rEFLections
Vol 32, No 3, September - December 2025

Avoidance of the English Present Perfect by L1 Thai Learners

PICHET PRAKAIANURAT
Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Thailand
Author email: pichet.pr@ku.th

Article information
Article history:
Received: 12 Mar 2025
Accepted: 21 Dec 2025
Available online: 25 Dec 2025

Keywords:
Avoidance behavior
Present perfect tense
L1 Thai learners
Second language acquisition

Abstract

This study investigated avoidance behavior in the use of the English present perfect among intermediate-level Thai learners of English, employing a mixed-methods approach. Two contrasting theoretical frameworks were explored: the Avoidance Behavior Hypothesis (ABH) (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Schachter, 1974), which attributes avoidance to L1–L2 differences or the absence of a corresponding L1 form, and the Factors of L2 Non-avoidance Hypothesis (FNAH) (Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013, 2019; Wang & Pongpairoj, 2021), which suggests that avoidance is not always observed in L2 learners due to some contributing factors. Thirty participants were recruited from a tertiary-level institution, with data collected through a comprehension task, an Indirect Preference Elicitation (IPE) task, and semi-structured interviews. The results indicated that the learners did not exhibit avoidance behavior with the continuative and resultative perfects. However, they showed avoidance specifically toward the experiential perfect, despite the presence of the aspectual marker kʰʏʏj in Thai, semantically encoding the English experiential perfect. The findings therefore confirmed FNAH. It was assumed that the Thai learners' (non-)avoidance behavior could be accounted for by intralingual transfer (Mahmoud, 2011), which stems from the syntax-semantics interface of the English present perfect, differences in L1–L2 semantic mappings, and transfer of training (Selinker, 1972).

INTRODUCTION

Research in Second Language Acquisition has investigated the underuse of specific target language forms by L2 learners over the decades, a phenomenon possibly attributed to the adoption of avoidance strategies. According to the Avoidance Behavior Hypothesis (ABH), L1–L2 differences or the absence of a corresponding target form in L1 can cause learners to avoid using L2 target-like forms, even though they demonstrate an understanding of how to use these forms (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Schachter, 1974). A range of studies has been conducted to examine the avoidance behaviors among learners from different L1 backgrounds (e.g., Dagut & Laufer, 1985; El-Dakhs, 2016; Kleinmann, 1977; Kosolsombat & Pongpairoj, 2017; Laufer, 2000; Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Rattanasak & Phoocharoensil, 2014; Schachter, 1974; Wang & Pongpairoj, 2021), challenging the misconception that a low frequency of errors indicates L2 learners' mastery of target structures — learners may opt for seemingly simpler structures, avoiding the target structures while effectively conveying the intended ideas (Laufer &

Eliasson, 1993). These studies emphasize that if such avoidance behaviors are overlooked, L2 learners could be mistakenly perceived to possess a higher level of proficiency than they actually do with respect to target structures when they deliberately resort to alternative, more familiar linguistic forms that deviate from the target language patterns.

While a number of studies supporting ABH have found that L2 learners exhibit avoidance behavior in using specific linguistic forms due to L1 transfer, other research has revealed that avoidance behavior is not always observed, even when the L1 lacks direct correspondences to L2 form-meaning mappings. According to the Factors of L2 Non-avoidance Hypothesis (FNAH), learners may still produce L2 target-like representations without resorting to avoidance (see Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013, 2019; Wang & Pongpairoj, 2021). This is due to some factors, such as L2 learners' familiarity with L2 target forms influenced by transfer of training, the simplicity of L2 structures, and the influence of task effects, each of which may play a significant role in whether avoidance occurs. With these two competing frameworks, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the specific factors that influence whether learners avoid or do not avoid using L2 target-like forms.

According to Fuchs et al. (2016), one of the English language constructions within the tense–aspect system that potentially poses a challenge for L2 learners of diverse L1 backgrounds is the present perfect (henceforth PP). This structure is deemed "one of the most semantically complex verb forms" (Kearns, 2011, p. 182) and a "learner-hard" or "latecomer" construction (Fuchs et al., 2016, p. 298), making the PP the subject of significant investigation by scholars and educational practitioners. In particular, Karpava and Agouraki (2013) found that Cypriot Greek learners experienced difficulties with the use of the English PP due to L1 negative transfer, leading them to substitute the simple past (henceforth SP) for the PP, as they tended to equate the semantics of the SP with those of the PP. A similar effect of L1 negative transfer was observed in a study by Kwan and Wong (2016), where Malaysian Chinese ESL learners faced semantic difficulties in distinguishing between the SP and the PP. Furthermore, Yoshimura and Nakayama (2009) argued that Japanese learners found the use of the PP challenging due to morphosemantic discrepancies between their L1 and L2, making them use the SP in place of the PP in L2 writing. In essence, the complexities of the PP may stem from diverse possibilities, ranging from its ability to convey several nuanced meanings (Kearns, 2011; Nelson & Greenbaum, 2018; Quirk et al., 1985) to its proximity to "semantically close neighbors" (Bardovi-Harlig, 1997, p. 376), with the SP being the most probable alternative.

According to the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (Salaberry, 2003), it is predicted that L2 learners at the beginner level will consistently employ a single past tense to express all past events. This suggests that when confronted with the complexities of the PP, L2 learners may tend to view the SP as the default form, even in situations where the SP and the PP "do not have the same semantics" (Schaden, 2009, p. 132) and a choice between the two exists for referring to past events. Given the perceived semantic simplicity of the SP and the complex nature of the English PP due to overlapping temporal frames and L1–L2 differences, it is plausible that L1 Thai learners tend to avoid the usage of the PP.

