, as evidenced by a pilot study with computer science students (Narayanan & Kumaravel, 2024). Further supporting the effectiveness of gamification, an online application incorporating games, quizzes, and chatbots was found to significantly improve vocabulary learning outcomes (Narayanan & Kumaravel, 2024). Students in the experimental group using this application reported better performance than students in the control group studying a vocabulary section from the book, and they found the AI tools both enjoyable and effective compared to traditional methods (Polyzi & Moussiades, 2023). Moreover, research shows that hedonic motivations facilitated by gamified chatbots lead to increased behavioral engagement and purchasing, while utilitarian motivations may have different effects on emotional engagement (Elmashhara et al., 2024). Finally, the integration of AI and gamification into educational systems has gained prominence, particularly in secondary and higher education. This approach aims to improve academic performance by creating engaging and supportive learning environments (Figueroa & Rivera-Loaiza, 2023). AI-driven gamification highly enhances vocabulary learning by making educational experiences more engaging, interactive, and tailored to individual needs, thereby fostering better learning outcomes and increased motivation.

The final advantageous feature is the application of computational thinking, which leverages vocabulary richness to facilitate advanced functions such as speech recognition and generation. Previous research indicates that incorporating computational thinking (CT) in language learning, supported by AI, enhances vocabulary richness in writing (Tang & Ma, 2023). By utilizing CT skills such as data analysis and pattern recognition, learners can improve their vocabulary acquisition efficiency (Tang & Ma, 2023). Specifically, AI technologies that focus on pronunciation education can significantly enhance vocabulary retention. AI-based pronunciation tools assist learners in practicing and refining their pronunciation, which, in turn, supports long-term vocabulary memorization, as found in the study of Kazu and Kuvvetli (2023b), where an ANOVA was used to assess student word retention over four weeks. Between the two teaching methods (phonetic alphabet pronunciation and AI-based speech recognition pronunciation), AI-supported speech recognition significantly improved students' word retention (Kazu & Kuvvetli, 2023a).

Types of AI Applications in Vocabulary Learning

Applications of AI can be categorized based on their functions. First, optimizing vocabulary acquisition through the use of language learning apps asynchronously, as these mobile apps offer flexible and efficient ways for students to learn vocabulary (Kayra, 2024). Asynchronous learning offers flexibility and self-paced exploration (Saxena & Carnewale, 2023); for example, Matlab introduces a new method for reviewing English words, allowing users to customize their lexicon, prioritize words, and practice spelling on an hourly basis rather than the daily basis used by most existing online platforms. This approach has been shown to improve the orthography of target words (Cao, 2024). Studies on mobile dictionary applications have demonstrated their efficacy in enhancing the receptive and productive vocabulary proficiency of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Dan et al., 2024; Jumabekovna, 2024). The study emphasized that students with higher levels of motivation achieved higher improvements in vocabulary (Dan et al., 2024). In Uzbekistan, where English is used as a foreign language, Jumabekovna (2024) argues that popular language learning apps such as Duolingo, Memrise, Babbel, Rosetta Stone, and Lingodeer are effective for vocabulary enhancement, supported by research studies and testimonials from B2-level students. Additionally, for students below the B2 level, AI apps like Kahoot and Quizlet have been confirmed to effectively improve vocabulary learning in secondary school students compared to conventional teaching methods (Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi, 2023).

The second type of AI applications for promoting vocabulary learning include an interactive AI platform such as chatbots and virtual tutors. This is considered synchronous learning, which promotes real-time engagement and interaction (Saxena & Carnewale, 2023). Previous research has demonstrated that interactive vocabulary practice, particularly through the use of AI chatbots, holds significant potential for automating and enhancing educational tasks (Zhang & Huang, 2024). These chatbots effectively capture the complexity and diversity of human language, thereby significantly aiding students in acquiring both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge during second language learning (Zhang & Huang, 2024). This finding aligns with another study indicating that chatbots, such as ChatGPT, support learners in mastering word forms, meanings, and usage based on the nation's multidimensional framework of vocabulary knowledge (Yildiz, 2023). In terms of virtual platforms, a study investigating VR-assisted language learning revealed that such technology enhances vocabulary learning and memory retention among EFL learners (Feng & Ng, 2024). The visual, aural, and textual stimuli provided by VR technology help learners subconsciously retain vocabulary items (Feng & Ng, 2024). Additionally, integrating Google Street View into a 3D virtual environment has been found to support both contextualized and motivational vocabulary learning processes in realistic settings (Shih, 2023). Another virtual tool, Wics, an IVR system, was proposed for its ability to offer learners multiple learning sessions and encounters with the same words in varied exposures, thereby providing learners with control over their explorative learning (Bergsma et al., 2023).

The final function of AI applications is their role as assessment tools. AI apps can effectively measure vocabulary knowledge, with research highlighting their ability to assess vocabulary and inform educational strategies (Dujardin et al., 2021). Prior studies have utilized mobile apps for formative assessment purposes (Poláková & Klimova, 2020). These apps enable students to practice vocabulary and receive immediate feedback, facilitating continuous assessment and allowing students to understand their learning outcomes and enhance their vocabulary skills. The accessibility of mobile devices makes them an ideal platform for ongoing vocabulary assessment and learning (Poláková & Klimova, 2020). In order to validate that mobile devices are valid tools in assessing vocabulary assessment and learning, Young et al. (2024) studied Mobile Toolbox (MTB) word meaning and validity evidence from 3 studies by employing over 7,525 participants. Regarding validity and reliability, the Mobile Toolbox (MTB) Word Meaning app has demonstrated adequate to good internal consistency ($\rho xx = 0.78$ to 0.81) and good test-retest reliability (ICC = 0.65) across multiple studies, indicating stable performance over time. It also shows moderate to large correlations with measures of similar constructs ($\rho = 0.67$-0.75), supporting its convergent validity (Young et al., 2024). Additionally, the construct validity of vocabulary assessment tools, such as WordFAM, a web-based platform for evaluating English vocabulary knowledge, has also been confirmed (Drown, 2023).

To conclude, AI applications that expand vocabulary learning can serve as asynchronous language learning apps, virtually synchronous platforms, and assessment tools. Anyhow, the limitations of language learning apps could be predicted, such as the lack of human interaction and feedback, limited range of vocabulary covered in the app, and inability to address individual learning needs (Jumabekovna, 2024). The next section will elaborate on the limitations of AI.

Challenges in Implementing AI Technologies in Vocabulary Learning

Despite the numerous benefits, AI technologies also face challenges. Foremost among these is the issue of data privacy. In some regions, such as the United States, AI technologies face skepticism due to concerns about privacy. Previous studies have indicated that the current legal frameworks in the U.S. are not fully equipped to address the rapid advancements in AI technologies, particularly regarding data collection, anonymization, and consent management. This regulatory gap creates challenges in ensuring privacy compliance while maintaining user convenience (Ijaiya & Adeniyi, 2024). Security issues often confuse privacy concerns, masking the fundamental privacy implications of AI. It is crucial for AI developers to understand these nuances and communicate effectively with users about the privacy impacts of AI systems (Nallam et al., 2024). Developing trustworthy AI systems may be a potential solution, as perceptions of privacy, security, and trust overlap and significantly impact the adoption and use of AI technologies (Leschanowsky et al., 2024). As found in the study of Data Privacy Vocabulary (DPV), it is a framework developed to create machine-readable and interoperable representations for personal data processing. It supports legislative requirements like the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and can be customized for specific use cases (Pandit et al., 2024). The contents,

methodology, current adoptions and uses, and future potential of DPV are in acting as a common vocabulary to support various regulatory (e.g., EU's DGA and AI Act) and community initiatives (e.g., Solid) emerging across the globe (Pandit et al., 2024). The issues of data privacy and vocabulary learning may not directly link to each other. However, privacy can affect how vocabulary is applied to a corpus of GDPR-compliant privacy policies for vocabulary learning further (Leone & Di Caro, 2020).

Another concern is the bias in AI algorithms. According to Li (2023), bias in artificial intelligence systems has the potential to perpetuate discrimination and social inequities, which can have ethical, legal, and social ramifications for organizations. Because artificial intelligence systems frequently learn from past data, which may have preexisting biases in society, this might result in biased outputs. One example of a factor that can lead to gender bias in artificial intelligence applications is the underrepresentation of women in datasets (Chadha 2024). According to Çırtlık and Cosar (2024), it has been discovered that artificial intelligence applications, including chatbots and art generators, have the ability to reinforce gender stereotypes and promote a male-centric perspective. In terms of vocabulary learning, AI systems often learn from large datasets that reflect societal biases. For instance, language models trained on biased corpora can perpetuate stereotypes, such as associating certain professions with specific genders, as seen in translation tasks where gender-neutral sentences are translated with gendered pronouns (Caliskan, 2023). In any case, this issue can be handled by utilizing transparent frameworks. These biases could potentially lead to the accuracy of the obtained information. Anyhow, the solution is suggested; according to Fazil et al. (2024), the establishment of explicit and transparent frameworks for algorithmic decision-making can assist in the identification and reduction of bias.

Ideally, the accessibility of AI technologies could be viewed as inclusive educational practices. For instance, AI, simulation, and e-collaborative tools (AISEC) are being used to improve accessibility in analytics courses in higher education. These tools help address the diverse needs of students with different linguistic backgrounds and analytical skills, promoting interactive engagement and reducing barriers to learning (Osorio et al., 2024). Indeed, AI technologies such as voice recognition, text-to-speech, and AI-powered search systems are enhancing library services for users with disabilities (Kishore et al., 2024). These tools improve accessibility for individuals with visual, auditory, and mobility impairments, making library resources more inclusive (Kishore et al., 2024). Also confirmed by another study is that AI-powered assistive technologies support students with disabilities, enabling full participation in educational activities (Adeleye et al., 2024). Tools like AI-driven captioning and translation improve accessibility for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speak different languages (Adeleye et al., 2024). In practice, on the other hand, those accessible tools can be difficult for the less financially supported group of students. Since AI tools are often contingent on the availability of necessary technological infrastructure, such as internet connectivity and compatible devices, demographic factors such as age, education, and income play a crucial role in the accessibility of AI tools. For example, older adults and those with lower educational attainment may face challenges in using AI tools like translation and transcription services (Goldenthal et al., 2021). In terms of

vocabulary learning, inaccessibility arises from various factors: inadequate knowledge and skills to use digital tools effectively, financial constraints that limit technology integration in education (Dahraj et al., 2020), unreliable internet connectivity, lack of guidance on using digital tools properly, and difficulties in understanding complex terminology associated with these tools (Khan & Ayaz, 2023). Collectively, these challenges prevent students from leveraging AI tools for vocabulary development.

Another issue raised is over-reliance on technology. Novikov and Kiseleva (2024) investigated the effects of over-reliance on technology in the foreign language learning process and found that students who were dependent on technology showed less confidence in spontaneous language use. This excessive reliance on technology can hinder students' ability to develop essential language skills (Novikov & Kiseleva, 2024). Moreover, clinging onto the AI tools negatively impacts students' ability to process and construct knowledge (Shrivastav & Hiltz, 2013) and also potentially overlooks critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Grissinger, 2019). This could be seen through the simple act students rely on, such as an auto-correct function in mobile phones or computer software. Indeed, at the vocabulary level, over-reliance on technology can lead to a lack of depth in vocabulary learning. For instance, the Turkish curriculum study highlights that technological tools are underutilized and vocabulary teaching activities remain monotonous, focusing predominantly on reading skills (Mete et al., 2023). In any case, Novikov and Kiseleva (2024) suggest that a balanced approach that integrates technology with traditional teaching methods would be a wise solution to enhance language learning outcomes.

The final challenge in implementing AI technologies in language learning is ethics. Although AI ethics is not directly associated with vocabulary acquisition, it raises significant challenges related to academic integrity and plagiarism within the broader context of language learning in higher education (Perkins, 2023). A roadmap for implementing AI ethically in universities is proposed, focusing on micro, meso, and macro levels to guide stakeholders like SoTL, educational authorities, and policymakers (Castelló-Sirvent et al., 2024). Research says that most participants (77%) were worried about the use of their data; in learning systems, fewer than 8% of adults were ‘not happy’ being tracked, as opposed to nearly two-thirds (63%) of young learners surveyed (Latham & Goltz, 2019). This could lead to urgent calls for a critical examination of how international policies and documents construct ethical standards in AI education (Nemorin, 2024). Since AI technologies seem unavoidable in the current digital era, several ethical aspects are raised, such as privacy and data protection (Gao et al., 2024), fairness and non-discrimination in training data (Siau & Wang, 2020), and accountability and transparency (Gao et al., 2024). Gao et al. (2024) proposed an alternative solution, which involves transitioning from initial ethical considerations to a focus on AI systems that are centered around humans. Additionally, the international organization as well as the database also responded to this issue by providing guidelines for AI ethics, such as Elsevier and UNESCO.

In conclusion, it is crucial to take into account the indirect impacts of data privacy, biases, accessibility, over-reliance on technology, and ethics when

implementing AI technologies for vocabulary acquisition. AI development in language learning is an ongoing development that involves the mutual learning of developers and users to navigate the immediate challenges and to effectively utilize the technology. The following figure illustrates the comprehensive overview of AI technologies for optimizing language learning.

Figure 1

A Comprehensive Overview of AI =Technologies for Optimizing Language Learning

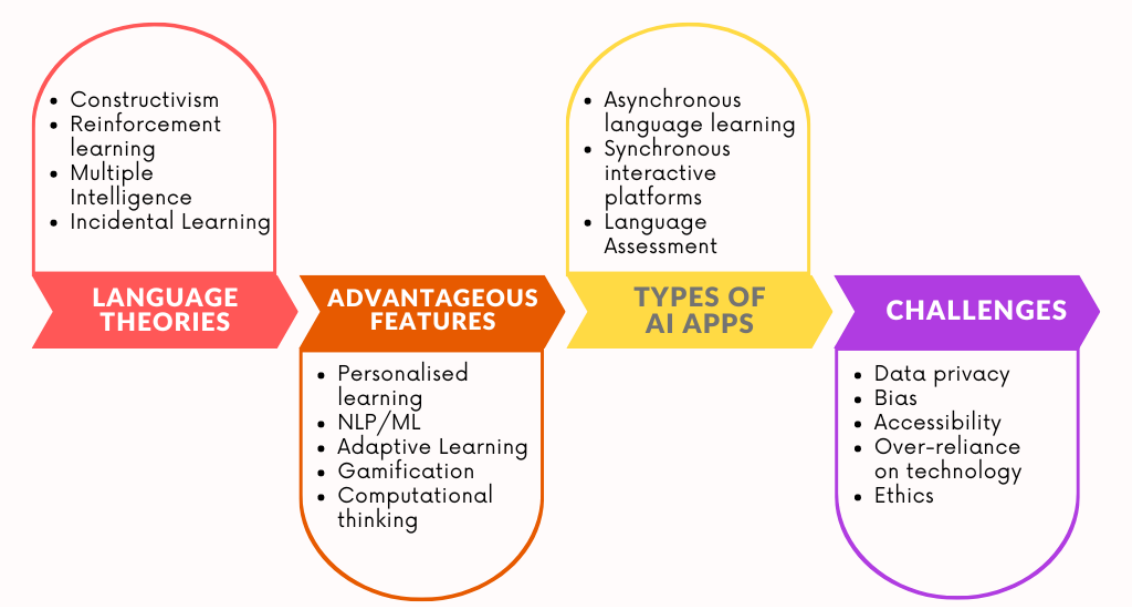

Figure 1 provides a comprehensive overview of AI technologies for optimizing language learning. It illustrates how these technologies enhance vocabulary acquisition by addressing various aspects, including underlying theories, contributing features, types of apps that facilitate learning, and the limitations of applying AI technologies in real-world contexts.

Conclusion

This article provides a comprehensive review of AI-assisted language learning, with a particular focus on the vocabulary aspect. It explores: 1) how AI technologies align with theoretical language foundations; 2) the functions and features of AI in education; 3) the types of AI applications that facilitate language learning, especially vocabulary acquisition; and 4) the current challenges associated with implementing AI technologies. AI-supported language learning can be understood through four main theories: constructivism, reinforcement learning, multisensory learning, and incidental learning. These technologies offer services such as personalized language learning, natural language processing, machine learning, adaptive learning, gamification, and computational thinking, all of which contribute to multi-dimensional language learning. Specifically, vocabulary acquisition can be enhanced through three main types of AI applications: asynchronous language learning, synchronous interactive platforms, and language assessment tools. However, AI technologies in education face several

challenges, including data privacy, bias, accessibility, over-reliance on technology, and ethical concerns.

The teaching and learning implications of using AI technology in language learning, especially for vocabulary acquisition, involve balancing technological tools with traditional teaching methods to enhance learning outcomes (Novikov & Kiseleva, 2024). Further research places an emphasis on integrating AI into educational circumstances (Jia Min, 2024; Yao & Lee, 2024). It is necessary to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of AI-driven vocabulary learning. For example, intelligent tutoring systems and automated writing evaluation tools, which offer interactive and personalized learning experiences, could significantly aid vocabulary acquisition, grammar correction, and pronunciation (Kovalenko & Baranivska, 2024). Additionally, immersive language learning environments, such as virtual classrooms like Wics, may provide additional benefits (Bergsma et al., 2023). As AI technology continues to evolve, it is essential for educators, learners, researchers, and developers to actively engage in this development. Collaborative efforts are crucial to effectively address the emerging challenges and capitalize on the opportunities presented by AI in education. In practice, this paper urges educators to design a dynamic curriculum that harmoniously blends traditional teaching methods with the innovative use of AI. It highlights the necessity of weighing both the benefits and potential pitfalls of AI technologies, including ethical concerns and biases, to ensure a thoughtful approach to classroom teaching and learning.

