

Research Articles

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Book Review

Principles of Intercultural Communication

■ *Patrawut Charoenroop*

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Editor's Note

Season's Greetings! With the release of this new issue, we would like to wish you a merry Christmas and a great New Year 2023.

This issue features three research papers, two academic papers and one book review exploring language and communication in various contexts from diverse perspectives. The first research paper investigates the burning social issue of suicide. Looking at posts by authors with a history of depression on social media platforms from an Interpersonal Theory of Suicide perspective, the posts with suicidal thoughts are classified. The findings reveal insight into the inner workings of the minds of those with depression and contribute to the development of the much-needed support for victims of depression.

The second research paper shifts our attention to a language teaching context. It investigates teachers' opinion towards the use of stories and theme-based teaching using classroom observations and interviews. The findings provide useful suggestions to complement the current teacher training scheme.

Multimodality employed in online selling posts is the issue of interest of the third paper. The paper posits that the effectiveness of online selling posts in the age of disruption is defined by the strategic use of both verbal and non-verbal element known as multimodality. The findings reveal insights into the range of devices employed in online posts of well-received sellers, which can be found useful for academia and online businesspeople alike.

Two academic papers invite us to think about classroom issues. One uses microethnography perspective to survey cultural interactions in business classrooms. Another asks us to consider an issue that potentially hinders language performance, which is anxiety. This paper focuses on the causes of anxiety in writing among EFL learners. The issue ends with a book review that takes us on a tour of the world of intercultural communication with Klyukanov's 10 multi-dimensional *Principles of Intercultural Communication*. This second edition, published in 2021, is essential reading for those wishing to keep up-to-date with the latest advancements in the field.

As the year 2022 is coming to an end, we see not only the changing of year but also the changing state of the world, as we slowly put the Covid-19 pandemic behind us. We now move toward the future with a fresh reminder of a lesson repeatedly learned and forgotten too quickly by many of us oftentimes in the past – that uncertainty is indeed the only certainty. *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication* is committed to be the platform where scholars from different disciplines related to language and communication can showcase their quality work that reveals insights into various social issues and sectors, so that together we contribute to the understanding of this new world, academically.

Warm Regards

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An Analysis of the Language of Suicidal Thoughts and Suicide Attempts on Social Media Platforms through the Lens of the ‘Interpersonal Theory of Suicide’

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Abstract

Language is an essential means to communicate and express how people think or feel. This study aimed to investigate if suicide-related behaviors can be evidenced by linguistic signs in posts on social media platforms. A total of 490 posts from 17 bloggers who had depressive episodes were analyzed. The analysis was based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (Joiner, 2005) frameworks. According to the results, the presence of language related to perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability was found. Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, and emptiness were also reported in the data. These aspects were stated by bloggers in both explicit and implicit ways and could be identified using some linguistic indicators at word level, group level, and clause level. Three patterns of social media posts were revealed: stressed posting, triggering posting, and problem posting. Increased understanding of the language of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts is helpful for family and friends as well as medical practitioners in detecting or in dealing with suicidal thoughts and/or behaviors, and in averting the occurrence and/or recurrence of suicide attempts.

Keywords: depression, major depressive disorder, suicidal behaviors, Interpersonal Theory of Suicide, social media

1. Introduction

Suicide is one of the silent killers that causes numerous deaths around the world. As estimated in 2019, more than 700,000 people take their lives every year (WHO, 2021). In other words, one person ends their life every 40 seconds. Suicide can occur in every level of society from those with low income to those who have a high income. According to *Suicide Worldwide in 2019: The Global Health Estimates Report* (WHO,

2021), suicide is one of the top four causes of death of those aged 15 to 29 years. However, males have a higher rate of suicide than females in this age group. For both genders, suicide was the fourth leading cause of death, after road injury, tuberculosis, and interpersonal violence.

Suicide may occur to anyone. The influential people in the world, celebrities, actors, singers, and the public can be victims of this silent killer. In December 2017, there was the tragic incident of Kim Jonghyun's suicide, a member of SHINee, a famous South Korean boy band. He was found unconscious in his apartment from carbon monoxide poisoning. He left a note revealing that he was broken from the inside and could not overcome his depression which had been slowly consuming him for a long time (Wang, 2017). One of the warning signs he gave before passing away was a tattoo that he posted on his Instagram account. The tattoo depicted a black dog sitting within a frame and the message: *"I have a black dog. If you touch, you'll get bitten!"* This tattoo was the most obvious sign of his mental state, because a black dog is widely known as a metaphor for depression. His fans felt guilty that they were unable to interpret Jonghyun's signs of sadness, even though he posted it on his social media account (Koreaboo, 2017).

Another case is the loss of Chester Bennington, the vocalist of the famous rock band Linkin Park, who was reported to have hung himself in his bedroom. A partially empty bottle of alcohol was found nearby (King, 2018). As reported by CNN, Bennington's wife mentioned that he gave her some warning signs such as self-isolated behavior, a sense of hopelessness, and alcohol addiction. However, she had not been educated to detect precursory signs of potential suicidal, so failed to notice.

Based on the above-mentioned cases, those who succeed in committing suicide give some indicators such as verbal expressions, images, and changes in their behavior. In this active area of research, several studies have concentrated on behaviors predicting suicide attempts. For example, a study by Joiner et al. (2009) disclosed that the presence of perceived burdensomeness and low sense of belongingness in text often resulted in suicidal ideation and the capability to take one's life. Van Orden et al. (2011) also revealed that perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and hopelessness were sufficient for predicting potential suicide attempts. Another study by Selby et al. (2010) of US military personnel indicated that thwarted belongingness and acquired capability were necessary factors leading to suicide.

Aside from observing behaviors, Pompili et al. (2016) reported that half of all those who commit suicide express suicidal intentions before taking their life. Based on previous research, the number of studies about language relating to suicidal ideation or attempts remains inadequate. Results from the study by Wasserman et al. (2008) showed that the participants admitted that they felt they did not receive positive support from others. They also communicated their negative feelings before attempting suicide. Examples of their written expressions are: *"very sad"*, *"life is meaningless"*, and *"my death could free me from my terrible life"*. A more recent study by Angkapanichkit et al.

(2019) focused on the language used by university students with depression. The participants revealed that they felt terrible being in a depressed condition. They used particular groups of vocabulary to express their negative feelings such as self-blame, loneliness, worthlessness, and burdensomeness.

To investigate whether suicide ideations or attempts can be indicated by linguistic signs, the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide, proposed by Joiner (2005), was deployed as a theoretical framework to identify the language showing suicide-related behaviors, and syntactic analysis based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) was applied to extract the language displaying suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Suicide

The word 'suicide' derives from the combination of two Latin bases, *sui* (= of oneself) and *caedere* (= to kill). This word was first introduced in the 17th century by Sir Thomas Browne, an English psychologist and philosopher, in the book named *Relegio Medici* (Karthick & Barwa, 2017). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) in the USA defines suicide as a cause of death by harming oneself with an intention to die. The American Psychological Association (2021) states that suicide is a behavior to take one's life, mostly affected by depression and other psychiatric disorders. It can be concluded that suicide is an act of hurting oneself with the intention of fatal consequences.

The suicide process consists of thinking, planning, and completing. Castle and Kreipe (2007) proposed that there are three types of suicidal behaviors: suicidal ideation, suicide attempt, and completed suicide. Suicidal ideation is a repetitive thought of killing oneself. A suicide attempt is an action with the intent to die, but is unsuccessful. Completed suicide is an act where someone is successful in ending their life. This is similar to Castle and Kreipe (2007) and O' Connor and Nock (2014) who assert that suicidal behaviors are thoughts and behaviors related to the decision of ending one's life. It can be divided into two types. The first type is a suicidal plan – a plan that is created for ending their life. The second is a suicide attempt – a behavior of lethal self-harm.

Commonly, suicide involves three behaviors: suicidal thoughts, suicide attempt, and completed suicide. However, there is a misunderstanding between suicide attempts and self-harm. The major difference is that a suicide attempt is a behavior that someone does to end their life. On the other hand, self-harm is a behavior where someone harms themselves to help cope with poignant thoughts, feelings, or difficulties. Self-harm can be either minor or high-risk behaviors (Foye et al., 2019).

Van Orden and Cornwell (2011) suggest that there are six potential risk factors for suicide. These include: (1) psychiatric illnesses (e.g., dementia, depression, and mood disorder); (2) social disconnectedness; (3) physical illness and pain (e.g., malignancies, heart and lung diseases, and spinal cord injury); (4) functional impairment (e.g., fear of losing autonomy); (5) cognitive and neurobiological processes (e.g., a lack of executive functioning); and (6) personality and cultural factors (e.g., societal attitudes and cultural background). Selby et al. (2010) proposed that previous trauma, low family support, high family conflict, low cognitive ability, and personal and family psychopathological history are key risk factors for suicide. Other risk factors stated by other researchers are childhood physical abuse (Cero & Sifers, 2013; O' Connor & Nock, 2014), low levels of serotonin (Smith & Cukrowicz, 2010), and genetics (Smith & Cukrowicz, 2010).

According to the list of risk factors mentioned above, the predominant factor contributing to suicide is major depressive disorder or depression (Nock et al., 2009). It was reported that 60% of suicide attempts were made by those who have a major depressive disorder. Moreover, people who had depressive symptoms were more likely to commit suicide than the general population (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2022). This is the reason why mental health issues, specifically depression (which is a common precursor to suicide), has been taken into consideration by many sectors of the medical institutions. Although several factors lead to an increase in near-lethal suicide attempts, it can be prevented by supportive relationships with friends, family, and community, accessibility to physical and mental health care, problem-solving skills, and limited access to lethal means (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

2.2 Interpersonal Theory of Suicide

The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide was proposed by Thomas Joiner (2005). This theory focuses on the elaboration of suicidal ideation and the progression from ideation to a suicide attempt. Through the lens of this theory, two interpersonal constructs that predict suicidal desire are 'perceived burdensomeness' and 'thwarted belongingness'. These two constructs may contribute to a person exhibiting suicidal behaviors (Van Orden et al., 2011).

'Perceived burdensomeness' is conceptualized as a belief that the self is a burden on others. Joiner et al. (2009) asserted that individuals who experience perceived burdensomeness have the idea that *"my death will be worth more than my life to family, friends, society, etc., I should not have been born"*. This interpersonal construct can be detected by statements such as *"I make things worse for the people in my life"* or *"I am useless"* or *"I hate myself"*. Family conflict, incarceration, unemployment, physical illness, and homelessness are all potential factors contributing to increasing levels of perceived burdensomeness (Van Orden et al., 2011).

'Thwarted belongingness' is another indicator of a potential to commit suicide. In most cases, people who commit suicide fail to positively connect to others. When the

need for belonging is unmet, this is a state where thwarted belongingness is formed (Van Orden et al., 2011). Individuals who experience failed belongingness tend not to interact with others and isolate themselves from their friends, family, or community. They may feel unwanted, lonely, and out of place. Some of them may express their feelings by stating “*I am alone*” or “*I have no one to turn to.*”

‘Acquired capability’ is another key motivational construct contributing to suicide. It is the development of fearlessness and competence regarding suicide (Stellrecht et al., 2006). There are two dimensions of enacting lethal self-harm – an increased physical pain tolerance, and a lowered fear of death (Van Orden et al., 2011). Repeated intentional self-harm and painful activities can instill those two dimensions leading to a successful suicide. Those who have suicidal ideation use expressions such as “*I want to die*” or “*I want to kill myself.*”

According to previous studies, the three-way interaction of perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability is crucial and it is an indicator to predict whether or not individuals’ current suicidal crises involved suicide attempts as well as desire to commit suicide (Ribeiro & Joiner, 2009; Van Orden et al., 2011). Christensen et al. (2013) reports that the perception of burdensomeness and the absence of belongingness results in acquired capability. Moreover, feeling hopeless was also one of the potential factors leading to suicide.

Perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability are three significant components in the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide. These three constructs explain how suicidal ideation develops into suicide attempts and then successful suicide. This is the reason why this framework was adopted in this study, to determine if posts on social media also show the existence of suicidal ideations or suicidal behaviors, and then is used to identify which constructs are evident.

2.3 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

SFL was developed by M.A.K. Halliday in the 1960s. This theoretical framework explains how language functions and how language is deployed in different contexts. From the SFL viewpoint, language is composed of four strata which are context, semantics, lexicogrammar, and phonology-graphology. The focus of this study is on the system of wording or lexicogrammar level as the objective is to investigate if suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts can be evidenced by any linguistic signs in social media posts.

To analyze the data, the rank scale of the grammatical hierarchy is adopted (Thompson, 2004). This rank scale consists of morpheme level, word level, group/phrase level, and clause level as shown in Figure 1. This study only focused on three levels: the word level, the group/phrase level, and the clause level. The morpheme level was not included in this study because Thai is an isolating language. Morpheme usage is not a significant feature when compared to word usage. Thus, starting at the word level as an

entry point of discussion is appropriate. This theoretical concept will be helpful for extracting how the language of suicide is constructed in written material.

Figure 1

Rank Scale of Grammatical Hierarchy (Thompson, 2004)

Clauses e.g., /// Computer facilities are free of charge /// <i>are made up of one or more</i>
Groups/Phrases e.g., /// [computer facilities] [are] [free of charge] /// <i>are made up of one or more</i>
Words e.g., [{computer} {facilities}] <i>are made up of one or more</i>
Morphemes e.g., {<compute><er>} {<facility><s>}

2.4 Social Media

Social media is computer-mediated communication. It is a type of digital communication occurring with the support of a computer, such as instant messaging, email, and video conferencing (Bohn, 2021). Kakkar (2020) suggests that there are eight types of social media:

- (1) social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn),
- (2) media sharing networks (e.g., Youtube, Instagram, Snapchat),
- (3) discussion forums (e.g., Reddit, Quora),
- (4) bookmarking and content curation networks (e.g., Pinterest),
- (5) consumer review networks (e.g., TripAdvisor, Agoda),
- (6) blogging and publishing networks (e.g., WordPress, Tumblr, Medium),
- (7) social shopping networks (e.g., Etsy, Shein, Fancy), and
- (8) interest-based networks (e.g., Houzz, Goodreads).

The advantages of social media are on three principal levels: the personal level, the professional level, and the company level. On a personal level, social media is a means to communicate with others such as friends, family, and colleagues, as well as a way to learn new information, develop interests, and have enjoyment. On a professional level, social media can be used to build and broaden professional networks and expand knowledge in a particular field. On a company level, social media is beneficial for organizations to communicate with customers, gain feedback, and advertise their company (University of South Florida, 2021). Nevertheless, users should be aware that

personal information posted on social media is not safe. It can be shared, stolen, or sold for commercial purposes. Also, the information found in social media is not wholly reliable as it can be edited by anyone.

Social media use yields both positive and negative outcomes related to psychological distress and suicidal ideation (Daine et al., 2013; Radovic et al., 2017). Based on semi-structured interviews, Radovic et al. (2017: 5) reported both positive and negative use of social media: positive use included searching for positive content (e.g., for entertainment, humor, content creation) or for social connection; negative use included sharing risky behaviors, cyberbullying, and for making self-denigrating comparisons with others possible.

Negative aspects of social media use include social media fatigue (Dhir et al., 2018), and significant reductions in loneliness and depression by limiting social media use (Hunt et al., 2018). Potential risks of problematic use of social media for well-being are reported on three main themes: (i) time spent and sleep quality (Brunborg & Andreas, 2019; Sampasa-Kanyinga & Lewis, 2015; Woods & Scott, 2016; Yan et al., 2017); (ii) Internet activity, namely passive and active Facebook use (Frison & Eggermont, 2016); and (iii) use of various social media platforms (Barry et al., 2017), including a wide range research on Internet addiction in various context (China: Wang et al., 2018; Korea: Kim et al., 2006; Taiwan: Lin et al., 2014; Thailand: Hanprathet et al., 2015; Turkey: Aydin et al., 2021).

In terms of self-harm and suicidal ideation, several studies have reported on constructive Internet use, namely seeking empathy and support, professional help-seeking, and coping strategies (Jones et al., 2011; Smithson et al., 2011). However, negative influences of Internet use have also been investigated by numerous scholars including cyberbullying (Hay & Meldrum, 2010; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010), depression (Barak & Dolev-Cohen, 2006; Park et al., 2013), increased risk of self-harm (Lam et al., 2009), and suicidal ideation (Katsumata et al., 2008).

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

Social media data used in this study were collected from personal weblogs i.e., Storylog (<https://storylog.co>), Blogger (<http://depressedream.blogspot.com>), and Bloggang (<https://www.bloggang.com/viewdiary.php?id=panicattack&month=04-2017&group=1>). The posts were selected following a predetermined data selection criteria. The criteria contained five requirements as described below:

- (1) The posts were written in Thai to share the experience of being in a depressed mood or having major depressive disorder (MDD).
- (2) Keywords and metaphorical expressions related to depression and suicide were used to search for posts with depressed messages and suicidal behaviors. Examples of keywords include depressed, depression, MDD, failure, die, death, suicide, worthless, and loneliness. Instances of metaphorical expressions are black dog, black hole, trash, corpse, and alien.
- (3) As this study was a retrospective cohort study, the posts were published during the period 2015 to 2020, so that the development of depression and suicidal behaviors were presented over time.
- (4) The posts were written as either prose or poetry. However, the content had to be written by the bloggers. Lyrics, poems, or any piece of writing by others – and cited in any post – were excluded from the analysis in this study.
- (5) Each blog had at least 15 entries, with more than 60% of posts in each blog presenting ideas about a depressed mood, depression, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and/or suicide attempt(s). The cutoff point of 15 post entries is in accordance with a definition of depressive episodes. That is, a person who experiences depressed mood (feeling sad, irritable, empty) or a loss of pleasure or interest in activities, for most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks is diagnosed with depression (WHO, 2021).

After completing the data selection process, 490 posts from 17 bloggers were included in the study. There were 403,172 words in total. This study included five male bloggers and 12 females. All the posts were written in Thai. They were translated into English by the researchers and back-translated by an English native speaker to ensure the translation accuracy.