While existing research has extensively explored avoidance behaviors among L1 Thai leaners of English across various linguistic phenomena (e.g., Kosolsombat & Pongpairoj, 2017; Laufer,

2000; Rattanasak & Phoocharoensil, 2014; Schachter, 1974; Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013, 2019; Wang & Pongpairoj, 2021), little attention has been directed specifically to their avoidance of using the English PP. Halliday (1994) emphasizes the critical role of mastering tense and aspect concepts in achieving advanced proficiency in an L2, thereby highlighting the importance of investigating L1 Thai learners' avoidance behaviors related to the PP. To address this research gap, this study aims to investigate (1) whether L1 Thai learners of English avoid using the English PP, (2) the extent to which L1 Thai learners of English avoid different types of the PP, and (3) what factors cause L1 Thai learners to either avoid or not avoid using the English PP. By examining these aspects, the research seeks to deepen our understanding of how L1 Thai learners navigate challenges in English tense and aspect systems, contributing insights into their language acquisition processes and proficiency development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous L2 avoidance studies

One of the pioneering avoidance studies conducted by Schachter (1974) allows us to observe the phenomenon when L2 English learners were inclined to have the lower error rate of English relative clauses as they produced fewer instances of the target language structure, rather than fully mastering it. This observation led to the development of ABH. Following this groundbreaking research are a number of avoidance studies that explored different L2 structures among learners from diverse L1 backgrounds that supported ABH. For example, studies found avoidance of English idioms by L1 Hebrew learners (Laufer, 2000), passive voice constructions by L1 Iranian learners (Ghabanchi & Goudarzi, 2012), English relative clauses by L1 Korean learners (You, 1999) and L1 Hebrew learners (Dagut & Laufer, 1985), and phrasal verbs by L1 Egyptian learners (El-Dakhs, 2016). Notably, previous research suggests that L1–L2 differences, the semantic complexity of target language structures, limited L2 exposure, and learners' interlanguage development may contribute to the avoidance behavior among English learners from different L1 backgrounds (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; El-Dakhs, 2016; Laufer, 2000; Liao & Fukuya, 2004).

In the Thai context, the body of research literature on L1 Thai learners' avoidance behaviors that supports ABH has also been growing. Kosolsombat and Pongpairoj (2017) investigated avoidance of L2 English phrasal verbs among 52 university students of intermediate levels, using a comprehension task, a preference task, and a translation task to elicit the data. The results testified avoidance behaviors of L1 Thai learners who tended to choose single-word verbs over phrasal ones and avoid figurative phrasal verbs more than literal ones due to their semantic complexities. Another study conducted by Rattanasak and Phoocharoensil (2014) also showed that L1 Thai learners of English avoided using non-restrictive relative clauses, and they were found to avoid using more marked types of non-restrictive clauses than the less marked ones. For instance, students more frequently opted to avoid a marked structure where the relative pronoun serves as an indirect object, as in "George Smith, to whom I introduced you, won the Booker Prize", than the less marked form where the relative pronoun functions as a subject, as in "George Smith, who won the Booker Prize, is my lifelong friend" (Rattanasak & Phoocharoensil, 2014, p. 268).

While these previous studies consistently showed that L2 learners tended to avoid using target structures due to L1–L2 differences, some other studies also revealed that L2 learners did not necessarily apply avoidance strategies despite the non-existence of L2 features in their L1. Proposing FNAH, the study on avoidance behavior of English participial reduced relative clauses among L1 Thai learners by Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013) showed that students tended not to avoid using English participial reduced relative clauses due to the L2 learners' familiarity, simplicity of the reduced relative clause, and the nature of the tasks.

Wang and Pongpairoj (2021) investigated the avoidance of passive construction among 31 Chinese upper-intermediate learners by using the Comprehension Task and Indirect Preference Elicitation (IPE) Task to elicit the data. The results revealed that the participants were more likely to use passive than active forms in both adversity and non-adversity contexts, even though the participants were more inclined to avoid the English passive construction in non-adversity contexts than in adversity ones due to transfer of training in the Chinese educational practices. The overall findings thus support the Factors of L2 Non-avoidance Hypothesis (FNAH) (Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013, 2019), whereby L2 learners of English may not avoid using certain structures despite L1–L2 differences.

Even though several studies have been conducted to provide insights into avoidance phenomena among L2 learners of English, research specifically focusing on tense-aspect systems, particularly the English PP, remains scarce. Since the PP is considered "the most confusing tense" (Arakkitsakul, 2008, cited in Thumvichit, 2016, p. 248) and can pose difficulties for L1 Thai learners (Arakkitsakul, 2008; Petchtae, 2011; Thumvichit, 2016), it is crucial to investigate whether L1 Thai learners tend to avoid using it. Given the focus on the English PP in this study, the following section will provide a discussion of its usage.

The English present perfect

The English PP, a structure comprising the present-tense auxiliary '*have*' followed by a past participle (e.g., 'we *have arrived* at the party'), has emerged as a subject of significant scholarly interest due to its intricate semantic complexities. This structure has been described as "one of the most semantically complex verb forms" (Kearns, 2011, p. 182), with scholars offering diverse interpretations that highlight both commonalities and variations in their analyses. For instance, Comrie's (1976) and Kearns's (2011) descriptions of the PP include the meaning of 'recent action/event' to denote the immediate relevance to the present moment, as exemplified in "Bill has just arrived" (Comrie, 1976, p. 60). Conversely, other scholars, such as Eastwood (1994), Leech (2004), and Quirk et al. (1985) focus on habitual actions or states that have persisted over time, with examples like "I've always walked to work" (Leech, 2004, p. 36).

Among its multiple interpretations, a central meaning of the English PP extensively discussed in scholarly literature is the 'current relevance' (see e.g., Howard, 2000; McCawley, 1971; Rastall, 1999). Scholars have described this aspect as "an interval stretching from the past into the present" (McCawley, 1971, p. 105), "an identification of prior events with the 'extended now'" (McCoard, 1978, p. 19), or "past-time-related-to-present-time" (Leech, 2004, p. 36), serving to establish a link between past events and their ongoing relevance to the present.

Building upon McCawley (1971), the English PP in this study encompasses three primary meanings, namely continuative/universal, resultative, and experiential/existential, classified for clarity and analytical convenience. These three distinct meanings were also found to be the most frequent in textbook data (Chareonkul & Wijitsopon, 2020). The three meanings of the English PP are exemplified as follows:

(1) a. I have known Jane since 2000. (continuative/universal)
b. Jane can't come tonight. She has caught the flu. (resultative)
c. We have discussed this before (experiential/existential)

Sentence (1a) serves as an instance of the continuative/universal reading, indicating a situation that began in the past and persists up to the time of the utterance. In sentence (1b), the resultative perfect is exemplified, wherein the enduring consequence of a past event remains in effect. Sentence (1c) illustrates the experiential/existential perfect, employed to assert a completely past state of affairs.

