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Policy

Journal History

Founded in 2020, Journal of English Language and Linguistics (JEL) is the double-blind peer-reviewed journal organized and published by the English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand. The journal welcomes the submissions of manuscripts both from Thailand and other countries.

Aim

The aims of the journal are 1) to strengthen the collaboration and networking of academic and research works among educators, scholars, and researchers from the fields of English language and Linguistics based on empirical academic and research studies, and 2) to provide an academic platform for authors to share their new insights and discoveries about theoretical and experimental implications.

Scope

The journal welcomes manuscripts for publication in the scope covering the following disciplines: English Language, Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Literature, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Translation and Interpretation, Technology and Language, World Englishes, Language Acquisition, Innovations in Language Teaching and Learning, Language Testing and Assessment, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), and English Language Teaching (ELT).

Peer Review Process

All articles submitted to this journal for publication must be peer-reviewed by three (3) anonymous external peer reviewers from various institutes in the relevant fields. Most importantly, the identities of the authors and reviewers must be concealed from each other (double-blind peer review) to produce all articles for publication with high quality and academic standards. The articles submitted for publication in this journal have not been published elsewhere or are not being considered for publication in other journals by peer reviewers. The authors must strictly adhere to the journal's reference system and the standards for the publication of academic or research articles.

Plagiarism Policy

All articles for publication in this journal will be screened for plagiarism using Turnitin, with a similarity score of 20% or less acceptable. The Journal will promptly reject all articles leading to plagiarism or self-plagiarism.

Citation Style

All articles for publication in this journal will be strictly cited in accordance with the 7th edition of the American Psychological Association's (APA) manual on citation reference styles. More information is available at www.apa.org.

Evaluation Process

Evaluation reports will be completed anonymously within three months after the peer reviewers' reception. Following the completion of the evaluation process, authors will get a statement of the editorial decision as well as an anonymized copy of the reports upon which the decision is based. The editorial decision will be considered final.

Submission Categories

The following two categories of manuscripts can be submitted to JEL:

1. Research Article

The research article must be based on the language-related areas specified in the aims and scope of the journal. The article should range from 2,500 to 8,000 words in length, including figures, tables, and references. An abstract, with 1 page of A4 or from 150 to 250 words, is accompanied by a list of three to five keywords.

2. Academic Article

The article should provide discussions on all aspects related to the language-related areas specified in the aims and scope of the journal. It should range in length from 1,500 to 4,000 words, including references. An abstract, with 1 page of A4 or from 150 to 250 words, is accompanied by a list of three to five keywords.

Publication Frequency

The journal is published biannually (January-June and July-December).

Special Issue Information

The journal may publish a special issue in terms of dealing with special academic events of national and international conferences held in both Thailand and other countries. This will be considerably approved by the journal editorial board.

Editor-in-Chief’s Note

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The Journal of English Language and Linguistics (JEL) is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal that is published biannually (January-June and July-December). This journal has strictly complied with all the criteria set out by the Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI). The journal's official indexed status in TCI, tier 2, was announced on June 23, 2023.

It is noted that from the 5th volume in 2024 onwards, there will be some modifications to this journal as follows: 1) JEL will discontinue the full online issue, but all articles will continue to be made freely available and accessible. 2) The article processing charge (APC) or publication fee will be paid by the authors for publication in JEL). 3) Three issues per year, not two, will be published. 4) All articles will be double-blinded and peer-reviewed by three reviewers from both internal and external institutions. And 5) every announcement of this journal will be available online via JEL’s website.

In this issue, eight articles were published: six from Thailand, one from Myanmar, and one from Yemen. All articles were considerably examined by three reviewers.

Finally, JEL would like to express heartfelt gratitude to all involved, including peer reviewers, authors, educators, academics, and researchers for their academic contributions.

Assistant Professor Suphakit Phoowong

Editor-in-Chief

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EFL Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Peer Team Teaching Experiences

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers (PTs) towards the advantages and disadvantages of their peer team teaching (PTT) experiences. The sample consisted of 52 participants, with equal numbers of males and females, from the English Language Department of the College of Education at Seiyun University. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed to gather the data, including reflective reports and a questionnaire. These findings prove that PTT has numerous benefits for PTs. The five most common advantages included increasing confidence, correcting the mistakes of one another, preparing a better lesson plan, exchanging experiences, skills, and knowledge, and overcoming challenging situations in teaching. On the other hand, some PTs held negative opinions towards PTT. The five most significant disadvantages included disagreement among team members, reliance of some members on other members to do the work on their behalf, not following the lesson plan, late completion of the work due to disagreement among the team members, and unequal division of work among the members. The findings revealed that PTs' perceptions of PTT's advantages and disadvantages did not differ significantly based on gender. The researcher recommends that EFL PTs implement PTT during their preparation stage, as it has many benefits for PTs' professional development.

Keywords: advantages and disadvantage, EFL pre-service teachers' perception, peer team teaching

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Introduction

Team teaching is defined as a collaborative approach to teaching in which a group of two or more teachers collaborate to plan, conduct, and evaluate instruction for the same group of learners (Crawford & Jenkins, 2018; Smith & Fogarty, 2016). In numerous universities, the common method of teaching still relies heavily on a single teacher being accountable for their students in a class, with minimal collaboration with other faculty members. Team teaching is normally conducted by qualified in-service teachers/instructors.

However, the current study is about the evaluation of the application of Peer team teaching (PTT) with novice pre-service teachers (PTs) as a training technique to help them improve their teaching styles and techniques and to prepare them for their future career. PTT involves two or more PTs taking the role of the teacher and the remaining fellow PTs taking the role of their students. The application of PTT in PTs education has the double feature of working as peer teaching and collaborative work where students have the chance to teach their own fellow PTs and to work collaboratively for the sake of polishing the teaching skills of one another. Whereas PTT can be viewed by some PTs as an awkward activity for they should teach their cohort who are required to act as their students, the benefits of peer teaching are unlimited because it resembles real classrooms in many aspects; yet drawbacks cannot be ignored.

The emerging practice of PTT in PTs education holds great promise in transforming the world of teacher preparation (Bacharach et al., 2010; Heck et al., 2008). While students may be taught the idea of team teaching, it cannot replace the experience of actually participating in such an approach (Jin & Nasara, 2000). It is important for teacher education programs in higher education to include a significant focus on preparing future teachers to collaborate effectively as co-teachers (Graziano & Navarrete, 2012). As emphasized by Bacharach et al. (2010), student teachers in traditional environments are given little or no support as they are assumed to have complete responsibility for a classroom.

According to Banks and Stave (1998), it is important for PTs to observe, participate in, and analyze learning activities from the viewpoints of both students and teachers during their coursework. Unfortunately, PTT is not commonly used in PTs education. This lack of exposure to PTT can limit their understanding of how to collaborate with other teachers and effectively manage a classroom with huge challenges. It is important for PTs education programs to incorporate PTT experiences so that future teachers can develop the necessary skills and knowledge to work collaboratively in classroom settings. By doing so, PTs will be better equipped to provide their students with high-quality education that meets their diverse needs and prepares them for success in their teaching careers.

This study is an attempt to address the issue of PPT at the tertiary level, where the PTs themselves work in teams to enhance their teaching skills and prepare them for professionalism. Being exposed to PTT as a new technique, some PTs may have doubts about the effectiveness and benefits of the activities and the potential impact on their teaching performance. Such misconceptions could have arisen from the nature of PTT activities. This research might contribute to changing the negative attitude towards PTT simply because PTs have been completely involved in this process by allowing them to act as teachers, students, and evaluators of their own acts. PTT is intended to stimulate the real classroom environment as much as possible so that PTs can acquire practical teaching experience to help them deal efficiently with possible problems when they become teachers.

Literature Review

1. Advantages of PTT for PTs

PTT is a useful technique for PTs preparation. Jin and Nasara (2000) stated three main goals of PTT in PTs preparation programs:1) to provide students with different teaching styles and strategies, 2) to develop learning experiences, and 3) to ease an encouraging and practical environment for students through communication with each other. It is a tool to help PTs evaluate their own teaching, and this in turn would participate in improving and sharpening their teaching skills when they go for their practice teachings at schools and when they become real teachers after graduation. It is an opportunity for PTs to put theories that they have been taught into practice while still in the training field. PTT activities thus work as a preparation stage for PTs to perform better in their practice and career teaching.

Numerous advantages of PTT were revealed for student teachers who team-teach their peers. One benefit is that it allows PTs to observe different teaching styles and techniques. It provides meaningful experiences that contribute to professional development (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019). According to Mononen et al. (2023), PTT is a significant teaching experience. In addition, PTT practice especially increases PTs' knowledge of the role of learning environments as well as classroom management skills.

Another benefit is that PTT provides diverse and valuable learning experiences for novice teachers and assists their professional and personal growth (Roth & Tobin, 2002). PTT experience has clear relevance to the personal professional development of student teachers. When teachers work together, they share their expertise and learn from each other's experiences. They can bring different skills and knowledge to the table, leading to more engaging and effective lessons. For example, one teacher may have expertise in technology, while another may have experience with project-based learning. By combining their strengths, they can create a well-rounded curriculum that meets the needs of all the students. This can lead to improved instructional practices and a deeper understanding of subject matter.

PTT provides PTs with the opportunity to observe and learn from other teachers, receive feedback on their teaching practices, and develop their teaching skills. By working alongside another PTs with complementary skills and knowledge, PTs can gain valuable insights into effective instructional strategies and classroom management techniques (Friend & Cook, 1996a,1996b). This can help them develop their own teaching styles and build confidence in their abilities. Therefore, PTT has been found to be an effective development tool for EFL PTs, as it offers them an opportunity to engage in collaborative practices that can enhance their learning experiences.

Moreover, PTT has been considered a successful method of instruction, and research indicates that it can encourage teachers to collaborate and innovate while developing fresh ideas as they work together to plan, deliver, and assess lessons (Roth & Tobin, 2002). This increases student engagement and motivation. When teachers work together to plan and deliver instruction, they can create more engaging and interactive lessons that cater to different learning styles. This can lead to increased student participation and interest in the subject matter.

To further establish the benefits of PTT for PTs, we need to consider the fact that teaching is a demanding profession, and many PTs struggle with feeling overwhelmed or isolated when they go for their practicum or become real teachers after graduation. A heavy load on novice teachers may disappoint them and force them to leave their profession. According to Kurtts and Levin (2000), the primary reasons for teachers leaving their profession are a lack of support and feelings of isolation. Hence, it is crucial to provide adequate support to teachers during their education, as their initial experiences can impact their decision to stay in the profession (Anthony & Ord, 2008). A peer can provide this support (Kurtts & Levin, 2000). As suggested by Casey et al. (2011), it is necessary to provide support during teacher education. Hsu (2007) indicated that student teachers tend to seek help from their peers more often than from their mentors regarding lesson planning and teaching, evaluation and job preparation, and personal issues. The PTT experience is an opportunity to see what happens in one's own teaching and to receive useful feedback from peers (Bolstad & Zenuk-Nishide, 2016). Therefore, implementing PTT during field experience is considered valuable.

Through team teaching, PTs will be able to overcome some common teaching skills that novice teachers usually encounter, such as time management, classroom management, lesson planning, and following lesson plans. "Not only was team teaching seen as a means for providing students with the skills they need, but it also was discovered as a way to enhance the teacher's own professional development." (Vesikivi et al., 2019, p.1). However, the environment in which the PTs are teaching is artificial, as they are not teaching real students but their fellow PTs who have a similar level of language skills and knowledge.

2. Disadvantages of PTT for PTs

In addition to the positives recorded above, some previous studies, such as Mononen et al. (2023), highlighted some challenges or conflicts that may occur in PTT. The disadvantages, as revealed by Gordana et al. (2022), are attributed to organizational and technical problems and difficulties in the functioning of the team. From this, we can understand PTT in itself as a method that has no major disadvantages, yet it may be surrounded by challenges due to the lack of skills for implanting it. Chitiyo (2017) concluded with two major challenges: (a) teachers lack the necessary skills required for implementing team teaching, and (b) PTT may require a lot of resources for its successful implementation. Gordana et al. (2022) revealed several problems regarding team planning and preparation.

However, the challenges of PTT can be overcome if certain strategies are followed. Mansell (2006, p.19) stated that PTT requires the team members to have a particular set of skills to create cohesion. Some examples of these skills include respect and trust, listening skills, assertiveness, empathy, the ability to give and receive feedback, and the willingness to challenge each other to action (Knights & Sampson, 1995; Mansell, 2006). In many PTT situations, team members are expected to work together in the preparation of classes and in the sharing of views after the classes. PTT is not a competitive situation in which one person’s good lesson diminishes the value of someone else’s (Gower et al., 1995). PTT requires strong communication skills from both the teachers. They must be able to work together effectively, share ideas openly, and provide constructive feedback without causing conflict or tension. This can be challenging if there are personality clashes or differences in teaching styles.

3. Previous studies on PTT

Several previous studies have supported the use of PTT in PTs education. PTs expressed many positive characteristics regarding the implementation of team teaching; they attributed the advantages to the resource of ideas for teaching and preparation of teaching content (Gordana et al., 2022). A study conducted by Hanusch et al. (2009), PTT has been highly appreciated by PTs because of the varied skills and teaching methods involved.

According to Mikyung et al. (2016), PTs held the belief that co-teaching methods allow them to communicate and collaborate effectively. Both groups acknowledged the importance of personality in co-teaching, as well as the difficulties involved in implementing it. Another study by Britton and Anderson (2010) revealed that PTs had positive views about PTT as they saw it as a simple process to teach and easy to learn. Participants also found PTT useful because it provided them with opportunities to observe and communicate with their colleagues. PTT was found to assist in altering and developing teaching practices. Data also revealed that peers enjoyed this 'stress free' experience of listening to their colleagues’ comments as compared to observations by university or classroom. supervisors.

Lu (2010) reported that PTT was found to be beneficial in pre-service programs, as it helps PTs develop professionalism. Learning and feedback from a peer has been reported as a very valuable experience for student teachers (Nokes et al., 2008). This is because PTT utilizes learning strategies from one’s colleagues. Baeten and Simons (2014) specified four other advantages for implementing PTT for PTs: (1) increased support, (2) increased dialogue about learning and teaching, (3) professional growth (in teaching, collaboration, and reflection), and (4) personal growth. Other benefits include enhanced support, professional development, reduced workload, learning gains, and enriched lessons (Baeten & Simons, 2014). PTT may further facilitate students' learning and understanding (Coleman et al., 2023).

Research Objectives

1. To find out the most common advantages and disadvantages of peer team teaching experiences as perceived by EFL pre-service teachers.
2. To examine if there are any statistically gender-based differences in the perceptions of pre-service teachers towards their peer team teaching experiences.

Methodology

This section deals with the design of the study, methods of data collection and statistical analysis, and the validity and reliability of the research instruments.

1. Design

The design of this study was a mixed-method approach that involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data collected through a questionnaire and qualitative data collected through reflective reports.

2. Data Collection

The sample of the current study included 52 PTs (26 males and 26 females) from the English department of the College of Education of Seiyun University Yemen for the academic year 2022-2023. The study considered gender differences for several reasons. In the Yemeni context, female students in general tend to care more about marks than males, and the PTT in which the target group participated was assessed and carried out within a course given to them called 'Teaching School Textbook.' Based on this, the females could rather work alone than in a group, as this individuality would allow them to do better work and thus higher marks. As stated by Chivers and Schoolbred (2007), group presentations are usually a problem for students; they feel that they do more of the work than other group members. They also thought that they could earn higher marks for an individual task than for a group task.

Working in groups of four, the 52 PTs were asked to plan, teach, and evaluate a 35-minute lesson selected from English textbook 4 of the secondary school, which is part of the English for Yemen series. This textbook was selected because its intermediate level would be more suitable for PTs, whether they take the role of the teacher or the role of the students; it is neither too easy so they might feel bored nor too difficult to make them feel disappointed. Each group was asked to submit a detailed lesson plan with suitable teaching aids, following a sample given to them. Every team member taught a part of the lesson for approximately seven to eight minutes. Immediately after the lesson was completed, the team members were encouraged to reflect on and write reports on the main pros and cons of their PTT experiences.

The team members were composed based on the PTs' own choices. As stated by Baeten and Simons (2014), when PTs consider the preferences of their peers, they would encounter less difficulty in building a positive relationship since they have chosen their own group. Having some level of compatibility in areas such as knowledge, skills, attitude, ability, academic achievement, personality, experience, age, and location is beneficial (Kamens, 2007; Smith, 2002, 2004; Walsh & Elmslie, 2005).

In the planning stage, each team was given a lesson and asked to write a full lesson plan following the lesson plan sample provided to them and the teacher's book in the prescribed textbook. In the conducting stage, the four-member teams were required to teach the lesson together, as one teacher and the other cohort PTs acted as their students. In the evaluation stage, students were asked to write a report on the advantages and disadvantages of their PTT performance. The questionnaire used in this study was developed based on the content of the students' reports.

The reflective reports were analyzed to determine the positive and negative aspects that were used to build up the questionnaire items. The questionnaire, which was a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, to strongly disagree, consisted of 64 items divided into two sections: the advantages section (37 items) and the disadvantages section (27 items). The questionnaire was distributed to 52 participants.

3. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, namely the means and standard deviations, were applied for the analysis of the questionnaire. An independent samples t-test was also used to identify differences in the perceptions of the male and female respondents regarding the advantages and disadvantages of PTT. The data of the questionnaire were analyzed using the statistical analysis program in version 20 to achieve the objectives of the study.

4. Validity and Reliability

The initial version of the questionnaire, which had 92 items, was given to three PhD specialists in ELT from Seiyun University to determine the instrument's face validity. Their comments were considered, 28 items were deleted, and other recommended changes were also incorporated. A reliability coefficient test was conducted for the questionnaire using the statistical analysis program in version 20. The Cronbach's alpha value remained .815, which is a highly acceptable consistency of reliability.

Results

In this section, the results of the study are first presented and then discussed.

1. Part 1: Advantages of PTT experiences as perceived by PTs

Table 1

The Most Common Advantages of PTs' PTT Experiences

Items	*N*	*M*	*SD*
It increases confidence of the team members.	52	4.54	.641
It helps classmates to correct the mistakes of one another.	52	4.42	.696
It helps prepare a better lesson plan.	52	4.38	.690
It is an opportunity to exchange experiences, skills and knowledge.	52	4.38	.745
It creates opportunities to overcome challenging situations in teaching.	52	4.35	.683
It allows the members to share their opinions and choose the most suitable ones.	52	4.35	1.008
It enhances teaching performance.	52	4.31	.829
It builds good relationship among classmates.	52	4.31	.919
It helps look at teaching from different angles.	52	4.27	.770
It leads to a better preparation of the lesson	52	4.27	.770
It is more flexible than traditional teaching.	52	4.19	1.011
Team teaching is an opportunity to communicate and observe other classmates.	52	4.19	.687
It increases creativity in teaching the lesson.	52	4.12	.943
It works as a support for teachers.	52	4.12	1.060
It teaches responsibility.	52	4.08	1.250
It makes work easier.	52	4.04	1.204
It enables the members to see how much learning is taking place.	52	4.00	.792

From Table 1, we can see that the mean scores for each item range from 4.54 to 4.00, indicating that the participants generally agree that PTT experiences have numerous benefits. The highest mean score was for "It increases confidence of the team members" (M = 4.54, SD = .641), followed by "It helps classmates to correct the mistakes of one another" (M = 4.42, SD = .696) and "It helps prepare a better lesson plan" (M = 4.38, SD = .690). One interesting finding is that PTT experiences are seen as an opportunity to exchange experiences, skills, and knowledge (M = 4.38, SD = .745). Another notable finding is that PTT experiences are seen as a way to overcome challenging situations in teaching (M = 4.35, SD = .683). The table above shows more advantages, yet the current study aimed to highlight the most common ones.

2. Part 2: Disadvantages of PTT experiences as perceived by PTs

Table 2

The Most Common Disadvantages of PTs' PTT Experiences

Items	*N*	*M*	*SD*
It becomes difficult when the members do not agree with each other.	52	4.12	1.060
Some members depend on the other members of the team to do the work on their behalf.	52	3.77	1.198
Some members do not follow the lesson plan.	52	3.62	1.286
Disagreement among the members may delay completing the work.	52	3.54	1.434
Work is sometimes divided unequally among the members.	52	3.54	1.514
Some members work harder than others.	52	3.50	1.566
The members are reluctant to work with people with whom they feel uncomfortable.	52	3.46	1.290
Some members may feel that their contributions are unwanted.	52	3.42	1.258
The members fail to manage the time specified for them.	52	3.35	1.251
Some members do not accept the lesson distribution, i.e. who should teach which part.	52	3.31	1.213
The members take time longer than required to take an action or make a decision.	52	3.27	1.416
The team members are not given appropriate parts to teach,	52	3.27	1.497
The members fail to explain the lesson well and students get confused.	52	3.27	1.548
Some members are not willing to share their ideas.	52	3.27	1.523
Arguments among the members happen when distributing the parts of the lesson.	52	3.19	1.189
Each participant cannot apply the idea with which they are convinced.	52	3.19	1.429
The team start working on the project late, closer to the deadline.	52	3.15	1.073

Table 2 shows the most common disadvantages of PTs' PTT experiences. The results indicated that one of the most significant challenges faced by PTs during PTT was disagreement among the team members (*M*=4.12, *SD*=1.060). Another common disadvantage identified in the table is that some members depend on others to do work on their behalf (*M*=3.77, *SD*=1.198). Additionally, the table shows that some members did not follow the lesson plan (*M*=3.62, *SD*=1.286). The other two common disadvantages included late completion of work due to disagreement among team members (*M*=3.54, *SD*=1.434) and unequal division of work among members (*M*=3.54, *SD*=1.434). More disadvantages are listed in the table; however, the current study aimed to investigate the most common ones.

Table3

Comparison between Advantage and Disadvantage of PTT

	M	*SD*	*N*
Advantages of Team Teaching	4.0239	.51148	52
Disadvantages of Team Teaching	3.2635	.63588	52

The table above presents a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of PTT. The mean score for the advantages of PTT was 4.0239, indicating that participants generally perceived PTT as beneficial. On the other hand, the mean score for the disadvantages of PTT was 3.2635, suggesting that participants also recognized some drawbacks of this approach.

The standard deviation for both measures is relatively low, with values of .51148 and .63588 for the advantages and disadvantages, respectively. This indicates that there was a high level of agreement among the participants regarding their perceptions of team teaching.

3. Part 3: Gender-based differences in the perceptions of the PTs towards their PTT experiences

Table 4 presents the results of a t-test conducted to examine gender-based differences in the perceptions of PTs towards PTT.

Table 4

Gender-Based Differences in the Perceptions of the PTs towards PTT

T-test	*t*	*df*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Advantages of PTT	.862	50	.393
Disadvantages of PTT	1.352	50	.183

It is evident from Table 4 that PTs' perceptions of advantages did not differ significantly based on gender ($t = .862$, $df = 50$, $p = .393$) and disadvantages ($t = 1.352$, $df = 50$, $p = .183$) of PTT.

Discussion

1. Part 1: Advantages of PTT Experiences as Perceived by PTs

The current study found that PTT has numerous benefits for PTs. The most common advantage is increasing confidence. This confidence is reflected in the reflective reports. One participant, for instance, commented on her/his team members as follows: “The individuals in my team supported each other with good instructions and confidence.” The second most common advantage is correcting one another’s mistakes. The confidence among the team members could be attributed to the openness and willingness of team members to encourage the correction of one another’s mistakes. As is known, a person cannot see their own faults, but they work with others and allow them to observe and give feedback; then, the mistakes can be easily identified by observers. The third most common advantage was the preparation of a better lesson plan. This result is in contrast to that of Gordana et al. (2022), who, as stated previously, revealed many problems regarding team planning and preparation. This conflict in results may be justified by the ability of team members to create cohesion among themselves. In the current study, it seems that PTs enjoy several of these skills such as respect and trust, listening skills, assertiveness, empathy, the ability to give and receive feedback, and the willingness to challenge each other to action. The fourth most common advantage is exchanging experiences, skills, and knowledge. This is in line with Barahona (2017), who stated that PTT could be a valuable approach to foster deeper learning among PTs. The fifth most common advantage is overcoming challenging teaching situations. Challenging situations could become tough for a single teacher, but not for team teachers who are able to discuss and openly share their ideas, experiences, skills, and knowledge.

As support for the above findings, one of the PTs in his/her reflective reports stated the following: "PTT was an effective way for me. It made me more creative and confident without confusion due to frequent discussions of ideas and points of view and planning with others. Group work allowed me to grow myself and brush up on my knowledge, as well as helping me to develop a better understanding of the task. In addition, it gave me a chance to learn several skills and expertise from members. Therefore, my teaching style, communication skills, and experience were promoted. Finally, working as a member in a team motivated me to improve my qualities and abilities not only in teaching but also in a whole life."

The positive feelings remarks that this participant wrote were not the only one; many other participants reported similar satisfaction with their PTT experiences. These findings indicate that participants valued learning from their peers and recognized the importance of collaboration in teaching. It also highlights the potential of peer support to help teachers navigate difficult situations and improve their teaching practices. Team teaching, as concluded by Knights and Sampson (1995), can improve teachers' teaching experience and practices. That is because the teachers share responsibility for the learning outcomes of the students and may take turns leading lessons or work together to co-teach.

2. Part 2: Disadvantages of PTT Experiences as Perceived by PTs

Besides the positive beliefs that most PTs held, some of them showed negative aspects that PTT involves. This finding is supported by Mononen et al. (2023), who concluded that PTs face both positive and negative experiences in team teaching. The most significant challenge is the disagreement among team members. This result emphasizes that team teachers and peers must be on the same page for lesson planning and instruction. Disagreements or misunderstandings between teachers can lead to confusion for students and undermine the effectiveness of the approach. In one of the reports, a PT referred to this challenge that, "…conflicts of ideas and opinions arise. It is difficult for some people to accept others' criticism or agree with their opinions and ideas. Several PTs have highlighted the importance of effective communication and collaboration among team members in achieving successful outcomes in team teaching. PTT would not be successful without good harmony among the team members, and such interaction would profit numerous benefits, including manifestation of new ideas, agreement of the best way to teach a particular part of the lesson, etc.

The second common disadvantage is that some members depend on others to do the work on their behalf. Some of the reason behind this result was explained in one of the student's reflective reports indicating that "…some members didn't work because they are sure other members will complete their work." Some PTs may lack motivation or feel overwhelmed by their workload, which could negatively impact the overall performance of the team. Team members reported about other members in their team that they feel unfair in the tasks distribution, and they think that the tasks given to them were more difficult than the tasks of the other members." To address this issue, it is essential to establish clear expectations and roles for each team member, and to provide support and guidance as needed.

The results also showed that some members did not follow the lesson plan, which is the third most common disadvantage. This drawback can lead to confusion among team members and undermine the effectiveness of PTT. To overcome this challenge, it is crucial to ensure that team members have a clear understanding of the lesson plan and are committed to following it.

The other fourth and fifth common disadvantages are late completion of the work due to disagreement among the team members and unequal division of work among the members, respectively. It is logical that disagreement among team members came as the first common disadvantage. The other four disadvantages that are reported as common could be the result of this disagreement. Reliance of some members on the other team members, deviation from the lesson plan, late submission of assignments, and unequal distribution of the tasks among the members could happen when there is disagreement among the members.

Generally, the findings suggest that while PTT can be advantageous in many ways, it may also have some limitations or challenges that need to be addressed to maximize its effectiveness. These findings support previous research that has shown PTT to be an effective instructional strategy (Friend & Cook, 1996b).

3. Part 3: Gender-Based Differences in the Perceptions of the PTs towards their PTT Experiences

The current study has shown that gender does not significantly influence attitudes towards PTT; yet, it is important to note that other factors such as individual learning styles may impact perceptions towards PTT. This finding suggests that PTs have similar perceptions of PTT regardless of their gender. This highlights the potential benefits of incorporating collaborative learning strategies, such as PTT, in teacher education programs to prepare future educators for effective collaboration in their classrooms. The finding that the males and the females have an equal view towards working in and with teams could nullify the notion that females usually prefer to work individually because they feel that they are more qualified than the other members of their team and they would score better marks for their individual assignments. Yet, Kaenzig et al. (2006) found in their study that males in the USA have been found to have more positive attitudes toward team learning experiences than females. It seems that the environment or the context in which the team teaching takes place would have an effect on gender preferences regarding working alone or as part of a group.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed several advantages of PTT for PTs. Most importantly, PTT can help PTs gain confidence in their teaching abilities by practicing in supportive environments. It can also provide them with feedback from their partners regarding their teaching mistakes. PTT allows PTs to work together to prepare better lesson plans. Exchange of their experiences, skills, and knowledge with each other is another valuable experience that can lead to overcoming challenging situations in teaching.

However, PTs expressed some negative aspects regarding their PTT experiences. PTs may disagree with each other about the best way to teach a lesson or about other aspects of team teaching. They may become reliant on their partners to do their share of work. When applying PTT, it may be difficult for each member to keep track of lesson plans. Equalizing portions of the lessons among the members is a must-to-do task; otherwise, it may be difficult to complete the required tasks on time if the members are not well-organized.

It could be encapsulated that PTT is a potential tool that can help PTs become more experienced and effective teachers and to improve their teaching skills, which can lead to more effective and engaging lessons. By being aware of the limitations of PTT, administrators of teacher preparation programs can ensure that PTT is a positive and productive experience.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that PTT should be applied by EFL PTs at the preparation stage, as this technique has many benefits for PTs' professional development. PTs are able to gain from their PTT experiences a variety of teaching and learning styles and strategies that have better results on their performances and learning outcomes.
For further study, the researcher made the following suggestions:
1. Although PTT had many advantages, the PTs commented negatively on some aspects of team teaching. Further studies should be conducted to determine the strategies that educators should consider to implement PTT effectively in PT preparation programs.
2. This study is exploratory in nature; it would also be preferable to conduct further experimental studies on the effect of PTT on PTs' teaching development.

3. The current study investigates the influence of gender on the perceptions towards PTT; yet, it is important to further investigate other factors such as prior knowledge with PTT and individual learning styles, which may impact perceptions towards PTT.

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The Use of COCA to Promote Thai EFL Public University Students' Autonomous Learning

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Abstract

This study investigated whether the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) can promote Thai EFL public university students' autonomous learning in a paragraph writing course. Thirty third-year students participated in this study, and they were from Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University in Bangkok, Thailand. They were asked to complete three writing assignments. Each assignment included the first draft and the final draft, and when they finished the first draft, they were required to use COCA to discover usage patterns and revise their work based on teacher feedback they received. The questionnaire was used to find out self-report data regarding the implementation of this concordance program on promoting their autonomous learning based on the process of autonomous learning by Knowles (1975). Additionally, the semi-structured interview was employed to investigate their perceptions of COCA as a tool for promoting autonomous learning. The results from the questionnaire showed that this concordance program could promote their autonomous learning based on Knowles' (1975) framework. They strongly agreed that they could formulate learning goals by themselves (M = 3.63, SD = 0.55) and use it as a material resource for learning writing (M = 3.50, SD = 0.56). The semi-structured interview also revealed that their perceptions of using COCA as a tool for promoting autonomous learning were positive because it can increase their confidence in their writing due to the use of authentic data. When they are confident of their writing skills, they are willing to continue practice writing through the use of this concordance tool.

Keywords: autonomous learning, COCA, EFL public university students, paragraph writing

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Introduction

Due to the English language education policy in Thailand, all university students are prepared to have English language skills for work in the future. Among the four skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing), writing is the most difficult, so EFL students and teachers should not neglect it (Al-Gharabally, 2015). The differences between English and Thai languages pose major challenges for Thai EFL students in terms of writing skills. Another important factor which influences the development of writing skills is learner autonomy. Learner autonomy refers to an ability which enables learners to control over the process of their learning (Benson, 1997, as cited in Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). It is essential for students' writing improvement because if they have an ability to reflect on their own learning, they can notice their strengths and weaknesses and then find the solutions for their learning problems. Additionally, learner autonomy is related to a special attitude. The learning process occurs when students are willing to improve themselves to achieve their own goals (Dueraman, 2015). Nevertheless, it is not easy for EFL teachers to measure learner autonomy. It will be more effective to investigate activities that students can do rather than the degree of their ability, and therefore, instead of learner autonomy, autonomous learning should be promoted in developing writing skills (Chiu, 2012; Tham, 2021).

