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Challenges and opportunities of EFL teachers in Thailand during emergency remote teaching

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Article Info

Abstract

The objective of this research was to determine the challenges and opportunities of Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching. The participants of this study included ten Thai EFL teachers working in public secondary schools of large to extra-large size and teaching English foundation courses online during emergency remote teaching. The interviewees were selected using the snowball sampling techniques. The research instrument was the semi-structured interview form. A thematic analysis was performed using the gathered data. The findings revealed that the challenges of Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching included the following: technological difficulties, English-language teaching struggles, unreliable assessment and evaluation, ineffective classroom management, lost relationships, and individual student unreadiness. In addition, the study identified several opportunities for Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching as follows: knowledge and skill improvement for online teaching, motivation for professional development, reduction of teacher workload, English-language skill teaching opportunities, more effective on-site teaching, and application to other duties.

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Introduction

After the coronavirus (COVID-19) was declared a global pandemic in March 2020, many educators around the world were required to adapt within a matter of days to shift from face-to-face instruction to remote teaching due to school closures. In doing so, they had to deal with the crisis without proper planning, conducting emergency remote teaching to ensure the continuity of students' learning. In keeping with this, most schools in Thailand implemented emergency remote teaching and shifted to online instruction (Anonymous, 2021a).

Recent research has indicated that as a result of the urgency at the outset of the pandemic, teachers tended to lack resources and complete support (Hodges et. al, 2020; University of the People, 2020). Undoubtedly, they have faced several challenges (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020; Ferri et al, 2020; Juárez-Díaz, & Perales, 2021; van der Spoel et al., 2020), such as insufficient technological knowledge, sudden changes in teaching pedagogy, questions regarding content delivery, and relationship issues between teachers and students.

Alternatively, some studies have mentioned opportunities in terms of enhancing teachers' development, such as training to improve technological and pedagogical knowledge and ensuring education equality by providing learning opportunities for all teachers (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Ferri et al., 2020; Phoodee & Pianpailoon, 2021). In Thailand, some previous studies in the Thai teacher context (Inthason, 2020; Oonsapiv & Nunthachaiya, 2021; Pandam, 2020; Phoodee & Pianpailoon, 2021) have focused on the experiences as well as problems, solutions, and opportunities that have arisen due to the implementation of emergency remote teaching.

However, questions regarding the challenges of and opportunities for Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching have remained largely unaddressed. This is because the research on emergency remote teaching is still limited, especially in terms of Thai EFL teachers' perspectives. Furthermore, subject-related challenges and opportunities have not yet been investigated.

To fill this gap in the literature, Thai EFL teachers' challenges and opportunities during this crisis were studied in the present research. To clearly address the research idea, insights into these teachers' challenges and opportunities were explored via interviews in two main aspects—instructional and social—adapted from Ferri et al. (2020). In terms of instructional aspects, the TPACK (technological, pedagogical, content knowledge) framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2006) was used as a guideline for the interview questions.
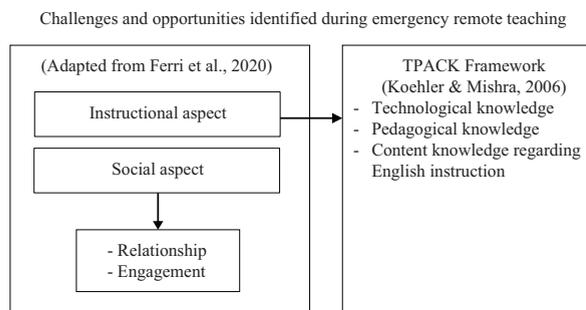
Challenges and opportunities identified during emergency remote teaching

Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods design incorporating quantitative and qualitative analyses. The first stage involved the interviews to gather more in-depth data on the challenges and opportunities experienced during emergency remote teaching, which led to the next stage: the development of the questionnaire. However, this article includes only qualitative data analysis from the first stage of the research, comprised of the semi-structured interviews.