As demonstrated by the examples above, the PP encodes anteriority, similar to the SP. Smith (1981, p. 259) highlighted that both utterances "Max has met the President" and "Max met the President" share identical truth values: if one is true, the other is also true — they are not distinct in terms of truth conditions and cannot be simultaneously asserted and denied. However, despite the shared semantic feature [+anterior], the PP uniquely possesses [+current relevance], while the SP is characterized by [-current relevance] (Suh, 1992), setting them apart from each other.

Beyond current relevance, the semantics of the PP also dictate its collocation with specific temporal adverbs, distinguishing it from the SP. The PP commonly co-occurs with indefinite adverbials (e.g., *recently*, *already*, or *yet*), whereas the English SP typically accompanies adverbs denoting 'finished time' (e.g., *yesterday*, *two weeks ago*, or *in 2000*) (Swan, 1980, pp. 494 – 495). Although instances of using 'finished time' adverbials with the PP can be found and are acceptable in existing corpora, such as British National Corpus (BNC), most scholars consider this usage ungrammatical (Comrie, 1976; Inoue, 1979; Quirk et al.,1985; Suh, 1992; Swan, 1980, as noted by Thumvichit, 2016). Therefore, (2a) and (2b) are grammatical, while (2c) is infelicitous.

(2) a. I have already washed the car. (PP)
b. I washed the car yesterday. (SP)
c. *I have washed the car yesterday.

Due to the incompatibilities of 'finished time' adverbials with the semantics and functions of the PP, which are crucial for facilitating a clearer distinction between the PP and the SP for L2 learners, previous studies consistently reported the overemphasis on temporal adverbials in textbooks and the frequent overuse of temporal specification when using the PP among L2 learners, especially those with low proficiency (see e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 1997; Fujimoto, 2017; Park, 2016; Thumvichit, 2016).

As the study centers on the use of the PP among L1 Thai learners, the following section provides a theoretical background on how time reference is conceptualized and expressed in Thai.

Time references in Thai

In contrast to English, Thai is identified as a tenseless language. While English uses auxiliaries and morphological inflections to encode tense-aspect time references, Thai is an isolating language that lacks verb inflections to indicate time frames (Prasithrathsint, 2006). Instead, time references in Thai are expressed through free grammatical morphemes that function as aspectual markers. Thai aspectual markers (henceforth TAMs) include both preverbal auxiliaries (e.g., '*kamlaŋ*' and '*kʰɤɤj*') and postverbal particles (e.g., '*jùu*' and '*lɛ́ɛw*'), which are possibly categorized into imperfective, perfective, and the perfect (Boonyapatipark, 1983; Comrie, 1976; Howard, 2000; Jenny, 2001).

The imperfective aspect is characterized by its reference to the internal temporal progression within a situation, while the perfective aspect presents the situation as a unified whole, observed from external perspective, denoting completed actions (Comrie, 1976; Howard, 2000; Jenny, 2001). In contrast to the imperfective and perfective aspects, the perfect refers to "some state to a preceding situation (and) indicates the continuing present relevance of a situation" (Comrie, 1976, p. 52). Examples of each TAM are provided below:

(3) a. เขากำลังอ่านหนังสือ
khăw kamlaŋ ʔàan năŋssɨ̌
he-ASP-read-book
He is reading a book.

b. เขาอ่านหนังสืออยู่
khăw ʔàan năŋsɨ̌ jùu
he-read-book-ASP
He is reading a book.

c. เขาเคยอ่านหนังสือเล่มนี้
khăw kʰɤɤj ʔàan năŋsɨ̌ lêm níi
he-ASP-read-book-this
He has read this book (before).

d. เขาอ่านหนังสือเล่มนี้แล้ว
khăw ʔàan năŋsɨ̌ lêm níi lɛ́ɛw
he-read-book-this-ASP
He has read this book already.
?He read this book already.

In examples (3a) and (3b), the imperfective is exemplified where the act of reading a book is semantically expressed as an ongoing process through TAMs *kamlaŋ* and *jùu*, which serve to

convey meanings similar to the English progressive form. Notably, while both markers indicate an ongoing action, they differ semantically: '*kamlaŋ*' emphasizes progression at the reference time, typically the moment of speech, whereas '*jùu*' denotes a continuous situation over time (Kullavanijaya & Bisang, 2007).

Example (3c) illustrates the Thai perfect marker *kʰɤɤj*, specifically indicating an experiential/ existential perfect (Howard, 2000; Jenny, 2001). The utterance *khăw kʰɤɤj ʔàan năŋsɯ̌ lêm níi,* probably translated as "He has read this book (before)", not only emphasizes the completion of reading but perhaps also underscores its current relevance or understandings it brings to the present discourse. Notably, while *kʰɤɤj* is generally understood in recent studies as denoting the experiential perfect, it was traditionally described by some scholars as expressing the preterit or the SP (see Dhanvarjor, 1973 for further discussion).

In (3d), the use of *lέɛw in khăw ʔàan năŋsɯ̌ lêm níi lέɛw*, possibly translated as "*He has read this book already*", serves to mark the completion of the action of reading the book while also underscoring the resultative impact on the present state. The PP suggests that the person now possesses knowledge of the book's content or has formed opinions as a consequence of reading it, while the SP, such as "*He read this book already*", focuses solely on the completion of the event at a specific past moment without highlighting its current relevance to the present.

Notably, the VP-final '*lέɛw*', often translated as 'already' (Schmidt 1992, cited in Howard, 2000, p. 380), remains a subject of considerable debate among scholars of TAMs due to its semantic nuances. On the one hand, *lέɛw* has been argued as a perfective marker, indicating the occurrence of a situation at a specific moment, rather than spanning across a duration of time (Scovel, 1970), or expressing a completed key point of situations (Kullavanijaya & Bisang, 2007). Additionally, it has been observed that utterances with lέɛw do "not always have continuing relevance at the speech time", and therefore are not always equivalent to the English perfect (Boonyapatipark, 1983, pp. 161–162). On the other hand, while acknowledging these views, Howard (2000) argues that *lέɛw* should be regarded as a perfect marker that signals the current relevance of a situation. He highlighted that "the meaning of the perfect in Thai cannot be limited to anteriority, because […] the notion of relevance of a situation to the reference time always holds" (Howard, 2000, p. 400). Given such controversy, it is possible that *lέɛw* inherently falls under the grammatical categories of both the perfective aspect and the perfect, depending on its contextual implications (Iwasaki & Horie, 2005).