3.2 Data Analysis

Discourse analysis was applied as an interpretive method in this study. The identification of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts were based on the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (Joiner, 2005). In order to recognize language reflecting suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts, the data were analyzed using SFL. The deployment of syntactic analysis was set. The units of the analysis were on three levels of rank scale of grammatical hierarchy (i.e., word level, group/phrase level, and clause level). After reading the entire text, the data were extracted and analyzed, starting with word level, group/phrase level, and clause level, respectively. Lexical choices, phrases, and clauses displaying the feelings, thoughts, and actions related to perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability as reported by the bloggers were marked. To ensure a high accuracy rate, the data were individually double-checked by two coders who have expertise in counseling psychology and linguistics.

4. Results

The language used by the bloggers indicated suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and a desire to commit suicide. Of the bloggers, 71% (12 out of 17) indicated perceived burdensomeness. Twelve bloggers showed a sense of thwarted belongingness. Regarding acquired capability, the presence of acquired capability was found in the writing of 11 bloggers. Among them, seven bloggers (or 41%) expressed all three constructs of the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide through their text. The results also revealed that language signaling of perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, acquired capability, and other suicidal thoughts and behaviors could be detected by the linguistics indicators.

4.1 Word Level Analysis

At the word level, keywords and word frequency were extracted. The top 10 most frequent words are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Top ten most frequent words

No.	Words	Instances	%	Word classes
1.	pronoun: I [เรา, ฉัน]	4,923	2.74	Grammatical word
2.	relative pronoun [ที่]	4,407	2.45	Grammatical word
3.	conjunction [ก็]	3,178	1.77	Grammatical word
4.	aspect marker [ได้]	2,982	1.66	Grammatical word
5.	negation [ไม่]	2,961	1.65	Grammatical word
6.	complementizer [ว่า]	2,712	1.51	Grammatical word
7.	auxiliary: future [จะ]	2,344	1.31	Grammatical word
8.	pronoun: it [มัน]	2,221	1.24	Grammatical word
9.	verb: go [ไป]	2,221	1.24	Content word
10.	conjunction [แต่]	2,032	1.13	Grammatical word

Among the 10 most frequent words, grammatical words were dominantly found (9 out of 10). The first-person pronoun and its variant as self-referencing verbal behavior (i.e., I [เรา and ฉัน]) were ranked first. It is interesting to note that the sixth rank (ว่า) was classified as a complementizer linking between two clauses (i.e., projecting and projected clauses). The projecting clauses were expressed by verbs of sensing (e.g., *feel*, *think*, *be bored*, and *be afraid of*). Verbs of sensing projected another clause containing cognitive words of burdensomeness (e.g., *I feel that I am a burden on everyone*; *I am bored to be a burden on others*) and thwarted belongingness (e.g., *I feel like I am an alien*; *I feel that I am an unwanted person*; *When I am down, I feel like I am alone*.)

By qualitatively examining the data, it was found that language indicating perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability had both similarities and differences in language use at the word level of analysis. The obvious similarity among the texts was that they all used the first-person pronoun ‘I’ repeatedly throughout their blogs.

In terms of conjunctions, there was no specific use of this linguistic element. The use of conjunctions, such as *and*, *because*, *when*, and *if*, can be widely seen in the texts. The major differences in the language relating to the constructs of perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability was the content word. There was a range of keywords and lexical metaphors used by the bloggers to identify each concept.

Table 2

Linguistic realization of the three constructs of the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide

Realization Aspects	Explicit realization			Implicit realization
	Nouns	Verbs	Phrases and clauses	Metaphor & idiom
perceived burdensomeness	a burden, a problem, a mistake, a problem, a difficulty, and a trouble maker	burden	I am a burden. I am an onus. I am an obstruction to others. I am dependent. I am useless. I am weak. I should not be born. I waste of parent's money. I make others in trouble. I make everyone fed up.	<u>metaphor</u> : trash, a retard lump <u>idiom</u> : a good for nothing
thwarted belongingness	disconnection, disassociation, and loneliness	disconnect, isolate	I am lonely. I am alone. No one cares, if I die. Among friends, I am not part of the group. I am different from others. I have no one understand me. I am lonely in the big world. I should not be alive in this universe. I lock myself in my gray world.	an alien, a monster, unwanted cells, gray world, Jupiter and Pluto, and dwarf planet

acquired capability	<u>nouns</u> : a cutter, a knife, a pair of scissors, a gun, a rope, a wire, filament stretch cords, and sleeping pills <u>place names</u> : a bridge, stairs, building, a dorm	self-cut, self-graze, tie, hang, overdose, and suicide	I increase taking sleeping pills. I have committed suicide, when there is no one at home.	—
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Table 2 presents linguistic resources expressing three aspects of the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide. The suicidal aspects are realized by content words (i.e., nouns and verbs), phrases, clauses, metaphors, and idioms.

The three constructs of the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (i.e., perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability) were categorized based on Joiner et al.'s (2009) description as presented in Section 2.2 above. To provide more insight, the results are discussed relating to these three concepts in the following sections.

Perceived Burdensomeness

People who want to end their lives believe they are a burden on others. They think they are expendable members of their circle of friends, family, and community groups. The presence of language showing perceived burdensomeness was frequently found, with results similar to the previous research by Joiner et al. (2009), Van Orden et al. (2011), and Angkapanichkit et al. (2019). As shown in the data, the high use of the personal pronoun 'I' was deployed to indicate that the bloggers were the narrator and also the agent of the actions mentioned in the posts. 'I' often occurred with content words showing negative feelings about being a burden or trouble for the others (e.g., *burden*, *trouble*, *mistake*, *problem*, and *retardation*). Examples of the language expressing the perception of burdensomeness are as below:

(1)

"...It's hard to express my feelings. I get mixed up. Should I speak it out or keep it shut? I don't want to be a burden..."
(DP05_04)

(2)

"...I feel that I am a burden. I am a trouble maker. I put others in a difficult situation..." (DP01_11)

The results also reveal that some bloggers use a lexical metaphor to explain how they view themselves. According to the data, the metaphor reflecting the sense of burdensomeness is the word ‘*trash*’.

(3)

“...I have no reason to live. I’m a burden. I’m trash that everyone doesn’t want. Everyone gets bored with me. They’re fed up with me...” (DP11_03)

This passage illustrates that the blogger uses the metaphorical word ‘*trash*’ to define herself as an unwanted thing. This metaphor also shows how the blogger perceives herself as undesirable and disgusting. Moreover, the metaphorical word ‘*trash*’ implies another dimension of perceived burdensomeness which is self-hatred.

In some cases, perceived burdensomeness cannot be detected by the given content words that the blogger has feelings of burdensomeness as they do not directly state that they are a burden or cause trouble to others. Instead, they explain how they feel about themselves. An example is provided below:

(4)

“...I don’t want anyone to worry about me. Because of that, I need to act like I’m okay, even if I’m sad or broken...” (DP03_02)

In passage (4), the blogger does not directly use any keywords relating to a sense of burdensomeness. However, the content words describe negative feelings (i.e., *worry*, *sad*, and *broken*). The blogger also uses a negative clause structure with the main verb ‘*want*’ to indicate something that she does not desire to happen. Furthermore, she uses a clause consisting of the word ‘*need*’ emphasizing necessity and the subordinating conjunction ‘*even if*’ to show the contradiction between her true feelings and what she has to do in order not to be a burden on others.

Thwarted Belongingness

In terms of thwarted belongingness, several posts showed that the bloggers were lonely and disconnected from family, friends, and community. The sense of failed belongingness often happens in a situation when a person believes that no one understands how they feel or gives them the support that they want. The language representing thwarted belongingness coincides with prior research by Wesserman et al. (2008), Joiner et al. (2009), Selby et al. (2010), Van Orden et al. (2011), and Angkapanichkit et al. (2019). The bloggers in this study expressed their feelings by using keywords such as *loneliness*, *lonely*, and *disconnect*. Some examples of text inferring unmet belongingness are provided below:

(5)

“...I think I’m used to being lonely because I’m the one who isolates myself from them. It seems like they are Jupiter, a gigantic planet surrounded by moons, while I’m just Pluto – a dwarf planet filled with sadness and grief. Pluto like me should be a friend with shadow. Perfect matching...”
(DP07_17)

The above-mentioned passage contains the keyword ‘*lonely*’ signifying the sense of failed belongingness. The word ‘*isolate*’ is also the indicator of thwarted belongingness as it is a verb describing the action of keeping oneself away from others. Furthermore, the blogger varies her lexical choices by deploying some metaphorical expressions, i.e., ‘*Jupiter*’, ‘*Pluto*’, and ‘*shadow*’ to elaborate on how she perceives loneliness and inferiority. According to the text, the blogger compares herself to a ‘*dwarf planet*’, while others in her life are ‘*Jupiter*’ with several moons nearby.

In some cases, the lack of belongingness is not explicitly stated, but it is presented in a way that explains why the bloggers feel excluded from family, friends, or community within which they are living. The examples of implicit language representing thwarted belongingness are as follows:

(6)

“...No one wants a gloomy person. I have decided to lock myself in my gray world – a world that nobody can experience and understand. Only sobbing and tears are with me...” (DP05_10)

In passage (6), the lexical choices show negative feelings. The attribute ‘*gloomy*’ is applied to describe the characteristics of the blogger as a depressed person. In addition, the word ‘*gray*’ is used to refer to several unpleasant feelings such as *sadness*, *melancholy*, and *joylessness*. It was observed that many bloggers metaphorically expressed their depressed feelings in terms of dull colors. This finding is in line with the results reported by Carruthers et al. (2010).

(7)

“...I have more than enough to get by. However, there are a few things that I’ve never had for 30 years, and I still haven’t found a way to get them. They’re the relationship, belongingness, acceptance, usefulness, and a sense of being loved by someone. I’ve never experienced them or even been in a relationship with a normal person who has good intentions...” (DP01_79)

(8)

“...I always wonder why I feel unfulfilled. I think it’s because I have not received enough love from my family. When I told others about this, most of them scolded me because they thought I was ungrateful for my parents...” (DP04_09)

Based on the passages above, the bloggers indirectly express that they feel different and do not belong to others. The negation ‘not’ is used with some verbs i.e., ‘have’ and ‘receive’ to explain the lack and unavailability of love, support, and understanding from those who are close to them. People should be cautious if there is an ongoing occurrence of these negative feelings because they can develop into chronic feelings of failed belongingness and loneliness, and possibly lead to self-harm or suicide if not resolved.

Acquired Capability

Acquired capability is a feeling that one is already experiencing a sense of burdensomeness and an unmet need to belong until they cannot handle it anymore, hence, they decide to end all problems by taking their own life. Acquired capability is not only about having suicidal thoughts, but also risking repetitive non-lethal or lethal self-harm. Two core dimensions related to acquired capability are lowered fear of death and an elevated physical pain tolerance. Based on the results, the expressions of acquired capability are associated with a number of content words showing deleterious actions of harming oneself (e.g., *self-cutting*, *hanging*, and *jumping from high structures*) and some suicide-related vocabularies (e.g., *kill*, *overdose*, *death*, and *die*) which coincides with the findings on thwarted belongingness in the research by Wesserman et al. (2008), Joiner et al. (2009), Selby et al. (2010), Van Orden et al. (2011), and Angkapanichkit et al. (2019). Examples of language indicating the construct of acquired capability are given below:

(9)

“...Here we go again. While I’m typing this, I’m drinking beer and doing something that someone might think is horrifying. I’m experimenting on how long I can continue cutting my wrist without feeling pain...” (DP10_60)

(10)

“...I once attempted to end my life (I can’t even remember how many times I have done that). Since I was in grade 3, I’ve always had thoughts about killing myself. One day, I was in a car with my parents. I saw a wire. I picked it emotionlessly and tied it around my neck...” (DP03_17)

Bloggers express their behaviors showing acquired capability and clear methods used for hurting themselves through the text. The content words such as *cut*, *tie*, *end*, and *pain* are presented. In passage (9), the blogger directly says she cuts her wrist to see how long she can endure it. This behavior shows that she has a tolerance for pain, which is one of the factors leading to a capability of suicide. Another example is in passage (10) where the blogger uses a wire to bind herself. This indicates that the blogger has a lowered fear of death, which results in lethal self-harm.

Not only language showing the above-mentioned aspects but also language about the exposure to a weapon or suicidal methods provides the signs of near-lethal suicide attempts. According to the data, the most frequently reported methods of self-harm were cutting the wrist with cutters or scissors, jumping from bridges or high buildings, or taking a toxic amount of medicine, in that order. There were several content words specifying methods for hurting oneself, such as *car accidents*, *stabbing*, and *injections*. Some general nouns relating to means to commit suicide (e.g., *a cutter*, *a knife*, *a bridge*, *stairs*, *a building*, and *a dormitory*) were also indicators of language inferring acquired capability.

(11)

“...I cut my wrist for the first time. I just want to end it all...” (DP10_125)

(12)

“...I look at those pills in my hand and take them have it all at once (I hope I can fall asleep forever or die)...” (DP03_17)

Other Types of Language Representing Suicidal Thoughts and Attempts

When assessing suicide-related behaviors, language reporting a sense of worthlessness, hopelessness, and emptiness are also predictors of suicidal tendencies. These senses differ from that of the three aspects of suicidal behaviors in terms of their frequency and duration of occurrence. The bloggers who reported these feelings later described an attempt to hurt themselves in either non-lethal or lethal ways. Those who repeatedly feel worthless tend to think that they are unwanted, so they plan to end their lives. Regarding hopelessness, when bloggers asked for help and did not receive support from their friends, family, or community, they reported feeling hopeless. For those who showed a sense of emptiness, they disclosed that being empty made them lose their minds. To be able to pull themselves together, self-harm is a method that they often use to alleviate their emotional pain. The lexical choices specifying these negative feelings were *worthless*, *hopeless*, *empty*, and *nothing*. Examples of language indicating these feelings are provided below:

(13)

“...I feel worthless because I cannot work properly. I also find my life worthless. There is no space for an incompetent person like me...” (DP10_12)

(14)

“...I stop asking for help. It isn’t because I’m getting better. It’s because I feel hopeless...” (DP05_03)

(15)

“...I think emptiness is scarier than sorrow. At least I feel sad when I’m sad but being empty is nothing, literally nothing. It’s a big hollow and it’s difficult to fill it up...” (DP10_120)

4.2 Group/Phrase Level Analysis

At the group/phrase level of analysis, the use of nominal group, verbal group, adverbial group, and preposition phrase were found in the language of the blogs, reflecting the tendency towards self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempt(s) of the bloggers. Generally, the nominal group and verbal group both contained keywords capturing unpleasant feelings, suicidal thoughts, and suicidal behaviors. In the nominal group, the keywords commonly served as both subject and object. The verbal group had a simple structure containing some predicator (e.g., *find*, *live*, *wake up*, and *tell*), aspect (e.g., *already* and *still*), and polarity (not) resources. The adverbial group frequently indicated how long the negative feelings, emotions, or events had occurred, and how often those feelings or events occurred (e.g., *all the time*, *these days*, *forever*, *every day*, and *every time*). There were only a few examples of the preposition phrase in this study, for example, a mention of the location (e.g., *in the room* and *at my dorm*) where the events occurred. Examples of these four groups are as follows:

Nominal Group

(16)

“... Actually, I am addicted to emptiness. It hurts.” (DP09_12)

(17)

“...Most of my body parts are full of wounds. It is an addiction. I self-cut when I have feelings of worthlessness and emptiness. This is the first door leading to death...” (DP09_12)

Verbal Group

(18)

“...I cannot find any reason to live in this fucking world. I have no feelings left. Sometimes, I wake up with emptiness...” (DP09_02)

(19)

“...I cannot tell anyone because no one understands me...” (DP06_33)

Adverbial Group

(20)

“...I don’t want anyone to be worried about me. Because of that, I need to act like I’m okay all the time, even if I’m sad or broken...” (DP03_02)

(21)

“...Every time I feel bad. Every time I feel worthless. I decide to hurt myself...” (DP09_3)

Preposition Phrase

(22)

“...I lock myself in my room. I shut myself away from everything. I’m drawn to the darkness. The room is so quiet that I can hear a whisper in my head...” (DP10_27)

(23)

“...When I arrived at my dorm, I decided to do something (that is cut my wrist). It’s not severe but it’s worse than the previous time...” (DP02_03)

4.3 Clause Level Analysis

Three clause types – declarative clause, interrogative clause, and imperative clause – appeared in this study. The examples of each clause type and how they were presented in the text are given below:

Declarative Clauses

Declarative clauses were the most common type of clause found in the corpus. This clause type was used to explain bloggers’ symptoms, emotions, feelings, and experiences. The following passages are the examples of how the bloggers applied these

types of clauses to express what they were thinking or feeling at that moment and to share their experience.

Declarative Clause: Expressing Feelings or Opinions

(24)

“...I prefer living alone. I have an idea to isolate myself from people. I can’t live with others...” (DP17_01)

(25)

“...I was so distressed. I suffered. Still, I tried to be happy. However, there was no way to make me happy...” (DP03_05)

Declarative Clause: Telling Experiences

(26)

“...When I think of killing myself, the beginning of it is the sadness that I have disappointed someone. I cause trouble and can’t solve it, so I blame myself...” (DP10_07)

(27)

“...Yesterday, I overdosed on two kinds of sleeping pills that the doctor gave me. This was my fourth attempt (but I never receive any treatment)...” (DP12_04)

Interrogative Clauses

According to the analysis, the identified interrogative clauses were wh-interrogative clauses. Wh-interrogative clauses can be realized by the use of wh-elements i.e., *why*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *how*. The most frequently found element was the word ‘*why*’, as the bloggers tended to ask for a reason or an explanation for a particular feeling or situation that they were currently encountering. Also, the presence of the word ‘*what*’ was commonly used to ask about a method, ‘*how*’ was deployed to inquire about solutions to escape from mental crisis, yet, the words ‘*when*’ and ‘*where*’ seldom appeared in the data.

Why: Asking for a Reason of Loneliness and Meaning of Life

(28)

“...Life has both good and bad sides, but why.... Why do I have to be alone?...” (DP08_22)

(29)

“...I try to be patient in both study and family issues. I feel like it would be better if I died. I’ve suffered too much. Plus, I’m just a bad child. Why do I have to be alive?...”

(DP10_125)

What: Asking for a Method of Suicidal Act

(30) a burden on others

“...I am a burden on everyone. What can I do so I can disappear?...” (DP11_01)

When: Asking about Time of Being Recovered from Depressed Mood

(31)

“...I’m bored. When will I be normal? When will I stop being a trouble-maker? I’m too useless to be alive...”

