# Implementing the Lexical Approach with Integrated Learning Activities with Thai EFL University Students

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| *Article information* | *Abstract* |
|---|---|
| | *This study implemented the lexical approach (LA) with integrated learning activities (ILAs) to determine its effectiveness in enhancing EFL university students' linguistic knowledge and English communication skills. The objectives were twofold: 1) to assess student progress in language achievement, specifically in English grammar and vocabulary used in everyday conversation, and 2) to investigate student attitudes towards the LA with ILAs in developing their English communication skills. Forty-nine English major students from a Thai higher educational institution participated in this study. Data were collected using two research instruments: a language achievement test and a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to calculate percentages and SPSS to examine mean scores and standard deviations. Results from a paired t-test showed statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores at the .05 confidence level, confirming that the students made progress in language achievement. The LA with ILAs significantly improved students' knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary used in daily conversation. Moreover, the questionnaire results indicated that students believed the LA with ILAs enhanced their English communication skills, particularly in speaking, followed by reading, listening, and writing skills, respectively. Therefore, the LA with ILAs could be an effective teaching method for EFL educators to reinforce students' linguistic knowledge and communication skills. With adequate knowledge and skills in an authentic learning environment, students will gain confidence in communicating with foreigners in real-life situations in the future.* |

## INTRODUCTION

As we live in an increasingly globalized world, English has undoubtedly become an indispensable commodity for Thai students that not only equips them with international communication skills, but also opens a gateway to employment opportunities overseas. For instance, when employees are tasked with engaging foreign customers, they should demonstrate proficiency in English, both spoken and written, to minimize the risk of miscommunication. This relevance aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasize that the primary purpose of language learning is to facilitate effective communication, particularly in business contexts and professional interactions across diverse fields (Chaiyasat & Intakaew, 2023).

Consequently, CLT has been widely applied in EFL language instruction as a groundbreaking response to traditional teaching methods, aiming to enhance learners' communicative competence (Yuan, 2022). Students' communicative abilities are assessed based on their adeptness in using English appropriately within social contexts. However, previous studies have identified language barriers faced by Thai students, including grammatical and lexical errors (Sinturat et al., 2022) and challenges in employing appropriate language in social settings (Tantiwich & Sinwongsuwat, 2021). These factors can impede students' communicative competence. Therefore, Thai students urgently need to develop their English communication skills to prepare for future careers.

Previous studies have identified several vital factors that influence students' language development, including learning style (Sundo et al., 2023), teaching methods (Alshumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021; Oeamoum & Sriwichai, 2020), and the learning environment (Kiatkheeree, 2018; Kondo, 2018). However, the extent to which current methods can overcome students' language barriers remains questionable. In an effort to enhance students' English proficiency, Thai educators in higher education institutions have been exploring appropriate and effective teaching and learning methods to support EFL students in English language learning. To do so, authentic content should be incorporated into language instruction through practical and diverse activities. If students have opportunities to practice their skills, they will be able to achieve effective communication (Alshumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021), as practice plays a crucial role in language development and leads to proficiency. Therefore, this study aims to implement the lexical approach (LA) with integrated learning activities (ILAs) to enhance students' English linguistic knowledge and communication skills. The decision to use this method is supported by numerous studies that have reported positive outcomes from employing the LA in language instruction (Aromin & Kim, 2021; Momeni & Ahmadian, 2022; Sewbihon-Getie, 2021; Susanto & Nanda, 2024; Zhong & Suwanthep, 2022).

However, few studies in Thai universities emphasized the implementation of using the LA in EFL instruction to improve students' English communication skills. This is supported by a study of Dorkchandra (2016) which revealed that the teachers in Thailand had a moderate understanding of the LA and utilized LA activities and exercises to a similar extent which highlighted the unpopularity of LA in Thailand, potentially influenced by factors such as the prevalence of traditional methods found in commercial ELT books and the perception of the LA tasks as time-consuming and challenging. Therefore, this study employed the LA with ILAs focusing on authentic content and practical tasks to determine if this method could enhance the students' linguistic knowledge and improve their English communication skills. Therefore, the LA with ILAs would provide EFL teachers with alternative strategies for English language instruction, aimed at enhancing students' language development. Moreover, these approaches would provide students with the ability to use English expressions accurately and appropriately. As a result, students will feel more confident when communicating with people in global communities.

**Research questions**

The objectives of this study are to examine Thai EFL students' progress in language achievement concerning linguistic aspects used in daily English conversation and to investigate student

attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs. The results of this study will indicate whether such approaches can enhance students' linguistic knowledge and develop their English communication skills. Two research questions are presented as follows:

1. To what extent can the LA with ILAs contribute to progress in Thai undergraduates' language achievement?
2. What are Thai undergraduates' attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs improving their English communication skills?

**The scope of the study**

This present study centers on the LA with ILAs whether such approaches can increase students' linguistic knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, as well as strengthen their English communication skills. To support students' practical experiences, the contents used in these activities mainly focus on topics of everyday conversation, including introduction and greetings, directions, descriptions of people, weather and temperature, health and sickness, and dining at a restaurant. The types of ILAs also include a mix of individual, pair, and group activities, as described below.