With the complexities of the form-meaning mappings of TAMs and English tense-aspect language systems, L1 Thai learners would need to develop a distinct set of classifications for English verb forms when expressing temporal frames in English, since a singular form of the Thai VP construction can convey up to four distinct temporal frames within the context of English verb forms (Lekawatana et al.,1969). Specifically, they need to differentiate between the SP and the PP in English. As shown in Table 1, the TAM *lέɛw* semantically covers both preterit (completed past actions) and the resultative perfect, with the subtle implication of current relevance (Boonyapatipark, 1983; Howard, 2000; Iwasaki & Horie, 2005; Lekawatana, 1969). In contrast, the marker *kʰɤɤj* likely denotes exclusively the experiential perfect (Howard, 2000; Jenny, 2001), which may make the form-meaning mapping of this feature less problematic for L1 Thai learners.

Table 1

Form-meaning mappings of aspectual markers in L1 Thai and L2 English

Thai (L1) Verb = unmarked, non-inflectional forms	Semantic Interpretation	English (L2)
kamlaŋ + Verb	Progressive	V-ing
V + [NP] + *jùu*		
kʰɤɤj + Verb	Experiential	Have + V-ed
	?Preterit (Completed Action)	V-ed
VP + *lέɛw*	Preterit (Completed Action)	V-ed
	Resultative (Current Relevance)	Have + V-ed

(adapted from Boonyapatipark, 1983; Dhanvarjor, 1973; Howard, 2000; Lekawatana, 1969)

Due to the subtle semantic properties of *lέɛw* and the diverse meanings of the English PP, alongside its vague notion of current relevance, it is probable that L1 Thai learners of English may encounter difficulties using the English PP compared to the SP. For example, they may overgeneralize the rules of the SP and use it in place of the PP, as discussed in (3d). In other words, the TAM lέɛw, semantically denoting both the preterit and resultative perfect, is likely to contribute to the competition between the SP and PP. As Arakkitsakul (2008) pointed out, the semantic overlap between the PP and SP further complicates the use of the PP for L1 Thai learners. According to the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (Salaberry, 2003), this overlap may lead L1 Thai learners to resort to the simpler structure of the SP over the more complex PP when describing actions completed in the past. Therefore, it was hypothesized that L1 Thai learners will avoid using the resultative perfect, due to its semantic overlap with the SP and its morphosemantic discrepancies with the TAM *lέɛw*.

On the other hand, according to FNAH (Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013, 2019; Wang & Pongpairoj, 2021), which suggests that L2 learners' familiarity with L2 target forms due to transfer of training and the simplicity of L2 structures can contribute to non-avoidance behavior, it is plausible that L1 Thai learners may not avoid the continuative and experiential perfects due to certain contributing factors, even in the absence of corresponding form-meaning mappings between L1 and L2. Since the continuative perfect is predominantly exemplified in textbooks used in Thai tertiary-level ESL classrooms, potentially providing L2 input and instruction that familiarizes learners with its usage (see Chareonkul & Wijitsopon, 2020 for further details), it is likely that learners will not avoid using the continuative perfect. Additionally, according to Howard (2000) and Jenny (2001), the TAM *kʰɤɤj* exclusively semantically encodes the experiential perfect in English. The simplicity of this corresponding form-meaning mapping between *kʰɤɤj* and the experiential perfect should facilitate its use by Thai learners, presumably leading to the tendency of non-avoidance behavior in the use of the experiential perfect.

While several studies have investigated the interlanguage development of the English PP among Thai learners, highlighting the difficulties L1 Thai learners face with the PP, such as its syntactic complexities (the auxiliary *have* + past participle) in transforming present participle to past participle (Petchtae, 2011), its semantic overlap with the SP (Arakkitsakul, 2008), and its use with temporal adverbials that deviate from patterns commonly found among native speakers, as shown in a comparative corpus analysis (Thumvichit, 2016), there has been little

focus specifically on the usage of the PP across its three different types — continuative, experiential, and resultative — as a primary area of investigation. Additionally, there has been limited attention to whether Thai learners avoid using the PP when the SP is explicitly provided. To address this gap and resolve the disparities in existing findings of learners' avoidance behaviors, more avoidance research into the area of the tense-aspect system is needed. Since identifying avoided items or structures is crucial for pinpointing learning difficulties, refining teaching methodologies, and improving instructional materials (Laufer & Eliasson,1993), exploring avoidance behaviors in the context of the English PP can provide nuanced insights that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of L2 learning processes. This study therefore aims to investigate whether L1 Thai learners avoid using the English PP and examine the plausible factors that influence their use of the PP.

Objective

The objectives of this study were:

1. To examine avoidance behavior of the English PP in 1) continuative perfect, 2) experiential perfect, and 3) resultative perfect by L1 Thai learners.
2. To investigate the factors behind avoidance or non-avoidance behavior of The English PP by L1 Thai learners.

Hypotheses

The subsequent statements outline the research hypotheses:

1. L1 Thai learners of English do not avoid using the English PP in (1) continuative perfect and (2) experiential perfect; however, they avoid using the PP in (3) resultative perfect and use the SP as a default form.
2. Based on the Factors of L2 Non-avoidance Hypothesis (FNAH), L1 Thai learners of English do not avoid the PP in (1) continuative perfect and (2) existential perfect, but avoid (3) resultative perfect, due to the transfer of training, a negative transfer, and the overgeneralization of rules.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants were thirty volunteer tertiary students studying English as a foreign language in a Thai public university in Bangkok. They were between 18 to 22 years old and had a minimum of 12 years of exposure to English in classroom settings. Their English proficiency fell within the intermediate level (CEFR: B1), with scores ranging from 30 to 39 out of 60 on the Oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT) (Syndicate, 2001). The focus on intermediate learners was due to their potential to either use or avoid complex target structures. At this stage, they might still be experimenting with these structures, making their linguistic behaviors particularly

informative for understanding how they transition from avoiding complex structures to using them more effectively. The exclusion criteria for volunteers included failure to complete the required questionnaire, unwillingness to provide necessary information, and not being within the designated data collection period. Participants could also withdraw from the study if they choose to leave voluntarily, if the researcher deemed their adverse symptoms to be potentially harmful, or if they experienced severe illness during the study. The research project would be terminated under several circumstances: if authorized personnel decided to discontinue the study, if unexpected adverse side effects more severe than anticipated arose, or if the funding source or sponsor withdrew support for the project.

