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The Lived Experiences of EFL Teachers in Developing Listening and Speaking Competencies in Nonthaburi Project

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ABSTRACT

As the need for excellent English proficiency grows in business and education in Thailand, teaching English as a foreign language has become increasingly relevant. Hence, learning strategies in Thailand have shifted to meet the needs of students and maintain the concepts and techniques of instruction utilized in foreign countries. This phenomenological study aimed to acquire information from the Filipino EFL teachers under the Chulalongkorn University Nonthaburi Project about their lived experiences and the teaching strategies used for effective classroom instruction in developing the listening and speaking competencies of the students. Seven EFL teachers under the Nonthaburi Project were the participants of this study. The results were transcribed and analyzed using Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method and thematic analysis to identify relevant knowledge and provide perspectives into the teaching methods and experiences of foreign language teachers striving to enhance the listening and speaking competencies of the students. Furthermore, the study revealed that the main challenge for EFL teachers is the language barrier. It was evidently seen that when the students have difficulty understanding the language, they lose interest and become unfocused on the classroom discussion. With this, this study explored that interactive strategies are more effective in English classes. Moreover, implementing interactive, cooperative, and active learning can serve as a framework for teachers to incorporate teaching strategies. They are learning activities to strengthen competency and achieve a high level of awareness for teachers and students in the teaching and learning process.

Key Words: EFL teachers, Listening and Speaking Competencies, Teaching Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

English has been described as the world's global language among people who speak many languages, for it signifies features that have become universal. As Rao (2019) stated, English is their main medium of communication. For instance, the distribution of newspapers and other literature and worldwide industry, political class, tourism, international telecommunications, and journal articles now use English to communicate. English is now utilized as a language of communication by most non-native speakers in different parts of the globe (Sharifian, 2017). With that, the importance of learning English has gradually increased in Thailand. Bangkok Post (2018) claims that since tourism accounts for around 12% of Thailand's financial system, English has become essential, especially to the country's economic growth. As the need for excellent English proficiency grows in both business and education, the role of teaching English as a foreign language has become increasingly relevant.

According to Sripatum University (2015), during the time of King Rama V, when many foreigners traveled Thailand, English became the most renowned foreign language. Since Thailand's number one cause of living is tourism, proficiency in English is necessary for the locals as it is the way of communicating with foreign nationals who visit their own country. In line with this, King Rama V considered that the nation's growth and development required more Thais to learn foreign languages. Throughout this time, the Ministry of Education was established. More schools were founded, and English as a foreign language was included in the curriculum. Since its first implementation, English has played a significant part in Thai education, emphasizing its relevance to the country's economic and social progress. It has been a part of the curriculum from primary school to higher education. Learning strategies in Thailand have shifted to meet the needs of students and maintain the concepts and techniques of instruction utilized in foreign countries.

Currently, Thailand's English language curriculum focuses primarily on interactive language learning, emphasizing teaching English for communication rather than only learning it. However, many students who studied English could not use it effectively as they find it a new language for them. Thus, they remain exclusively focused on their native tongue. Therefore, implementation strategies have been proposed to encourage learners to develop greater English language competency. As the linguistic structure of language is emphasized, students in a foreign language learning experience must attempt to communicate themselves and perhaps communicate in English.

The goal of learning a foreign language is to develop communication, learning, and economy since this will help the country become much more economically and globally competitive in this time of globalization. As the perspective in learning a foreign language develops, students are also anticipated to appreciate their Thai culture and be better equipped with their English language competencies. With this, a study was conducted about the lived experiences of EFL teachers and how the instructional strategies they utilized can help them develop the listening and speaking competencies of the students in the Nonthaburi project.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In this increasingly competitive global economy, there has been a continuous need for education to be developed in training to prepare young students for language learning at a young age. In this time of globalization, learning foreign languages is necessary for a nation's economic development because it has numerous advantages, including those for entrepreneurship and education. Per the Ministry of Education (2017) standards for successful foreign language acquisition, the primary objectives of English education in schools are to improve students' fundamental intercultural communicative competence and the urge to learn the English language to become globally competitive.

Chulalongkorn University, under the academic service center, organized a project to employ foreign teachers to teach foreign languages such as English, Science, Mathematics, and Chinese to the students with the collaboration of Nonthaburi Provincial Administrative Organization, Office of Primary Educational Area 1, Office of Secondary Education Area 3, Nonthaburi Technical College and 61 schools in Nonthaburi, Thailand. This project aims to develop the English language learning of students in basic education schools and to build up the ability and opportunities of students, to broaden their knowledge of the usage of English as a medium of instruction, to be able to communicate English in both listening and speaking, and lastly, to be able to prepare for entering the time of globalization. According to Chula Unisearch, Chulalongkorn University (2016), this Nonthaburi project has been carried out since 2005 up to this time. This project gave the teachers, particularly those who teach English, an opportunity to improve English language teaching skills abroad and allow students to study well the foreign language. Students can enhance their speaking, listening, and writing abilities, as well as their ability to interact more effectively.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THAILAND

3.1 English Language Teaching at Present

Thailand recognizes English as a foreign language and is required for international tourism, academic development, and job advancement. As specified by Michel (2020), there are two important factors to shape the development of the Thai educational system: political and economic factors. By this means, Trakulkasemsuk (2018) stated that English is exclusively utilized in the country and maintained a central position as a language of nobility and a sign of social standing. However, Thai people had little exposure to English because most Thai children living in rural areas had little opportunity to attend school, even though basic education was required. In addition to Trakulkasemsuk (2018), the descriptive result of the Ordinary National Education Test (O-NET) English Language Teaching (ELT) technique in Thailand demonstrates to be insufficiently effective given that Thai students' English language competency was insufficient. As a result, the outcomes of Thai students spending twelve years learning English in elementary and secondary schools are still debatable. Chanaroke and Niemprapan (2020) argue that prominent achievements have been undertaken recently to transform the English language curriculum in Thailand. Instances include integrating English courses early in year 1, providing funds to support English teachers, and establishing the communicative teaching approach used for English classes. Moreover, teachers are the most vital part of determining how well students learn, and they are more significant than other variables like financing, teacher quality, and passion.