**Table 1**
**The details of ILAs**

| No. | Topics | Functions | Features | Types |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction and greetings | ● Formal and informal greetings<br>● Self-introduction and introducing others | ● Wh-questions<br>● Helping verbs<br>● Modals: May, Can, Could, Would<br>● Adjectives<br>● Demonstrative pronoun: This | Group |
| 2 | Directions | Giving directions | ● Verb phrases<br>● Prepositions: Place, Movement | Individual |
| 3 | Descriptions of People | Describing appearance | ● Adjective orders<br>● Present continuous | Individual |
| 4 | Weather and temperature | Talking about weather and climate | ● Adjectives<br>● Nouns<br>● Quantifiers<br>● Wh-questions<br>● There is/There are… | Pair |
| 5 | Health and Sickness | Talking about health and sickness | ● Adjectives<br>● Nouns<br>● Modals: Might, Could, Can, Must<br>● Wh-questions<br>● Present perfect tense<br>● Past simple tense | Pair |
| 6 | Dining at a restaurant | Ordering food and beverage | ● Modals: Would, Can, Could<br>● Adjectives<br>● Future simple tense | Group |

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Since students come from various fields of study and are majoring in English for International Communication, they require a strong foundation in English linguistic knowledge and communication skills, which are essential components of effective communication. This aligns with the world-renowned approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which focuses on improving students' communicative competence (Hien, 2021; Yuan, 2022). As for communicative competence, it encompasses four domains of knowledge and abilities: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980 as cited in Ahmed, 2023). Therefore, students will be able to convey their messages effectively to interlocutors if they possess communicative abilities. In other words, EFL students need both grammatical and lexical knowledge in English to accurately combine words, construct sentences, follow the rules of language use, and use language appropriately according to social contexts (Thuratham, 2022). Thus, English linguistic knowledge and communication skills are the bridging components that EFL students must master to achieve English proficiency, as emphasized by Zarfsaz and Yeganehpour (2021).

Despite communication being a vital skill for life and careers, it has been found to be the most frequent problem for students (Tolanur, 2022). University students, in particular, have yet to overcome their communication problems, which encompass linguistic, lexical and skill aspects. This issue has been acknowledged by several studies (Islam et al., 2022; Sinturat et al., 2022; Tantiwich & Sinwongsuwat, 2021). A study conducted by Tantiwich and Sinwongsuwat (2021) showed that students encountered significant communication problems during phone call role plays, particularly regarding pronunciation, sounds, stress, pauses, and grammatical accuracy in turn-taking, which could impact their social use of language and performance in everyday conversation. Furthermore, it was discovered that students encountered difficulties in linguistic aspects, notably limited vocabulary and challenges with grammar when formulating utterances, which constituted the majority of their speaking issues. Additionally, students expressed feelings of nervousness and shyness when speaking English (Sinturat et al., 2022). According to a study by Islam, Ahmad, and Islam (2022), university students experienced significant difficulty communicating in English due to the lack of practice in listening and speaking skills since primary school. The students struggled with grammar and vocabulary proficiency and lacked a supportive environment to practice speaking.

Additionally, several factors can hinder students' language development. A study conducted by Sundo et al. (2023) identified several discouraging factors in English language learning, including a learning style that overemphasizes textbook-based instruction. This approach creates an imbalance between the skills highlighted in textbooks and the actual language practice in which students engage. Similarly, Oeamoum and Sriwichai (2020) highlighted challenges in English language learning related to teaching methods, such as a shortage of specialists for specific courses and the use of unengaging instructional techniques. Furthermore, Alshumaimeri and Alhumud (2021) indicated numerous impediments to students' development of English communication skills, such as teaching methods, curriculum design, time constraints and class size. Interestingly, a study by AlFadley and Qasem (2020) demonstrated that the preference for native speakers as teachers had the most significant impact on the development

of students' speaking skills. Additionally, English language proficiency and the teaching methodologies employed also exerted considerable influence. These factors contribute to the ongoing challenges students face in overcoming their obstacles in English language learning. Therefore, effective teaching methods should be introduced into EFL classrooms to support students' language learning and development.

The LA emphasizes the importance of the lexicon, particularly multiword units or "chunks". This approach enhances students' comprehension and acquisition of a foreign language by associating terms with lexis and supporting oral communication (Ricaurte, 2022). The goal of this approach is to cultivate learners' awareness of lexical chunks as a fundamental aspect of naturalistic language. Instead of focusing explicitly on grammatical rules and structures, students learn through the use of sentence frames (Yao, 2021). Consequently, many scholars have adopted the LA in English language instruction to facilitate the language development of EFL students. Research by Zhong and Suwanthep (2022) demonstrated that the LA improved reading comprehension among Chinese English majors by enhancing their ability to identify, classify, and acquire lexical chunks. Furthermore, Sewbihon-Getie (2021) found that students significantly increased their vocabulary knowledge through the LA in EFL instruction. Aromin and Kim's study (2021) underscored that the LA enhances students' speaking confidence and proficiency, particularly in understanding contextual meanings, using fixed and semi-fixed expressions, and selecting appropriate collocations. Additionally, Momeni and Ahmadian (2022) revealed that lexically-based instruction significantly enhances university students' writing proficiency, particularly in managing lexical complexity and range. Moreover, Susanto and Nanda (2024) integrated phonetic symbols with the LA, demonstrating its beneficial impact on improving students' listening skills and comprehension of spoken texts. Furthermore, Cancino and Iturrieta's study (2022) indicated that employing the LA positively influences learners' oral proficiency, as assessed by native-speaker evaluators. This approach supports language development through exposure to authentic language and heightened awareness of lexical bundles. It also promotes the acquisition of formulaic sequences, particularly specific lexical chunks, among learners. This is supported by Ricaurte's findings (2022), which showed that students significantly improved their communicative abilities, achieving more precise and confident speech through the integration of language chunks into authentic and meaningful contexts.