The control group for the IPE task comprised five native English-speaking American adults aged 25 to 35, residing in the U.S., all of whom were working professionals with a bachelor's degree. They completed the IPE task, and their results served as baseline data for comparison. This selection is based on the recognition that variations in English varieties (such as British vs. American English) can influence the usage of the PP in certain contexts. For instance, while British English speakers may say "Have you had lunch?", American English speakers may say "Did you have lunch?" with similar meanings and intentions (Hundt & Smith, 2009). To minimize such potential variations, this study focuses on American English.

Research procedures

The research comprised three main phases: a comprehension task, a preference assessment task, and a semi-structured interview. One week after taking the English proficiency placement test, participants were asked to complete the comprehension task and preference assessment tasks, adapted from Kleinmann (1977), within 45 minutes. The comprehension task focused on understanding English PP through a multiple-choice test, while IPE task was employed to determine if participants avoided using the PP construction. Subsequently, all participants would receive an email asking if they are interested in participating in the semi-structured interviews. The first twelve volunteers to respond affirmatively to the email were selected in the study. They were informed of the interview time, which was conducted virtually, recorded, and held the following day.

Following data collection, results from the comprehension and preference assessment tasks were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean and SD) and inferential statistics (one-way ANOVA) to test the hypotheses. Data from semi-structured interviews underwent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), categorizing elicited responses into significant emerging themes. Details for each phase will be explained below.

Research instruments

Comprehension task

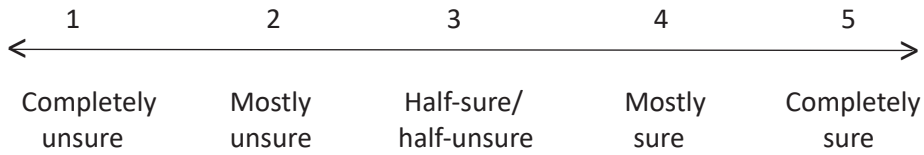
Since avoidance of a particular structure presupposes learners' comprehensive understanding of that target syntactic representation and their choices regarding its use (Kleinmann, 1977), a comprehension task was administered to all participants to ensure they fully understand a specific target structure before any claims of avoidance were made.

The test comprised twenty-five items in total, including twelve target items and thirteen distractors. The twelve target items were designed to assess the use of the three PP meanings: the continuative perfect, the experiential perfect, and the resultative perfect. Each meaning of the PP was represented by four items: two items with temporal markers, while the remaining two without. The sentences in the test were drawn from a range of sources, including COCA corpus-based data, English language teaching textbooks, scholarly research, and newspapers. These sentences were adapted to align with the study's objectives.

To ensure consistency across variables, the subjects of all target items were [+animate] noun phrases, proper nouns, or pronouns, limited to a maximum of three words and without any post-modifiers (e.g., "my Midwestern friend", "butterflies", "He", and "Sarah"). Examples are provided below:

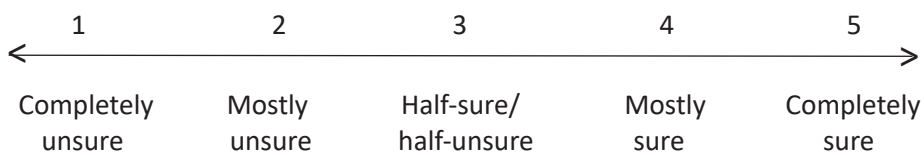
(1) He _____ his training already, so he is now qualified to handle the new task.

(A) will complete (B) has completed
(C) completes (D) is about to complete



(2) Because Sarah _____ the lottery, she will not need that job.

(A) has won (B) wins
(C) is winning (D) was winning



While both (1) and (2) test participants' comprehension of the resultative perfect, they differ in that question (1) included the temporal marker "already", whereas question (2) did not. This distinction ensures that participants have comprehensive understanding of the English PP, including its compatibility with specific temporal markers and its meaning in context when the temporal marker is absent.

As exemplified in (1) and (2), participants needed to choose the most appropriate answer for each question and also rated their confidence in their answer on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'completely unsure' and 5 means 'completely sure'. This confidence assessment scale would be considered in determining the scores based on reported confidence. If a participant answered an item correctly and selects "completely sure" on the scale, the score would be marked as +5. Conversely, if a participant answered incorrectly but reported being "completely

sure", the score for that item would be marked as -5. In essence, the penalty for incorrect answers was adjusted based on the degree of confidence reported.

Only those who achieve an 80 percent or higher score were included in the study to ensure participants possess adequate knowledge of the PP in order to determine if they tended to avoid using the construction. A total of 31 volunteer participants, all at the intermediate level (CEFR: B1) as assessed by the OQPT (2001), were recruited from two ESL classrooms at a tertiary education institution. These participants took part in both the Comprehension task and the IPE task. Of the 31 participants, 22 achieved scores above 80 percent and were included in the study. To meet the required sample size, additional 8 participants were recruited from another ESL classroom, with the inclusion process conducted individually, ensuring a total of 30 participants in the study.

The Indirect Preference Elicitation (IPE) task

The second task consisted of fourteen items, each with three blanks to be filled with an appropriate word or phrase. In total, there were forty-two blanks to complete, with twelve target items and thirty distractors. The task comprised twelve targeted items, with four items representing each of three meanings of the PP: continuative, resultative, and experiential. For each meaning, two items featured temporal markers, while the remaining two did not, similar to the comprehension task. However, in the IPE task, participants were asked to select between two options: the PP or the SP. A preference for the SP would indicate the avoidance of the PP. Similar to the comprehension test, the IPE task employs [+animate] noun phrases, pronouns, or proper nouns, each no longer than three words and free from any post-modifiers, to control for variables. The test items were reviewed and validated by three Thai instructors, each with over five years of experience teaching English in tertiary education in Thailand, to ensure the relevance, accuracy, and alignment of the test items with the intended research objectives. Here are some examples:

(3) (A) _____ Paris twice this year, (B) _____ I have some great tips to share. I can recommend nice places to eat, cool things to see, and the best times to visit famous spots. I also know some quieter areas (C) _____. Whether they like food, art, or just walking around, I have ideas to make their trip special.