Participants

The participants in this study included two groups: ten teachers for collecting the interview data and three hundred teachers for answering the questionnaire. The participants were Thai EFL teachers working in public secondary schools of large to extra-large size (more than 1,500 students each). The teachers were required to teach English Foundation, which is a compulsory subject focusing on improving four English skills—namely, listening, reading, speaking, and writing—as well as to deliver online lessons during emergency remote teaching. For the interview stage, the snowball sampling technique was employed to select participants sharing the characteristics according to the criteria mentioned above. The participants in this interview stage consisted of three males, six females and one who preferred not to disclose their gender. Their ages ranged from 25 to 46 years old, and their teaching experience varied from 2 to 23 years.

Data Collection

This qualitative study employed one data collection method—the semi-structured interview. The objective of this interview was to gain a deeper perspective on challenges and opportunities of Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching. Each participant was interviewed online at a time convenient for the research participants. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and thirty minutes per participant. Before the interview was conducted, the participants were informed of the objectives of the research study and the purpose of their involvement, as well as given the consent form. The research instrument was the interview form, and the open-ended questions were framed based on the literature review. The questions aimed to explore challenges and opportunities in both instructional and social aspects (Ferri et al., 2020). In terms of instructional aspects, the TPACK framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2006), including technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, was also used to clearly identify challenges and opportunities. Before conducting the interview, the questions were also reviewed by the thesis advisor and the Institutional Review Board of Thammasat University.

Data Analysis

To identify the challenges and opportunities of the Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching,

the transcribed data from the ten interviews were used in thematic analysis. In order to conduct the thematic analysis, the explicit meanings of the data were sorted into themes using the mapping. After ensuring that the map had fit the data set, the themes were defined and refined (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

The in-depth interviews revealed challenges and opportunities experienced by Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching.

Challenges of Thai EFL Teachers during Emergency Remote Teaching

In terms of challenges, the six main challenges included technological difficulties, English-language teaching struggles, unreliable assessment and evaluation, ineffective classroom management, lost relationships, and individual student readiness. Each challenge was represented as outlined below.

1. Technological difficulties

Emergency remote teaching requires technological knowledge and skills, and one main source of the challenges mentioned in the interviews was technology. These problems were highlighted more by senior teachers. Sample responses from the interview include the following:

"Even though teachers were allowed to work from home, there were some senior teachers who needed to go to school every day since they could not use technology for teaching."

(Teacher 3).

"Teachers were not experienced in online teaching. When they worked alone, they did not know any functions in the applications for online teaching, such as how to accept students to the online meeting."

(Teacher 5).

However, even teachers with sufficient technological knowledge still experienced technological difficulties, as they were not confident using the tools for online teaching. Notably, their anxiety increased due to a lack of confidence rather than a lack of knowledge or skills:

"Personally, I considered myself not good at technology. I am not that confident when using it. I can do it, but not well. At first, I was a little worried if I could use Google Classroom or Google Meet."

(Teacher 2).

Moreover, since emergency remote teaching requires the implementation of technological and pedagogical knowledge and skills, some teachers noted that it was difficult to create their lesson plans since they were inexperienced in teaching online:

"Emergency remote teaching was such a challenge. I had to think a lot about technology when it came to online teaching, for example, what materials I should use and what teaching methods I could implement."

(Teacher 1).

To conclude, the challenge of technological difficulties could result from inadequate knowledge and skills; lack of confidence in using technology in teaching and challenges in terms of teaching with technology.

2. English-language teaching struggles

It cannot be denied that shifting to emergency remote teaching led to challenges in terms of teaching. As the participants in this study were teachers responsible for teaching all four skills in English foundation courses, they stated that they had problems when teaching some English skills—most of the participants mentioned speaking as a problem area:

"Students practiced speaking English just a little, very little. That was because speaking required a lot of time. When it came to online, teachers had only forty minutes per period—the school added a ten-minute break between lessons."

(Teacher 2).

"You can forget speaking. During online learning, students did not speak at all. I could not encourage them to ask and answer with me. For presentation, it might be okay, but for conversation, it was impossible."

(Teacher 3).

"Most of all speaking activities are group activities. Since I used Google Meet, I could not use the breakout room function like Zoom. So, they did not have a chance to speak or discuss much."