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3.2 English Language Teaching in Neighboring Countries

3.2.1 English Language Teaching in China

Based on Moparthi (2017), western teaching methods have been implemented, and the communicative approach progressively developed rapidly in China's English teaching institutions. Meanwhile, most schools and colleges still teach intensive reading as a basic requirement. Translation between Chinese and English, alternative activities, combination exercises, and reading aloud were all intervention activities. As a result, this strategy achieved grammatical and lexical precision objectives, emphasizing structure rather than content, explanations, and word remembering. Also, extensive reading helped students improve their reading comprehension and other reading skills like analysis, reasoning, and concept synthesis.

Referring to Sun, Xie, and Zhu's (2021) study, stated that role-playing and practice style is more appropriate for students, and it has been acknowledged that situational teaching has been most frequently used in conversational English instruction. Moreover, the teacher can further develop or present a particular scenario to help students grasp the target language as part of the situational language teaching strategy. In contrast, it is said that the problem-based learning approach was usually utilized in research English learning environments. However, problem-based learning does have a downside in that it could be challenging to maintain high standards of instruction. The conversation topics rely on what occurred. By this means, finding a material that perfectly matches students' knowledge development level may be challenging.

3.2.2 English Language Teaching in Japan

According to Chida (2017), secondary schools in Japan started incorporating oral communication instruction into their English language curriculum in 1989. This illustrates that the government constantly worked hard to improve students' communicative competence. The two major social developments during this period were the emergence of technology and the rising prominence of the JET (Japan Exchange Teaching) project. In order to share ideas and perspectives globally, English was utilized as a foreign language. As this purpose proceeds, the Ministry of Education focused on implementing the notion that English is now more essential to Japan's internal matters.

Selke et al. (2018) argue that as Japanese educational standards, teaching strategies, and learning methodologies remain diverse, the country's English proficiency level is lower than the global average. Herewith, Amelsvoort (2014) suggested urging teachers to integrate the four skills more into their lectures and to utilize the target language more extensively, especially in communicative tasks for learning English should focus more on improving communication skills than it does on developing translation or grammar knowledge.

3.2.3 English Language Teaching in Indonesia

Jaya et al., (2021) stated that most Indonesian students find learning English challenging. In response to this, the Indonesian government or the education ministry is constantly modifying how English is taught. Nevertheless, for us to be effective in our English education curriculum, there are a lot of other things we need to consider. (Gultom, 2015)

According to Gultom (2015), most people pay attention to effective teaching strategies. The grammar-translation method, total physical response method, audio-lingual method, reading method, structural method, situational method, direct method, and communicative approach are a few of the techniques that have already been utilized. Moreover, it is also advised that smaller class sizes must frequently practice ensuring intensive instruction in a foreign language. It usually works if done daily so students can make meaningful developments and outcomes. Students will be engaged in learning extra if they can sense their progression.

As Prayogo (2022) stated, teachers, need to be well-versed in the developments in modern teaching techniques or alternative teaching theories, such as multiple intelligences theories, digital learning, blended learning, neuroscience-based learning, transformative learning, and learning through disruptions. Additionally, educators must be dedicated to developing student-centered learning rather than teacher-centered learning and give students a way to develop their own learning. By assigning students tasks that include discovering, locating, organizing, utilizing, evaluating, combining,

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assessing, and producing using innovation and the real world, teachers can help students to develop their High Order Thinking Skills.

3.3 Foreign Language Teachers' Perspective - Professional Development

No question that trained professionals can create the best language learning. Chanaroke and Niemprapan (2020) stated that techniques are important, but teachers' skill to execute their lessons in a way that promotes intended learning is equally important. Teachers are considerably more engaged in assisting students in achieving their own goals than using them.

Qualified teachers best create an efficient learning experience. One approach that is prevalent and essential to boosting teacher quality is training and development. Cambridge Assessment International Education (2021) claims that teacher professional development is a consistent self-improvement, understanding, and practice to strengthen a teacher's skills and expertise, resulting in improved teaching strategies that positively influence students' training. Additionally, training enhances a method's implementation while centering on developing a single skill, such as mastering how to deliver from the curriculum or establishing instructional outcomes. As per Jamjuree (2017), two major challenges exist in teacher professional development. The first is allowing all teachers to utilize a well-developed framework. Second, a variety of teacher-training strategies that efficiently and effectively attain teachers' needs and maintain the competence of teachers by developing skills that were established in a variety of professional matters. With this, it is expected that teachers take part in continuing professional development. It could be very beneficial if the teachers' inadequate duties and responsibilities are lessened, and they receive sufficient assistance for their professional growth to achieve good results in the language learning process, techniques, and instruction interactions.