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Enhancing Learning Outcomes and Students' Satisfaction Through Flipped Classroom and STAD Integration in Thai EFL Students' Syntax Learning

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of integrating the Flipped Classroom model with the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) technique on Thai EFL students' syntax learning, focusing on learning outcomes and student satisfaction. The quasi-experimental study was conducted with 16 first-year Thai Bachelor of Education students in English. The study involved administering pre-immediate posttests and delayed posttests each consisting of 60 items. The tests assessed students' knowledge and application of English grammar, focusing on the types and functions of words. The results of the comparative analysis show significant improvements in student achievement. Pretest scores (M = 25.25, SD = 7.08) increased substantially in the posttest (M = 52.81, SD = 6.92), with a statistically significant difference (Z = -3.521, p = .000). Retention was supported by the delayed posttest scores (M = 51.75, SD = 8.28), which remained high but slightly lower than the immediate posttest. Students expressed high satisfaction with the integrated approach, highlighting enhanced engagement, active participation, and personalized learning. The flipped classroom promoted self-directed learning by encouraging students to prepare before class, while the STAD technique facilitated peer collaboration, fostering teamwork and communication skills. The combined approach also developed higher-order thinking and a growth mindset, as students engaged in analytical and practical tasks. Despite these strengths, some students found pre-class preparation tasks less engaging, indicating a need for improved task design. Overall, this integration significantly enhances academic performance and satisfaction.

Keywords: Flipped Classroom, STAD, Student Achievement and Satisfaction, Collaborative Learning, Peer Learning Strategies

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Introduction

Instructing English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly in the areas of morphology and syntax, presents significant challenges. This is particularly applicable to Thai students pursuing a Bachelor of Education. To teach effectively in the future, it is essential for these students to develop a strong understanding of sentence structure and the functions of different parts of speech. Regrettably, the conventional instruction of syntax and morphology frequently devolves into rote memorization. Teachers typically deliver grammar and sentence construction lessons from the front of the classroom, using a chalkboard or PowerPoint for examples. While this method of presenting information is straightforward, it may not facilitate comprehension or appreciation of the subject matter. Consequently, this approach often renders classes tedious, reduces student engagement, and compromises learning quality, potentially leading to subpar academic performance.

The Flipped Classroom and Student Teams-Achievement Division (STAD) methodologies are appealing alternatives. Flipped learning prioritizes active engagement and student involvement (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). Flipped classrooms, as noted by Abeysekera and Dawson (2015), contest conventional educational paradigms. This technique transfers instructional content beyond the classroom, preferably into personal learning settings via digital technologies. This renders the class more dynamic, engaging, and focused on the learner. Nanor (2024) characterizes several key features of STAD. Firstly, STAD promotes heterogeneous grouping, where students are organized into diverse teams based on varying abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles. This diversity is crucial as it allows students to learn from one another, fostering a supportive learning environment that encourages peer interaction and collaboration (Nanor, 2024). The field of education has thoroughly examined the flipped classroom and STAD methodologies.

Research on the utilization of English morphology and syntax instruction for Thai bachelor's degree students is limited. This lack of focused research raises uncertainty about whether novel tactics can enhance learning outcomes in this educational context. Moreover, instructing students on the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD methodology prior to their implementation in English morphology and syntax lessons can be advantageous. By introducing these strategies beforehand, students will understand what to expect in class, including teaching methodologies, student roles, and expectations for engagement. This could potentially ease the transition and improve the quality of learning and instruction.

Consequently, this research aims to address these gaps by focusing on two primary objectives. First, it evaluates the efficacy of the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD technique in teaching English morphology and syntax to first-year Thai Bachelor of Education students. Specifically, it investigates two research questions:

RQ1: What is the impact of using the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD technique on the academic performance and retention of first-year Thai Bachelor of Education students, as measured by pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest scores?

RQ2: What is the level of students' satisfaction with the implementation of the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD technique in the English morphology and syntax class?

Through these research questions, the study seeks to provide insights into the application of these pedagogical strategies in Thai EFL instruction.

Literature Review

Innovative teaching strategies are crucial for teaching EFL, notably morphology and syntax. Flipped-classroom instruction and cooperative learning methods such as STAD boost student engagement and learning. This study uses these two strategies to help Thai EFL students understand morphology and syntax and overcome learning challenges. To support this research, the literature review discusses flipped-classroom instruction, STAD, morphology and syntax learning, and related studies.

Flipped-Classroom Instruction

A teaching method known as the "flipped classroom" reverses the traditional sequence of learning. Instructional content is delivered outside of the classroom, often through online videos or readings, allowing students to explore and learn independently. Class time is then utilized for active and collaborative learning experiences, such as discussions, problem-solving, and hands-on activities (Tucker, 2012).

One of the primary advantages of the flipped classroom is its ability to foster active learning. Jensen et al. argue that the flipped classroom facilitates active learning strategies, which can lead to increased student satisfaction and improved learning outcomes compared to traditional instructional methods (Jensen et al., 2015). This assertion is corroborated by Jang and Kim, who conducted a meta-analysis revealing that flipped classrooms significantly enhance cognitive outcomes, such as test scores and self-directed learning skills (Jang & Kim, 2020). Furthermore, the flexibility of accessing pre-recorded lectures allows students to learn at their own pace, which has been shown to improve understanding and retention of material (Hew & Lo, 2018).

To summarize, the flipped classroom is a teaching method that reverses traditional instruction by having students engage with learning materials, such as videos or readings, outside of class. This approach allows classroom time to focus on active learning, discussions, and collaborative activities, helping students deepen their understanding with support from teachers and peers.

Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) Techniques

STAD is a cooperative learning strategy in which students of mixed abilities are placed in teams to work together on academic tasks. Each team member is individually accountable for their own learning and is also responsible for helping their teammates learn. Team points are awarded based on the individual and collective achievement of team members (Slavin, 2014).

In the STAD approach of cooperative learning, students are placed into diverse teams to work together on academic assignments to support each other's learning and improve their performance through mutual assistance and shared accountability. Individual and group incentives are provided to motivate students and promote academic achievement (Kagan, 2021).

To sum up, STAD is a cooperative learning model where students of diverse skill levels cooperate on academic objectives in teams. Students take responsibility for their learning and help the team succeed. Rewards for individual and team performance encourage collaboration, peer support, and shared responsibility.

Morphology and Syntax Learning

Morphology and syntax are fundamental components of language learning, and their understanding is crucial for language teachers. Morphology, the study of word structure, and syntax, the study of sentence structure, are intertwined. For language teachers, a solid grasp of these elements enhances their ability to teach effectively, as they provide the foundational knowledge necessary for students to develop proficiency in a language.

Teachers who incorporate morphological instruction into their curriculum can help students understand the internal structure of words, which in turn aids in decoding and comprehension tasks (Anwar & Rosa, 2020). This is especially important in contexts where students may struggle with language acquisition, as morphological knowledge can serve as a predictor of overall language proficiency (Washburn & Mulcahy, 2018).

Furthermore, teacher training programs that emphasize the importance of morphology and syntax can better prepare educators to address the diverse needs of their students. Studies suggest that teacher candidates often lack sufficient knowledge in these areas, which can hinder their teaching effectiveness (Daulay et al., 2021; Washburn & Mulcahy, 2018). By focusing on linguistic content, including morphology and syntax, teacher preparation programs can equip future educators with the tools necessary to support their students' language development.

In formal educational settings, the teaching of morphology can be challenging due to the inherent complexities of different languages. For instance, learners often struggle with the diverse morphological structures present in English, which can vary significantly from their native languages (Le, 2023). Effective instructional strategies that incorporate morphological analysis have been shown to improve students' understanding and use of language. For example, teaching methods that emphasize the segmentation of words into morphemes and the meanings of affixes can significantly enhance vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Goodwin et al., 2012; Sulistyawati et al., 2021). Furthermore, interventions focusing on morphological awareness have demonstrated positive outcomes in enhancing learners' productive vocabulary breadth, particularly among second language learners (Asaad et al., 2022; Ghasemi & Vaez-Dalili, 2019).

To summarize, a solid understanding of morphology and syntax is critical for efficient language teaching, especially in diverse and demanding educational settings. Integrating morphological instruction and emphasizing linguistic knowledge into teacher education programs can considerably improve students' language growth and performance. Teachers can better meet the requirements of their students by implementing effective teaching strategies and interventions that promote greater vocabulary, comprehension, and productive language abilities.

Related Studies

Several studies have explored the effects of flipped classrooms and cooperative learning across various educational contexts, revealing positive impacts on both learning outcomes and student motivation. Rohyami and Huda (2020) investigated the application of flipped classroom and cooperative learning in an analytical chemistry course at the Islamic University of Indonesia. In this study, students had access to online video lectures and instructional materials before class through various devices such as cellphones, tablets, laptops, and PCs. During in-person sessions, students engaged in collaborative learning using the STAD and Team Games Tournament (TGT) techniques. The lecturers evaluated student progress through interactive tests, group activities, and continuous feedback. The findings demonstrated that this flipped classroom-cooperative learning approach significantly improved students' understanding of volumetric testing concepts and yielded higher average learning results compared to traditional cooperative learning methods. The study concluded that this instructional method enhanced the comprehension of volumetric and stoichiometric concepts in analytical chemistry.

Moreover, Shafiee Rad et al. (2022) conducted a quasi-experimental investigation of the impact of flipped learning in conjunction with STAD cooperative learning on students' expository writing and learning attitudes. Over an 11-week period, students in the experimental group participated in flipped classroom activities focused on expository essay writing, while the control group followed traditional face-to-face instruction. The

researchers collected data using pretests, posttests, surveys, and interviews. The results indicated that the flipped classroom-STAD approach led to significant improvements in students' expository writing scores. Additionally, students in the experimental group expressed positive attitudes toward the flipped learning model, citing the benefits of instructor support, group collaboration, and the opportunity to engage more deeply with course content. Similarly, Mayasari et al. (2022) explored the impact of a flipped classroom-STAD approach on cognitive learning outcomes related to the blood circulatory system. Their study used a one-group pre-experimental design with pretests and posttests to measure learning gains. The results indicated a substantial improvement in student learning, with the N-Gain test showing a 62% increase in cognitive understanding, as compared to an 87% gain under more traditional teaching methods. These findings suggest that the flipped classroom-STAD approach effectively enhanced students' comprehension of the blood circulatory system.

Further supporting the benefits of flipped classroom methods, a study by Putri et al. (2022) compared student motivation in learning the human circulatory system using traditional teaching versus a flipped classroom model facilitated through Google Classroom. This quasi-experimental study, involving pretests and posttests, analyzed the data using questionnaires and *t*-tests. The researchers found that the flipped classroom method with Google Classroom significantly increased students' motivation to learn compared to conventional teaching techniques. The results highlight the motivational advantages of integrating technology and flipped learning in instructional design. Taken together, these studies suggest that the combination of flipped classrooms and cooperative learning strategies, such as STAD, not only enhances academic performance across various subjects but also fosters greater student motivation and engagement. This instructional model appears to provide more effective learning experiences compared to traditional approaches, as it allows students to actively collaborate, receive timely feedback, and engage with content in a more dynamic and interactive manner.

Materials and Methodology

Research Design

To address the first research question on the impact of using the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD technique on academic performance and retention, this quasi-experimental study was conducted with 16 first-year Thai Bachelor of Education students in English. The selection of this group was based on their role as student teachers preparing for careers in education. These students were specifically selected because of their need to develop a strong understanding of morphology and syntax, with a focus on parts of speech, which are foundational to teaching English effectively. As future educators, it is crucial that they master these elements of language to provide quality instruction in grammar and language structure to their own students. The study involved administering pretests

immediate posttests and delayed posttests each consisting of 60 items. The tests assessed students' knowledge and application of English grammar, focusing on the types and functions of words, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and pronouns. The tests evaluated the ability to identify and use these parts of speech correctly, such as recognizing noun types and their functions, applying verb tenses, identifying adjective forms and placement, understanding prepositional phrases, using conjunctions to connect ideas, and ensuring correct pronoun usage with proper antecedent agreement. Questions included multiple-choice and sentence completion with multiple-choice options. A pretest was given to assess students' baseline knowledge, specifically their ability to identify and apply the types and functions of words, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and pronouns, followed by instruction using the Flipped Classroom model combined with the STAD technique. A posttest was administered immediately after the intervention to evaluate learning outcomes, and a delayed posttest was conducted two weeks later to assess retention. The results from the pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest were compared to analyze the effectiveness of the instructional methods.

To explore the second research question on the level of students' satisfaction with the implementation of the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD technique in their English morphology and syntax class, a 20-item questionnaire was developed based on concepts from previous studies (Afrilyasanti et al., 2017; Karyadi et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2017; Morgan et al., 2015). These studies emphasized key aspects of the flipped classroom, including active engagement, skill development, collaborative learning, and real-life problem-solving. Although the prior research did not provide explicit questionnaires, these themes served as a foundation for designing the questionnaire to effectively assess student satisfaction. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' satisfaction with the teaching approach that combines the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD method. It used Likert-scale items to capture perceptions across various aspects, including engagement, personalization, collaboration, critical thinking, academic performance, and overall satisfaction. It was administered in class immediately after the posttest.

Instrument Validation

To ensure the quality and reliability of the test, a systematic validation process was undertaken. First, five experts in the field of education and language assessment reviewed the questionnaire items. Using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index, the experts evaluated each item for relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study's objectives. Items with IOC values of 0.50 or higher were retained, while those with lower values were revised or removed.

Following the expert evaluation, the revised test was piloted with a group of students who were not part of the actual sample group. The pilot study aimed to identify

any ambiguous or unclear items and to assess the overall structure and timing of the test. Feedback from the pilot participants was used to make further refinements to the test items.

For quantitative validation, key metrics such as the difficulty index and discrimination index were calculated. Analysis showed that the difficulty index for the test items ranged from 45% to 58%, confirming that the items were neither too easy nor too difficult.

The discrimination index, which measures the ability of an item to differentiate between high- and low-performing students, was also computed. A discrimination index value of 0.3 or higher is generally regarded as acceptable. All items in the test achieved values above the threshold, indicating that they effectively differentiated between students with varying levels of understanding.

Additionally, the reliability of the test was assessed using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), which is specifically designed for dichotomously scored items (e.g., multiple-choice questions). The KR-20 value was calculated to be 0.88, indicating a high level of reliability.

Cronbach's alpha validated the questionnaire assessing students' satisfaction with the two techniques, yielding an acceptable internal consistency result of 0.81. Before its use, the questionnaire was reviewed by the five aforementioned experts to ensure content validity. Each item was evaluated using IOC index, with items requiring an IOC value of 0.50 or higher to be retained. Out of the initial set of items, three were removed due to low IOC values, leaving 20 items with IOC values above 0.50.

The questionnaire categorized satisfaction levels on a Likert scale as follows: scores between 1.00 and 1.99 indicated low satisfaction, scores between 2.00 and 2.99 reflected moderate satisfaction, and scores between 3.00 and 4.00 represented high satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework integrated the Flipped Classroom model and STAD to enhance students' understanding of English morphology and syntax, focusing on parts of speech and their syntactic functions. Grounded in constructivism and cooperative learning theories, this approach leveraged pre-class individual learning and in-class collaborative activities to foster deeper engagement and retention. The details of the framework are as follows:

Table 1

Conceptual Framework, Instructional Framework, and Breakdown of Steps

1. Conceptual Framework

Model	Theoretical Basis	Application	Interactive Element
Flipped Classroom Model	Constructivism and Active Learning.	Students engage in video-based pre-class activities to build foundational knowledge on types of parts of speech and their syntactic functions.	Pre-class activities encourage students to take notes, prepare questions, and identify points of confusion for resolution.
Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD)	Cooperative Learning and Social Constructivism.	Small teams collaborate on syntax and parts of speech tasks, promoting active discussion and problem-solving.	Teams foster peer teaching, ensuring mutual understanding and accountability while building syntactic knowledge.

2. Instructional Framework (Loop of Instruction)

Step	Objective	Activities	Interactive Element
Step 1: Homeroom Time	Introduce Flipped Classroom and STAD techniques.	- Present an overview of the models using case studies. - Facilitate interactive sessions where students discuss expectations and concerns.	- Promotes student engagement and sets a collaborative tone.
Step 2: Out-of-Class Activities (Flipped Classroom)	Enable pre-class preparation.	- Students watch videos on parts of speech and take structured notes. - Prepare questions for discussion.	- Fosters independent engagement and reflection. - Prepares students for collaborative in-class activities.
Step 3: In-Class Activities (STAD Loop)	Foster collaborative learning through teams and expert groups.	See the breakdown of activities.	Builds collaboration, accountability, and mastery through peer and whole-class teaching.

Breakdown of Step 3: In-Class Activities (STAD Loop)

Sub-Step	Objective	Activities	Interactive Element
Team Formation	Ensure diverse group dynamics.	- Form teams with students of varied skill levels.	Teams build rapport and leverage diverse perspectives.

Sub-Step	Objective	Activities	Interactive Element
Team Discussions	Review pre-class material collaboratively.	- Teams discuss parts of speech and their functions. - Address areas of confusion collectively.	Encourages collaborative problem-solving and peer support.
Expert Groups Formation	Deep specialization.	- Regroup into expert groups, each focusing on a specific part of speech. - Prepare explanations, examples, and teaching points.	Experts collaborate to refine understanding and prepare teaching points.
Collaboration in Expert Groups	Strengthen mastery of content.	- Practice teaching within expert groups. - Peer review ensures accuracy and clarity of content.	Promotes peer feedback and enhances comprehension.
Expert Group Teaching	Share knowledge with the entire class.	- Groups present their topics with definitions, examples, and functions. - Classmates engage through questions and feedback.	Encourages active participation and feedback for deeper understanding.
Teacher Input	Provide expert guidance.	- Supplement presentations with clarification and corrective feedback. - Facilitate class-wide discussions.	Reinforces concepts and ensures accuracy.
Interactive Whole-Class Activities	Reinforce learning collaboratively.	- Sentence construction tasks applying parts of speech. - Error correction as team competitions.	Engages students in real-time problem-solving and collaboration.
Small Group Collaboration	Apply knowledge to syntactic contexts.	- Teams solve exercises collaboratively. - Examples include writing sentences or analyzing grammatical errors.	Encourages shared responsibility and application of concepts.
Assessments	Measure understanding and retention.	- **Immediate Posttest:** Conducted at the end of class. - **Delayed Posttest:** Administered two weeks later.	Evaluates both immediate learning outcomes and long-term retention.