Literature Review

Autonomous learning, which is a synonym for self-directed learning (Benson, 2001), can be described as a process that requires individuals, especially adult learners, to determine their learning needs (Knowles, 1975, as cited in Uz & Uzun, 2018). The process of autonomous learning by Knowles (1975) includes 1) diagnosing learning needs 2) formulating learning goals 3) identifying human and material resources for learning 4) choosing and implementing learning strategies, and 5) evaluating learning outcomes. To be specific, when students have learning needs, they will identify what to learn, which learning materials and strategies to use, and how to evaluate their learning. Since autonomous learning plays a crucial role in English language learning, it should be promoted in EFL writing classrooms. In order to enhance autonomous learning, teachers should focus on the three dimensions of the autonomous learning model by Garrison (1997). That is, teachers should provide students with feedback so that they can implement learning strategies and evaluate their learning outcome. Besides, teachers should give opportunities to students to identify resources for learning on the internet. Moreover, teachers should give opportunities to students to diagnose learning needs and formulate learning goals by themselves. Accordingly, teacher feedback, the internet, and learning objectives are necessary in promoting autonomous learning in EFL writing classrooms.

The internet plays an important role in promoting autonomous learning in EFL writing classrooms because students can identify resources for learning by themselves on the internet. According to Moradi (2018), the internet allows students to reach a large number of learning resources conveniently. Students can choose many online learning tools to help improve their writing skills. They can surf the internet anywhere and anytime to learn more about how to write accurately. To be specific, language examples on the internet are authentic; that is, they are used in the real situations. A corpus is among the most effective online tools for students to enhance their writing skills. A corpus is a collection of texts, both spoken and written, that are used to study language (Spiri, 2012). A corpus can be used to verify and improve grammatical accuracy by providing users with a large number of language examples to compare their writing to (Yoon, 2011). Students can search for language examples which are originally based on various online resources from a corpus and learn how to write accurately from them. During this process, they have opportunities to explore a lot of language examples which are presented in the form of concordances. As a result, a corpus which is a resource for learning on the internet can promote autonomous learning in EFL writing classrooms.

In Thailand, it has been found in many universities that students have problems with autonomous learning. According to Prabjandee and Inthachot (2013), students lack autonomous learning due to the culture of learning. In Thailand, teachers have traditionally had the obligation to evaluate, so students have inadequate experience of the self-evaluation process (Suwanarak, 2018). They cannot diagnose their learning needs and evaluate their learning outcomes. Moreover, students always believe that the teacher is the best source of knowledge, so they do not try to learn something by themselves, and thus, they do not have opportunities to enhance their creative thinking skills (Prabjandee & Inthachot, 2013). When students lack autonomous learning, they do not have opportunities to exchange and share knowledge with others (Rampai, 2013). Besides, some teachers prevent students from autonomous learning because they do not believe in the students’ ability.

As a result, this study aimed to promote autonomous learning among Thai EFL learners by using a corpus, one of the most effective technology tools, as a medium. A corpus can provide assistance for both learners and teachers. This is in line with the study by Xiao and Chen (2018), which showed that teachers can use the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) as a tool to solve problems in relation to teachers’ overload of correcting students’ essays, and a corpus provides the opportunities for students to practice writing via self-assessment which helps students develop autonomous learning ability. Moreover, according to Liu and Jiang (2009), the British National Corpus (BNC) has been useful in promoting inductive learning since students can observe grammar usages in concordance data, and then they can discover usage patterns and rules. As a consequence, a corpus enhances discovery learning.

In summary, this study attempted to find a method to improve Thai EFL public university students’ autonomous learning in a writing classroom. Before the researcher conducted the study, previous research was studied, and it was found that there had been a lack of research on the use of COCA, a widely used concordance tool for EFL researchers, to improve autonomous learning in a paragraph writing course in Thailand. Therefore, Thai EFL public university students and teachers should not neglect this concordance program, so promoting the students’ autonomous learning through COCA in a paragraph writing course should be primarily taken into consideration, and the findings of this study will have important implications for teaching EFL writing.

Research Objectives

1. To study the results of the use of COCA on promoting Thai EFL public university students' autonomous learning in a paragraph writing course.
2. To explore Thai EFL public university students' perceptions toward COCA on autonomous learning in a paragraph writing course.

Methodology

1. Research Design

The researcher conducted a mixed-method study and used quantitative and qualitative information in order to investigate the results of the use of COCA on students' autonomous learning and their perceptions toward this concordance program on autonomous learning. Data collection included a) quantitative data from a questionnaire and b) qualitative data from a semi-structured interview.

2. Population and Samples

Approximately 90 third-year students enrolled in a paragraph writing course, but only 30 were selected to participate in this study. All participants were from the same English program at Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University in Bangkok, Thailand, and the same writing background. All participants had previously enrolled in and passed a controlled and formulaic writing course.

3. Instruments

COCA: The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), a widely used concordance tool for EFL researchers, was chosen as it represents American English and is freely accessible online. Keyword in context (KWIC), one of COCA's seven functions, was selected for the experiment because it allows users to identify structural usage patterns by examining concordances. This can help students solve grammatical problems.

Questionnaire: A questionnaire from Wang et al. (2013) was adapted to collect self-report data on how COCA impacted students' autonomous learning in a paragraph writing course. The questionnaire was based on Knowles' (1975) model of autonomous learning and used a four-point Likert scale, with 4 indicating "strong agree" and 1 indicating "strong disagree". The questionnaire was validated by three experienced EFL writing teachers based on the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). They rated each statement for congruence. In case they thought that some statements were unclear, they provided comments and suggestions, and the researcher revised the statements accordingly.

Semi-structured Interview: A semi-structured interview with 10 participants was conducted to collect qualitative data on whether COCA could promote Thai EFL students' autonomous learning in writing. Three interview questions were validated by three experienced EFL writing teachers based on IOC. They were asked to rate whether they thought that all questions were congruent and easy to understand. In case they did not agree with some questions, they provided comments and suggestions, and the researcher revised the questions accordingly.

4. Research Procedure

Participants in this study completed three writing tasks. At the beginning of the study, they were required to complete the first writing task. According to Lai (2009, as cited in Wang et al., 2013), there are three stages of the writing process including an introductory session, a writing session, and a revising session. Following this process, participants only had to write two drafts for each writing task. For the first draft, they were given a topic by the researcher and had one hour to write and submit it online.

After one week, participants received feedback from their teacher on the grammatical errors in their writing. There were two versions of teacher feedback. For the first version, the researcher indicated the location of each error by circling words. An error correction code was not given to errors because the researcher would like participants to write the error correction code by themselves. They were asked to look at each circle and consider which error correction code should be used. After participants finished writing the error correction codes, the researcher gave the final version of teacher feedback which included both circles and the error correction codes. Participants needed to check whether they wrote the correct error correction code or not.

After receiving teacher feedback on their grammatical errors, participants revised their first drafts using COCA. They used the KWIC function to identify patterns in the language and correct any errors. The circles in the teacher feedback indicated which words to search for in the concordance lines. For example, the circled word was "because". Participants had to type this word, and then they had to search for concordance lines to learn how to use this word in each sentence. Participants should be able to learn by themselves based on the process of autonomous learning by Knowles (1975). Consequently, this activity was designed based on the three dimensions of the autonomous learning model by Garrison (1997) because those dimensions (i.e., self-management, self-monitoring, and motivation) support the process of autonomous learning by Knowles (1975). In order to promote self-management, the researcher presented a material resource, which was COCA, to participants. Moreover, since COCA is an online learning tool, it promotes self-monitoring. Furthermore, in order to promote motivation, the researcher gave participants opportunities to identify their learning needs as well as to select their learning goals based on teacher feedback that they received.

Participants had four hours to revise and submit their final draft online after completing the first writing task, which was due in two class sessions. They had to complete three writing tasks in total, which took six consecutive weeks. This same process was repeated for the second and the third writing tasks. One week after completing the third writing task, participants were required to complete a questionnaire, and one week later, the researcher selected ten participants for the semi-structured interview.

5. Data Analysis

Questionnaire: The frequency of responses to the questionnaire was calculated to collect self-reported data on the results of the use of COCA on Thai EFL public university students' autonomous learning. The analysis employed the descriptive statistics method. To be specific, means and standard deviations were calculated.

Semi-structured interview: The semi-structured interview was conducted and analyzed using qualitative content analysis to examine the participants' experiences with and perceptions of using COCA for autonomous learning. All ten participants' responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to investigate their perspectives on its impact on Thai EFL public university students' autonomous learning.

Results

1. The Results of the Use of COCA on Students' Autonomous Learning

The research results presented in this section were obtained from the questionnaire. Self-report data were used to provide the results regarding the use of COCA on autonomous learning. As can be seen in Table 1, the results can be illustrated clearly when looking at questionnaire questions 1-5. The participants showed that they strongly agreed with most of the items. They strongly agreed (*M* = 3.43, *SD* = 0.59) with the overall statements. According to Knowles' (1975) framework for autonomous learning, the participants strongly agreed that locating an error correction code by themselves helped formulate their learning goals (*M* = 3.63, *SD* = 0.55). Furthermore, they strongly agreed that COCA could be a material resource for learning writing (*M* = 3.50, *SD* = 0.56). Most of them also believed that they could diagnose their learning needs after the teacher asked them to write an error correction code by themselves (*M* = 3.40, *SD* = 0.55). Furthermore, they strongly agreed with the statement "I can examine my own writing weaknesses by myself after I practice writing through COCA." (*M* = 3.40, *SD* = 0.49). Nevertheless, they agreed less on their ability to choose and implement appropriate learning strategies after learning to write via this concordance program (*M* = 3.20, *SD* = 0.79).

Table 1

The Results from the Questionnaire of COCA on Autonomous Learning

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	*M*	*SD*	Meaning
1. After the teacher asks me to write an error correction code by myself, I can diagnose my learning needs.	13 (43.33%)	16 (53.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	3.40	0.55	Strongly agree
2. After the teacher asks me to write an error correction code, I learn to formulate learning goals by myself.	20 (66.67%)	9 (30%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	3.63	0.55	Strongly agree

Table 1 (Continued)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	*M*	*SD*	Meaning
3. I can identify COCA as a material resource for learning writing.	16 (53.33%)	13 (43.33%)	1 (3.33%)	0 (0%)	3.50	0.56	Strongly agree
4. I can choose and implement appropriate learning strategies after I learn to write via COCA.	12 (40%)	13 (43.33%)	4 (13.33%)	1 (3.33%)	3.20	0.79	Agree
5. I can examine my own writing weaknesses by myself after I practice writing through COCA.	12 (40%)	18 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3.40	0.49	Strongly agree
Overall					3.43	0.59	Strongly agree

2. Students' Perceptions toward COCA on Autonomous Learning

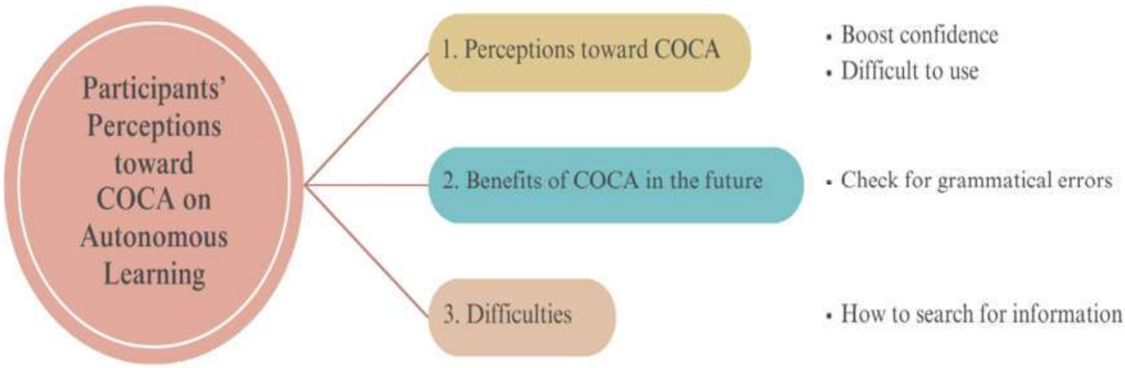
The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with ten participants to explore their perceptions of COCA for autonomous learning in Thai EFL public university students. The interviews were conducted after the participants completed a questionnaire. Regarding the participants' perceptions toward this concordance tool on autonomous learning, the participants were required to answer the following three questions.

1. How do you feel about using COCA in a paragraph writing course? Why?
2. How confident are you that COCA will improve your writing skills for your future studies and work?
3. What difficulties have you met after you practiced writing through COCA? How did you tackle these difficulties?

Dörnyei's (2007) qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the semi-structured interview responses to those three questions. Qualitative data were coded and categorized under frequently mentioned themes. The hierarchy of codes related to the participants' perceptions toward COCA on autonomous learning is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Category Codes Organized into a Tree Diagram Regarding the Participants' Perceptions toward COCA on Autonomous Learning



2.1 Perceptions toward COCA

Most participants agreed that COCA could help them improve their autonomous learning, particularly their writing confidence. However, one participant had a negative response. According to the results obtained from interviewing participants about their positive perception, the reason included that it boosted confidence in their writing.

S16: I think I have more confidence in my writing skills. Every time I used COCA to help correct errors, I learned many things especially grammar. Furthermore, when I wasn't sure if I wrote it correctly, I always turned to COCA for some grammatical points.

S26: I didn't understand why the teacher asked us to use it at first. However, after using it, I found that it was helpful. Sometimes I used it before receiving teacher feedback to make sure that I used correct grammar.

Only one participant had a negative perception. He felt that it was difficult for him to use COCA.

S10: I think it is difficult for me to use COCA because sometimes I cannot find what I need in concordances. Moreover, there is a limit on the use of COCA if we don't get registered.

2.2 Benefits of COCA in the Future

All of the participants' responses about their confidence in using COCA to improve their writing skills in the future were positive. They thought that they could use concordances from COCA to help check for grammatical errors in their writing. Below are responses from participants.

S9: In the future, I am sure that COCA can improve my writing skills. I think I will use COCA to check the use of grammar in my sentences.

S17: I think it is important for me to have a tool like COCA to help me use correct grammar in the future for work and study.

S24: I will use COCA in the future because it is an effective tool to check grammar in my writing. I am confident to use it.

S28: I will use COCA to help avoid grammatical errors in my writing. I will search for examples to check for the use of verb forms.

2.3 Difficulties

On the question that asked the participants' difficulties after they practiced writing through COCA, most of them had difficulties when they searched for information. They had difficulties with some specific codes, and they tackled those difficulties by asking friends or the teacher. However, some of them tackled those difficulties by themselves. Below are responses from participants.

S8: I had difficulties when I typed some specific codes. When I didn't know which specific codes needed to be used, I always asked my friends. Sometimes my friends asked me too. We helped each other to tackle those difficulties.

Discussion

1. The Results of the Use of COCA on Students' Autonomous Learning

Self-report data from the questionnaire revealed the results regarding the use of COCA on autonomous learning. The questionnaire was distributed after the implementation of this concordance program. The results were shown by using the calculation of descriptive statistics including the mean score and standard deviation. According to Knowles (1975), the process of autonomous learning includes 1) diagnosing learning needs 2) formulating learning goals 3) identifying human and material resources from learning 4) choosing and implementing learning strategies and 5) evaluating learning outcomes.

With regard to the impact of COCA on autonomous learning, the results reveal that it could be a material resource for learning writing, and the students could choose and implement appropriate learning strategies after learning to write via this concordance tool. According to Garrison (1997), an online environment should be given to students in EFL classrooms in order to promote self-monitoring. Consequently, COCA can be considered to be an effective tool to develop autonomous learning. The point is supported congruently with the study of Khodary (2017). An online learning tool allows students to independently choose and implement appropriate learning strategies. Finally, the results showed that the students could examine their own writing weaknesses by themselves after they practiced writing through COCA. The explanation of this study can be supported by Haidari et al. (2019). They explained that students are provided with an independent way of learning through the use of technology, so promoting autonomous learning by using technology can activate a sense of individual accountability.

2. Students' Perceptions toward COCA on Autonomous Learning

The majority of students interviewed said that COCA could help them become more confident writers, and they were willing to continue practicing English writing through the use of this concordance program. The results in this study are also in line with the study of Yoon and Hirvela (2004). One of the reasons can come from common usage of words. According to Yoon (2011), a corpus provides authentic language, and thus, it can be considered to be a reference tool for students to check and follow grammatical patterns. When students are confident that they gain and increase their knowledge of writing, a corpus will be of great use to them for their further study and work (Tsai, 2021). They can consult it to verify grammatical patterns whenever needed.

Although most of the students responded that COCA was as effective tool to promote autonomous learning in their writing, some of them reported that they had problems while using this concordance tool. The results of the semi-structured interview indicated that some students reported some difficulties after practicing writing through COCA. They said that they were confronted with it before and after they searched for words or phrases. Tung et al. (2015) explained that students may encounter difficulties in analyzing concordance lines and understanding unfamiliar words in concordances. In addition, they may not find information they need when they use a corpus (Bridle, 2019).

Conclusion

This study has developed a new method for integrating COCA into a paragraph writing course in Thailand. This method is more efficient than previous methods since it does not only provide usage patterns to help Thai EFL public university students solve problems in their writing, it also promote autonomous learning. These findings have implications for teaching EFL writing. COCA can be implemented in EFL writing classes to promote students' autonomous learning by following the process of autonomous learning by Knowles (1975). Moreover, this concordance program is beneficial to students because it can boost confidence in their writing due to authentic data. When students have problems in their writing, they can search for words or phrases that they would like to learn from it. When they know how to write correctly and accurately from authentic data, they will have confidence to correct errors. In addition to correcting errors, COCA boosts confidence in producing more writing. When students are confident of their writing skills, they are willing to continue practice writing through the use of this concordance tool. In case they are not sure of writing some sentences, they can use it to help check those sentences. As a consequence, receiving teacher feedback and finding correct patterns or usage from concordances can promote autonomous learning. However, teachers should be resourceful when students encounter difficulties in some steps of how to use COCA, so they should be able to give some good advice when students have problems.

Recommendations

Future research should be carried out with students who have different levels of English proficiency, such as high, intermediate, and low levels. This would determine correlation between their English proficiency and the development of autonomous learning after the learning through COCA. In addition, since a corpus investigated in the present study was the Corpus of Contemporary American English, various concordance programs should be employed as other sources of concordances so that the results of the research can be generalized.

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Rhetorical Moves and Metadiscourse in English Abstracts of Research Articles and Masters' Theses

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Abstract

Rhetorical communication and metadiscoursal devices are important for understanding the rhetorical negotiations involved in academic texts. Research studies comparing these two phases of the analysis of English abstracts of research articles and Master's theses written by non-native English writers are limited. Three corpora of abstracts in the field of business were analyzed for their rhetorical moves using Hyland's (2000) model and metadiscourse markers in the moves using Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse taxonomy. Some striking similarities and differences were found among the three sets of data. Purpose, Method, and Product moves were found with different degrees of occurrences, while the Introduction and Conclusion moves occurred infrequently. The employment of interactive devices outnumbered that of interactional devices. Transitions and self-mention were the most frequent markers in the international corpus, while frame markers and attitude markers were found extensively in the two Thai-based corpora. The findings of the analysis of the two related genres shed light on the genre variations which were derived from genre-specific features. This can be ascribed to the dynamic nature of research articles as professional genres and theses as educational genres. Additionally, this study provides inexperienced non-native writers with a deeper understanding of the rhetorical structure and metadiscourse devices realized in research articles and theses.

Keywords: abstract writing, business, metadiscourse, rhetorical structure, thesis writing

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Introduction

Writing a good abstract is challenging for researchers, particularly non-native English writers or inexperienced researchers who are encouraged to write their abstracts in English. This is because most indexed journals require an English version of the abstracts for publication (Lorés, 2004). To widen their research papers internationally, research writers in any discipline have to organize their English abstracts not only informatively but also convincingly (Jiang & Hyland, 2017; Hyland, 2000; Hyland, 2005; Pho, 2008). However, it remains a serious concern for non-native English writers because writing an English abstract involves not only grammatical knowledge but also rhetorical structure and linguistic features.

Results of several studies provide insightful information about the usefulness of communicative analysis or move analysis to the novice and non-native writers (Samraj, 2005, Swales, 1990). This is because authentic text analysis demonstrates the structural patterns which can be directly applied especially in pedagogical sectors. Particularly, move-based analysis which is one of the genre-based approaches, yields fruitful findings as well as helps to understand academic writing conventions used in discourse communities. Thus, a move-based analysis is considered as a top-down approach and its focus is on the hierarchical schematic structures of texts (Nwogu, 1997). 'Move' means a discoursal segment that performs a particular communicative function (Swales, 2004). It can be said that a move analysis provides a clear picture of the RA genres. The structural patterns obtained from an analysis of rhetorical moves supports non-native writers in organizing their research papers to meet a wider international published setting (Kanoksilapatham, 2009; Loi et al., 2016; Lorés, 2004). Therefore, to understand the structure of abstracts, a move-based approach should be adopted and applied.

Apart from the propositional content, metadiscourse is another level of writing which helps readers read, understand and interpret what is written (Ozdemir & Longo, 2014). Metadiscourse is a term used frequently in discourse analysis studies to refer to the "ways in which writers and speakers interact through their use of language with readers and listeners" (Hyland, 2017,p.16). "Metadiscourse demonstrates the workings of the author's recipient design filter, spelling out how he or she intends a message to be understood" (Hyland & Jiang, 2018, p.20). In addition, through the lens of genre as a social activity, metadiscourse plays an important role in academic writing. As Hyland (2005) highlighted, it shows the ways writers interact with their subject matter and readers, displaying the "strategies used by members of different social groups (p. 41)". Because the key function of metadiscourse is interacting with an audience by linking texts with contexts, it has been extensively applied to "explore patterns of interaction, most commonly in an academic register, in different languages and genres" (Hyland & Jiang, 2018, p. 20). As suggested in the literature, writers in different disciplinary communities engage themselves, their work and their readers in different styles, like those writers in the humanities and social sciences who express themselves far more explicitly and communicate far more personally in their writing than those writers in the science and engineering fields (Hyland, 2005).

Previous research studies have examined metadiscourse in different types of genres such as students' writing, RAs, and theses. Some researchers focused on abstract sections of RAs (e.g., Alghazo et al., 2021; Gillaerts & Van de Velde, 2010; Nur et al., 2021) and some have identified introduction sections (e.g., Kawase, 2015, Rubio, 2011). This is because a well-organized research abstract is persuasive in its nature and attracts readers' attention. As such, writers use metadiscourse markers to persuade their readers. Metadiscourse can be realized by a variety of linguistic forms (i.e., however, therefore, perhaps, certainly), which will assist the readers to understand the texts better in both linguistically and communicatively (Ozdemir & Longo, 2014). That is, the usage is purposively connecting readers with the texts being read. For example, logical connectives (thus, therefore, etc.), boosters (obviously, clearly, etc.) are considered as linguistic resources which help readers to process written text (Hyland, 2004). As such, a metadiscourse device is one of strategies writers use extensively to achieve their communicative purposes or express their claims when writing abstracts (Cao & Hu, 2014; Ngai et al., 2018).

In the literature, there are some interesting results on the move structure and linguistic expressions of abstracts. For example, Nur et al. (2021) who analyzed RA abstracts in the field of applied linguistics, found that three moves (Purpose, Method, Finding) were used heavily by Indonesian writers, while the Introduction and Conclusion moves were only used moderately. Also, the use of interactive metadiscourse was far more frequent than interactional metadiscourse devices and most of them were employed to describe the method and results of the study. This is because the Indonesian writers were more concerned about the flow of the texts. Text organization and convincing their readers were more of a priority than interaction with their potential readers. El-Dakhs (2018) compared the metadiscoursal resources employed in theses and research articles and found the extensive use of transitions, evidentials and hedges. Conversely, code-glosses and self-mentions were found more frequently in abstracts of RAs. In a study conducted by Alotaibi (2015), Arabic abstracts tended to rely on transition markers, while English abstracts preferred using frame markers and code-glosses. Self-mentions were infrequent in both sets of data.

It can be seen that analyzing the rhetorical moves and metadiscourse markers deployed in each move yields great benefits and also broadens inexperienced writers' knowledge of the genre-based approach to academic writing. The findings from an authentic analysis raise their awareness and help them get a clearer picture of how abstracts are constructed and also lead to some insightful knowledge into the pedagogical implications. Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the rhetorical moves and metadiscoursal markers in the abstracts in three different corpora. The first two groups were English RA abstracts written by Thai and non-Thai writers. The third corpus consisted of abstracts of masters' theses written by Thai graduate students. Based on our knowledge, research studies focusing on these characteristics are scarce, particularly in the field of business. Generally, theses abstracts have received relatively less attention than RA abstracts since their readership is much more limited. However, the organization of theses abstracts is important and thesis writers are expected to convert their theses to RAs to reach a wider audience. Although they are different genres, they remain relevant in nature and share some common features (Pramoolsook, 2009) and numerous theses or dissertations are cited literally in books or RAs. These lead to the focus of our research. We raise two objectives; 1) to identify the rhetorical moves of the abstracts of RAs and theses, and 2) to examine how those moves are realized with the use of metadiscourse devices. The rhetorical moves identified and the metadiscourse resources are compared to show the similarities and differences among the three corpora.

Methodology

1. Corpora and Data Collection

Abstracts in the business field were the focus of the present study. This is because the business field is a dynamic discipline which lacks genre research at present. As stated by Amidon (2008, p. 452), business communication is "in sore need of more research" in various genres like writing for publication (Hernon & Schwartz, 2010). Studies of abstracts in the field of business or business-related studies have been underexplored. Only a few studies have focused on genre-based analysis of RAs in the field of business such as Piqué-Noguera, (2012) and Alsharif (2022). Piqué-Noguera, (2012) examined linguistic usage in the abstracts while Alsharif (2022) analyzed the rhetorical moves employed in the introduction sections of RAs. Their focuses were different from the present study, which investigated rhetorical moves and metadiscoursal devices in abstracts in business studies.

Three corpora were used in the present study; namely the international corpus, the Thai corpus, and the thesis corpus. Each corpus contained 30 abstracts. The International corpus included RA abstracts randomly selected from prestigious journals. The titles and their impact factors in the year 2021 (shown in brackets) were "Journal of World Business (8.635)", "International Business Review (8.047)", and "Journal of Business Research (10.969)". These journals were provided by Elsevier. The Thai corpus included abstracts of RAs randomly taken from three high-profile journals published during the years 2020-2021 by leading universities in Thailand. They were the Journal of Business Administration, Creative Business and Sustainability Journal, and Kasetsart Applied Business Journal. These journals were indexed as top-tier journals and placed in the Tier 1 group provided by the Thai-Journal Citation Index Center (TCI), which can be accessed through https://tci-thailand.org/. The Thesis corpus consisted of 30 English abstracts of masters' theses in business management written by Thai graduate students during the years 2013-2018 which are available at the time of the data collection. These abstracts were randomly drawn from the university's Master's theses database where the authors work. The original language of the theses was Thai, but all these theses were required to provide abstracts in both Thai and English. The analysis of the thesis corpus was expected to show the current practices in theses written by business graduate students. The aim was to reflect genre-based writing in EFL contexts and the results of the analysis of the three corpora could raise the awareness of Thai writers and novices (graduate students) in writing abstracts. The reason for this was that graduate students are required to reduce their thesis papers to RAs in order to qualify for a degree and also to gain a wider readership. In addition, the similarities or differences found between the three sets of data should provide an insightful understanding of the rhetorical structures of the three types of abstracts.

2. Analytical Framework and Coding

Hyland's (2000) model was used as the analytical framework for the move analysis. It was selected because of its ease of implementation and wide use in the literature (e.g., Alotaibi, 2015; El-Dakhs, 2018; Kaya &Yağız, 2020; Pratiwi & Kurniawan, 2021). The model originally consisted of the five main rhetorical moves including Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion as presented in Table 1. Also, the Introduction and Purpose moves of Hyland's (2000) model were separated and stated clearly to include the communicative function of the units. As such, it is the most suitable model for the present study.

The function of the text boundary was used as the main point for coding the moves in the three corpora. However, linguistic signaling words in the moves were important because they were used as indicators to capture the boundaries of the moves. In other words, they corresponded to the communicative function of each move and facilitated the identification process. The frequency of occurrence was recorded and then assigned according to the frequency criteria developed by Kanoksilapatham (2005)'s criteria, which classifies the frequencies of occurrence of each move which include obligatory, conventional, and optional moves (i.e. 100%, 60%-99%, and less than 60% of the corpora, respectively).

Hyland's (2005) discoursal model was used to analyze the metadiscourse resources in the three corpora. This framework is widely used in the previous literature (e.g., Alghazo, et al., 2021; Alotaibi, 2015; El-Dakhs, 2018; Wei & Dueng, 2019) and comprehensively illustrates the text units. The model contains two major categories as shown in Table 2. The 'interactive' category was divided into five modes including Transitions, Frame markers, Endophoric markers, Evidentials, and Code glosses. These features allow the writers to manage the information flow. The second category is called 'interactional' which focuses on the involvement of the reader in the texts. This means they show the writers' persona and a tenor consistent with the community conventions. Five of these conventions are Hedges, Boosters, Attitude markers, and Self-mentions. There were two stages in identifying the metadiscourse markers using Antconc software (Anthony, 2011) and manual analysis. First, plain texts from each abstract were uploaded to the software and then lists of most the common metadiscourse words and phrases suggested in previous studies (Alotaibi, 2015; El-Dakhs, 2018, Hyland, 2005; Hyland & Jiang, 2018; Nur et al., 2021) were inserted into the search field to check if they appeared in any of the move units. All metadiscourse devices identified were listed separately according to each move. In the manual stage, all abstracts were read and highlighted manually to identify the metadiscoursal features. These two stages were conducted in order to strengthen the accuracy of the analysis and to confirm the occurrence of the markers. The metadiscoursal devices identified were counted and their frequencies presented and compared among the three sets of corpora. By following Hyland & Jiang's (2018) example, the present study omitted both *and* and *or* from the counts of transitions if they acted as "default options of marking conjunctive relations of addition and alternation rather than rhetorical strategies." (p. 21). Identifying these manually ensured the presence of each of the markers.

To access each analyzed abstract more easily, all 90 abstracts from the three corpora were codified separately (I1-I30) for the international corpus, T1-T30 for the Thai corpus and Th for the Thesis corpus.

Table 1

Hyland's (2000) Move Model

Move	Function
Introduction	Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research or discussion.
Purpose	Indicates purpose, thesis or hypothesis, outlines the intention behind the paper.
Method	Provides information on design, procedures, assumption, approach, data, etc.
Product	States main findings or results, the argument, or what was accomplished.
Conclusion	Interprets or extends results beyond scope of paper, draws inferences, points to applications or wider implications.

Table 2

Adaptation of Hyland's (2005) Taxonomy of Metadiscourse

Category	Function	Examples*
Interactive	Help to guide the reader through the text	Resources
Transitions	expresses relations between main clauses	in addition; but; thus; moreover; so that; in order to; then; next; also; by the way; additionally; furthermore; to this end
Frame markers	refer to discourse acts, sequences or stages	finally; to conclude; my purpose is; to sum up; the finding shows; the research (paper, study)
Endophoric markers	refer to information in other parts of the text	noted above; see Fig; in section X; earlier
Evidentials	refer to information from other texts	according to X; Z states; based on (well-known theory/framework/model);
Code glosses	elaborate propositional meanings	for instance; for example; namely; called; that is; e.g.; i.e.; such as; in other words; specifically; generally; indeed; usually; that means
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	Resources

Table 2 (Continued)

Category	Function	Examples*
Interactive	Help to guide the reader through the text	Resources
Transitions	expresses relations between main clauses	in addition; but; thus; moreover; so that; in order to; then; next; also; by the way; additionally; furthermore; to this end
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Evidentials	refer to information from other texts	according to X; Z states; based on (well-known theory/framework/model);
Code glosses	elaborate propositional meanings	for instance; for example; namely; called; that is; e.g.; i.e.; such as; in other words; specifically; generally; indeed; usually; that means
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	Resources
Hedges	withhold commitment and open dialogue	might; perhaps; possible; about; may; unclear; quite; rather; appear; expect; could be; likely, tend to; seem to be; in general
Boosters	emphasize certainly or close dialogue	in fact; definitely; it is clear; confirm; reveal; evident; undoubtedly; as expected; prove; doubles; truly; sure
Attitude markers	express writer's attitude to proposition	unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly; interesting; amazing; substantial; crucial; significantly; critical; notable; useful; important; necessary;
Self-mentions	explicit references to author(s)	I; we; my; me; our; the researcher
Engagement markers	explicitly build relationship with reader	consider; note that; you can see that; by the way

Note. Examples or resources are adapted from Alotaibi (2015); El-Dakhs (2018); Hyland and Jiang (2018); Nur et al. (2021).