(Teacher 4).

However, one participant mentioned that the most challenging skill to teach was listening—unreadiness in terms of electrical devices and internet signals could lead to problems:

"I found listening the most difficult. The problems were about the internet signal and the devices, such as their headphones or speakers. It turned out that they could not listen at all. Sometimes, my microphone was not working as well. So, I decided to cut the listening part off."

(Teacher 5).

Apart from skill teaching, several teachers found choosing content challenging as well. That was because they had less class time and they also needed to spend some time in the beginning of each class to check in with students. Additionally, it was difficult for students to stay focused when a significant amount of content was being delivered. As a result, the teachers needed to choose the most interesting, useful content:

"During online teaching, I had to wait until all students showed up. So, I could not finish teaching all content as planned."

(Teacher 5).

"I had to choose content which could interest students. If it was too much, they did not pay attention at all."

(Teacher 7).

In conclusion, English-language teaching struggles included challenges in teaching some English skills, the limitations of the online setting and the limited time per period. Moreover, teachers sometimes encountered challenges when trying to choose the right content to teach in order to suit students the most during the pandemic.

3. Unreliable assessment and evaluation

Online assessment and evaluation seemed to be a challenge for teachers since they found it difficult to measure students' learning. When it came to teaching, it seemed impossible to assess students since there were not enough responses to allow teachers to check the students' understandings:

"It was hard for teachers to assess students' learning because we had no idea if students understood or not. We could not observe every student like in the classroom. We knew just only students who answered every time."

(Teacher 2).

Moreover, the results in online tests could be unreliable due to a rise in cheating:

"Students became more familiar with technology, and it turned out that they knew some tricks to copy work and cheat during online exams."

(Teacher 5).

Finally, there could also be errors with online exam tools:

"We needed to recheck the scores during online learning as well because the online tools could be unstable."

(Teacher 5).

As indicated previously, the interviewees reported that challenges in terms of assessment and evaluation could occur during teaching, testing, and even scoring. The teachers remained unclear how to assess and evaluate students' learning appropriately during emergency remote teaching.

4. Ineffective classroom management

Ensuring students were focused and academically productive during online teaching was difficult. Some teachers offered their opinions on the difficulties of managing their classroom and creating a productive atmosphere in the online classroom as follows:

"I would give myself eight out of ten for this online teaching. Two points were deducted because I could not get all students engaged in my class."

(Teacher 2).

"Students also asked me to add more games to help them stay more focused in class."

(Teacher 4).

"It was hard to create an online positive classroom climate where students feel safe and trusted so that they were attentive and confident to ask and answer questions in class."

(Teacher 8).

In summary, it was clear that teachers found that they could not manage their classrooms effectively since they could not capture students' attention and encourage students to actively participate in online classes.

5. Lost relationships

Since emergency remote teaching entails a change from the normal modes of teaching—from face-to-face instruction to online settings—it affected relationships as teachers and students no longer saw each other in person. Sample responses from the interviews included the following:

"It was more difficult because we did not know each other at all. I even could not remember students' faces. I did not think chatting could help build real relationships."

(Teacher 3).

"The relationship between teachers and students are completely lost similarly to the relationships between students. Even though they talked via online, they needed to start knowing each other again face to face."

(Teacher 1).

Overall, not only did relationships between teachers and students change, but relationships between students themselves were also disconnected during remote learning. Even though online settings could allow teachers and students as well as students and students to communicate, it was notable that they felt that in actuality, this did not work to build or strengthen relationships.

6. Individual student unreadiness

To make emergency remote teaching effective, students' readiness was also regarded as a challenge for teachers. In this sense, individual student readiness included their self-discipline, technological skills to deal with emergency remote teaching, and opportunities to access education when it shifted to online learning. Teachers' opinions are illustrated below:

"Since they are still young, they did not have enough self-discipline skills. When they had to study many subjects in one day, they might not gain as much knowledge as teachers' expectations. Even when I studied online for just two hours, I felt bored."

(Teacher 4).

"I was worried about students' technological skills because I was not sure if they had enough skills to study online. I think they never learned Google Classroom from the computer subject at school."