Results

This section provides an analysis of the impact of the flipped classroom model and the STAD technique on students' learning outcomes, retention, and satisfaction. The focus is on how these instructional approaches influence both short-term learning outcomes, long-term retention, and overall student satisfaction with the combined methods.

Impact of Flipped Classroom and STAD Technique on Students' Learning Outcomes: Pretest, Posttest, and Delay Posttest Analysis

This section presents the learning outcomes of students assessed at three different time points: before the intervention (pretest), immediately after the intervention (posttest), and two weeks after the intervention (delayed posttest). The goal was to evaluate not only the immediate learning gains resulting from the Flipped Classroom model and STAD technique, but also the retention of knowledge over time.

Table 2

Comparative Analysis of Pretest, Posttest, and Delayed Posttest Scores Using the Flipped Classroom Model and STAD Technique

Learning Outcomes	Mean	S.D.	Median	Min	Max	Z	P-value
Pretest	25.25	7.08	23.50	12.00	39.00	**-3.521**	.000
Posttest	52.81	6.92	55.00	30.00	57.00		
Delayed Posttest	51.75	8.28	54.00	25.00	57.00		

Table 2 combines the results of the pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest, showing key descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviations (S.D.), medians, and minimum and maximum values for each assessment. The data reflect significant improvements in students' learning outcomes from the pretest to the posttest, with a slight decrease in performance observed in the delayed posttest, administered 2 weeks after the immediate posttest. Specifically, pretest scores had a mean of 25.25, with a wide range of scores from 12 to 39, indicating lower levels of prior knowledge. After the intervention, posttest scores showed a marked improvement, with a mean score of 52.81 and scores ranging from 30 to 57, indicating that the instructional intervention had a strong impact on student learning.

Two weeks after the posttest, the delayed posttest showed a slight decline in mean scores (51.75) compared to the immediate posttest, but scores remained relatively stable, with a range of 25 to 57. This suggests that the majority of students retained most of the

knowledge gained during the intervention. The slight drop in performance in the delayed posttest is typical in retention studies, and it indicates that while some knowledge was lost over time, the impact of the instructional process persisted.

To assess the statistical significance of the observed improvement, a Wilcoxon Matched Pairs test was performed on the pretest and posttest data. The Z-score of -3.521 and the P-value of 0.000 indicate that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This confirms that the increase in students' performance was a result of the instructional intervention rather than random variation.

Table 3

Student Satisfaction with the Flipped Classroom and STAD Technique

Description	Mean	S.D.
1.The Flipped Classroom model has fostered a higher level of engagement and active participation during in-class exercises compared to traditional lecture-based instruction.	3.69	0.48
2. The Flipped Classroom model, combined with STAD, has allowed for a more personalized and self-paced learning experience, catering to individual learning styles and preferences.	3.69	0.48
3. The implementation of the STAD method and the Flipped Classroom model has nurtured a growth mindset, encouraging continuous learning and improvement among students.	3.69	0.48
4. The incorporation of the Flipped Classroom model with STAD has increased my happiness and satisfaction compared to conventional lecture-based instruction.	3.63	0.50
5. Based on my experience, I strongly believe that other students would benefit from the implementation of the STAD method and the Flipped Classroom model.	3.63	0.50
6. The Flipped Classroom model, when integrated with STAD, has allowed for a more interactive and dynamic learning environment, promoting active student engagement.	3.63	0.50
7. The STAD method and the Flipped Classroom model have provided opportunities for immediate feedback and clarification, enhancing the learning process and addressing misconceptions in a timely manner.	3.56	0.51
8. My interest in and motivation for learning have increased as a direct result of the STAD method and the Flipped Classroom model.	3.50	0.52
9. The collaborative nature of the STAD method, integrated with the Flipped Classroom model, has facilitated effective teamwork and communication skills development.	3.50	0.52
10. The Flipped Classroom model and STAD have encouraged a deeper level of understanding and application of concepts, promoting higher-order thinking skills.	3.50	0.52
11. The implementation of the Flipped Classroom model and STAD has resulted in a noticeable improvement in my academic performance.	3.50	0.52
12. The combination of the Flipped Classroom model and STAD has fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility for my own learning journey.	3.50	0.52
13. The utilization of the STAD method and the Flipped Classroom model has encouraged collaborative problem-solving and critical thinking among peers	3.50	0.52

Description	Mean	S.D.
14. The combination of the Flipped Classroom model and STAD has created a supportive and inclusive learning environment, fostering a sense of belonging and community among students.	3.44	0.51
15. The Flipped Classroom model, in conjunction with STAD, has facilitated a deeper connection between theory and practice, enhancing the application of knowledge in real-world scenarios.	3.44	0.51
16. The integration of the Flipped Classroom model and STAD has significantly enhanced my understanding of the subject matter.	3.44	0.51
17. The STAD method and the Flipped Classroom model have provided opportunities for group learning and peer engagement, enhancing the overall learning experience.	3.38	0.50
18. The utilization of the STAD method and the Flipped Classroom model has greatly improved my critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities.	3.38	0.50
19. The combination of the Flipped Classroom model and STAD has positively impacted my overall satisfaction with the learning experience.	3.38	0.50
20. The pre-classwork in the Flipped Classroom model has effectively prepared me for in-class activities, allowing for a more productive learning experience.	3.31	0.48
Overall mean	**3.51**	**0.03**

Table 3 presents a comprehensive analysis of student satisfaction with the combined use of the two techniques, measured through mean scores and S.D. The satisfaction levels are categorized into three ranges: low satisfaction (1.00-1.99), moderate satisfaction (2.00-2.99), and high satisfaction (3.00-4.00). Based on the results, all items received mean scores within the range of 3.31 to 3.69, which indicates high satisfaction across all evaluated areas. Three items consistently demonstrated the highest mean score, 3.69 (S.D. = 0.48) the Flipped Classroom model, which promotes higher engagement and active participation, provides a more personalized and self-paced learning experience, and fosters a growth mindset that encourages continuous improvement.

These scores reflect students' strong approval of how the combination of Flipped Classroom and STAD positively influenced their learning experience and mindset. Other aspects of the learning model also received high satisfaction scores, including the increased happiness and satisfaction (mean = 3.63, S.D. = 0.50), improved teamwork and communication skills through collaboration (mean = 3.50, S.D. = 0.52), and the enhanced application of knowledge in real-world scenarios and understanding of the subject matter (mean = 3.44, S.D. = 0.51). These high ratings indicate that students found the methods effective not only for individual learning but also for collaboration and practical application. The statement about pre-classwork in the Flipped Classroom model, which prepares students for in-class activities, received the lowest mean score, 3.31 (SD = 0.48). While this score is still within the high satisfaction range, it suggests that some students might have found the preparatory work less impactful compared to other components of the method. Overall, the average satisfaction score across all items was 3.51 (S.D. = 0.03), indicating a strong overall positive response to the combined use of the Flipped Classroom and STAD techniques.

Conclusion and Discussion

This section summarizes and discusses the research findings.

Impact of the flipped classroom model and the STAD technique on learning outcomes

The findings regarding the impact of the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD technique on learning outcomes reveal a significant enhancement in student performance, as evidenced by the comparative analysis of pretest and posttest scores. The substantial increase in mean scores from the pretest to the posttest indicates that both instructional strategies effectively supported students in improving their understanding of English morphology and syntax, particularly focusing on types of parts of speech and their functions. This aligns with previous research that highlights the benefits of interactive and collaborative learning environments on student engagement and achievement. For instance, Leary et al. (2021) observed that cooperative learning approaches in STEM courses led to increased academic success and retention, suggesting that interactive instructional designs, such as the Flipped Classroom and STAD, can promote deeper learning. Similarly, Khanova et al. (2015) found that students generally prefer the Flipped Classroom format when implemented effectively, which may contribute to positive learning outcomes by fostering active engagement and collaboration.

While some studies (e.g., Jdaitawi, 2019) suggest that the Flipped Classroom model can promote self-awareness in students and improve communication and collaboration skills, these aspects were not directly measured in the current study. The focus of this research was on the effectiveness of the combined Flipped Classroom and STAD approaches in fostering academic achievement in the domain of English morphology and syntax. The improvements observed were reflected in the test scores and not in other areas, such as self-awareness or communication skills.

The retention of knowledge, assessed through a delayed posttest administered two weeks after the immediate posttest, revealed a slight decrease in mean scores; however, the scores remained relatively close to those of the immediate posttest. This suggests that while some knowledge may fade over time, the Flipped Classroom model still supports increased retention compared to traditional methods. In terms of long-term retention, studies have indicated that the Flipped Classroom can lead to sustained improvements in knowledge retention. For example, Day's research demonstrated that students in a Flipped Classroom not only performed better but also retained information more effectively over time compared to their peers in traditional settings (Day, 2018). Similarly, Noroozi et al. (2020) found that flipped instruction significantly enhanced learners' retention of grammatical knowledge, indicating that the benefits of this instructional strategy extend beyond immediate learning outcomes (Noroozi et al., 2020). The integration of the Flipped Classroom model and the STAD technique not only leads to immediate improvements in

learning achievement but also fosters an environment that enhances student engagement, collaboration, and retention of knowledge over time. This multifaceted approach to learning is supported by a growing body of literature that underscores the effectiveness of active learning strategies in educational settings.

Students' Satisfaction with the Integration of the Flipped Classroom Model and STAD Technique

The integration of the Flipped Classroom model with the STAD technique has received high levels of satisfaction from students, as evidenced by their positive ratings across the following key themes.

1) Enhanced Engagement and Active Participation

One of the most notable outcomes of this approach is the significant increase in student engagement and active participation during in-class activities. By shifting the focus from passive listening to active learning, the Flipped Classroom model encourages students to come to class prepared, fostering meaningful interactions and collaborative problem-solving. Research supports this shift, indicating that active learning environments contribute to improved academic performance and critical thinking skills (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). Additionally, the real-time feedback provided during STAD activities plays a crucial role in clarifying misconceptions, ensuring a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This dynamic classroom atmosphere aligns with the principles of student-centered learning, further enhancing satisfaction.

2) Personalized and Collaborative Learning

The combination of personalized and collaborative learning strategies emerged as another key factor contributing to student satisfaction. The Flipped Classroom model allows learners to engage with materials at their own pace, catering to diverse learning styles and individual preferences (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). When integrated with the STAD technique, this personalized learning experience is complemented by opportunities for teamwork and peer interaction. The cooperative structure of STAD fosters a sense of community and shared accountability, enhancing both academic achievement and essential soft skills such as communication and collaboration (Johnson et al., 2014; Slavin, 2015). Students expressed high satisfaction with this balance of independence and group learning, as it creates a more inclusive and supportive educational experience.

3) Development of Higher-Order Thinking and a Growth Mindset

This pedagogical approach has proven effective in promoting higher-order thinking and nurturing a growth mindset among students. The Flipped Classroom model provides opportunities for learners to analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge in practical contexts, while the STAD technique emphasizes continuous improvement through collaborative efforts (Lage et al., 2000).

4) Student Satisfaction and Overall Experience

Overall, students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the integrated approach compared to traditional lecture-based instruction. The sense of ownership and responsibility instilled by the Flipped Classroom model, coupled with the engaging and cooperative elements of STAD, created an enjoyable and fulfilling learning environment. These findings align with studies showing that cooperative learning strategies not only enhance academic outcomes but also improve student motivation and engagement (Felder & Brent, 2009).

5) Challenges with Preparatory Work

Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback, some challenges were noted regarding the preparatory work required for the Flipped Classroom model. While students acknowledged the importance of pre-class activities, some found them less engaging or directly impactful. This suggests the need for refinement in designing preparatory tasks to ensure alignment with in-class objectives and to effectively stimulate curiosity and motivation (Baker, 2000). Addressing this issue will be critical in maximizing the potential of this integrated approach and maintaining high levels of student satisfaction.

The integration of the Flipped Classroom model with the STAD technique has achieved high levels of student satisfaction across the mentioned key themes. By enhancing engagement, fostering collaboration, promoting higher-order thinking, and creating a supportive learning environment, this approach not only meets academic goals but also addresses students' emotional and social needs. However, attention to the design of preparatory activities is essential to ensure their full effectiveness. Future iterations of this model should focus on refining these areas to further optimize the learning experience.

Teaching and Learning Implications

The integration of the flipped classroom and STAD techniques has important implications for teaching English grammar and syntax in Thailand's EFL context.

1. Improved Learning of Complex Concepts: Flipped learning allows students to review grammar rules and syntax before class, freeing up class time for practical, interactive exercises. This shift helps students better grasp and retain complex concepts.
2. Collaborative Learning: STAD encourages teamwork and peer-supported learning, fostering a collaborative environment that helps students practice grammar in groups, boosting both understanding and confidence.
3. Increased Engagement: These methods create an interactive classroom where Thai students, who may be hesitant to participate, are actively involved in applying grammar and syntax, leading to greater engagement and motivation.
4. Development of Communication Skills: By explaining and correcting grammar in groups, students enhance their speaking and listening skills, crucial for real-life language use.

5. Catering to Learning Styles: The flexibility of the Flipped Classroom allows students to engage with grammar lessons at their own pace, accommodating different learning preferences and improving satisfaction.

6. Better Retention: These strategies support long-term retention of grammar rules better than traditional methods, with interactive learning helping students internalize and apply concepts effectively.

7. Preparation for Real-World Use: The combination of active learning and teamwork equips students with practical language skills, preparing them for real-world communication. Overall, the Flipped Classroom and STAD techniques enhance learning outcomes, engagement, and skill development in teaching English grammar and syntax to Thai students.

Limitations

One limitation of the study is the small sample size, with only 16 first-year Thai Bachelor of Education students participating, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Additionally, the study focused solely on teaching the types and functions of parts of speech, which may not fully represent the effectiveness of the Flipped Classroom and STAD techniques for other areas of English language learning. The short duration of the study, with assessments conducted immediately after instruction and two weeks later, may also not capture long-term retention or the sustained impact of the instructional methods. Lastly, the reliance on self-reported data for student satisfaction through surveys may introduce bias, as students could respond favorably due to the novelty of the teaching approach rather than its actual effectiveness.

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Academic Writing Anxiety and Coping Strategies of EFL Postgraduate Students at a Thai University

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate symptoms and causes of academic writing anxiety among Thai postgraduate students of English as a foreign language, as well as the strategies that students use to cope with academic writing anxiety. The participants were 30 postgraduate students majoring in English in a Master of Arts (MA) program at a Thai university. The primary research instruments used in this study were the Academic Writing Anxiety Inventory (AWAI) and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative results revealed that cognitive anxiety emerged as the highest category. Additionally, the data indicated that a lack of topical knowledge was the most significant source of academic writing anxiety among the participants. The qualitative results demonstrated the participants' perceptions of academic writing and their strategies to cope with anxiety during the academic writing process. These strategies can be categorized into four main groups: seeking support from others, taking breaks or pausing during the writing process, adopting a positive mindset, and employing cognitive strategies such as effective time management. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges associated with writing anxiety in a graduate context.

Keywords: writing anxiety, academic writing, EFL learners, postgraduate students, Thai university

Introduction

Academic writing stands out as particularly complex among the different types of writing. Unlike other forms of writing, academic writing requires a formal tone, a well-organized structure, and a logical flow of ideas. According to Bailey (2014), academic writing serves two primary purposes: to report on completed research and to discuss topics from the writer's perspective. It also reflects a student's comprehension of learning materials, the ability to generate new ideas, and the application of knowledge. These characteristics make academic writing a vital skill for success in higher education, where students are expected to demonstrate their intellectual abilities through various forms of written work. These increased expectations can frequently

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lead to writing anxiety among students, as they face growing pressure to meet academic standards at higher levels of education.

In Thailand, academic writing plays a central role in university programs. Many universities require postgraduate students to publish at least one research paper in a national or international journal as a graduation requirement (Rungruangthum, 2011). For instance, at Khon Kaen University, postgraduate students across all disciplines must fulfill this requirement to obtain their degrees. This publication requirement places additional pressure on students, particularly those who are not native speakers of English. Publishing in international journals often involves meeting strict linguistic and academic standards, which can be challenging for EFL learners.

The challenges associated with academic writing can be exacerbated by anxiety. Anxiety can cause both positive and negative impacts on language learning. Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) explained that anxiety in writing tasks can cause cognitive resources to be depleted, even among competent students. When students are overwhelmed by anxiety, they may struggle to organize their thoughts, recall vocabulary, or adhere to grammatical rules, resulting in poor-quality writing. This is especially problematic in the setting of academic writing, where precision, clarity, and coherence are essential. Moreover, anxiety is often cited as one of the primary barriers to successful writing in a second or foreign language, making it a critical issue that requires further investigation (Cheng, 2002; Kondo & Ying-Ling, 2004). Addressing the writing anxiety is essential to improving both academic performance and overall well-being.

Although numerous studies have explored writing anxiety (e.g., Ariyanti, 2017; Kirmizi & Kirmizi, 2015; Qadir et al., 2021), there is still a lack of research specifically examining its symptoms, causes, and coping strategies among Thai postgraduate students. Research on academic writing anxiety is particularly important because it provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by EFL learners and offers practical solutions for addressing these challenges. Studies have shown that understanding the symptoms and causes of writing anxiety can help educators develop targeted interventions to support students. For instance, Wahyuni et al. (2019) found that providing students with constructive feedback and creating a supportive learning environment can significantly reduce writing anxiety. Similarly, Zhang (2011) emphasizes the importance of teaching students effective writing strategies, such as brainstorming, outlining, and revising, to build their confidence and competence.