(DP11_22)

What and How: Asking About Solutions and Where: Asking About Place

(32)

“...I ask myself repeatedly: what should I do? how must I do for those feelings to disappear, I don’t want to be like this. Shall I get a knife and stab myself, or should I take sleep pills and sleep for good? Where can I buy sleeping pills?”

(DP06_01)

Imperative Clause

Few imperative clauses were found in the data. The imperative clauses were the jussive imperative clause, where the bloggers asked someone to do something for them. For instance:

(33)

“...Don’t waste your time blaming me. Stab me. I want to die so I’m no longer a burden on others...” (DP10_76)

The passage above, contains two jussive imperative clauses. The first imperative clause is where the blogger orders their interlocutor to stop ‘*blaming me*’. The other clause is when the blogger orders the interlocutor to stab him so he could be freed from being a burden on others.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to examine posts on social media platforms to determine if suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts can be evidenced by linguistic elements used by the bloggers. Syntactic analysis and three constructs of the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (i.e., perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and acquired capability) were cooperatively applied to discover language showing suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts. Based on the three key motivational aspects of the model, there were no discernable differences in the expression of the three constructs for either the males or females.

The results are consistent with prior studies by Wesserman et al. (2008), Joiner et al. (2009), Selby et al. (2010), Van Orden et al. (2010), and Angkapanichkit et al. (2019). The analysis reveals that language signaling suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts can be evidenced by linguistic signs. At the word level, content words played a key role in assisting detection of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts. There were several keywords indicating suicidal ideations and behaviors such as *burden*, *trouble*, *loneliness*, *death*, *helplessness*, and *worthless*. In some cases, suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts were implicitly stated by using metaphorical expressions such as *trash*, and a contrast between the planets *Pluto*, and *Jupiter*. Also, it was found that language representing worthlessness, hopelessness, and emptiness can be potential indicators for predicting suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts. In terms of pronouns, the personal pronoun ‘*I*’ was the most-used pronoun found in this study. This might be because the bloggers are the narrator and gave most attention to themselves which can be implied as a self-focused idea. At the group/phrase level, nominal group and verbal group mostly existed in association with negative keywords to convey the bloggers’ pessimistic thoughts or feelings. The adverbial group indicated how long the bloggers had had their negative feelings or symptoms. Concerning the location, the preposition phrase was found but it was rarely used in this corpus. At the clause level, three types of clauses were used by the bloggers: declarative clause, interrogative clause, and imperative clause. The declarative clause was widely used to report the bloggers’ experiences or actions and to convey feelings or thoughts. The second most frequently found clause in the data was the interrogative clause. Even though this clause type is normally used to indicate the question speech function, most interrogative clauses used by the bloggers in this study seemed to be a type of self-talk or rhetorical questions. The imperative clause was the least frequently used by the bloggers, where they gave a command and a suggestion to their interlocutor, how to deal with depression symptoms, negative mood, and a person in a depressed state.

Knowing how people communicate their suicidal thoughts and attempts at suicide is helpful for suicide surveillance. If someone conveys these types of communication, positive support from family, friends, or people in their community (e.g., paying more attention to them, standing by their side, listening to them without being judgmental, and

taking them to a therapist) should be provided. However, the results are still inconclusive and should be taken with caution.

Based on quantitative results, the first-person singular pronoun ‘I’ was predominantly used to express the bloggers as self-focus of attention and was one of the key linguistic indicators of depression. This finding is in line with previous studies affirming that frequent use of first person singular pronouns is associated with depressive symptoms (Angkapanichkit et al., 2019; Edwards & Holtzman, 2017; Jarrold et al., 2011; Rude et al., 2004; Sloan, 2005; Zimmermann et al., 2013; Zimmermann et al., 2017).

This current study provided a syntactical approach based on rank scale to detect online activity that contained suicide-related behavior messages. Three patterns of social media posting of depressed persons were observed: stressed posting, triggering posting, and problem posting. The first two patterns were detected and described by Radovic et al. (2017). Stressed posting is defined as sharing negative updates such as reactions to stress and depressed mood. Triggering posting is defined as sharing unpleasant content such as negative coping such as self-harm, disordered eating, alcohol drinking, and isolation. In this current study, problem posting refers to sharing problematic experiences such as in family relationships and expectations, personality and life skills, bullying, loss of a loved one, financial problems, and traumatic experiences. Observing these three posting themes can be used to detect suicide-related behaviors in social media platforms.

As this study has a limited size corpus, a larger corpus would provide more promising results and a greater dataset. Further studies focusing on analyzing the language of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts in various sources of information is recommended. This would then provide a structure for characterizing the language representing suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts more accurately.

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Thai EFL Teachers' Experiences and Viewpoints of Using Stories and Themes for Teaching English to Young Learners

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Abstract

This qualitative research study aims to investigate the Thai English teachers' experiences and views toward story and theme-based teaching to young learners in Thailand, and also to compare the findings between two groups of teachers with different educational backgrounds. A purposive sampling of four Thai English teachers from four different schools was employed for the study. The data were collected from 10 classroom observations over a period of two months and was followed by a semi-structured interview of each participant. The research instruments include the observation checklist, field notes, and semi-structured interviews which were developed based on the theoretical framework of Cameron (2001). The data were analyzed in the form of the frequency of the occurrences. The findings revealed that all participants are inexperienced in incorporating stories into teaching and have very little knowledge and skills in teaching English through themes. Paradoxically, they are aware of the benefits of both teaching methods. These findings show that teacher training at the universities may be insufficient to prepare good teachers of the English language to teach young learners and most of them still require proper and continual pedagogical training on story and theme-based teaching as well as other teaching methods for young learners at a specific age group.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Story-Based Teaching, Theme-Based Teaching, Young Learners, Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Introduction

The English language has become increasingly permeated into daily life because it is widely used as a global language tool to connect people from different countries around the world both in academic and non-academic contexts. In a non-academic context, the English language can be found on labels of food and household products, in movies and songs, in published news articles and other documents, and on social media. Therefore, schools must equip their students with English language proficiency and competence from

an early age to help them survive competitively in a globalized world where English is used as a global language.

In the past, most young learners (YLS) of the English language, especially learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), had a limited opportunity to use English in a classroom context. They also had very little exposure to the natural usage of the English language in their daily lives. However, now YLS are increasingly exposed to English used outside their classroom environment due to the rapid growth of digital technology. Thus, children growing up in the digital age are more likely than before to have the potential to engage and achieve English language competence from a very young age. Dryden and Mukherji (2014) also suggested that YLS at their prime stage of learning (age 2 to 12 years old), can acquire a second or a foreign language faster than adults because of their readiness in terms of cognitive functions. Therefore, to develop competency in English or other second languages, it is better to start the developmental process at a young age (Bland, 2015).

Nonetheless, the acquisition of English at a young age cannot always guarantee the perfect attainment of second language competence because YLS still need guidance from knowledgeable teachers and appropriate language teaching methods to facilitate and shape the process of language development in the right way (Bialystok, 1997; Nikolov & Djigunović, 2006). Several researchers such as Cameron (2001), Kiziltan and Ersanli (2007), Sesorina (2014), and Shin (2006) have suggested various teaching methods that are appropriate for teaching EFL for YLS. Some of these methods include teaching English through stories and themes, which can focus on different language knowledge and skills development. According to Machdarifah and Yunita (2019), integrating stories and language can develop YLS' critical thinking, interpreting, and communication abilities. They further stated that the two significant drawbacks to success in EFL classes for both teachers and YLS are motivation and communication. Most students may have knowledge of the grammatical and linguistic structure of English, but most of them may fail to practice these skills properly. The stories provide a key solution to these problems because stories not only motivate YLS but also exemplify the use of grammatical structures in the target language.

Moreover, as most English textbooks contain different themes, teachers must still supplement activities under the same themes provided in textbooks in order to extend knowledge for YLS. According to Cameron (2001) and Shin (2006), theme-based teaching method allows teachers to create interconnected activities and tasks under one theme. Furthermore, content from other subjects can be incorporated into each theme for teaching and learning the English language. These are the reasons which support the concept that story and theme-based teaching methods are helpful for teaching EFL to YLS.

EFL Teaching for YLs in Thailand

In Thailand, the English language has been a compulsory foreign language subject in the Thai Basic Education Core Curriculum for primary education levels since 1999. In the past, many researchers claimed that English language teachers use the traditional teaching method which is teacher-centered. Nowadays, the approach of learner-centered and technology-based language learning is favored more than the traditional teacher-centered method, and the teaching and learning activities were suggested to shift toward autonomous and independent learning (Methitham & Chamcharatsri, 2011).

In evaluating the success or failure of the reform movement in teaching EFL to YLs, English language teachers are one of the key factors to study since they are responsible for implementing the policy into practice. According to previous research, most Thai English language teachers have commonly reported that they adopted Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as their main teaching approach (Methitham, 2009; Methitham & Chamcharatsri, 2011; Saengboon, 2002), which corresponds to the principle of EFL teaching as stated in the English core curriculum. For Thai teachers who teach EFL to YLs in particular, Prasongporn (2016) pointed out that more than 50% of primary school teachers in Thailand did not graduate with English language-related degrees. Moreover, they had to be responsible to teach other subjects besides teaching the English language. Even though some teachers received degrees in English major, most of them still lack the knowledge and skills required for English language teaching, especially those for teaching YLs of particular age groups. Moreover, Noom-Ura (2013) also reported that some English language teachers lack skills and knowledge of the proper English teaching methods. Teaching English through stories and themes are believed to be useful teaching methods for YLs. Teaching through stories enables YLs to understand and appreciate other cultures, societies, and beliefs which may differ from their own while, at the same time, encouraging personal growth and academic development (Carter et al., 1988). Teaching English through themes is another appropriate teaching method because it allows for many lessons and activities to be created under a single theme while simultaneously permitting the incorporation of other subjects under its umbrella. Therefore, it is important for the researchers to investigate whether the teachers have the knowledge and skills required for the two teaching methods, and also to compare the similarities and differences relating to the teaching experiences and viewpoints between teachers from two different educational backgrounds.

Research Questions

1. What are Thai EFL teachers' experiences and viewpoints on using stories and themes for teaching EFL to YLs at the primary schools (grade 1 to grade 6) in Ubon Ratchatani Province?

2. Are there any similarities or differences, relating to their experiences and viewpoints toward teaching EFL through stories and themes, comparing teachers who hold a B.Ed. and a B.A. in English major at Ubon Rajabhat University in Ubon Ratchatani Province?

Literature Review

Young Learners' Second Language Acquisitions

The Critical Period Hypothesis is held accountable for the L2 acquisition of YLs, as mentioned by several researchers (Birchwood et al., 1998; Singleton, 2005; Singleton & Lengyel, 1995). Age is considered one of the most significant factors that most researchers used to explain the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition. Brown (1994, p. 52) claimed that, for L2 acquisition, there is “a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which language is increasingly difficult to acquire”. McLaughlin (1987) also added that there is a fixed biologically determined period for the L2 acquisition of children between the ages of 2 to 12 years old. Moreover, with an early age start, constant exposure to the target language and proper teaching techniques is believed to positively affect the rate of language learning (Gürsoy, 2011).

There have been various theories that describe the nature of L2 acquisition, which enable language teachers to understand the language learning process of YLs and to better design proper syllabuses, teaching processes, and classroom activities for YLs. For instance, Ellis (1994, as cited in Ipek, 2009) stated that there are three stages of the L2 developmental process which are the silent period, formulaic speech, and structural and semantic simplification. According to Ellis (1994, as cited in Ipek, 2009) learners develop second language competence through listening first before speaking. This speaking developmental stage is known as *formulaic speech*. Lyons (1968, cited in Ellis, 1994) defines formulaic speech as an expression, which can be in the form of routines or patterns, that is learned and employed in a particular situation. The language developmental process continues to the third stage, in which Ipek (2009) suggested that children usually omit or simplify the grammatical functions (e.g., articles, auxiliary verbs) and the content words (e.g., nouns, verbs). English language teachers of YLs need to understand the process of L2 acquisition to design English language teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for children.

Teaching English through Stories to Young Learners

Story- and theme-based English language teaching is a famous method for teaching English to YLs because there are several benefits that stories can bring to English language teaching and learning (Bland, 2015; Cameron, 2001; Shin, 2006). According to Cameron (2001), learning the English language through stories is similar to bringing the outside world into the classroom because stories associate the learners with genuine uses of the

English language. Moreover, Mart (2012) claimed that integrating stories into English language learning at an early age can raise learner's awareness of the rich and authentic use of English.

Stories can be integrated into YLs' English language classrooms for different purposes. For instance, storytelling can be used to develop English listening and speaking skills while engaging learners in different situations (Cameron, 2001). Also, the structure of stories can help YLs understand the logical and thematic structure of the content. Several researchers (e.g., Bland, 2015; Cameron, 2001; Mart, 2012) believed that YLs can learn a prototypical storytelling feature; such as an opening, introduction of characters, description of the setting, introduction of an issue, a sequence of event, the resolution of the issue, a closing and a moral while learning English through stories. In addition, there are linguistic features that are commonly found in children's stories, such as parallelism (repetition of phrases), vocabulary (unfamiliar words), alliteration (words with the same initial consonants), contrast (strong differences between characters), metaphor (setting), intertextuality (references within the text), and narrative/dialogue, that can be used to promote English language learning. Cameron (2001) and Bland (2015) suggested that to implement stories in English language teaching, teachers should carefully select appropriate stories for the YLs. Moreover, they suggested that language teachers evaluate stories according to these criteria when incorporating stories into YLs' lessons: *quality books or 'real books'; content that encourages learners; values and attitudes embodied; discourse is well organized; balance of dialogue and narrative; and how and what new language is used.*

According to some of the previous studies, Chithra (2018) used short stories to enable YLs between the age of 4 to 10 years to negotiate meanings and connect the texts with the world at a private school in Gurgaon and a government-run school in north Delhi. The results revealed that the YLs were able to connect their thoughts, feelings, and memories, and understand themselves better when incorporating stories into their lessons. Porras González (2010) studied utilizing stories for teaching English as a foreign language to YLs in first to third grades at a Colombian public elementary school in Bucaramanga, Colombia. The results of the study revealed that stories increased the YLs' motivation when they were told or read, participation in the different activities, comprehension of the stories, and acquisition of the new vocabulary. However, in Huang's (2021) study on teaching EFL through stories to Chinese primary students in classrooms in China, the results showed that the teachers failed to explain the stories' content and they instead applied traditional teaching approaches due to their lack of knowledge of how to select appropriate stories and how to apply stories for English language teaching. There are some, however limited, research studies on using stories for teaching English to YLs in Thai context. Khamsuk and Whanchit (2021) conducted research on improving YLs' English vocabulary through storytelling during the Covid-19 pandemic in the South of Thailand. The data collection and analyses were conducted on the five stories' pre- and post-test scores, observation of YLs' learning performance, and parents' reflection. The stories were

written in Thai with the insertion of 15 English words in each story. The results showed the development of the YLs' English vocabulary and also showed the parents' satisfaction with their children's learning behavior.

Teaching English through Themes to Young Learners

According to Cameron (2001), the main concept of teaching English through theme is that teaching and learning activities are designed based on the thematic content, and they are connected under the umbrella of one theme. A theme can be selected and used for developing more than one lesson per week, or several weeks in a semester. Moreover, Cameron (2001) suggested different ways that teachers can reassure that YLs gain benefits from theme-based language learning. The first is to allow YLs to choose a theme or topic according to their interest. Next is to design content-based language teaching which allows YLs to learn the English language at the same time as they are learning other subjects such as mathematics, science, language, history, geography, music, and arts. The last technique is to provide YLs with opportunities to gain exposure to the natural use of the meaningful thematic content of the English language.

According to Cameron (2001), the most difficult part of implementing themes into English teaching is the 'planning stage'. She stated that teachers need to have the knowledge of using this teaching method and the awareness of their YLs' English language needs to plan and design the content/activities that work together to promote language learning. Shin (2006) also suggested that teachers should select themes from various sources (e.g., the learner's current interest, different class subjects being contemplated, stories, local events, or international festivals). However, the selected themes, as well as designed English language content and activities, must be suitable to the YLs' age, cultural background, and language learning needs (Cameron, 2001).

Sokhamkaew (2016) conducted research using content-based instruction, which was constructed from the themes, to investigate 30 Thai primary school YLs' English reading comprehension at Sriracha, Chonburi, Thailand. However, the focus of this research was on the content of the themes, not the theme itself. The researcher conducted the activities based on the themes of YLs' interests. Pre- and post-tests, a self-assessment questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview were used for the data collection and, SPSS and Microsoft Excel were used to analyze the data. The results revealed that content-based instruction improved Thai EFL primary YLs' reading comprehension, enhanced their participation in the classrooms, and encouraged their English learning. Kiziltan and Ersanli (2007) also studied the effectiveness of the three content-based instructions (sheltered, adjunct, and theme-based models) to YLs in Turkish public schools. The experiments were divided into two control groups and one pilot group. The first control group was taught in a second language by a content specialist and an ESL specialist using the sheltered model. The second control group was taught by ESL teachers using an adjunct model. The pilot group was taught by ESL teachers using the theme-based model. The study found that the YLs who learned English through themes were significantly more improved in terms of

language skills than those who learned through the sheltered and adjunct models. The YLs were allowed to choose themes that corresponded with their interests; therefore, the English lessons were fun and motivating. They developed their collaborative skills from pair and group work, and they were able to use language in a more meaningful way through relevant theme-based content materials selection.

Alptekin et. al. (2007) also studied the effectiveness of teaching English through themes to Turkish YLs between the ages of 10 and 11 years old. The two groups of students were randomly assigned to one of the two syllabus types and received instruction for two years. The syllabuses were designed based on two different language instructional frameworks of Widdowson (1990) and Cummins (1981). The control group was exposed to the grammatical syllabus of which the content was chosen according to the textbook, and the teaching methodology was guided by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. In contrast, the experimental group learned the English language through a theme-based syllabus, of which the content was designed in parallel to the topical content of subject areas in the curriculum. The results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group both in listening and reading/writing skills.