(Teacher 8).

"The internet is really important. Typically, students would have only one mobile phone. When they had to use Google Meet for eight hours straight, they said their phones could be getting hot, broken or simply out of battery."

(Teacher 3).

"Since we had online learning, we could figure out how to make students ready for it as well. If students were supported and everyone can get access to online learning, teaching online would be much more effective."

(Teacher 7).

"When COVID-19 occurred, we all knew that students were not ready because of devices and internet signals. In the end, more and more students dropped out from schools during COVID because they found difficulties in accessing to online learning."

(Teacher 10).

As you can see, students' unreadiness could result from a lack of their skills—life skills like self-discipline as well as the technological skills necessary to effectively learn with technology. Moreover, students could be unready due to a lack of opportunities to continue their learning since they did not have enough infrastructure, such as electronic devices, or supports to learn in this abnormal mode of teaching.

This section outlined the six major challenges of Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching—namely, technological difficulties, English-language teaching struggles, unreliable assessment and evaluation, ineffective classroom management, lost relationships, and individual student unreadiness—that were mentioned during the interviews. Links were also found between these challenges. To illustrate, the technological difficulties of not knowing how to plan online lessons effectively also led to English-language teaching struggles. For example, teachers had no idea what tools they could use in online class or how online lessons could be delivered, and ended up with using the same teaching materials or teaching pedagogies, which did not work for emergency remote teaching. Moreover, these struggles could result from individual student unreadiness, which occurred, for example, when students could not practice their English listening skills without working speakers. Thus, teachers experienced challenges in teaching those English skills.

Opportunities of Thai EFL Teachers during Emergency Remote Teaching

Opportunities presented by emergency remote teaching were also investigated. The research results showed that the six main opportunities were as follows: knowledge and skill improvement for online teaching, motivation for professional development, reduction of teacher workload, English-language skill teaching opportunities, more effective on-site teaching, and application to other duties.

1. Knowledge and skill improvement for online teaching

Undoubtedly, teachers have gained new knowledge and improved their skills in order to conduct online lessons, which differs from their normal modes of teaching. Some interesting opinions were presented as follows:

"I just learned most of the online teaching tools when I had to teach online. Before that, I did not even know if these tools existed."

(Teacher 3).

"I like to play games with students, but I was bored with Quizizz and Kahoot as I had been using them for ages. With this emergency remote teaching, I found and learned a lot of new things, such as Booklet."

(Teacher 1).

"What I have learned is about technology. We all need to adapt ourselves learning to use technology according to the situation. Don't let the crisis like this freeze students' learning process."

(Teacher 2).

"I learned some skills from teaching online, such as video editing so that students could review what they have learned or became interested in lessons more. Before the pandemic, I have never thought about video editing before."

(Teacher 3).

Overall, teachers found that they learned new knowledge and skills after emergency remote teaching commenced, especially in terms of technological knowledge and skills.

2. Motivation for professional development

The interviewees reflected on their motivation for professional development instead of being discouraged because of difficulties. Some provided examples below could show that they were encouraged to become life-long learners to improve their teaching.

"I became an up-to-date teacher in order to encourage students when learning online because the lessons needed to be fun and academic. I tried using interesting tools and applications in my class."

(Teacher 4).

"I decided to join teacher trainings so that I could know activities which could be used in online settings."

(Teacher 10).

"I joined teacher trainings to improve my technological and pedagogical skills. One workshop that I participated in was using games for online classrooms. I got to see fifty teachers sharing their ideas and they were really useful. I realized that teachers could not stop learning. We need to be active and eager to learn."

(Teacher 9).

"Actually, I graduated in Master of Education Technology. However, during emergency remote teaching, I still tried to learn new programs by myself. I realized I could not stop learning."

(Teacher 5).

In terms of this opportunity, teachers did not mention how their knowledge and skills were improved due to emergency remote teaching, but their eagerness to learn to improve themselves was evident. They could see that both self-learning and teacher trainings benefitted them greatly.