In addition to addressing the symptoms of anxiety, research on academic writing anxiety can contribute to the development of educational policies and practices that promote student success (e.g., Cheng, 2004b; Horwitz, 2001). By identifying the factors that contribute to anxiety, educators and administrators can design curricula that are more inclusive and supportive of diverse learners. This is particularly relevant in Thailand, where English is a foreign language, and students face unique challenges in acquiring advanced writing skills (Rungruangthum, 2011). Moreover, researchers and educators in EFL contexts struggling with academic writing anxiety may adapt these findings as guidelines for designing curricula or supporting students in reducing writing

anxiety. However, investigation of the specific symptoms, causes, and coping strategies among Thai postgraduate students remains essential for bridging a critical gap. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the symptoms and causes of academic writing anxiety among Thai postgraduate students studying English as a foreign language?
2. How do Thai postgraduate students studying English as a foreign language deal with academic writing anxiety?

Literature Review

This section explores the key concepts and research that form the foundation of this study. It begins by discussing academic writing, focusing on its importance and the challenges it presents in the EFL context. The review then explores writing anxiety, examining its symptoms and causes and exploring practical strategies that students use to cope with it. Finally, the review highlights related studies, linking them to the current research to provide context and a clearer understanding of the topic.

Academic Writing

Academic writing is a formal style of writing used in scholarly and academic contexts to present ideas, research findings, and arguments. It is characterized by clarity, precision, objectivity, and evidence-based reasoning, aimed at contributing to the academic community (Swales & Feak, 2004). Academic writing typically adheres to specific structures and conventions, such as the use of formal tone, citation practices, and logical argumentation. In postgraduate settings, academic writing serves as a primary tool for expressing critical ideas and engaging in scholarly discourse, including the writing of research papers, theses, and journal articles (Hyland, 2009).

As Matsuda (2015) highlights, academic writing is not merely a linguistic activity but also a social and rhetorical process. It involves understanding the conventions of specific academic disciplines and engaging with the broader academic community. For postgraduate students, mastering academic writing requires both linguistic proficiency and rhetorical awareness, which are essential for producing high-quality work that meets disciplinary standards.

Academic writing is crucial in postgraduate education, as it is the primary mode of communication in academic environments. It allows students to present research, support claims with evidence, and contribute to knowledge in their field (Hyland, 2009). For postgraduate students, effective academic writing is vital for success in their studies and future careers, as it is required for producing dissertations, publishing research, and engaging with other scholars (Swales & Feak, 2004). Mastery of academic writing also enhances students' ability to think critically, analyze literature, and engage in intellectual debates (Tahira & Haider, 2019).

As Weigle (2002) emphasized, writing proficiency encompasses more than the ability to produce grammatically accurate sentences. It includes the ability to structure ideas coherently, use appropriate vocabulary, and tailor writing to meet academic and cultural expectations. This is particularly challenging for EFL students, who must balance language acquisition with mastering the rhetorical conventions of academic writing.

For EFL postgraduate students, academic writing presents specific challenges due to the demands of writing in a second language. Second-language learners are expected to produce written texts that demonstrate complexity, accuracy, and fluency (Zabihi et al., 2020). These measures assess students' ability to construct grammatically correct sentences (accuracy), present ideas with sophistication (complexity), and write seamlessly without hesitation (fluency) (Barrot & Agdeppa, 2021). However, EFL students often struggle with linguistic and cultural differences in writing conventions, which can hinder their ability to express complex ideas clearly and coherently (Leki, 2001). Additionally, the pressure to produce high-quality academic texts in a foreign language can lead to increased anxiety and feelings of self-doubt among EFL students, particularly when faced with the high expectations of academic institutions (Chatdecha & Liangpanit, 2023).

Writing Anxiety

Daly and Miller (1975) introduced the concept of writing anxiety, or writing apprehension, which describes the worry that students experience when completing written tasks. This anxiety often leads to a tendency to avoid the writing process or even academic examinations. Writing anxiety is considered a significant linguistic obstacle that prevents students from functioning effectively during writing activities (Aripin & Rahmat, 2021). Writing anxiety arises from concerns about how their writing will be perceived by others who read it (Rasuan & Wati, 2021). A number of research papers found that in the context of academic writing, students must produce clear, well-structured, and evidence-based arguments within strict academic conventions, which often trigger feelings of anxiety (Sa'adah & Ali, 2022). For example, Ariyati (2017) discovered that EFL students had the highest levels of writing anxiety when completing academic writing assignments. Moreover, Rohmah and Muslim (2021) investigated the perspectives of five EFL undergraduate students regarding their academic writing practices and the challenges related to writing anxiety. One of the students shared her anxiety-provoking experience when encountering her first academic writing task. She felt anxious due to the high level of difficulty it required, such as expressing her ideas in a series of sentences and organizing them into cohesive and coherent paragraphs.

Writing anxiety can hinder a learner's ability to write. Kurniawati and Atmojo (2022) identified three effects of writing anxiety on the thesis writing process, which is a form of academic writing. These effects include writing procrastination, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes. These consequences may increase students' anxiety and, as a result, lead them to avoid participating in writing activities altogether.

1. Symptoms and Causes of Writing Anxiety

Cheng (2004a) proposed a three-dimensional conceptualization of writing anxiety: Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior. Somatic Anxiety refers to physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, sweating, and muscle tension, particularly during high-stakes writing tasks. Cognitive Anxiety involves intrusive thoughts, mental blocks, and excessive self-doubt, which hinder the clarity and organization of ideas. Avoidance Behavior is demonstrated by a tendency to avoid writing tasks (Cheng, 2004a; Rasuan & Wati, 2021; Rudiyanto, 2017).

Moreover, Cheng (2004a) created the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), which consists of three subscales: Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior. They developed SLWAI from 10 reliable and valid instruments, using the quality of a timed essay as a measure of the participants' English writing performance (English Use Anxiety Scale, English Classroom Anxiety Scale, English Writing Apprehension/Attitude Test, English Writing Block Questionnaire, English Writing Self-Efficacy Scale, Personal Report of Communication Apprehension-College, Test Anxiety Scale, Math Anxiety Scale, English Writing Motivation Scale, State Anxiety Scale, Index of English Writing Performance). Numerous academics have investigated the links between various components of writing anxiety in second language and aspects of writing performance and practices using the SLWAI's three subscales (e.g., Rezaei & Jafari, 2014; Zhang, 2011). This SLWAI categorization is used in the current study to describe the symptoms of writing anxiety that EFL students encounter.

Zhang (2011) identified eight potential causes of ESL writing anxiety among Chinese English majors: a lack of topical knowledge, linguistic difficulties, fear of negative evaluation, low self-confidence, insufficient writing practice, insufficient writing technique, a lack of effective feedback, and a fear of tests. The researcher emphasized eight situation-specific remarks in the questionnaire. These are often encountered in circumstances involving second-language writing (Cheng, 2002; Hassan, 2001; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Similarly, Prasetyaningrum et al. (2021) identified four primary triggers of writing anxiety: a high frequency of writing assignments, low self-confidence, time pressure, and difficulties in topic selection. Wahyuni et al. (2019) also found issues with topic choice, linguistic difficulties, and lack of writing practice. Similarly, Rezaei and Jafari (2014) found that linguistic challenges and fear of assessments are key triggers for writing apprehension. Interpersonal concerns also play a significant role. Cheng (2004b) highlighted that fear of criticism or rejection from instructors or peers often amplifies writing anxiety.

Writing anxiety presents as a combination of physical, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms, influenced by a range of internal and external factors. These challenges can significantly impede students' academic performance, particularly in settings with high expectations and demanding standards. Addressing the underlying symptoms and causes is essential for reducing writing anxiety and fostering a supportive academic environment.

2. Strategies to Cope with Writing Anxiety

Examining practical strategies to manage writing anxiety during the academic writing process is essential, as writers in the field of language learning frequently encounter this challenge. Understanding effective coping strategies can benefit not only writers but also writing instructors and educators by providing targeted interventions to address anxiety (Talasee & Poopatwiboon, 2024). Wahyuni et al. (2019) suggested five key coping strategies employed by Indonesian EFL learners: preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, peer-seeking, and resignation. These findings align with the framework proposed by Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004), who categorized strategies for managing writing anxiety into three broad types: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive strategies involve techniques such as positive thinking and seeking peer support. Affective strategies, such as relaxation, aim to reduce stress and physical tension, while behavioral strategies emphasize preparation to enhance performance. Further supporting this framework, recent research has echoed the findings of Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004). For instance, Cahyono et al. (2023) and Chatdecha and Liangpanit (2023) found that EFL learners commonly adopt strategies aligned with cognitive, affective, and behavioral approaches. Additionally, specific techniques have been highlighted for their effectiveness. Talasee and Poopatwiboon (2024) emphasized the role of self-talk in managing writing anxiety, while Jawas (2019) underscored the importance of staying focused and calm during the writing process. Therefore, this research underscores the significance of understanding how EFL students cope with writing anxiety to design effective support systems. By combining insights from these studies, educators and instructors can implement targeted strategies that not only alleviate anxiety but also improve students' writing performance and overall confidence in academic tasks.

Related Studies

This section reviews previous research on language writing anxiety, particularly in relation to EFL learners. Several studies have explored writing anxiety during the writing process among EFL learners (e.g., Huwari & Al-Shboul, 2015; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). Sun et al. (2024) examined Chinese EFL learners' perceptions toward and sources of their writing anxiety during the writing process, highlighting the implications for the teaching and learning of EFL writing courses. Similarly, Wahyuni et al. (2019) investigated the levels, causes, and coping strategies of writing anxiety among Indonesian EFL college students. These studies suggested that EFL learners often experience anxiety during the writing process, primarily due to a lack of prior knowledge. Students reported feeling anxious when uncertain about how to organize their ideas or structure their writing. Furthermore, these learners expressed the need for strategies to reduce writing anxiety, including clear instructions on how to approach writing tasks, provision of appropriate resources, individualized feedback, and a supportive learning environment.

Additional research has investigated other components of second language writing anxiety. For instance, Shang (2013) explored potential associations between

foreign language writing anxiety, gender, year of writing experience, writing self-efficacy, and actual writing skills among 146 juniors majoring in English at a private university in Taiwan. The study found that writing anxiety is particularly prevalent in EFL writing courses, regardless of how long students had studied English writing. Male students, who tended to be more concerned about their writing, performed better than female students. Moreover, students with lower levels of anxiety felt more confident in their writing abilities, exhibiting greater self-efficacy and perceived writing skills.

Kirmizi and Kirmizi (2015) investigated writing self-efficacy, writing anxiety, and the cause of fear among 172 English Language and Literature students enrolled in a Turkish public institution. The data reveal that participants exhibit poor self-efficacy for content, correctness, design, and unity but a high level of efficacy for punctuation. The participants expressed a moderate amount of nervousness about writing. Male students, the study discovered, have better self-efficacy for writing and less writing anxiety. Furthermore, the study revealed that time restrictions and negative teacher evaluations were the two most often stated causes of writing anxiety in Turkish L2 students. Finally, correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant negative relationship between writing self-efficacy and writing anxiety.

On the other hand, Qadir et al. (2021) aimed to assess the amount of writing anxiety experienced by postgraduate students studying EFL in this context when writing in English. Additionally, the study evaluated the relationship between writing apprehension and age, gender, academic level, and socioeconomic status. Although nearly half of the students reported feeling extremely nervous when writing in English, the majority reported feeling moderately nervous, and the relationship between writing apprehension levels and variables was not statistically significant; that is, age, gender, academic level, and socioeconomic status did not affect writing apprehension. Nonetheless, instructors should be aware of the signs of writing anxiety in the classroom and take steps to reduce it. Aripin and Rahmat (2021) also discovered evidence of writing anxiety displayed by a female ESL writer during the writing process.

When considering the context of writing, several studies have supported exploring writing anxiety in the aspect of academic writing. Oi (2023) highlighted the academic writing demands at universities, noting that students are required to express logical thinking and high-level reasoning. This academic environment can influence students' writing anxiety, particularly in English academic writing. Similarly, Ariyati (2017) examined writing anxiety among EFL students at the university level, finding that students experienced high levels of anxiety due to time constraints and a lack of self-confidence, often stemming from insufficient English proficiency.

As highlighted in previous research, much of the existing literature on writing anxiety in a second language primarily focuses on undergraduate students, with limited attention given to postgraduate students across various academic years. While many studies have explored ESL writing anxiety, there is a noticeable gap in research specifically examining how EFL postgraduate students experience and manage writing anxiety within the context of academic writing. This gap is particularly critical, as

postgraduate students often face distinct challenges in academic writing that are not adequately addressed in the existing literature. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing language writing anxiety among Thai EFL postgraduate students. Using a mixed-methods research design that includes a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, the study investigated the symptoms and causes of writing anxiety among these students and the strategies they use to cope with it. By focusing specifically on Thai EFL postgraduate students, this research seeks to offer valuable insights into how they manage the unique pressures of academic writing anxiety and contribute to the development of more targeted, effective instructional strategies in this area.

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study were 30 postgraduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts in English program at Khon Kaen University. These students were selected with quota sampling to ensure an equal representation of first-year, second-year, and third-year students, with an equal distribution of 10 participants from each year group. Quota sampling was selected to capture diverse perspectives and experiences across different academic stages, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. They all agreed to complete the online survey and participate in the semi-structured interviews voluntarily. The selection criteria were as follows:

- First-year students: Participants had completed at least three credits in a course focusing on Academic Reading and Writing in English. They had experience in academic English writing tasks such as report writing and mini-research projects.
- Second-year students: Participants had completed at least three credits in a thesis-related course and gained experience drafting thesis proposals in English.
- Third-year students: Participants had completed at least five credits in thesis-related courses and had successfully defended their thesis proposals. They also had extensive experience in writing theses and research papers in English.

All participants were enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2022 and had experienced at least one semester of academic English writing instruction. This ensured that they could provide valuable insights into their experiences as EFL learners in academic writing contexts.

The university review board granted an ethics approval of the study (HE663102) before participant recruitment and data collection.

Research Instruments

The present study employed two instruments. First, the Academic Writing Anxiety Inventory (AWAI) questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. This five-Likert scale questionnaire was adapted from Cheng (2004a), which demonstrated

strong internal reliability, with a reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91., and Zhang (2011), which addresses specific writing experiences encountered by EFL students and had been adopted in many studies related to second language writing anxiety in the EFL context (e.g., Syarifudin, 2020). Referring to these justifications, the measures were renamed the Academic Writing Anxiety Inventory (AWAI) and employed to assess participants' anxiety symptoms and causes during the academic writing process.

The questionnaire includes three sections: (1) Personal Data, (2) Anxiety Symptoms, and (3) Anxiety in Writing Situations. To ensure its validity, two specialists in applied linguistics and English language education reviewed the questionnaire for content validity. All items received an IOC score of 1.0, indicating a high level of congruence with the research objectives. Once finalized, the questionnaire was created using Google Forms for distribution and data collection.

A semi-structured interview was also employed to collect qualitative data to investigate strategies the students used to cope with their difficulties and anxiety. The interview questions were adapted from Aripin and Rahmat (2021), which cover key aspects relevant to this study. Specifically, the questions explored the strategies employed by participants with high levels of writing anxiety to manage their challenges effectively. The interview focused on two main themes: (1) participants' general perceptions of English writing and the difficulties they face, and (2) the strategies they use to address their difficulties and anxiety. The validity of the interview questions was reviewed by the same two specialists who validated the questionnaire, with all items receiving an IOC score of 1.0. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, facilitating in-depth discussions while maintaining flexibility in the interview process.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were collected between July and September 2023, during a period when remote learning was still in effect due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire link was distributed through both formal and informal channels, including Facebook chat and Line groups, to ensure a broad reach among the participants. The collected data were then analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation (SD). Additionally, five negatively worded items (1, 4, 17, 18, and 22) from the Anxiety Symptoms section were reverse-scored before being included in the quantitative analysis. The interpretation of the mean scores for each item in Anxiety Symptoms section is as follows: 1.00–1.49 means *No Anxiety or Very Low Anxiety,* 1.50–2.49 means *Low Anxiety,* 2.50–3.49 means *Moderate Anxiety,* 3.50–4.49 means *High Anxiety,* 4.50–5.00 means *Very High Anxiety.* The interpretation of the mean scores for each item in the Writing Situations section is as follows: 1.00–1.49 means *Strongly disagree*, 1.50–2.49 means *Disagree*, 2.50–3.49 means *Moderate*, 3.50–4.49 means *Agree*, 4.50–5.00 means *Strongly agree.*

After the questionnaire results were gathered, students with high levels of anxiety were selected for individual interviews to examine the strategies they use to

manage it. Prior to the interviews, participants provided informed consent, and permission was obtained to record both video and audio for transcription and analysis. During the semi-structured interviews, students were asked to recall the contexts and situations in which they felt anxious while writing academic tasks and the difficulties they encountered when writing in academic English. The participants were encouraged to share the strategies they used to cope with it.

The interview data was transcribed, and after which the researcher carefully reviewed and coded significant features throughout the data. These codes were subsequently categorized into themes. The themes were then detailed and summarized to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

Results

The results are reported and discussed to address the two research questions in this study. Quantitative data were analyzed to answer Research Question 1: *What are the anxiety symptoms and causes of academic writing anxiety among Thai postgraduate students studying English as a foreign language?* Meanwhile, qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews were used to explore Research Question 2: *How do Thai postgraduate students of English deal with academic writing anxiety?*

1. Anxiety symptoms of academic writing

This section reports academic writing anxiety symptoms based on a three-dimensional conceptualization of academic writing anxiety, which includes Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior (Cheng, 2004a). The data is presented in an overall summary and analyzed according to the students' academic year.