There have been some, however limited, studies on implementing the story and theme-based teaching methods to YLs in Thai context. However, these teaching methods seem to be popular in many other countries. According to Cameron (2001) and Shin (2006), these two teaching methods require knowledgeable and skillful teachers to conduct the lessons effectively. Ulla and Winitkun (2018) postulated that qualified, well educated, and well trained teachers lead to effective teaching. In Thailand, there are two types of English teachers; ones who hold a degree in B.Ed. and the others who hold a degree B.A. majoring in English. The former ones received some training of English language teaching but the latter did not receive any teaching training. White (1998) believed that quality teaching can be attained and sustained by attending to the process in training and developing teachers in professional skills and judgement, rather than by acquiring craft skills alone. In addition, Cameron (2001) also believed that teaching English is not a straightforward process that can be undertaken by anyone with a basic training in ELT. Cameron's arguments emphasize the necessity of specific training for teachers who teach English to YLs. Therefore, this study hopes to shed some light on as to whether two groups of teachers who hold degrees in English major but are from different fields of education are implementing stories and themes into teaching English to YLs differently. Also, to investigate whether the teachers' educational backgrounds affect the way they are teaching English to YLs.

Methodology

The methodology was designed to focus on the participants' teaching experiences and viewpoints; therefore, a qualitative approach was adopted because it is useful for a study of the natural setting to retrieve detailed and in-depth information.

Participants

The participants are four Thai female English teachers who teach English as a foreign language at primary schools located in Ubon Ratchatani Province. A purposive sampling of participants was employed to select the participants for the study. Two teachers received a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in English major, and the other two teachers received a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in English Major. All of the participants graduated from Ubon Ratchatani Rajabhat University, and have been teaching English for 3 years.

The first two English teachers holding a B.Ed. degree are referred to as T1 and T2. T1 teaches EFL at the early-primary level (1st grade – 3rd grade), while T2 teaches EFL at the late-primary level (4th grade – 6th grade). The other two teachers holding a B.A. degree in English major are referred to as T3 and T4. T3 teaches EFL at the early-primary level, whereas T4 teaches EFL at the late-primary level. All but T3 teach English subjects only. The teachers who hold a B.Ed. received some training in teaching EFL, whereas the teachers who hold a B.A. did not receive any EFL pedagogical training.

Research Instruments

The research instruments include the observation checklist, field notes, and semi-structured interviews which were developed based on the theoretical framework of Cameron (2001) to find answers to each research question.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedures

The data collection procedures are divided into three phases: sample familiarization and research boundary designation, observation, and interview. First, the researcher met with each participant and the school director to inform them about the study, its goals, and its procedures. After that, the researcher asked the participants to sign the consent form before interviewing each of them individually. Then, the second phase, which was classroom observation, began from the first week of February to March of the year 2021 and lasted approximately 8 weeks. There were 10 lessons in total, lasting from 50 minutes to an hour per lesson.

The observation field note data were used for triggering the participants to reflect on the observed data. Moreover, the data from the field notes were used to triangulate with the interview data and to compare the observed implementation and the viewpoints of the participants toward story and theme-based teaching methods.

The last phase, which consisted of semi-structured interviews, was conducted a week after the researcher had completed viewing and finalizing the observation field notes. The researcher arranged face-to-face interviews one at a time with the participants. The interview questions were pre-designed and grouped into three sections: (1) the educational background, (2) teaching method implementation, and (3) the viewpoints toward each

teaching method. However, the participants were encouraged to share their experiences and viewpoints freely during the conversation. The interview was conducted in the Thai language to help the participants feel confident in communicating and expressing their ideas. An audio recorder was used to record the interview data for further analysis.

To analyze the interview data, the researcher listened to the audio recordings several times before transcribing the audio data of each participant. Next, the transcribed data was sent to each participant for the accuracy verification of the data and for the purpose of validity. After that, the data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method (Evans, 2018), and the researcher translated the results into the English language. Then, data was sent to the lecturer who has experience in teaching English translation for many years to verify the accuracy and reliability of the translation before the researcher report the results.

Results

Teaching English through Story for YLs: Thai Teachers' Views and Practices

The observation field notes and the interview results reveal the similarities and differences in the participants' teaching experiences and viewpoints toward teaching English through stories. When the researcher inquired about the participants' teaching experience in using stories and the planning and selecting methods, only T1 claimed that she had experience in teaching English through stories; although she performed that only once. T1 also stated that she planned and selected the stories according to the YLs' interests and age appropriateness. T1 further noted that she used story-based teaching to teach English listening and writing skills to YLs in the third grade. Nevertheless, she did not use this teaching method due to the time consumption in planning and conducting a lesson. In contrast, T2, T3, and T4 reported that they were inexperienced in using this teaching method. However, they started to have an idea after the researcher introduced the concept of this teaching method to them, and they were able to provide opinions on teaching English through stories to YLs. Unfortunately, the observation field notes showed that all participants, including T1, did not teach English through stories during the 10 classroom observations. Therefore, the report of the findings is mainly based on the interview data.

Comparison of T1 and T3: Thai teachers with different educational backgrounds teaching EFL at the primary level

The interview data revealed one thematic similarity between T1 and T3 in terms of the story-based teaching implementation. T1 reported that she once used the story to develop English listening and writing skills; also T3 thought she would focus on the English listening skill if she had a chance to use it. T1 and T3 had slightly similar viewpoints about how to plan and select stories for English language teaching. T1 planned and selected the stories according to the YLs' interests and age appropriateness, while T3 would plan and select stories according to the lesson's objective or the YLs' age

[35]

appropriateness. However, T3 did not mention the importance of the learner's interest when planning and selecting stories for English language teaching.

Regarding their opinions on the effectiveness of story-based teaching to YLs, T1 and T3 had different opinions. T1 believed that this teaching method could enhance the YLs' imagination and memorization, while T3 believed that it would motivate YLs to learn English, enhance listening skills, and allow teachers to create various activities. Interestingly, T1 also pointed out a possible challenge of using stories to teach EFL to YLs. She stated that YLs with very low English language proficiency may not enjoy learning English through stories due to a lack of understanding of the story. Therefore, the effectiveness of the method depends on how the teacher plans and selects the story. In contrast, T3 believed that all YLs would enjoy learning through stories because most YLs grew up with stories. She did not think there would be any limitation to this method of English language teaching.

Comparison of T2 and T4: Thai teachers with different educational backgrounds teaching EFL at the late-primary level

Based on T2's and T4's opinions of teaching English through stories, T2 would plan and select a story according to the YLs' interests and familiarity. She could also develop YLs' reading and writing skills through this teaching method. In contrast, T4 did not provide an answer to how she would plan and select the story or which language skill could be developed through stories because she had not previously heard of such a teaching method.

Regarding effectiveness, both participants believed that this teaching method could benefit both teachers and YLs. T2 noted that teachers can create many activities under one story and YLs can enjoy the story while learning. In contrast, T4 believed that YLs probably would concentrate well when learning English through stories because most children enjoy listening to the stories. Both participants did not believe that the story-based teaching method has any disadvantages.

Teaching English through Theme for YLs: Thai Teachers' Views and Practices

During the 10 observed lessons, the researcher found that the participants taught English through themes differently, although all of them followed themes that were provided in the textbook. T1, T2, and T4 were found to develop extra activities (e.g., games, pair-work, group-work), in addition to the textbook activities, using the themes. Before starting the activity, they modeled the activity first and also translated the vocabulary from English to Thai to ensure the students' understanding. Moreover, T2 and T4 also translated the instructions from English to Thai language to ensure that the YLs knew how to complete the tasks. The observation field notes also revealed that T1 encouraged the YLs to participate in the activity, as well as praised and provided feedback

to YLs in English at the end of the activity. T2 was also found to provide feedback and suggestions, but in both Thai and English. In contrast, T4 provided both feedback and suggestions in Thai only. Contrasting to the others, T3 did not develop any extra activities during the 10 observed lessons. She strictly used the textbook to teach English and provided suggestions and feedback for the YLs in the Thai language only. The textbook activities were mostly structural-based individual activities (e.g., grammar exercises and worksheets).

Similar to the observation findings, all participants reported in the interviews that they preferred to follow the themes provided in the textbook. Themes from the textbook were believed to be well-designed and appropriate for the YLs. However, T1 and T2 noted that they also selected the themes according to the YLs' language proficiency and interests. Through themes, both participants reported that they developed various activities for teaching different language skills. T1 reported that she used themes to conduct activities for teaching English conversation. T2 said "I use themes for designing activities to teach all four skills". T3 said that she used themes to develop activities for teaching vocabulary and grammar, and T4 said "I use theme-based activities for teaching reading and writing skills". As reported in the previous paragraph, it was observed that T1, T2, and T4 developed various extra activities to improve language skills. However, T3 did not develop any physical activities for teaching vocabulary or grammar, she only followed the textbook activities which focused on vocabulary and grammar teaching.

As for the effectiveness of teaching English through themes, all participants believed that this teaching method contains benefits for both teachers and YLs. T1 and T4 stated that the content from other learning subjects can be used to develop a theme. T2 believed that YLs can be involved in the theme selection, and T3 stated that many activities can be created under one theme, but cannot be used to teach grammar. Nonetheless, during the classroom observation, T3 did not use the theme to create any physical activity as stated in the interview, but she used the exercises in the form of a worksheet to accompany each lesson.

Comparison of T1 and T3: Thai teachers with different educational backgrounds teaching EFL at the primary level

There are two main thematic similarities between T1 and T3 involving the planning and the theme selection methods. Both participants are experienced in teaching English through themes and planned and selected the themes according to the textbooks. Besides selected the themes from the textbooks, T1 also selected the themes and activities according to the YLs' interests and language proficiency. However, T1 and T3 have their differences when incorporating themes into teaching English to YLs. T1 reported that she used themes to develop YLs' conversational skills; although, it was observed that she focused on short and simplified conversations. Conversely, T3 reported that she used themes to teach English

vocabulary and grammar, which mirrored the way she conducted the lesson following the textbook without adding any extra activities.

The interview data also revealed the participants positive views toward the effectiveness of teaching English through themes. T1 believed that this teaching method allows teachers to incorporate themes with or from other subjects. T3 believed that this teaching method could help teachers create various activities. However, T3 believed that theme-based teaching is not helpful for grammar teaching, although she was observed following the theme in the textbook when teaching vocabulary and grammar.

Comparison of T2 and T4: Thai teachers with different educational backgrounds teaching EFL at the late-primary level

The interview data revealed that T2 and T4 shared similarities in their teaching experience and planning method, but reported theme selection methods somewhat differently. Both participants are experienced and have used a theme-based teaching method in their classrooms. They planned and selected the theme according to the topics in the textbook. However, T2 noted that she sometimes planned and selected the themes according to the YLs' interests. Regarding the language skills being developed through themes, T2 and T4 used the theme to develop language skills differently. T2 used themes to develop all four skills, while T4 used themes to develop reading and writing skills which matched the data found in the observation field notes.

Regarding the effectiveness of teaching English through themes, the participants have different views. T2 postulated that it would help YLs to focus more on learning if the teacher allows YLs to select the theme which aligns with their interests. Nonetheless, T2 believed that YLs would be unable to select the theme of their interests if the teacher had already selected it. Dissimilarly, T4 believed that theme-based teaching has no limitation because one main theme can help link one lesson to other lessons.

Discussion

Teaching English through story and theme is commonly suggested by many scholars (e.g., Cameron, 2001; Mart 2012; Shin 2006; Wright 1995) and practiced in primary education in many countries. However, teaching English through story is not commonly practiced, and teaching English through theme is not quite properly conducted in Thailand. This assertion is supported by the reflection of the observation data which demonstrated that all participants did not strategically implement stories and themes into their English lessons. Moreover, based on the interview data, the participants knew very little about how to plan and select the appropriate stories and themes for teaching English, which language skills can be developed through stories and themes, and the effectiveness of these teaching methods to YLs. One of the participants (T4) even said that she had not previously heard

of a story-based English language teaching method. This implies that Thai teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills required to prepare story and theme-based ELT lessons.

For story-based ELT, a story is a basic form of literature or narration that is introduced to most YLs at an early age and is also comprised of general world knowledge (Cameron, 2001). Moreover, it is theoretically believed that children, in general, have an innate ability to acquire language while at the same time they can enjoy listening to story reading by adults. Unfortunately, although storytelling is considered one of the common family activities for YLs in Western countries, it is not quite common in the social context of the Thai family at present, especially in rural areas. Nevertheless, in the researcher's view, Thai teachers must know how to incorporate stories into their English teaching to YLs because teaching English through stories can be one way to enhance students' general world knowledge and extend their enjoyment of learning English. The present research revealed the Thai teachers' views of the benefits of story-based teaching are somewhat consistent with the findings of many other researchers who found that stories had a positive effect on language learning (e.g., Al-Dersi, 2013; Chou, 2014; Thiyagarajan, 2014). Although T1 postulated that YLs with low English proficiency may not enjoy learning English through stories if the story is too difficult. However, the researcher believes that YLs with different levels of language proficiency can still benefit from learning English through stories if their teachers know how to select the stories and activities that match their learning abilities and interests.

In the researcher's view, Thai English teachers should receive continual training in story-based teaching along with other methods for teaching English to YLs because they were mostly trained only in the English language and English language teaching in general while at university level. The theories and methods for teaching English to learners in specific age groups such as YLs may be overlooked. Savic and Shin (2016) and Saydakhmetova (2020) suggested that teachers of YLs should have extra skills and knowledge to choose and simplify the story or create their own stories to meet the YLs interests and language proficiency before planning the English language learning activities. Cameron (2001) and Bland (2015) also suggested that teachers who have narrative knowledge and skills can identify discourse organization of stories and conduct activities to develop discourse competence for YLs. These suggestions can serve as the core idea for developing EFL teacher training in Thailand, particularly in terms of developing training programs for EFL teachers of YLs.

For theme-based teaching, according to Larsen-Freeman (2012), the important stage of this teaching method is the theme selection and planning stage. Based on the interview findings, all participants followed the themes in the textbooks. This method of planning and selecting themes is also congruent with the suggestion of Cameron (2001) and Shin (2006), who suggested that the teachers may select the themes from the textbook to create extra activities because most themes construct the chapter with related grammatical and meaningful language content. In the researcher's opinion, there may be two factors that

influence such a decision by English language teachers. It is a matter of fact that using themes in the textbook is convenient and helps assure the alignment of the teaching content stated in the school's curriculum. However, Cameron (2001) and Larsen-Freeman (2012) also point out that YLs' interests should be considered as well. They note that language teachers should be flexible and that YLs should be allowed to take part in the process of selecting and planning themes for the lessons. From the interview data, T1 and T2 reported that they sometimes asked the YLs what they would like to learn before they started planning the activities. Allowing YLs to become involved in the learning process is one of the theme selections that was suggested by Cameron (2001), and it also correlated to the expected learning outcomes of the national EFL curriculum which focuses on being learner-centered rather than teacher-centered. Importantly, this method of theme selection has been found to be successful in Kiziltan and Ersanli's (2007) study. The YLs were allowed to select the themes of their interests. They found that the YLs were significantly improved in terms of language skills and that the lessons were fun and motivating.

Based on the observation field notes and the interview findings, it is possible to conclude that although all participants' skills and knowledge are quite limited, T1 and T2, who possessed an educational background in English language teaching, could provide more precise ideas on how to implement stories and themes into the lessons than T3 and T4, who graduated with the degree in the English language. Similarly, T1 and T2 provided more information than T3 and T4 on how to implement theme-based teaching. The former group seems to be better aware of the benefits that YLs may receive from this teaching method than the latter or perhaps the latter group just strictly taught according to the school curriculum. They did not only teach according to the themes in the textbook but also selected themes that interested students and created extra learning activities. This may be the result of some teaching training T1 and T2 received from the teacher education program, which was not provided for the teachers who graduated from the English language department. According to Noom-Ura (2013) and Prasongporn (2016), unqualified and poorly-trained teachers are one of the factors that were reported to cause the failure of English teaching in Thailand. Thus, the findings contribute to the concept of the importance of lifelong learning of language teachers in that teachers should continually learn about various methods available for teaching English to specific groups of learners or for the learner groups that they are teaching because the training they received from their respective universities may have been too limited or too general.

Conclusion

This research was conducted to study Thai EFL teachers of YLs from two different educational backgrounds in regards to their experiences with and thoughts about the two well-known methods for teaching English to YLs, that is, story and theme-based teaching. Although both groups have different educational backgrounds, they nevertheless hold a degree in an English major, they have the same amount of teaching experience, and they are teaching English to YLs. Therefore, they are expected to have some sort of knowledge

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and skills before teaching English to YLs. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that both groups of Thai English language teachers still lack the knowledge and skills of these two EFL teaching methods for YLs. Thus, it portrays a clear indication that there is an urgent need for the teachers' educators to equip Thai English language teachers (with or without an educational background) with the knowledge and skills needed for teaching English, particularly to YLs. In addition, the researcher believes that the findings from this research provide useful information for stakeholders in the EFL educational field, especially in English teaching for YLs, and highlights an issue with the current teaching in the context of Thai schools.

It is obvious from the findings that all participants recognized the significant benefits or usefulness of using stories and themes in teaching English to YLs. However, they were quite inexperienced and had very little knowledge and skills in teaching English through stories and themes. These findings, by and large, show that English language learning or teacher training at the universities may be inadequate to prepare good teachers of English language for YLs and that most Thai English language teachers need proper and continual pedagogical training on story and theme-based teaching as well as other methods for teaching English to YLs at a specific age group. As it stands, it is undeniable that stories are considered an essential part of children's literacy development, and teaching English through stories would allow them to be exposed to the natural use of English. Moreover, most YLs enjoy stories and because of the nature of story-based teaching, students are more likely to engage with the lessons (Mart, 2012). As to theme-based teaching, many lessons and activities can be created under one theme to help supplement the lessons in the textbook. Other subjects, such as math and art, can be readily incorporated into a theme which helps to broaden and enrich YLs' understanding of the subject matter.

Since this study was only undertaken in four primary schools in Thailand, the results cannot necessarily be applied to other schools. However, there are several issues that require further investigation, for instance, how English teachers from other school areas teach English to YLs. Additionally, the English teacher trainer curriculum also needs to be investigated because the English teacher trainer curriculum is one of the most important contributing factors responsible for producing productive teachers.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Teaching through stories

1. Do you know the storytelling approach in teaching YLs? Have you ever incorporated it in your classroom before?
2. In your opinion, do you think storytelling is an effective method for YLs? Why or why not?
3. How would you plan the task using storytelling in your classroom?
4. How would you select the story for YLs?
5. How would you incorporate the story into your lesson? What kind of language skills would you use storytelling for?
6. Do you think there are more advantages or disadvantages of using storytelling tasks for YLs?