3. Reduction of teacher workload

It turned out that teacher workload decreased during emergency remote teaching for the interviewees, as they did not have to do other school-related work—Thai teachers in public schools are typically assigned to other duties apart from teaching. They noted they had more time for preparing their lessons:

"When I taught on-site, one day passed really quickly. Even though I did not have to teach every period, I felt like other schoolwork always came up."

(Teacher 6).

"When we taught on-site, sometimes I was assigned to work on something right away without advance notice."

(Teacher 1).

"My workload during emergency remote teaching was only about teaching. That was because I did not have to do some work, such as morning duties, since we all did not have to go to school. Moreover, projects and competitions were held online as well, which required less preparation time. Thus, I could spend more time focusing on my teaching."

(Teacher 3).

Thus, these findings showed that the Thai EFL teachers' duties during emergency remote teaching were primarily dedicated to teaching rather than any other school-related work. This was because the teachers worked from home; thus, they were not required to be responsible for various

school duties or were responsible for an online version of such duties that were more easily managed.

4. English-language skill teaching opportunities

Although there were challenges in terms of English-language teaching, some opportunities were also identified. While some teachers reported that speaking seemed to be a big challenge, others found that having students make video clips was another way to improve their speaking ability—at least, in this way, students could practice their presentation skills. Regarding listening, if students' devices were ready, the teaching of listening could be conducted more smoothly. Some interesting points were illustrated by the teachers as follows:

"For speaking, I came up with the idea asking students to make a video clip. I think it was a good idea because students could show their speaking skills for presentation."

(Teacher 1).

"When I taught at school, I did not focus on listening much because it took much time to set up everything in class. Unlike onsite, teaching listening online was much easier."

(Teacher 8).

"As the facilities in school, such as microphones and speakers, were not that supportive, sometimes it was hard to conduct lessons, especially with listening activities. When it came to online, students were able to listen via their devices much more clearly."

(Teacher 2).

Thus, it can be seen that English-language teaching presented both challenges and opportunities, depending on factors such as teachers' learning objectives and individual student readiness. However, according to the interviewees, students seemed to have more opportunities to improve their listening skills compared to when they studied on-site.

5. More effective on-site teaching

After the pandemic, teachers will be able to apply what they have learned during emergency remote teaching, especially in terms of the tools that they found useful:

"Teaching materials that teachers found online could be used in on-site teaching as well. We just need to change the way we use to make them more effective. For example, we don't need to assign students to play games individually like online class, but we can use a projector in the classroom and play

games together. Or when I ask every student to share opinions, I can still use Padlet so that all answers can be shown clearly via the projector."

(Teacher 2).

"Games can be used whether it is online or on-site teaching. Back when I taught at school before the COVID, I did not use games to engage students much."

(Teacher 5).

"I will keep using Google Classroom, as it can remind students to submit work, and it is good to record students' scores. Plus, for quizzes and unit tests, I will try using Google Forms."

(Teacher 7).

"Even though there is no COVID, I will not have paper tests anymore. I will do like when I have to score online. I think I can prevent cheating, for example, students do the test together in a computer room with teachers walking around to observe. Plus, using Google Classroom for recording scores is more systematic."

(Teacher 4).

"I will try Google Docs for writing assignments, as it was easy to use for students and convenient to mark for teachers. What I really like is the feature "rubric" because students can see criteria and their points in each criterion clearly."

(Teacher 6).

In summary, various online tools the teachers learned to use during emergency remote teaching can also be used when they come back to face-to-face instruction. For example, they can continue to use games as well as Google education tools and applications, as these can also enhance effectiveness in in-person teaching.

6. Application to other duties

What teachers apply after emergency remote teaching may not necessarily be related to their teaching but rather to the other duties for which they are responsible as teachers:

"From now on, I think many school activities can be done online, such as tutoring, which used to be in a school auditorium. As I am responsible for organize this tutoring activity, I will change to online settings even when the pandemic stops since it is more convenient and cheaper. Plus, students can choose to watch tutoring anytime when they are ready. Apart from that, some teacher trainings can be changed to online

sessions as well. It saves time and costs. I believe online will be the new trend."

(Teacher 4).