(A) 1. I've visited
    2. I visited

(B) 1. and
    2. so

(C) 1. worth exploring
    2. that are worth exploring

In the IPE test example (3), the subject is the pronoun '*I*' without any postmodifiers. The participants were asked to choose between '*I've visited*' (the PP) and '*I visited*' (the SP) in (3A)

within the context of the experiential perfect where the PP is expected, with the temporal cue '*twice this year*' provided, to test whether they avoid using the PP. (3B) and (3C) serve as distractors.

Semi-structured interview

Unlike previous studies on avoidance behaviors, this study incorporated semi-structured interviews into its methodological design. These interviews were used to uncover attitudes or beliefs that may not be directly observed (Kvale, 1996). Each interview lasted approximately 10-15 minutes per person and was conducted in Thai to ensure that the participants could freely express their opinions on the topics under discussion, without facing communicative difficulties. This approach aimed to explore the reasons behind the avoidance or non-avoidance of the PP, providing a more comprehensive understanding of avoidance phenomena among L2 learners of English. Examples of the interview questions included:

1. Which English tense do you think is the hardest to learn, and why?
2. Between the simple past and the present perfect, which one do you find more difficult and why? How are they similar or different?
3. How's your experience been with learning these two tenses? Can you share with me about it?
4. Do you think the present perfect tense can be used for the situations that happened in the past? If yes, when is it right to use it? If no, why not?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results from the IPE task are shown in Table 2 and Figure 1. As shown in Table 2, the overall usage rates of the English PP by L1 Thai learners across all the three functions — continuative, resultative, and experiential — were considerably lower than that of native English speakers: 61% for the former compared to 80% for the latter.

Table 2

Frequency of the English PP usage by L1 Thai learners and native English speakers

	Total	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
L1 Thai Learners (n = 30)	222/360	61%	7.4	2.444
Native Speakers (n = 5)	48/60	80%	9.6	1.673

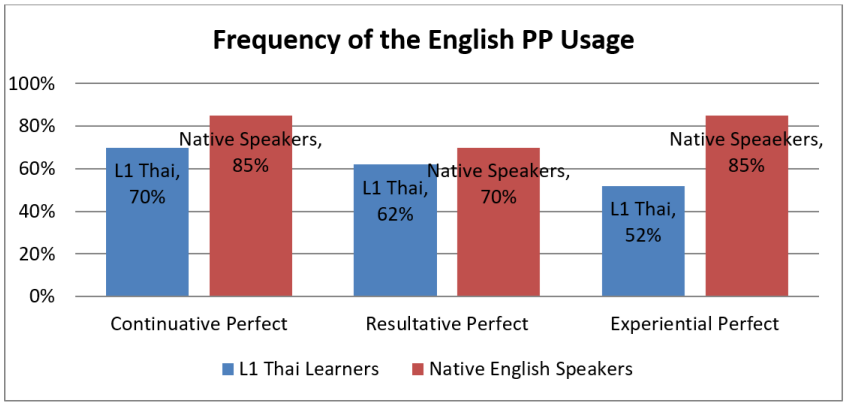


Figure 1 Frequency of the English PP Usage for continuative, resultative and experiential perfects by L1 Thai learners and native speakers of American English

However, when the data were closely scrutinized, the results showed quite different results of L1 Thai learners' usage of the English PP in relation to its different functions. Figure 1 shows that L1 Thai learners tended to avoid using the experiential perfect. Specifically, while their use of the continuative and resultative perfects was relatively close to that of native speakers (with L1 Thai learners using the continuative perfect 70% of the time, compared to 85% for native speakers, and the resultative perfect 62%, compared to 70% for native speakers), their use of the experiential perfect was notably lower, at just 52%, in contrast to 85% for native speakers. Notably, with regard to the usage of the resultative perfect, native English speakers were less likely to use the PP (70% of the time), compared to the continuative and experiential perfect (85% of the time). This could be attributed to the closer semantic relationship between the resultative perfect and the SP, as both involve a singular event or result state, making the experiential perfect nearer to the SP than the experiential perfect (see Mittwoch, 2008, for further discussion). This similarity likely created some degree of competition between the resultative perfect and the SP, and may have led native speakers to occasionally choose the SP over the PP for the resultative perfect, in contrast to the less similar continuative and experiential perfect. The ANOVA showed a significant difference in the use of the experiential perfect compared to the continuative and resultative perfect among L1 Thai learners, F (1, 33) = 5.990, $p < 0.05$, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.154$. A t-test comparison between L1 Thai learners and native speakers showed a statistically significant difference in the use of the experiential perfect ($t = 8.125$, $df = 33$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that L1 Thai learners tended to avoid using this form compared to native speakers.

Hypothesis 1 states that L1 Thai learners of English do not avoid using the English PP in (1) continuative perfect and (2) experiential perfect; however, they avoid using the PP in (3) resultative perfect and use the SP as a default form. The results thus partially supported the hypothesis: L1 Thai learners of English did not avoid using the PP in the continuative perfect, as their usage was not significantly different from that of native speakers, F (1, 33) = 1.018, $p > 0.05$. However, the hypothesis that they do not avoid using the PP in the experiential perfect, while avoiding it in the resultative perfect, was contradicted. Their use of the experiential perfect was significantly lower than that of native speakers, while their use of the resultative

perfect not significantly different from that of native speakers, F (1, 33) = 0.355, $p > 0.05$. Given that Thai, in contrast to English (with the former being an isolating language and the latter an inflectional language), lacks a direct morphosyntactic equivalent to English PP (i.e., the auxiliary *have* + past participle) and instead uses TAMs, such as *lέɛw* (typically indicating the resultative perfect) or *kʰɤɤj* (commonly marking the experiential perfect), the findings confirmed FNAH: avoidance behavior was not consistently observed, even in the absence of corresponding L1 (morpho)syntactic representations in the L2, due to certain factors. For instance, although Thai lacks the corresponding morphosyntactic-semantic form for the English resultative perfect, 22 out of 30 Thai learners (73%) chose the PP (*has crashed*) over the SP (*crashed*) to describe the situation of Kathy crashing her motorcycle and still knowing the feeling of it. This choice highlighted the learners' recognition of the current relevance of the situation and its ongoing effects, an essential semantic feature of the resultative perfect in English. Furthermore, when asked to choose between the PP (*has maintained*) and the SP (*maintained*) to describe the situation — 'Due to his cancer, Chris _____ his fitness routine, consistently going to the gym and eating healthy food' — 26 out of 30 Thai learners (87%) selected the PP '*has maintained*' to semantically convey the continuative perfect. The non-avoidance of the resultative and continuative perfects by L1 Thai learners suggests that L1–L2 differences may not solely serve as a factor in the (non-)avoidance of certain L2 structures in the absence of direct L1 equivalents.