3. Assuring Reliability and Validity

Since the dentification of moves was based on function, it can be criticized for its subjectivity (Kawase, 2015). Besides both authors, an experienced invited coder, who was an English lecturer in a university and skilled in text analysis, was invited to code both the rhetorical moves and the metadiscourse devices of each move. Thirty percent of the abstracts from the entire corpora were selected randomly and shown to the invited coder. To obtain agreement, move units from the coders needed to be identical in terms of move(s), their position in the discourse, and the sequence of the moves. Also, the metadiscourse devices employed in each move must be identical. There was a discussion between coders when there were any disagreements. Thus, the results of both types of analyses needed to arrive at a consensus. Both authors and an invited coder worked independently when analyzing the abstracts and achieved an inter-rater agreement of 95% before resolving disagreements.

Results and Discussion

The results are divided into two subsections in accordance with the rhetorical moves and metadiscourse devices as stated above. In order to get a clear picture of the moves and metadiscourse found in the present study, the excerpts taken from the corpora were displayed as examples of the realizations of moves and metadiscourse resources. The reference sources are provided after each example signalled, for example, by I1 which refers to RA abstract number 1 from the international corpus, while T1 means RA abstract number 1 from the Thai corpus, and Th1 is the thesis abstract number 1from the Thesis corpus.

1. The Frequency of Rhetorical Moves in the Corpora

Table 3 delineates the frequencies of the rhetorical moves found in the abstracts of the three corpora.

Table 3

The Frequency of Moves in the Corpora

Move	International (*N*=30)	Thai (*N*=30)	Thesis (*N*=30)
Introduction (I)	23 (76.66%)	13 (43.33%)	-
Purpose (P)	23 (76.66%)	29 (96.66%)	30 (100%)
Method (M)	26 (86.66%)	27(90%)	30(100%)
Product (Pr)	29 (96.66%)	30 (100%)	30(100%)
Conclusion (C)	14 (46.66%)	19 (63.33%)	1 (3.33%)

Table 3 shows that there were similarities and differences in the occurrence of moves in the three sets of data. The frequencies of the three moves (Purpose, Method, and Product) were relatively high in the three corpora, while the Introduction and the Conclusion moves showed different degrees of occurrences. The high frequency of occurrence of the Product move was similar to those of previous studies (e.g., Alotaibi, 2015; Kaya &Yağız, 2020; Nur et al., 2019; Zang, et al. 2012). This showed that presenting results was an important move in abstracts in nearly all fields and genres. For example, El-Dakhs (2018) asserted that the high frequency of the Product move may be the result of the professional nature of journals which are strongly competitive situations. This means that the authors are expected to present their research studies in convincing and informative style. The marked differences were the frequencies of the occurrence of the Introduction and Conclusion moves. With regard to the Introduction move, it was a conventional move in the international corpus and an optional move in the Thai corpus. However, it was omitted in the Thesis corpus. The Conclusion move was an optional move in the international corpus, but it was a conventional move in the Thai corpus. Although the frequency of the Conclusion move was optional in the International and Thesis corpora, its frequency in the Thesis corpus was very different from that found in the international corpus. It accounted for 46.66 percent in the international corpus, while it was only 3.33 percent in the Thesis corpus. Only one thesis abstract contained the Conclusion move.

Regarding the frequencies of occurrence of the moves in the Thesis corpus, in which three moves (Purpose, Method, and Product) were obligatory, two moves (Introduction and Conclusion) were less frequent. This is interesting because a previous study of Ren and Li (2011) found that the frequencies of all five moves were relatively high in their thesis abstracts. They believed that this was due to the influence of academic writing regulation. Thus, the supervisor or examiners of the theses play important roles in the shaping of the thesis structure. El-Dakhs (2018) found that strong claims of new knowledge are often presented in the abstracts. Relating to this assumption, the three moves (Purpose, Method, and Product) were dominant in the Thesis corpus. The reasons may be due to the fact that these three moves were always the focus of the research that the gatekeepers (i.e., supervisor/examiner of the theses) tended to look for when reading through these theses. Therefore, thesis writers are taught to write the purposes and methods of the study clearly, and they are also expected to present detailed information about the findings.

The absence of an Introduction moves in the Thesis corpus differed from previous studies (e.g., Ebadi et al., 2019; El-Dakhs, 2018; Ren & Li, 2011). The Introduction move varied in its occurrence in these studies. It was one hundred percent in Ren & Li's (2011) study, while it was slightly less than half of the entire corpora in the studies carried out by El-Dakhs (2018) and Ebadi, et al. (2019). However, in the present study, there was on Introduction move in the Thesis corpus. Ren and Li (2011) pointed out that thesis writers preferred to present their abstracts in an informative rather than a persuasive role. Space limitations in theses were not so restricted as those in the RAs. Thesis writers were also less pressured in seeking readership compared to the RAs. In El-Dakhs' (2018) study, the frequency of the Introduction move in theses abstracts was nearly two times higher than that in RAs. El-Dakhs (2018) believed that writers of the RA abstracts tended to highlight their research topic because of space limitations. This means that writers need to capture their readers' attention by directly stating their research details. Importantly, readership is one of the key factors for research abstract writing. The persuasive role was one of characteristics of the RA abstracts that writers needed to consider when writing their research abstracts (Ren & Li, 2011). However, this assumption did not apply to the abstracts in the Thesis corpus in the present study. The omission of the Introduction move in the Thesis corpus may reflect the writing practice employed in the disciplinary context. Graduate students tended to follow the thesis structure available in the library provided by their department without careful consideration. This might be one of the reasons for the absence of the Introduction and Conclusion moves. As pointed out by Ebadi et al. (2019), different universities imposed different thesis formats or manuals. Another reason for an infrequent occurrence of the Introduction may be that the thesis writers were not aware of the importance of giving background on their topic to the readers. They opted to jump straight to the purposes, method, and results of their studies. This is because establishing the territory of their research studies and showing the necessities of the topic being studies were demanding and challenging for inexperienced writers since it required skills in seeking the position of the research topic. Therefore, strictly following the guidelines and consulting the well-written theses would be the best approach for inexperienced non-native writers. Although thesis and RA are related genres, RA abstracts represent a professional genre while thesis abstracts are an educational genre (El-Dakhs et al., 2019), so their structural organization should be thoroughly introduced to graduate students. Training on the rhetorical structure of English writing abstracts or genre-related writing should be conducted and taught in all graduate programs.

Another difference was the frequency of the Conclusion move. It was an optional move in the international corpus, while it was included in the conventional group in the Thai corpus. It was noticeably scant in the Thesis corpus, appearing in only one abstract. A possible reason for this absence may be the fact that interpreting the findings or drawing inferences is obviously difficult skill for novice graduate students. They need to point out clearly and confidently how their findings could benefit wider communities or the literature. The Conclusion move was found to be a conventional move in the research of Nur et al. (2019). They found that writers of abstracts published in local (Indonesia) and international journals ended their abstracts with the conclusion move which appeared in more than 80 percent of each corpus. On the contrary, in a study investigated by El-Dakhs (2018), the conclusion move was optional in both RA and thesis corpora as it occurred in nearly similar frequencies, and also the RA writers tended to provide implications for their studies more than the writers in the thesis corpus. This may result from the professional nature of RA abstracts as writers needed to emphasize the importance of their findings, which are related to theoretical or practical issues in order to attract readership (El-Dakhs, 2018). This is because nowadays RA publication in prestige journals is extremely competitive (Ren & Li, 2011).

Some examples of the rhetorical language used to present the Conclusion move in RAs in both RA corpora are presented in Example 1. Although international writers stated their research contribution to a lesser degree compared to Thai RA writers, their views in interpreting their results were more diverse than those of Thai writers.

Example 1

1) Besides ***understanding*** *the role of Bitcoin, the research findings* ***enable*** *investors to* ***plan*** *their future investment with greater confidence. (T26)*

2) Overall, this study ***contributes*** *to contemporary international business research by advancing theorization on SME multinationalization. (T6)*

3) Thus, this study ***contributes*** *to the literature by investigating responses to CSR among generation Y consumers from a cross-cultural perspective. (I4)*

4) This study ***offers*** *novel insights into the relationship marketing literature and* ***provides contributions*** *to fundraising managers. (I17)*

2. Distribution of Metadiscoursal Markers in the Moves

To respond to the second aim of the present study, the results concerning the metadiscourse markers found in each move in the three corpora are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency of Interactive Metadiscourse

Category	*I*	*P*	*M*	*Pr*	*C*	Sub Total
	I T Th	I T Th	I T Th	I T Th	I T Th	
Interactive						
Transition	12 3 -	2 2 1	10 1 -	12 22 15	3 10 -	93
Frame M		16 27 30	2 7 2	3 4 1	6 2 -	100
Endorphic M.						-
evidentials						-
Code glosses		1 1 -	- 1 -	- 7 -		10
Sub-total	12 3 -	19 30 31	12 9 2	15 33 16	9 12 -	203
Interactional						
Hedges	1 1 -			3 4 1	2 3 -	15
Boosters	1 - -	- 1 -		- 1 -	- 1 -	4
Attitude markers	10 6 -		3 - -	7 9 6	1 4 -	46
Self-mentions	1 - -	8 - -	27 2 -	18 1 1	5 - -	63
Engagement M.						-
Sub-total	13 7	8 1	30 2	39 2 9	8 7 5	128

Note. I= International corpus; T= Thai corpus; Th=Thesis corpus

Table 4 shows the use of metadiscourse resources in the three sets of data. Three devices, namely 'endorphic markers', 'evidentials', and 'engagement markers' were absent in the three sets of data. The remaining categories varied in their degrees of employment. Overall, the interactive devices outnumbered the interactional devices, accounting for 203 and 128 respectively. For interactive metadiscourse, two resources (Transition and Frame markers) were employed most in all three corpora, but in a different variation. It was found that the international writers relied heavily on transition markers, while the Thai writers (from RA and Thesis corpora) favored Frame markers. Three transition sub-categories were found frequently including contrast (e.g., however, but), addition (e.g., moreover; in addition), consequence (e.g. thus; therefore), as shown in Example 2 below. The international writers tended to use more transitions of contrast, especially in the Introduction and Product moves. The extensive use of transitions was in line with El-Dakhs's (2018) study, who found that transitions were used extensively to describe the results. The use of contrasting expressions in Introduction move was mostly used to establish niches as showed in Example 2(1). It was found that the Thai writers in the RA and Thesis corpora preferred giving additional details in the move for findings.

Example 2: The use of Transitions in different sub-categories

*1) **However**, studies using bibliometric techniques have often attracted criticism for failing to adequately link their derived analytical and visual outputs with theory building and practice improvement. (I12) (Contrast)*

*2) **Therefore**, the results of the research can be used as a model for executives to improve the quality of service in any area to meet consumer needs. (T5) (Consequence)*

*3) **Furthermore**, the corporate image, perceived service quality and customer satisfaction between 3 private hospitals in Nakhon Ratchasima are different. (Th15) (Addition)*

The frame marker device was the most frequent device used by Thai writers in both corpora accounting for 27 and 33 in the Thai RA and Thesis corpora, respectively. However, it was the second most interactive resource to be used in the international corpus which occur in 27 instances. The variation in occurrence was in the Purpose move. Thai writers preferred to state their research aims or objectives using expressions such as "The purpose of this research study is to …..",. Frame markers are "references to text boundaries or text structure" (Hyland & Jiang, 2018, p. 20). They include sequence, stage, discourse goals, and topic shift. However, announcing discourse goals was favored by Thai writers in both the RA and Thesis corpora as they were used in the opening move in the abstracts. This occurrence was similar to a study conducted by Alotaibi (2015). The key signalling words such as 'purpose', 'objective', 'aim' were employed frequently. The high frequency of usage of frame markers in the Thesis corpus may be due to the fact that the research objective section was one of the key components of the theses, which would normally be a standalone sub-section and stated clearly and distinctly in research papers. Moreover, research aims were one of the required components when writing research papers and they were the target statements which will be reviewed by the theses' supervisors and committees. Therefore, they had to be included in the abstracts of the theses.

Unlike interactive metadiscourse, the overall usage of the interactional metadiscourse resources was less employed in the three corpora; 'engagement marker' was omitted in all corpora, which is similar to previous studies (Alotaibi, 2015; Nur et al., 2019; Ozdemir & Longo, 2014). Among the five sub-categories of interactional markers by Hyland (2005), 'self-mention' was the most frequent feature in the international corpus, while 'attitude marker' was the most frequent interactional device in the Thai RA and Thesis corpora. However, the frequencies of the other four features of interactional metadiscourse were infrequent in these two Thai-based corpora.

Surprisingly, the usage of 'hedge' was scarce in the present study, and it was mostly found in the Product and Conclusion moves. On the other hand, there was only one instance that appeared in the Thesis corpus, which differed from the results of El-Dakhs' (2018) and Koutsantoni's (2006) studies. They found that post-graduate students hedge more than expert writers in their studies. The degree of the usage of hedge may reflect how the graduate students immerse themselves in the disciplinary community. El-Dakhs (2018) believed that if graduate writers expose themselves less to the discourse community, they may "not appropriate their practices well enough to the community's conventions" (p.57). This concern should raise awareness in genre-based writing practice and be integrated into the pedagogical implications. Example 3 shows hedge employment in some moves in the abstracts.

Example 3

1) Our finding suggests that U.S. manufacturing firms ***may*** *be able to reduce negative impacts on inventory in a global pandemic and achieve greater inventory efficiency if they can target global customer bases with demand characteristics less correlated with U.S. domestic demand. (I14) (Conclusion move)*

2) That is, individuals with a high level of online privacy risk were less willing to disclose their personal data, while those with a low level of online privacy risk were significantly more ***likely*** *to disclose such information. (T3) (Product move)*

Compared with the use of hedge markers, booster features were used less frequently. There were no examples of this in the Thesis corpus. It appeared once in the international corpus and three times in the Thai corpus. This is in line with some previous studies' findings (e.g., Alotaibi, 2015; Nur et al., 2019). These studies found that booster devices were infrequent in their studies. However, Ozdemir and Longo (2014) and Alghazo et al. (2021) reported that boosters were fairly frequently used in their studies. In fact, both hedges and boosters are persuasive devices and the combination of the two features can establish a relationship with the readers (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). Example 4 shows the use of Booster markers.

Example 4

1)Previous studies have focused on identifying the key features of one 'ideal' multinationalization approach but ***shed less light on*** *the potential alternative approaches that firms can use in different situations. (I6)*

2) The findings of the study ***confirmed*** *the significance of organizational identification, encouraging organizations to enhance this factor. (T27)*

'Attitude marker' was the second most frequent features in the international corpus, while it was the most frequent feature in the Thai RA and Thesis corpora. Their occurrence was found with nearly all moves, except for Purpose. The results revealed that most writers used adjectives showing the necessity or importance of their research. Attitude markers allow a writer to "express attitude to propositions, conveying surprise, obligation, agreement, importance and so on" (Hyland & Jiang, 2018, p. 20). Attitude markers were represented by the use of adjectives and adverbs as in Example 5.

Example 5

*1) ..., this study finds that a geographically diversified customer base **significantly** reduced inventory efficiency during the pre-pandemic period, but increased inventory efficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic. (I14)*

*2) In terms of recommendation, promoting people's awareness on risk is **crucial** element for increasing insurance purchase demands. The insurance can in turn create warranty of people life and safety. (T10)*

*3) Training is **importance** for each personnel in the organization and encourages them to work effectively. (Th13)*

'Self-mention' is an interactional marker which was found frequently in the international corpus and it ranked number one on the list. Its occurrence was mostly in the Method and Production moves. Conversely, it only occurred in 3 and 1 instances in the Thai RA and Thesis corpora, respectively. The limited use of the self-mention device was in line with previous studies, especially those which compared the English abstracts written by native and non-native writers (Alotaibi, 2015; El-Dakhs, 2018; Ghadiyani & Tahirian, 2014). It has been suggested by Ghadiyani and Tahirian (2014) that the limited use of self-mention by non-native writers may result from their lack of English language knowledge or an unintentional mistake. As shown in the case of one Thesis abstract which using "we" as a self-mention device in the Product move (see Example 6(3)). In this regard, when we looked closely at the Thai version of that abstract, the Thai word "ผู้วิจัย" should be translated as "the researcher". Although this incorrect use of words can be interpreted in different ways, it may be the result of a lack of English language knowledge.

Another reason to explain the lower number of self-mentions in the Thesis corpus may be due to the fact that the writers were more aware of taking personal responsibility for their claims since their status in the discourse community was relatively inferior (El-Dakhs, 2018; Koutsantoni, 2006). As explained by Koutsantoni (2006), despite the fact that RA and theses are related genres, they "differ as regards the status of their authors in academic discourse communities and the power asymmetries between themselves and disciplinary gatekeepers." (p.19). Thesis writers needed to meet their supervisor's and examiners' expectations. All their claims should adhere to their examiners' expectations and satisfy their requirements. Self-mention devices can sound more personal for thesis writers. In this regard, Wu and Zhu (2015) observed from their study that non-native writers revealed their collective self and took on the role of researcher, which was different from the native English writers. Hyland and Jiang (2018) investigated the metadiscourse devices used in articles in different time spans and written by different authors of different nationalities. They found an increasing trend of self-mentions in metadiscourse. This becomes a persuasive way of allowing expert authors to gain credit for their research claims. It was also found that self-mention devices were mostly realised in the plural form which allows "authors to create more distance between themselves and their reporting than the first person and so temper a more invasive stance" (Hyland & Jiang, 2018, p. 27). This nature may be one of the reasons to explain the degree of occurrence of markers in the present study, especially in the international corpus. It can be said that the power and social forces that are behind the formation of genres (Koutsantoni, 2006), as well as the rhetorical strategy for constructing authorial identity in research papers, play crucial roles in influencing writers in these two genres (Theses and research articles). Some examples of self-mention devices in the moves are in Example 6.

Example 6

*1) **We** test the relationships between these constructs in a sample of 140 Australian SMEs.. (I30)*

*2) In addition, **we** conducted 15 in-depth interviews consisting of 5 informants*

from each generation. (T23)

*3) **We** found that the factors have positive influence on … (Th26)*

Conclusion

This research study analyzed rhetorical moves and metadiscourse resources in RAs and master's theses abstracts in the field of business. It was found that five moves in Hyland's (2000) model occurred in all abstracts, but they were found at different frequencies. Four moves, except for the Conclusion, were conventional moves in the international corpus. In the Thai RA corpus, Product move was obligatory, while the Purpose, Method, and Conclusion moves occurred in a conventional group, and the Introduction was optional move. Distinct difference was found in the use of the moves in the Thesis corpus. For example, the Introduction and Conclusion moves were hardly employed. The other three moves were obligatory. With regard to the metadiscourse analysis, the frequencies of interactive devices outnumbered the interactional resources. Two metadiscourse devices (endorphic markers and evidentials) were missing in the interactive category, while the engagement marker was omitted in the international category.

The authors in the international corpus organized their abstracts with a frequent use of transitions and frame markers. Transitions were found frequently in the Product move, while the frame markers were mostly employed in the Purpose move. In the Thai RA and Thesis corpora, transitions and frame markers were found more frequently than in the other three sub-types of interactive resources, and they were heavily used in the Purpose and Product moves. With regard to interactional metadiscourse, self-mention was the most preferred type followed by attitude markers. It occurred in the Method and Product moves. In contrast, the Thai RA abstracts used more attitude markers, but less self-mention devices. All interactional resources were found less in the Thesis corpus. The variations observed in the present study reflect the disciplinary and practice-oriented nature of the two related genres (RA and Thesis). The greater or lesser usage of rhetorical moves and metadiscourse items in moves is to some extent a result of the writers' rhetorical ability knowledge in order to respond to the nature of the section of the targeted genre (Kawase, 2015).

The research findings shed light on rhetorical writing in terms of form and function which can be used as a guideline for writing abstracts in the field of business studies, particularly by novice non-native writers. Based on the findings, it can be inferred that the variations in the use of moves and metadiscourse in RA and Thesis may derive from the features specific of each genre and the writing style of the writers. As shown in the use of self-mentions, Thai writers are reluctant to use them, but international authors use them frequently. This may raise the awareness of educators or material designers in developing or integrating the findings into instructional materials for writing classes to assist students in getting familiar with the structure of rhetorical moves and metadiscoursal devices. A knowledge of metadiscourse markers is clearly important for writing instruction because implementing metadiscourse in compositions will help students understand readers' expectations, which could assist them in improving their writing (Hyland, 2005). Therefore, the findings are beneficial for students, especially those in the field of business pursuing their masters' and doctoral degrees, as the findings can serve as guidelines for shaping their RAs or theses in ways expected in their discourse community.

The features in interactive categories help writers present their papers coherently and with convincing arguments, while interactional resources control the extent of personal involvement in the text by directly focusing on the reader's attention, acknowledging uncertainties, and guiding interpretations (Hyland, 2005; Sanford, 2012). Overall, the process of writing RAs for international publication and writing theses for graduation requirements involve many factors, and the authors of both genres need not only language skills and linguistic knowledge, but also conventional practice in certain disciplines. Thus, these two genres are the "results of social negotiations between authors and disciplinary gatekeepers" (Koutsantoni, 2006, p.19).

Recommendations

Since the present study was limited to the analysis of the abstract sections, future research studies should expand their analyses to cover other sections or entire organizational structures of rhetorical research articles or theses. Also, with larger corpora, the findings would present a clearer picture of the rhetorical moves and metadiscoursal devices. Interdisciplinary research is an interesting area for future studies, as it allows us to observe the differences and similarities in move structures and linguistic resources used in research articles and theses across various fields. Moreover, the writing styles may be influenced, to some extent, by the personal and cultural backgrounds of the authors. These factors should be taken into account when conducting textual analysis in the future.

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Using Dilemma Scenarios in English Education to Enhance Undergraduate Students' Speaking Skills and Perceptions

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of using dilemma scenarios in the English education curriculum for improving undergraduate students' speaking abilities and perceptions of English learning. 45 undergraduate students from a public university in northern Thailand took "Listening and Speaking in Daily Life" in the first semester. A pretest-posttest design was used in the study, which was supplemented by a twenty-item questionnaire. The findings demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in speaking proficiency, as seen by post-test scores that increased from an average of 17.80 to 23.07. The questionnaire reply emphasized the pupils' strong impressions even further, with an average perception level of 4.23 on a five-point Likert scale. The capacity of the scenarios to effectively portray real-life situations earned the most favourable evaluation, with an average score of 4.51. Furthermore, students reported greater vocabulary learning, enhanced critical thinking abilities, and a preference for the dilemma scenario methodology over traditional educational approaches. In conclusion, this study indicates the educational importance of employing dilemma situations in English instruction, emphasizing its ability to develop abilities and foster positive learning perspectives among students. Dilemma scenarios are used in this study to provide students with scenarios that call for serious thought and decision-making between possibilities. The purpose of these scenarios is to imitate real-world circumstances where definitive answers are frequently unavailable. This forces students to think more deeply and analytically while expressing their reasoning in English. According to the study's findings, using dilemma scenarios can help Thai undergraduate students improve their speaking abilities considerably and give them a more engaging and hands-on English language education that is in line with the needs of international communication.

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Introduction

The relevance of the English language is undeniable in our technologically evolved and interconnected global society. Recent studies have shown that English is an essential tool in a variety of academic and professional sectors (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019). With the rising popularity of English as a global language for communication, schools throughout the world are faced with the job of educating their pupils with vital skills (Galloway & Rose, 2015). Thailand has prioritized the expansion of English-language education. Nonetheless, a notable issue is obvious, particularly in educational organizations such as a public university in northern Thailand as noted by Darasawang (2014), where there is a gap in students' competency in written and spoken English. Verbal communication proficiency is a vital component of good communication and should not be overlooked. As a result, Thornbury (2016) believes that specialized methods in education are required to encourage expertise in this area. Attempting to include problem scenarios in classes may aid in the elimination of knowledge gaps. According to Foster and Tavakoli (2015), adopting dilemma scenarios in which students are presented with dilemmas and must produce smart verbal answers can increase both their language competency and their analytical thinking skills. These conditions provide students with an engaging and genuine environment in which to build and refine their English-speaking abilities.

According to Mercer and Ryan (2019), students' perceptions of a teaching method and its efficacy usually coincide. With a devoted and motivated student, an educational technique that emphasizes the need to comprehend and actively change students' viewpoints is more likely to succeed. Given this backdrop, the major goal of this study is to investigate the possibility of using dilemma situations to improve the English-speaking abilities and perspectives of undergraduate students, especially within Thailand's educational environment.

Literature Review

1. Dilemma scenarios

Meyers (2019) says that is necessary for students to actively participate in tough settings in the classroom because they need to make moral, ethical, or practical judgements in the face of inconsistencies. As established by Flavell (1976) and Dinsmore et al. (2011), the literature presents scenarios that aid in self-awareness. Furthermore, research has shown that being exposed to such events helps to build empathy (Gilligan, 1982). Both Jonassen (1997) and Facione (2015) emphasize that the unconstrained nature of these tools presents a challenge to students, which supports the development of critical and flexible thinking. As a result, these resources support the ideas of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory.

2. The Role of Dilemma Situations in English Language Instruction

Participating in real-world problem-solving initiatives benefits both ESL and EFL students significantly. These exchanges, according to Taguchi (2011), allow ESL students to gain advanced language and practical skills. According to Gay (2010), the goal of culturally responsive education is to help students negotiate varied social settings in English while simultaneously embracing their cultural background. A study carried out by Nunan (2012) showed that these examples serve to bridge the gap between academic issues taught in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) institutions and their practical application in real-life circumstances. Furthermore, it has been asserted that these methods foster student independence (Benson, 2001) and facilitate the growth of cultural consciousness (Byram, 1997). Collectively, these circumstances not only enhance public speaking skills but also foster the development of critical thinking, cultural awareness, and self-directed learning. This illustrates the several benefits they offer in the context of instructing English as a second language.

3. The Concept and Use of Dilemma Scenarios

Critical thinking, reflective judgment, and cognitive engagement could be enhanced using educational situations involving morally challenging dilemmas (Rest, 1984). These scenarios improve critical thinking and ethical reasoning while motivating educators to examine and encourage moral growth by exposing students to ethically hard circumstances (Nucci & Weber, 1995; Kohlberg, 1981). However, implementation necessitates thorough writing to guarantee relevance and context, and instructors must engage in learning-related interactions.

4. Speaking Skill

Developing language skills such as fluency is a crucial element of language acquisition, particularly in the English language. There is general agreement in the academic field that highlights the importance of great verbal communication talents, particularly when it comes to human connections and interactions. The goal of this study is twofold: first, to perform a complete assessment of the various variables associated with speaking skills, and second, to emphasize the most efficient educational approaches discovered by specialists in this sector. According to Goh and Burns (2012), speaking entails more than just making sounds with one's physical tongue. This entails studying a wide range of languages as well as social and cognitive issues. Brown, (2014) categorizes the speaking process into several components, including pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and coherence. These components complement one another to promote communication efficiency and effectiveness. (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Snow, 2014) stress the necessity of accurately characterizing phonetic components while studying pronunciation. In contrast, a good understanding of grammatical structures is required for the construction of cohesive sentences. According to Nation (2013), developing a broad vocabulary is essential for recognizing the multiple nuances enclosed inside words. Furthermore, as mentioned by Derwing and Munro (2015), fluency is critical for effective communication, whereas coherence allows for the seamless flow of ideas. Both abilities are required for efficient communication. Speaking, at its heart, entails multiple nuanced aspects that are required for efficient interpersonal communication.

5. Techniques and Strategies for Teaching Speaking Skills

The development of students' speaking abilities is extensively focused on language learning since it is seen as essential for achieving language competence. Based on extensive study and proven successful educational approaches, several strategies and techniques have been developed over the years to enhance one's speaking abilities, which are currently being used. This section examines the previously mentioned approaches. This is performed by examining recent research from the past decade to provide a current perspective. The educational approaches vary greatly, reflecting the many criteria that students must meet. Recent research has highlighted the importance of using interactive educational approaches, including role-playing, dialogues, and cooperative learning. Participating in activities such as those indicated may aid in the development of cognitive abilities such as critical thinking and decision-making (Gillies, 2014; Oradee, 2012). These exercises both present realistic circumstances in which previously learned information may be applied and contribute to this development. The effectiveness of these strategies is determined by a variety of factors, including the specific context in which they are implemented and the unique requirements of the students engaged in the projects. Additional study is required to enhance and assess the enduring advantages that these tactics have on the enhancement of speaking skills.

6. Speaking Skills in EFL Contexts

English language skills are essential in an educational context focused on teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) since they improve both language usage and total language proficiency. According to Nunan (2015) and Richards (2015), this is an important factor in allowing successful communication and providing opportunities for individuals. However, critical abilities in English language learning may be hampered by a variety of factors, including a lack of exposure to real spoken English and the existence of learner anxiety (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Derwing & Munro, 2015). To effectively address these issues, it is crucial to implement a complete approach that includes creative teaching methods, a deep understanding of learners' cognitive processes, and the incorporation of cultural perspectives into language training.

7. Student Perceptions in the Context of Using Dilemma Scenarios in English Education

Understanding students' viewpoints is a critical component that has a considerable impact on teaching techniques and the efficacy of educational resources. This is a recurring theme in educational research that should not be overlooked. Kuh (2001) identifies student involvement, contentment, and academic outcomes as significant indicators of both learning and personal growth. These viewpoints are important in judging student involvement, fulfilment, and academic progress. According to Van (1999), dilemma situations are useful instruments in English education. They successfully depict real-world problem-solving scenarios, which boost cognitive engagement, particularly in the context of language acquisition. This is particularly true when it comes to learning a new language. As noted by Mercer and Ryan (2010), students have shown a positive attitude towards these situations, viewing them as more engaging than standard teaching techniques. This conclusion is supported by the fact that students have a positive attitude towards specific situations. Furthermore, pupils demonstrated a considerably increased feeling of passion, a quality commonly recognized as crucial for efficient language learning. In addition, it is critical to recognize that these impressions have a considerable influence on the learner's level of motivation and participation in the language learning process. Maintaining a positive attitude, as suggested by Dornyei and Ushioda (2011), is critical for improving one's inherent motivation, which is required for reaching a high level of competency in speaking skills. Teachers should gain a thorough understanding of their students' points of view. Understanding how learners engage in various teaching approaches, including the incorporation of hypothetical dilemma scenarios, is critical for improving educational outcomes.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the effects of dilemma scenarios on undergraduate students' English-speaking ability.
2. To investigate students' perceptions of using dilemma scenarios to improve their speaking skills.

Hypotheses of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential of dilemma scenarios in improving undergraduate students' English-speaking skills and to understand students' perceptions of such pedagogical strategies. Two guiding hypotheses formulated to address the study's core objectives are central to the research. The first hypothesis predicts observable improvements in students' speaking abilities, whereas the second hypothesis considers the subjective evaluation of the learning experience. Together, these hypotheses will direct the research's analytical focus, with the following specific expectations:
1. The use of dilemma scenarios in the English education curriculum will improve student speaking proficiency.
2. Students will report positive perceptions of dilemma scenarios as a tool for improving their communication skills.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study mainly utilizes a quantitative research approach to thoroughly evaluate the educational impact of dilemma situations on the enhancement of English-speaking skills among students in a private university in northern Thailand. The quantitative emphasis of this research is supported by two primary empirical instruments. The use of speaking proficiency evaluations is an important component of this research's approach, especially because it intends to assess students' speaking abilities. The use of a pretest-posttest strategy provides an excellent framework for assessing the various impacts of teaching tactics based on dilemma scenarios. The evaluations are based on Brown's (2001, pp. 406-407) speaking proficiency scoring categories. These exams are designed to suit individual evaluations and cover numerous areas such as grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and task completion, all of which emphasize challenging circumstances. The scores for the criteria are organized into an overall total of 30. A detailed validation approach was carried out to ensure the reliability and validity of these assessments. The components that were included in the assessments were chosen after a careful review by three independent specialists. The validation tool employed was the *Index of Item-Objective Congruence* (IOC) to ensure that the assessments were aligned with the major study objectives. In addition to the previously mentioned speech assessments, the study technique includes a suitably developed structured questionnaire with 20 items. The goal of this study was to get a complete grasp of students' viewpoints on the educational value and efficacy of dilemma situations in their English language acquisition process. The decision to do mostly quantitative research was prompted by the need to collect data that can be statistically examined and objectively understood. This study's structured design serves a few purposes. First, this allows for a quantitative evaluation of the educational intervention's performance. Furthermore, the strategy provides a framework for incorporating and assessing students' perspectives, resulting in a comprehensive evaluation of the educational approach's benefits.