In this study, the LA with ILAs was implemented to determine if these teaching methods could help students increase their linguistic knowledge and improve their English communication skills. To implement this method, students were provided with opportunities to learn how to use language chunks effectively to communicate in English across various topics and engage in individual, paired, and group activities. For example, during group activities, students were assigned to study sample conversations, such as by watching video clips featuring interactions in a restaurant setting. Afterwards, they formed groups to analyze language chunks, complete exercises, collaboratively create sentences, and practice communication through in-class role-playing activities. This method also allows students to learn through trial and error before applying their knowledge and skills in everyday conversation. According to My (2021), effective methods that assist students in applying their knowledge and skills successfully involve integrated activities that allow students to practice authentic language typically used in real-life

situations. By doing so, students are immersed in an English learning environment where the teacher interacts with and facilitates students in applying and practicing English expressions in realistic activities both inside and outside the classroom. It is essential to create an environment that supports the practice of acquired language skills and strategies, and it is also important to guide students through tasks and enable them to reflect on their learning outcomes (Chou, 2021). As a result, the interaction between teacher and students becomes more active, and students gain autonomous learning experiences. Ultimately, students become more confident and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate with others in society effectively and successfully.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

A single-group pre- and post-test design was administered in this study to determine the differences in learning outcomes between the pre- and post-tests within one target group (Patmanthara et al., 2019). The participants' linguistic knowledge related to language achievement in the topics of daily English conversation was evaluated before and after applying the LA with ILAs, which served as the treatment in the study. Additionally, the study explored students' attitudes towards the implementation of ILAs in classrooms.

### Participants

The total number of participants in this study was 49, selected from an intact group. The students were in their first year of study in the Department of English for International Communication, within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at a university in eastern Thailand. They were enrolled in a compulsory course, "English for Undergraduate Students," during the first semester of the 2022 academic year. To ensure the homogeneity of the participants in the research, a language achievement pre-test was administered in conjunction with the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria. All participants willingly attended all activities and were at least 18 years old. Students who were absent from any of the activities in this study were excluded. Participation was voluntary, and students were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without obligations. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Subjects of Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok, Thailand on 8th September 2022 (COA No. 017, RMUTTO REC No. 035/2021).

### Instruments

Two instruments were employed in this study. First, a language achievement test was administered to assess the students' linguistic knowledge, focusing on English grammar and vocabulary used in everyday conversation. Second, a questionnaire was distributed to all the students to investigate their attitudes towards the application of the LA with ILAs and whether this method could enhance their English communication skills. The details of the research instruments are explained as follows.

**The language achievement test for linguistic knowledge of daily English conversation**

The students were assigned to take a pre-test and post-test of language achievement assessing their linguistic knowledge in daily English conversation before and after employing the LA with ILAs. The scores of both tests were compared to evaluate the improvement in students' linguistic knowledge, particularly in English grammar and vocabulary used in daily conversation. The daily English conversation topics covered six areas: introductions and greetings, directions, descriptions of people, weather and temperature, health and sickness, and dining at a restaurant. The content for these topics was derived from the course book "English for Everyone (Level 3 Intermediate)" by Johnson (2016), as well as multimedia resources such as audio and video clips from YouTube and various websites. The language achievement test consisted of 60 multiple-choice items, with 10 items for each topic. The test content was validated by three experts in English language from English departments at Thai universities. The language achievement tests were subsequently refined based on the experts' feedback and comments.

**Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was administered in this study to survey student attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs for developing their English communication skills. After completing their language learning through this treatment, the students took the language achievement post-test. The questionnaire was then delivered to the students in the final phase. The questionnaire was self-developed based on the CLT approach, which emphasizes enhancing students' communicative competence. The questionnaire details were categorized into three main parts: students' background information, student attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs, and two open-ended questions. This allowed the researcher to gain insights from the students about their favorite topics, skill development after participating in the LA with ILAs, and any language barriers they encountered for further investigation. To evaluate the items of the questionnaire, validation was conducted through the IOC process by three experts in English language from English departments in higher educational institutions in Thailand. The questionnaire was subsequently revised according to the experts' suggestions.

**Data collection**

Two instruments were employed in this study to collect data. The first was a language achievement test assessing linguistic knowledge of everyday conversation. The second was a questionnaire exploring student attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs for improving their English communication skills. The data collection took place over six weeks, organized into four phases: pre-test, treatment, post-test, and questionnaire, as presented in Figure 1 below. First, the students undertook a pre-test to assess their linguistic knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary used in six everyday conversations: introduction and greeting, directions, description of people, weather and climate, health and sickness, and dining at a restaurant. Following this, the LA with ILAs were introduced and applied in the classrooms as a treatment for the study. The treatment included individual, pair, and group activities. The students participated in each activity for three hours a week, totaling 18 hours over the six weeks. After