3.4 Development of English Language Competency in Listening and Speaking - Teaching Strategies

In English language teaching in Thailand, Western instructional strategies consistently play key roles. As Prasongporn (2016) stated in the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), teachers in all Thai schools have received training on how to teach English through interactive language learning activities that highlight learner engagement and communication in various interactions. Different types of these exercises are games, entertainment, role-playing exercises, TPR exercises, information-gap exercises, and many others. Teachers are working diligently to start innovation opportunities and diverse teaching strategies. Also, cognitive skills are incorporated into language teaching.

With this, English teachers are always searching for how to make the students fully equipped with the English language so that they can execute it in different ways effectively. Moreover, there are several categories of students: elementary, secondary, college and adult learners. These students are studying English for various reasons. Therefore, it is not recommended to teach them using the same techniques. (Chanaroke and Niemprapan, 2020)

On the other hand, Heng (2014) stated that a communicative approach is a learner-centered approach in which teachers can no longer recognize them as knowledge providers and students as knowledge absorbers. The principal objective or main objective of this communicative approach is to develop learners' language proficiency through a wide range of educational activities and resources. The engagement and willingness of classroom teachers play a significant role in establishing whether communicative language teaching execution in English as a foreign language environment is effective.

3.5 Problems in Developing English Language Competency in Listening and Speaking

Zhou (2017) revealed that some Thai students lacked application and were uninterested in studying English, for they lacked opportunities to practice English in and around the school. Also, some problems in learning the English language are the students' first thoughts in Thai before translating them into English. As a result, the students also had difficulty pronouncing and understanding English. Therefore, Dani and Fahriany (2020) argue that every approach may display a varied student response. Teachers must choose an appropriate way of teaching when delivering English to students. Thus, the teacher has a variety of appropriate teaching tactics together with the individual understandings of these strategies, such as vocabulary-teaching strategies, including different activities like drilling, spelling, sketch drawings,

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employing emotion and movement, and teaching language through objects. As an outcome, students can grasp the language and show an understanding of the subject, highlighted by an engaging strategy. As Ngang (2020) stated, global competition and the need to address global concerns are the main factors affecting English as a medium of instruction in Thailand. Therefore, to respond to these criteria, education aimed for the optimum institutional framework for its requirements. The Thai government has promoted more English language programs in higher education institutions and made English the major foreign language.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding

Vygotsky interpreted the Zone of Proximal Development to emphasize the learner's existing or subjective stage of development and the next stage that can be achieved through intervening semiotic and environmental resources, as well as effective professional or peer facilitating. The theory argues that people learn better when they collaborate with others and that creative approaches, methods, techniques, and abilities are best learned and internalized through cooperative activities with more experienced people. (Mcleod, 2021) In addition, the Zone of Proximal Development, according to Billings and Walqui (2016), is the area between what a learner can accomplish on their own and what they can accomplish with formal instruction or in cooperation with more experienced peers. To assist students in fulfilling their full development, teachers must give them the appropriate learning resources and training. For instance, the teacher can choose a difficult material that is completely beyond the students' comprehension and utilize various instructional strategies to assist the students in gaining a better understanding of the assigned learning material.

On the other hand, Kurt (2020) claims that scaffolding is vital to learning. With teacher supervision, students can achieve greatness as individuals. The teacher develops every task as a steppingstone towards its objectives as the teacher continuously supports the student's learning outcomes. Furthermore, the strategic and structural resource known as scaffolding motivates and empowers learners to engage throughout their Zone of Proximal Development to accomplish their maximum yet development potential. The structured, systematized frameworks that support learning tasks are referred to as the structural component of scaffolding. For example, when introducing a new set of terminology or words, the teacher would first lead the student through every step of the process. The teacher slowly decreases the support, moving from repeating after my supervision to providing hints for the students to memorize. Once the students fully understand the concept, the teacher will stop assisting so they can carry out the task independently.

4.2 Communicative Language Teaching

According to Dell Hymes, four categories can describe communicative language teaching (CLT): (1) Language skill is understanding linguistic signs, such as grammar, tone, standards for word structure, and vocabulary. (2) Social language skill, wherein competent handling of four skills in a real-world situation. (3) Textual competence, whereby linguistic integration and conceptual alignment could also fulfill text unity and individuals can deliver both grammar rules and context into a meaningful structure through both spoken and written forms, and lastly, (4) Strategic competence, wherein it is the capacity to enhance verbal and nonverbal communication proficiency or to prevent potential errors. (Dos Santos, 2020)

The communicative language teaching's objective is to assist students in mastering the communication abilities of the language of choice. Instead of a teacher-centered approach, the communicative language teaching approach focuses on a student-centered approach. The role of the teacher in the classroom is to facilitate student interaction through an efficient learning activity. Students are normally able to communicate, collaborate, share peer assessments, and discuss ideas. According to Tweedie and Johnson (2018), for instance, many communicative language teaching experts utilize role-playing activities to maximize the chances for language speaking and interaction. As a result, these activities let students, classmates, friends, and teachers communicate while they are being taught and learning. Teachers and students are continuously motivated by the communicative language approach to explore appropriate teaching and learning resources and tools in their normal living circumstances, society, and ways of life.

5. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

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This study was conducted to recognize the lived experiences of foreign language teachers in utilizing different teaching strategies in the classroom and how it can help them to become efficient in developing listening and speaking competencies.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. What are the lived experiences of EFL teachers teaching listening and speaking in terms of instructional strategies?
- 2. What strategies and educational approaches did the project observers teach EFL teachers in response to students' needs?
- 3. What are the challenges encountered by EFL teachers?
- 4. How did the EFL teachers cope with the challenges?
- 5. What alternative or proposed intervention procedure could be drawn to resolve or enhance the teachers' effectivity in utilizing their strategy?

5.1 METHODOLOGY

5.2 Research Design

The study focused on phenomenological research, and qualitative research was used as a research design. Giorgi (2009) believes that statements of lived experience are complex and need the utmost caution and conceptual clarity in their explanation through core components considering their rich multi-contextuality in the situations of actual individual human beings.

In addition, the study used a semi-structured interview in which the participants answered based on their experiences teaching English in Thailand. This design aimed to determine the most effective teaching strategies for students, the most challenging teaching strategy, and how it becomes effective based on developing listening and speaking competencies.

5.3 Research Locale

The study was conducted within the assigned schools of foreign language teachers under the Chulalongkorn University Nonthaburi Project, particularly Filipino teachers who have been teaching English and who are also in the Nonthaburi project for 2 years above. Also, the study chose three schools based on the following criteria: with foreign teachers under this Nonthaburi project and schools that conduct 2-3 times a week English lessons per class.

Chula Unisearch under the Chulalongkorn University proposed a program in the Nonthaburi province to employ Filipino teachers to teach foreign languages in different schools in Nonthaburi. Currently, 181 Filipino teachers are employed under the project who are teaching different subject areas such as English, Science, Mathematics, and Chinese using English as a medium of instruction.

5.4 Participants of the Study

The study used purposive sampling, enabling the researcher to filter whether the participants are relevant and meet the study's parameters. The participants of this study were around seven foreign language teachers currently teaching in Thailand government schools and employed under the Chulalongkorn University Nonthaburi Project, particularly Filipino teachers who are teaching English for communication in the schools around Nonthaburi, Thailand. Moreover, the participants of this study were selected based on the subject area they are teaching, the years of service in the school, and their nationality. Also, the participants should teach English and handle primary and secondary levels only.

The total number of Filipino foreign language teachers employed under the Chulalongkorn University Nonthaburi project is 181. From 181 teachers, the researcher decided to interview 7 Filipino foreign language teachers regarding their teaching experience in English as a foreign language and the strategies they used to develop the student's language competency.

5.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The study participants had an interview wherein they were asked questions regarding this study. The questionnaire used in the interview consisted of suitable self-made questions from the statement of the problem about their teaching experience and strategy, and how it can affect the students in terms of developing their listening and speaking competencies. Also, the interview was recorded for data collection. Lastly, rest assured that all information is confidential and used in this study only.

5.6 Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method to find out a deeper understanding of how the selection of appropriate teaching strategies can be a factor in developing the listening and speaking competencies of students. Moreover, the said method was used to identify relevant knowledge and provide perspectives into the teaching methods and experiences of foreign language teachers striving to enhance Thai students' listening and speaking competencies.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participant and Pertinent Characteristics

Participant	Educational Attainment	Years of teaching in Chulalongkorn University Nonthaburi Project	Handling grade level/s	The specific area in English (currently teaching)
Participant 1	BEED	2	Grades 1 and 2	English for Communication
Participant 2	BEED	2	Grades 2 and 3	English for Communication
Participant 3	BSED-English	4	Grade 8	English Skills (Listening and Speaking)
Participant 4	BSED-English	3	Grades 3 and 5	English for Communication
Participant 5	BSED-English	4	Grades 5 and 6	English Skills (Listening and Speaking)
Participant 6	BSED-English	4	Grade 1	English for All
Participant 7	BEED	3	Grades 3 and 6	English for Communication

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of seven foreign language teachers currently teaching in Thailand government schools and employed under Chulalongkorn University, Nonthaburi Project. Three participants are in their 4th year of teaching, two are in their 3rd year, and two are in their 2nd year under the project. Four participants earned a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education, majoring in English, and three earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. Lastly, three participants of the study teach English for Communication, three are teaching English Skills such as listening and speaking, and one is teaching English for All.

Table 2. Themes and Sub-Themes of Thematic Analysis

Themes	Sub-Themes

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Communication as a barrier in teaching EFL to foreign students	 Challenges in the classroom that leads to the language barrier Conversational and instructional strategies for active communication Involvement of technology as an educational tool for learning 		
Multiple uses of teaching strategies as an effective tool in teaching EFL	 The use of reward and positive reinforcement (Operant Conditioning Theory) Applying the readiness theory in the class The utilization of the visual learning style The usage of learning by doing to retain and recall information (Experiential Learning Theory) 		
Problems in comprehending and communicating	Difficulty in terms of giving instructionStruggles in making a conversation		
Developing the students' competencies to understand the English language	 Engaging the students with the use of technology as an activity Adjusting to the student's capability and level of understanding 		

Table 2 shows the four major themes based on the foreign language teachers' experiences in utilizing different teaching strategies and how it can help them to become efficient in developing listening and speaking competencies.