2. Population and Samples

Purposive selection was used to carefully choose participants for this study. Purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, enables the researcher to pick people based on specific requirements or a thorough grasp of the target group. The deployment of this specific technique was deemed the best way to handle the complex needs of this research. The population of the study included 45 undergraduate students, all in their third year, from a private institution in northern Thailand. These individuals were not chosen at random; rather, they were chosen deliberately from the population of students currently enrolled in the "Listening and Speaking in Daily Life" course during the first semester of the 2023 academic year. Because of the use of this option, the study's participant group was instantly exposed to the educational interventions that were critical to the study's aims.

3. Instruments and Data Collection

This study investigated the varied consequences of problem situations on students' English-speaking abilities and viewpoints using a selected collection of assessments. The whole set of equipment has been carefully selected and painstakingly set up to get the most accurate data and provide a thorough understanding of the relevant issue. The data-obtaining method included the administration of a speaking test, which served as a crucial instrument for assessing student improvement in speaking ability. The assessment was given both before and after the instructional intervention and was based on Brown’s (2001) oral proficiency scoring categories. A well-constructed questionnaire, consisting of 20 questions, aided in the collection of quantitative data. The primary goal of this instrument was to assess students' perceptions of the usefulness of dilemma situations in enhancing their English-speaking abilities. This study was carefully placed to obtain quantitative data as well as contextual understanding by utilizing these tools. The incorporation of quantitative data and detailed comments from participants in an integrated method increases the comprehensiveness of the findings, allowing for a thorough analysis of the research’s objectives.

3.1 Speaking Test

The introduction of the speaking exam, which was delivered as a pretest and a posttest, offered a vital technique for evaluating students' speaking competence. In the assessment, students were given a topic with a problem situation that required a spoken answer. The responses of the participants were rigorously evaluated using Brown's (2001) oral proficiency scoring categories. Grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, and the efficient application of the dilemma scenarios as a way of executing the work were among the areas included in these categories. To establish the content validity of the speaking exam, a comprehensive validation procedure was initiated using the Index of *Item-Objective Congruence* (IOC). Three highly competent specialists in English language education examined the test items to ensure they were coherent with the study's goals. The IOC has commonly accepted a value of 0.5 or above as the requirement. Remarkably, the evaluated items obtained an overall IOC score of 1.00, indicating a significant alignment with the initial means of the research. The comprehensive validation process not only highlights the significance but also enhances the reliability of the speaking assessment as an essential instrument in the study.

3.2 Questionnaire

This research devised a questionnaire with 20 items to measure the students' viewpoints extensively. The major goal of this study was to determine learners' perceptions of the influence of problem scenarios on their English-speaking skills. For validation purposes, the *Index of Item-Objective Congruence* (IOC) was utilized as the initial assessment measure. Three English language learning specialists were hired to extensively analyze each item in terms of both relevancy and alignment with the study's aims. A minimum IOC score of 0.5 was necessary for an item to be judged acceptable. Following the experts' evaluations, the questionnaire produced a great IOC value of 1.00, showing the question's compatibility with the study's aims. Before the actual implementation of the questionnaire, this reliability was validated by the performance of an experiment with a population that was not a part of the sample used for data collection in this study. This provided assurance of the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability value, also known as Cronbach's Alpha, was calculated to be .90 utilizing the Cronbach formula.

3.3 Dilemma Scenarios

The researcher carefully constructed six different dilemma scenarios for the "Listening and Speaking in Daily Life" course. Because they are based on actual scenarios, these scenarios were carefully chosen to be relevant and directly applicable to those taking the course. A detailed validation methodology was developed to assess the dependability and usefulness of these situations. The *Index of Item-Objective Congruence* (IOC) was chosen as the primary measurement for this strategy. Three English-language teaching experts agreed to thoroughly examine each case. The researchers used a five-point Likert scale to rate the appropriateness of the six problem situations in this study. For the dilemma scenarios, a minimum acceptable threshold was created, with a benchmark score ranging from 3.51 to 4.50. The scenarios achieved an excellent average IOC score of 5.00 after expert evaluations, suggesting near-universal agreement on their applicability and usefulness. The outstanding rating stresses the strong connection between the scenarios and the pedagogical aims, generating trust in their utility and significance in the teaching approach.

3.4 Lesson Plans

The course "Listening and Speaking in Daily Life" involved the creation of six different scenarios that presented various dilemmas. These scenarios were designed to effectively include students' daily interactions scenarios, illustrating actual scenarios. To validate their effectiveness, the items were assessed through the utilization of the *Index of Item-Objective Congruence* (IOC) by experts focusing on the field of teaching the English language. The appropriateness of each scenario was evaluated by experts using a five-point Likert scale. The assessment resulted in a desirable IOC score of 5.00, signifying total agreement among experts regarding the relevance and efficiency of the scenarios for accomplishing the pedagogical objectives of the course.

4. Research Procedures

The study consisted of a methodical collection of six lesson plans, each focusing on a problem situation highlighting a challenge. The study began by assessing the participants' initial speaking abilities, followed by a follow-up evaluation after the intervention to detect any improvements in their speaking abilities because of contact with the dilemma scenarios. A standardized questionnaire with 20 items was used to collect students' thoughts on the various problem scenarios. The expert assessment approach and the Index of *Item-Objective Congruence* (IOC) were used to assess the evaluation's content validity. The results of the speaking evaluations were quantitatively analyzed, with a paired-sample t-test used to determine the impact of the difficult circumstances. Following that, the questionnaire data was examined for descriptive statistical purposes, with the mean and standard deviation for each item established. The purpose of this study was to give a complete view of students' opinions and the many types of responses they provided. The purpose of this study was to look at the benefits of using dilemma scenarios to improve speaking abilities, with a focus on quantitative analysis.

5. Data Analysis

The study used several data analytic methodologies to correctly assess the consequences of ethical quandaries. Initial evaluations of participants' speaking abilities were undertaken before and after the presentation of dilemma scenarios. A paired-sample t-test was employed to determine whether any significant enhancements were identified. Following this, a questionnaire was administered to evaluate undergraduate students' perceptions of each dilemma scenario, and the implementation of descriptive statistics provided insights into the consensus. By implementing the method of data triangulation, an in-depth comprehension of the effectiveness and perception of the dilemma scenarios in improving English-speaking skills was obtained through the integration and synthesis of findings from several assessments.

Results

This part investigates the data obtained from a group of 45 undergraduate students who were enrolled in the course titled "Listening and Speaking in Daily Life." The analysis focuses on two main objectives of the study: evaluating the impact of dilemma scenarios on students' speaking proficiency and gathering the students' perceptions of their effectiveness.

1. Effect of Dilemma Scenarios on Students' Speaking Proficiency

This study performed a systematic evaluation of their performance before and after the intervention to determine the concrete influence of the dilemma situations on students' speaking skills. A comparison of the pupils' pre-test and post-test results was undertaken. This method gave a measurable assessment of undergraduate students' growth in their speaking abilities after being exposed to the problem scenarios. Table 1 shows the specifics of this investigation, including mean scores, standard deviations, and the statistical significance of observed improvements.

Table 1

Comparative Analysis of Pre- and Post-Speaking Skills through Dilemma Scenarios

Speaking Proficiency Test	Pre-Test (*n*=45)		Post-Test (*n*=45)		*t*	P-Value
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Speaking Proficiency Score	17.80	3.56	23.07	3.51	-15.43	0.00*

**P<.05*

Table 1 shows that after being presented with the issue scenarios, students' speaking skills improved noticeably. The pre-test mean score, which sits at 17.80 with a standard deviation of 3.56, grew dramatically in the post-test, achieving a mean score of 23.07 with a slightly lower standard deviation of 3.51. This decrease in standard deviation post-intervention implies that the student's performance became more consistent when the dilemma situations were implemented. The t-value of -15.43 combined with a P-value of 0.00 (much less than the conventional threshold of 0.05) demonstrates the statistical significance of this improvement. In essence, this research supports the idea that problem scenarios have a real and positive influence on students' speaking skills.

2. Students' Perception Towards Learning through Dilemma Scenarios

A thorough assessment of the students' replies was conducted to assess the importance of their perceptions of the use of dilemma situations in their English training. Table 2 shows the students' perceptions, which provide insights into the effectiveness of dilemma scenarios as perceived by participants. The following study highlights the table's major components, focusing on the four most prevalent elements that students overwhelmingly associate with.

Table 2
Students' Perceptions on the Efficacy of Dilemma Scenarios in Enhancing English-speaking Skills: Questionnaire Results

No. Statements	*M*	*SD*	Interpretation
1. I believe dilemma scenarios enhance my English-speaking skills.	4.17	0.82	Agree
2. Dilemma scenarios make my English learning process more interesting.	4.29	0.75	Agree
3. I find that dilemma scenarios help me to grasp new vocabulary more effectively.	4.37	0.60	Agree
4. Learning English through dilemma scenarios encourages me to think more critically.	4.17	0.75	Agree
5. I gain more confidence in speaking English after engaging in dilemma scenarios.	4.06	0.84	Agree
6. I find the challenges presented in dilemma scenarios stimulating and beneficial.	4.37	0.73	Agree
7. I feel the dilemma scenarios used in our class reflect real-life scenarios.	4.51	0.61	Strongly Agree
8. I am comfortable expressing my ideas in English during dilemma scenarios.	4.00	0.80	Agree
9. Dilemma scenarios actively involve me in the learning process.	4.29	0.71	Agree
10. Participating in dilemma situations assists in improving my English pronunciation.	4.31	0.72	Agree
11. Dilemma scenarios enhance my ability to interact in English effectively.	4.37	0.65	Agree
12. Engaging in dilemma scenarios aids in understanding different viewpoints.	4.17	0.86	Agree
13. I prefer the method of learning English through dilemma scenarios over traditional methods.	4.23	0.84	Agree
14. I would appreciate more use of dilemma scenarios in our English classes.	4.29	0.83	Agree
15. The feedback and assessment I receive after dilemma scenarios are helpful in my learning.	4.31	0.72	Agree
16. I find that dilemma scenarios make me more aware of my speaking errors.	4.14	0.73	Agree
17. I feel more motivated to learn English through dilemma scenarios.	4.23	0.77	Agree
18. Dilemma scenarios improve my ability to construct and convey my arguments in English.	4.09	0.89	Agree
19. Dilemma scenarios aid in my comprehension of English grammar rules in context.	3.89	0.93	Agree
20. I think learning English through dilemma scenarios prepares me better for real-life English communication.	4.26	0.82	Agree
The overall students' perception level	4.23	0.77	Agree

Table 2 provides a full understanding of the students' assessments of the effectiveness of dilemma situations in improving their English-speaking abilities. When the data was analyzed, statements stood out due to their higher average ratings, highlighting the important components of the scenarios that resonated most with the participants: With a mean score of 4.51 and a S.D. of 0.61, Statement No. 7: “I feel the dilemma scenarios used in our class reflect real-life scenarios,” claimed the lead. This suggests a prevalent sentiment among students about the real-world relevance of the scenarios implemented. Statement No. 3: “I find that dilemma scenarios help me to grasp new vocabulary more effectively” registered a mean score of 4.37 and an S.D. of 0.60. This highlights the students' acknowledgement of the vocabulary enhancement potential of these scenarios. Statement No. 11: “Dilemma scenarios enhance my ability to interact in English effectively” secured a mean score of 4.37 and an S.D. of 0.65, accentuating the students’ belief in the interactional benefits of the scenarios. Statement No. 6: “I find the challenges presented in dilemma scenarios stimulating and beneficial” echoed the same sentiment with a mean score of 4.37 and an S.D. of 0.73, emphasizing the pedagogical appeal of the scenarios.

However, a thorough remark from Statement No.19: “Dilemma scenarios aid in my comprehension of English grammar rules in context” stimulates thought. With a mean score of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.93, students have a somewhat average view of the scenarios’ direct impact on grammatical comprehension. The total mean perception level is 4.23, with a standard deviation of 0.77, showing that students are favourable about the usefulness and applicability of dilemma scenarios in their English learning process.

Discussion

The primary goals of this study revolved around two pivotal axes: first, to investigate the effects of dilemma scenarios on the improvement of English-speaking abilities, and second, to delve into students' perceptions of using these scenarios to improve their speaking abilities. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of dilemma scenarios in English language training, with a special emphasis on undergraduate students' speaking skills and perceptions. The findings show a significant gain in speaking skills, which is consistent with Richards and Rodgers’ (2001) notion of communicative language education. This progress can be linked to the utilization of realistic and contextually appropriate scenarios, which is consistent with Nunan's (2012) advocate for realistic communicative settings in language learning. Furthermore, the positive opinions that students had of the dilemma scenarios that were employed in this research align with the conclusions drawn by Benson (2001) regarding the significance of learner autonomy and engagement in language learning environments. These impressions support Harmer’s (2007) claim that incorporating real-world, practical elements into language training can greatly improve student results. Meyers (2019) asserts that challenging and reflective activities are necessary in educational settings, and the study supports this claim by highlighting the role that dilemma scenarios play in developing critical thinking skills. This supports the view expressed by Jonassen (1997) regarding the significance of situational learning in language instruction. However, as Brown (2001) points out, a well-rounded strategy that incorporates conventional language elements like grammar and vocabulary is also necessary for these scenarios to be effective. It is clear from these results and the literature review that including dilemma scenarios in English instruction can have a big impact on students' speaking abilities and perceptions. This study opens the door for more research in this field by adding to the expanding body of literature supporting creative, practical approaches to language instruction.

1. The Effects of Dilemma Scenarios on English-Speaking Abilities

The results of the pre-and post-test evaluations demonstrate the effectiveness of dilemma scenarios in enhancing students' speaking skills. The significant increase in post-test mean scores compared to pre-test scores demonstrates the efficacy of dilemma-driven pedagogy. Notably, introducing real-world circumstances and obstacles into training not only makes learning more engaging but also fosters practical language use, hence improving speaking skills. The increase in speaking skills might also be attributed to the diversity of difficult scenarios. They typically ask students to think strategically, improve their thinking style, and convey their perceptions in the target language. The necessity to explain complex concepts and defend one's judgements may increase language skills in and of itself.

2. Students' Perceptions of Using Dilemma Scenarios

The overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the students, as extrapolated from the questionnaire results, correspond with the measurable improvements observed on the speaking assessments. Most students agreed or strongly agreed with the advantages and benefits of dilemma scenarios in the learning process. The most important remark emphasized the relevance of these scenarios to real-life circumstances, implying that students should master not just the language but also the subtleties and pragmatics of utilizing English in real-world contexts. This provides a crucial insight that shows students are more likely to be interested and find value in educational techniques that have practical, real-world implications. Interestingly, the comment about the use of problem scenarios to aid in the learning of English grammatical principles in context was also worth mentioning. This emphasizes the comprehensive benefits of dilemma situations, in which grammar is learnt contextually in real-world settings rather than as separate rules, making the learning process more natural and less abstract.

Conclusion

This research, situated within the framework of English language instruction in the "Listening and Speaking in Daily Life" course, sought to investigate the pedagogical efficacy of dilemma scenarios. The findings reveal a marked improvement in students' speaking skills when dilemma scenarios, backed by established pedagogical theories (Brown, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), are introduced. Significant post-test improvements provide convincing evidence of the advantages of dilemma scenarios. Such findings are consistent with past research indicating that context-driven teaching techniques, particularly those that replicate real-life events, have a significant influence on learners (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Furthermore, students' largely positive assessments of these scenarios reinforce their relevance and importance, echoing the claims of researchers such as Harmer (2007), who argue for the introduction of practical, real-world components in language training. However, (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2007) have stated that, while including dilemma scenarios in training has several benefits, it is necessary to maintain an emphasis on key language components such as grammar so that their value is not lost. Adopting a balanced strategy that integrates both traditional and new concepts appears to be the best course of action.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the significance of dilemma situations as an essential tool in the field of English language instruction. As instructors investigate the changing pedagogical environments, this study provides valuable insights based on empirical evidence and established theoretical frameworks. These findings can serve as guiding principles, highlighting the significance of incorporating contextual, real-world relevance in language learning.

Recommendations

1. Implications and Further Studies

The study's main findings emphasize the need for interactive and context-based educational techniques in language learning. Due to their intrinsic difficulty, dilemma situations provide a multidimensional approach to language learning by pushing undergraduates to think about, communicate about, and engage with the language on a deep level. It would be interesting to look more into the ways different sorts of problem scenarios impact different components of language acquisition in future studies. Furthermore, incorporating qualitative insights, maybe through focus group discussions, could improve knowledge of language learners' opinions and preferences. Given the overwhelming data supporting the usefulness of dilemma situations in improving English-speaking abilities, teachers are urged to include dilemma scenarios in the English curriculum in a more comprehensive manner. This kind of integration might help bridge the gap between theoretical comprehension and actual implementation. However, the sustainability of this strategy is dependent on providing adequate teacher training in the effective use of scenarios, maintaining a diverse range of scenario designs to facilitate wider applicability, and developing efficient feedback systems following scenario performance. The substance and value of these scenarios must be examined regularly, considering contemporary advancements in the field of English education. Furthermore, future research might offer insight into the potential benefits of dilemma situations in other cognitive domains, broadening our knowledge of their role in language learners' education.

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Exploring the Virtual Linguistic Landscape of Chinese University Websites: A Focus on Internationalization and Multilingualism

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Abstract

This study explored the Virtual Linguistic Landscape (VLL) in Chinese higher education amidst a strong government focus on internationalization. A descriptive qualitative methodology was adopted to investigate the VLL of the top 100 Chinese university websites. The focus was on language code selection, language distribution, and informational functions of these websites. The data analysis involved the use of frequencies and percentages to explore both the quantity and types of language displayed on universities' homepages. Additionally, content analysis was employed to scrutinize the informational function of the content found on websites. The findings revealed that the majority (87%) of these websites were bilingual and used simplified/traditional Chinese and English. Additionally, 7% employed a multilingual approach, employing simplified Chinese, English, and other foreign languages. A minority of the participants (6%) adopted monolingualism. These websites disseminate various types of information, including general university details, admissions, academic units, research, campus life, international collaborations, academics, training, and talent recruitment. Notably, some websites feature information specific to the Chinese Communist Party and its cultural aspects. The prevalence of English content demonstrates top Chinese universities' efforts to engage with the global community and enhance their international reputations. These findings add to the understanding of multilingualism and the roles of English in cyberspace, such as websites.

Keywords: Chinese university websites, English as a global language, internationalization of higher education, multilingualism, virtual linguistic landscape

Introduction

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The notion of the linguistic landscape (LL) was first defined by Landry and Bourhis (1997) as 'the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings' (p. 25). LL study originated from sociolinguistics, the study of language, and linguistic performance as influenced by social and cultural variables in daily life. With the expansion of research fields, it gradually intersects other disciplines and pays particular attention to the language landscape in a multilingual society (Zhang & Shang, 2020). With the development of the Internet, research on LL is no longer limited to signage in public areas, but has gradually turned to virtual cyberspace. This virtual phenomenon overcomes the limitations of time and space.

With the improvement of the country's comprehensive national strength and the rapid development of higher education (HE), China has become increasingly popular as an educational destination for international students (Hu, Diao, & Li, 2022, p. 1). In addition, the government has issued a series of related policies to promote the global expansion of Chinese education, such as the 'Overall Plan for Promoting the Construction of World-Class Universities and First-Class Disciplines' and 'Educational Action for Promoting the Construction of the Belt and Road' ('Silk Road Economic Belt' and the '21st Century Maritime Silk Road'). These two policies are critical for raising China's educational development level, boosting its core competitiveness, and setting the groundwork for long-term development.

According to Gu and Yi (2019, p. 46), to guide teachers and students in shaping the international education institution's image, enhancing Chinese HE's overseas communication strength, and better participating in international competitiveness, building a multilingual foreign language website has become a key strategy for China's HE to 'go global.' Chinese universities have paid great attention to the critical role of websites in information dissemination, establishing an international image, and attracting international students. They form a unique VLL by providing different language choices and multilingual pages. Hence, the VLL on educational websites is worth investigating.

Literature Review

1. Linguistic Landscape (LL)

A number of scholars' interest in language in public spaces has increased since the landmark work of Landry and Bourhis (1997) on 'linguistic landscape' and 'the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a certain territory or region.' LL includes the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial store signs, and public signs on government buildings, combined to produce the linguistic landscape of a certain territory, region, or urban agglomeration (p. 25). It encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including linguistics, geography, education, sociology, semiotics, architecture, and urban planning. On numerous levels, it provides rich and exciting texts. These LL texts shape the ecology in local, global, and international contexts and in multiple languages (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). Language signs are the main research object in LL research, which aims to reveal the method of discourse construction among language users, language planning agencies, and signage readers (Zhang, 2020). In addition, according to Gorter (2006), when there are multiple languages on signs, LL can reveal an area's social background as well as its multilingualism.

2. Functions of LL

LL has two primary functions: informational and symbolic (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25), which serve different purposes. The informational function of language on public signs provides information for communication and service, such as languages that are visible in public and private spaces in streets, schools, shopping malls, etc. (Lu et al., 2020; Zeng & Luo, 2019, p. 115). According to Zeng and Luo (2019, p. 115), information on public signs can inform, direct, guide, or warn the public.

The informational function indicates the boundaries of the territory in which language groups live and the availability of a particular language for communication within that territory (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). For instance, consistent use of a single language within the LL of the same territory can help establish clear linguistic boundaries between adjacent language groups within a given geographic area (p. 25). Furthermore, based on the language mainly used on a local language sign, people can conclude that language is the main language of the area, and the establishment of multilingual signs in a certain place shows the social phenomenon of multilingual coexistence in the region. The LL provides information about language conditions (Shang & Zhao, 2014). In other words, LL can also provide information about the sociolinguistic composition of language groups that inhabit the territory.

The symbolic function refers to the views of members of a language group on the worth and status of their language compared to other languages (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, pp. 27-29). As public signs can be monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, the superiority of one language over other languages on public signs reflects the relative power and status of competing language groups. In addition, the linguistic diversity existing in the LL can be regarded as the specific expression of the linguistic and cultural diversity of ethnic linguistic groups living in a particular administrative territory or region (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, pp. 26-27; Mao & Zhu, 2018). LL contains an understanding of language values and the status of language group members. However, this study focuses on the informational function only.

3. Virtual Linguistic Landscape (VLL)

VLL, also known as the non-physical landscape, refers to the LL of cyberspace -- computer-mediated communication that takes place on the Web. VLL is a new dimension of language practice (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009; Carr, 2019; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). In virtual space, multilingual choices and options are becoming increasingly frequent owing to the increasing spectrum of multilingual capabilities in digital interactions (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). 17). Cyberspace can be considered an extension of physical space (Wang, 2020, p.3). VLL is used to describe language communities and mark language status in expressive power relations between language choices that coexist in cyber space. Languages in cyberspace have become an important force in promoting changes in global language ecology. Virtual environments can repackage and reposition language in innovative ways in a world of everevolving interactive possibilities, resulting in a language ecosystem that is not representative of the physical world (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). 19).

4. Multilingualism

Despite the belief of many monolinguals that speaking only one language is the norm, multilingualism is ubiquitous in communities worldwide (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). 82). Multilingualism can be defined as 'the ability of societies, institutions, groups, and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives' (European Commission, 2007, p. 6).

LL can reveal the social background or multilingual situation of a region (Ngampramuan, 2010). According to Gorter (2006), LL refers to a social environment in which more than one language exists (p. 1). Numerous studies on multilingual LL have been published in recent years, including Backhaus (2006), Johnson (2017), and Lay (2015). LL reflects the strength and status of different languages and can show how policies to promote minority languages and multilingualism are developing (Goter & Cenoz, 2009, p.17). Hence, the study of LLs is useful for multilingualism studies because linguistic signs are indicators of the language employed in a particular context.

5. English as a Global Language

English, widely recognized as a global language, serves as a modern lingua franca for international relations, media, travel, science, and education. Its usage is not just functional but often reflects cultural appropriateness (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997). English has a unique global status acknowledged in every country and is used worldwide for business, diplomacy, and global communication, driven by economic and cultural globalization (Crystal, 2003; Rao, 2019; Zhang, 2013). In the era of globalization, English is increasingly the preferred international medium, vital for knowledge across science, business, and education (Crystal, 2003; Lewis & Deterding, 2019).

English is spoken in 110 countries as a mother tongue, official language, or common second language, owing to historical factors and technological advances (Al-Dosari, 2011; NetEase, 2023). It is currently the world's most widely spoken language, with around 2.3 billion users, serving as a trade tool that attracts global investors and enhances economic power (British Council 2023). Since the 1960s, English has become the regular language of instruction in HE in many countries (Crystal, 2003, pp. 110-112), including China.

6. A Review of Previous Studies on VLL

Studying VLL in HE is vital for understanding the interplay between language, technology, and academic changes. Greenall (2012) studied how the Norwegian University of Science and Technology attracted international students by utilizing bilingual information on its website. The researcher contrasted the introductory web pages directed at Norwegian students with those of their English-language counterparts targeted at international, non-Scandinavianspeaking students. The researcher found that the English homepage builds the international image of the university, but at the same time, the cultural information -- that is, culture-specific items relevant to the Norwegian university, such as recruitment and international master's programs -- was downplayed in the English version, which results in the suppression of local culture in cyberspace. Another study that explored the bilingual website of a university was conducted by Keles, Yazan, and Giles (2019), who applied comparative content analysis to investigate bilingual (Turkish and English) content in the VLL of a university in Turkey to scrutinize exclusionary de facto language policies. They found three main issues on the website: the unavailability and inaccessibility of information, inconsistency in content, and difficulty in comprehending English content on the English homepage. Hence, the researchers pointed out that as HE institutions increasingly become part of international student and faculty exchange programs, universities should build a more linguistically inclusive VLL in their website construction to improve the outcomes of international exchange programs.

In a more extensive study, Callahan and Herring (2012) analyzed the websites of 1,140 universities in 57 countries using the content analysis method. They studied the extent to which universities in different countries provide foreign language websites and the languages used as primary and secondary languages on these foreign websites. They found that university websites do not implement multilingualism but take the official language, Turkish, as the center and English as the first additional language. Other trilingual modes of second languages are targeted at special groups. The researchers concluded that English continues to spread as the global language of HE on university websites, while the use of the national language remained stable, and the inclusion of other languages grew faster than English, resulting in an overall net increase in multilingualism. In this case, it could make universities look welcoming to speakers of these languages and provide international students with more extensive experience.

Gu and Yi (2019) discussed the current situation and problems in the construction of multilingual websites of Shanghai International Studies University in China using content analysis. They pointed out that universities should formulate a website construction approach and translation scheme that meets the needs of the audience and language service industry standards. In particular, universities should gradually carry out the construction of multilingual websites by strengthening the construction of English websites (Pei, 2013, as cited in Gu & Yi, 2019, p. 48), guiding teachers and students to jointly shape the image of an international university, and enhancing the overseas dissemination of Chinese HE. Furthermore, Zhou (2022) extended the discourse by taking the official websites of ten famous Minzu universities in China. A Minzu university or ethnic university is a broad term that usually refers to HE institutions in China, which focus on research, education, and promotion of the culture, language, history, traditions, and national characteristics of various ethnic groups in China. The researcher adopted a mixed research method to examine language code selection, presentation methods, and topic distribution. The findings indicated a multilingual pattern where Chinese predominates over English, non-lingua franca languages, and minority languages on the website, which reflects the characteristics of uneven language power. The distribution of themes highlighted ideological discourses such as 'party and government construction, epidemic prevention and control, and the construction of a national community.' Zhou remarked that the findings had implications for broadening the scope of LL investigation and enriching the content of LL research.

In a recent study, Wen (2023) examined nine official websites of language universities in China to explore the characteristics of the VLL on official university websites in terms of language code selection and distribution and the characteristics of its presentation. Wen used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods and concluded that Chinese language universities took Chinese as the preferred language on their official websites, and Chinese characters as the preferred symbols constitute the entire content of their VLL. As the official language of China, Chinese has dominant language power in public spaces. Second, the official websites of language universities, without exception, use English as the second language in addition to Chinese. This suggests that in terms of linguistic vitality and language information dissemination, English holds distinct advantages. Third, compared with the status of Chinese and English, the language status of non-common languages (e.g., French, Russian, Arabic, Spanish, German, Japanese, Indonesian, etc.) is relatively marginal. This is because uncommon languages have a wide distribution area. They had some representativeness and symbolism, and their role was mainly to disseminate language information to overseas audiences. Finally, the virtual cultural landscape (the cultural and social environment formed in the virtual world) displayed on the university's official website mainly focused on 'Party and government construction, and league education construction and cultural community construction,' which is an ideological and political task that the Chinese government has always attached importance to.

Wang (2020) studied the VLL of Chinese university websites from another perspective. The researcher explored the language display mode, ideology, and power of cyberspace on Chinese university websites. The researcher utilized multimodal, quantitative, and qualitative analyses to investigate the VLL of six first-class universities in China, Japan, and England. From the perspective of language display mode, the researcher found that only English was provided on the websites of universities in English-speaking countries. However, the websites of universities in non-English- speaking countries generally used the model of 'official language and English' or 'official language, English, and other languages.' Regarding the language ideology behind the VLL, the researcher discovered that universities in English-speaking countries pursued a monolingual language ideology and made full use of the hypercentral language status of English to achieve international communication, thus marginalizing other language resources. Universities in non-English-speaking countries emphasize superlingualism, making full use of language resources, and building an international image, whereas other universities adopt linguistic pragmatism, mainly relying on English for international communication. The researcher explained that official languages hold the highest power in informational functions, but English has a limited role in virtual spaces.

In the context of Chinese university websites, although few studies have touched upon this topic, a significant absence of extensive research examining Chinese university websites is apparent.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were as follows:
1. To investigate the language code selection and distribution on the top 100 Chinese university websites; and
2. To investigate the informational functions of the VLL on the studied Chinese university websites.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This research was conducted as a descriptive qualitative study. Descriptive research describes the characteristics of a subject. Usually, descriptive qualitative research questions are more open-ended and tend to address 'what' and 'how' questions and require a descriptive answer (Blaikie, 2007, pp. 6-7; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006, p. 488). A qualitative descriptive study is a method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired (Sandelowski, 2000). Therefore, it was suitable for this study, which sought to investigate the multilingual phenomenon of VLL. Before collecting the data, ethical approval was obtained from the Research and Innovation Administration Division of Burapha University (IRB4-176/2565).

2. Data Sources

The data for this study were extracted from the textual content exhibited on specific Chinese university websites. These websites were sourced from the top 100 universities in China and ranked by the Network of Science and Education Evaluation in China website (http://www.nseac.com/eva/CUcompallE.php). The data collection process took place from 2021 to 2022.

3. Data Collection Procedure

First, the researchers divided the top 100 universities in China into seven categories according to their type characteristics: agriculture and forestry, grammar, finance and economics, medicine, normal, science and technology, and comprehensive universities.

Second, the researchers visited the homepage of these top 100 universities' web pages, downloaded them as full web pages, and captured screenshots for the analysis process. The researchers then used Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel to collect and sort the data. To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the research design and data collection methods were reviewed by experts in Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics. Additionally, the authors presented preliminary findings at two conferences to validate the accuracy of their interpretations and conclusions.
The researchers then identified the default language and other language settings of the homepage and clicked on the language option provided by the homepage to enter the page of the specific language to check if the page exists. This is to confirm whether a page exists, confirm its language types (monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual), and infer its language functions.

Finally, to further determine the informational function, the researchers counted the amount of information (such as information related to admission, campus culture, campus life, etc.) provided in the navigation menus and recorded this information in Microsoft Excel. The researchers then compared the content presented on the Chinese and English versions of the webpages.

4. Data Analysis

To answer the language code selection and distribution question (RQ1), the researchers counted the number and type of languages displayed on each university's homepage. In this process, the researchers used frequencies and percentages to present the data.