the treatment, the students took the post-test. At the end of the study, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs.
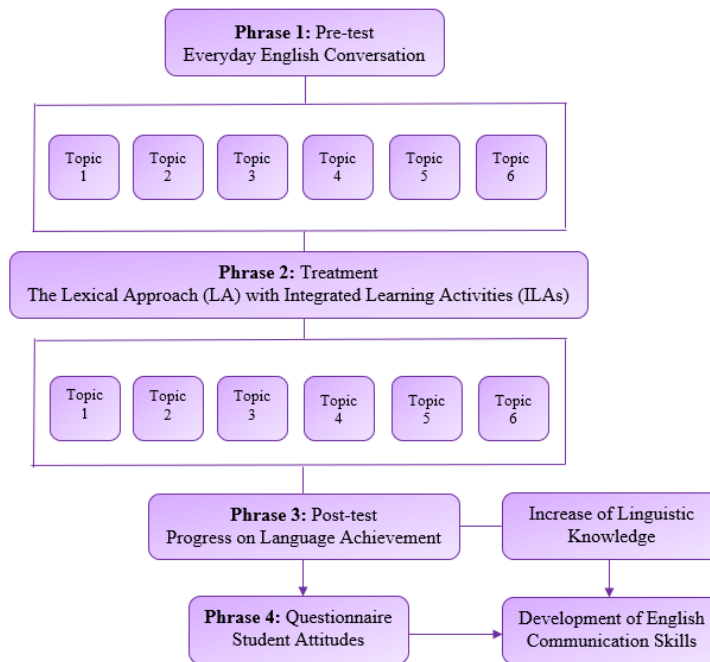


**Figure 1** The procedure for data collection

**Data analysis**

In this study, the data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to calculate percentages and SPSS to examine mean scores and standard deviations. Microsoft Excel was employed to analyze the results of the language achievement test in percentages. Similarly, the SPSS program was used to analyze the results obtained from two instruments: 1) the language achievement test, and 2) the questionnaire (exploring student attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs)). Using the SPSS program, the researcher conducted a paired t-test to analyze the data between the pre-test and the post-test. The results were then compared. A P value of less than 0.05 ($p < .05$) indicated statistically significant differences, suggesting that the students made progress in language achievement in English grammar and vocabulary after the LA with ILAs were implemented in classrooms.

The SPSS program was also used to analyze the data from the questionnaire on student attitudes towards the use of the LA with ILAs. Student responses were assigned ratings on a 5-point Likert scale: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). Scores ranging from 4.21 to 5.00 were interpreted as very positive, followed by scores from 3.41 to 4.20 (positive), 2.61 to 3.40 (moderate), 1.81 to 2.60 (negative), and 1.00 to 1.80 (very negative), respectively (Suebwongsuwan & Nomnian, 2020). The results of student attitudes were summarized using mean scores and standard deviations. For the open-ended questions,

student responses were analyzed using content analysis, where data were compiled into similar wording clusters, and the results were presented overall.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were guided by the following two research questions:

**RQ1: To what extent can the LA with ILAs contribute to progress in Thai undergraduates' language achievement?**

The results from the language achievement assessment demonstrated that students' linguistic knowledge developed effectively. Although most students passed the pre-test, the number of students who passed the post-test increased significantly, as shown below.
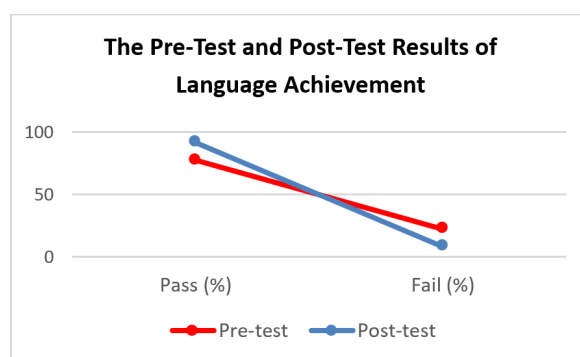


**The Pre-Test and Post-Test Results of Language Achievement**

**Figure 2** The pre-test and post-test results of language achievement for all activities

The results from Figure 2 illustrate significant improvements in students' grammatical and lexical knowledge across various everyday conversation topics (including greetings and introductions, dining at a restaurant, directions, weather and climate, health and sickness, and descriptions of people) after the LA with ILAs was applied in classrooms. Specifically, 92% of the students passed the post-test, compared to 78% in the pre-test. Therefore, the LA, which focused on developing students' skills enabling them to identify, classify, and gather lexical chunks (Zhong & Suwanthep, 2022), led to a substantial increase in vocabulary (Sewbihon-Getie, 2021). Moreover, this approach, along with other contributing factors, improved their grammatical knowledge, enabling the use of appropriate grammar in the right contexts (Ricaurte, 2022).

To provide a comprehensive view, Figure 3 below illustrates the pre-test and post-test results of language achievement before and after implementing the LA with ILAs for each activity.
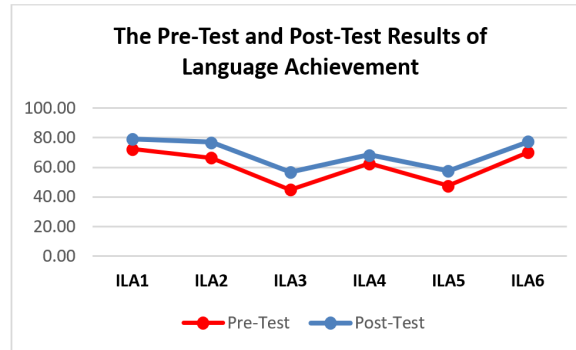
**The Pre-Test and Post-Test Results of Language Achievement**