Teaching through theme-based

1. Do you know the theme-based approach to teaching YLs? Have you ever incorporated it in your classroom before?
2. In your opinion, do you think theme-based teaching is an effective method for YLs? Why or why not?
3. How would you plan the task using theme-based teaching in your classroom?
4. How would you select the themes for YLs?
5. How would you incorporate the theme-based teaching into your lesson? What kind of language skills would you use theme-based teaching for?
6. Do you think there are more advantages or disadvantages of using theme-based tasks for YLs?

Appendix B

Observation Checklist

Teacher No. _____ Lesson No. _____ Date: _____

Teaching Approach	Y/N	Themes	Y/N	Remarks
Learning through stories		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use storytelling - Introduce vocabulary first - Use story includes characters, a plot, and graphics 		
Theme-based teaching and learning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct activities based on a real and meaningful theme - Use a wide range of activities - Modeling activity first - Give suggestions/feedback using target language 		

Strategies to Grab Attention: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Online Selling Posts

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Abstract

The present study is a multimodal discourse analysis of the popular online selling posts purposively selected from a university's online marketplace in Thailand. Adopting five Modes of Communication (The New London Group, 1996), this study aims to reveal sellers' preferred characteristics of the online selling posts, that is, verbal and nonverbal communicative strategies in an online trading platform in the disruption era. The data comprises visual storytellers' 120 online selling posts that contain multimodal elements. The findings suggest that six Moves and 10 main author tones are adopted to construct the selling captions following a textual mode. The features and types of objects, symbols, icons, colors, and sizes are found to be diverse in a visual mode, as is the organization of those elements in a spatial mode. Gestures, facial expressions, and feelings in presenting products play a key role in a gestural mode. For an aural mode, the content-related background music and songs are often noticed, except for the sound effects. The results of the current study not only reveal practical suggestions and devices for creating online selling content in terms of online marketing but also online linguistic structures favored by well-received sellers.

Keywords: modes of communication, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Multimodality, online language, social media marketing

Introduction

Since the last quarter of 2019, the severe disease Covid-19 has been spreading across the world, leading to a huge number of infected cases and a high death toll. Lockdown, quarantine, and social distancing mandates have been imposed in several countries, including Thailand, which have caused considerable damage to many people and industries, especially the economy due to the suspension of business. World Bank (2020) reveals that Covid-19 and its lockdown measures have plunged the global economy into the deepest recession since World War II. Face-to-face outdoor activities have been

replaced by the new normal “do-from-home” to reduce infection. Being present on a digital platform is thus the promising contactless way to keep all lives going in the era of digital disruption.

Due to the aforementioned economic impact, an online marketplace becomes a promising cure—an alternative channel to conduct transactions. With the help of technology, social media dominates online commerce by facilitating both sellers and buyers in ways that traditional markets cannot, for example, easy price comparison, no pressure, and an increased variety of services (Jain, 2020). In addition to social media that have drastically changed business systems, Sheth (2020) suggests that both the Covid-19 situation and state measures to address the pandemic considerably disrupt consumer behaviors, and consumers will not fully return to the old habits that have been modified by technological advances. In other words, shoppers are increasingly turning to online channels.

To address the financial issues, a university online marketplace has emerged for the first time in Thailand, with the goal of providing a platform to assist those affected by the pandemic. A group of Thai university alumni held an online marketplace in a new form, which was established as a private community for sellers who are members of the university only. This virtual community employs a Facebook group as a semi-public place where members can exchange services. Both captions and visual media can be posted unlimitedly to spark prospective customers’ interest. The manner in which a post includes various modes of media at one time is considered Multimodality, a combination between multi- and mode. Additionally, it has been over 2 years since the novel virus was first detected, yet the marketplace still stands active as a popular online shopping channel.

With a platform equipped with several useful multimedia functions, multi-style elements are added to enhance the feeling of media consumption. Not only text but nonverbal designs are also integrated into the same medium, for example, still image, video, and sound. The lack of any meaning modes can lead to incomplete communication, as the media creators hope, as language gives perfect meaning when various modes of representation are combined (Kress, 2010). Since sellers have different posting styles and preferences, the patterns of online selling posts are abundant and worth further study.

Posts with rich multimodal elements and consistent verbal and nonverbal modes of communication can effectively convey meaning. Therefore, to understand the characteristics and interplay of multimodal elements in online marketing communication, the researcher considers that the construction of these attractive selling posts be examined to see how each element is created and positioned based on the framework Multimodal Discourse Analysis. The finding of the study are intended to add to the literature on online language analysis in terms of multimodality, where both verbal and nonverbal content are analyzed. The analysis aims to propose a guideline of practical tools that can be utilized by content creators to generate more attractive and favorable online selling content for Thai customers.

Literature Review

Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The framework Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) focuses on how meaning is made through various modes of communication. Kress (2012) introduced the main objective of MDA as an approach to how all *modes* are framed as one *field* and one *domain* because, together, they are treated as one related cultural resource for making meaning by community members at a specific time. Mode categorizes a channel of representation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), field is the entire situation with the purposive activity of the speaker or writer (Halliday, 1994), and domain is a different literacy, including various symbolic and representational resources (Gee, 2008). MDA initially focused on face-to-face interaction, but more recent trends examine the complex interplay of different modes, including how meanings shift as they move across modes (Jones, 2021).

As online media platforms are easily accessible to all users and offer a place for creating media with multiple semiotic modes, MDA is widely used in analyzing digital content, especially multimodal elements' features and interplay. In a business sense, Pratiwy and Wulan (2018) found that the interplay of all modes strengthens the producer's intention. Some cleaning advertisement videos on television present themselves as protection through visual choices, while gestures and facial expressions, music, and sound effects are purposefully designed. The product placement manifests the interrelated meaning of the ads. Similarly, Yao and Zhuo (2018) reported that the multiple resources interrelate to create synergy in a promotional video. Visual images vividly portray the positive image of the place; traditional instrument background music stirs emotions and supports the visual resources; and titles, subtitles, and background music reinforce the visual mode and create meaning as an integrated whole. However, Ife Fiyinfolu (2021) suggested that, though all multimodal modes show coherence, nonverbal resources provide more explanation in Facebook ads. Nonverbal resources take both offer and demand forms, whereas verbal resources help express those actions.

Modes of Communication

As digital content comprises multimedia, modes of communication are adopted to scrutinize the distinct details of each mode. Based on Kress (2010), multimodality is an interdisciplinary approach that considers various modes that people use to communicate with each other and express themselves. One medium generally consists of more than one mode of communication, and each performs its duty to convey meaning in different ways. All modes are equally important in representation and communication (Kress, 2010). As with the multimodal analysis in the current study, the lack of any elements—captions and visual media—causes an incomplete interpretation as both are interrelated. The New London Group (1996) set clear meaning modes and developed a tool for examining the lists in each design to cover all aspects and features of the communication, leading to five modes of communication: linguistic, visual, spatial, gestural, and aural modes.

Textual mode considers verbal choices such as vocabulary, metaphor, modality, and information structure, as well as other linguistic frameworks, for example, Move Analysis which is conducted to explore discourse organization to understand how texts are interpreted, consumed, and used in specific contexts to reach a specific goal (Biber et al., 2007; Bhatia, 2014). Visual mode focuses on the choices of visual resources such as image, color, perspective, page layout, and screen format, while spatial mode is the choice of spatial resources, including scale, proximity, boundaries, direction, layout, and organization of objects (Department of Education and Training Victoria, 2020). Gestural mode explores the choices of body movement; for instance, behavior, bodily physicality, gesture, and sensuality, as well as facial expression, eye movements, and gaze. Lastly, audio mode examines features of sound such as music, sound effects, noises, alerts, and volume.

Although Kress (2010) proposed that all modes are potentially equal, Álvarez's (2016) showed that linguistic mode performs the heaviest semiotic work in academic books, while visual mode deals with images that create coherence with the overall theme. Page layout in spatial mode is intentionally designed for pleasurable viewing and space for notes. As for gestural mode, the gestures initially depend on the speaker's focus of attention or relevant information (Müller, 2013). Meanwhile, Alpert et al. (2005) proposed that different music's structural elements, such as tempo, dynamics, and rhythm, can lead to a perception of sad or happy advertising content.

Linguistics and online marketing

With advances in technology and social stimuli, businesses are increasingly reliant on online channels such as social media. Not only the business itself, but language is an important tool for running a business and can enhance many opportunities (Allcock, 2018). As a result, well-perceived linguistic characteristics and textual paralanguage (TPL) in advertising content can promote business, especially online marketing through online media platforms.

To promote business through online platforms, some marketers on Facebook attract their buyers with directive and expressive speech acts, as well as persuasion through *personal branding* and *giving tips* (Septianasari et al., 2021). Furthermore, on Twitter, shorter average sentence lengths and fewer long words are preferred, as are certainty achievement words, emojis, at mentions (@), and first-person plural pronouns (Deng et al., 2021). Cheung (2010) also revealed that testimonials are used in emails for attraction, including a friendly remark ending, graphics, animations, and interactive media along with text-based content. *Introducing the Offer* and the benefits of a product or service to a customer's needs also arouses interest.

In terms of TPL, Luangrath et al. (2017) revealed that emoticons can foster feelings of warmth and personableness, and emojis positively enhance brand engagement, leading to happy feelings and positive brand perceptions, especially when placed before relevant texts (McShane et al., 2021).

Not only is the message's content crucial, but so are other linguistic features in online business communication. Linguistics is highly compatible with marketing circles, as language and its different characteristics are powerful tools for marketing communication and a strategy that can transform a business.

Methodology

Materials

One hundred and twenty online selling posts were purposively collected from the 65 data-qualified Visual Storytellers, posted on Thammasat University and Marketplace Facebook group. It is the first marketplace to emerge in a new form in Thailand and has the largest number of visual storytellers, 113, on the day of data collection. The data was drawn from April 7, 2020, the group's founding day, to October 7, 2020, 6 months after the group's establishment—the first wave of the pandemic and the early stage of its founding. The visual storyteller is a badge that signifies group members who have made unique contributions to the community and share images or videos that other group members value (Facebook Community, 2018). The online selling posts could be in any category but have received more than 1,000 reactions, including Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad, and Angry. Also, the data must carry both captions and visual elements in still or video clip form to cover five modes of communication.

Data Collection

The qualified data were purposively collected and downloaded one by one from the visual storytellers' posts in the Thammasat University and Marketplace Facebook group. The online files were shared to the researcher's Facebook folder, while the offline files were kept as screenshots to prevent unexpected disappearance and post deletion. Importantly, this research strictly adheres to the Institutional Review Board's ethical principles in collecting data.

Analysis

Five modes of communication were examined in line with The New London Group's (1996) theory. All elements in the caption and visual media were investigated based on the framework's guidelines. Apart from the author's tones, the captions were analyzed with Swales' (1990) Move Analysis to reveal the organization. While analyzing the texts, color coding was adopted to help distinguish lexical choices, TPLs, and content types. The VxPx code is put after the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) texts to indicate the data source: Vx for the Visual Storyteller number and Px for the post number. The visual mode focuses on semiotic elements, that is, objects, symbols, colors, and sizes, whereas the spatial mode analyzes the organization and composition of the post's elements and captions. The gestural mode studies the body language and emotional expressions of people in the media to see how they present and are involved with their products, and the aural mode analyzes sound components in the selling videos. In addition, the interplay of

multimodal modes was studied to see how various modes of representation cooperated in conveying meaning.

Results

In pursuit of the research goal, a question is posed to guide this study: What are the characteristics of the multimodal elements in the online selling posts in the virtual university marketplace? How are they constructed and interrelated? The results are divided into two parts: the multimodal construction of online selling posts and the interplay of multimodal communication.

Multimodal construction of online selling posts

This section analyzes five modes of communication based on The New London Group (1996): textual, visual, spatial, gestural, and audio modes.

To present the overall pattern of the online selling posts, sellers not only include promotional messages but also general stories with different content-related emotional tones in their captions. Meanwhile, the visual media includes stills and spoken and music videos. The elements within visual media differ depending on the creators and the content they wish to express. The features of each mode of representation are provided.

I. Textual mode

The caption organization is divided into six moves based on Move Analysis, namely, starter, salutation, introduction, body, ending, and closing. ± Move 1: *Starter* begins the captions. ± Move 2: *Salutation* greets and builds familiarity between buyers and sellers. ± Move 3: *Introduction* contains only an announcement. + Move 4: *Body* includes important information about products and services and is the only mandatory move. ± Move 5: *Ending* functions as a summary. Lastly, ± Move 6: *Closing* finally ends the captions. All moves and their popular steps (submoves) are described in Table 1. However, this organization is a specific pattern of the online selling posts found in the online university marketplace.

Table 1

Caption organization and popular steps

Move	Step
Move 1: Starter	Step 1A: ± Announcement
Move 2: Salutation	Step 2A: ± Greeting
Move 3: Introduction	Step 3A: ± Announcement
Move 4: Body	Step 4E: + Main detail

Move 5: Ending	Step 5D: ± Call to action
Move 6: Closing	Step 6B: ± Call to action, Step 6B: ± Soliciting response

Apart from the caption organization, the author's tones were analyzed to find the themes of the posts. Analyzing lexicon choices, 10 main author's tones were found: informative, persuasive, humorous, appreciative, nostalgic, romantic, depressing, encouraging, offering, and fictional tones.

I) Informative tone provides buyers with information, characteristics, and properties of goods and services. Also, it is the most prevalent tone in the online sales posts, found in all captions (100.00%). This tone is subdivided into four categories: general details, business stories, advice, and announcements. As shown in Example 1, the seller puts the announcement in his caption.

(1) tɔɔnníi thaɔŋ ráan thán sǎɔŋ sǎakhǎa tɔŋ khǎɔ pít thík wancan hâj pháʔnákŋaan thík khon dǎaj phákpòn kan (V3P5)

[Translation] Now both branches will close every Monday for all employees to rest.

II) Persuasive tone engages readers with one strategy. It is sorted into three aspects: persuade with interesting details, persuade with references, and persuade for actions. The first two subtones attract readers with interesting issues such as prices or real users' comments. While the last tone entices readers to do something for the writer's business, as shown in Example 2.

(2) fàak kòt láj phèet wáj kòɔn phûa sòn kamlaŋcaj hâj kan mâj ʔìtnǎn mâjpenraj raw càʔ loŋ khaathǎa riak maa jǎam chom kan bɔj bɔj conkwàa càʔ jɔɔm lɔɔŋ chim khàʔnǎmpaŋ khǎɔŋ raw 🍷 (V33P1)

[Translation] Please like our page first to support each other. No purchase is fine. We'll often cast a spell to call you to visit us until you're willing to try our bread.



III) Humorous tone keeps readers entertained while consuming the content. It can be noticed in jokes, exaggerated slogans, mimic speeches, and laughter markers and emojis. Focusing on laughter, several sounds are presented, that is, /haa/, /ʔàhí/, /ʔáək/, and LOL (laughing out loud). Interestingly, the number 5, /hâa/, in Thai is pronounced the same as the English word "ha", so this figure is often used to represent laughter, as displayed in Example 3.

(3) khàʔnǎmclíp kŋ 69 bàat 3 lǎik kŋ lân lǎan phróʔ raw sàj mǎi mâj dâj 55 (V22P1)

[Translation] Shrimp dumplings 69 baht/3 balls, pure shrimp as we can't put pork.
55

IV) Appreciative tone expresses the seller's gratitude in various ways, but the obvious one is to thank the community's trading space, moderators, and members, as shown in Example 4. Other thankful people are also introduced, such as specific persons, celebrity customers, and ancestors who gave rise to today's business, as well as appreciative emojis: 🙏 (folded hands) and ❤️ (red heart).

(4) khòp khin phèet thammá?sàatlé?kaanfàakráan thîi tham hâj ?òdôê jé? khà?nàat níi khòp khin cîj cîj ná? kháp (V3P11)

[Translation] Thank you to the Thammasat and Marketplace page for giving such large orders. Thank you very much.

V) Nostalgic tone recalls memories, particularly events related to the university, which are perceived by most members. This can be seen in specific place names and in-group activities. Moreover, since memories took place in the past, a past-time marker "like/mǎan/" is used to compare the events of the past, as shown in Example 5.

(5) chîaṇ níi jîi bâan nôk càak WFH kôo thǎj fèet sîj jîi naj klîm níi tà?lòot hên thǎj khwaamtà?lòk ?òp?îi kan?eej khǒj phûan phîinóoj mǎothoo mǎan sà?mǎj rian mǎj mii phît mii khraj pen mǎan ?əej bâaṇ mǎj khítthǎj chiiwít má?hǎalaj mâak 🤗 (V7P1)

[Translation] I'm home these days. Besides WFH, I scroll down the FB feeds, always embedding in this group. I see the humor, warmth, and friendliness of the TU family exactly like when I was there. Is anyone like me? Miss college life so so much. 🤗

VI) Romantic tone expresses the seller's love experiences and memories, including couple and family love. This tone is signified through endearing terms and loving emojis, such as 😊 (smiling face with smiling eyes) and ❤️ (red heart). As displayed in Example 6, the seller takes advantage of his wedding anniversary and includes an endearing term to show romance.

(6) ... wanníi thǎu?ookàat wan khróprôop tènṇaan kàp fèen sǎaw sînlá?pà?sàat mǎothoo rá?hàt 50 mǎankan ná? kháp ... (V31P1)

[Translation] ... Today I take the opportunity of my wedding anniversary with my girlfriend, Liberal Arts, TU, Year 50 ...

VII) Depressing tone in the study reveals the negative feelings that result from the Covid-19 crisis, using the cause-effect sentences to clarify the situation before and after the pandemic. This tone was also noticed in the terms that express melancholy, such as crying emoji (😭 loudly crying face and 😓 downcast face with sweat), and cry mimicry,

that is, /ŋɛɛ/ and /huuu/ which are equivalent to “wah” in English, as presented in Example 7.