To answer RQ2, the researchers used content analysis to analyze the informational function of VLL embodied on websites. The researchers focused on the type information of the navigation menu and language emphasis patterns in the navigation menus on the website, while other elements such as the submenu of the navigation tabs, footer, header, logo, and multi-modal forms (pictures, colors, animations, and videos) were excluded from the analysis. Moreover, the researchers compared the information presented in the Chinese and English versions to examine whether both versions offered comparable content.

Results

1. The Language Code Selection and Distribution on the Top 100 Chinese University Websites

The languages of the studied 100 Chinese university websites can be divided into four main groups: 1) monolingual (i.e., simplified Chinese); 2) bilingual 1 (i.e., simplified Chinese and English); 3) bilingual 2 (i.e., simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, and English); and 4) multilingual (i.e., simplified or traditional Chinese, English, and other foreign languages). Simplified Chinese is part of mainland China's communist reform system, which was widely promoted in the early 1950s to increase literacy among China's vast population. Simplified Chinese is simplified from traditional Chinese, and writing is simpler and easier, with relatively fewer strokes. Traditional Chinese was the Chinese writing system before China's reform and is currently used in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.

Table 1

The Frequency and Percentage of the Language Code Selection on the Top 100 Chinese University Websites

The Language Code Selection	Frequency and Percentage of Occurrences
Monolingual simplified Chinese	6
Bilingual 1 simplified Chinese + English	85
Bilingual 2 simplified Chinese + English + traditional Chinese	2
Multilingual simplified Chinese + English + other foreign languages	7
Total	100

As shown in Table 1, the 100 top university websites in China are bilingual, monolingual, and multilingual. The majority (87%) were bilingual, incorporating two languages. These websites predominantly employ 1) simplified Chinese and English, and 2) simplified Chinese and/or traditional Chinese and English. It is worthwhile to note that nine out of the top 10 universities in China follow a bilingual format, except Zhejiang University, which has a multilingual website. Only a handful (6%) of the websites were monolingual, using Mandarin Chinese. They are East China Normal University, Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Hefei University of Technology, Capital Medical University, Peking Union Medical College, and Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology. These universities are ranked in various positions among the top 100 Chinese universities: 25th, 37th, 55th, 85th, 91st, and 97th.

Multilingual websites, accounting for 7%, have incorporated a diverse range of languages beyond Chinese and English, including Russian, German, French, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. They are Zhejiang University, Harbin Institute of Technology, Tongji University, Tianjin University, Jiangnan University, Harbin Engineering University, and China University of Petroleum (East China). These universities were ranked 3rd, 13th, 19th, 26th, 56th, 63rd, and 90th, respectively. While website ranking might not necessarily correlate with language display, it is noteworthy that the top ten websites exhibit a combination of bilingual and multilingual formats.

Figure 1
The Language Distribution by Each University Type

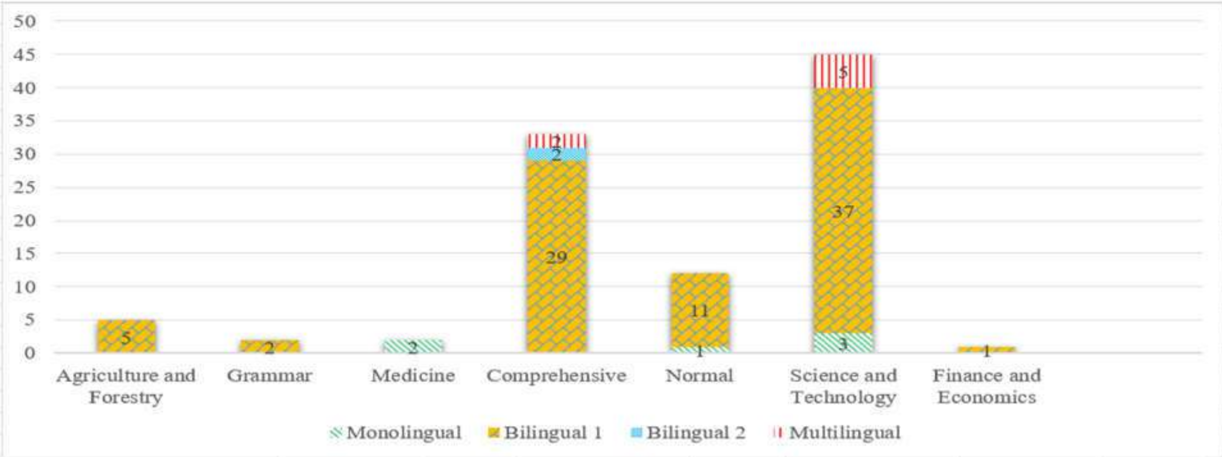

Figure 1 depicts the language format of each university type. The majority of the top 100 universities were science and technology (45%) and comprehensive universities (33%). Most of these websites are bilingual. 37 out of 45 science and technology university websites are bilingual, while 29 out of 33 comprehensive universities are bilingual using simplified Chinese and English. Agriculture and forestry, grammar, and finance and economics university websites are all bilingual, using simplified Chinese and English. Two out of the 33 comprehensive universities are bilingual, using simplified or traditional Chinese and English. For monolingual websites, two out of the two medicine university websites were monolingual, using only simplified Chinese. One out of 12 normal universities and three out of 45 science and technology universities were monolingual. Five out of the 45 science and technology universities and two out of 33 comprehensive university websites follow the multilingual format, that is, employing simplified Chinese, English, and other foreign languages.

2.1 Types of Information

A basic element of the website architecture is the navigation menu, which determines the number, level, and layout of the web pages. The navigation menus of the studied universities cover the information involved in HE services (Gu & Yi, 2029, p. 50), as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
The Navigation Menu Categories on the Chinese University Websites

Sections	Descriptions
1. About	An overview of the university. It often includes information about the university's history, mission, vision, values, leadership, achievements, and any special recognitions.

2. Admissions	Details about the admission process, requirements, application deadlines, entrance exams, and any specific admission criteria for various programs.

Table 2 (Continued)

Sections	Descriptions
3. Schools and Departments	Information about the different academic units within the university. It provides details about various schools, colleges, and departments, including faculty members, academic programs offered, research areas, and contact information.
4. Research	The university's research initiatives, ongoing projects, research centers, publications, collaborations, and breakthroughs in various fields.
5. News	Updates, press releases, announcements, and articles related to the university's activities, achievements, events, faculty, and student accomplishments.
6. Events	Upcoming and past events hosted by the university, including academic conferences, seminars, workshops, cultural events, and other campus-related activities.
7. Podcasts	Recorded audio or video content such as interviews, discussions, lectures, and presentations related to academic, cultural, or other relevant topics.
8. Campus Life and Campus Culture	Insights into the overall university experience, including student life, extracurricular activities, clubs, sports, facilities, student services, and the university's cultural environment.
9. International Collaboration and Exchange	International partnerships, exchange programs, study abroad opportunities, collaborative research projects, and global engagement efforts.
10. Academics	The Academics category elaborates on the various academic programs offered by the university, including information about undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs, majors, minors, course descriptions, and academic regulations.
11. Talent's Training and Talent Recruitment	Career development services offered to students, such as internships, job placement, resume workshops, and networking events. It may also feature information for potential employers looking to recruit graduates.
12. Chinese Communist Party and Government Building Culture	Insights into the university's adherence to political ideologies, the role of the Communist Party, government initiatives on campus, and any cultural aspects aligned with these themes.

These 12 navigation menu categories offered a comprehensive view of the university's academic provisions, research pursuits, campus life, collaborations, and roles within larger social and political contexts. In addition, the emergence of party and government information was, to a certain extent, the positive response and powerful promotion of the party and the country's major political policies in different periods, and it also highlighted the distinctive characteristics of Chinese universities advancing with the times.

2.2 Language emphasis patterns in navigation menus

Three distinct language emphasis patterns were discerned: 1) Chinese navigation predominated over English (71%), 2) equivalent menus (14%), and 3) English navigation menus predominated over Chinese (6%), as shown in Table 3. Note that three university websites could not be accessed, and the other six universities were monolingual.

Table 3

Language Emphasis Patterns in Navigation Menus

Language Emphasis Patterns	Percentage
1. Chinese navigation predominated over English	71%
2. Equivalent menus	14%
3. English navigation menu predominated over Chinese	6%
Total	91%

The first pattern occurred when the navigation menus of the Chinese code exceeded those of English. In the second pattern, the menus were equivalent. The third pattern occurred when the navigation menus of the English code exceeded those of Chinese.

Discussion

1. Language Code Selection and Distribution on the Top 100 Chinese University Websites

1.1 Bilingual Websites

The findings of this study revealed the largest proportion of bilingualism (simplified or traditional Chinese and English). Chinese holds primary linguistic authority in public spaces as the official language, reflecting the identity and national identity of the Chinese people. English is a secondary language on Chinese university websites alongside Chinese, which possesses significant advantages owing to its linguistic vitality and convenience for information dissemination (Wen, 2023). This finding is not surprising, as most countries where English is not the national language use both their national language(s) and English on their university websites market to different audiences and for different purposes (Callahan & Herring, 2012). The roles of English are further discussed in the following subsection.

These universities' predominant use of Chinese may indicate their intention to underscore their connections with Chinese culture and values. They may perceive their websites as platforms for promoting Chinese linguistic and cultural identities. Additionally, this preference may signify a strong dedication to preserving and championing the Chinese language, particularly as it holds the status of the official language of China — a symbol of national sovereignty and dignity–as well as a vital link between national and ethnic identities (Zhou, 2022).

Furthermore, on these bilingual websites, two universities out of 100 use traditional Chinese on their websites, suggesting that these universities aim to attract students not only from mainland China and abroad, but also from Taiwan, Macao, and Hong Kong (Chai & Jia, 2018).

1.2 Multilingual Websites

The VLL of the studied websites reflects the development trend of multilingual culture in Chinese universities, and on the other hand, it reflects the background of the era in which Chinese universities pursue the development of international education. Although website rankings may not directly correspond to language presentation, it is important to highlight that the top ten websites utilize a mix of bilingual and multilingual formats. When a university offers information, resources, and communication channels in various languages, it demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and global engagement. The views are also similar to Greenall (2012), Keles, Yazan, and Giles (2019), who proposed that universities should build more linguistically inclusive VLL in their website construction to improve the outcomes of international exchange programs. In turn, this can enhance a university's reputation as an institution that values diversity, promotes internationalization, and strives to accommodate a wide range of students, scholars, and stakeholders. In addition, the visibility and importance of different languages in public spaces (physical or virtual space) vary greatly because of various political, economic, social, cultural, and geographical factors (Zhou, 2022). In other words, the language setting of each university website is determined by a combination of factors, such as geographic location, university policy, internationalization efforts, and target audience. For example, in addition to simplified Chinese and English, the Harbin Engineering University (HEU) website also includes Russian because Harbin is located in Heilongjiang Province and its long border connects with Russia. In addition, the university has a Sino-Russian 'Belt and Road' joint laboratory with St. Petersburg State Marine Technical University in Russia.

On these multilingual websites, English is the second most commonly used language after Chinese, indicating a high regard for the international significance of the English language by Chinese universities. This also shows that Chinese universities attach great importance to multilingual development. English is increasingly being employed as an internationally preferred medium of communication in the era of globalization and the modern era's lingua franca (Crystal, 2003; Deterding, 2019; Graddol, 1997). Furthermore, the continued spread of English as the global language of HE across university websites can make universities appear welcoming to speakers of these languages and provide international students with broader experience (Callahan & Herring, 2012).

2. Monolingual Websites

The analysis revealed the lowest proportion of monolingualism, possibly due to these factors. The target audience of these universities might be primarily domestic. Second, these universities may have resource constraints that limit their ability to maintain multilingual websites. Creating and maintaining content in multiple languages can be resource-intensive, and smaller or less-funded institutions may opt for a monolingual approach. Mao and Ren (2018) pointed out that a shortage of language service personnel and inadequate financial investments can lead to limitations in the creation and maintenance of LL information. These universities might face technical challenges in implementing multilingual websites, as Chinese universities are still in the early stages of constructing multilingual websites, and the content development of these websites lags behind the internationalization demands of HE (Gu & Yi, 2019). It is noteworthy that both medical universities exclusively utilize simplified Chinese on their web pages. This choice aligns with the typical focus of medical institutions, which primarily serves a local or domestic audience consisting of students, faculty, and healthcare professionals. Given that simplified Chinese is the predominant script in mainland China, this decision may be considered adequate for effectively reaching their target audience.

3. The Informational Functions of the VLL of the Studied Chinese University's Websites

3.1 The Types of Information on Chinese and English Websites

The analysis of university websites clearly indicates that their VLL serves informational functions. The university's navigation menu categories provide a comprehensive view covering academic provisions, research pursuits, campus life, collaborations, and the university's role in wider social and political contexts. Second, it can be inferred that universities tailor their messages to different audiences in different languages. For instance, information such as 'International Collaboration' and 'International Exchange' under the navigation menus demonstrates that Chinese universities focus on catering to international students and global audiences. It is also reflected that Chinese universities actively responded to the national 'Overall Plan for Promoting the Construction of World-Class Universities and First-Class Disciplines' 'Educational Action for Promoting the Construction of the Belt and Road' policies. In particular, it encouraged Chinese HE sustainable development by providing bilingual and multilingual language emphasis patterns in the navigation menus. This view is aligned with Gu and Yi (2019), who found that multilingual language websites serve as a crucial platform for the development of 'Double First-Class' initiatives in foreign language disciplines at Chinese universities and play a pivotal role in China's HE strategy for internationalization. Essentially, the informational function of the LL provides the public with information on communication and services (Lu et al., 2020; Zeng & Luo, 2019, p. 115), so the researchers considered that the presence or absence of specific content in the Chinese and English menus reflects the university's strategic decision to different language audiences and specific information emphasized by its internationalization goals. In addition, as a form of media in the public virtual space, official websites offer various information services to users. They engage in interactive communication and create a multifunctional service platform, all of which contribute to the advancement of public relations and communication (Zhao 2021).

Information regarding the Chinese Communist Party and government shows that universities have actively responded to and promoted the major political policies of the party and the country in different periods. This demonstrates the important role of universities in China's social and political system and their mission to support national policies and social progress. At the same time, this also emphasizes the contemporary nature and flexibility of Chinese universities. They can continuously adapt and evolve as the political environment changes, which is a distinctive feature of China's HE system. This finding aligns with the notion that fostering a strong connection between the Party and the government has consistently been a central theme in China's ideological and political efforts, reflecting the prevailing characteristics of the era (Wen, 2023; Zhou, 2022).

3.2 Language Emphasis Patterns in Navigation Menus

This finding indicates that Chinese occupies a dominant position in the VLL of Chinese university websites. This is clearly because Chinese is China's official language. Official languages hold the highest power in informational functions, and the readers of the landscape determine the dominant role of Chinese in the LL of official university websites (Wang, 2020; Wen, 2023). When the main audience of the universities is Chinese users, the universities might want to attract and meet the needs of local or regional students and parents in terms of admission information, campus activities, and campus life (Wen, 2023).

The fact that Chinese and English websites provide equal information suggests that these universities value a consistent user experience across languages, which may be a sign of internationalization efforts aimed at catering to diverse student populations and global audiences. It can be seen that universities focus on effective bilingual communication, and ensuring consistent messaging for all stakeholders is very important. Hence, it can be further deduced that these universities aim to create a unified global identity, attract diverse students, promote international collaboration and research, and uniformly provide information to researchers and scholars around the world.

Lastly, the finding of the situation in which there were fewer menus in Chinese than in English suggests that Chinese websites provide less information than English websites. This may be because some information is more accessible or relevant to English-speaking audiences. The reduction in Chinese menus may be due to specific strategies to attract and support international students. As the second-preferred language in the VLL, English is not as dominant as Chinese in the local communication context, but its language vitality gene and information dissemination advantages as the world's lingua franca are undeniable (Zhou, 2022). This suggests that these universities might be more focused on providing information to English-speaking prospective students.

Conclusion

The examination of the VLL on Chinese university websites illuminates several key aspects of language use and priorities in the country's HE sectors. First, it is evident that Chinese universities place a strong emphasis on bilingual and multilingual communication. This shows the bright vision of Chinese universities' international engagement and communication. In addition, English is widely used on both bilingual and multilingual websites. This reflects universities' recognition of the global importance of English as a lingua franca for academic and international discourse. The dominance of English, followed by Chinese, underscores its significant role in reaching global audiences. This role indicates a high regard for the international significance of English by Chinese universities. English websites are strategic tools for Chinese universities to build international reputations, attract outstanding students and scholars, promote international cooperation, and provide centralized sources of information for researchers worldwide. Third, the findings related to the informational functions of these websites reveal Chinese universities' dedication to offering a wide range of academic opportunities. This emphasis extends to areas such as knowledge advancement, innovation, student well-being, and partnerships with institutions, both within and outside China. Notably, each language code selection particularly targets different groups of audiences, and the content of the websites varies according to the purposes of the university. Finally, the alignment of these findings with national policies underscores the crucial role of Chinese universities in promoting and supporting government initiatives.

Recommendations

1. Implications

These findings offer significant implications for HE institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders. First, Chinese universities' emphasis on bilingual and multilingual communication highlights the importance of multilingualism in online communication. Therefore, to be 'international' and engage international audiences, universities should consider using bilingual and multilingual websites. Second, the dominant role of English as a global lingua franca underscores the need for universities to cultivate English language proficiency among both staff and students. English proficiency is essential for effective internationalization efforts and participation in the global academic community. Hence, universities need to promote English language proficiency among both faculty and students. Finally, variations in content between the Chinese and English navigation menus underscore the necessity of tailoring information to specific language audiences. To effectively engage diverse user segments, institutions should recognize the importance of tailoring content to specific language audiences. These insights will be invaluable to education leaders, policymakers, and university administrators as they navigate the evolving landscape of modern HE.

2. Further Studies

Looking forward, first, further study should explore the most informational and symbolic functions of VLL to comprehensively understand the current LL in context. Second, further studies may consider a comparison of websites of two HE contexts, such as China and Thailand, to gain further perspectives on the issue. Finally, further studies can explore the multimodal forms of VLL to broaden the diversity of the field of VLL research.

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Production of Politeness by Myanmar (Burmese) Native Speakers in Requests

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the production of politeness in Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers via the request speech act. The politeness theory of Brown & Levison (1987) was deployed to investigate the responses elicited from the informants. The data consists of a quantitative approach (Discourse completion test). Forty-nine male and female Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers with different ages and educational backgrounds responded to the questionnaire. The findings of this research argued for the adequacy of the theories of Brown & Levison (1987) for the Myanmar (Burmese) context. In addition, a new politeness strategy, "using politeness markers," was suggested. Employments of politeness strategies in making the requests varied depending on the different social variables. Three characteristics of using politeness strategies by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, which can be said as the pragmatic competencies of politeness, are also laid out. The framework of politeness production the request by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers was proposed to fulfill the goal of third-wave politeness research, studying politeness at macro and micro levels.

Keywords: Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, politeness in Myanmar (Burmese), request speech Act, social variability in language use, third-wave politeness research

Introduction

Politeness is more than a subfield of pragmatics since it heavily relates to the other manifestations of pragmatics. When there is a loophole in pragmatic maxims and theories, politeness is the field that gives the most suitable, relevant, and comprehensive explanations for those leakages. For example, politeness can explain conversational implicatures and

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maxims flouting. Lakoff (1973) devised the first politeness theory, which began the prolonged controversial field of politeness. Kadar and Haugh's (2013) framework of understanding politeness is the latest framework regarding the field. During these fifty years, scholars worldwide have participated in shaping politeness restlessly. Ide (1989), Matsumoto (1989), Gu (1990), and Mao (1994) presented their findings on the theory of politeness set by Western scholars.

According to Kadar (2017), theories, research, and ideology of politeness can be divided into three waves. These three waves of politeness research are developed from the criticisms and refurbishments of previous theories. Kadar (2017) claimed the third wave of politeness research that explores politeness beyond the study of its production and evaluation.

The current study can also be said to revisit Brown and Levison's (1987) theory during the third wave in the politeness field. However, this belongs to the tenets of third-wave politeness research (production and evaluation) since it will be focusing on the production of politeness. According to Kadar (2017), the third wave of politeness research works on the knowledge gap or theoretical gap still needs to be answered by the second wave of politeness research. This gap is the endeavor to make politeness models that cover both its production and evaluation. In studying the production of politeness, Brown and Levison's (1987) theory of politeness is the most comprehensive theoretical background as they can provide detailed, accurate, and mathematical answers to how politeness is used. On the other hand, this study does not endorse the claim of the universality of Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory.

Another research niche for doing this study is due to "a state of limbo" left by the second wave of politeness research. Kadar (2017) pointed out that second-wave politeness scholars did not provide a theory that can be an alternative to Brown and Levison's (1987) theory. The third wave politeness research tries to develop a model of politeness for examining the production and evaluation of politeness. This development can be done by adjusting the previous politeness theories. This study aims to test the universality of Brown and Levison (1987) in the Myanmar context. As mentioned before, this is a revisit to Brown and Levison's (1987) theory when no other politeness theory can explain the production of politeness as comprehensively and detailed as Brown and Levison's (1987) theory. Even if the current theory cannot explain the production of politeness at the macro level (discourse) and it has some defaults in explaining politeness in certain cultures, it is workable in micro-level analysis (utterances) in the context of face-threatening acts (e.g., requests). To fulfill the gaps mentioned above, it aims to examine the politeness production in Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers via the request speech act. Based on the arguments above and considerations, the research questions are as in the following:

1. Do Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers use strategies that are not mentioned in the politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987)?
2. Do the politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987) fit into the operation of politeness among Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers?
3. How do the employments of politeness strategies vary depending on the different social variables by Brown and Levison (1987)?

The introduction deals with a brief history of politeness and the justifications for using Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory in this study. It also outlines the aim and research questions of the current study. The literature review section provides detailed facts about the politeness theory by Brown and Levison (1987). The materials and method section presents research tools (Multiple-choice discourse completion test and Discourse completion test) and informants of the study. The section on findings and discussion focuses on three research questions laid out in the introduction section. It also tackles the characteristics of the politeness strategies used in the requests by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. The conclusion section highlights the study's main findings and suggestions for further research.

Literature Review

Based on the concepts of "face" and "face-threatening act," the most comprehensive and analytical theory of politeness was presented by Brown and Levison (1987). The term "face" is divided into two parts: negative face and positive face. The former is described as the desire not to be impeded or put upon and to have freedom as the individual's will. The latter is about the individual's desire to be liked, respected, approved of, and appreciated by others.

Brown and Levison (1987) assumed that specific speech acts could damage or threaten the interlocutors' (speaker or hearer) public images or faces. Generally, there are two types of faces: positive and negative. A positive face can be damaged by insulting the hearer, expressing disapproval of something the hearer possesses, and forcing the speaker's mistakes on the job. A negative face can be damaged by impinging the hearer's freedom to do something or making an offer by the speaker. Those are regarded as "face-threatening acts" (FTAs). With the virtue of mitigating the face threats to the speaker or hearer, politeness strategies are used. Brown and Levison (1987) also presented the possible choice of strategy based on the three variables: power (P), distance (D), and rating of imposition (R).

Regarding the employment of strategies, avoiding the FTAs or doing the FTAs by using the strategy is the initial option for the speaker. If the speaker chooses to do the FTA, there are two options: doing the act directly (on record) or indirectly (off record). The on-record option covers doing FTA with redressive action (positive and negative politeness) or without redressive action (bald on record). The FTAs tracking can be divided into five strategies: 1. Bald on record, 2. Positive politeness strategies, 3. Negative politeness strategies, 4. Off-record strategies, and 5. Do not do FTA.

1. Bald on Record Strategy

Using the bald-on-record technique, the listener can clearly understand the speaker's communication goal (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The speaker employs this strategy because, rather than appeasing the listener's face, he wants to perform the face-threatening act effectively. The statements are made in a direct, lucid, unequivocal, and brief manner. It tries to get the listener to do something. This strategy is frequently employed when the speaker and the hearer are well acquainted. Therefore, this strategy will surprise, humiliate, and make the listener uneasy. It is also assumed to be a direct strategy.

2. *Positive Politeness Strategies*

A positive politeness strategy emphasizes the listener's positive face and shows the desire for what he wants or claims himself (Brown & Levison, 1987). Those strategies are frequently used to reduce the gap between the speaker and the listener and the harm to the addressee's face by softening the interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) listed the positive politeness strategies as 1. Notice, attend to the hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods) ,2. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer) ,3. Intensify interest to the hearer ,4. Use in-group identity markers ,5. Seek agreement ,6. Avoid disagreement ,7. Presuppose/raise/ assert common ground ,8. Joke ,9. Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants ,10. Offer, promise ,11. Be optimistic ,12. Include both the speaker and hearer in the activity ,13. Give (or ask for) reasons ,14. Assume or assert reciprocity ,and 15. Give gifts to the hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation).

3. Negative Politeness Strategies

A negative politeness strategy is positioned to satisfy the addressee's negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that "negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded." In addition, if the speaker wishes an intention to threaten the addressee's face, Brown and Levison (1987) suggested using strategies to reduce that threat, such as 1. Be direct/conventionally indirect, 2. Question, hedge, 3. Be pessimistic, 4. Minimize the size of imposition on hearer, 5. Give deference, 6. Apologize, 7. Impersonalize S and H; Avoid the pronouns 'I' and 'you', 8. State the FTA as a general rule, 9. Nominalize, and 10. Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting hearer.

4. Off Record Strategies

If there are multiple clear goals, the off-record strategy is utilized so that the speaker cannot be assumed to have committed to just one objective (Brown & Levinson 1987). It signifies that the speaker's speech has more than one clear aim or meaning; the hearer must interpret it to grasp its true significance. In this regard, the off-record strategies are as 1. Give hints, 2. Give association clues, 3. Presuppose, 4. Understate, 5. Overstate, 6. Use tautologies, 7. Use contradictions, 8. Be ironic, 9. Use metaphors, 10. Use rhetorical questions, 11. Be ambiguous – metaphor, 12. Be vague, 13. Over generalize, 14. Displace H, and 15. Be incomplete, and use ellipsis

5. Don't Do FTA

Brown and Levinson (1987) do not explain in detail about this strategy. It is about the speaker not saying anything when the utterances are prone to falling into the category of face-threatening.

Research Objective

To examine the production of politeness in Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers via the request speech act.

Methodology

1. Tools

The questionnaire for the study is composed of three sections: Section 1 (Demographic information), Section 2 (Discourse completion test), and Section 3 (Multiple choice discourse completion test). The multiple-choice discourse completion test (MCDCT) and discourse completion test (DCT) contain eight items, respectively. The researcher develops these two tests by adapting the previous studies' tests in Qari (2017) and Rima (2019). The items in the two tests are adapted to reflect different social variables in the speech situation of each item. According to Brown & Levison (1987), the use of politeness strategies varies depending on the social variables of the speech situation. The social variable has three factors (Social power, social distance, and size of imposition). Different social variables mean the difference among these three factors. In other words, three factors are not always the same (existence or absence) in every speech situation, resulting in eight social variables (See Table 1). For example, in social variable 1, the speaker has more social power than the hearer; there is no social distance between them, and the size of the imposition of the utterance is small. Each item in the survey describes the speech situation in which the respondents have to make their requests or deny other people's requests. The social variables of each item are as follows.

Table 1
Underlying Social Variables in the Items of MCDCT and DCT

No.	Social Variables		
	Power (-= The speaker does not have power over the hearer.) (+=The speaker has more power than the hearer)	Distance (+= no distance) (-=distance)	Ranking of Imposition (+= high, -= low)
1.	+	+	-
2.	+	-	+
3.	+	+	+
4.	+	-	-
5.	-	-	-
6.	-	+	+
7.	-	+	-
8.	-	-	+

Apart from the 16 items mentioned above of MDCT and DCT, the personal information of the respondents, such as the items of ages (six options: 16-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and above 61), gender (three options: male, female, and rather not to say) and the high educational level (nine options: Having the experience of attending schools, High school completion level, Undergraduate level, Graduate level, Postgraduate student level, Master degree students level, Master degree holder level, Ph.D. students level, and Ph.D. level) are also asked.

These three parts (two tests and personal information) were built in the form of a questionnaire and distributed through Microsoft Office forms and distributed to the respondents electronically via Facebook and Viber applications. The average time to complete the questionnaire is 34 minutes. The survey is in the English language. It is translated into Burmese (Myanmar) language to understand the questionnaire better, and the responses are gathered in the Burmese (Myanmar) language. The brief introduction of the study, researchers' brief information, and targeted participants are also mentioned in the questionnaire. The consent of the researcher, mentioning that the data from the respondents was only used for academic purposes, is also informed.

2. Method

The quantitative method from two data collection methods as multi method approach, namely multiple-choice discourse completion test and discourse completion test, is utilized. The politeness strategies underlined in the responses of the informants were examined through the politeness theories by Brown and Levison (1987) in the Excel software.

2.1 An Example of Analyzing the Response

The responses written by the informants in the questionnaire are dealt with quantitative means by using the content analysis method. The strategies underlined in them are examined with the researcher's justifications using the politeness theories mentioned in the literature review section. The texts relating to politeness strategies are coded. For example, in Table 2, it can be seen that the strategies are coded as PPS-13, etc. To be exact, P means "positive," "PS" means "politeness strategies, the number (e.g., 1, 13, etc.) is their occurrence in theory, and "N" means "negative." The following is an example response (1) to item (6) for analyzing data.

Item (6) in the Questionnaire
Myanmar (Burmese) Version
သင်သည် ဆရာ/ဆရာမ ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ သင်၏ စာသင်ခန်းအတွင်းမှ တပည့်တစ်ဦးအား ကျောက်သင်ပုန်းရှိစာအား ဖျက်ခိုင်းရာတွင် သင်သူ့အား မည်သို့ ပြောမည်နည်း။
English Version

You are a teacher. You want your student to wipe out the whiteboard. How do you tell him?
(1)

တစ်	ယောက်	လောက်	သင်ပုန်း	ဖျက်	ပေး	ပါ	လား	ကလေး
one -N	CLF	PARTICLE (minimizer)	blackboard -N	wipe out- V	PARTICLE	POLITENESS MARKER	could- Q	kid-N

Kid, could just one of you wipe out the blackboard?

In this response, NPS-4 (Minimize the size of imposition on hearer) can be traced by the word "လောက် (lout)", which is the particle in Myanmar (Burmese) language, and it is used as the minimizer here. The use of politeness marker can be seen from the word "ပါ (par)." This new strategy is not encoded here since the politeness marker role is not mentioned in the politeness theory by Brown and Levison (1987). The word "ကလေး (kid)" is coded as PPS-4 (Use in group identity markers). The respondent has to request this item (6), and here in this response, the informant requested by using questions. Thus, it is coded as NPS-2 (Questions/hedge). This extracted example response finds three strategies (NPS-4, PPS-4, and NPS-2). Apart from this, the use of politeness markers, which can be regarded as the politeness strategy used by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, is also investigated. However, it is not mentioned in the theory of Brown and Levison (1987). The strategy counts from both tests are combined within the same social variable items. For example, in the questionnaire, item (14) from the multiple-choice discourse completion test and item (6) from the discourse completion test under the same social variable (the speaker has more social power than the hearer, there is no social distance among them and the size of the imposition of the utterance is low). By enlisting the number of strategies used in this way in EXCEL software, the number of strategies use in terms of social variables, the overall number of strategies used, and the number of strategies used per politeness strategy are obtained in this data analysis.

3. The Informants

The research informants are 12 males and 37 females of Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. The questionnaire, including a personal information section, multiple-choice discourse completion test, and discourse completion test, was distributed to 300 people of different backgrounds and ages. Among them, only 49 people responded to the surveys. The rate of response is 16 percent. The questionnaire was distributed online (via Facebook and Viber applications) to the target audience. The educational background and ages of the informants are as in the following (See Table 2 & Table 3).

Table 2
Educational Background of the Informants

Level	Male	Female
High school completion level	1	3
Undergraduate level	4	18
Graduate level	3	-
Master degree students' level	2	15
Master degree holder level	2	1
Total	12	37

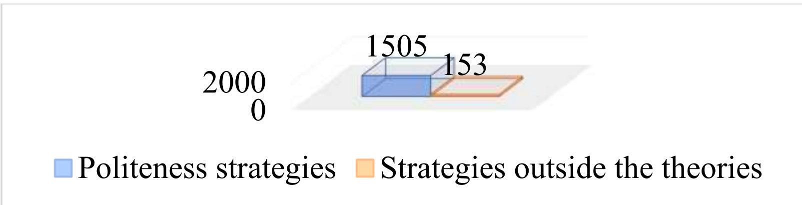
Table 3
Ages of the Informants

Age Interval	Male	Female
16-20	5	19
21-30	4	16
31-40	1	2
41-50	2	-
Total	12	37

Findings and Discussion

The present research paper worked on the politeness strategies in the requests used by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers in Myanmar. The responses given by the informants were examined via politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1986) to elicit the politeness strategies underlined in the responses given by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. The collected data was analyzed via Excel software and interpreted for the three research questions as in the following. To answer the research question (1), "Do Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers use strategies that are not mentioned in the politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987)?", all strategies used in the requests are analyzed whether they belong to the present (im) politeness strategies or not.