The overall academic writing anxiety among Thai postgraduate students is categorized into somatic anxiety, cognitive anxiety, and avoidance behavior. According to Table 1, cognitive anxiety emerged as the highest category ($\bar{x}$=2.79, SD=1.20), indicating a moderate level of anxiety. The data suggest that students experience significant concern and nervousness when their academic writing tasks are evaluated. This is evidenced by the highest score ($\bar{x}$=3.31, SD=1.25), followed by somatic anxiety ($\bar{x}$=2.65, SD=1.13), indicating that the students experience physical symptoms of anxiety during academic writing tasks. Particularly, item 2 ($\bar{x}$=3.00, SD=0.82) and item 6 ($\bar{x}$=3.00, SD=1.22) reflect moderate anxiety levels. Avoidance behavior had the lowest score ($\bar{x}$=2.29, SD=1.18), indicating a lower level of engagement in avoidance-related behaviors. Specifically, item 4 ($\bar{x}$=2.00, SD=0.91) and item 18 showed low engagement in English writing practice outside the classroom ($\bar{x}$=2.08, SD=0.95).

Table 1

Overall Anxiety Symptoms of Academic Writing Anxiety

Items	x̄	SD	Meaning
Somatic Anxiety			
Item 2. When I'm pressed for time and have to do English writing tasks, research proposals, or thesis proposals, my heart starts to race a little faster.	3.00	0.82	Moderate Anxiety
Item 6. When I begin working on English writing assignments, research proposals, or thesis, my mind frequently goes blank.	3.00	1.22	Moderate Anxiety
Item 8. I tremble or perspire when I am pressed for time when composing English writing assignments, research proposals, and thesis.	2.54	0.88	Moderate Anxiety
Item 11. My ideas become confused when I am pressed for time when completing English writing assignments, research proposals, and thesis.	2.92	1.38	Moderate Anxiety
Item 13. I frequently experience fear when I am pressed for time when completing English writing assignments, research proposals, and thesis.	2.46	1.13	Low Anxiety
Item 15. When I am abruptly assigned English writing assignments, research proposals, or a thesis, I freeze.	2.31	1.11	Low Anxiety
Item 19. When I compose English writing assignments, research proposals, and thesis, I frequently feel my entire body hard and strained.	2.31	1.25	Low Anxiety
Total	**2.65**	**1.13**	**Moderate Anxiety**
Cognitive Anxiety			
Item 1. I'm not nervous at all while writing in English.	2.69	1.11	Moderate Anxiety
Item 3. When I'm creating English writing assignments, research proposals, or thesis, I'm concerned and nervous if I'm aware they'll be reviewed.	3.31	1.25	Moderate Anxiety
Item 7. I'm not concerned that my English writing assignments, research proposal, and thesis are far worse than those of my classmates.	2.85	1.21	Moderate Anxiety
Item 9. If my English writing assignments, research proposal, and thesis are reviewed, I'm afraid I'll receive a failing mark.	2.54	1.27	Moderate Anxiety
Item 14. I'm afraid that other students would deride my English writing assignments, research proposal, and thesis if they read it.	2.62	1.12	Moderate Anxiety
Item 17. I am completely unconcerned with what others think of my English writing assignments, research proposal, and thesis.	3.08	1.26	Moderate Anxiety
Item 20. I'm scared that my English writing assignments, research proposal, and thesis will be selected for discussion in class as an example.	2.46	1.33	Low Anxiety
Item 21. I have no fear that my English writing assignments, research proposal, or thesis will receive a very low grade.	2.77	1.17	Moderate Anxiety
Total	**2.79**	**1.20**	**Moderate Anxiety**

Avoidance Behavior			
Item 4. I frequently choose to write my thoughts down in English.	2.00	0.91	Low Anxiety
Item 5. Generally, I make an effort to avoid English writing assignments, research proposals, and thesis writing.	2.31	1.25	Low Anxiety
Item 10. I make every effort to avoid circumstances that need me to write in English.	2.15	1.28	Low Anxiety
Item 12. Unless I were forced to, I would avoid writing assignments, research proposals, and thesis in English.	2.15	0.99	Low Anxiety
Item 16. If required to compose English writing assignments, research proposals, or a thesis, I would make every effort to excuse myself.	2.92	1.44	Moderate Anxiety
Item 18. I normally take advantage of any opportunity outside of class to complete English writing assignments, research proposals, and thesis	2.08	0.95	Low Anxiety
Item 22. Whenever feasible, I would write my assignments, research proposals, and thesis in English.	2.38	1.33	Low Anxiety
Total	**2.29**	**1.18**	**Low Anxiety**

2. Causes of academic writing anxiety

The questionnaire investigated the causes of academic writing anxiety in eight areas: lack of topical knowledge, linguistic difficulties, fear of negative evaluation, low confidence, insufficient writing practice, insufficient writing technique, lack of effective feedback, and fear of tests. The participants were asked to identify the causes or factors that contribute to their academic writing anxiety.

Table 2

Causes of Academic Writing Anxiety

Causes	$\bar{x}$	SD	Meaning
1. Lack of topical knowledge	3.00	1.08	Moderate
2. Linguistic difficulties	2.69	0.95	Moderate
3. Fear of negative evaluation	2.54	1.27	Moderate
4. Low confidence	2.85	1.46	Moderate
5. Insufficient writing practice	2.62	1.19	Moderate
6. Insufficient writing technique	2.77	1.09	Moderate
7. Lack of effective feedback	2.15	0.99	Disagree
8. Fear of test	2.77	1.42	Moderate
Total	**2.67**	**1.18**	**Moderate**

Table 2 indicates that the most significant source of academic writing anxiety is the lack of topical knowledge. Students frequently report that they do not know what to write, particularly under time constraints ($\bar{x}$=3.00, SD=1.08), followed by low confidence ($\bar{x}$=2.85, SD=1.46), and insufficient writing technique ($\bar{x}$=2.77, SD=1.09). A lack of effective feedback was the least significant cause of academic writing anxiety ($\bar{x}$=2.15, SD=0.99).

3. Postgraduate students' coping strategies for academic writing anxiety

To answer Research Question 2, "*How do Thai postgraduate students studying English as a foreign language deal with academic writing anxiety?*", five participants who experienced high levels of academic writing anxiety were interviewed regarding the strategies they use to cope with the difficulties and anxiety when writing academic papers. The findings revealed that all five participants with high levels of academic writing anxiety were third-year students. Their responses were recorded and analyzed. The data provided insights into their perceptions of English academic writing, emphasizing the strategies they employed to overcome their academic writing anxiety. The participants utilized various ways to deal with their anxiety such as seeking support from others, using cognitive strategies, and time management.

The first strategy highlighted by almost all respondents was the importance of seeking support from others to cope with writing anxiety. Students 2 and 5 mentioned that they often talked to their MA classmates or peers with similar experiences to share the difficulties they were facing. They believed this not only helped relieve some of the pressure but also provided practical solutions, as their peers occasionally suggested strategies they had successfully used in the past. Similarly, Student 4 sought support from someone they trusted and who could serve as a good listener after an unsuccessful attempt to consult with their supervisor, much like Student 1, who chose to talk with their mother. The excerpt below reflects their perspectives: *"...I talked to my mother. She is my good listener, but she cannot help me…"* (Student 1)

> *"I talked to my MA classmate who can be my assistance and also consult with my advisor and other professor to help me in my works"* (Student 2)

> *"I try to talk to my advisor and consult about my work but sometimes it doesn't help me a lot."* (Student 4)

> *"I talked to my boyfriend and find someone who can be my listener. Sometimes I just want to express my tension out. I did not want anyone to give me the advice or answer"* (Student 4)

> *"...I talk to my peers"* (Student 5)

The second strategy for reducing writing anxiety involved taking a pause or break from the writing process. Three participants mentioned using this approach. Students 2 and 4 believed that when they were under pressure and experiencing anxiety, they were unable to produce quality work. Taking a short break allowed them to return to the process with a clearer mindset. Similarly, Student 5 emphasized the importance of relaxation and mentioned finding comfort in food that improved their mood and helped them feel more positive. The excerpts below reflect their perspectives:

> *"… Sometimes I don't even have in progress of my work because I cannot write. I'm paused and when I feel better. I will write again…" (Student 2)*

"...Actually, when I have anxiety, I stop writing my thesis. I know that if I force myself to do my work would come out not good…." (Student 4)

"...I go outside and take a break from my work and eat…" (Student 5)

The third strategy was developing a positive mindset. Two participants emphasized the importance of this approach. Student 2 explained that adopting the mindset of taking small steps and accepting this small progress helped reduce self-imposed pressure. Similarly, Student 3 shared that managing expectations, including concentrating on others and not focusing only on submission deadlines and supervisor feedback, helped them feel less anxious. Both participants highlighted that adjusting their mindset played a significant role in coping with writing anxiety. The excerpts below reflect their perspectives:

"... I try to do a bit by a bit and tell myself that it's okay I try my best. Don't put pressure on myself you can do as you okay…" (Student 2)

"…I thought that I write this for my friend not for my teacher. I think about others. If I think I have to submit to teacher in time, I will think a lot and cannot write..." (Student 3)

The last strategy for managing writing anxiety was effective time management. Student 1 emphasized the importance of planning and allocating sufficient time for writing tasks. They believed that having more time to work on their writing allowed them to produce better-quality work and reduced the stress associated with tight deadlines. This approach highlights the role of time management in alleviating pressure and enabling a more focused and less anxious writing process. The excerpt below reflects their perspectives:

"If I have more time, I would write better." (Student 1)

Discussion

The results are discussed in two main aspects. First, the analysis focuses on the anxiety symptoms and causes of academic writing anxiety among Thai postgraduate students studying English as a foreign language. Second, the discussion highlights the strategies employed by Thai postgraduate students to manage and cope with academic writing anxiety.

As for the symptoms of academic writing anxiety, the results from the AWAI questionnaire revealed that cognitive anxiety is the most dominant symptom of academic writing anxiety experienced by Thai postgraduate students. This finding aligns with Cheng's (2004a) three-dimensional model of writing anxiety, which identifies cognitive anxiety as a key component characterized by excessive worry, fear of negative evaluation, and self-doubt. The prominence of cognitive anxiety in this study confirms its central role in EFL learners' writing experiences. Specifically,

students expressed significant concern and nervousness when their academic writing tasks were evaluated. This finding aligns with prior research. For instance, Zhang (2011) identified cognitive anxiety as the most common form of ESL writing anxiety among Chinese English majors, attributed mainly to high-pressure tests and evaluations. Similarly, Wern and Rahmat (2021) observed a high prevalence of cognitive anxiety among Chinese students. These parallels suggest that cognitive anxiety may be a widespread issue in EFL contexts, particularly in Asian cultures where academic success is often closely tied to personal and social expectations.

The findings further support those of Rezaei and Jafari (2014), who identified cognitive anxiety as the primary cause of high levels of writing anxiety among Iranian students. Their research indicated that an intense focus on performance, combined with overly high expectations of both themselves and their instructors, heightened anxiety levels. A critical examination of these patterns suggests a possible cultural influence on cognitive anxiety, where collectivist values and a strong focus on academic success may intensify students' fear of failure or criticism. It is important to recognize that while cognitive anxiety is a significant factor, other factors also contribute to the challenges faced by EFL students. For instance, the fear of making grammatical mistakes, using incorrect vocabulary, or not following the rules of academic writing in English can increase cognitive anxiety (Rasuan & Wati, 2021). This highlights the dual challenge EFL learners face in mastering both language proficiency and academic writing standards, which can feel particularly overwhelming. It is also similar to the findings of Ariyati (2017), who reported that the fear of receiving negative feedback or failing to meet professors' expectations can considerably increase anxiety levels. This suggests that cognitive anxiety is not entirely self-imposed but is also influenced by external factors such as instructor attitudes and institutional assessment methods.

The results related to the causes of academic writing anxiety revealed that a lack of topical knowledge was the largest challenge experienced by Thai postgraduate students. Also, the students reported struggling with the issue of topical knowledge, particularly under time pressure. Aripin and Rahmat (2021) found similar results, indicating that time pressure results in it being even more difficult for students to generate ideas and organize their thoughts. When students are asked to write about unfamiliar topics with tight deadlines, they may experience higher cognitive anxiety and feel unprepared and stressed (Cheng, 2004b; Prasetyaningrum et al., 2021). This stress is exacerbated by the need to write clearly in English, which requires both language skills and a good understanding of the topic. When students lack knowledge about the topic, it increases the difficulty for them to generate ideas, lowers their confidence, and affects their overall writing (Ariyati, 2017). The interaction between limited content knowledge and linguistic challenges suggests a need for integrated approaches that address both knowledge-building and language proficiency simultaneously.

The results of the present study also show that low confidence is a significant factor contributing to academic writing anxiety. This finding is similar to those reported by Prasetyaningrum et al. (2021). This issue is particularly challenging for students

learning EFL, as they already face difficulties writing in a language that is not their own (Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). To address this, Wahyuni et al. (2019) suggested incorporating reading and writing in class, which can help students build sufficient knowledge on the topic. In addition, classroom management should be carefully designed to support students in improving their writing skills (Pimsarn, 2013). Providing a specific program to encourage additional writing practice beyond standard curriculum topics can also boost students' confidence and reduce their sense of being overwhelmed (Wahyuni et al., 2019).

In addition, the results from the AWAI questionnaire accord with those of the semi-structured interviews in that the postgraduate participants were particularly concerned about linguistic issues such as writing fluency and grammatical accuracy. Some reported that receiving low writing scores in childhood led to a lack of confidence in their writing abilities. This finding suggests that the issue of confidence is not isolated. It is deeply connected to students' previous experiences, particularly those involving negative feedback. These results are consistent with many previous studies (e.g., Cheng, 2004b; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014; Wahyuni et al., 2019; Zhang, 2011), which confirm that students in an EFL context face significant challenges in academic English writing, particularly in the aspects of linguistic difficulties and low confidence. Linguistic difficulties, including problems with grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, appear to be a crucial factor for EFL students, unlike native students, because the EFL context often emphasizes grading and evaluation procedures (Zhang, 2011). This suggests that evaluation can lead to increased pressure on students, making them more vulnerable to anxiety, especially when they receive negative feedback. The impact of the pressure is evident in the current study, in which one participant mentioned that negative evaluations caused them to suffer and doubt their writing abilities (Kurniawati & Atmojo, 2022). This underscores the long-term impact of assessment practices on students' self-perception and writing abilities. This finding is also consistent with the study of Shang (2013), which noted that EFL students often struggle with confidence in their writing due to the high stakes associated with grading and assessment. The fear of making mistakes and receiving low scores can create a cycle of anxiety that reduces students' ability to express themselves effectively in writing.

To ameliorate this issue, feedback and evaluation should not focus primarily on grammar or textual organization; students' ideas should also be valued. As suggested by Kara (2013), instructors should approach error correction as an opportunity to encourage growth and learning rather than as a form of punishment. To help students alleviate academic writing anxiety stemming from low confidence in their writing ability, it may be helpful to encourage them to recognize that they are not alone in their anxiety. Group discussions in small groups or with the whole class can allow students to express their concerns regarding academic writing (Cheng, 2004b).

The findings of this study indicate that most participants adopted various strategies to cope with academic writing anxiety. A common approach was seeking support from individuals they trust, such as teachers, peers, or significant others. This aligns with findings from previous studies (e.g., Cahyono et al., 2023; Jawas, 2019;

Kurniawati & Atmojo, 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2019), which emphasize the importance of social support in alleviating anxiety and building confidence. However, while effective, this strategy highlights systemic issues. Reliance on peer or teacher support raises concerns about the availability and accessibility of these resources. Additionally, the effectiveness of creating a collaborative environment, where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and receiving feedback, is also worth exploring critically. Another key strategy reported by participants was taking pauses or short breaks during the writing process. Participants noted that stepping away from their work temporarily helped them manage their anxiety and approach writing with greater clarity. This finding aligns with Jawas's (2019) study, which highlights the benefits of such breaks in reframing thoughts, reducing stress, and enabling students to approach academic writing with greater ease and focus. By incorporating these practices, students can work more comfortably and maintain a healthier mindset while navigating the demands of academic writing. However, while this strategy appears individually effective, it may lead to concern about how students manage their overall time and workload. Without proper time management skills, this strategy could delay progress and contribute to a cycle of procrastination.

The findings highlight that while students employ various strategies to manage academic writing anxiety, these methods have their limitations. To provide more effective support, academic institutions need to address the structural and pedagogical factors contributing to this anxiety. Integrating individual approaches, such as seeking support and taking breaks with initiatives, guided peer feedback, and time management training, can help students navigate the challenges of academic writing with greater confidence and less stress.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the symptoms and causes of academic writing anxiety among Thai postgraduate EFL students and how they manage this anxiety. The findings revealed that cognitive anxiety was the most prominent type of academic writing anxiety. Major causes included a lack of topical knowledge, low confidence, and linguistic difficulties. The study also highlighted that high levels of anxiety were closely linked to linguistic challenges and low confidence in academic English writing. Participants identified four key strategies for managing academic writing anxiety: seeking support from others, taking breaks or pausing during the writing process, adopting a positive mindset, and employing cognitive strategies such as effective time management.

Based on these findings, it is evident that academic writing anxiety significantly impacts EFL students, especially given the high standards required for graduation. These findings may guide instructors and universities in curriculum design and classroom management. First, to reduce the fear of negative evaluation, instructors should focus on the clarity of students' ideas as much as grammar accuracy. Second, creating opportunities for students to share and address their concerns during the writing

process can help build confidence. Finally, to address a lack of topical knowledge, instructors should incorporate reading activities that expose students to diverse topics.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study can be further enhanced by increasing the number of participants and including students from all academic years. The small sample size and limited representation across academic levels may not fully capture the broader population. Future research should include more participants from each year level to provide more comprehensive insights. Furthermore, the data were collected during a period of remote online learning, which may have influenced participants' responses and the data collection process. The online format might have restricted the depth of interaction and the immediacy of participants' reactions. Future studies should consider in-person data collection methods, such as face-to-face interviews or focus groups, to gather more detailed information about students' experiences.