(7) phêŋ pəət maa dâaj 1 sàpdaa thũu wâa phɔɔ khăaj dâaj khâ? tɛɛ jaŋ mâj thũŋkhân mii lĩkkháa prà?cam tɔnnĩi mii khêe ráan?aahăan ráan nuŋ thĩi ?ɔɔdôɔ raw tà?lòɔt tà?lòɔt nôɔknán pen khăacɔɔn baŋ wan kôo ŋiáp ciŋciŋ khâ? ŋɛɛ (V1P1)

[Translation] I’ve opened a store for a week. The sales are okay, but we do not have regular customers. There is only one shop that keeps ordering from me now. Others are casual. It’s so quiet some days. Wah.

VIII) Encouraging tone in this context is given by people who are experiencing difficulties to people who are experiencing difficulties, especially Covid-19, and is counted as an inspirational message. It can be noticed from philosophical insights and personal experiences, as shown in Example 8. The length of the encouraging message varies. Some are merely concise phrases, but there is one caption that devotes almost the entire section to encouragement.

(8) thóɔthéɛ mǎankan tɛɛ thâa cà? hâj nân mòtwăŋ kôo khonj mâjchâj jaŋ mii lómhăajcaj kôo tɔŋ sîi kan tòɔpaj phá?jaajaam ráksăa thĩ?rá?kit thĩi sâaŋ khũn maa hâj jĩrôɔt hâj dâaj tɔŋ mii khwaamwăŋ wâa thĩkjàaŋ cà? tɔŋ dii khũn (V19P1)

[Translation] I’m also frustrated, but staying hopeless is not the way. As long as I have a breath, I fight, trying to keep the business going on. I must hope that everything will get better.

IX) Offering tone gives a signal that a seller can help or facilitate buyers. Appearing in an affirmative or imperative sentence, this tone can be in an offering form, asking buyers to be served by the sellers, as in Example 9, or inform what the sellers will do for buyers, as in Example 10.

(9) wé? maa thákthaaj kan dâaj khráp dùumnáamdùumthâa kan kòɔn dâaj khráp phôm cà? pen câwphâap ?eeŋ ☺ (V31P1)

[Translation] Please come and say hi. Let’s drink some water. I’ll be the host. ☺

(10) cà? phá?jaajaam ?aw khǒɔŋ thĩi khǒɔj loŋ wáj naj tà?làat lé? khǒɔŋ thĩi ráppàak wâa cà? chiaj thá?jɔɔj loŋ hâj mâak thĩisít ná? khráp (V9P12)

[Translation] I tried to consistently post the products that have been posted once and those that I promised to help as much as possible.

X) Fictional tone creates something special and unimaginable for an online selling caption. This tone is presented through common fictional elements such as fictional and character names, unreal things such as imaginary events and places, and unusual words such as archaic and royal words. Quotation marks (“ ”) are another prominent indicator of

the fictional tone. The excerpt in Example 11 contains quotation marks and unreal organizations and places, respectively.

(11) “thân phîdoojsăan năkchóop pròot sâap khà?nà?nii *bɔɔri?kaan jiiŋthɔɔŋ* khǎɔŋ raw dâaj nam thân maathŋj *thâa?aakàatsá?jaanphrá?can* léew... khòɔpkhîn lé? sà?wàtdii khâ?” (V9P2)

[Translation] “Dear shopping passengers. Our *Yoong Thong flight* has brought you to *Phra Chan Airport* ... Thank you and goodbye.”

Combining the caption organization and the author’s tones, the finding reveals that the most popular tone for *Move 1: Starter*, *Move 2: Salutation*, *Move 3: Introduction* and *Move 4: Body* is the informative tone (announcement). The most popular tone for *Move 5: Ending* is the persuasive tone (requiring action). Last, the most popular tone for *Move 6: Closing* is the informative tone (announcement).

II. Visual mode

In terms of objects, various items are put in the visual part. Not only the product itself is inserted, but also items of equipment, animals, places and environment, people, artworks, and signs are added. Symbols are sorted as logos, letter symbols, and non-letter symbols. Focusing on social media icons, they are noticed in the selling images to facilitate buyers and promote sales in the era of online selling. To comply with the lockdown restriction, the icons are placed on as many platforms as possible, particularly shipping companies, as illustrated in Figure 1. Texts in the visual elements are concise and can be multilingual. Concerning colors, colorful, monocolored, dull, and bright images are common. Black and white, sepia, and yellowish hints are often used with old-time images to convey nostalgia. Colors for highlighting objects are flamboyant so that they contrast with surrounding images. When it comes to size, important or central objects are always larger than others. Meanwhile, the posts have a specific pattern conforming to Facebook’s requirement, for example, square (1:1) or rectangle (3:4 or 9:16) (Digivizer, 2022).

Figure 1

Delivery companies’ logos in the online selling images



III. Spatial mode

The main products are sometimes presented with other objects. In this manner, most products occupy the center or half of the image, which makes them stand out. The most popular way for the sellers to present their products is to encourage people to become involved with them. The most common pattern is that the hand is below or behind the product in a holding gesture, pointing the product logo towards the camera if possible. Both the products and hands are at the center of the image, but the products remain in the first layer, as displayed in Figure 2. Meanwhile, the spatial organization of other elements analyzes symbols and letters. These elements spread along the edges of the image, arranged in groups or horizontally with equal sizes and gaps. The placement of emphasizing symbols varies depending on the objects to be presented and is sometimes on the back layer. The collage is used quite often as it presents multiple images at one time, and the number of images depends on the selected pattern, mainly two to four, and each is stepped with borders of different sizes, as presented in Figure 3.

Figure 2

Product presentation by hand

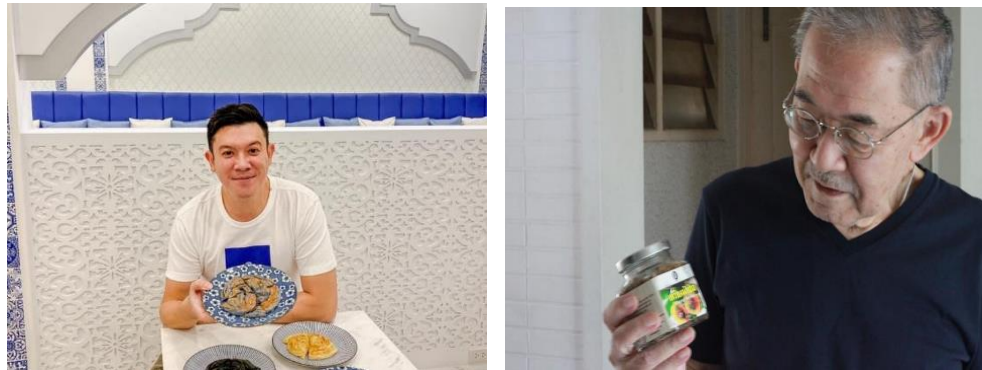


Figure 3*Collage of customer's reviews*

With regard to letters, or captions, due to a rule of the selling platform, Facebook, all messages are solely aligned to the front. The captions are mostly in the form of paragraphs of different lengths. The lines are evenly spaced, but each paragraph takes up a great deal of space due to the double-spaced lines or the use of a period or a long line of dashes as a separator. Yet, the arrangement of the text in a separate sentence can be seen, often preceded by a dash or an emoji.

IV. Gestural mode

Regarding facial expressions and feelings, the most common facial expression is the eyes looking straight at the camera (demand gaze) with a smile, but the offer gaze, in which people look at other objects, is also found. Figure 4 compares the difference between demand and offer gazes. Funny, sad, and calm expressions are common in the data, including a dreamy face. Each face corresponds to the theme that the sellers want to express. However, viewers must understand the story in the caption to understand the expressions and emotions of the people in the visual media.

Figure 4*Demand gaze (left) and offer gaze (right)*

Concerning body language, there are multiple ways of promoting products, but the most visible act is for the product to be held in one's hand and presented to the camera while the seller is sitting or standing. The seller focuses on the product by being close to it and may spread their hands or point at it. In order to present the atmosphere of a business, the presenters take photos in various gestures with those locations as the background. Furthermore, all the gestures shown in the video clips are one seller dancing to songs with exaggerated facial expressions.

V. Audio mode

In terms of songs, they were used in the selling video clips and are found in nine posts, but there are 10 songs in total: seven Thai folk songs, two international songs, and one Korean pop song. The seller used songs to accompany his dance performance. None of them were full songs. The length of the song ranged from 25 seconds to 1.50 minutes, and the song's volume was consistent. Music was noticed in the six video clips, and most of them were in a cheerful tone. The rhythm can be either slow, fast, or alternate. The pattern of volume and beat was inconsistent. The duration of the music did not necessarily equal the duration of the clip, ranging from 13 seconds to 2.55 minutes. The music styles also varied depending on the product, such as traditional Thai music with a video of a traditional Thai restaurant and cheerful music with a video of flower fields and hotel surroundings. Meanwhile, sound effects in the online selling posts were very limited and found in only one clip. Lastly, the soundscape's type and volume varied based on the background at that time.

Having analyzed 120 online selling posts using five modes of communication, the most popular tools of each mode, as well as their frequency and percentage, are displayed in Table 2. In line with the study contribution, the given data serves primarily as a guide to present the products and services in terms of verbal and nonverbal designs to help sellers create eye-catching online selling posts.

Table 2*Popular tool, frequency, and percentage of each communication mode*

Modes of communication	Mode's popular tools	Frequency/ posts*	Percentage
Textual	Move Analysis: Step 4E: + Main details	120/120	100.00
	Author's tone: informative tone for general details	120/120	100.00
Visual	Object: image of product and service	102/107	95.33
Spatial	Product position: in the center	102/102	100.00
Gestural	Facial expression: demand gaze with smiling face	51/94	54.26
	Body language: presenting a product by hands	43/94	45.74
Audio	Background song: related to a story	7/10	70.00
	Background music: cheerful tone	5/5	100.00

* *The number of posts that contained captions for textual mode, objects for visual and spatial modes, people for gestural mode, and songs and music for audio mode.*

As outlined in Table 2, it can be concluded that a popular online selling post contains five communication elements as follows: (i) for textual part, or caption—a text must include main details of the product and service in the informative tone; (ii) for visual part—images of product and service must be added; (iii) for spatial mode—an important item must be in the center of the image; (iv) for gestural mode—if the media includes people, the participants must have a demand gaze looking straight at the camera with a smiling face and presenting a product in their hands; and (v) for audio mode—if the medium is video, the background song must be relevant to the story of the presentation and the background music must have a cheerful melody.

Interplay of multimodal communication

All modes of communication have equal status and strengthen each other in representation and communication (Kress, 2010). The objects in each mode of representation are selected on purpose to complete the selling posts. All resources are interrelated to create synergy; that is, the caption is related to the content of the visual media, whereas the visual media amplify the caption. Yet, elements within the visual media support the representation; that is, facial expressions, gaze, and body language correspond to the author's writing tone; the color, size, and spatial organization of the visual components correspond to the degree of importance; and the music corresponds to good and service types. The absence of any part can result in incomplete communication or distort the media creator's intention.

Focusing on the emoji-text interplay, the emojis in the middle or at the end of the selling captions often express emotions based on content, such as humorous messages with laughing emojis and appreciative and romantic tones with heart emojis. Meanwhile, the emojis preceding the selling messages usually function as bullet points. The data shows that emojis are most commonly used in humorous-tone texts, with many specific laughing emojis.

The gesture-song interplay proposes that the dancer's choreography relates to the lyrics, regardless of whether the content is positive or negative. Also, facial expressions clearly relate to the song's content, but the expressions are often exaggerated. As illustrated in Figure 5, the dancers' body language and facial expression and their lyrics are related. He is working hard and wiping sweat with a sad expression that matches the lyric about hard work.

Figure 5

Dancing gesture and facial expression related to lyric

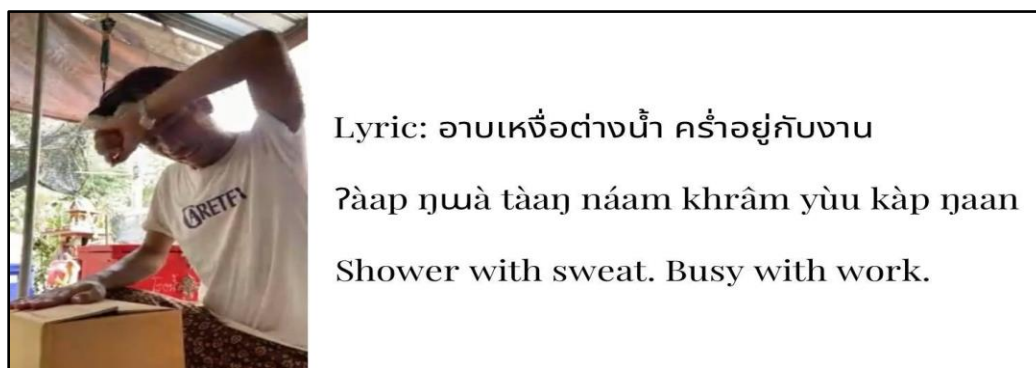


Figure 6 provides an example of the interplay of the caption and visual medium. The multimodal post of Figure 5 comprises a caption and an image. The stater and the introduction of the caption have a depressive tone, as observed from the overall content, the term /rɔ̌ɔ̌ŋhâj/ (cry), and the crying emojis (😭). Meanwhile, the ending has an appreciative tone, as observed from the term /lɔ̌əb/ (love) and the heart (❤️) and smiling face with heart-eyes (😍) emojis that were added to show appreciation toward marketplace members. The male seller shows his sadness by bringing his hands to his forehead, narrowing his eyes with an offering gaze, and pouting his mouth. The restaurant's banner stand and the seller, both of equal size, occupy most of the image to gain more attention (Serafini, 2013). The pink circle emphaziser encircles the restaurant's slogan in order to link the seller's intention in the caption, necessitating the creation of a new banner. Its contrasting color guides the attention of viewers (Deswal, 2013). All multimodal elements are congruent within the same theme.

Figure 6

Caption and visual media of the online selling post

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Having examined the various elements of the online selling posts, many interesting points for discussion appear. The issues include: emotional marketing: the relationship between feelings and business; the benefits of computer-mediated communicative tools; organizational solidarity and online marketing; and the advantage of being a celebrity.

Emotional Marketing: the relationship between feelings and business

Exploring multimodality in online selling posts, it is true that all sellers aim to sell their products, but selling without specific information can lead to a failure to share emotions, an influential factor leading to buying decisions. They thus write as much as possible to evoke a feeling in the viewers, and the only place they can write the entire text is in a caption. Not only a selling story but also the author's feelings can be included. Here, the depressive tone of the author is found, but it is not surprising because of the abundance of negativity during the Covid-19 crisis, and these depressive feelings are also added to the visual media. Following Fairclough (1992), the circumstances during the text's production influence the content; the Covid-19 pandemic severely affects many people and is the main cause of the trading in this online community. Although the sellers may not realize that their action—expressing personal moods—is considered a selling strategy, arousing the viewer's emotions is an acceptable and effective way of doing business. It is called "Emotional Marketing," which describes how to provoke emotions in people to induce them to buy a particular product or service (Consoli, 2010). Different authors' tones can be claimed to arouse different emotions, but all work in a commercial sense. However, not only captions but resources in other modes can arouse the viewers' different feelings, such as cheerful music, sad facial expressions, and happy family images. When modes of representation are combined, their elements promote each other as an effective selling post.

Benefits of computer-mediated communicative tools

With the capabilities of technology and social media in the era of online commerce, the subtle elements of online sales posts strongly convey the intentions of media creators and make it easy for audiences to shop online. In terms of media creators' intentions, emojis—visual symbols in computer-mediated communication—can convey their emotions more clearly due to the variety and significant differences of each emoji. Emojis also help amplify messages when used with related content, such as a megaphone emoji with seller's suggestions and a chopsticks emoji with Chinese food menus. However, emojis should be used carefully according to culture, as the interpretation is influenced by cultural background (Bai et al., 2019). To increase the convenience of shopping for customers, not only the verbal information conveys the intention, but the semiotic information also serves an effective role, especially computer-mediated symbols. As seen in the data, QR codes are frequently used as they meet the needs of the modern age of technology, and social media icons inform readers of the available platforms. Therefore, the online selling posts have adapted to the times and crises such as Covid-19 appropriately by taking advantage of computer-mediated communication tools.

Organizational solidarity and online marketing

When conducting business with group members, organizational solidarity is a key consideration. The sellers do not only hard sell but help to encourage or create a harmonious atmosphere for other members, which is evident in their encouraging and offering tones. Also, many sellers manage to foster solidarity between customers by establishing various relationship styles in the virtual marketplace, that is, the introduction with university-related information, special deals only for university members, and products specially made for the university, as noticed from lexical choices in the informative tone. These associative strategies are not only profitable but also raise awareness and multicultural expressions in the group (Mulyana et al., 2019). Furthermore, what the sellers call readers signifies a sense of membership and family; for example, /lûuk mē doom/ (Mother Dome's children) or /phîi nó ɔŋ lûat lǝaŋ dɛɛŋ/ (yellow-red-blooded sibling). These addressing terms are only understood by community members as they represent unique elements of the identity of the university. As a result, trading with corporate members is not only commercially beneficial but also strengthens relationships.

Advantage of being a celebrity

The sellers who belong to the virtual trading space are from various backgrounds, so the contents and linguistic styles are naturally different. Concerning the text producer, famous people within the community are very influential when creating content and are also very popular regardless of the message's characteristics. Even when selling the same products, famous people are always more popular than normal sellers. Therefore, the male seller, who is an actor, takes advantage of his acting career to sell products on behalf of his acquaintances, and every post is well received, often gaining over 5,000 reactions. Out of 120 posts, 27 came from him, though some posts contain poor-quality visual elements and

long messages. Supported by Lestari and Wahyono (2021), celebrity has positive effects on purchasing decisions as an indicator of visibility, credibility, attraction, and power. In addition, community celebrities are just as popular as real ones in the virtual marketplace, despite different styles of posting. This is a good example of how the individual affects text consumption and how being a famous person benefits business.

Suggestions for Future Research

Due to the limitations of the Facebook platform, a broader perspective on linguistics and online marketing will be gained if datasets across social media platforms are examined with a wide variety of captions and graphic styles. Moreover, as every post created by celebrities grabs the reader's attention no matter what the posts' characteristics are, a study on the relationship between celebrities' influence and online marketing should be undertaken. Additionally, the study analyzed 120 qualifying posts, which is a small number that could prevent some interesting online selling patterns from appearing. Hence, more data may reveal more varied patterns of sales.