Figure 1
Comparison of the Use of Politeness Strategies Mentioned and not Mentioned in the Present Politeness Theory



The number of strategies not mentioned in the politeness strategies is to a certain extent in the strategy employment at 153 out of 1658 (See Figure 1). Those include the use of politeness markers (ဗျ)bya(, ပါ) par(, ရှင်) shint(, etc.) among the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers.

The new strategy used by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers is politeness markers. There is no previous description of using politeness markers as the politeness strategy. In Myanmar (Burmese) language, the absence of a politeness marker is assumed as impolite (Oo, 2023). In this study, the responses given by the informants are attached with politeness markers. Widarwati (2014) states that politeness markers mean "linguistic entities whose presence makes the utterance more polite."

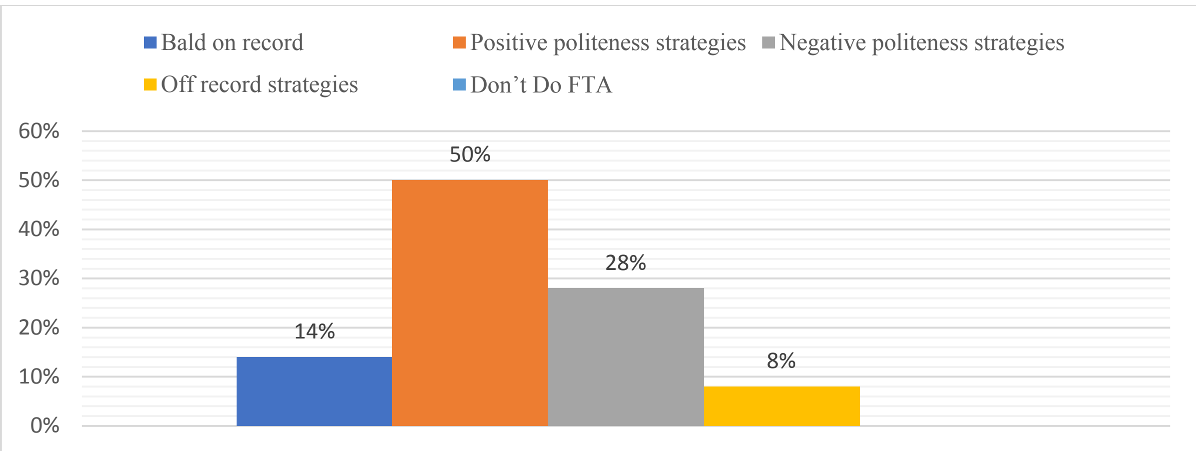
Moreover, Kadar and Haugh (2020) define politeness markers as "a cluster of expressions which are commonly associated with politeness." The use of politeness markers as the strategy for conducting politeness is not mentioned in Brown and Levison (1987), and the lack of them as impoliteness is also not described in Culpeper (2005). Oo (2023) presented that the lack of politeness markers means impoliteness in the community of Burmese and Rakhine in Myanmar. The types of politeness markers responded to by the informants are six such as "par)ပါ ((used by both gender), shint)ရှင့် ((feminine term), naw)နော် ((used by both gender), bya)ဗျ ((masculine term), khinbyar)ခင်ဗျာ ((masculine term), and please (loanword) (See Table 5). The politeness marker "par)ပါ(" is the most frequent one used in the daily lives of the Burmese community. It is also noted that the difference of occurrences in the politeness markers used by males and females is also linked with the current study population in which the female participants outnumbered male participants.

Table 4
New Strategies Used in the Requests

Overall (S4)	Occurrences
Politeness marker (par/ ပါ)	98
Politeness marker (Shint /ရှင့်)	33
Politeness marker (naw /နော်)	9
Politeness marker (bya /ဗျ)	8
Politeness marker (khinbyar /ခင်ဗျာ)	3
Politeness marker (please)	2

Regarding the research question (2) "Do the politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987) fit into the operation of politeness among Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers?", the proportion learns the use of politeness strategies occurrences per super strategies. For example, there are 47 strategies of politeness proposed by Brown and Levison (1987), but they can be regrouped into five super strategies. The most prevalent politeness strategies and the number of politeness strategies that are not employed, although they are in the theories, are investigated.

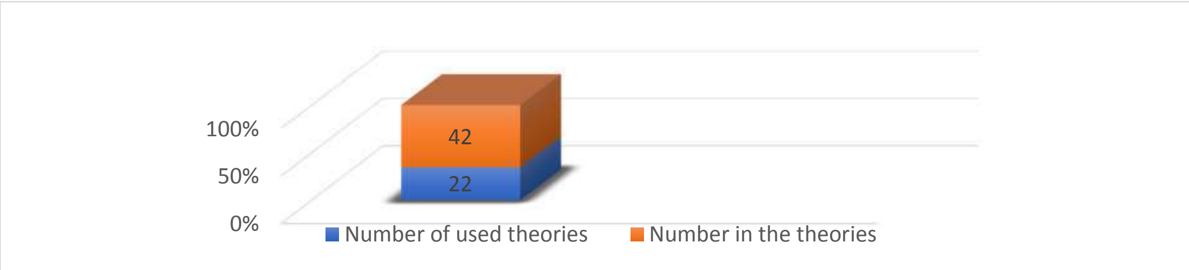
Figure 2
The Percentage of Politeness Strategies Used in the Requests



Half of the politeness strategies used by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers belong to the "positive politeness strategies" category. On the other hand, no employment of the "Don't do FTA" strategy is seen. The use of "negative politeness strategies" is doubled to that of "bald on record."

Figure 3

Comparison of the Number of Used Strategies and Strategies in the Politeness Theory



Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers do not use all the strategies mentioned in the politeness strategies. 22 out of 42 strategies are used in the politeness theory by Brown and Levison (1987).

Table 5

Politeness Strategies found in the Requests

No.	Strategies	Occurrences	Percentage
1.	PPS-13	301	20
2.	NPS-2	213	14
3.	PPS-4	210	14
4.	Bald on record	199	13
5.	NPS-4	194	13
6.	PPS-15	88	6
7.	ORS-1	75	5
8.	PPS -1	54	4
9.	ORS-3	34	2
10.	PPS-10	29	2
11.	PPS-9	28	2
12.	PPS-3	26	2
13.	NPS-1	13	1
14.	PPS-2	11	1
15.	ORS-2	8	1
16.	NPS-6	5	> 1
17.	ORS-5	5	> 1
18.	PPS-14	4	> 1
19.	PPS-12	3	> 1
20.	PPS-7	3	> 1
21.	NPS-9	1	> 1
22.	PPS-5	1	> 1

The occurrences of politeness strategies are significantly different in number, with the most prevalent one (PPS-13: Give (or ask for) reasons) found to be over 300 times more than the least prevalent one (PPS-5: Seek agreement).

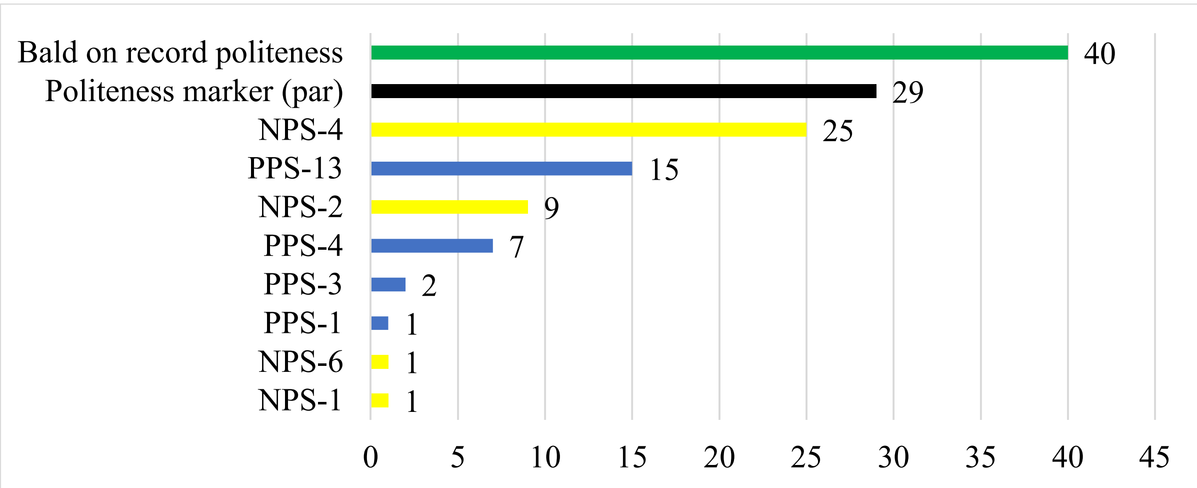
Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers heavily orient to positive politeness strategies (See Figure). This finding aligns with the nature of Burmese people, who are willing to be likened to or approved by others and are not willing to hurt other people's positive faces. On the other hand, the use of "bald on record" contributes to a certain extent in making requests for Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers (See Figure 2). The justifications for using this strategy will be discussed comprehensively in the discussion of research question 3. The uses of politeness strategies by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers are investigated under all social variables (power, social distance, and rank of imposition). However, not all the strategies proposed in the politeness theories by Brown and Levison (1987) are employed to achieve the speech act of request (See Figure 2 and Table 6).

On the other hand, the strategy of politeness marker should be added to the existing politeness theories. Some unemployed strategies can be excluded to adjust the current politeness theories for the Burmese community. This adjustment can be made by reinforcing the comprehensive and in-depth discussion from the point of Burmese culture. This finding does not mean neither theory matches the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. Upon these findings, it can be deduced that Brown and Levison's (1987) theory of politeness fits into the Burmese community, and the politeness of Burmese people can be expressed through this theory, unlike with the other Asian communities in the previous works of literature (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1989; Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994).

For research question (3), it is investigated that the uses of politeness strategies by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers are variable in terms of the different social variables (1) to (8). Those social variables are distinguished in terms of having the social power of the speaker over the hearer or not, having the social distance between the speaker and the hearer or not, and the high or low size of imposition.

Figure 4

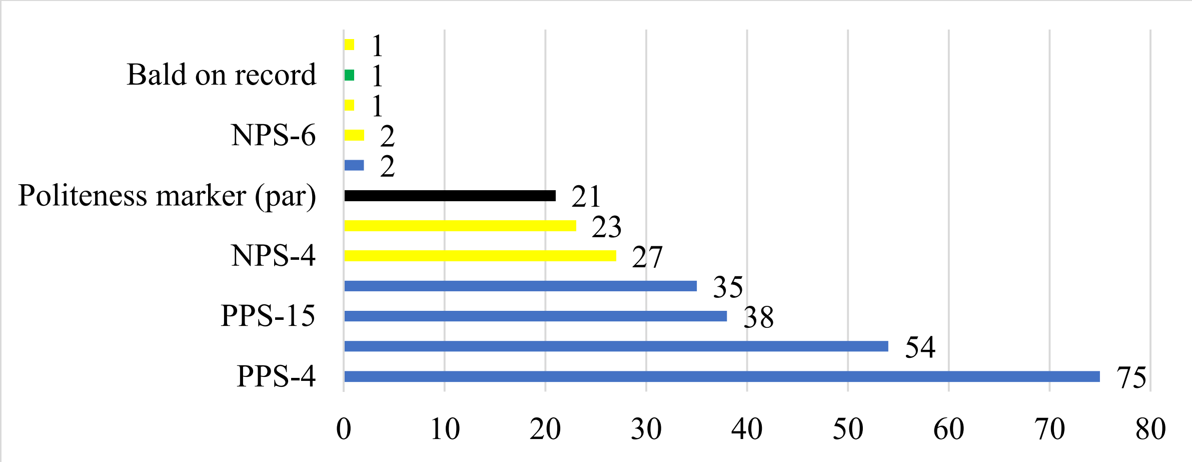
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 1



The context of social variable 1 (item 6 and item 14 in the questionnaire) is that the speaker has more social power than the hearer, there is no social distance between the speaker and the hearer, and the size of imposition is low. Using strategies in this social variable reflects the factors of social variables such as social power. “Bald on record politeness”, which is the least polite among the strategies, is the most common. Though positive politeness strategies (PPS-13, PPS-4, PPS-3, and PPS-1) can be seen, their breakdown is lower than the use of negative politeness strategies.

Figure 5

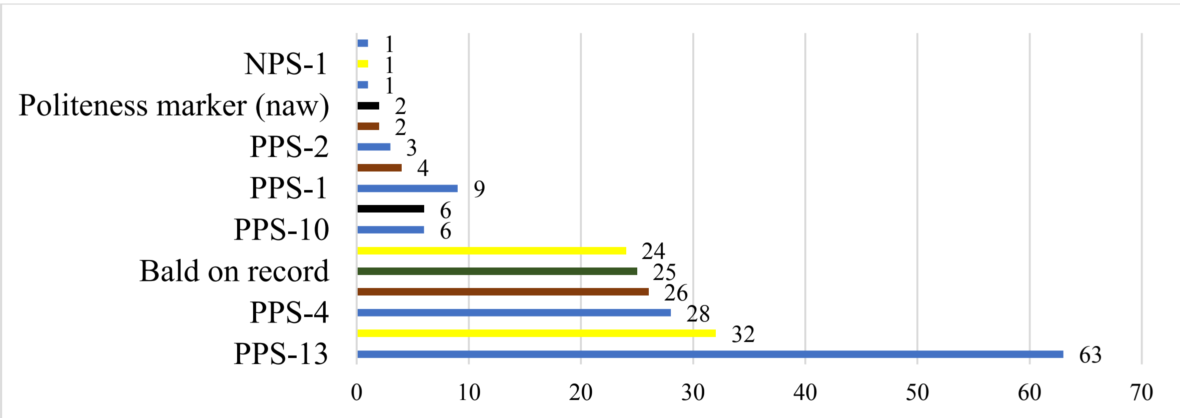
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 2



In social variable 2 (item 7 and item 17 in the questionnaire), the speaker has more social power than the hearer (You vs. the friend's son/daughter, and You vs. You as well as the new classmate), there is the social distance among the speakers, and the size of imposition is high. 202 out of 280 occurrences in this social variable are under the category of positive politeness strategies (PPS-4: Use in-group identity markers, PPS-13: Give (or ask for) reasons, PPS-15: Give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation), and PPS-1: Notice, attend to hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods)). Negative politeness strategies like NPS-2 (Question, hedge) and NPS-4 (Minimize the size of imposition on hearer) are also used to a certain amount. The politeness marker (par) occurrences are also no less than negative politeness strategies.

Figure 6

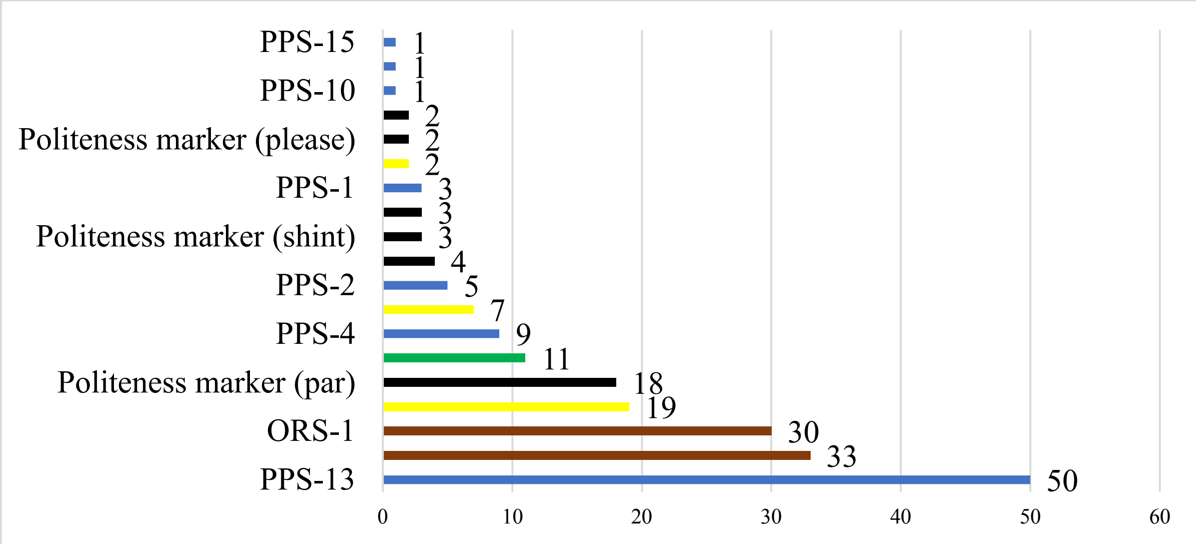
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 3



Social variable 3 (item 8 and item 16 in the questionnaire) is the context in which the speaker has more social power than the hearer, there is no social distance among them, and the size of imposition is high (Big brother/sister vs. Little brother/sister). Although positive politeness strategies (PPS-13, PPS-4, PPS-10, PPS-1, PPS-2, PPS-14, and PPS-15) have the lion's share in strategy uses with 111 out of 233, the distribution of the strategies is packed with different politeness strategies.

Figure 7

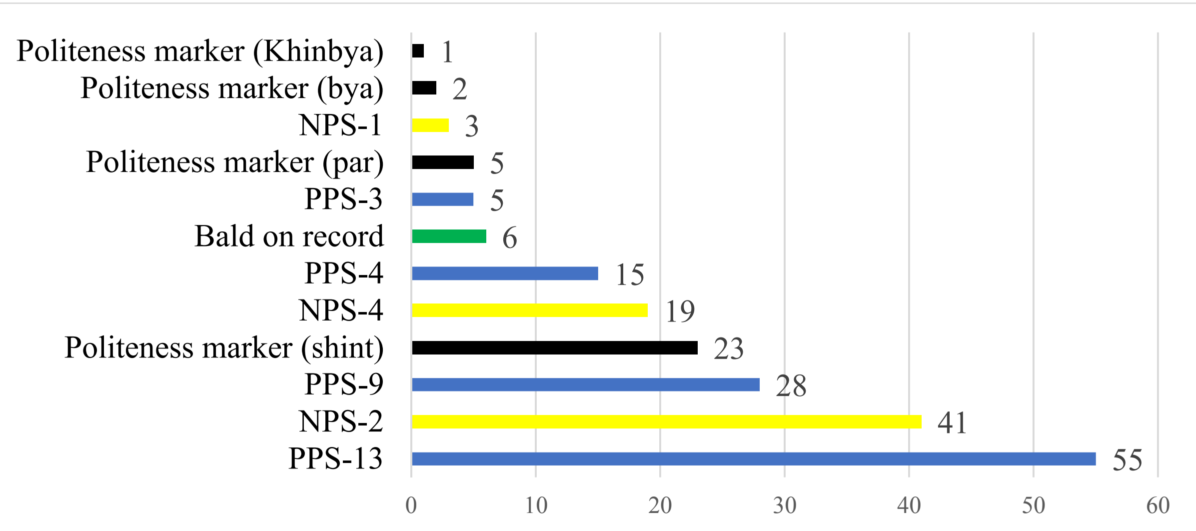
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 4



In social variable 4 (item 9 and item 15 in the questionnaire), the speaker has more social power than the hearer, there is a social distance among them, and the size of imposition is small (Customer Vs. Delivery service man and You Vs. New Neighbor). The most significant finding is that more off-record strategies are employed in this social variable, and different politeness markers (par, bya, shint, naw, please, and khinbyar) are used. This result is because of the social distance between the speaker and hearer, for example, communication with the new neighbor.

Figure 8

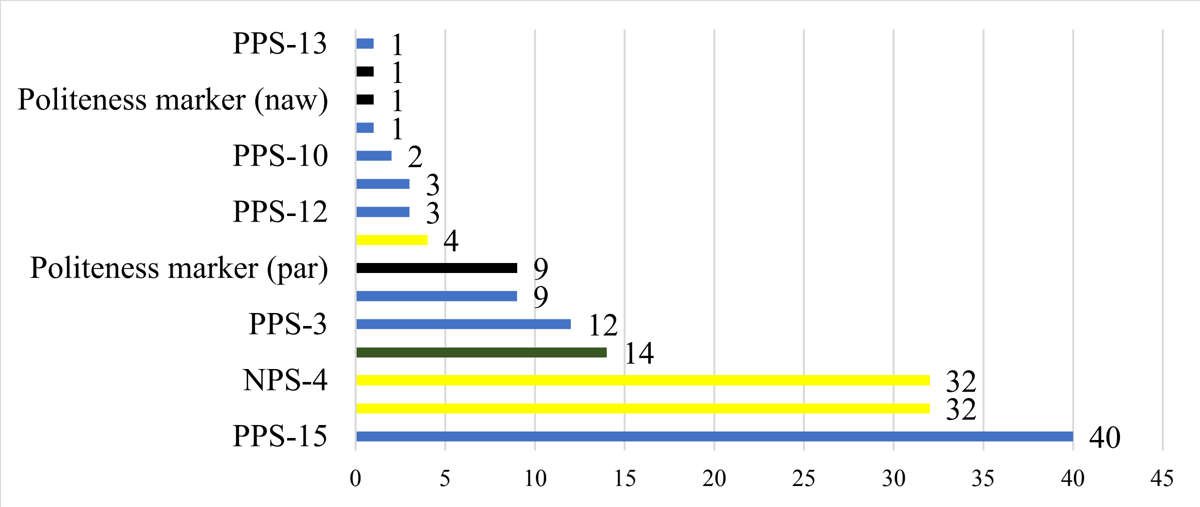
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 5



Social variable 5 (item 10 and item 18 in the questionnaire) is the situation (You vs. Stranger older man, and You vs. Stranger) in which the speaker does not have social power over the hearer, there is a social distance among them, and the size of imposition is small. Like the social variable 4, different politeness markers such as shint, par, bya, and khinbya can be seen here. PPS-13 is primarily seen in the employment of strategies. This result may be because the hearers are strangers, and the social role of the hearers needs to be higher. The most prevalent strategies are positive and negative politeness strategies.

Figure 9

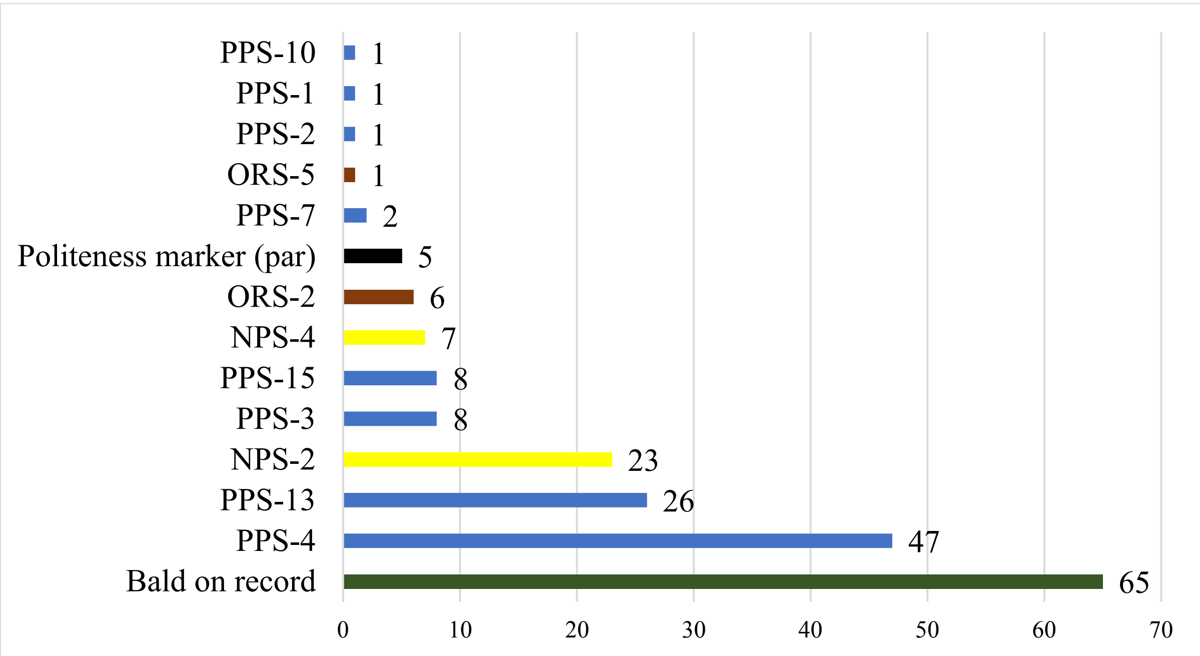
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 6



In social variable 6 (item 11 and item 20 in the questionnaire), there is no social power over the hearer by the speaker, no social distance among them, and the size of imposition is high (You Vs. your friend). PPS-15 (Give gifts to the hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)) is the most employed strategy since the size of imposition is high. Surprisingly, the use of positive politeness strategies here is the highest gain in overall strategy use.

Figure 10

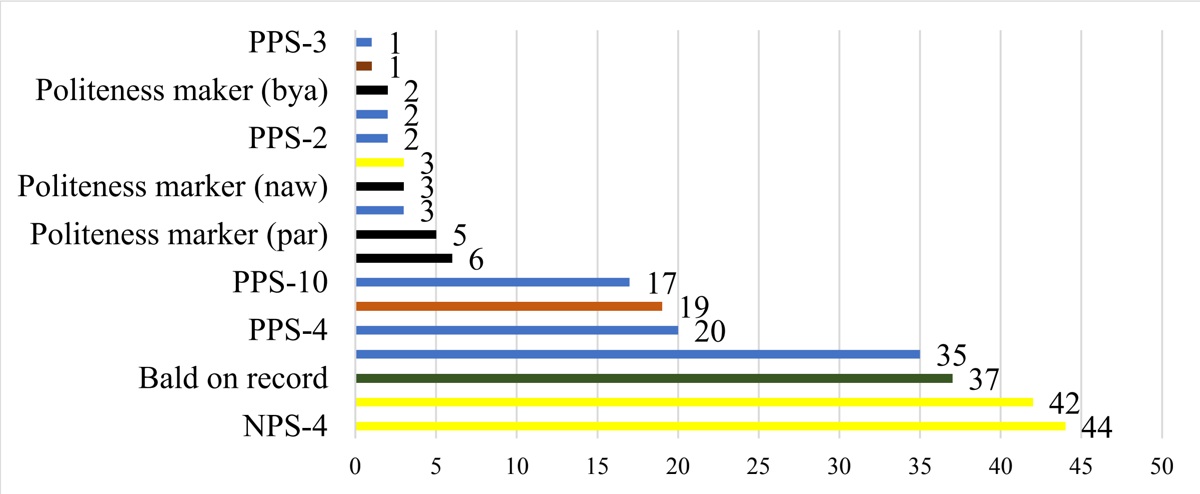
Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 7



Social variable 7 (item 12 and item 19 in the questionnaire) is when the speaker has no social power over the hearer and no social distance from the hearer, and the size of imposition is small. In such a social variable, it is normal that bald on record is the highest overall strategy employed to make the request.

Figure 11

Politeness Strategies Used in the Social Variable 8



The context of social variable 8 (item 13 and item 21 in the questionnaire) is that the speaker has no social power over the hearer, there is a social distance among them, and the size of imposition is high. This social variable is set in two situations: asking for and denying the request. Nearly one in five politeness strategy use is linked to negative politeness strategies. Due to the interlocutors' lack of social power and social distance, different politeness markers such as bya, naw, shint, and par are employed.

Thus, based on the findings above and the theories used in this study: politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987) and the three factors of social variables by Brown and Levison (1987), the three characteristics of the politeness strategy used in request by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers can be laid out for the practical implications of politeness in the interaction within Myanmar society.

1. Politeness markers are used less when the size of the imposition of the request is high, regardless of social distance and social power among the interlocutors.
2. Bald on record politeness strategy, along with politeness markers, is used in the requests where the speaker does not have social power over the hearer and the size of the imposition is small.
3. The less use of positive politeness strategies and the use of Bald on record politeness can be seen in the requests in which there is no social distance between the speaker and the hearer and the size of imposition is low.

Since the data in this study has many variables such as ages, educational backgrounds, gender, politeness strategies, and eight different social variables, the present study has distinguished limitations. Firstly, the findings and discussion were presented merely based on politeness strategies and eight social variables. More findings and discussion can be discussed from the point of other different variables such as ages, educational backgrounds, and gender of the respondents. Secondly, there is difficulty in collecting data to get respondents. The response rate is 16 percent. Thirdly, the data from this research is collected from only two means (DCT and MDCT) though it is a multi-method approach. Data can be triangulated to promote the validity of the result. Instead, interviews about how the requests are made by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers should be conducted.

Last but not least, the Gricean-based politeness theory, such as politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987), is vehemently opposed by discursive scholars such as Eelen (2001) and Mills (2003). The politeness research wave is now in its third wave, initiated by scholars like Kadar and Haugh (2013). Researching the first-wave theories is commonly assumed to need be updated. However, there is so much research on politeness these days which works on Brown and Levison (1987) since none of the discursive and third-wave scholars have not developed a comprehensive and meticulous politeness theory like that of Brown and Levison (1987) to study politeness production.

The findings of this research are significant enough to refute the criticisms mentioned above of using Brown and Levison's (1987) theory. The typical criticism of Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory is its preference for Western values, which do not align with Eastern cultures. However, this research shows that Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory is compatible with Burmese culture and can be used to explain Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers' operation of politeness to a great extent. Based on the findings, one thing to be added in their politeness strategies to embed Burmese people's use of politeness is considering politeness markers as another strategy. One more point here is that Brown and Levison (1987) proposed three factors (social power, social distance, and size of imposition) for the social variables of the speech act to describe the strategies used in line with them.

Nevertheless, for the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, the speaker's social role in the community (e.g., being a teacher) is more important than the social power over the hearer. This study mainly focuses on how politeness strategies are used in the different social variables. Three characteristics of the politeness strategy used in requesting by the Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers are proposed in this study. These characteristics are regarded as pragmatic competencies in the Burmese community.

Regarding the theoretical implications of politeness, Kadar (2017) pointed out the critical knowledge gap and the attempts to create models that capture practices of the production and evaluation of politeness. The present research explores the practices of producing politeness. It fulfills the literature of politeness from the point of a Southeast Asian community by supporting scholars and research works on politeness, creating the tentative politeness model covering both aspects of production and evaluation. Here, it is emphasized that the employment of Brown and Levison (1987) as the theoretical background for the third-wave politeness research is still workable and is not traced back to the first-wave research. In studying the production of politeness, this theory is the most comprehensive, mathematical, and meticulous and could provide solid and proven findings for producing politeness. However, it has some flaws criticized by second-wave politeness scholars.

Recommendations

The Tentative Framework of Politeness Production in the Requests by Myanmar (Burmese) Native Speakers

To formulate the tentative framework for politeness production in Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, the most prevalent findings on politeness strategies used in this study, and the conceptualizations of politeness of Myanmar (Burmese) speakers in making requests by Oo (2023) are used. According to Oo (2023), making requests, using politeness markers and minimizers, thinking about others, and choosing words depending on the hearers are polite. On the other hand, using an "imperative" form, an unpleasant tone, and making a mere request are impolite.

Although Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory can explain the politeness production of Burmese, three of their theoretical assumptions relating to politeness in the request are somewhat different from what was found in this study and previous literature about Burmese's politeness. Firstly, Brown and Levison (1987) classified "Bald on record" as part of the politeness theory. However, Oo (2023) pointed out that the use of the "imperative" form, which is "Bald on record", is impolite. In this study, Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers use the "Bald on record" strategy and politeness markers to mitigate the impoliteness sense in the requests.

Secondly, the face-threatening act of "request" is related to negative politeness (Brown & Levison 1987; Leech 2014). In this study, the request is mainly connected to positive politeness, damaging the addressee's positive face (Figures 2 & 3). The respondents mainly use positive politeness strategies to make and deny requests.