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Task-Based Language Teaching to Develop Japanese Language Speaking Skills among Thai Secondary Students

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Abstract

Japanese is a widely taught foreign language in Thailand, with secondary school students being the largest group of learners. However, many students struggle with speaking Japanese. This study aimed to address this issue by: (1) developing task-based language teaching (TBLT) lesson plans to improve the speaking skills of Thai learners, targeting an efficiency criterion of 75/75; (2) evaluating the influence of TBLT on students' anxiety related to speaking Japanese; and (3) exploring students' attitudes towards the TBLT lesson plans. The study used a single-group quasi-experimental design. Data were collected over four action research cycles, involving 42 purposively selected secondary school students enrolled in a Japanese elective course. The instruments used included post-cycle tests, post-tests, and questionnaires. The findings revealed that: (1) the TBLT lesson plans achieved an efficiency criterion of 83.13/85.94, exceeding the target of 75/75; (2) a paired samples *t*-test indicated a significant reduction in students' anxiety levels, with scores before the intervention ($M = 20.190$, $SD = 1.131$) compared to after the intervention ($M = 16.595$, $SD = 1.594$); $t(41) = 14.217$, $p < .01$; and (3) the questionnaire results showed positive attitudes towards the TBLT lesson plans. Additionally, the study discussed the challenges encountered and provided pedagogical implications for future practice.

Keywords: task-based language teaching; Japanese language education; speaking skills; Thai secondary students

Introduction

Learning a foreign language is increasingly important not only for economic cooperation and cultural exchange but also for enhancing career opportunities. According to the International Monetary Fund (2024), Japan ranks among the top five largest economies in the world by nominal GDP. Proficiency in Japanese can be a valuable asset in international business, as it opens doors to opportunities in trade, diplomacy, and global business relations. In addition, Japan's cultural exports, particularly in the entertainment sector through anime and manga, have sparked

greater interest in learning the Japanese language (Japan Foundation, 2023). McGibney (2022) notes that there are approximately 4 million Japanese-language learners worldwide, ranking sixth after English, French, Mandarin, Spanish, and German.

McGibney's statement aligns with findings from a survey conducted by the Japan Foundation in fiscal year 2021. The Japan Foundation (2023, pp. 7-32) reports that Japanese language education is being implemented in 141 countries and regions, with a total of 3,794,814 learners. Particularly in Southeast Asia, the number of institutions, teachers, and learners has increased to more than 100,000 people in the region overall. Notably, Indonesia ranks as the country with the second-largest number of Japanese language learners in the world. The primary goal of learning Japanese in Southeast Asia is to foster interest in the language, which accounts for 60.1% of the motivation. Thailand ranks fifth in terms of total learners, with 183,957 students.

According to the Japan Foundation (2020, p. 34), approximately 80% of students studying Japanese are enrolled in secondary schools. This trend is attributed to the establishment of World Class Standard Schools (WCSSs) by the Thai Ministry as part of its policy to enhance the quality of secondary education. Consequently, Japanese is taught as a second foreign language alongside other languages. Additionally, student enrollment in Japanese language programs has increased due to the expansion of these programs and the annual dispatch of Japanese volunteers, known as NIHONGO partners, to secondary schools.

Kaewkitsadang and Srisattarat (2012) found that Thai teachers encounter significant challenges in teaching Japanese at the secondary level, primarily due to students' limited opportunities to communicate in Japanese outside the classroom. This lack of practice is a major hurdle for many educators. To encourage language students to apply what they have learned, it is essential to offer opportunities for speaking in real-life contexts based on everyday situations (Lantolf, 2000).

During a Japanese listening and speaking class at a school in Northeastern Thailand, the researcher observed that some students struggled with speech issues such as stuttering, incorrect intonation, a lack of confidence, and passivity in the classroom. To identify classroom-related issues, the researcher conducted a pre-intervention survey focused on anxiety associated with speaking Japanese. The results showed that the majority of these students experienced high levels of anxiety. Many students expressed concerns about the embarrassment of speaking Japanese in class and the fear of making mistakes in their communication.

Since the 15th century, various methodologies for language teaching have been developed, including the audio-lingual method, traditional grammar-translation, structural approaches, and the natural approach. Currently, communicative language teaching (CLT) is regarded as the primary method used by educational institutions worldwide for language instruction (Hein, 2021; Nishino, 2012; Richards, 2006).

Littlewood (2007) also noted that improving learners' communication competence is a national policy for teaching foreign languages in ASEAN countries (Tay, 2015; Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017). Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of these methods, allowing students to utilize their skills to communicate in the classroom through the completion of tasks (Nunan, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Robillos & Bustos, 2023).

In Thailand, TBLT has mainly been applied to teaching English. Research indicates that it is effective in enhancing language learners' performance in areas such as vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and particularly in listening and speaking skills (Bunmak, 2017). However, there is a noticeable lack of published research on the effectiveness of TBLT for teaching Japanese within the Thai context (Kobayashi, 2015).

For this reason, this study aims to develop TBLT lesson plans specifically designed to enhance the speaking skills of Thai learners studying Japanese to meet the efficiency criterion (E1/E2) of 75/75. The need for these TBLT lesson plans arises from the lack of TBLT applications in Japanese language instruction in Thailand. While TBLT has proven effective in improving language learners' performance in other languages, such as English, it is rarely utilized in Japanese classrooms. This scarcity indicates a gap in teaching methods that could enhance learners' speaking skills through practical, task-oriented activities. The development of TBLT lesson plans aims to fill this gap by providing a structured, task-oriented approach to language instruction that fosters meaningful communication and active participation. Traditional Japanese language instruction may not adequately emphasize real-world language use, which could hinder students' speaking skills. By incorporating TBLT, this study aims to provide an innovative solution that not only meets students' educational needs but also addresses the limited research on TBLT for Japanese language instruction in Thailand.

The research questions are as follows: (1) Do the TBLT lesson plans meet the efficiency criterion of 75/75? (2) Does the implementation of TBLT lead to a reduction in students' anxiety? (3) What are students' perceptions of TBLT?

Literature Review

Importance of Learning Japanese

Learning Japanese has become increasingly important due to its influence on global economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and career opportunities. As one of the most studied languages in the world, Japanese occupies a significant place due to Japan's role in technology, industry, and cultural impact (The Thai Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade of Thailand, 2023). McGibney (2022) notes that Japanese is the sixth most popular language globally, a ranking supported by Japan's strong economic presence and cultural exports such as anime and manga. This

widespread interest is also demonstrated in a survey conducted by the Japan Foundation (2023), which reports that Japanese language education is active in 141 countries, with nearly 3.8 million learners worldwide. Particularly in Southeast Asia, there has been a substantial increase in the number of learners, driven by cultural fascination and the economic opportunities associated with Japan.

Despite positive trends, gaps still exist in research regarding the importance of learning Japanese. Current studies often overlook the impact of recent technological advancements and media trends on language learning (Robillos & Bustos, 2023). For example, there is a lack of updated research exploring how digital platforms and modern media influence learners' motivations and language acquisition processes. Furthermore, more detailed studies are needed to investigate the specific regional factors contributing to the growing popularity of Japanese in Southeast Asia, such as socio-economic changes and local educational policies. Addressing these gaps could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Japanese language learning trends are evolving in response to contemporary influences.

Teaching Japanese in Thailand presents several unique challenges, especially in developing students' speaking skills. According to Kaewkitsadang and Srisattarat (2012), Thai educators face significant difficulties due to the limited opportunities for students to use Japanese in real-world situations outside the classroom. This lack of practical application greatly impedes students' ability to achieve fluency and confidence in their language skills. Without regular and practical use of the Japanese language, students often find it challenging to apply what they have learned in class to everyday communication.

Jaisamak and Wechayaluck (2022, pp. 179-180) conducted a study on the management of Japanese language learning in the Northern region, collecting data from 133 administrators and teachers. They found that teachers strictly followed textbook-based instruction and lacked the skills to design activities allowing students to practice using the language in real-life contexts. Besides, the teachers were unable to create flexible learning management strategies that accommodated their students' current learning styles. Furthermore, they had a limited understanding of how to measure and evaluate learning outcomes, particularly in terms of formative and summative assessments.

Joemkhunthod (2020, pp. 60-61) discussed Japanese language teaching in Sisaket province, located in Northeastern Thailand. The report noted that the popularity of Japanese language instruction is limited, partly due to the province's proximity to the Cambodian border, which creates an environment less conducive to using Japanese. Also, teachers tend to focus more on grammar structures than on developing students' speaking skills, resulting in minimal time allocated for speaking practice. Furthermore, some scenarios presented in the textbooks are not relevant to students' everyday lives, leading to a lack of interest in the language. Students also encounter challenges such as

a lack of confidence in expressing themselves, fear of speaking, and embarrassment when trying to pronounce words correctly.

Cultural factors and the lack of immersive language environments significantly complicate the process of speaking Japanese, making it feel overwhelming for many students. Observations in secondary schools in Northeastern Thailand indicate that students encounter various challenges, including stuttering, incorrect intonation, and a general lack of confidence. These difficulties not only hinder their ability to communicate effectively but also negatively impact their overall learning experience and motivation to improve their Japanese language skills. To address these issues, innovative approaches and tailored strategies are necessary to better support students in overcoming their speaking challenges and enhancing their fluency.

TBLT in Language Instruction

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained recognition for its effectiveness in enhancing communicative competence through practical, real-world tasks (Bunmak, 2017; Robillos & Bustos, 2023). This approach significantly improves various aspects of language performance, including vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and, notably, speaking and listening skills (Bunmak, 2017). TBLT encourages meaningful language use, which fosters better communication skills (Willis, 1996). The TBLT framework, introduced by Willis (1996), consists of three stages: the pre-task stage, which presents the topic and relevant vocabulary; the task cycle, involving task completion, planning, and reporting with feedback on content and form; and the language focus phase, which provides explicit instruction on specific language features, including analysis and practice.

Many scholars and educators consider TBLT as an effective method for improving language proficiency (Chou, 2016; Siriwong, 2020). Research has shown that TBLT positively impacts students' speaking skills, with learners demonstrating a strong interest in developing their speaking skills through this approach (Joemkhunthod, 2020; Sae-ong, 2010; Shumin, 2002; Tareq, 2009). Furthermore, students exhibit positive attitudes towards communicative activities in the classroom, which leads to a notable increase in their motivation. Moreover, TBLT successfully promotes the development of target language acquisition. Notably, TBLT also provides learners with valuable opportunities to interact with their classmates, thereby supporting collaborative learning. (Crookes & Gass, 1993; Lochana & Deb, 2006; Pongsawang, 2012).

Despite its advantages, TBLT has several drawbacks. One major challenge is designing assignments that accommodate students with different levels of language proficiency (Ellis, 2003). Furthermore, creating context-specific tasks for TBLT requires a high level of teacher expertise, which can be time-consuming and may not align with conventional curricula (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). Additionally, some instructors argue that direct grammar instruction is essential; however, TBLT's

emphasis on communication often overlooks this component (Skehan, 1998). Finally, assessing students' progress in task-based learning can be challenging, as traditional assessment methods may not effectively measure the outcomes of this approach (Van den Branden, 2006).

Although the benefits of TBLT have been extensively studied in the context of teaching English (Pham & Do, 2021; Robillos & Bustos, 2023), its application to Japanese language instruction is still relatively underexplored, especially in the Thai educational context. Investigating how TBLT can be adapted to fit the Japanese curriculum could provide valuable insights. Addressing these gaps will not only enhance the understanding of TBLT's applicability for Japanese but also help develop more effective teaching strategies tailored to the needs of Japanese language learners.

Importance of Speaking Skills in Language Learning

Speaking skills are essential for effective communication and real-life interactions, especially in language learning (Pham & Do, 2021). For learners of Japanese, mastering speaking skills is crucial for both academic success and practical engagement in social and professional situations. Proficient speaking abilities allow learners to confidently interact with native speakers, participate in conversations, and navigate environments where Japanese is spoken. Research highlights that proficiency in speaking enhances overall language competence, leading to improvements in listening comprehension, vocabulary usage, and fluency (Nunan, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Despite the acknowledged significance of speaking skills, there is a noticeable gap in research specifically addressing how TBLT can enhance speaking skills in Japanese. While TBLT has been demonstrated to improve various language skills, such as writing (Siriwong, 2020), reading (Ngerndee & Chattiwat 2019), vocabulary acquisition (Shintani, 2012), and listening (Chou, 2016), its impact on speaking skills, particularly in the context of Japanese, is underexplored. Most existing studies focus on the effectiveness of TBLT for other language skills, leaving a gap in understanding how this approach can be specifically adapted to enhance speaking skills. In addition, there is limited research on which TBLT tasks are most effective for promoting speaking skills in Japanese, especially in non-native contexts like Thailand. Addressing this gap is crucial for optimizing TBLT to better support the development of speaking skills among Japanese learners.

Challenges and Opportunities in Developing Speaking Skills through TBLT

Implementing TBLT to develop speaking skills in Japanese presents both challenges and opportunities. One significant challenge is designing TBLT tasks that address the unique aspects of Japanese, such as its honorifics and speech levels, which are essential for effective communication but often difficult for learners to master (Shibatani, 1990). Ensuring that TBLT tasks are aligned with the specific linguistic and

cultural elements of Japanese is crucial for their effectiveness. Additionally, integrating TBLT into existing Japanese curricula requires careful planning to ensure that task-based activities complement traditional teaching methods and adhere to educational standards (Richards, 2006). This integration is essential for creating a cohesive and effective language-learning experience.

Despite these challenges, TBLT offers significant opportunities for enhancing speaking skills. By designing activities designed to reflect real-world interactions, such as role-playing or problem-solving activities, teachers can encourage students to use Japanese actively and meaningfully. Research suggests that such task-based approaches can significantly boost learners' speaking confidence and fluency by providing practical language use experiences (Robillos & Bustos, 2023). Also, the necessity of lesson plan design in TBLT is crucial for maximizing the effectiveness of TBLT. Well-structured lesson plans ensure that TBLT tasks are purposeful, contextually appropriate, and adapted to the particular needs of Japanese learners. Without careful planning, the potential of TBLT to improve speaking skills may not be fully realized. By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities offered by TBLT, educators can develop more effective and engaging methods to improve speaking skills among Japanese language learners in Thailand.

Methodology

Method and Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design involving a single group to observe improvements in students' speaking skills in the Japanese language. Classroom action research was conducted over four cycles, following the framework established by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). The research process began with the first stage (planning), during which students' issues were identified through classroom observations. This was followed by a problem analysis and a review of relevant literature to find potential solutions. Based on these findings, teaching plans were developed, and a pilot study was conducted before administering a post-cycle test. In the second stage (acting), the teaching plans were implemented. During the third stage (observing), students' interactions in the classroom were monitored, and observations were recorded in post-lesson reports. Finally, in the fourth stage (reflecting), data from the post-cycle tests and post-lesson reports were collected and analyzed to identify challenges encountered during the cycle. This analysis guided the design of new lessons for continuous improvement in subsequent cycles.

Participants

This study involved 42 Grade 11 students who were selected through purposive sampling. These students were enrolled in Japanese as an elective subject, attending two consecutive classes each week, with a total duration of 100 minutes. In the first semester of Grade 10, they learned to read and write Japanese characters, including

Hiragana, Hiragana special sounds, Katakana, and 30 basic kanji. During the second semester, they studied vocabulary and sentence structures from lessons 1 to 5 of the textbook *Minna no Nihongo*[1]. By this point in their studies, the students were able to introduce themselves, count numbers, explain the locations of places, things, or people, express time, days, and months, and conjugate verbs to indicate affirmative, negative, and present/future tenses.

After reviewing the lesson plans from the previous semester and observing the teaching practices, it was noted that the teacher primarily focused on textbook content. Instruction centered on grammar and vocabulary, mainly through repetition drills. Very few speaking activities were incorporated into the classroom. This teaching approach aligns with the research findings of Jaisamak and Wechayaluck (2022). As a result, most students struggled with speaking skills, facing issues such as inaccurate intonation, lack of confidence, and minimal classroom participation. Many were hesitant to respond when teachers asked questions in Japanese.

During the first semester of Grade 11, students were taught using TBLT lesson plans, with the *Marugoto*[2] (Starter A1): Japanese Language and Culture textbooks as the primary teaching material.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

Lesson plans: This study was conducted over an 8-week period, excluding the pilot study. Each cycle lasted for 2 weeks. The lesson plan contents are outlined in Table 1. Most of the vocabulary and grammar covered had not been taught previously in Grade 10.

Table 1

The contents of lesson plans for Cycle 1-4

Cycle 1	
Content	Topic 8 Shopping: lesson 15
Can-do statements	1.Talk about what you want to buy 2. Talk about where to shop for something you want
Vocabulary	Souvenirs and counting numbers
Grammar	Watashi wa__ga hoshii desu. (I want to buy…) Watashi wa__ni__o agemasu. (I will give…to…) __wa doko de kaemasu ka. (Where I can buy…)
Cycle 2	
Content	Topic 8 Shopping: lesson 16

[1] Minna no Nihongo was first published in 1998, and it is one of the most popular Japanese language textbooks, with translations in over 30 languages. It follows a structural syllabus, representing a traditional pedagogical approach.

[2] Marugoto is a comprehensive series of coursebooks developed by the Japan Foundation for learners of Japanese as a foreign language, structured according to the JF Standard for Japanese Language Education. The coursebooks encompass both language and culture, featuring communication between people in various situations. Learners can learn by listening to a variety of natural, contextualized conversations.