It was assumed that the (non-)avoidance of the English PP among Thai learners may be attributed to three main factors: intralingual transfer (Mahmoud, 2011; Scovel, 2001), L1–L2 differences in form-meaning pairings (McManus, 2015), and transfer of training (Selinker, 1972).

Firstly, the avoidance of the English PP among L1 Thai learners, particularly the experiential perfect, could stem from intralingual transfer (Mahmoud, 2011; Scovel, 2001), possibly caused by the syntax-semantics interface of the English PP. Intralingual transfer, as defined by Scovel (2001, p. 51), refers to "the confusion a language learner experiences when confronting patterns within the structure of a newly acquired language, irrespective of how the target language patterns might contrast with the learner's mother tongue". The findings from semi-structured interview revealed that most participants (67%) regarded the PP as the most complex English tense, and when asked specifically to compare the difficulty of the PP with the SP, 10 out of 12 (84%) found the PP more complicated, attributing its difficulty to a combination of semantic subtleties and syntactic complexities.

> *I believe it's the present perfect tense because it requires more careful consideration to determine whether it's being used correctly. If discussing something in the past, I would choose the past tense and provide further explanation or context if more clarification is needed, especially when people don't fully understand in real-life situation.* (Participant 1)

> *I find the present perfect the most challenging because it can be used in various con texts. The simple past and present perfect sometimes seem to be used interchangeably, adding to its confusion.* (Participant 2)

> *The present perfect tense is the most challenging since it spans the past, present, and future. Furthermore, constructions like 'has been' don't have the simple patterns like the simple past or the present simple tenses, which makes it more complex.* (Participant 3)

> *I think it should be the present perfect tense because, for example, with present simple, you just add '-s' or '-es', but with the present perfect tense, you must use has or have plus the past participle. It seems more complicated compared to past simple, where you only need the past form of the verb* (Participant 9)

As demonstrated in the excerpts above, Participants 1 and 2 primarily attributed the difficulty of the English PP to its overlap with past temporal frames. In particular, Participant 1 expressed a clear preference for using the SP over the PP when discussing past events due to the perceived complexity of the latter and opted to provide explanations to clarify the situations rather than considering whether the PP would be more appropriate in the context. Additionally, Participants 3 and 9 further discussed the syntactic complexities of the PP, specifically the challenge of combining both the correct conjugation of verbs for subject-verb agreement and the past participle form to convey the intended perfect aspectual meaning. This process introduces an additional cognitive processing step not required in the SP, where only past tense marking is applied. In other words, the syntax-semantics interface of the PP possibly contributes to its perceived difficulty among L1 Thai learners, supporting the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace, 2011). This hypothesis suggests that difficulties in acquiring L2 target-like representations presumably emerge when learners must integrate syntax with contextual discourse-pragmatic information, even in the presence of partial structural overlap between L1 and L2.

Secondly, it was assumed that differences in L1–L2 semantic mappings may lead to avoidance of experiential perfect among L1 Thai learners. As Jiang and Liu (2024) highlighted, accurate form-meaning pairing relies on the establishment of a distinct semantic system for the L2, which requires a process of developing new meanings, resetting semantic boundaries, or incorporating new semantic features to map L2 forms onto L2-specific meanings. Given that the English PP form (*have* + past participle) conveys continuative, resultative, and experiential meanings, Thai learners may be required to cognitively process and map these subtle meanings onto their L2 while also restructuring the semantic domains of the English PP along with existing L1 TAMs *jùu*, *lɛ́ɛw*, and *kʰɤɤj*, each of which carries its own unique semantic features that may differ from the English counterpart. In this way, Thai learners would likely need to reset the semantic boundaries of the English PP, as the semantic domain of the TAM *kʰɤɤj* may overlap with the experiential perfect, but not align exactly. For example, while the English experiential perfect is incompatible with the use of definite temporal adverbials like 'yesterday' or 'last year', the TAM *kʰɤɤj* can co-occur with these adverbials, as demonstrated in (4) and (5).

(4) ฉันเคยเล่าให้เธอฟังเมื่อวานนี้
chăn kʰɤɤj lâw hây thəə faŋ mɨ̂awaan níi
I-ASP-tell-you-yesterday
I told you yesterday.
*I have told you yesterday.

(5) ฉันเคยไปประเทศจีนปีที่แล้ว
chăn k^hɤɤj pay pràthêetciin pii thîilɛ́ɛw
I-ASP-go-China-last year
I went to China last year.
*I have been to China last year.

Examples (4) and (5) highlight the key differences in the aspectual viewpoints between the English experiential perfect and the TAM *k^hɤɤj*. While the English experiential perfect denotes an event or experience from an indefinite time in the past, *k^hɤɤj* in Thai permits a more definite temporal frame while still conveying an experience or completed event but within a specific time period. This cross-linguistic distinction highlights that the semantic mappings between the English experiential perfect and *k^hɤɤj* are not identical, revealing crucial differences in how each language frames past experiences within specific temporal contexts. Unlike the semantic pairing between *lɛ́ɛw* and the resultative perfect, where the semantic feature [+current relevance] emphasizes the ongoing result of the event and makes it more salient than the experiential perfect, Thai learners may find it more challenging to reset the semantic boundaries between *k^hɤɤj* and the experiential perfect, even though *lɛ́ɛw* and *k^hɤɤj* can denote preterit. Consequently, Thai learners of English may need to adjust their conceptualization of these aspectual distinctions since the partial overlap in their semantic domains requires recalibrating the semantic boundaries between the two. Such overlap in semantic features could lead to the overgeneralization of rules (Selinker, 1972), causing learners to resort to a simpler form the SP to express past events. This supports the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (Salaberry, 2003), which posits that L2 learners will use the SP to express past events — a point in line with data from the semi-structured interview for using the SP as a default form for the PP.