<u>Problem 1. What are the lived experiences of EFL teachers teaching listening and speaking in terms of instructional strategies?</u>

Challenges in the Classroom that Leads to Language Barrier

Since English is the most widely used language worldwide, it is important, especially with all forms of communication. For instance, in Thailand, English has not considered their second language. Thailand employs foreign teachers with the capacity to teach English to Thai students for the Thai government prioritized the improvement of students' language skills in order to serve a variety of goals, including communication, language learning, an expert in English, professional progress, and importance of the language and its culture. (Xu, 2014)

In this study, the four participants described their experience as a challenging task as an EFL teacher teaching in Thailand. On top of that, Participant 5 stated that "teaching English is very challenging, especially since not all students can speak and understand English."

According to EF English Proficiency Index (2022), Thailand's English proficiency was very low and ranked 97th out of 111 countries and regions in the global ranking. With this, the EFL teachers faced a big challenge, particularly the language barrier. Participant 4 added that "they are unable to communicate with the students but as well as with the school staffs."

Phongpichitphoom (2017) stated that individuals from various first language skills and cultures typically encounter more language barriers when trying to communicate effectively. Language barriers are the most frequent forms of communication that hinder complete understanding between individuals. Whereas Participant 4 specified that "making the students easily understand the lesson requires various and mostly blended strategies."

Conversational and Instructional Strategies for Active Communication

Moreover, different approaches and strategies were used for effective communication. By this means participant 2 mentioned that "building a connection by engaging the students with their interest is a good strategy." Good instructional strategies can make the students feel interactive and willing to participate in the class. With this, the students will feel comfortable, for they will feel connected, and there will be no pressure to learn English.

In particular, participant 1 uses *vocabulary building and cooperative learning as instructional strategies* in the class. On the other hand, participant 5 used *the repeat after me and memorization strategy* for the students to converse

properly. The said strategy has been extensively utilized in Thailand to emphasize English as a language of communication wherein memorization, and grammatical translation were the primary methods of English language instruction. (Trakulkasemsuk, 2018)

Furthermore, participant 7 uses the *learning by doing, hands-on activities and let the students experience the learning* in order for the students to have a full understanding of the topic. Also, participant 6 uses *direct instruction* for the combination of different unique learners to teach challenging context and interactive instruction to view the students as the participants who could work together to complete tasks. Abykanova et al. (2016) stated that using various learning techniques in the learning process helps students get motivated and develop their creative potential.

Involvement of Technology as Educational Tools of Learning

According to Carstens et al. (2021), students today have risen in a technology-driven environment. Thus, students have used technology in various ways and can learn more effectively using technology. In line with this, participant 2 specified that "the usage of technologies and educational websites that are relevant with the lesson are also helpful especially for today's generation of the students" for technology motivates the students to learn and to let them continue to take part in the lesson through a variety of activities. (Brown, 2019) Moreover, participant 4 believes that "using classroom technology eases the learning and understanding," Technology has strengthened student involvement and eagerness as well supporting the progress of understanding. Also, technology is a wide environment to explore, and it can provide students with activities and lessons to help them acquire the language easily.

<u>Problem 2. What strategies and educational approaches did the project observers teach EFL teachers in response to students' needs?</u>

The Use of Reward and Positive Reinforcement (Operant Conditioning Theory)

The two participants (P1 and P2) stated that they apply *the reward, bargaining, and conditioning techniques* since they handle primary levels. It is much easier for the EFL teacher to use this strategy for the students to remain focused and participate in class discussions. In agreement with Sidin (2021), rewarding performance can boost students' enthusiasm and interest in their learning. Also, an appropriate reward can positively stimulate students. Students' engagement in tasks and activities in the classroom may also improve as a result.

Moreover, participant 2 stated that with this strategy, "the students are showing positive response to it by being participative and cooperate in class" also, participant 1 agreed that "praises and rewards are essential to teaching and all students like to be rewarded once they did good in class and thinks they deserved it." When the students are rewarded or hear praise from the teacher, they feel validated, giving them the motivation and confidence to speak out.

Furthermore, Anggreni, Hastini, and Erniwati (2019) stated that giving praise can also be used to affirm validation, appreciation, pleasure, or encouragement, sustain effective learning actions, and provide motivation presented for the exertion of effort.

Applying the Readiness Theory in the Class

According to Dangol and Shrestha (2019), the essential for a school student's willingness to learn effectively is their readiness to learn. The level of student learning outcomes is greatly influenced by learning readiness. With this, participant 2 narrates that before the start of class discussion, he prepares his students by *grabbing students' attention* and ask the students to put aside the unnecessary things not related to the subject to be able to participate in the discussion. Therefore, it can be said that developing student learning readiness is a hugely important goal for obtaining better learning among students. Thus, the lack of learning readiness affects the teaching and learning process, making all efforts in teaching ineffective.

The Utilization of Visual Learning Style

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According to Raiyn (2016), the development of visual thinking, a learning technique in which the information is more understood and remembered by the learner with the identification of ideas, words, and perspectives using pictures, is another benefit of visual learning for students.

In line with this, participant 4 narrates that "using flip charts, pop up and pull ups is one strategy that the observer suggested, and I find it effective in some cases" and it concludes that when there is visual material presented in the class, the information is more clearly understood by the students, especially with the non-native students whose English is not their first language. Also, the use of a visual learning style delivers detailed information in simple ways. With this, participant 4 also concludes that "seeing how students respond with curiosity, interest and understanding, makes it worth the preparation."