Can-do statements	1. Make a brief comment on things in a shop 2. Read prices 3. Do some shopping
Vocabulary	Clothes and prices
Grammar	Kore wa ikura desu ka. (How much is this?) Kono shatsu o kudasai. (Please give me this shirt) Hoka no iro arimasu ka. (Do you have other colors?)
	Cycle 3
Content	Topic 9 Holidays and Day off 2: lesson 17
Can-do statements	1. Read a short blog 2. Say what you did on your day off 3. Say briefly what you thought about your days off 4. Write a short blog about your day off
Vocabulary	Holiday activities, how you felt about it
Grammar	Yasumi wa doo deshita ka. (How was your day off?) Kinoo depaato ni ikimashita. (I went to shopping mall yesterday.) Kimono wa takakatta desu. (Kimono was expensive) Watashi wa doko nim o ikimasendeshita. (I didn't go to anywhere.)
	Cycle 4
Content	Topic 9 Holidays and Day off 2: lesson 18
Can-do statements	1. Read a simple E-mail 2. Say what you did on your vacation trips 3. Say where you want to go next time
Vocabulary	Experiences in Japan and trips
Grammar	Otera o mimashita. Sorekara omiyage o kaimashita (I saw the temple. Then, I bought a souvenir) Osushi wa oishikatta desu. Demo, takakatta desu. (Sushi was delicious, but expensive.) Kyooto ni ikitai desu. (I want to go to Kyoto.)

The researcher developed lesson plans based on the TBLT frameworks proposed by Willis (1996) and Nunan (2004). Each cycle lasted for two weeks, with a total of four cycles. The details of each step are as follows:

Pre-task (100 minutes): Pre-task is a phase of learning vocabulary, grammar, listening, and speaking practice. The activities vary for each cycle, and students are assigned to follow these steps: 1) View pictures or video clips, then discuss the topic to be learned that day; 2) Check the Can-do statements;[3] 3) Listen to the recording and associate the words with the illustrations; 4) Listen to the model conversation and practice shadowing; 5) Identify the grammar used and figure out its meaning; 6) Listen to a conversation and fill in the blanks with the missing information; and 7) Practice speaking in pairs.

[3] The JF Can-do Statement is part of the Japanese-Foreign Language (JF) Standard, a framework designed by the Japan Foundation to guide the level of proficiency in various language skills. The statements are divided into different proficiency levels, from beginner (A1) to advanced (C2), similar to the CEFR levels. The purpose of Can-do statements is to help learners and educators set language learning goals.

Task cycle (60 minutes): Tasks in all four cycles were newly created by the researcher based on Can-Do statements for each cycle. The Marugoto textbook emphasizes listening and speaking exercises without any group activity tasks. Some situations and vocabulary are related to life in Japan, which does not align with everyday situations for all students. To address this, the researcher created additional tasks that allow students to practice real-life conversations, such as introducing famous products from their hometowns. Learners were encouraged to gather more information and expand their vocabulary beyond what is covered in the textbook. The tasks vary in each cycle, and students were grouped into teams of three to four to collaborate and share ideas. Due to limited classroom time, students utilized class time for planning and spent additional time outside of class recording video clips of their conversations, writing blogs, and presenting their work on Facebook.

Task for Cycle 1: Students were assigned to compose a conversation based on the following situation: [You are visiting your friend's hometown and want to buy some renowned products as souvenirs for your family members. However, you don't know what to buy and where to buy it. Ask your friend for advice.]

Task for Cycle 2: Students were assigned to compose a conversation based on the following situation: [You are preparing for travel abroad and want to buy clothes. Imagine you are selecting clothing at a department store. Inform the staff what type of clothing you want and ask if they have the color and size you need.]

Task for Cycle 3: Students were assigned to discuss holiday activities in groups. After this discussion, they were instructed to independently write a blog post on the topic and express their opinions about it.

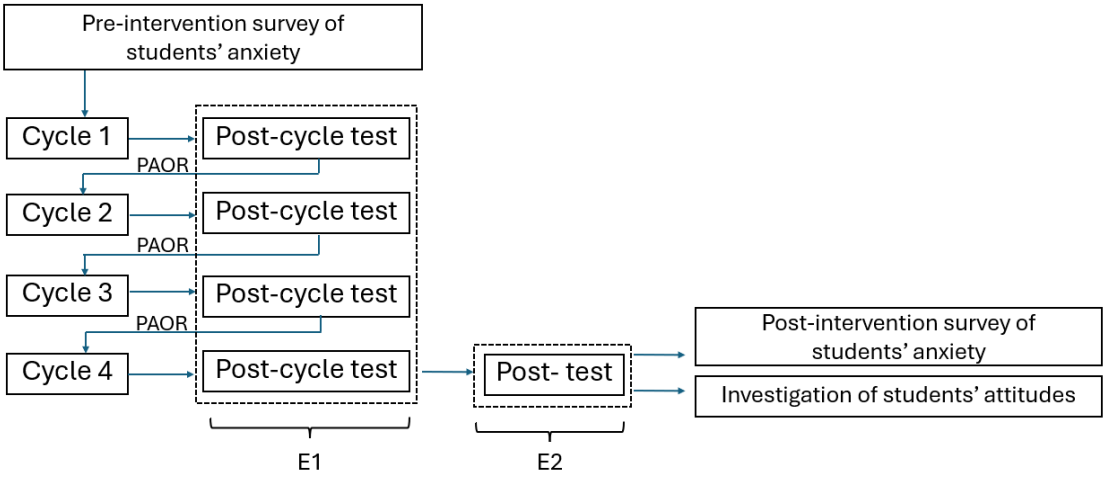
Task for Cycle 4: Students were asked to discuss their experiences during vacation trips. Following this discussion, they were required to write a short essay reflecting on this topic and expressing their feelings about it.

Upon completing their essays, students needed to share their writing in Japanese and upload a video presentation in the Facebook group. They were also expected to view and comment on their classmates' posts on Facebook.

Language focus (40 minutes): In the next class session, the teacher, along with classmates, will provide feedback to all students. The teacher will identify grammatical errors and misuse of particles, prompting students to correct their mistakes. Each student will then need to self-assess their work, highlight what they did well, identify areas for improvement, and review the Can-do statements.

Lesson plans were evaluated for the index of item objective congruence (IOC) by three experts, resulting in a score of 0.87.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Note: PAOR (Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect), is a framework used in classroom action research, a reflective activity in which teachers methodically examine their own teaching to improve students' learning outcomes.

Assessment Rubric: The assessment rubric was composed of five criteria adapted from Harris (1969), Ur (2006), Waluyo (2019): Can-do, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. Scores spanned from 1 to 4, with a total maximum score of 20. The assessment rubrics were evaluated for the index of item objective congruence by three experts, resulting in a score of 0.74. The speaking assessment rubric is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Speaking Assessment Rubric

Criteria	4- Excellent	3-Good	2-Satisfactory	1-Needs Improvement
Can-do	Understands and responds appropriately to a wide range of topics and questions	Understands most topics and questions, with few misunderstanding. Responses are generally appropriate	Struggles to understand, requiring frequent clarification. Responses were incomplete	Cannot understand the questions
Vocabulary	Uses a wide range of appropriate and varied vocabulary.	Uses appropriate vocabulary with some variety. Occasional repetition or minor inaccuracy.	Uses limited vocabulary, often repetitive, or sometimes inaccurate in word choice.	Uses limited vocabulary, frequently incorrect
Grammar	Uses a wide range of accurate	Uses mostly accurate grammar	Uses grammatical structures with frequent errors	Frequently makes grammar mistakes that

	grammatical structures without errors	with occasional minor mistakes.	that occasionally hinder meaning.	significantly hinder communication.
Pronunciation	Clear and natural	Generally clear with minor mispronunciations	Frequent mispronunciations	Unclear and frequent mispronunciations
Fluency	Speaks smoothly and confidently	Speaks fairly smoothly with some pauses or hesitations	Hesitates frequently and has noticeable pauses or self-corrections	Struggles to speak fluently, hesitates, or pauses often

Post-cycle tests: These assessments were conducted outside of class hours and aimed to evaluate each student's speaking skills individually by two teachers. The speaking tasks were adapted from textbooks and aligned with Can-do statements to assess students' speaking skills after each cycle. The tests comprised four short question-and-answer sessions and one role-play scenario. During the assessments, the subject teacher posed questions, and students responded based on information derived from pictures. Additionally, the reliability of the post-cycle tests was confirmed through a pilot study. To ensure inter-rater reliability, 15 students not involved in the main study were selected for evaluation. Their speaking skills were assessed by three experts, and inter-rater reliability was analyzed using Fleiss' Kappa statistic, which returned a value of 0.63, indicating a good level of agreement.

Post-test: The post-test comprised eight short question-and-answer sessions and two role-play scenarios. The questions were adapted from textbooks that aligned with the Can-do statements of each cycle. Although the questions in the post-test were similar to those in the post-cycle tests, the researcher modified the vocabulary and the information presented in the pictures.

Questionnaire on Anxiety in Speaking Japanese: The questionnaire was adapted from Bhattarachaiyakorn and Phettakua (2023) and designed to measure anxiety across three main categories: negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety. Students responded to five items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree). The mean responses were categorized into five levels of anxiety: Very High Anxiety (4.21-5.00), High Anxiety (3.41-4.20), Moderate Anxiety (2.61-3.40), Little Anxiety (1.81-2.60), and Very Little Anxiety (1.00-1.80). The maximum possible score for the questionnaire was 25. The anxiety scores collected before and after the intervention were analyzed for statistical significance.

Attitudinal Questionnaire: The attitudinal questionnaire was adapted from Hadi (2013) and Tan (2016) to assess students' attitudes towards the TBLT lesson plans. Tan adapted some items from Jeon (2005) and Willis and Willis (2001). The questionnaire was divided into two sections. In the first section, students responded to nine items using

a 5-point Likert scale. Responses were categorized into five levels of agreement: Strongly Agree (4.21-5.00), Agree (3.41-4.20), Neutral (2.61-3.40), Disagree (1.81-2.60), and Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.80). In the second section, students were asked to write their opinions freely regarding the implementation of TBLT. The reliability of the first section was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, resulting in a value of 0.84, which indicates a good level of reliability.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the post-cycle tests and post-test were collected as scores and analyzed using the mean, percentage, and standard deviation (S.D.). The efficiency of the lessons was evaluated through the E1/E2 model. E1 represents the process efficiency, calculated as the percentage of the average scores from the four post-cycle tests, which served as formative assessments. E2 represents the outcome efficiency, calculated as the percentage of the average scores from the post-test, used for summative evaluation. Additionally, quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed by assigning ratings on a scale and calculating the arithmetic mean and standard deviation. This rigorous approach ensured a comprehensive assessment of both the pedagogical approach and the learning achievements.

Results

Scores of Post-Cycle Tests and Post-Tests

The researcher collected speaking assessment data, which was divided into four post-cycle tests and a post-test. The assessment covered five aspects, with each aspect having a maximum score of 4 points, totaling 20 points. The speaking assessment scores for all cycles are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3
Speaking Assessment Scores

Cycle	Total score	Mean	S.D.	Percentage
1	20	15.84	1.05	79.22
2	20	17.00	1.02	85.00
3	20	16.84	1.02	84.22
4	20	16.78	0.91	83.91

As shown in Table 3, the average scores demonstrate a clear trend of improvement across the four cycles. In Cycle 1, the average score was 15.84 (79.22%), reflecting the initial implementation stage of the lessons. By Cycle 2, the average score increased to 17.00 (85.00%), indicating significant progress. Scores experienced a slight decrease in Cycles 3 and 4, falling to 16.84 (84.22%) and 16.78 (83.91%), respectively. This suggests that while notable improvement was observed initially, performance stabilized with only minor fluctuations in the subsequent cycles.

Table 4
Efficiency of TBLT Lesson Plans on Students' Speaking Skills

Efficiency	Total score	Mean	S.D.	Percentage
Process efficiency (E1)	80	66.50	3.16	83.09
Outcome efficiency (E2)	20	17.19	1.06	85.94
task-based language teaching (TBLT) lesson plans' efficiency (E1/E2=83.09/85.94)				

Table 4 reveals that the efficiency of the TBLT lesson plans, both in terms of process and outcome, was 83.09 and 85.94, respectively. These values exceed the established criteria of 75 for both measures. This indicates that the TBLT lesson plans not only met but surpassed the expected criterion for effectiveness, highlighting their successful implementation and positive impact on learning achievements.

Table 5
Percentage of Each Language Aspect

Language Aspects	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Overall
Can-do	89.06	93.75	95.31	94.53	93.16
Vocabulary	71.09	78.13	78.91	77.34	76.37
Grammar	80.47	84.38	78.13	79.69	80.66
Pronunciation	79.69	89.06	90.63	89.06	87.11
Fluency	75.78	79.69	78.13	78.91	78.13

The results indicate that students exhibited the strongest performance in the Can-do aspect, with consistently high scores across all cycles, peaking at 95.31% in Cycle 3 and achieving an overall score of 93.16%. Pronunciation also showed significant improvement, beginning at 79.69% in Cycle 1 and reaching 90.63% in Cycle 3, with an overall score of 87.11%. Grammar scores remained relatively stable, starting at 80.47% in Cycle 1 and experiencing a slight decline to 77.34% in Cycle 4, leading to an overall score of 80.66%. Fluency improved gradually over the cycles, increasing from 75.78% in Cycle 1 to 78.91% in Cycle 4, resulting in an overall score of 78.13%. Vocabulary showed notable improvement, but it still had the lowest overall score at 76.37%. starting at 71.09% in Cycle 1 and reaching 77.34% in Cycle 4. These findings suggest that while students excelled in Can-do and made notable progress in pronunciation, there was less advancement in vocabulary and grammar.

Results of the Questionnaire on Anxiety in Speaking Japanese

The results of the questionnaire on anxiety in speaking Japanese, presented in Table 6, were compared before and after the intervention.

Table 6
Level of Anxiety Compared before and after the Intervention

item	Statement	Before			After		
		Mean	S.D.	Interpretation	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1.	It embarrasses me to speak Japanese in my speaking class.	4.45	0.50	Very high anxiety	2.76	0.48	Moderate anxiety
2.	My vocabulary is limited.	3.60	0.73	High anxiety	3.29	0.64	Moderate anxiety
3.	I worry about making mistakes in communication.	4.83	0.49	Very high anxiety	3.93	0.71	High anxiety
4.	I worry about grammatical accuracy.	4.05	0.49	High anxiety	3.60	0.66	High anxiety
5.	I feel unconfident about my pronunciation.	3.26	0.70	Moderate anxiety	3.02	0.68	Moderate anxiety
Overall		4.04	0.82	High anxiety	3.32	0.76	Moderate anxiety

Before the intervention, students exhibited high levels of anxiety when speaking Japanese. Particularly, they were concerned about making mistakes during communication (mean score: 4.83) and felt embarrassed to speak in class (mean score: 4.45). These concerns were interpreted as "Very high anxiety." After the intervention, overall anxiety levels decreased from "High anxiety" (mean score: 4.04) to "Moderate anxiety" (mean score: 3.32). Although anxiety related to pronunciation and vocabulary remained at a "Moderate anxiety" level, there was a significant reduction in the embarrassment students felt when speaking in class, which dropped to a mean score of 2.76. Despite these improvements, concerns about making mistakes and grammatical accuracy remained relatively high. These findings indicate that the intervention was effective in reducing overall anxiety, though specific issues, such as fear of communication mistakes, continue to pose challenges for students.

Table 7
Comparison of Anxiety Score before and after the Intervention

	Mean	S.D.	t	df
Before the intervention	20.190	1.131	14.217**	41
After the intervention	16.595	1.594		

**p<0.01

A paired samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the anxiety scores of students before and after the intervention. The results revealed a significant difference in anxiety scores: before the intervention (M = 20.190, SD = 1.131) and after the intervention (M = 16.595, SD = 1.594), with $t(41) = 14.217$, $p < .01$. This indicates that the implementation of TBLT had a significant effect on reducing students' anxiety. To summarize, the implementation of TBLT led to a reduction in students' anxiety levels.

Results of the Attitudinal Questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire showing students' attitudes toward the TBLT lesson plans are presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Students' Attitudes toward the TBLT Lesson Plans

item	Statement	Mean	S.D.	Level of Agreement
1.	TBLT helps create a relaxed atmosphere for language learning	4.47	0.35	Strongly agree
2.	TBLT helps create motivation for language learning.	4.12	0.35	Agree
3.	TBLT helps develop integrated skills and collaboration skills.	4.08	0.39	Agree
4.	TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment.	4.34	0.41	Strongly agree
5.	TBLT takes time to complete tasks.	4.63	0.26	Strongly agree
6.	TBLT helps students practice using the language in real-life situations.	4.54	0.14	Strongly agree
7.	TBLT focuses on practical communication than grammar accuracy.	4.48	0.37	Strongly Agree
8.	TBLT is appropriate for small group work	4.41	0.57	Strongly Agree
9.	TBLT is suitable for examination preparation	2.87	0.71	Neutral

The results from the attitudinal questionnaire regarding students' insights on the TBLT lesson plans are presented in Table 8. Students expressed their strongest agreement with the statement items 1,4,5,6,7, and 8. However, students were neutral regarding the suitability of TBLT for exam preparation, with the lowest mean score of 2.87. Overall, these findings suggest that students value the benefits of TBLT, particularly in promoting active learning and interaction, although they recognize the time-consuming nature of the preparation.

The information presented in Table 9 is summarized from quotations provided by four selected students. These statements were chosen for their feedback on all five key points: classroom experience, teaching approach, group work benefits, speaking confidence, and learning motivation.