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The Study of Cultural Interactions in Business English Classroom using Microethnography Approach

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Abstract

This article highlights issues of cultural interaction in business English classrooms and the perspectives of a microethnography approach to business discourse studies. Cultural interactions in business situations describe the interaction of people in a professional setting, both in terms of written and spoken language. The microethnography approach is a discourse analysis approach to further understand social interaction in business English classes by combining attention to how people use language and other communication systems to establish occurrences with attention to social, cultural, and political processes. The article also provides perspectives on cultural communication and English-language learning in the English business classroom. Some perspectives on the rationale and business discourse studies cultural interactions are presented, and the microethnography study in the language learning classroom is discussed at the end.

Keywords: Cultural Interactions; Business English; Microethnography Approach; Discourse Analysis

Introduction

In social interaction, two or more people interact by exchanging thoughts which are cultural interactions involving different human beings and different formations. Social interaction is not only an exchange of everyday communication; it also begins with any discussion of things that are happening in a specific situation. People frequently link culture with objects, such as food, clothing, music, art, and literature. Others might link culture to norms such as social interaction patterns, values, thoughts, and attitudes. In addition, there are many definitions of culture in the classroom, and teachers should first describe culture before students participate in interactive cultural discussions (Frank, 2013). As mentioned, the culture, particularly in the classroom, should be defined as the traditional system of classroom manners (e.g., greeting teachers and classmates, asking and answering a question, asking for permission) in language learning and teaching. It also involves

language formality levels: appropriate language use and promoting learning environment together with good behavior in the social interaction. Moreover, Ghadami et al. (2014) suggested that our interactions occur at the intersections and boundaries of cultures as people move between and across them. In this circumstance, the complexity of cross-cultural communication and cross-functional and cross-social interaction can be challenging. Integrating cultural knowledge with language skills helps learners become better interactors. Thus, the students who incorporate cultural knowledge with language skills become better communicators. For language students, intercultural competence in the target language is critical, and the foreign language anxiety they experience should be viewed as a positive aspect of raising cultural awareness (Yurtsever & Dilara, 2021).

In the ELT context, the main essentials of the language classroom are normally focused on four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of language practices, and all these skills are aimed to develop the students' appropriate communication skills. Thus, cultural interaction is also expected as the fifth skill of language learning to remind students of how they should act properly in the particular situation. In addition, students are supposed to learn about how cultural interaction impacts cultures and societies with different cultural beliefs and different cultural practices. This can lead to students finding themselves in a culturally diverse environment because much of the practice takes place in the classrooms as well (Yurtsever & Dilara, 2021). In the business English classroom, the students should learn to perform tasks in a foreign language in a specific professional culture that is different from using the language for everyday life. Even participants using L1, they also learn new behaviors. Also, there are at least two levels of difficulty for business language students (coping in a foreign language, coping in a business situation). Therefore, the students need to consider their linguistic competency and effective communication. All aspects of culture (e.g., symbols, language, norms) are relevant to communication. Still, the social structure also impacts on communicative forms and processes, and it may play a role in both everyday and business discourse. The students may be unwilling to adopt strategies which are unusual to their own cultural attitudes and behaviors, and they may refuse to follow the patterns they are taught (Moradi, 2019; Trosborg & Shaw, 1998).

To enhance a research approach in investigating the cultural interaction in the particular setting, a microethnography approach seems to be an appropriate method that offers a methodology for investigating face-to-face interaction and specific viewpoints on language use in arrangements involving different participants in complex societies to understand what represents social and communicative competence and connecting situated interactional occurrences to cultural issues such as social opportunity and current cultural events (Garcez, 2017). The cases of microethnographic research are based on empirical details of actual behavior captured on videotape and made available to the visually examining audience.

This paper highlights the relationship among these three sets of theoretical perspectives by first providing the theoretical viewpoints on English language learning in the business

English classroom. Next, I refine cultural interaction in the classroom to make a clearer understanding regarding the different types of classroom interaction. Finally, I describe the importance of using the microethnography study to grasp the cultural interaction in the business English classroom. Moreover, this paper will consider the implications for business English lecturers to increase awareness and raise understanding of cultural interaction perspectives as well as to prepare the communitive resources to develop their instruction effectively to enhance the students' learning abilities.

Cultural Interaction in the Classroom

In regards to cultural interaction, there is attention to a wide range of topics within that large body of existing research, including the digital divide, multicultural education, cultural relevance, internationalization and localization of educational content, and cross-cultural awareness. In the cultural interactions and empirical studies in those areas, cultural critiques, analyses, definitions, and theories abound as globalization trends intensify (Ghadami et al., 2014). In the classroom environments, the cultural interaction generally happens when students communicate with their classmates and teachers to deliver their thoughts and/or exchange ideas by using formal and informal language as a medium to communicate with people of various levels. They are sometimes given the task of producing their work while using appropriate language for the situation to improve their communicative skills. Thus, the aforementioned can be the cultural interaction that is supposed to create a better learning environment in the social and cultural interaction. Individual work may be insufficient to engage students in developing efficient communicative skills; however, pair work or group work may be more effective in creating a productive environment for social interaction and practicing language skills. In terms of Business English, students are required to learn about business subjects, particularly communication skills for specific purposes such as telephoning, negotiating, and small talk (Léon-Henri, 2015).

The nature of interactions between native and non-native speakers in the globalized business world supports that the cultural dimension is becoming increasingly crucial for successful communication. Cultural interaction has gained much importance as a means of facilitating inter-cultural relations that benefits people of all professions (Hemmige, 2017). Previous intercultural communication research has focused on the behavior of people who are confronted with cultural differences in language and the consequences of these differences. The most important aspect of teaching foreign languages as a means of communication between people of various nations and cultures is that they must be studied in combination with the world and culture of the people who speak to them (Shamsitdinova, 2020). In a classroom, learning a language includes more than just memorizing words, phrases, and sounds. Students must also be aware of the cultural rules surrounding oral communication. Understanding these cultural differences can assist teachers in avoiding underestimating students' intellectual abilities and learning levels in certain types of classroom interactions. Johnson (1997) stated that there are three types of interaction to focus on when studying students' culture interaction: (1) Whole-class interaction: the

teacher engages with the entire class through class discussion or question-and-answer periods; (2) Interaction in small groups: students interact with one another; and (3) Student presentations: Students "perform" for the entire class in a formal setting. In these types of interactions, students from various cultures will react differently. When a classroom contains students from many cultures or different perspectives, the students contribute a great deal of diversity to the classroom. Teachers must grasp that diversity—how students' regular attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors differ from one another, especially from those of the teachers. Furthermore, some previous studies show that there are some impacts of social anxiety during learning interactive activities and the students found it difficult to be themselves and communicate with others (Eskiyurt & Alaca, 2021; Mouet al., 2022; Russell & Topham, 2012).

Understanding cultural differences is a simple way to improve and increase the effectiveness of classroom management. Suggestions include engaging students with a satisfying situation by requiring a great deal of team and group work, as well as providing points to students and reducing misbehavior rather than forcing them to gain points through competition. As mentioned, teachers can vary their classroom procedures, but they will never be able to conduct the class in a way that is always comfortable for all students. Nevertheless, understanding the relationship between students' social anxiety and their classroom interactions may enable instructors to modify teaching methods to better assist students with various needs, such as incorporating appropriate instructional strategies.

English Language Learning in the Business English Classroom

The Business English classroom is seen as a particular classroom for learning English for specific purposes where students can improve their English language and practice based on using business content. English language use in a business situation is merely one example of English for Specific Purposes. Business English has become particularly crucial in a globalized context, while more and more organizations require their employees to be fluent in the language. The primary aim of any Business English course is to enhance students to communicate effectively with others in various business communication forms (e.g., correspondences, face-to-face conferences, and negotiations; Fitria, 2019). Moreover, other goals of the new international Business English highlight teaching content to support students in critical thinking and to use their knowledge both of general and business English in participating in classroom activities. Furthermore, students will have the opportunity to enhance the business skills that will be required in their future careers, particularly in business organizations (Bhatia & Bremner, 2012).

In order to accomplish the students' goal of language learning, the Business English course generally provides related contents in business for the students such as business correspondence, negotiations, formal presentations, business vocabulary, report writing, and professional vocabulary. Each of these may be more or less challenging for different students. From the previous discussion, some students might understand the concepts of the courses and pay attention to learning, while other students might require more time to

prepare for their lesson and need more explanation in their native language (Martyn, 2018). Zunaidah (2019) found that there are some challenges faced by EFL students in learning business English focused on self-confidence, vocabulary knowledge, improvement of communication skills, and internship problems. In the classroom situation, for example, students can meet with difficulty when they have to study in the same group for entire academic years, and they may feel uncomfortable having a conversation with other people who are unfamiliar. Thus, it will be a problem for them in the future when asked to share ideas with their manager or colleague in the workplace.

Due to Business English being complex and integrative, its teaching objectives, teaching contents, and teaching methods differ from traditional English. Business English students also require increasingly more understanding about cultural communication skills as well as business practice skills. This means the students need more collaboration and activities to practice their skills. Moreover, providing more opportunities to interact with others in English can enhance their cross-cultural communication skills and essential business skills they should have learnt (Gu, 2020). Cross-cultural communication skills are developed when people from diverse cultural backgrounds interact with one another. Understanding different business behaviors, beliefs, and communication styles focused on cross-cultural workplace communication should be expanded in the classroom in order to improve cross-cultural communication and increase English-language proficiency for the students' future careers. Current trends of Business English learning also highlight the way that English learning should include the use of information communication technologies and the Internet. Due to the class environment having changed to online classes, many language courses have offered various instructional experiences that use the digital network for interaction, learning, and dialogue. Furthermore, this may effectively encourage more instructional activities for students with updated content areas and boost social connections so that students can gain new knowledge through interaction to develop their language abilities (Bali & Liu, 2018; Nambiar, 2020; Tratnik et al., 2019).

In summary, English language learning in Business English classrooms should be integrated and based on the students' proficiency and needs. Most importantly, university students' current English teaching and learning should not be undertaken using a teacher-centered classroom. With the rapid technological changes, English learning appears to be a significant challenge. Thus, in such contexts it remains essential to develop students' linguistic competency and business skills and overcome the challenges facing Business English lecturers as they strive to improve student creativity, promote cross-cultural awareness, and enhance the students' social interaction.

Rationale and Business Discourse Studies

Discourse studies have rapidly evolved over the last 10 years, influenced by a developing academic approach among linguistics that takes into consideration anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, and established sub-fields within linguistics. An

increasing interest in historical ethnographic and corpus-based approaches to discourse has helped to raise the relevance of the social contexts in which discourse occurs as well as increase the value of what matters as 'discourse' to include multi-modal texts and interaction (Bhatia et al., 2008).

Business discourse has its origins in language for specific purposes (LSP) studies. The amount and diversity of research accumulated lead to the understanding business discourse necessarily in broad terms (Cap, 2009). Business discourse concerns how people communicate in commercial organizations to complete their work. It is also concerned with how individuals communicate in business organizations to complete works or projects, whether verbally or in writing in general, and language in particular, in business contexts, most commonly in professional settings (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007; Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2013). Business communication's goal orientation results in effective interaction. There are genres that are utilized to do a specific action to attain goals that have patterns. Discourse analysis can be used to identify genres in business discourse and to evaluate structures of communicative practices of specific discourse communities. Furthermore, interpersonal relationships include teachers, peers, close friends, colleagues, co-workers, and many others who constitute the network of social connections. Thus, the use of language in commercial contexts is intimately linked to the social and cultural contexts in which it is produced. Conversation analysis can include examining how social and cultural factors influence discourse, such as intercultural communication.

However, discourse analysis can significantly contribute to Business English research and education. Business discourse research could play an essential role in providing students with the knowledge they need for effective corporate communication, given the increased importance of Business English today. It can throw light on the description of Business English, which is one of the critical contributions of discourse analysis to the teaching of Business English. It also describes how people use language in business and what linguistic qualities learners may need to know when working. As a result, the data can suggest which linguistic aspects should be included in teaching materials and how people use these linguistic features in this context.

Microethnography Study in the Language-Learning Classroom

Ethnography is a comprehensive study technique that uses ethnographic narratives of actual communication events and occasions to investigate different cultural and environmental aspects of communication. It provides extensive theoretical foundations and thorough methodological processes for analyzing and comprehending discursal and other communication sign systems in everyday interactions and mediated rituals (Noy, 2017). Smith (1978) defines different ethnographic conceptual traditions based on anthropological and sociological perspectives. While these perspectives represent a growing body of work, he argued that there was also a similar body of work focusing on what it took to conduct participant observation. He argued that more investigation was needed to clarify what this social science approach as a methodology involves. He also

introduced “new ethnographies,” which moved the focus from a more holistic study of a group or community and toward analyses of audio and videotapes of classroom events, a direction he termed “microethnography.” This is an approach of describing and analyzing the language and communication of a specific group of people within the context of larger social and cultural organizations, practices, and communities. The approach also builds on the broader discourse studies that investigated the discourse and linguistic structure and processes in social communication in their daily lives (Kim, 2018). In addition, employing the microethnography approach to explore classroom behavior includes videotaping the classroom situation and then attentively analyzing the recording to define its social organizational features. The analysis might involve related documents and anticipate the nature of actual action of people as well as sequence a set of teaching procedures in a classroom or analyze whether the students understand and attempt to follow the teacher’s guidance for receiving attention or answering questions (Au & Mason, 1982).

Microethnography study investigates how people interact socially and culturally in specific settings, such as classrooms. It is also concerned with the degree to which natural interaction can be achieved in particular classroom activities. For the study method, it should considered what people produce in real-time in terms of context and sense making by using video and audio recordings, observation, and fieldnotes of naturally occurring social encounters (Dougherty, 2019; Garcez, 2017; Herrle, 2020). Bloome and Carter (2013) suggest that literacy events and practices are constructed by people acting and reacting to each other through written language, according to a microethnographic discourse analysis perspective. Importantly, microethnographic study is about discourse analysis which is a way of “seeing,” theorizing, and exploring to extend or, at times, problematize our understanding of people’s actions and reactions, meaning-making, and relationship-building processes within a community (Kim, 2018). Spoken language and different modes of communication may be used in literacy events and practices. The relationships between written and spoken language and other modes of communication vary depending on the nature of the social events and practices. Moreover, employing the microethnographic approach to classroom research should be conducted in qualitative studies to gain more comprehensible information from various specific contexts in the classroom.

De Moraes Garcez (1993) investigated a case of microethnographic study of a cross-cultural commercial interaction. The study demonstrated how differing discourse organizing conventions may alter natural conversation by examining how two Brazilians and two U.S. businesspeople structured their speech during their talks. The purpose of this study was to highlight the stylistic differences in point-making utilized by American and Brazilian negotiators, as well as to analyze the implications of these findings for education in general and specifically for ESP and business training. Although this study illustrated the structure of the cross-cultural commercial communication patterns which occurred during the negotiation of the two groups, it was also instructive in terms of its investigation of the use of semiotic resources (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, gazes, visual) in

the interactional communication in the business courses. In the English for Tourism course, for example, the inquiry could focus on the interaction between verbal and nonverbal communication when students use English as a tour guide (Carrasco et al., 2017; de Moraes Garcez, 1993; Herdanti & Saefullah, 2021; Latipah, 2021).

The context above shows that microethnography studies in language learning classrooms should focus on specific scenes in educational settings. It provides different perspectives of language classroom research to discuss the complexity within the field of literacy studies and within broader cultural movements (Bloome et al., 2004). The primary purpose of conducting such analyses is that learning in a classroom is deeply ingrained in the flow of social interaction between the teacher and the student. Understanding students' failure to understand necessitates an understanding of communication failure on the part of one or both participants in these interactions. Provided the time and effort required to conduct such appropriate analyses, consideration should be given to the distinctive contributions of this research approach and how the information received can relate to efforts to improve classroom literacy instruction. It will be welcomed by scholars working in language and literacy studies, and educational researchers interested in classroom discourse analysis and the language used in the particular setting.

Conclusion

Studying cultural interaction in the classroom, especially in the Business English classroom, is considered an appropriate method and is a primary process for gaining valuable data from the participants. Investigating the nature of language and its connections to the self, others, thought, knowledge, culture, and society are at the heart of education. For example, text and discourse are two topics that should be investigated further. It is crucial to distinguish between them to comprehend the various explanations for discourse analysis. However, the Business English content, particularly in the classroom setting, has paid little attention to employing microethnography study to investigate cultural interaction. Thus, further investigation should involve the analysis of the correlation of patterns in particular social interactions with different modes of communication aspects (e.g., verbal, non-verbal, signal, visual), points of view on language use, and social and communicative competence. In addition, the investigation should focus on cultural expression patterns that differ among each group of students in the classroom, which may influence group members' attitudes and behaviors, including political engagement patterns. Although cultural differences may cause communication difficulties in the classroom, this does not indicate that communication will not occur appropriately. Informed and concerned teachers can fully engage students in learning by using the information offered here and collaborating to overcome the challenges that cultural communication norms present.

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Abstract

Having a level of writing anxiety is normal and often a sign that writers are concerned about writing well. If this type of anxiety motivates the writers to devote thought and effort to their writing, their mindset can have a certain positive value. However, in excessive quantities, writing anxiety can be a hindrance. In the EFL context, being a good writer depends on many factors, including learners' psychological factors. Writing anxiety is one of the most affective factors which is claimed to affect the learners' motivation and attitudes towards writing. Many studies have shown that when EFL learners have high levels of writing anxiety, the writing process becomes more complicated. This can lead to a negative effect on their writing performance. Therefore, this article provides an overview of the writing anxiety among EFL learners in terms of its aspects, factors, and effects based on literature and previous studies. There are three main types of writing anxiety: Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior. Writing Anxiety can be caused from lacking self-confidence, fear of negative evaluation, having a low level of English proficiency, teachers' giving feedback, and peers' criticisms. When writing, the learners with a high level of the anxiety perform more poorly than those with a lower level.

Keywords: Writing Anxiety, Writing Performance, EFL Learners

Introduction

According to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1985), anxiety is the affective filter or mental block such as motivation and self-confidence that profoundly influences language learners' output. The learners with clear motivation, strong self-confidence and less anxiety can produce more outputs because of the low filtering effects on language input. On the other hand, the language learners have less output as a result of the high filtering effects.