"Even though it is not about teaching, I can apply what I have done online such as conducting online teacher meetings."

(Teacher 3).

Overall, this opportunity was mainly about online trends encouraging teachers to start changing some school-related activities into online settings to save time and costs.

This section has shown the six major opportunities for Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching—namely, knowledge and skill improvement for online teaching, motivation for professional development, reduction of teacher workload, English-language skill teaching opportunities, more effective on-site teaching, and application to other duties. As with the challenges mentioned earlier, there was also a link between the various opportunities. This is because motivation for professional development can also result in knowledge and skill improvement for online teaching and more effective on-site teaching. To illustrate, teachers reported that after they were motivated to improve their teaching, they gained new knowledge and enhanced their skills, which could be applied to both online and on-site teaching. Thus, the research findings lead to a new framework of the challenges and opportunities of Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching.

Discussion

The present qualitative study sought to determine the challenges posed and opportunities presented by remote teaching to Thai EFL teachers during the pandemic. Below is a discussion of the research findings.

With regard to technological difficulties, the results of the present study are in line with those of Ferri et al.'s (2020) study: the teacher participants lacked skills in technology use and needed training to carry out remote teaching. The possible reason for this is that remote teaching requires the use of technology, and the shift to that from face-to-face instruction was immediate and thus did not allow for adequate relevant teacher training prior to its use (Putri et al., 2020). Senior teachers were also found to have had more problems with technology than younger teachers (Putri et al., 2020).

In terms of the English-language teaching struggles, as found in the interviews, teachers struggled with teaching English skills and choosing the content to deliver. Hazaea et al. (2021) also found that teaching in a traditional way
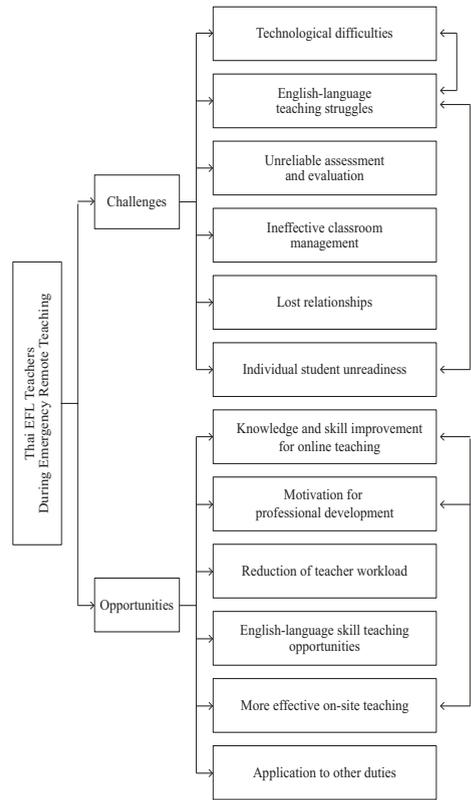

Figure 2 Challenges and the opportunities of Thai EFL teachers in the present study

in an emergency remote context was not viable or effective. Moreover, it seems possible that teaching speaking skills was also a challenge, as Zhang (2020) found that it was difficult to encourage students to speak during online classes.

Regarding assessment and evaluation, similar to the findings of the present study, Mukhtar et al. (2020) found that there was a lack of student feedback in remote teaching during the pandemic; thus, teachers did not know if their students understood the lessons. In addition, Howarth, Messing and Altas (2004; as cited in Khan & Abid, 2021) reported that it was difficult to stop students from cheating or plagiarizing in remote learning. To address this problem, it has been suggested that more appropriate examinations are given, such as those focusing on the application of knowledge instead of the content that the students have learned.

For classroom management, a study conducted by Zhang (2020) showed that teachers regarded this as their major challenge because they had difficulty monitoring their students online. In other words, the students did not actively participate in class and were silent or disappeared. Similarly, Mukhtar et al. (2020) stated that students were not highly attentive and disciplined when studying online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, regarding relationships, the results were in line with those of previous studies (i.e., Abdel Latif, 2022; Juárez-Díaz & Perales, 2021), which have noted that teacher-student and student-student interaction and communication were limited and not likely to take place in remote teaching, even though these are widely suggested in effective online education (Cundell & Sheepy, 2018).