Lastly, Brown & Levison's (1987) mentioned that off-record strategies are for large requests, and on-record strategies are for small requests. This study refutes this point since the data describes on-record strategies that are used for both large and small requests. Off-record strategies are mostly found only for the request in the social variable 4; the size of imposition is small (Figure 7). In addition, the social variables (2,3,6, and 8) have a large size of imposition in the requests. The occurrences of off-record strategies are absent in the social variables 2 and 6, and a few in 3 and 8. This finding is against what Brown & Levison (1987) mentioned above. Based on these facts, the framework of politeness production in the request made by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers is developed as follows.

Table 7
Tentative Framework of Politeness Production in the Requests by Myanmar (Burmese) Native Speakers

1. Politeness marker
2. Positive politeness strategies by Brown and Levison (1987)
3. Full-fledged request (by using one or more of the following strategies) • PPS-13 (Give (or ask for) reasons) • NPS-2 (Question, hedge) • PPS-4 (Use in-group identity markers) • NPS-4 (Minimize the size of imposition on hearer)
4. Social Role and three factors of social variables by Brown and Levison (1987)

In terms of politeness production, the first point is about politeness markers. The politeness production analysis in the current study and Oo's (2023) study on politeness conceptualization with theoretical/folk-theoretical conceptualizations (second order) by Kadar & Haugh (2013) indicate that the use of politeness marker as the practice of politeness and its absences show impoliteness.

The second point is the use of positive politeness strategies. The findings show that half of the strategy used is related to this type of strategy in the request (Figure 2). Unlike the traditional assumptions of the connection between the request and the negative face, the positive face can be damaged in making and denying requests in the Burmese context. The third point is about full-fledged requests. Oo (2023) mentioned that "a mere request" is assumed as impoliteness for the Burmese people. In order to avoid "a mere request," using the most prevalent strategies found in this study can help the speakers be polite. The occurrence of five politeness strategies (PPS-13 (Give (or ask for) reasons), NPS-2 (Question, hedge), PPS-4 (Use in-group identity markers), NPS-4 (Minimize the size of imposition on hearer) and Bald on record is 74% (Table 6). Though "Bald on record" is one of the most common strategies used for politeness, this is regarded as "impoliteness" by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers (Oo, 2023).
In the Burmese context, politeness production also depends on "social role," the last point, apart from three social factors (social distance, social power, and size of imposition). Based on the social role, politeness can occur even when it is unnecessary.

Conclusion

The study examines how Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers in Myanmar operate politeness in their community through the speech act of the request and formulate the framework of politeness production in the request by Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers. Politeness production is studied using the politeness theory of Brown & Levison (1987). This research is in the trend of the third wave politeness trying to provide the data for the practices of the production of politeness to create the model. Relating to the politeness production of Myanmar (Burmese) native speakers, a native tribe in the Southeast Asian region, the main findings provide information about different politeness strategies used in terms of the social variables, a new proposed politeness strategy, and theoretical suggestions for the theories for Brown & Levison (1987). It is also affirmed that Brown & Levison's (1987) politeness theory is compatible with the Burmese culture, unlike the previous studies on some Asian communities. As for further studies, to reinforce the aim of the third-wave politeness research: creating the politeness model, the production of politeness should be studied in different cultures and different ethnic tribes as their roles are vital in the field of politeness to identify universal and cultural distinctive components of politeness.

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Judgements of EFL Students on English Stress Placement

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Abstract

The purposes of the study were to investigate the knowledge related to the stress in English at the word level and the sentence level gained by 2nd – 4th year Thai students majoring in English and to compare the scores of the knowledge test obtained by the students with different years of their study and different faculties of their affiliations. The randomly selected sample consisted of 190 participants out of 321 volunteers, the 2nd - 4th year English majors. The research instrument was a Test to Measure the Knowledge of English Stress (TMKES) at the word and sentence levels used to collect the data, and the statistics that were utilized to analyze the data included frequency, mean, standard deviations, and One-Way ANOVA. The findings of the study showed that students who took the test were able to score over half of the total on average. The students' competence in English stress was not significantly different due to their different years of study. However, the students who were affiliated with different faculties had the significantly different competence in English word stress excluding English sentence stress. Additionally, when the scores of both the word stress and the sentence stress were combined, there was a statistically significant difference owing to the distinguishable affiliations.

Keywords: affiliations, class levels, EFL students, English stress, knowledge

Introduction

Incorrect placement of words in a lexical context can hinder learners' word recognition abilities, and mispronunciation may introduce ambiguity, potentially leading to misinterpretation (Sadegna & Jarosz, 2022; Tolibovna, 2023). Existing research has highlighted the challenges faced by learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in accurately producing English word stress (Ahmed, 2019; Khamkhien, 2010;), with various factors influencing pronunciation, including stress placements

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(Cabrera, 2016; Khamkhien, 2010). To attain proficiency in English pronunciation, it is imperative for all English learners to retain knowledge of stress placements at both the word and sentence levels. Consequently, past studies have sought to explore how EFL students retain knowledge of English stress and how to enhance their understanding of stress placement, thereby impacting their pronunciation skills.

Several previous studies have yielded results pertaining to such advancements. For instance, Yanklang (2013) employed an e-learning program to enhance students' proficiency in English stress. The findings revealed that students demonstrated improvement in their pronunciation, as evidenced by the comparison of pretest and posttest scores.

Additionally, Khamkhien (2010) tasked students with acquiring proficiency in English word stress. The results indicated that mastering stress in words with five syllables posed a significant challenge for the students. Nevertheless, this approach proved instrumental in enhancing their overall pronunciation skills.

In addition, the knowledge that learners have gained involves their retention. Theppanya (2014) used mapping activities to teach reading to EFL students. The learners still memorize what they have learned even though the activities passed a few weeks ago. Ghaemi and Rafi (2018) utilized postures to support how to memorize what students have learned. The findings found that the students have memorized what they learned for a long time. Nevertheless, Ahmed (2019) studied about English stress pronounced by the students at a university in Saudi Arabia. The study showed that the students forgot the stress rules. Hence, retention is crucial to store knowledge.

How can the retention of learning and skills be known? According to previous studies, the retention can be known through tests. For instance, Chatupot & Kasuwan (2013) tested the retention of students’ knowledge about vocabulary and speaking with tests. Similarly, Saenglor (2017) tested the retention of students’ knowledge about adjective words.

However, there is a research gap, as no previous study has explored how well students retain English stress across different English programs in two faculties and one college, specifically at Uttaradit Rajabhat University. Based on their learning plans, the sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English already took a phonetics course when they were freshmen. Furthermore, they had different class levels and faculties, but they took a similar course with English stress. Uttaradit Rajabhat University offers three English programs affiliated with two faculties and one college, namely, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Education, and the International College within the university. Each program includes a course in English Phonetics, which encompasses the study of English stress. This course delves into the aspects of human sound production and transcription, as highlighted by scholars such as Rogers (2000) and Katz (2013). In essence, the course is focused on pronunciation. Thus, this study seeks to assess the proficiency of EFL undergraduates—sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English at Uttaradit Rajabhat University. The objective is to examine the extent of their competence in English stress and determine whether variations exist in their proficiency based on different class levels and affiliations with diverse faculties.

Literature Review

1. Notions and Principles of English Stress

The notions and principles of English stress in this study refer to the definitions, degrees of English stress, and stress types.

1.1 Definitions

The English stress is defined by authors. The stress on a syllable of a word is called word stress (Carr, 2013; KatZ, 2013). A long, loud, and high sound is produced for the stress on a word position on which a speaker focuses is called word stress (Carley, Collins, & Mees, 2019). However, Roger (2000) stated that listeners are encouraged to be interested in words or impressed with a word or words in a sentence through the stressed, unstressed, long, and high sounds to express the meanings that the speakers determined is called sentence stress. Therefore, based on the previously mentioned definitions, English stress can be divided into two categories: word stress, and sentence stress.

1.2 Degrees of English Stress

In the stress on either words or sentences, Cruttenden (1986) and Roger (2000) stated that English stress contains four categories of its degrees. The first one is primary stress. A syllable or a word that is pronounced with the greatest force in other syllables in the same word or other words in the same sentence is called primary stress. The stress point is marked with a symbol (ˈ) inserted in front of the syllable that is stressed. The second one is secondary stress. The secondary stress is pronounced with the force that is less than is the primary stress. In addition, it can be marked with this symbol (ˌ) inserted in front of the syllable that is stressed. The third one is tertiary stress. This stress is pronounced with the force that is less than is the secondary stress. In addition, it is used for the words with the symbol (‸). The last one is an unstressed syllable. This stress is the weakest sound in the categories of the stress.

1.3 Stress Types

There are two types of English stress: word stress and sentence stress (Carley, Collins, & Mees, (2019).

1) Word Stress
In word stress, a syllable or syllables of a word is stressed. According to Carley, Collins, & Mees, (2019); Carr, (2013); Roach, (2009), word stress rules can be summarized as follows.

In terms of the word stress, the syllables of words are stressed based on the number of word syllables. Accordance with the English stress rules (Orion, 2012), if a word contains two syllables, the second syllable is stressed. If a word contains three syllables, any syllable can be stressed. If a word comes with four syllables, the first, the second, or the third syllable is stressed. Furthermore, if a word contains five syllables, the third syllable is stressed, and if a word comes with six syllables, the fourth syllable is stressed.

In addition, the word stress is pronounced based on parts of speech and affixes. In this regard, the last syllable of a verb or an adjective can be stressed. If a word is utilized as a noun with two syllables, its syllable with a long vowel is stressed (Cruttenden, 1986). The affixes: prefixes and suffixes determine the syllable of a word for the stress. Unlike the suffixes, the prefixes do not affect the word stress. However, suffixes involve the word stress. Based on the suffixes, the syllable that is followed by one of these suffixes: -ee, -eer, -ese, -ette, -esque is stressed. For instance, the word, refugee /refjuˈdʒiː/ that is followed the suffix (-ee) must be stressed on the second syllable of the word as a primary stress. Nevertheless, the suffixes that do not influence any position of the stress include -able, -age, -al, -en, -ful,-ing, -like, -less, -ly, -ment, -ness, -ous, -fy, -wise, -y, and -ish. For example, the word, comfort /ˈkʌmfət/ contains two syllables and is stressed on the first syllable. When the suffix (-able) is added to the word, comfort, it becomes comfortable /ˈkʌmfətəbəl/, and the stress is still on the first syllable. In addition to the suffixes, the syllable that is followed by the suffixes: -eous, -graphy, -ial, -ic, -ion, -ious, -ty, and -ive is stressed. To illustrate, the word, perfect perfect /ˈpɜːfekt/, which is followed by the suffix, -ion, becomes a new form, perfection /pəˈfekʃən/.

Furthermore, when a noun combines with another noun, the first word is stressed as a primary stress such as teacup /ˈtiːkʌp/, but when an adjective combines with the word with an -ed suffix, a secondary stress is used for the first stress and a primary stress is used for the second stress such as bad-tempered /ˌbædˈtempəd/. Additionally, if a number and a noun are combined, how to stress is the same as the adjective and -ed suffix combination as in the word, second-class /ˌsekənd ˈklɑːs/. Besides, the same word with the same spelling can be stressed as a speaker determines to be a noun or a verb. For instance, a word, conduct, can be stressed as a noun as in conduct /ˈkɒndʌkt/, whereas it can be stressed as a verb as in conduct /kənˈdʌkt/.

In essence, word stress involves emphasizing a particular syllable within a word. Both speakers and pronunciation ters need to follow specific stress rules, which encompass considerations such as syllables within words, parts of speech, affixes, compound nouns, and numbers.

2) Sentence Stress

The stress on a word or words in a sentence through the loud, high, or long force of sounds is called sentence stress. Words in a sentence that are stressed are called content words, but words in a sentence that are not stressed are called function words. However, the function words can be stressed in the situations that the speaker commands to use English language as he or she needs. The content words include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The function words comprise pronouns, axillary verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and question words. Additionally, sentence stress can be divided into four types: content word stress, contrastive stress, new information stress, and emphatic stress (Carley, Collins, & Mees, 2019; Kansakar, 1998; Rogers, 2013).

In the content word stress, although a sentence contains several words, a speaker can stress on only content words to express his or her main idea. For example, a sentence, *I will sell my car because I want to go to England*, has five content words: sell, car, want, go, and England. When the speaker stresses on the words, the sentence stress becomes I will **sell** my **car** because I **want** to **go** to **England**. For this result, regardless of the function words, the main idea is to sell the car to go to England.

In contrastive stress, a speaker compares a piece of content with another piece of content by stressing on the word the meaning of which is different from another word. To illustrate, the sentence, *I think I want that shirt, but I don't want this one* has two words: **that** and **this** with opposite meanings. Thus, the speaker stressed the two words. Besides, whenever a speaker stresses on any word in a sentence as he or she wants, the meaning will be different from the previous meaning. For example, the sentence, *I* ***went*** *to China last year*., has the word, **went**, which was stressed because the speaker focused on going. Nevertheless, if the speaker stresses on the word, **China**, he or she focuses on a place. Therefore, the two sentences have different meanings due to the contrastive stress.

In the new information stress, this stress is mostly found in questioning and answering. The answer shows new information. For instance, when a question, *who will give me some money?* is raised, the person's name that is the answer is regarded as the new information.

In emphatic stress, this stress focuses on emotional expressions. It depends on the speaker's force of voice. The speaker's degree of his or her voice can increase emotional meanings. The word in a sentence that is emotionally emphasized will showcase an intensive meaning. For example, *this is the* ***difficult*** *homework.* If the word, difficult, is normally stressed, **hard** homework is expressed. However, if the word is emotionally stressed through a strong force of the voice, **so hard** homework is meant.

From the above information, even though the words that are stressed have the same spelling, they are stressed in a different force of the voice.

In a nutshell, sentence stress refers to emphasizing specific words within a sentence to convey the intended meanings as desired by the speaker. This concept can be categorized into four distinct types: content stress, contrastive stress, new information stress, and emphatic stress.

2. Factors Influencing English Stress

In the factors affecting English stress, previous studies investigated the factors that were likely to affect learners' English pronunciation. They included sex, affiliation, and class levels. The results of the previous studies showed that the EFL students' sex (or gender) influenced English pronunciation test scores but affiliation and class levels (Cabrera, 2016; Khamkhien, 2010). However, Panthong and Tumtavitikul (2015) stated that the EFL students' sex and class levels did not affect their English pronunciation, especially word stress. Generally, as the previous studies mentioned above, the affiliation and class levels may or may not influence English pronunciation performed by non-English native speakers or English as a Foreign Language students (EFL).

Research Objectives

This study had three objectives as follows:

1. To investigate the knowledge of English word stress and English sentence stress gained by the EFL undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English,
2. To compare the test scores of English word stress and the English sentence stress obtained by the EFL undergraduates who have different class levels, and
3. To compare the test scores of English word stress and the English sentence stress gained by the EFL undergraduates who have different affiliations/faculties.

Questions of the Study

1. To what extent is the knowledge of English stress gained by the EFL undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English?

2. Do the EFL undergraduates' class levels affect the test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress obtained by the undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English?

3. Do the EFL undergraduates' affiliations affect the test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress obtained by the undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English?

Hypotheses of the Study

1. The test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress earned by the EFL undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English do not have statistically significant differences due to their class levels.

2. The test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress obtained by the EFL undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English do not have statistically significant differences due to their affiliations.

Limitation of the Study

In this study, the limitation comprised the population, sample, variables, and content. The population was drawn from the 321 students at Uttaradit Rajabhat University. They were in different class levels and affiliated with different faculties. Additionally, the students were between the second- and fourth-year undergraduates majoring in English having the status of regular students in the first semester of 2021 and affiliating with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSO), Faculty of Education (ED), and International College (IC). Furthermore, they had already enrolled in the course related to English phonetics when they were freshmen.

The sample for this study was selected randomly from the population using Taro Yamane's calculation formula (Yamane, 1973). Employing a combination of stratified sampling and simple random sampling methods, the study included a total of 190 participants as determined by the formula. Variables to be studied included the participants' competence in English stress and their test scores. Competence was an independent variable. The test scores were regarded as dependent variables.

The contents of the study included English stress at the word and sentence levels (word stress and sentence stress). In terms of the word stress, syllables, parts of speech, affixes, and numbers were used to be the content of the word stress. In terms of the sentence stress, four types of sentence stress: content word stress, contrastive stress, new information stress, and emphatic stress were employed to be the content of the sentence stress.

Methodology

The methods in this study included the research design, population and sample, instrument and procedures, data collection, and data analysis.

1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate differences in test scores among students across various years of study and faculties.

2. Population and Sample

In this study, the 321 English major undergraduates who were sophomores, juniors, and seniors in the first semester of the academic year, 2021 and affiliated with different faculties: Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences, Faculty of Education, and International College at Uttaradit Rajabhat University were selected as the research population because they had taken the course related to phonetics when they were freshmen. Thus, their knowledge or competence in the stress on the syllables of a word or the words in a sentence based on the different affiliations and class levels was determined as the independent variable of the study. Additionally, the test scores were determined as dependent variables.

To draw the sample from the population, the numbers of the sample were calculated with a formula by Yamane (1973) through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The amount of the sample was 190 comprising 28 participants with 8 sophomores, 6 juniors, and 14 seniors from International College, 56 participants with 18 sophomores, 17 juniors, and 21seniors from Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and 106 participants with 25 sophomores, 40 juniors, and 31 seniors from Faculty of Education.

3. Instrument and Procedures

The instrument employed to collect the data was A Test to Measure the Knowledge of English Stress (TMKES) at the word and sentence levels. It contained three parts: respondent’s general information, word stress, and sentence stress. The test was used for this study because it aimed at testing the participants’ knowledge of English stress and comparing their test scores. In addition, the instrument was created through steps. First, the researcher collected text and previous studies related to English stress and designed the test based on the purposes of the study. To do so, the pieces of the content related to the stress were categorized into two sorts: English stress at the word level that consisted of the words stressed based on syllables, affixes, parts of speech, and numbers and English stress at the sentence level that comprised four types of the sentence stress: content word stress, contrastive stress, new information stress, and emphatic stress. The 40 created items for the word stress and 22 items for the sentence stress were placed in the test with multiple choices. Next, three experts assessed the test using the *Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC)* tool (Rovinelli, 1976). Based on the experts' recommendations, test items were revised and eliminated to align with IOC values ranging from 0.5 to 1.0. To pilot the test, the test was taken by 30 volunteers, English major students who were affiliated with another university. The used test was calculated to find the difficulty and easiness of the test items (*p*:20-.80) and the discrimination of the items (*r*: .20-1.00) (Kraiwan, 2002). In this regard, the test item that gained lower or higher scores as determined was removed from the test. The revised test finally contained 40 items out of 62 items. Next, the test underwent a pilot phase, administered to 100 volunteer EFL students from a different university. The employed test was evaluated for reliability using the Kuder-Richardson KR-20 method (Kuder & Richardson, 1937). The findings revealed a reliability value of .89 for the test items, establishing the research instrument's validity and reliability. Subsequently, the test was employed for data collection.

4. Data Collection

In this study, the data were collected via the Online Google Form because coronaviruses (covid-19 disease) spread across Thailand. The researcher placed the test items with a consent form in the Form and sent letters to the deans of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Education, and International College to have the permission to collect the data from the selected sample. After the permission, the researcher made an appointment with the participants to send the test link to them via Line Application. Of 190 participants, 187 participants responded to the test. Thus, the data from the 187 participants were prepared for the analysis.

5. Data Analysis

In data analysis, the data were analyzed based on the research objectives, questions, and hypotheses. A computer program was used to analyze the data. The data were divided into three sections: sample’s general information, test scores, and score comparison. For the first section, the data were analyzed with frequency, percent, mean, and standard deviation. For the second section, percent, mean, and standard deviation were employed to analyze the data. For the last section, Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA) was used to analyze the data. Hence, statistics that were used to analyze the data included the frequency, percent, mean, standard deviation, and One-way ANOVA to obtain the research results.

Results

The findings obtained from the data analysis were related to the test respondents’ information, English word stress, English sentence stress, and the test score classification on class levels and affiliations. In addition, the results responded to the research questions and hypotheses.

The participants from two faculties and one college participated in taking the test. However, three participants missed the test (See Table 1).

Table 1

Numbers of the Participants by Affiliations

Affiliations	Participants' Numbers	Numbers of Test Respondents	Percent
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	56	56	29.5
Faculty of Education	106	106	55.8
International College	28	25	13.2
Total	190	187	98.4
The participants who did not take the test		3	1.6
Total		190	100

Table 1 showed that the 187 respondents (98.4%) out of the 190 participants took the test. Three participants (1.6%) who were affiliated with International College missed the test. In addition, the participants who were affiliated with Faculty of Education were at 55.8 percent, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at 29.5 percent, and International College at 13.2 percent, respectively.

At the class levels, three seniors missed the test. Nevertheless, the numbers of the seniors were equal to the numbers of the junior as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Numbers of the Participants by Class Levels

Class levels	Participants' Numbers	Numbers of Test Respondents	Percent
Sophomore	61	61	32.1
Junior	63	63	33.2
Senior	66	63	33.2
Total	190	187	98.4
The participants who did not take the test		3	1.6
Total		190	100

Besides, Table 2 showed that the numbers of the sophomores (32.1%) were less than were the numbers of juniors and seniors (33.2%). The respondents' proportion was not more different. The results shown in table 3 answered the first research question. To what extent is the knowledge of English stress gained by the EFL undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English?

Table 3

The Scores of English Stress Obtained by EFL Undergraduates

Stress Levels	Numbers of the Test Items	Maximum Scores	Minimum Scores	*M*	*SD*
Word stress	22	22	4	13.81	0.31
Sentence stress	18	15	2	7.12	1.21
Total	40	37	6	20.93	0.52

Table 3 showed that the maximum scores which the test respondents totally obtained were at 37 out of 40 items, while the minimum scores were at six out of 40 items. Furthermore, the mean score of the word stress and sentence stress was totally combined at *M*=20.93 with *SD*=0.52. Separately, based on the word stress, the test respondents' maximum scores were at 22 out of 22 items, while the minimum scores were at four out of 22 items. The mean score of the word stress was 13.81 (*SD*=0.31). In terms of the sentence stress, the test respondents' maximum scores were at 15 out of 18 items, while the minimum scores were at two out of 18 items. The mean score of the sentence stress was 7.12 (*SD*=1.21).

Tables 4 and 5 showed the results answering the second research question. Do the EFL undergraduates' class levels affect their test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress?

Table 4

The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Test Scores Classified by Class Levels

Stress Levels	Class Levels	Numbers	*M*	*SD*
Word	Sophomore	61	13.50	4.01
	Junior	63	14.71	4.46
	Senior	63	13.21	4.40
	Total	187	13.81	4.32
Sentence	Sophomore	61	7.52	2.94
	Junior	63	7.00	3.08
	Senior	63	6.87	2.96
	Total	187	7.12	3.00
Word and Sentence	Sophomore	61	21.08	5.81
	Junior	63	21.71	5.69
	Senior	63	21.05	5.91
	Total	187	21.05	5.80

Table 4 indicated that at the word stress level the juniors gained the highest scores at *M*=14.71, *SD*=4.46; sophomores at *M*=13.50, *SD*=4.01; and seniors at *M*=13.21, *SD*=4.40, respectively. At the sentence level, the sophomores obtained the highest scores at *M*=7.52, *SD*=2.94; the juniors at *M*=7.00, *SD*=3.08; and the seniors at *M*=6.87, *SD*=2.96, respectively. Additionally, when the scores of the word stress combined with the scores of the sentence stress, the juniors obtained the highest scores at *M*=21.71, *SD*=5.69; the sophomores at *M*=21.08, *SD*=5.81; the seniors at *M*=21.05, *SD*=5.91.

The results shown in Table 5 proved the first hypothesis. The test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress obtained by the EFL undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors do not have statistically significant differences due to their class levels (See Table 5).

Table 5

Class Level Score Contrast

Stress Levels	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.*
Word	80.029	2	40.014	2.161	0.118
Sentence	14.723	2	7.361	0.820	0.442
Word and sentence	57.415	2	28.707	0.53	0.428

$*p \leq .05$

Table 5 showed that test respondents with varying class levels did not exhibit distinct test scores at each stress level. This is evidenced by the p-values for word stress, sentence stress, and their combination, all of which exceeded .05 ($p > .05$). Therefore, the results proved the first hypothesis that the test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress obtained by the EFL undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors did not have any statistically significant difference owing to their class levels.

Tables 6, 7, and 8 showed the results answering the third research question. Do the EFL undergraduates' affiliations affect their test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress? In addition, the results also proved the second hypothesis. The test scores of English word stress and English sentence stress obtained by the EFL undergraduates: sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English do not have statistically significant differences due to their affiliations.

Table 6

The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Test Scores Classified by the Students' Affiliations

Stress Levels	Affiliations	Numbers	*M*	*SD*
Word	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	56	15.68	5.33
	Faculty of Education	105	13.07	3.74
	International College	25	12.80	2.69
	Total	187	13.81	4.33

Table 6 (Continued)

Stress Levels	Affiliations	Numbers	*M*	*SD*
Sentence	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	56	7.88	3.20
	Faculty of Education	105	6.77	2.82
	International College	25	6.96	3.02
	Total	187	7.13	2.99
Word and sentence	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	56	23.60	6.88
	Faculty of Education	105	20.00	4.92
	International College	25	19.76	4.95
	Total	187	21.05	5.80

Table 6 showed that for the word stress the students who were affiliated with Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences obtained the score (*M*=15.68, *SD*=5.33), with Faculty of Education gained the score (*M*=13.07, *SD*=3.74), and with International College had the score (*M*=12.80, *SD*=2.69), respectively. For the sentence stress, the students who were affiliated with Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences obtained the score (*M*=7.88, *SD*=3.20), with International College gained the score (*M*=6.96, *SD*=3.02), and with Faculty of Education had the score (*M*=6.77, *SD*=2.82). For the word and sentence stress combination, the students from Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences obtained the score (*M*=23.60, *SD*=6.88), from Faculty of Education (*M*=20.00, *SD*=4.92), and from International College (*M*=19.76, *SD*=4.95), respectively.

Additionally, One-way ANOVA was used to analyze the data to find whether the students who were affiliated with different faculties gained different scores or not (See Table 7).

Table 7

Affiliation Score Contrast

Stress levels	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Word	279.697	2	139.849	8.024	0.000*
Sentence	45.269	2	22.634	2.568	0.079
Word and Sentence	522.558	2	261.279	8.389	0.000*

$^*p \leq .05$

Table 7 indicated that the students' different affiliations affected their test scores of the word stress. Their scores were at the statistically significant difference in the word stress with the f-test=8.024
(p < .05). However, the students' different affiliations did not affect their test scores of the sentence stress with the f-test=2.568 (p > .05). Nevertheless, when the scores of the word and sentence stress were combined, they were at the statistically significant difference with the f-test= 8.389 (p < .05). To compare the scores in pairs, Post Hoc (LSD) was employed (See Table 8).

Table 8

The Test Score Comparison Classified by Affiliations Calculated through Post Hoc Test (LSD)

Dependent Variable	(I) Faculties	(J) Faculties	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Word	HUSO*	ED*	2.61253*	0.68966	0.000*
		IC*	2.87857*	1.00416	0.005*
	ED*	IC	0.26604	0.92819	0.775
Sentence	HUSO*	ED*	1.10142*	0.49043	0.026*
		IC	0.91500	0.71408	0.202
	ED*	IC	-0.18642	0.66006	0.778
Word and sentence	HUSO*	ED*	3.59771*	0.92196	0.000*
		IC*	3.84714*	1.34240	0.005*
	ED*	IC	0.24943	1.24084	0.841

$p \leq .05$

Table 8 showed statistically significant differences of the test scores based on the affiliations in pairs. In terms of the statistically significant differences in the test scores, at the word stress level, HUSO students' scores were different from ED and IC students' scores (p < .05). However, ED students' scores were not significantly different from IC students' scores with the (p > .05). At the sentence stress level, HUSO students' scores were different from ED students' scores (p < .05). However, HUSO students' scores were not different from IC students' scores (p > .05). In addition, ED students' scores were not different from IC students' scores (p > .05). When both scores were combined, the findings were found that HUSO students' scores were different from ED and IC students' scores (p < .05). Nevertheless, ED students' scores were not different from IC students' scores (p > .05).

Discussion

The findings from the present study address the research questions and align with previous studies. The subsequent discussion is organized according to the research questions and is framed by the outcomes of this study.

Research question 1 explores the proficiency of EFL undergraduates—sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English—in their knowledge of English stress. The findings indicate that students were able to achieve scores exceeding half of the overall scores at the two stress levels. Nevertheless, at the sentence level, students did not demonstrate strong performance, evidenced by their lowest scores. It is conceivable that the quantity of words may influence stress placement judgments, suggesting a potential correlation with students having lower proficiency in pronunciation skills. Accordingly, this suggests that the respective faculties have implemented high-quality curricula. The results have practical implications for the improvement of English program curricula through informed revisions.

Research question 2 inquiries about the potential impact of class levels on the test scores of EFL undergraduates in English word stress and English sentence stress. The results revealed that although the students had different class levels, they did not have any significantly different competence or knowledge of the English stress. This was in concord with Panthong and Tumtavitikul (2015), who studied whether class levels affect English stress. The findings found that the class levels did not influence the English stress.

Research question 3 investigates whether the affiliations of EFL undergraduates have an influence on their test scores in English word stress and English sentence stress. The findings revealed significant differences in the competence or knowledge of English stress among students affiliated with different faculties. This contrasts with the findings of Khamkhien (2010), who investigated whether test takers' affiliations had an impact on test scores and found that affiliations did not influence the test scores.

The findings of this study carry practical implications for the improvement of teaching and learning English stress. Specifically, the ability to administer a common test across different class levels can enhance the overall effectiveness of English language education. For English programs, these results can inform curriculum revisions by guiding decisions on additions or removals from existing curricula. Additionally, universities can benefit by recognizing the potential variations in knowledge acquisition among students with different affiliations, even when enrolled in similar courses. On a broader scale, these insights are valuable for national-level policymaking, as the government can use this study to formulate policies that enhance the learning of English as a foreign language. In terms of students retaining the knowledge acquired about English stress rules from their Phonetics class, the outcomes align with Ahmed's (2019) study, suggesting that students tend to forget this knowledge, as evidenced by their overall scores reaching a moderate level and particularly low scores on words with five syllables. Hence, it is advisable for educators to develop activities and tasks, along with utilizing effective computer-assisted language learning (Topal, 2022) or online resources such as YouGlish at www.youglish.com (Jarosz & Sadegna, 2022), to improve retention (Ghaemi & Rafi, 2018; Theppanya, 2014). The emphasis should be on retaining knowledge of stress because incorrect pronunciation by a speaker can lead to misinterpretation of messages. In addition, it is crucial to instruct EFL students at all levels, including children, in the accurate and standard pronunciation of English to avoid improper or unclear articulation (Tolibovna, 2023).

Finally, the observed statistically significant difference in scores between HUSO students and those from ED and IC students ($p < .05$) suggests that affiliation plays a role in the English stress judgment of EFL learners with a Thai background. This finding aligns with the results of Khamkhien (2010) and Cabrera (2016) but contradicts the findings of Panthong and Tumtavitikul (2015). Conversely, the absence of statistically significant differences between the scores of ED students and IC students ($p > .05$) implies that affiliation does not impact stress judgments for these students. Therefore, it is recommended that additional factors such as gender, English proficiency, and motivation be explored in future investigations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was conducted to address a gap in previous research, as no similar study had been undertaken before. Moreover, with established reliability and validity, the study successfully met its objectives by providing insights into how EFL undergraduates—sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in English—have acquired knowledge of English stress over an extended period. The study also examined whether differences in students' knowledge or competence in English stress were associated with class levels and affiliations. The results indicate that the proficiency or understanding of English stress among students in all groups is of a moderate level. Notably, class levels do not seem to impact the retention of knowledge about English stress, while affiliations do play a role, although not consistently across all groups. Hence, the impact of affiliations requires further investigation.

Recommendations

The recommendations arising from this study suggest that future research should explore the potential influence of learners' gender on English stress. Additionally, there is a need for further investigation into the retention of learners' knowledge. Lastly, curriculum designers can apply the insights gained from this study to enhance pedagogical approaches, and researchers conducting studies in a similar context can consider adapting the TMKES instrument employed in this study for their own research endeavors. Additionally, exploring the development of computer-based learning tools or leveraging existing online resources for pronunciation instruction, both within and outside regular classes, should be considered.