**Figure 3** The pre-test and post-test results of language achievement for each activity

Based on the pre-test data presented in Figure 3, the highest score was achieved in ILA1 (72.24%). The subsequent scores were for ILA6 (69.80%), ILA2 (66.33%), and ILA4 (62.45%). Additionally, the percentages for two activities were below 50%, including ILA5 (47.55%) and ILA3 (44.90%), with the latter being the lowest. This suggests that students struggled with linguistic knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, particularly on the topics of describing people (ILA3) and health and sickness (ILA5), as both scored below 50%. Specifically, ILA3, which covers the topic of 'descriptions of people,' had the lowest score. Therefore, the linguistic and lexical aspects related to adjective order and the present continuous tense, as taught in this topic, are identified as the most urgent issues needing attention compared to the other five topics.

After the LA with ILAs was introduced in classrooms, students engaged in a variety of activities, including individual, pair, and group exercises. The findings from the post-test on language achievement through the LA with ILAs reveal that the highest score was achieved in ILA1 (79.18%), followed by ILA6 (77.14%), ILA2 (76.94%), and ILA4 (68.57%). Notably, the students also passed the post-test for ILA3 and ILA5, with scores higher than those in the pre-test. Specifically, ILA5 scored 57.76%, and ILA3 scored 56.94%. Therefore, it can be inferred that students gained a better understanding of English grammar and vocabulary across all topics of everyday English conversations after employing the LA with ILAs in the classroom. The highest score was achieved in ILA1, which focused on the topic of 'greetings and introductions,' indicating this as the most effective activity compared to the others. This outcome was highly expected. These integrated activities enabled them to learn how to greet and introduce themselves and others, using both formal and informal language appropriately in social interactions, considering factors like age and status. As a result, students increased their awareness of appropriate social language use, enhanced their abilities to engage effectively in social contexts, and achieved successful communication outcomes (Muslimawati, 2022).

Consequently, students in higher education should possess adequate knowledge of grammatical and lexical aspects to communicate accurately and meaningfully in everyday contexts (Saengboon et al., 2022). Without a solid understanding of grammar, students may struggle to use language successfully. Moreover, explicit and frequent grammar instruction enables students to grasp the rules of language use, facilitating gradual knowledge development and positive learning outcomes (Aka, 2020). Additionally, vocabulary plays a crucial role in the

language acquisition of EFL students, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively (Bergström et al., 2021). Therefore, both grammar and vocabulary are integral components of English language learning and teaching for EFL students and should not be taught in isolation.

To gain a clearer understanding, the language achievement results from pre-tests and post-tests, conducted before and after implementing LA with ILAs were compared to assess the students' language improvement. These results were analyzed using a paired sample t-test, as detailed below.

**Table 2**
**The pre-test and post-test results of language achievement before and after applying the LA with ILAs**

| Pair | Pre-test and post-test | N | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|------|----------|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | | X̄ | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pair 1 | Pre-test – Post-test | 49 | -5.102 | 5.100 | 0.729 | -6.567 | -3.637 | -7.003 | 48 | 0.000 |
| Pair 2 | Pre-ILA1 – post-ILA1 | 49 | -0.694 | 2.123 | 0.303 | -1.304 | -0.084 | -2.288 | 48 | 0.027 |
| Pair 3 | Pre-ILA2 – post-ILA2 | 49 | -1.061 | 2.313 | 0.330 | -1.726 | -0.397 | -3.212 | 48 | 0.002 |
| Pair 4 | Pre-ILA3 – post-ILA3 | 49 | -1.204 | 2.483 | 0.355 | -1.917 | -0.491 | -3.394 | 48 | 0.001 |
| Pair 5 | Pre-ILA4 – post-ILA4 | 49 | -0.612 | 2.564 | 0.366 | -1.349 | 0.124 | -1.671 | 48 | 0.101 |
| Pair 6 | Pre-ILA5 – post-ILA5 | 49 | -1.020 | 2.411 | 0.344 | -1.713 | -0.328 | -2.963 | 48 | 0.005 |
| Pair 7 | Pre-ILA6 – post-ILA6 | 49 | -0.735 | 2.691 | 0.384 | -1.508 | 0.038 | -1.911 | 48 | 0.062 |

*p < .05

The analysis utilizing a paired sample t-test, as presented in Table 2, reveals statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test results at the .05 confidence level ($t$ = -7.003, $df$ = 48, $p$ < .05). These findings indicate that students increased their knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary used in everyday conversation following the implementation of the LA with ILAs in the classroom. When comparing and analyzing both tests, it is evident that students showed the greatest improvement in their language achievement in ILA3 ($\bar{X}$ = -1.204, $S.D.$ = 2.483, $t$ = -3.394), which focused on describing people. Despite initially scoring lower in this area compared to others, ILA3 significantly expanded their vocabulary and enhanced their grammatical accuracy. This was followed closely by ILA2 ($\bar{X}$ = -1.061, $S.D.$ = 2.313, $t$ = -3.212) on the topic of giving directions, another individual activity, which also demonstrated substantial improvement. Further notable improvements were observed in ILA5 ($\bar{X}$ = -1.020, $S.D.$ = 2.411, $t$ = -2.963) on the topic of health and sickness, and ILA1 ($\bar{X}$ = -0.694, $S.D.$ = 2.123, $t$ = -2.288) on the topic of greetings and introductions. However, there were no significant differences between the pre-test and post-test results for ILA6 ($t$ = -1.911, $df$ = 48, $p$ > .05) on the topic of dining at a restaurant, and ILA4 ($t$ = -1.671, $df$ = 48, $p$ > .05) on the topic of weather and temperature. Both activities, which involved group and pair work