Typically, anxiety is a natural feeling that may happen in different situations. This phenomenon is significant in educational settings, especially in foreign language learning. Based on previous studies, when language learners face anxiety, they may avoid attending the class, never volunteer, and sit at the back of the classroom to reduce their

embarrassment of being called to speak. Additionally, when the learners have a high level of anxiety, they may have low performance and achievement, and as a result dislike learning the language (Horwitz et al., 1986; Fukai, 2000; Hassania, & Azizah, 2012). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), anxiety concerning foreign language anxiety is defined as “a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process” (p. 128). Fears of negative evaluation (FNE), test anxiety (TA), and communication apprehension (CA) are recognized as the components of foreign language anxiety which are observed when a language learner expects that others would evaluate them negatively. FNE means the learners are nervous about evaluation or being evaluated. TA means a type of anxiety in performance which derives from a fear. CA is a type of shyness derived from anxiety through communicating with others. Dörnyei (2005) also categorized anxiety as facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety, and trait and state anxiety. For facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety, it has been noted that anxiety does not necessarily hinder performance, but some cases can actually enhance it. Worry, which is considered the cognitive component of anxiety, is shown to have a negative impact on performance, while the affective component, emotionality, does not necessarily have negative effects. For trait and state anxiety, trait anxiety is the stable propensity to feel anxious in a variety of situations, whereas state anxiety is the temporary, moment-to-moment feeling of anxiety as an emotion connected to the current situation (p. 198). In addition, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) defined anxiety as a learner’s experience of feelings of uneasiness, worries, and physiological responses while doing a task for a specific language skill such as speaking, reading, or writing. It is also one of crucial affective variables that may have negative effects on second language acquisition.

Regarding writing anxiety or writing apprehension, the term was firstly coined by Daly and Miller in 1975 after the communication research conducted in 1970 pointed out a type of anxiety specific to written communication. It refers to a situation and subject specific difference related to an individual’s tendencies to approach or avoid situations requiring writing accompanied by evaluation. People with high anxiety find writing unrewarding, indeed punishing. Consequently, they avoid situations where writing is required if possible (Daly & Wilson, 1983).

Daly and Miller (1975) also defined writing anxiety as “the tendency of a person to avoid the process of writing-particularly when it is to be evaluated in some way” (p. 244). It is also considered the challenges that frequently happen when L2 learners are asked to write (Al Asmari, 2013). These challenges often negatively affect the learners’ writings. According to Al-Sawalha and Chow (2012), writing anxiety is known as a situation that hinders writers from performing well in the writing process. In learning L2 writing, writers need to ensure that their readers receive the intended message successfully even though the writers face language difficulties along the way. Knowing L2 writing as a demanding process, it is common for the writers to experience writing anxiety when they are in a writing process. This is one of the obstacles that the writers need to encounter in L2 writing (Aripin & Rahmat, 2021). As far as writing anxiety is concerned, the L2 writing problem

definitely gives various effects to the writers. For example, the writers develop negative perceptions about writing. In addition, they are worried about other's expectation including the negative evaluation or feedback (Jebreil et al., 2015; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014; Wahyuni & Khotibul Umam, 2017).

In the L2 writing context, there may be a large number of learners who fail miserably in an environment where writing is demanded because of an anxiety about writing (Golda, 2015). These learners are those who find the demand for writing competency exceedingly frightening (Daly & Miller, 1975). For example, the learners with high anxiety of writing may fear evaluation of their writing, feeling that they will be negatively rated on it. Consequently, they avoid writing when possible. Moreover, when they are forced to write, they express a high level of anxiety. They expect to fail in writing logically since they seldom engage in it.

Since the 1970s, a good number of studies have been conducted regarding L1 writing anxiety. One of the most significant works among them was conducted by Daly and Miller (1975), who coined the term "writing apprehension" to refer to the emotional difficulty and developed an instrument, the Writing Apprehension Test (WAT), to measure it. Daly and Miller (1975) stated that when observing students in classrooms, most writing teachers recognized their students seem to be apprehensive about writing. Simple observation is not enough. As well intentioned as observation may be, incorrect impressions may easily be derived from numerous misinterpretations of the students' behavior. They suggested that a more effective and efficient means of isolating apprehensive student writers should be through an empirically based, standardized instrument. WAT developed by Daly and Miller (1975) consists of 63 items. According to WAT, writing anxiety was divided into three categories: teacher evaluation of writing, peer evaluation of writing, and professional evaluations. This instrument was commonly used to measure second language writing anxiety (e.g., Cheng et al., 1999; Hadaway, 1987). However, as WAT was originally developed with reference to first language learners, particularly English native speakers, it might not gauge the most essential aspects of second language writing anxiety (Cheng, 2004).

There has been a substantial quantity of research considering the relevance of language learners' writing anxiety from the foreign language perspective in the past two decades (Arindra & Ardi, 2020; Cheng, 2004; Hassan, 2001; Kara, 2013; Kurt & Atay, 2007; Miri & Joia, 2018; Sabti et al., 2019; Wahyuni & Khotibul Umam, 2017). Cheng (2004) developed a multidimensional L2 writing anxiety scale, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), to assess the levels and types of second language writing anxiety. It is now very popular among researchers conducting writing anxiety, (Jebreil et al., 2015; Kabigting et al., 2020; Masriani et al., 2018; Solangi et al., 2021).

Although it is not easy to identify the presence of writing anxiety in a writing process, it is believed that writing anxiety can be recognized from writers' behavior that can be associated with anxiety. Additionally, according to Cheng (2004), writers who are anxious during the writing process usually show some symptoms or signs of writing

anxiety such as shaking, sweating, trembling and feeling guilty. In this paper, aspects of EFL learners' writing anxiety, factors causing writing anxiety, and effects of writing anxiety on EFL learners' performance will be discussed as follows.

Aspects of Writing Anxiety

As Cheng's (2004) SLWAI has been widely utilized to investigate writing anxiety of language learners in the ELT context since it was published, this part of the paper discusses it.

According to Cheng's (2004) development of writing anxiety scale, SLWAI conforms to three-dimensional conceptualized aspects of anxiety: Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior.

- *Somatic Anxiety* refers to one's perception of the physiological effects of the anxiety experience which is reflected in increased autonomic arousal and unpleasant feelings such as nervousness and tension. Individuals, sometimes, are feeling nervous or in high tension when doing a writing task under time limitation with having no idea. For example, in an essay writing class, language students are asked to write three-paragraph narrative essay within one hour. At the beginning, even though the students may not be nervous, they feel nervous when seeing some of their friends having finished their writing, while they have not completed their task yet.

- *Cognitive Anxiety* refers to the cognitive aspect of anxiety experience, including negative expectations, preoccupation with performance, and concern about others' perceptions. How students perform their writing is highly influenced by expectations from both their teacher and other students. For instance, the teacher highly expects the students to achieve the high standard from the teacher. This can negatively affect the students' writing performances because they will focus on the teacher's expectation rather than their own writing.

- *Avoidance Behavior* refers to the behavioral aspect of the anxiety experience where the students avoid writing. For example, the students do not come to the writing class or do not do their writing task. This aspect can be regarded as the most problematic because if the students avoid writing or do not attend to the class, they will not develop their writing ability.

Based on Cheng's (2004) SLWAI, it can be concluded that there are three types or aspects of writing anxiety: Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior. They specify the physiological, cognitive, and effects of writing anxiety on writing processes and behaviors.

Factors Causing Writing Anxiety

Factors that can cause EFL learners to feel anxious when they are asked to write might be various. General factors ranging from highly personal to procedural can be found in the studies in the field of second/foreign language writing as well as writing anxiety.

Self-confidence is one of the factors that cause writing anxiety. EFL students' lack of self-confidence is very decisive for determining writing anxiety (Hassan, 2001). Cheng (2004) affirmed that lack of self-confidence could be considered a major cause of anxiety. Even learners of high competence in writing might not perceive themselves as competent writers and might not be able to avoid writing anxiety.

Referring to Horwitz et al. (1986), another factor causing writing anxiety is fear of negative evaluation because writing is a productive skill influenced strongly by time limitation; even the smartest and well-prepared students frequently feel anxious when they are about to write. The fear of being negatively evaluated by the teachers and peers and the worry about timed writing makes the students uneasy to develop their English writing skills (Wahyuni & Khotibul Umam, 2017).

Moreover, for learners who are at the beginning level of English proficiency, lacking knowledge or understanding necessary to complete the writing task can cause writing anxiety as writing requires knowledge about how to develop a good piece of writing (Parichut, 2014; Wahyuni & Umam, 2017). When students have an inadequate grasp of vocabulary and grammar, they are unable to express their ideas in appropriate and correct English (Hyland, 2003).

According to Kara (2013) and Rezaei and Jafari (2014), teachers' ways of teaching and giving feedback are also the factors affecting the anxiety levels of the students. For example, some teachers act like a "drill sergeant" instead of a "facilitator" as they believe that there is a constant need to correct their students' errors (Young, 1991). This approach absolutely leads to tension in the writing class which can elevate students' anxiety level (Aida, 1994). Furthermore, the students' writing anxiety can also be affected by their peers. Peers' criticisms and laughter at the students' performance in the classroom have caused them to feel embarrassed and anxious to participate in tasks given (Aragão, 2011).

In this section, according to the previous studies, there are many factors that can cause writing anxiety: lack of self-confidence, fear of being evaluated negatively, having low English proficiency level, and receiving negative feedback from teachers and peers. All of these are the factors ranging from highly personal to procedural that can be found in the studies in the field of writing as well as writing anxiety.

Effects of Writing Anxiety on EFL Learners

Many studies have found that writing anxiety is linked to the trend of unwillingness to be involved in writing classes as it has a strong influence on learners' ability to grasp the writing course content. In other words, writing anxiety has negative effects on EFL

learners' writing performance. It makes the learners consider writing as difficult and an awful activity.

Writing anxiety significantly and negatively correlates with writing performance. The language learners with a high level of writing anxiety mainly have a low level of writing performance. For example, their written products are shorter than those whose levels of writing anxiety are lower (Cheng, 2004; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). Furthermore, the effects of writing anxiety can likely weaken the learners' ability and confidence about their writing achievement (Abbas, 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986; Kara, 2013; Liu & Ni, 2015). Additionally, the effects of writing anxiety on writing performance can be predictors of the quality of the writing. For instance, the learners who have low anxiety tend to achieve higher grades in writing courses than other learners who have high anxiety. In addition, low anxious learners can write three times more words and incidentally make fewer spelling errors than those who are high anxious (Daly, 1978; Kassim et al., 2013).

Furthermore, apart from the aspect of the learners' writing performance mentioned earlier, Erkan and Saban (2011) assert that learners who find writing difficult to learn have the same problems such as being afraid of making writing errors. This feeling forms anxiety patterns because the learners who feel afraid of making mistakes in writing unconsciously will try to avoid it. This is also supported by Cheng (2004) who states that Avoidance Behavior, one of three aspects of writing anxiety, refers to the actions or behavior an individual takes to escape from difficult thoughts or feelings.

Conclusion

Writing anxiety has been mainly related to EFL learners' writing performance. It causes serious difficulties and challenges to the learners in the mastering of writing proficiency. The anxiety is also one of the psychological factors that can affect the learners' writing performance and their willingness to take opportunities to write. According to Cheng's (2004) SLWAI, there are three main types of writing anxiety. Somatic Anxiety refers to feeling nervous or in high tension when writing; Cognitive Anxiety refers to the perceptive aspect of anxiety experience such as negative expectations, and concern about others' perceptions; and Avoidance Behavior refers to the behavioral aspect of the anxiety experience where the learners avoid writing.

Writing Anxiety can be caused from lacking self-confidence, fear of negative evaluation, having a low level of English proficiency, teachers' giving feedback, and peers' criticisms. When writing, the learners with a high level of the anxiety perform more poorly than those with a lower level. These problems are inherent in the nature of education in the context which provokes fears such as teachers as the main readers and evaluators of the learners' writings, pressure for perfect work, and goals of writing which are not compatible with the learners' expectations.

From a theoretical view, a high level of writing anxiety often leads L2 learners to disappointing performances, whereas those who have a low level of writing anxiety achieve

better results on writing performance (Cheng, 2004; Rezaei & Jafari, 2014). This is consistent with the study of Erkan and Saban (2011) who affirmed that learners with high writing anxiety performed poorly in a writing task compared to those with low and moderate writing anxiety. Apart from writing performance which is affected by writing anxiety, students who have a high level of writing anxiety try to avoid writing tasks since they find the tasks as threats rather than challenges (Sabti et al., 2019). This appears very similar to and supports one of Cheng's (2004) findings, which is Avoidance Behavior. This refers to the actions or behavior that one takes to escape from tough feelings.

From this it can be concluded that English language teachers in the EFL context need to be aware of students' high level of writing anxiety as it mostly affects the students' proficiency negatively. To do so, the teachers should implement appropriate approaches or methods to teach literacy and motivate their students to write more and not try to avoid the writing class. It is also suggested that, in order to minimize learners' writing anxiety, their beliefs about their writing abilities should be fostered by providing positive feedback from teachers and encouraging positive feedback from peers.

Authors

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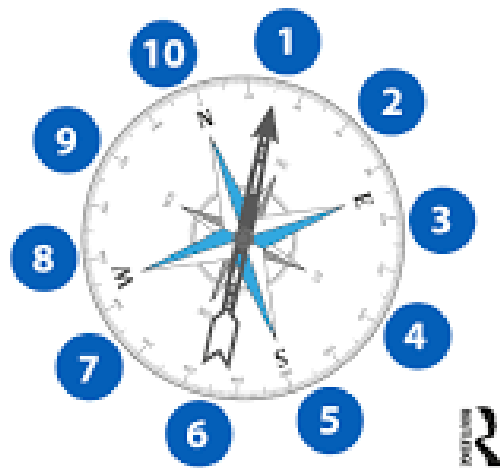
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PRINCIPLES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

IGOR E. KLYUKANOV

Second Edition



Book Review

Klyukanov, I. E. (2021). *Principles of intercultural communication* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

By Patrawut Charoenroop

National Institute of Development Administration

Professor Igor E. Klyukanov is currently a Professor of Communication in the Department of Communication Studies at Eastern Washington University. He has numerous books and research publications in the field of intercultural and global communication. Many of his works explore intercultural communication in Russian language and culture. One of his early books, *Principles of Intercultural Communication*, was published in 2005 by Pearson Education, and Routledge has now released the second edition.

In this book, Professor Klyukanov addresses 10 principles of intercultural communication: (1) Punctuation, (2) Uncertainty, (3) Performativity, (4) Positionality, (5) Commensurability, (6) Continuum,

(7) Pendulum, (8) Transaction, (9) Synergy, and (10) Sustainability. Fully understanding a complex phenomenon like intercultural communication at present requires multi-dimensional principles, because, as the author says, “no single theory can explain a complex object in its entirety” (p. 2).

Each chapter begins with questions which invite the reader to consider each principle in the intercultural communication framework. Basic terms, thorough explanations, and precise definitions related to each principle, help the reader understand the questions. In addition, 10 case studies are given to help clarify the theory, including (1) ‘Peace Walls’ in Northern Ireland, (2) ‘The Shock of the Other’, (3) ‘Translation zone(s): A stuttering’, (4) ‘The Kosher Phone’, (5) ‘The Globalization of Chinese Medicine’, (6) ‘The 1999 Coca-Cola Scare in Europe’, (7) ‘Dialectics of Colonial Encounter: Interacting with the Kobon’, (8) ‘The Wall of Death: A Conflict Between Japanese and Western Cultures’, (9) ‘The Case of AMD: Unleashing Intercultural Potential’, and (10) ‘An Ethics of Cultural Exchange’. These case studies are intercultural diverse rather than exclusively American like other previous studies especially on cross-cultural communication (cf. Samovar et al., 2017). At the end, a few side trips—minor excursions—are included, inviting the reader to draw connections to their own experience. The many authentic incidents described allow readers to enjoy the book, even those without expertise in the field. In addition, the author’s style is reader-friendly. Although there is occasional jargon and some difficult concepts, the author explains it all clearly.

The 10 principles show us that intercultural communication is a reiterating, ongoing, and interactive process in which diverse people work toward mutual objectives. However, there are distinctions to be made among the principles. The Punctuation Principle (Ch. 1) explains how people create their identities “by drawing boundary lines between themselves.” These lines separate in-groups from out-groups, and intercultural communication means searching for “a mutually acceptable boundary fit” between in-groups and out-groups. The Uncertainty Principle (Ch. 2) discusses how people seek knowledge beneficial to their intercultural contacts, especially those with different or unpredictable backgrounds. The Performative Principle (Ch. 3) shows how people of different backgrounds use different modes to communicate. The Positionality Principle (Ch. 4) discusses how different groups “claim authority” for their worldviews. The Commensurability Principle (Ch. 5) explains how people compare their cultures with others’ and seek common ground. The Continuum Principle (Ch. 6) shows how groups, when distant from one another, construct “a shared space” for meaning. The Pendulum Principle (Ch. 7) illustrates how different groups are connected or kept apart in order to “produce multiple voices.” The Transaction Principle (Ch. 8) explains how different groups relocate within “a negotiation zone” to resolve conflicts. The Synergy Principle (Ch. 9) shows how groups integrate ‘resources’ and ‘interests’ to achieve the best results, revealing how and why the most satisfying results are produced by groups not individuals. The Sustainability Principle (Ch. 10) suggests that groups display mutual ‘tolerance’, ‘trust’, and ‘resistance’ both to maintain group identity and make interactions more effective.

This book will benefit postgraduate students, researchers, and teachers of intercultural communication at any level, as well as the general public. The ideas will certainly broaden the reader’s perspective, helping them understand and thrive in a diverse world.

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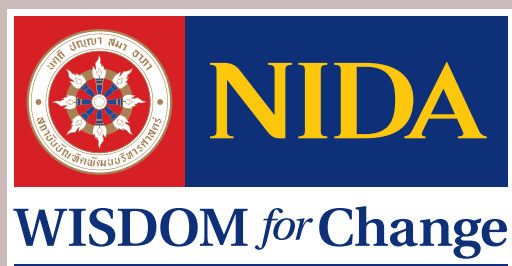
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