Finally, major challenges can also occur when students do not have access to the necessary infrastructure, such as technological devices and internet connection, as well as due to individual student non-readiness, increasing inequality, and high dropout rates (Moscoviz & Evans, 2022). However, Hazaea et al. (2021) showed that even if the students had the infrastructure in place, some of them did not take responsibility for their learning or were not sufficiently autonomous.

Regarding opportunities, the study conducted by Sundarwati and Pahlevi (2021) reported that teachers improved their knowledge and skills, especially in digital literacy, while carrying out emergency remote teaching. They perhaps learned from their training and from the difficulties they encountered while teaching online. They were motivated to keep learning and trying to do better in their emergency remote teaching. As a result, since the onset of the pandemic, teachers' abilities related to technology use have expanded (Beardsley et al., 2021), possibly leading to more effective on-site teaching.

With regard to English-language teaching, the present study showed that students had more opportunities to improve their listening skills during the pandemic, perhaps because they had more opportunities to use electronic devices in class, such as their own cell phones. This is in line with the results of the study by Fedorova et al. (2018), which showed that remote teaching has increased the use of electronic tools. To clarify, students' use of their cell phones and other devices could benefit the teaching and learning of listening skills, for example, as students could listen to the provided audio clip more clearly on their own devices.

In contrast to the earlier findings that emergency remote teaching increased the teachers' workloads (Ní Fhloinn & Fitzmaurice, 2021; Zhang, 2020), the Thai EFL teachers in the present study reported that their workload was reduced since they were able to focus on their teaching tasks rather than doing other school-related work as typically required (Anonymous. (2021b). When the teachers worked from home and conducted online lessons during the pandemic, they did not have to carry out these non-teaching tasks.

In terms of application to other duties, the results of the present study are in line with those of Ferri et al.'s study (2020), showing that emergency remote teaching can open up new opportunities and does not need to be implemented only as an alternative to traditional teaching during a pandemic. For example, the online setting can be implemented when appropriate to the nature of a given activity such as some school activities or online meetings.

Overall, there were some presented challenges and opportunities related to the TPACK framework—namely, technological difficulties, English-language teaching struggles, unreliable assessment and evaluation, knowledge and skill development, English-language skill teaching opportunities, and more effective on-site teaching.

However, there were additional findings about challenges and opportunities apart from the TPACK framework as follows: ineffective classroom management, lost relationships, individual student unreadiness, motivation for professional development, reduction of teacher workload, and application to other duties.

In summary, all the observed and reported challenges involved in remote teaching should be addressed to make the overall experience more effective. The key to this effort, apart from teachers' adaptability, is support from all stakeholders. Moreover, the opportunities that were found to be offered by remote teaching could benefit teachers in many ways, such as by promoting their self-development and well-being.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from this study represent the challenges and the opportunities of Thai EFL teachers during emergency remote teaching. The data from the interviews show that there were six major challenges—namely, technological difficulties, English-language teaching struggles, unreliable assessment and evaluation, ineffective classroom management, lost relationships, and individual student unreadiness. However, the Thai EFL teachers in this study also reported six major opportunities: knowledge and skill improvement for online teaching, motivation for professional development, reduction of teacher workload, English-language skill teaching opportunities, more effective on-site teaching, and application to other duties.

The results of this study have important implications as follows. First, teachers are encouraged to apply any opportunities they have discovered during emergency remote teaching to their on-site teaching and other duties. Second, there are some useful suggestions in improving teacher education and professional development, such as focusing on online learning preparation to ensure a smoother transition to emergency remote teaching.

Further research should be conducted to identify ways to overcome the challenges posed by remote teaching and ensure that the opportunities it presents are not lost beyond the pandemic. Ensuring this could help make both remote

and on-site teaching more effective. In addition, the findings of the present study raise questions about the challenges posed and opportunities presented by emergency remote teaching for Thai EFL teachers with characteristics different from those of the Thai EFL teachers in the present study, such as those working in private schools or in public schools with small student populations.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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