respectively, did not achieve statistically significant improvement, as their confidence levels were higher than .05. Therefore, it can be inferred that the progress in ILA6 and ILA4 was not statistically significant, indicating comparatively less improvement. Notably, ILA3 contributed the most to improving students' linguistic proficiency, particularly in using the present continuous tense and ordering adjectives when describing people. Conversely, ILA4, which addressed discussing weather and temperature, showed the least improvement and involved teaching adjectives, quantifiers, wh-questions, and the use of "there is" and "there are." These findings suggest that individual activities were the most effective in enhancing students' grammatical and vocabulary knowledge within the integrated learning environment. This observation is consistent with a study by Thuratham (2022), which highlighted the effectiveness of individual activities in enhancing EFL students' vocabulary comprehension, especially in specific contexts, while also improving their grammatical proficiency (Kaweera et al., 2019). Although individual activities yielded positive outcomes, it is important to recognize that they were not the sole contributors to productive linguistic acquisition.

To summarize, it is evident that the LA with ILAs effectively increased students' linguistic knowledge of both grammar and vocabulary across all topics of everyday English conversation: introductions and greetings, directions, descriptions of people, weather and temperature, health and sickness, and dining at a restaurant. Therefore, EFL students should receive opportunities to gain vocabulary, learn the sentence structures of authentic language, and practice their English communication skills across diverse everyday conversation topics, as practice is essential for skill refinement. Engaging in real-life scenarios allows students to apply their skills practically and learn from their mistakes, thereby improving their ability to handle communication challenges in real situations (Alshumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021). With productive ILAs, the interactions between students and instructors will be fostered.

**RQ2: What are Thai undergraduates' attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs for improving their English communication skills?**

The questionnaire was employed in this study to obtain the data about the student attitudes towards the implementation of the LA with ILAs for improving students' linguistic knowledge and English communication skills. The results can be divided into two parts: the LA with ILAs and English communication skills. The overall attitudes are presented below.

**Table 3**
**The student attitudes towards the LA with ILAs**

| No. | ILAs | X̄ | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|-----|------|-----|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | ILA1 – Introduction and greeting | 4.31 | 0.77 | Strongly Agree |
| 2 | ILA2 – Directions | 4.16 | 0.87 | Agree |
| 3 | ILA3 – Description of people | 4.06 | 0.77 | Agree |
| 4 | ILA4 – Weather and temperature | 4.24 | 0.85 | Strongly Agree |
| 5 | ILA5 – Health and sickness | 4.22 | 0.77 | Agree |
| 6 | ILA6 – Dining at a restaurant | 4.24 | 0.72 | Strongly Agree |

From Table 3, the results indicate that students strongly agreed with four activities: ILA1, ILA4, ILA6, and ILA5. Meanwhile, they rated ILA2 and ILA3 as 'agree'. The highest mean score was

given to ILA1 at 4.31, indicating that students particularly enjoyed the introduction and greeting activity. ILA4 and ILA6 received equal mean scores of 4.24, reflecting strong agreement with the weather and temperature activity and the dining at a restaurant activity, respectively. ILA5 followed closely with a mean score of 4.22, indicating positive reception of the health and sickness activity. With mean scores lower than 3.21, ILA2 and ILA3 were rated as 'agree'. Specifically, ILA2 received a mean score of 4.16, higher than ILA3's 4.06, suggesting that while students agreed they liked both activities, they preferred the 'directions' activity over the 'description of people' activity.

Following instruction using the LA with ILAs, students evaluated their overall English communication skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as demonstrated in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**
**The overall of student attitudes towards English communication skills**

| No. | English Communication Skills | X̄ | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|-----|------------------------------|------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Speaking | 4.14 | 0.89 | Agree |
| 2 | Listening | 4.00 | 0.84 | Agree |
| 3 | Reading | 4.12 | 0.88 | Agree |
| 4 | Writing | 3.84 | 0.90 | Agree |

From the table above, the results indicate that students agreed they improved all English communication skills after the implementation of the LA with ILAs in classrooms. Speaking received the highest mean score at 4.14, followed by reading at 4.12 and listening at 4.00, respectively. However, writing received the lowest mean score at 3.84. Therefore, it can be concluded that students believed the LA with ILAs effectively enhanced their English communication skills. According to their feedback, students perceived the greatest improvement in their speaking skills, while writing showed the least development. The following table provides a clear overview of how students perceived the development of each English communication skill after learning through the LA with ILAs.