The Usage of Learning by Doing to Retain and Recall Information (Experiential Learning Theory)

As per participant 6 stated, "as a teacher, you need to be flexible especially you are dealing with creative young mind." With this, the project observer suggested an interactive strategy to utilize in her classes, for it helps the EFL students improve their interactive communication and become effective communicators.

On the other hand, Khamees (2016) found that the most effective and least effective students mostly used the repetition strategy to absorb written text, words, and terminology. According to participant 5, the project observer suggested "teaching the vocabulary again and again for the students to remember it and to be able to use it in conversations." However, Khamees (2016) also stated that students who use this method frequently forget what they have memorized, cannot identify between significant and irrelevant information, and become incapable of drawing conclusions.

Furthermore, *learning by doing* was suggested by participant 7 in which the *students are encouraged to think, speak,* and participate during class. As Mekonnen (2020) stated, learning by doing refers to bringing up knowledge from experiences directly related to everyone's practices. In other words, it is a strategy for helping students actively engage in their learning to get the most out of it. Moreover, the student takes charge of their learning throughout the application. The teacher's job is to facilitate learning within the students by supplying them with various tasks and forms of assessment.

In conclusion, Dani and Fahriany (2020) stated that every approach might display a varied response from the students; every student varies and has their own pacing in acquiring a language. With that, the teachers need to utilize appropriate instructional strategies of teaching when instructing the students.

Problem 3. What are the challenges encountered by EFL teachers?

The third theme focuses on the challenges encountered by EFL teachers in utilizing their chosen strategies in class. Since the language barrier is one of the main problems of the EFL teachers in developing the English competency of Thai students, it is indeed a struggle for them to communicate and give instructions, especially with interactive activities with complicated directions. Lap and Thy (2017) stated that interaction in the classroom is necessary for learners to develop competencies. Moreover, information might not be retained without interaction, and there could be no efficiency.

Difficulty in Terms of Giving Instructions

The three participants (P2, P6, P7) come up with the same challenges in utilizing their chosen teaching strategy: the difficulty of giving instructions to the EFL students. Since some Thai students have little knowledge of the English language, participant 2 admitted that "I can't help but to speak in their language for them to be able to understand." With this, the EFL teachers need to adjust with the students to understand what the teacher is saying. According to Margaretha (2015), instructions require a detailed step-by-step process. For the students to comprehend the instructions, teachers must repeat them in the simplest way that the students will be able to understand.

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However, some students are still trying their best to learn the language. Hasanah and Tri Utami (2019) stated that for students to comprehend what is being said and attempt to communicate in English, specifically Thai students, they constantly look for the same meaning in Thai and English translations. In addition, with the continuous effort of the teacher to communicate English using the appropriate word choice and a calm, cheerful voice, the students will be encouraged to try their best to comprehend and acquire the target language.

Struggles in Making a Conversation

As participant 5 narrated, "The students lose their interest with the class when it is hard for them to comprehend and get the point of what the teacher said." As a habit of some students, once they do not understand something being said to them, they tend to ignore any information and avoid the interaction, especially with the EFL teachers, for it was seen that the language barrier hinders the development of listening and speaking competencies. Also, participant 3 expressed, "I normally get a no reponse to my students whenever I ask questions. It is pure silence." Since some students lack exposure to the English language, they have this kind of action whenever someone is talking to them. They will rather stay silent than embarrass themselves if they speak the language incorrectly.

According to Rahmaniah and Asbah (2019), two types of barriers to speaking English for students in the non-English courses must cope: internal and external. Internal barriers include the student's silent character, for they might have confusion in understanding the language, remembering vocabulary, trouble pronouncing words, poor knowledge of the language, laziness in remembering words, lack of self-esteem, and anxiety about making mistakes. With the external barriers, the students rarely communicate English in class as they are not exposed to it and would rather converse in their native language. In addition, Zhou (2017) revealed that some Thai students lack application and are uninterested in studying English because they lack opportunities to practice English in and around the school.

Thus, if the students and teachers meet halfway to work together in comprehending each other, there will be effective and understandable communication that will lead to developing listening and speaking competencies.

Problem 4. How did the EFL teachers cope with the challenges?

Despite the challenges the EFL teachers encounter in utilizing their chosen strategy, they are still finding ways to develop the student's listening and speaking competencies effectively. The fourth theme focuses on the different coping mechanisms of EFL teachers related to the challenges they encounter in utilizing their chosen strategy. Also, it covers the teaching strategies that the participants suggested in developing the listening and speaking competencies of the EFL students. With this, the participants come up with the idea of letting the students engage in interactive activities through technology. The EFL teachers believed that today's students are more focused when technology is involved in teaching and learning.

However, students' capacity and level of understanding should be considered in choosing the appropriate strategy for each student have learning needs in developing their listening and speaking competencies

Engaging the Students with the Use of Technology as an Activity

Lettvin, South, and Stevens (2016) believed that since today's young people are digital natives, they do not have to be instructed how to use electronic tools because they are tech-savvy and multi-taskers. In line with this, participant 3 said, "The integration of educational games online is more engaging and fun activity." It is also believed that the incorporation of technology in the classroom stimulates student performance and strengthens teachers' technical skills. However, The Center for Development and Learning (2019) stated that when a good strategy is utilized in the wrong situation or is mismatched with a problem for which it will have no positive effects, students and teachers will become dissatisfied.