Table 9
Overview of Students' Attitudes toward the TBLT Lesson Plans

Key points	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D
Classroom Experience	Felt the textbook-based approach was	Hesitant to speak due to concerns about	Traditional activities focused on repetition drills.	Struggles with shyness and expressing

	repetitive and lacked variety.	vocabulary and grammar.		oneself confidently.
Teaching Approach	TBLT introduced activities not in the textbook, improving engagement.	TBLT allowed for more interactive learning through peer feedback.	Enjoyed role-playing and real-life situations in TBLT, fostering better communication skills.	TBLT encourages creativity and motivated exploration beyond the classroom.
Group Work Benefits	Group work encouraged the sharing of knowledge, making learning collaborative and fun.	Group work increased confidence by reducing anxiety about speaking in front of the whole class.	Group work made learning more enjoyable and led to increased speaking practice through role-play.	Group activities fostered communication, supported peer relationships, and increased self-expression.
Speaking Confidence	TBLT gave me a safe environment to practice speaking, which built my confidence over time.	Group support helped overcome hesitation and allowed for constructive feedback.	TBLT gave opportunities to practice speaking, boosting confidence in communication.	I was constantly involved in discussions and had to think quickly, which helped me overcome shyness.
Learning Motivation	TBLT made concepts more applicable to real life, enhancing motivation to learn.	Peer feedback and group interaction made learning feel more rewarding.	More speaking practice in TBLT motivated a deeper engagement with the language.	TBLT stimulated curiosity, and group work made learning more meaningful and enjoyable.

Discussion

The findings indicated that the efficiency of the process and outcomes in the TBLT lesson plans was 83.09/85.94, surpassing the established criteria of 75/75. As shown in Table 5, mean scores for speaking skills improved significantly from Cycle 2 to Cycle 4, with notable enhancements in Can-do and pronunciation. These results are consistent with previous studies by Brigette and Inthapthim (2019) and Omar et al. (2021), which demonstrated that TBLT significantly enhances the speaking skills of ESL learners. Although the context of this study differs from previous studies, the findings consistently show that TBLT can enhance the confidence and fluency of beginner-level foreign language learners in communication. Furthermore, Bunmak (2015) emphasized that TBLT provides many advantages, such as motivating learners to practice the target language and offering opportunities for conversations in contexts similar to those encountered outside of the classroom.

When analyzing the speaking skills in each aspect, it was found that the Can-do and pronunciation components achieved an average score of approximately 90%. This success can be attributed to the TBLT approach, which emphasizes communication to achieve objectives and allows students to assess their own performance. This has contributed to the high scores in both areas. Fluency, grammar, and vocabulary followed closely behind, each averaging around 80%, with vocabulary receiving the lowest score at 76.37%. This lower score can be explained by the fact that vocabulary and grammar introduced in each cycle were entirely new to the students, who rarely had opportunities to use Japanese outside the classroom. As a result, students needed additional time to memorize vocabulary and practice sentence composition. The limited research timeframe did not allow for extensive practice on these topics. In this study, TBLT primarily focuses on communication skills. This means that even if vocabulary recall or sentence structure is not entirely accurate, as long as the communication achieves its purpose, the learning goals are considered met. In real-life situations, students can compensate for a lack of fluency by using body language or translation applications to aid comprehension. While TBLT might not directly improve vocabulary retention and grammar accuracy to the same level as Can-do or pronunciation, it can motivate students to engage more in speaking the target language and contribute to the expansion of their vocabulary. These benefits align with the findings of Albino (2017).

The comparison of anxiety levels among Japanese-speaking students showed a significant decrease in anxiety following the intervention. However, concerns about grammatical accuracy and mistakes in communication remained high. This is consistent with Bhattarachaiyakorn and Phettakua's (2023) findings, which identified grammar as the primary source of anxiety among Thai learners of English. Therefore, it can be inferred that grammar is a significant source of anxiety for Thai learners of both English and Japanese. In contrast, the most significantly reduced form of anxiety was the fear of embarrassment when speaking Japanese. Based on the researchers' observations, Thai students often hesitate to express themselves confidently or share their opinions in public due to a fear of criticism or standing out too much. These personality traits can negatively impact language learning. Furthermore, language classes in Thailand typically accommodate large numbers of students, which can restrict teacher-student interactions and contribute to heightened levels of anxiety among learners. To address these challenges, working in small groups can offer students additional chances to engage in speaking and reduce anxiety. It is also crucial for teachers to foster a supportive classroom environment and serve as positive role models, helping students build the confidence to express themselves freely.

According to the results from the questionnaire in Table 8, students had a positive perception of the TBLT lesson plans. This finding is consistent with research by Sae-ong (2010), Hasan (2014), Bao and Du (2015), and Fatima et al. (2021), all of which emphasize the positive impact of TBLT on speaking skills. TBLT creates a low-anxiety environment that allows learners to engage effectively with the target language. Small group tasks foster confidence and collaboration among students. Initially, in

Cycle 1, students were nervous and focused on language accuracy. However, when assigned small group tasks, they felt more relaxed and engaged in increased interaction. TBLT also helped students set clear communication goals and achieve them through task completion. Positive feedback further motivated learners to use the target language, promoting vocabulary acquisition as students encountered new words relevant to their tasks. These observations support Ellis's (2003) assertion that TBLT boosts students' enthusiasm to acquire a target language.

Based on the questionnaire results, students generally had a positive view of TBLT and understood its concepts and benefits. However, some concerns were raised. Students noted that TBLT involves multiple steps, which can be time-consuming, and the limited classroom time is often not sufficient to complete all the tasks. Additionally, a few students expressed that TBLT can be burdensome due to the increased workload it requires. This sentiment is reflected in the lowest mean score of 2.87 on questionnaire item 9. Some students also felt that TBLT is less suitable for exam preparation, as exams typically focus on grammar and vocabulary knowledge. This traditional view aligns with the findings of Littlewood (2007), Deng and Carless (2010), and Tan (2016), who suggest that examinations are often seen as barriers to implementing communicative or task-based approaches in educational settings.

According to a study by Jaisamak and Wechayaluck (2022), teachers in Thailand have limited knowledge regarding the measurement and assessment of learning outcomes. The typical language testing emphasizes vocabulary and grammar through traditional paper-based tests. However, this approach may not align with the TBLT framework, which prioritizes communication skills. Furthermore, TBLT integrates multiple language skills, making it challenging for teachers to assess each skill individually.

Implementing TBLT involves several processes, and teachers must be highly skilled in designing activities and managing time effectively. However, it is not always feasible for teachers to apply all these processes consistently throughout the semester. This limitation is consistent with the views of Van den Branden (2006) and Samuda and Bygate (2008).

Conclusions

This study demonstrated that TBLT significantly enhances students' speaking skills. The high efficiency scores of the TBLT lesson plans (E1/E2 = 83.13/85.94) and the substantial reduction in language anxiety, as indicated by the paired samples *t*-test (pre-intervention M = 20.190, SD = 1.131; post-intervention M = 16.595, SD = 1.594; $t(41) = 14.217$, $p < .01$), provide strong evidence of TBLT's effectiveness. These findings highlight the value of TBLT in improving not only students' speaking skills but also their overall language learning experience. Additionally, positive feedback from students further emphasizes the benefits of this approach, which include enhanced language skills, reduced anxiety, authentic language use, and a supportive

collaborative environment.

Implications

The implications of these results are significant. TBLT can effectively create a more engaging and less stressful environment for language learning, which is essential for developing speaking skills. The decrease in anxiety suggests that TBLT creates a more supportive environment for students to practice and improve their language skills.

However, the study furthermore identified several constraints, such as the lack of explicit grammar instruction, which may affect grammatical accuracy, and the substantial planning and resource demands on teachers. To address these issues, it is recommended that teachers adapt TBLT to their specific contexts by integrating traditional grammar instruction with TBLT tasks, considering practical constraints such as preparation time and class size, and using feedback effectively. Additionally, while TBLT is effective for improving communication skills, it may not fully address grammar and vocabulary development; thus, combining TBLT with traditional methods like the audio-lingual approach can be beneficial. Based on the researcher's experiences teaching Japanese at both the higher secondary schools and university levels, integrating explicit vocabulary and grammar instruction with TBLT creates a balanced approach that enables students to not only acquire language structures and vocabulary but also apply them in meaningful contexts. During the pre-task phase, it is advisable for teachers to introduce conversations that include new vocabulary and sentence structures, encouraging students to infer their meanings. Following this, the teacher should clarify the sentence structures and engage students in speaking practice through various drills, such as repetition drills, combination drills, and question-and-answer drills. Furthermore, teachers can enhance vocabulary and grammar practice through activities such as group vocabulary games, chain drills, pairing students to make sentences, or utilizing interactive applications like Blooket and Kahoot. In the researcher's opinion, the pre-task phase is crucial for students to acquire new vocabulary and sentence structures. During this phase, the teacher should focus on teaching grammar and provide students with the opportunity to practice speaking until they feel confident in forming correct sentences. Only after this should the teacher guide the students through tasks during the task cycle. Since the complexity of each grammar topic varies, the teacher can adjust the duration of the pre-task phase based on the difficulty of the content.

TBLT is an instructional method that encourages students to work collaboratively in groups on various tasks. This approach presents several advantages, as detailed in Table 9. Among the benefits of TBLT are the opportunities it provides for students to share their perspectives and the increase in their speaking confidence. The findings presented in Table 6 suggest that TBLT is effective in reducing communication anxiety. While students reported moderate anxiety regarding vocabulary and pronunciation, they experienced higher levels of anxiety related to communication errors and grammatical accuracy. To address these issues, teachers are encouraged to

create a supportive and low-pressure environment where mistakes are viewed as a natural part of the learning process. Students should be encouraged to prioritize clear communication of their ideas rather than striving for perfection. It is important to reassure them that even native speakers make mistakes. Providing constructive feedback and making corrections when necessary is also essential. Incorporating activities such as role plays, discussions, and real-life contexts can help practice grammar in a meaningful way. Finally, teachers should help students develop a growth mindset by emphasizing improvement over perfection and encouraging regular reflection on their progress.

Small group work and project presentations can help reduce speaking anxiety. It's important to focus on students' strengths when providing feedback to avoid increasing anxiety through excessive corrections. Tasks should be designed to relate to students' real-life situations and cultural backgrounds, using relevant visual media to make the target language more relatable.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This research has a limitation in terms of duration, as it lasts only one semester. Consequently, it is unable to observe the long-term development of students. Throughout each cycle, the researcher spent the same amount of time collecting data; however, the difficulty of the content varied between cycles. Some students needed additional time to understand the content and wanted to practice sentence structures before completing tasks during the task cycle. Even though some students did not fully understand the grammar concepts, they still needed to complete the tasks, which led to communication issues for some of them. Additionally, data collection was not conducted continuously due to school activities that interrupted classes, resulting in delays in the research process. When students returned to class, they often forgot the content previously taught by the teacher, leading the researcher to extend review hours beyond the scheduled data collection time. Limited classroom time and extracurricular activities may disrupt language acquisition and hinder student progress. Students often do not have enough time to practice speaking, which can make it difficult for them to master essential language skills. In developing listening and reading writing skills, students have the opportunity to practice outside of class. However, for speaking skills, practice is generally limited to class time. Speaking involves several key components, including pronunciation and fluency. Beginner-level learners often face challenges such as difficulties with tone, mispronunciations, and a lack of confidence. It is crucial for students to practice speaking during lessons and to receive feedback from their teachers. Without adequate practice, their speaking skills may not develop as effectively as needed.

According to TBLT theory, the pre-task phase should not take much time. However, in actual teaching, this period is used to introduce vocabulary and practice sentence formation before starting the task cycle. If the teacher does not allocate enough time for practice, students may encounter difficulties in completing tasks. Japanese is a

new language for the students, as it is not taught at the elementary level, leading to a longer pre-task phase. It is advisable to increase the number of practice exercises. Although TBLT does not emphasize grammar, most learners are concerned about grammatical accuracy. Insufficient practice can affect their confidence in communication. In future research, it would be beneficial to incorporate technology or applications that support self-directed learning outside the classroom, as this would help students better understand the content and save time on exercises in class.

Data collection in cycles enables instructors to monitor students' progress effectively. The length of each research cycle should be flexible and tailored to the complexity of the content. If the content is not overly complex, the duration can be shortened to allow for more time on complex topics. Additionally, more time should be allocated at the beginning of class to review content through engaging activities, such as games, sentence creation, or vocabulary practice.

The research is an action study aimed at addressing problems that arise in the classroom. The target group was selected specifically. If this method is applied to other classes where students have different characteristics, the research results may differ from those of this study. In future research, it would be beneficial to compare the TBLT teaching method with other teaching approaches to effectively highlight TBLT's relative strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, conducting research in classrooms with diverse student characteristics will help identify effective teaching strategies tailored to each group.

Author

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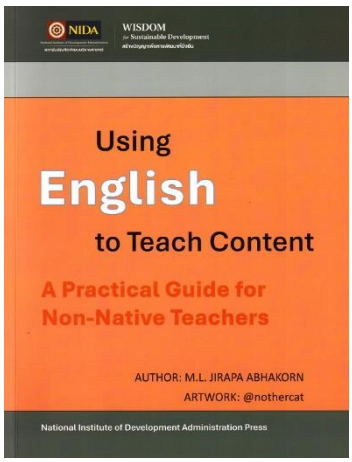

Book Review

M.L. Jirapa Abhakorn, (2025). *Using English to Teach Content: A Practical Guide for Non-Native Teachers*. PE 1128.A2 J566 2025. NIDACIP

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Using English to Teach Content is a practical guide for non-native English-speaking teachers who teach academic subjects in English. The book contributes to the fields of English Medium Instruction (EMI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), offering a step-by-step framework for developing teacher communication, lesson planning, and language support in multilingual classrooms. It is particularly relevant in Asian educational contexts, where teachers are expected to use English as the medium of instruction despite not being native speakers.

The first chapter, *The Social Perspective of Learning*, emphasizes the role of social interaction and oral communication in the learning process. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, scaffolding is described as the support children receive from adults, while the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) refers to the difference between what a child can do independently and with guidance. Mariani (1997) identified four classroom learning zones: (1) Learning/Engagement, (2) Frustration/Anxiety, (3) Comfort, and (4) Boredom. Of these, the learning engagement zone is the most effective for student learning.

The second chapter, *The Role of the Teacher to Engage Students in Learning*, highlights the importance of ensuring all students are actively involved through student-centered and inclusive methods. It identifies three principles: (1) noticing students' needs and participation, (2) building self-esteem through positive, respectful relationships, and (3) using flexible, diverse teaching methods. The chapter also presents strategies such as setting high expectations and allowing students to choose some learning activities. A key strength is its focus on inclusiveness, equity, and student-centeredness.

Chapter Three, *Teacher Talk and Student Learning*, reinforces the importance of teacher talk and advocates a dialogic approach that promotes extended student responses, moving beyond the traditional Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback (IRE/IRF) model. Useful strategies include asking display and referential questions, giving more thinking time, encouraging longer student responses, scaffolding, and

employing techniques such as *Message Abundance*—using gestures, visuals, and verbal prompts to support comprehension in EMI classrooms.

Chapter Four, *English Language for Teaching*, outlines three essential types of English in EMI academic contexts: Basic Interpersonal Communication Language Skills (BICS), Classroom Language (CL), and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). While BICS refers to everyday conversational skills, CL supports classroom management and instructions, and, CALP enables understanding of complex grammar and expressions. Overall, this chapter emphasizes that fluency in BICS does not guarantee mastery of CALP.

Chapter Five, *Planning English Language Support for Content Lessons*, underscores the significance of structured language support in EMI classrooms. It emphasizes comprehensible input, stretched language use, awareness of linguistic limitations, and modelling academic language. The chapter also stresses the importance of formative assessment to track language growth through targeted vocabulary and grammar.

Chapter Six, *Creating English Conversation Prompts*, demonstrates how prompts can foster classroom discussions, problem-solving, collaboration, and real-life preparation. Effective prompts can be drawn from personal experiences, case studies, or questions progressing from simple to complex. They can also encourage thinking skills such as evaluating importance, interpreting themes, and making references.

Chapter Seven, *Designing and Implementing Conversation Tasks*, describes features of productive tasks, such as ensuring participation at appropriate levels and encouraging critical and creative thinking. The chapter also highlights the importance of teaching students to accept disagreements, negotiate conflicts, clarify ambiguity, and apply knowledge in real-world situations. Strategies such as simplifying texts and adding visual aids are also discussed.

Chapter Eight, *Teachers' Academic English Development*, provides practical guidance for non-native EMI teachers to improve their proficiency. It recommends avoiding colloquial expressions, run-on sentences, redundant words, and gender-specific terms. Exercises focus on transforming informal sentences into academic style through nominalization and hedging. Self-assessment tools and case studies are suggested to build confidence and proficiency.

Chapter Nine, *Teachers' English Vocabulary and Grammar Development*, suggests strategies for improving academic vocabulary and grammar. These include using high-frequency academic words, mastering sentence structures (simple,

compound, complex, and compound-complex), employing transition markers, and hedging to express caution.

The final chapter, *Teachers' English Discourse Skills Development*, explores the importance of both spoken and written discourse in instructional communication contexts. To develop writing skills, teachers are encouraged to craft clear topic sentences and use cohesive devices to connect ideas. For spoken discourse, they are advised to ask questions, provide prompts, and use idea-building activities such as using graphic organizers. The chapter also notes the importance of managing controversial discussions appropriately.

Overall, this book offers a practical and valuable resource for non-native teachers using English as a medium of instruction. It addresses oral communication, inclusive teaching, teacher talk, and teachers' professional language development. I recommend it to educators and teacher trainees seeking to design communicative tasks, enhance student engagement, and improve their own English proficiency and classroom communication skills.

About the Reviewer

Phyu Phyu Win is pursuing a Master of Arts in English Language Studies and Teaching at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand. Her research focuses on "Exploring EFL Teachers' Needs for Professional Development to Enhance Teaching Effectiveness in Monastic Schools in Myanmar." She has experience in teaching English and providing extra-curricular learning support for young learners. She is interested in teacher professional growth, curriculum design, and student-centered instruction. She also enjoys reading educational literature and writing book reviews to share insights with other educators.

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