**Table 5**
**The student attitudes towards each English communication skill**

| No. | Statements | X̄ | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|-----|-----------|------|----------------|----------------|
| | **Speaking Skills** | | | |
| 1 | I think ILAs help me improve my English pronunciation. | 4.10 | 0.85 | Agree |
| 2 | I think ILAs help me speak English grammatically. | 3.86 | 0.98 | Agree |
| 3 | I think ILAs help me speak English fluently. | 3.96 | 0.91 | Agree |
| 4 | I think ILAs help me speak English properly in different situations. | 4.12 | 0.81 | Agree |
| 5 | I think ILAs help me feel confident to speak English. | 4.24 | 0.75 | Strongly Agree |

| No. | Statements | X̄ | Std. Deviation | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Listening Skills** | | | |
| 1 | I think ILAs help me increase my vocabulary size. | 4.12 | 0.86 | Agree |
| 2 | I think ILAs help me increase my understanding of grammar. | 3.88 | 0.93 | Agree |
| 3 | I think ILAs help me understand fast speakers. | 3.92 | 0.86 | Agree |
| 4 | I think ILAs help me have better listening of word pronunciation. | 4.02 | 0.88 | Agree |
| 5 | I think ILAs help me guess the meaning of communication easier. | 4.10 | 0.82 | Agree |
| | **Reading Skills** | | | |
| 1 | I think ILAs help me read faster. | 3.90 | 0.87 | Agree |
| 2 | I think ILAs help me gain more vocabulary. | 4.12 | 0.83 | Agree |
| 3 | I think ILAs help me familiar with groups of vocabulary. | 4.10 | 0.80 | Agree |
| 4 | I think ILAs help me guess the meaning of long sentences easier. | 4.10 | 0.77 | Agree |
| 5 | I think ILAs help me find the main ideas of the texts faster. | 3.94 | 0.77 | Agree |
| | **Writing Skills** | | | |
| 1 | I think ILAs help me choose vocabulary in writing properly. | 3.84 | 0.80 | Agree |
| 2 | I think ILAs help me write sentences grammatically. | 3.78 | 0.87 | Agree |
| 3 | I think ILAs help me use connectors in writing correctly. | 3.92 | 0.86 | Agree |
| 4 | I think ILAs help me organize my writing concordantly. | 3.78 | 0.82 | Agree |
| 5 | I think ILAs help me feel confident in writing. | 3.86 | 0.91 | Agree |

From Table 5, the results concerning speaking skills indicate that students strongly agreed with item 5 the most, as their agreement on this item exceeded 4.20. Specifically, students strongly believed that ILAs helped them feel confident to speak English ($\bar{X}$ = 4.24). Following this, items 4 and 1 received the next highest scores. Students agreed that ILAs assisted them in speaking English appropriately in various situations, with a mean score of 4.12, and that ILAs contributed to improving their English pronunciation ($\bar{X}$ = 4.10). While students also agreed with items 3 and 2, their mean scores were below 4.00. Specifically, students perceived that ILAs helped them speak English fluently ($\bar{X}$ = 3.96), and to speak English grammatically, which received the lowest mean score at 3.86.

According to listening skills, the results show that students agreed with all items. The highest mean score was for item 1 ($\bar{X}$ = 4.12), where students felt ILAs helped them increase their vocabulary size. Item 5 received a mean score of 4.10, slightly lower than item 1, indicating that students found ILAs helpful in guessing the meaning of communication easier. Following this, item 4 had a mean score of 4.02, with students agreeing that ILAs improved their ability to understand word pronunciation. However, the mean score of item 3 was higher than that of item 2. Students acknowledged that ILAs aided their understanding of fast-talking speakers ($\bar{X}$ = 3.92), and helped them improve their understanding of grammar ($\bar{X}$ = 3.88), respectively.

With respect to reading skills, the results reveal that item 2 had the highest mean score at 4.12. Students indicated that ILAs helped them acquire more vocabulary. Items 3 and 4 received equal ratings with mean scores of 4.10. Students agreed that ILAs aided them in becoming familiar with groups of vocabulary and in understanding the meaning of long sentences more easily. Item 5 followed with a mean score of 3.94, indicating that students believed ILAs facilitated faster identification of the main ideas in texts. However, item 1 had the lowest mean score at 3.90 compared to other items. Students felt ILAs helped them read faster.

Regarding writing skills, the results show that students agreed with all items, but the mean scores for these items were below 4.00. Item 3 had the highest mean score at 3.92. Students acknowledged that ILAs helped them correctly use connectors in writing. This was followed by items 5 and 1 consecutively, with students feeling confident in their writing ($\bar{X}$ = 3.86) and choosing appropriate vocabulary ($\bar{X}$ = 3.84). Additionally, items 2 and 4 received equal mean scores of 3.78, indicating that students jointly agreed that ILAs helped them write grammatically correct sentences and organize their writing effectively.

Overall, students strongly affirmed that combining the LA with ILAs significantly enhanced all aspects of their English communication skills. They expressed highest satisfaction with their improved confidence and proficiency in speaking English.The LA effectively enhances students' communicative abilities by exposing them to authentic language and increasing their familiarity with lexical bundles (Cancino & Iturrieta, 2022). Additionally, the use of ILAs under LA has been shown to expand students' vocabulary, as evidenced by Sewbihon-Getie's research (2021), thereby strengthening their listening skills and improving message comprehension in communication (Susanto & Nanda, 2024). Moreover, the LA with ILAs supports students' reading comprehension (Zhong & Suwanthep, 2022). As students acquire more vocabulary, they become more proficient at recognizing, organizing, and applying lexical units for deeper understanding of textual meanings. However, the lowest average score was observed in writing skills, indicating that students perceived ILAs as least effective in developing their writing abilities. This underscores the widely recognized challenge of writing for EFL students, which requires significant time to master grammar, vocabulary, and the writing process (Easi, 2020; Ngoc, 2021). Anh's study (2019) identified several factors influencing students' writing performance, including limited vocabulary, gaps in grammar knowledge, and inadequate writing skills influenced by instructional materials, methods, and individual student factors. Thus, it can be concluded that the LA with ILAs did not have as significant an influence on students' writing competency as anticipated. This may be attributed to the fact that the activities were primarily oriented towards speaking skills. Additionally, the students were likely less proficient in writing at the beginning, as they were in their first year of study, which requires time to develop. Moreover, achieving proficiency in writing necessitates an extensive vocabulary, a solid grasp of grammar, and well-developed writing skills.