Furthermore, participant 2 came up with the idea of exposing the students to English words through the use of English videos to develop their English comprehension. As Christensen (2019) believed, technology in education emphasizes learning again, and with the use of technology, there will be less distraction but more active learning.

Adjusting to the Students' Capability and Level of Understanding

The first thing that the EFL teachers need to consider in developing the listening and speaking competencies of the students is to adjust to the student's capability and determine the level of understanding of each student, for not everyone has the same pace in acquiring the language. Participant 5 stated, "learn to adjust with the level of the students since they are the number 1 priority in the class." Since not all students have the same level of understanding, participant 2 suggested that "give time for the students to fully understand by being patient and helping them one by one and one step at a time" for some students to take time to understand the lesson. It is acceptable since Thai students are non-native speakers of the English language.

According to Robert Sternberg's Theory of Intelligence (2005), the three main categories of intelligence that people generally exhibit are present in the same way of measuring in all students: practical intelligence, analytical intelligence, and creative intelligence. Students that possess practical intelligence can easily adjust to their surroundings. These students like to emphasize their abilities while refusing to acknowledge their downsides. In addition, students exhibiting analytical intelligence excel at skills that involve organization, analysis, and reasoning. These students possess exceptional thinking and knowledge comprehension skills. Lastly, students with creative intelligence are exceptional at activities that recognize innovation, creative thinking, exploration, and creativity. These students are excellent contributors to the learning process and have interesting ideas.

Taking everything into account, Shuib (2019) stated the main factors which must be taken into account when incorporating English as the major language of learning and teaching in non-native English-speaking nations: students' behaviors and motivation, students' degree of English language proficiency, teachers' degree of English language proficiency, teachers' capacity to effectively teach English as the primary language of learning and teaching, and institutional support for English as the medium of instruction.

<u>Problem 5. What alternative or proposed intervention procedure could be drawn to resolve or enhance the teachers' effectivity in utilizing their strategy?</u>

This study proposed an intervention program for EFL teachers. It is based on the suggestions of the EFL teachers, their experiences, areas they find more challenging, and a combination of the different strategies they used in developing the students' English language competency, particularly with listening and speaking skills. Since the Chulalongkorn University, Nonthaburi Project conducted training and seminars for the EFL teachers currently employed in the project, the head teachers of the project will be in charge of the practice, training, and workshop in the utilization of the strategies and approaches in developing the listening and speaking competencies. Also, it is suggested to tackle this topic in the seminars and training for the professional development of the EFL teachers and effective utilization of teaching strategies in the classroom.

The listed strategies were categorized based on the needs of the EFL students and the target macro skills that the EFL needed in relation to the lesson they will discuss in the class. Moreover, since the EFL teachers reveal that they struggle in giving instruction, the suggested activities contain instructions that are easy to comprehend but also aid them in acquiring the target language.

Table 3. Proposed Intervention Program

Strategies and Approaches to Develop the English Language Competency							
Learning Strategies and Approaches	Specific Activities	Objectives	Target Macro Skills	Evaluation			
Interactive Strategy	Educational Online Games such as Kahoot, Quizlet, Blooket	To observe students' participation in the activity To boost students' interest in the learning process To make the active students participants in the lesson To improve the student's critical thinking skills	Speaking Listening	The students are expected to join in a specific online game with the assistance of their gadgets. The nature of the online game could be done individually and by groups depending on the teacher's discretion.			
Active Learning Strategy	Think-Pair- Share Brainstorming Peer Teaching Follow-Up Discussions	To check the students' understanding To guide the students in understanding new concepts To encourage the students to think, discuss, and share their acquired knowledge	Speaking Listening	The students are expected to discuss and share their insights about the topic with the group assigned to them. The goal of the activity is to create an environment where students can be comfortable helping each other to achieve a successful learning process.			
Communicative Approach	Telephone Conversations Dialogues	To encourage the students to converse using the target language To observe students' pronunciation To allow the students to answer in a well-organized manner and well-understood context	Speaking Listening	The students must apply the proper ways of answering and interacting using the target language. It is advisable to work it by pair for more effective learning outcomes.			
Inquiry-Based Strategy	Q & A Sessions Incident Process	To develop the higher order thinking skills To check the students' comprehension To guide the students to the proper way of responding to the question	Speaking Listening	The students are expected to apply critical thinking in answering the inquiry. The activity contemplated questions related to real-life situations in preparation for situations outside the classroom.			
Cooperative Learning Approach	Role Playing Drama Skit	To develop the students' learning experience To speak in exchange for interpersonal communication To boost confidence in using the target language	Speaking	The students must interact using the language and develop their creative thinking and communication skills. This activity aims to work efficiently with various people, boost confidence in speaking the target language, and value the insights of individual members.			

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6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to recognize the lived experiences of foreign language teachers in utilizing different teaching strategies in the classroom and how it can help them to become efficient in developing listening and speaking competencies.

The data analysis displays five significant themes related to the participants' experiences in an EFL classroom:

1. What are the lived experiences of EFL teachers in terms of instructional strategies?

Since there are two different people with different languages, the EFL (Filipino) teachers who are using the English language and Thai students who are speaking their native language, the language barrier is one of the problems of EFL teachers in teaching English in the class, especially with the zero English students. With that, the participants find the language barrier as a challenging task in developing the listening and speaking competencies of the students in a way that they need to come up with and use various blended strategies for the students to understand. Also, the EFL teachers utilized conversational instructional strategies and the involvement of technology in their classes because they believe these strategies aid them in becoming effective teachers in an EFL classroom.