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Effective English Speaking and Writing Strategies of Chinese Working Staff

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to 1) explore the effective English speaking and writing strategies of Chinese working staff and 2) compare those strategies of participants with different genders and ages. The participants were 96 working staff at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, Dongming country, Shandong province, China. The four staff, two males and two females, were interviewed. The researchers employed questionnaires and a semi-structure interview to collect the data from those officers. The findings revealed that the 15 speaking and 15 writing strategies were their moderate effective strategies. Their top three speaking strategies were 1) watching English movies/videos, 2) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly, and 3) practicing questioning and answering; while their top three writing strategies were 1) learning writing correct grammar from teachers, 2) writing after models, and 3) spelling correctly. When comparing those strategies by gender and age using *t*-test to compare means, the participants with different genders and ages rated those strategies moderate effective, which was not different. The highest effective strategy of males was telling the interlocutor to speak slowly and the highest effective writing strategy was writing correct grammar learned from teachers. The females' highest effective speaking strategy was watching English movies/videos and the highest effective writing strategy was the same as males' strategy. The staff aged 25-40 rated playing English games the highest speaking strategy. The staff aged 41-60 rated telling the interlocutor to speak slowly the highest effective speaking strategy.

Keywords: Chinese working staff, effective English speaking strategies, effective writing strategies

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Introduction

English is the most important information carrier in today's society and the most common language in the world. English’s greatest function is communication. English can be found everywhere: coffee shops, subway entrance, and road signs. It has been deeply embedded in our lives (Galloway & Numajiri, 2019).

In China, English for students is required for many levels such as primary school, middle school, and high school. China has focused on the importance of speaking English. In the aspect of English teaching, the teaching method has changed from teacher-centered to student-centered, from classroom-centered to life-based learning, and knowledge-centered development to comprehensive and critical thinking ability (Liu, Lin & Wiley, 2016).

With the importance of learning English as Chinese have been aware of, they desire to be able to communicate with English language. However, they still lack speaking and writing. They can neither speak fluently, nor write effectively. The wealthy parents have their children learned with native speakers. They want their children to be able to communicate in English and get good job in the future (Li, 2020).

Learning strategy is a way to help Chinese people improve their English speaking and writing. Chinese students have learned variety of English learning strategies such as spelling, free dialogue, situational performance, telling jokes, guessing riddles, telling stories, singing English songs, listening to radio, or watching movies (Wickham, 2023).

Speaking and writing are means of sending message from people to people across the world. English is one of international languages that people use in communication (Johnson, 2001). To be able to communicate in English by speaking and writing, learners must apply appropriate strategies since strategy refers to actions, behaviors, or methods the students apply intentionally to improve their second language skills (Oxford, 1992). The benefits of learning strategies were revealed in previous studies. For example, Larenas (2011) explored the speaking strategies knowledge to communicate in English of Grade 8 and 12 Chilean EFL students and concluded that knowing speaking strategies was a significant issue for improving students’ speaking skill. Liu (2015) investigated the English writing strategies used by Chinese senior high school students and found that females applied higher English writing proficiency, had stronger motivations, and performed much better writing strategies.

The researcher is a Chinese and now is studying English Language Teaching master degree at Buriram Rajabhat University; would like to be a teacher who teaches English to Chinese students in the future. As mentioned earlier, being a teacher who has knowledge of learning strategies and can teach students to apply effective learning strategies is a qualification of a good teacher. The students’ English learning will be improved after they employ the strategies. The researcher used to work in an office of Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, China. This office is a place for giving permission to people who would like to work on a piece of land. All staff used to learn English in school; and they all graduated a bachelor degree from a college or university. At this working place, they communicate in Chinese. The researcher would like the staff to recall the strategies they think effective when learning speaking and writing English. Therefore, the researcher employed a questionnaire to ask them to rate the given speaking and writing strategies. This study may not much beneficial for the staff and their task at that office. However, it may be useful when they have to communicate with foreigners, want to improve their English speaking and writing by themselves, or want to change their job after they can communicate in English well. Moreover, the teachers in Chinese schools may employ these strategies when they teach English.

Literature Review

Learning strategies refer to ways or methods that learners believe they can help them learn better or achieve their set goals. For the teachers, the strategies are plans or methods they will employ when teaching their students. They believe that those plans will help their students to meet the goals of learning objectives (Mangle & Mangle, 2009). Oxford (1991) posited that language learning strategies are learning methods that learners applied in learning to make learning easier, faster, or more effective. Oxford categorized English learning strategies into 6 categories: memory, cognition, compensation, metacognition, affection, and social; and she developed a questionnaire called SILL (Strategies, Inventory of Language Learning) to survey English learning strategies. The SILL questionnaire comprises of six categories of English learning strategies: memory, cognition, compensation, metacognition, affection, and social (Bessai, 2018; Goh & Foong, 1997).

1. The strategies under the memory category, or mnemonics, include mental processes applied in reorganizing information, making relations, and reviewing. For examples: linking between the own knowledge and the new ones, applying new words in learning English, frequently reviewing English lessons, etc.

2. The strategies under the cognitive category comprise how to make the English meanings clear such as reasoning and analyzing. The examples of sub strategies are saying or write new English words many times, practice saying the sounds, applying new words in speaking, writing, and other different ways, watching English language movies or TV, writing messages, notes, or letters in English, linking new words to familiar Chinese words, etc.

3. Compensation strategies help learners to use English for comprehension such as guessing meaning from context clues, or using synonyms. Examples of sub strategies are using gestures or body language, making up new English words, trying to predict what the interlocutor would say.

4. Metacognitive strategies refer to how the learners coordinate their own learning process like planning or evaluating their learning. The strategies under this category are setting the time table to practice English, looking for someone to speak English with, finding ways to be an effective English learner, etc.

5. Affective strategies are employed by English learners to decrease anxiety, afraid of, or self-encouragement. The strategies relating to these are awarding myself when doing well in English, encouraging myself to speak English, relaxing myself, etc.

6. Social strategies are based on the saying, language is a form of social activities, it is used for sending message to each other, or it is used for communication. The strategies under this type are telling the interlocutor to reduce the speaking speed, usually practice English with other people, asking for help from native speakers or knowledgeable others, etc. Hayaraman and Worasurt (2020) interviewed EFL aviation students in Thailand and proposed four speaking strategies: role-playing, group discussion, storytelling, and group discussion.

1. Role-playing. This speaking strategy is one of the most effective speaking strategies gained from the study. Teacher gave the students situations and the students did dialogue with their friends. It enhanced students' confidence; students learned more vocabulary; and improved their English speaking.

2. Small Group Discussion. After teacher assigned a topic for students to discuss in groups, the students expressed their perspectives in English. The activity strengthened the students' pronunciation, speaking performance, and increased their confidence.

3. Storytelling. Both active and passive students can gain benefit of storytelling. Teacher may assign them to explain their personal experiences and link to the short story they read. This speaking activity enhances the students' confidences, improves their speaking, comprehending the read story.

4. Singing English Songs. The students pointed out that the songs that they listened to and sang along helped them in pronunciation. Students recalled the songs' relic and sang out loud. The students were happy when listen to songs and sing. The songs improve their speaking indirectly.

The researcher created a questionnaire by using Oxford's questionnaire as a guideline; and put the following strategies suggested by scholars and researchers in the questionnaire:

1. Speaking Strategies

1.1 Pronouncing Correctly

Chinese teachers believe that if students can pronounce English vowels and consonants correctly, they will be successful in learning English (Wickham, 2023). This strategy is practiced and trained at the early stage of learning to speak English.

1.2 Playing English Games

Playing English games to enhance speaking performance like Whispering or Tongue Twister is a good learning motivation and improves speaking short sentences. Zue (2018) found that game-based learning improves Chinese students' speaking English.

1.3 Memorizing a Lot of Vocabulary

Nation (2004) posited that vocabulary is a vital knowledge in learning English. Learners apply vocabulary in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Afma (2018) found that adequate amount of vocabulary helps learners to speak English well.

1.4 Using Body Language

People may use hands, head nodding, or face expression to help their interlocutors understand their speaking. It is a strategy for face-to-face communication.

1.5 Reading Aloud.

Reading aloud with rising and falling intonation helps learners improve their speaking English. Chinese students are trained to read aloud and repeat the patterns. They believe that practice makes perfect.

1.6 Watching English Movies/Videos

This strategy is a good motivation in learning English. Even though, learning English is tough, watching movies or videos is learning in a relaxed atmosphere. Students can employ this strategy at their home or wherever they want (Ashrafuzzaman & Roy, 2019; Dazhi, 2016).

1,7 Listening and Singing English Songs

This strategy serves both entertainment and learning to speak some words or phrases from music. Teachers select appropriate songs for their students to sing. Students are happy in singing. The lyric of the songs and the music rhythm help learners to be able to say words or sentences.

1.8 Practicing Questioning and Answering

This strategy is matched with the Chinese students' learning styles since they like to practice and work hard to be successful (Wickham, 2023). Teacher sets situations such as interviewing, asking for directions, etc. and has students to take turn of questioning and answering.

1.9 Asking for Clarification.

This strategy is used when non-native speakers talk to people who speak English and they are not clear about what they said, for example, "What do you mean?" "Could you please repeat it?"

1.10 Expressing not Understanding

This strategy is also applied when non-native speakers do not understand what the interlocutor said. The speakers may shake their heads or show confusing.

1.11 Telling the Interlocutor to Speak Slowly

The ESL students found their interlocutor speak English with a fast speed, then they told them to slow down the speed to catch what they said. This strategy is applied in a face-to-face communication'

1.12. Role-Playing.

The teacher may set the situation at various places, like at a bank, post office, or train station, etc. then have students to take a role of a people at those places and make a dialogue. This strategy is one of effective speaking strategies because the students practice speaking as people do in the real situations.

1.13. Group discussion.
The students work in group and teachers assign them to brainstorm
for solving a problem by speaking English. Group discussion may be done in a reading class after the students have read a topic.

1.14. Telling stories in English. After the learners read some stories, like a short passage or a novel, teachers may have them retell those stories in English. Always apply this strategy will be beneficial for speaking.

1.15. Using simple words
Students are encouraged to speak English by employing the simple words that they have learned. Using simple words but the speakers can communicate fluently and what they said are understandable is effective communication.

2. Writing Strategies
2.1 Spelling Correctly.

ESL Chinese students want to be good writers. Spelling correctly helps them to be effective writers. The study of Bear, Gillern and Xu (2018) found that learning how to spell could predict the effectiveness of writing ability. Spelling correctly made the students proud of themselves. On the contrary, if the students fail in writing they will be shameful.

2.2 Reciting Newly Learned Words.

Recite newly learned words every day help ESL students remember vocabulary and they can employ vocabulary in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Afna, 2018). Learning a lot of vocabulary contributes learners' good writing.

2.3 Looking up New Words in a Dictionary.

This is one of effective writing strategies because a dictionary provides pronunciation, meanings, and examples of usage. EFL learners always use a dictionary to look up meanings of words and help them in writing.

2.4 Memorizing Sentence Structures.

Chinese students and Chinese teachers found that grammar is a fundamental knowledge for them. They cite the structures of grammar and use them correctly as their teachers teach them. The students believe that if they remember grammar rules and apply grammar rules correctly, their writing will be acceptable (Bao & Sun, 2010).

2.5 Knowing Correct Grammars.

ESL students learn correct grammar from teachers and from grammar books. Grammar books provide patterns, rules, usages, and exercises. Teachers assign their students to do homework every day.

2.6 Writing after Models.

This writing strategy was applied in a writing composition class. For beginners, teachers provide them with models or examples. It was a controlled writing. Later, teachers have them to do free writing.

2.7 Asking Teachers or Classmates.

Vygotsky (1978) posited that all learners can reach their highest potential if they learn from friends, person who know more, or teachers. Therefore, if a student does not know how to write correctly, s/he may ask her/ his friends who know more or ask the teacher. Chinese students generally do not apply this strategy because they always listen to teachers but never ask something they do not understand.

2.8 Practicing Describing People and Things.

This strategy is effective both for speaking skill and writing skill. After students learn words about people, things, and adjective, teacher may assign students to describe people or objects by writing.

2.9 Using Translator Devices.

Nowadays Chinese people use translator devices when they study English, study abroad, or travel. Bowker (2020) studied using translator devices in writing academic paper and found that the translator devices are essential tools for the Chinese graduate students in writing.

2.10 Writing English Sentences Every Day.

EFL students believe in learning hard and practice hard. Practice every day makes them improve in writing. Writing a diary is one of good writing strategies.

2.11 Making Outline before Writing.

This strategy is useful for essay writing class. Before writing an essay, teacher teaches students to create outline. After that the students put content into their outline.

2.12 Writing in Chinese and then Translating to English.

This strategy is based on Grammar-Translation Method, and the influence of mother-tongue language (Pratsyo, 2015). Chinese learners think in Chinese phrases or sentences and translate into English. Their mother-tongue language helps them to communicate what they want.

2.13 Writing and Reading the Written Sentences for Many Times

This strategy gets rid of mistakes since the students write and read their written paper many times to look for any errors. The students' writing improves after they often employ this strategy.

2.14 Learning Writing with Correct Grammar from Teachers

In the past EFL teachers teach students grammar and drill every day. They believe that grammar and vocabulary are foundation of English communication. This has been a traditional teaching strategy since the past up until now.

2.15 Using AI Software such as Grammarly or Chat GPT

This AI software are popular among people in many countries including countries in Asian continent (Raheem, Anjum, & Ghafar, 2023). These devices can translate ESL mother-tongue language to English, gives correct grammar writing, and paraphrasing.

Research Objectives

1. To explore effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, China.

2. To compare effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers with different genders, and ages at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center.

Research Questions

1. What are effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, China?

2. Are effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers with different genders, and ages at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center different?

Hypothesis of the Study

Effective English speaking and writing strategies of officers with different genders and ages at Dongming Administrative Service Management Center are different.

Methodology

1. Research Design

The design of this study was survey research. It was a mixed-method: quantitative and qualitative (Cresswell, 2014). The main part of the research was quantitative research. The qualitative part was interviewing, the researcher interviewed four staff to gain data from their point of views. The second part data confirmed the collected data from a questionnaire.

2. Population and Samples

The population of this research included 116 staff of the Dongming Administrative Service Management Center. All of them used to learn English in their schools. The samples were 92 staff of Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, recruited by simple random sampling. The sample size was specified by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table. The table indicates that the sample size of 120 number of population is 92. The samples for interview were two males and two females who were not asked by the questionnaire. They were selected because they can speak and write English well and used to teach English in a school. However, working in this office, all staff communicates in Chinese. Knowledge of English was beneficial for them when they communicate with foreigners or go abroad. They can learn English by themselves through movies, songs, or games. Therefore, language strategies were important for them.

3. Instrument(s) and Procedures

The research instruments employed in collecting the data concerning English speaking and writing strategies of Chinese people were a questionnaire and a semi-structure interview form. There were three parts in this questionnaire: The first part was personal information, i.e. gender, educational level, age. The second part was a 5-Likert rating scale: five was the highest effective and one was the least effective. There were 15 speaking and 15 writing strategies for the samples to rate. The researchers used Oxford (1992)'s SILL questionnaire as a guideline to develop the questionnaire, for examples, watching movies and videos, playing English games, asking teacher about writing, or writing and revising. The third part was the area of suggestions, this part provides the space for the participants to write more strategies or suggestions for the researcher. For making the questionnaire qualified, the researcher took the questionnaire, the interview form, and the *Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC)* evaluation form to the three experts for evaluating the congruence of the items and research objectives. The IOC mean value of the questionnaire was 0.67, and the mean of the interview form is 1.00. The researchers took the evaluation from the experts to be the reliability.

4. Data Collection

The researchers went to Dongming Administrative Service Management Center, Shandong province, China; gave the questionnaires to the samples and provide 30 minutes for the samples to answer. For the interview, the researchers invited the samples for a group interview and interviewed them in a room. Their answers were recorded.

5. Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the data by a computer statistical software. For the information from the interview, the researchers did the content analysis by categorizing the data in groups. After that the researchers showed the result by descriptive analysis.

Results

Table 1 and 2 below answered the 1st question: What are effective speaking and writing strategies of Chinese working staff?

Table 1

The Effective Speaking Strategies of the Staff

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
Speaking Strategies				
1. Start with pronouncing English vowels and consonants correctly	3.46	0.70	8	Moderate Effective
2. Play English games	3.52	0.70	4	High effective
3. Memorize a lot of vocabulary	3.46	0.60	7	Moderate Effective
4. Use body language	3.45	0.73	9	Moderate effective
5. Read Aloud	3.40	0.70	11	Moderate effective
6. Watch English movies/videos	3.60	0.65	1	High Effective
7. Listen and sing English songs	3.43	0.62	10	Moderate Effective
8. Practice questioning and answering	3.52	0.64	3	High Effective
9. Ask for clarification	3.33	0.67	12	Moderate effective
10. Express not understanding	3.51	0.78	6	High Effective
11. Role-play	3.27	0.67	14	Moderate Effective
12. Group discussion	3.51	0.60	5	High Effective
13. Tell stories in English	3.21	0.64	15	Moderate Effective
14. Tell the interlocutor to speak slowly	3.53	0.72	2	High Effective
15. Use simple words	3.32	0.60	13	Moderate Effective
Grand total	3.43	0.67		Moderate Effective

Table 1 showed that the grand total of 15 speaking strategies. It was M = 3.43, *S.D.* = 0.67. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) watching English movies/ videos (M = 3.60, *S.D.* = 0.65), 2) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly (M = 3.53, *S.D.* = 0.72), and 3) practicing questioning and answering (M = 3.52, *S.D.* = 0.64).

Table 2

The Effective Writing Strategies of the Staff

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
Writing Strategies				
1. Spell correctly	3.47	0.69	3	Moderate Effective
2. Recite newly learned words	3.38	0.69	8	Moderate Effective
3. Look up new words in a dictionary	3.40	0.66	7	Moderate Effective
4. Memorize sentence structures	3.41	0.67	5	Moderate Effective
5. Know correct grammars	3.29	0.66	14	Moderate Effective
6. Write after models	3.53	0.62	2	High Effective
7. Ask teachers or classmates	3.21	0.64	15	Moderate Effective
8. Practice describing people and things	3.35	0.69	12	Moderate Effective
9. Use translator devices	3.46	0.74	4	Moderate Effective
10. Write English sentences every day	3.38	0.64	9	Moderate Effective
11. Make outline before writing	3.41	0.61	6	Moderate Effective
12. Write in Chinese and then translate to English	3.38	0.68	10	Moderate Effective
13. Write and read the written sentences again and again	3.35	0.69	11	Moderate Effective
14. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.64	0.57	1	High Effective
15. Use AI software such as Grammarly or Chat GPT	3.29	0.66	13	Moderate Effective
Grand total	3.40	0.66		Moderate Effective
Grand total of speaking (Table 1) and writing strategies (Table 2)	3.42	0.66		Moderate Effective

Table 2 revealed the grand total of 15 writing strategies. It was *M* = 3.40, *S.D.* = 0.66. They were moderate effective writing strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers (*M* = 3.64, *S.D.* = 0.57), 2) writing after models (*M* = 3.53, *S.D.* = 0.62), and 3) spelling correctly (*M* = 3.47, *S.D.* = 0.69. Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was *M* = 3.42, *S.D.* = 0.66. The participants rated all strategies at moderately effective level.

Table 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 below showed the means of speaking and writing strategies of males, females, staffed aged 25-40, and staffed aged 41-60. This data answered the 2nd research question: Are effective speaking and writing strategies of Chinese working staff with different genders and ages different?

Table 3

The Effective Speaking Strategies of Males

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Tell the interlocutor to speak slowly	3.64	0.76	1	High Effective
2. Practice questioning and answering	3.60	0.66	2	High Effective
3. Express not understanding	3.60	0.83	3	High Effective
4. Group discussion	3.55	0.63	4	High Effective
5. Watch English movies/videos	3.55	0.74	5	High Effective
6. Memorize a lot of vocabulary	3.52	0.63	6	High Effective
7. Listen and sing English Songs	3.52	0.67	7	High Effective
9-15 strategies are moderate effective strategies				
Grand total	3.46	0.71		Moderate Effective

Table 3 showed the grand total of males' 15 speaking strategies. It was *M* = 3.46, *S.D.* = 0.71. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. This table showed only high effective strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly (*M* = 3.64, *S.D.* = 0.76), 2) practicing questioning and answering (*M*= 3.60, *S.D.* = 0.66), and 3) expressing not understanding (*M* = 3.36, *S.D.* = 0.83).

Table 4

The Effective Writing Strategies of Males

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.62	0.58	1	High Effective
2. Write after models	3.57	0.63	2	High Effective
3. Memorize sentence structures	3.57	0.70	3	High Effective
4. Write in Chinese and then translate to English	3.57	0.74	4	High Effective
5-15 are moderate writing strategies				
Grand total	3.44	0.68		Moderate Effective
Grand total of speaking (Table 3) and writing strategies (Table 4)	3.45	0.70		Moderate Effective

Table 4 presented the grand total of 15 writing strategies. It was *M* = 3.44, *S.D.* = 0.68. They were moderate effective writing strategies. This table showed only high effective strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers (*M* = 3.62, *S.D.* = 0.58), 2) writing after models (*M* = 3.57, *S.D.* = 0.63), and 3) memorizing sentence structures (*M* = 3.57, *S.D.* = 0.70). Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was *M* = 3.45, *S.D.* = 0.70. They were moderate effective strategies.

Table 5

The Effective Speaking Strategies of Females

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Watch English movies/videos	3.64	0.56	1	High Effective
2. Play English games	3.54	0.65	2	High effective
3. Group discussion	3.48	0.58	3	Moderate Effective
3-15 strategies are moderate effective strategies				
Grand total	3.41	0.63		Moderate Effective

Table 5 showed the grand total of females' 15 speaking strategies. It was *M* = 3.41, *S.D.* = 0.63. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) watching English movies/videos (*M* = 3.64, *S.D.* = 0.56), 2) playing English games (*M* = 3.54, *S.D.* = 0.65), and 3) group discussion (*M* = 3.48, *S.D.* = 0.58).

Table 6

The Effective Writing Strategies of Females

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.66	0.56	1	High Effective
2. Write after models	3.50	0.61	2	Moderate Effective
3. Spell correctly	3.48	0.61	3	Moderate Effective
2-15 strategies are moderate effective strategies				
Grand total	3.36	0.63		Moderate Effective
Grand total of speaking (Table 5) and writing strategies (Table 6)	3.39	0.63		Moderate Effective

The grand total of 15 writing strategies was *M* = 3.36, *S.D.* = 0.63. They were moderate effective writing strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers (*M* = 3.66, *S.D.* = 0.56), 2) writing after models (*M* = 3.50, *S.D.* = 0.61, and 3) spelling correctly (*M* = 3.48, *S.D.* = 0.61). Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was *M* = 3.39, *S.D.* = 0.63. They were moderate effective strategies.

According to Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6, the researcher found that males and females gave the same average level of all writing and speaking strategies. However, their effective top three speaking and writing strategies were different. The researchers compared the means of males and females with *t*-test and found that they were not different. The *t* value for 1-tailed was .072 and 2-tailed was .601.

Table 7

The Effective Speaking Strategies of Staff Aged 25-40

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Play English games	3.65	0.71	1	High effective
2. Watch English movies/videos	3.63	0.64	2	High Effective
3. Practice questioning and answering	3.52	0.59	3	High Effective
4-15 are moderate strategies				
Grand Total	3.43	0.67		Moderate Effective

Table 7 showed that the grand total of 25-40 years old staff's speaking strategies was *M* = 3.43, *S.D.* = 0.67. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) playing English games (*M* = 3.65, *S.D.* = 0.71), 2) watching English movies and videos (*M* = 3.63, *S.D.* = 0.64), and 3) practicing questioning and answering (*M* = 3.52, *S.D.* = 0.59).

Table 8

The Effective Writing Strategies of Staff Aged 25-40

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.60	0.58	1	High Effective
2. Write after models	3.57	0.58	2	High Effective
3. Use translator devices	3.50	0.72	3	Moderate Effective
3-15 are moderate strategies				
Grand total	3.37	0.65		Moderate Effective
Grad total of speaking (Table 7) and writing strategies (Table 8)	3.40	0.66		Moderate Effective

The grand total of 15 writing strategies was *M* = 3.37, *S.D.* = 0.65. They were moderate effective writing strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers (*M* = 3.60, *S.D.* = 0.58), 2) writing after model (*M* = 3.57, *S.D.* = 0.58), and 3) using translator device (*M* = 3.50, *S.D.* = 0.72. Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was *M* = 3.40, *S.D.* = 0.66. They were moderate effective strategies.

Table 9

The Effective Speaking Strategies of Staff Aged 41-60

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Tell the interlocutor to speak slowly	3.65	0.64	1	Highly Effective
2. Express not understanding	3.59	0.78	2	High Effective
3. Watch English movies/videos	3.57	0.65	3	High Effective
4. Start with pronouncing English vowels and consonants correctly	3.52	0.62	4	High Effective
5. Group discussion	3.52	0.62	5	High Effective
6. Practice questioning and answering	3.52	0.69	6	High Effective
7-15 are moderate strategies				
Grand Total	3.43	0.66		Moderate Effective

Table 9 showed that the grand total of 41-60 years old staffs' speaking strategies was *M* = 3.43, *S.D.* = 0.66. They were moderate effective speaking strategies. The top three effective speaking strategies were 1) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly (*M* = 3.65, *S.D.* = 0.64), 2) expressing not understanding (*M* = 3.59, *S.D.* = 0.78), and 3) watching English movies and videos (*M* = 3.57, *S.D.* = 0.65). This table showed only highly effective strategies.

Table 10

The Effective Writing Strategies of Staff Aged 41-60

Effective /Useful Strategies	*M*	*SD*	Rank	Meaning
1. Learn writing with correct grammar from teachers	3.67	0.60	1	High Effective
2. Spell correctly	3.52	0.59	2	High Effective
3. Make outline before writing	3.52	0.59	3	High Effective
4. Memorize sentence structures	3.52	0.72	4	High Effective
5-15 are moderate strategies				
Grand total	3.42	0.67		Moderate Effective
Grand total of speaking (Table 9) and writing strategies (Table 10)	3.43	0.66		Moderate Effective

The grand total of 15 writing strategies was (*M* = 3.42, *S.D.* = 0.67). They were moderate effective writing strategies. The top three effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers (*M* = 3.67, *S.D.* = 0.60), 2) making outline before writing (*M* = 3.52, *S.D.* = 0.59), and 3) spelling correctly (*M* = 3.52, *S.D.* = 0.59). Finally, the grand total of all speaking and writing strategies was (*M* = 3.43, *S.D.* = 0.66). They were moderate effective strategies.

Table 7, 8, 9 and 10 reveals that the two groups of staff (25-40, 41-60) did not rate the given strategies differently. However, their top 3 effective strategies were different.

Interview Results

The researchers did a semi-structured interview to two males and two females who can communicate in English well. The interview showed that their top three effective speaking and writing strategies were not the same. The top three speaking strategies of males were 1) listening, reading, watching movies, and speaking a lot, 2) practicing speaking frequently and 3) making learners surrounded in English as much as they can. They explained that practice makes perfect.

Moreover, the top three writing strategies of males were 1) more reading and practice a lot of writing, 2) asking persons who know more to correct learner's writing, and 3) do not write any incorrect words. They explained that reading a lot of English can improve learners' writing.

For females, the researchers found their top three speaking strategies were 1) know a lot of vocabulary and use them in speaking activities, 2) speaking with good grammar, and 3) do not afraid of mistakes, have self-confidence. They explained that knowing a lot of vocabulary and good grammar were the basic guarantee of speaking English.

The top three writing strategies of females were 1) reading a lot and often practice writing till it forms the habit, 2) writing and reading to find some errors, and 3) knowing good grammar could help perfect writing. They believed practice writing with various vocabularies and correct grammar was an effective strategy.

Discussion

The researchers would like to know what the effective English speaking strategies of the Chinese working staff were, and found these following effective strategies: 1) learning to speak English through watching movies and videos, 2) telling the interlocutor to speak slowly when they can't catch the words, 3) practicing questioning and speaking, 4) expressing not understanding, 5) playing English games, and 6) group discussion. The participants pointed out that watching English movies and videos improve their speaking ability because movies entertain them. They watch, hear, and see the actions, imitate the actors/actresses' speaking. Watching movies frequently helped them remember words or phrases. It was a relaxed learning atmosphere. They were able to watch the movies at their home or wherever they liked (English Engine, 2019). In line with English Engine (2019). the study of Ashrafuzzaman and Roy (2019) found that having their participants watch English movies regularly improved the samples' listening, pronunciation, speaking, and understanding natives' accents (Juan & Abidin, 2013; Qiu, 2017; Wang & Fan, 2015).

The second strategy, telling their interlocutors to slow down their spoken speech, was used when they were unable to catch the words. After they had the speakers slow down but they still not understand, they would express not understanding through their face or shaking their head.

Generally, Chinese learners or students who learned English as a foreign language found that native speakers speak so fast. They had no ideas what they said. Therefore, they wanted the natives to speak slowly. They would catch word by word and try to construct the meanings. Beside the native speed, the pronunciation of some sounds and consonants like /l/, /r/, /v/, /w/, or /th/, etc. were problem sounds of Chinese and these sounds were hard for them to see the differences and pronounce those sounds (Wickham, 2023). Chinese students studied hard, they put their attempt in practice, most of them were high responsibility, believed in their teachers. Because of those Chinese students' characteristics, their next effective speaking strategies were practice English questioning and speaking. The interviewees who were good at English posited that practice, practice, and practice made perfect. Practice every day like it was one of learners' habits.

Moreover, playing English games was another effective speaking strategy. Games attracted students' intention, generated interesting English classes, and brought enjoyment (Anyaegbu, Ting & Li, 2012; Mongillo, 2008). Generally, Chinese high school students studied hard in a serious atmosphere since they had to pass the English proficiency test which was the requirement of the government (Zhu, 218). Group discussion was also one of the Chinese participants' effective speaking strategies. They worked together and helped each other to discuss or talk some things. Most of Chinese students were shy, did not want to look stupid, were afraid of mistakes, and did not want to lose face (Wickham, 2023). Group discussion could safe their face.

On the other hands, their high effective writing strategies were 1) learning writing with correct grammar from teachers, 2) writing after modals, 3) spelling correctly, 4) using translator devices, and 5) making outline before writing. Chinese students and Chinese teachers found that grammar was a fundamental knowledge for them. They cited the structures of grammar and used them correctly as their teachers taught them. The students believed that if they remembered grammar rules and applied grammar rules correctly, their writing would be acceptable (Bao & Sun, 2010). Spelling correctly has been trained intensely in China. Spelling correctly was a basis for good writers (Bear, Gillern & Xu, 2018).

In an essay writing class, teachers provided them models to follow. It was a controlled writing, then the teachers had them do free writing later. Making an outline was a must for writing a composition (Hu & Chen, 2007; Ridhuan & Abdullah, 2009).

Using translator devices among Chinese students happened currently and now the devices were popular. They used them when they studied English, write an academic paper in English or when they were travelling (Bowker, 2020).

The interviewees suggested effective writing strategies like reading a lot, especially grammar text, learning a lot of vocabulary, and applying vocabulary and grammar to practice writing frequently. They believed in practice and repetition (Wickham, 2023).

Conclusion

The Chinese working staffs liked to learn speaking English through watching movies or videos. When they had a chance to talk to native foreigners but could not understand the conversation, they would tell the speakers they did not understand and told them to speak slowly. They believed that if they wanted to write well they had to read a lot of grammar books to learn grammar usages, know a lot of vocabulary, and employ them in writing. When they studied English, they liked to work in group to help each other, the smart helped the weak. Most Chinese students were shy, did not want to look stupid, were afraid of mistakes, and did not want to lose face. Group discussion could safe their face.

Recommendations

1. Implications

This study is beneficial for teachers who teach English to Chinese students. The teachers should select the effective strategies and apply to the English classes. One thing that teachers should keep in mind is the teachers must be aware of Chinese cultures. Most of Chinese students are shy. They will do as the teachers tell them. Teachers must not embarrass them. They don't want to lose their face. The workers at work places can select appropriate strategies for learning English by themselves. Being able to communicate in English provides good opportunity for them to get good job, communicate with foreigners, and speak to people around the world when they travel.

2. Further Studies

Researchers should do experimental research to see the results of the proposed strategy. For example, "The effects of movies and games on enhancing Chinese students' communication ability", or "Employing English kid songs to improve Chinese students' listening efficiency".

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