To clearly illustrate student attitudes regarding the LA with ILAs and English communication skills, the overall results of students' responses to the open-ended questions were categorized into two aspects and are presented below.

*The students' most improved skills after applying the LA with ILAs*

**Table 6**
**The overall results of students' responses to the open-ended questions**

| No. | Aspects | Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | English communication skills | Students improved in all areas of English communication skills. |
| 2 | Learning obstacles | Students encountered learning difficulties with the following factors:<br><br>▪ Concentration<br>▪ English accents<br>▪ English grammar<br>▪ English pronunciation<br>▪ Listening comprehension<br>▪ Self-confidence<br>▪ Vocabulary |

Table 6 presents the comprehensive results of students' responses to open-ended questions regarding their attitudes toward the implementation of the LA with ILAs, their English communication skills, and the primary obstacles they face in developing these skills. Here is a summary overview of the students' responses:

*The major obstacles for students in developing English communication skills*

Students identified several challenges that hindered their learning process, particularly in linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Islam et al., 2022; Sinturat et al., 2022; Tantiwich & Sinwongsuwat, 2022). They struggled with English accents, grammar, and pronunciation, especially finding it difficult to pronounce consonants and vowel sounds accurately. This is supported by a study by Tantiwich and Sinwongsuwat (2022), which identified communication problems in EFL students' performance, including issues with pronunciation, sounds, stress, pauses, and grammatical accuracy. These difficulties could adversely affect their pragmatic language use and overall performance in everyday conversational contexts. In addition, speaking confidently was another issue, as students feared making mistakes, felt shy and nervous when speaking English, and faced challenges due to limited vocabulary (Sinturat et al., 2022). This often led to confusion over sentence meanings due to unfamiliar words. Furthermore, understanding various English accents was problematic when they were unclear, making it hard for students to follow conversations accurately. Students also highlighted their limited grammar knowledge and the burden of having to memorize extensive grammar rules. A lack of confidence, especially when listening to fast speakers, was another barrier. Self-distraction sometimes prevented students from concentrating during lessons. Despite these challenges, students acknowledged their issues and actively worked towards improvement. They emphasized the need for more practical applications to enhance their English skills, noting that a lack of practice in listening and speaking could lead to difficult communication (Islam et al., 2022).

In summary, the LA with ILAs received positive feedback from students for its practical application in real-life contexts, notably improving their speaking fluency, vocabulary, and confidence. They also benefited from better listening and reading comprehension, as well as enhanced grammar and writing skills through the LA with ILAs. Challenges included difficulties with accents, grammar, pronunciation, and limited vocabulary, which impacted their learning

despite their proactive efforts to overcome these obstacles. They emphasized the importance of practical learning to further develop their English communication abilities. Therefore, the LA with ILAs can be used as a teaching method that facilitates students' acquisition of both grammatical and lexical knowledge, while also enhancing their English communication skills. It improved students' overall proficiency by providing opportunities to practice language chunks through various activities, fostering a learning environment that encouraged the use of authentic language.

**CONCLUSION**

Thai students often encounter challenges with English grammar and vocabulary, frequently making errors and struggling to use diverse vocabulary effectively in sentence construction (Punyapratheep & Wudthayagorn, 2022). This limitation can hinder their communication skills, as effective communication necessitates both linguistic knowledge and practical skills. This study aims to implement the LA with ILAs covering various topics and activities to enhance EFL students' grammatical and lexical knowledge, as well as their English communication skills in everyday conversations. The results confirmed that the LA with ILAs significantly improved students' understanding of English grammar and vocabulary across all discussed topics. Although students achieved the highest scores in the group activity on 'greetings and introductions', a closer analysis using a paired sample t-test revealed that the most improvement occurred in the topic of "descriptions of people", facilitated through individual activities. Conversely, the topic of "weather and temperature", which involved pair activities, demonstrated the least improvement. These findings support the effectiveness of individual activities as a teaching method for developing students' grammatical and lexical skills. This can be attributed to the fact that students had time to independently review their own performance, and the repetitive practice allowed them to thoroughly refine their skills. Therefore, the LA with ILAs, coupled with diverse learning topics and activity types, notably supported students in their linguistic and lexical development and overall language proficiency. Regarding English communication skills, student feedback indicated improvements across all areas. Students perceived ILAs as most beneficial for enhancing their speaking skills, attributing increased confidence to the practice provided in ILAs. Furthermore, they reported successfully applying their knowledge and skills in real-life situations. However, despite overall improvement in all English communication skills, writing remained the least developed skill although the LA was found to be effective in improving students' writing skills (Momeni & Ahmadian, 2022). Future studies should explore additional teaching methods aimed at enhancing students' writing skills and evaluate how these methods influence their writing proficiency, as the LA and ILAs may only be more suitable for specific skills and certain student groups. Therefore, factors influencing students' language development warrant further exploration.

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