2. What strategies and educational approaches do the project observers teach EFL teachers in response to students' needs?

The project observers are the ones who guide the EFL teachers through their monthly observations and suggestions, such as strategies, activities, techniques, and classroom management in response to students' needs. With this, the study revealed the use of reward and positive reinforcement, and bargain and conditioning techniques as one of the suggested strategies by the project observers. With this strategy, the participants concluded that the more the students are being rewarded or given praise in the class, the more they are interactive and show a willingness to participate in the class, for they believed that students like to be rewarded when they do good in the class.

Moreover, more strategies are suggested by the project observers, such as applying the readiness theory in the class and utilizing the visual learning style for the EFL teachers who observed that some students are visual learners. It builds curiosity and interest among the students, especially at the primary level. Lastly, learning by doing to retain and recall the information is important for the students to experience the learning for retention and still recognize Thailand's educational standard using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in the class.

3. What are the challenges encountered by EFL teachers?

The study shows that the EFL teachers struggle in giving instructions and making a conversation with the students in a way that when the teacher explained the instruction about the activity or asked questions about the lesson, they did not a response from the students. It is seen that the language barrier hinders the development of the listening and speaking competency of the students. With this problem, it also found that students lose their interest and willingness to participate in the class when the words or language structure is hard to comprehend.

4. How did the EFL teachers cope with the challenges?

The study shows that by putting up the engagement of students with the use of technology as an activity will help to develop the students' competencies to understand the English language. These coping strategies will not just make the students become interested in the class, but also enjoy the learning process as well.

Furthermore, it highlighted the act of knowing the students' capacity and level of understanding first when choosing an instructional strategy, for it is explained that not all students have the same pacing when it comes to acquiring the language. Also, it is important to be patient with the students, especially with the lower-level students, because English is not their first language and learning English for the students is a long process that needs to focus.

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5. What alternative or proposed intervention procedure could be drawn to resolve or enhance the teachers' effectiveness in utilizing their strategy?

The said intervention program is a combination of participants' suggestions and the researcher's idea to help the EFL teachers choose an appropriate teaching strategy and approach for their classes and become more effective in developing the listening and speaking competencies of the students. Moreover, the intervention program comes up with five learning strategies such as interactive strategy, active learning strategy, communicative approach, inquiry-based strategy, and cooperative learning approach. The researcher also suggested specific activities that the EFL can use in their classes. It emphasizes the target macro skills to choose what is related to the lesson easily.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This phenomenological study about the lived experience of EFL teachers in the Nonthaburi Project concluded that:

- 1. The main challenge for EFL teachers in developing Thai students' listening and speaking competencies is the language barrier. It was seen that when the students have difficulty understanding the language, they lose their interest and become unfocused on the classroom discussion. Because of that, EFL teachers are finding ways to become more effective in teaching the language by seeking different teaching strategies that they can apply in their classes.
- 2. Through the participants' statements, this study explored that interactive strategies are more effective in English classes. Participants believed that the more the students explored the language, the more they could easily understand the lesson. Also, when interactive strategies are executed properly, the teachers can maintain progress in developing listening and speaking competencies. It makes learning more meaningful when students shift from passive to active learners.
- 3. If the strategy is not utilized well in the class, the students might be confused and lose interest. As a result, the development of listening and speaking competencies might fail. It might not achieve the world-class standard school curriculum that the ministry of education in Thailand wants to achieve, especially in foreign languages like English.
- 4. Technology is also a big help to EFL teachers since the generations today are more interactive when technology is involved in the classroom. It is also discovered that there are many interactive educational games where the EFL teachers can improve instruction and actively engage by being efficiently applied in the classroom. It can also help the students develop listening and speaking competencies.
- 5. Teachers remain an essential way of learning even though there are various new materials, cooperative learning, and more opportunity. The materials, strategies, and techniques exist to help assess students' general understanding and modify instruction to meet barriers to learning and the student's abilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is hereby recommended that:

- 1. Implementing interactive, cooperative, and active learning can serve as a framework for teachers to incorporate teaching strategies, lesson plans, and learning activities to strengthen competency and achieve a high level of awareness of both teachers and students in the teaching and learning process.
- 2. The EFL teachers should practice conversation in their EFL classes using the following strategies stated in the intervention program partnered with the specific EFL topics that usually tackle in the EFL classes. For example, how to order in the restaurant, doctor and patient conversation, steps on how to cook, and so on) to make the students gain confidence in conversing in English.
- 3. Involving technology as an educational tool in learning can aid the teacher in developing the student's listening and speaking competencies, for it is revealed that technology can make the students more engage in the class and simultaneously experience the learning for better retention of the lesson.

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- 4. Using different kinds of motivation such as giving praises and rewards will make the students more motivated and interested in the learning process when they receive validation and positive response from their teachers.
- 5. The EFL teachers should attend seminars regarding instructional materials and its strategies for further professional development that can help them become more effective in developing the listening and speaking competencies of the students.
- 6. Adapting the intervention program made by the researcher can help the EFL teachers develop the listening and speaking competencies of the EFL students, for it incorporates interactive, cooperative, and active learning to utilized for they are considered as one of the most prominent concepts.

DECLARATION

The author declares that the ethical standards of research were strictly followed and that there was no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study.

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