Finally, transfer of training could be another potential factor contributing to (non-)avoidance behavior of the PP among L1 Thai learners. That is, they may apply patterns and usage strategies from prior L2 instruction. As highlighted in the semi-structured interviews, almost all participants (11 out of 12) stated that the PP is 'used for events that occurred in the past and have an impact on the present', with some also adding 'and continue into the future', a phrase commonly taught and recited as part of the conceptualization of the PP tense in Thai ESL classrooms, alongside ESL textbooks that emphasize these functions of the tense. For example, some textbooks such as the ESP book *Business results: upper-intermediate level* used in some tertiary-level institutions explain the use of the PP in terms of "a present situation resulting from a past action" (Duckworth et al., 2018, p. 22), while grammar reference books used in Thai society such as English grammar in use (Murphy, 2002) and *Advanced grammar in use with answers: A self-study reference and practice book for advanced learners of English* (Hewings, 2013) describe the PP as a morphosyntactic-semantic structure used to highlight that "the action in the past has a result now" (Murphy, 2002, p. 14) and to talk about "a period that continues until now" (Murphy, 2002, p. 16).

> *If I say something wrong, feel free to correct me. It's something that started in the past, continues to the present, and keeps going on.* (Participant 1)

> *The present perfect — though I might be explaining it incorrectly — refers to a period of time that began in the past and continues to the present.* (Participant 9)

> *I probably won't remember this very well either. <laugh> The present perfect refers to an event that happened in the past and has an effect on the present.* (Participant 11)

Notably, when explaining the use of the PP, some participants prefaced their responses with hedging, such as 'If I say something wrong, feel free to correct me' (Participant 1), 'Though I might be explaining it incorrectly' (Participant 9), or 'I probably won't remember this very well either' (Participant 11), unlike when asked to describe other tenses, such as the SP or the present simple tense where participants tended to offer more confident and direct explanations. This stance-taking suggested a degree of uncertainty regarding the use of the PP, further highlighting its perceived complexities compared to other tenses (the aforementioned intralingual factor). The excerpts also suggested that their understanding of the PP was primarily centered around its continuative and resultative meanings, despite their knowledge of the experiential perfect, as indicated by their achieving 80% on the comprehension task. The absence of any references to the experiential perfect could perhaps indicate that they were either unfamiliar with this specific use of the tense, or that the experiential perfect simply did not come to mind during the discussion. This suggested that the continuative and resultative perfects are perhaps more frequently emphasized or practiced in the classroom, and are perceived as the core meanings of the PP, making the patterns of their use comparable to those of native speakers. However, this also likely pointed to a deficiency in the learners' ability to fully grasp the broad semantic and pragmatic meanings that the PP can convey across diverse contexts.

The interviews also revealed that Thai learners tend to rely on temporal adverbials as cues for PP usage in both English classrooms and tests, highlighting the influence of L2 instruction on their use of the PP. Rather than discussing the use of the PP from daily life, most participants highlighted temporal adverbials, such as *since*, *for*, and *already* as key indicators for using the tense in a test context, an effort to establish semantic/pragmatic boundaries of the English PP functions.

> *The simple past tense will have adverbs like 'last week' or 'yesterday' to identify it, while the present perfect tense often uses 'since' or 'for'.* (Participant 2)

> *Most of the time, they ask you to identify the keywords, like 'since', 'for', or 'already', to help identify the tense.* (Participant 12)

> *When it comes to tenses, I will look at the sentence structures first (whether it is something that happens in the past) because by analyzing the structure, I can easily identify the tense without going into details about its meanings. If the sentence is ambiguous or unclear, then I will focus on the meaning.* (Participant 8)

The excerpts above revealed that the participants primarily relied on temporal adverbials as key indicators for identifying tenses, potentially suggesting that they tended to approach

tense usage in a more structural manner and prioritized forms over meanings in a test context. Such a form-based approach implies that learners were likely to focus on memorizing grammatical rules, presumably due to challenges in applying tenses — especially outside of controlled test settings, where contextual understanding is essential for appropriate tense choice.

In line with the findings from semi-structured interviews, the IPE task also highlighted that Thai learners tended to rely on temporal adverbials as indicators for the tense usage. Table 3 shows the use of the experiential perfect in relation to time markers among L1 Thai learners. It was observed that L1 Thai learners used the experiential perfect 62% of the time when no temporal cues were provided. However, in contexts with temporal adverbials, their use of the experiential perfect decreased to 44%, with a noticeable preference for the SP instead. The tendency to use the SP as a default tense when the temporal markers were present may stem from an (over)reliance on the available temporal cues they saw rather than a comprehensive consideration of the entire context of the situation (e.g., whether the event was ongoing, habitual, or completed). For example, when asked to choose *has always looked forward to and looked forward to* in the circumstance when John was reflecting on his ongoing or repeated excitement (looking forward to the international conference) that started in the past and continues to the present, 19 out of 30 Thai learners (63%) chose the SP over the PP. This might be because Thai learners interpreted the temporal adverbial '*always*' as denoting an event regularly occurring in either the present or the past, and the time frame in the subsequent clause was in the SP, prompting them to use the SP.

A similar pattern can be observed in another IPE test item where a temporal cue '*twice a year*' appeared in the context. In this instance, 50% of the Thai learners chose the SP (*I visited*) over the PP (*I have visited*) to refer to two distinct visits to Paris within an indefinite time frame '*this year*', highlighting their experiences across the broad span of time. The findings were in line with Thumvichit's (2016) comparative study on the use of the PP among Thai learners and native speakers in relation to temporal adverbials, underscoring the tendency of Thai learners to rely on temporal markers as cues for tense selection, rather than fully interpreting the time frame of events through their subtle contextual meanings. This suggests that Thai learners may have difficulty conceptualizing nuances in the conceptual distinctions between the PP and the SP.

Table 3

Frequency of the experiential perfect usage with and without time markers by L1 Thai learners

		Frequency	
		N = 30	**Percentage**
Experiential Perfect	With time marker	26/60	44%
	Without time marker	37/60	62%

Additionally, the frequency pattern of the PP usage found in this study was also consistent with Chareonkul and Wijitsopon's (2020) corpus-based study on the frequency of the English PP examples in textbooks for Thai ESL classrooms at the tertiary level, supporting the idea that transfer of training can influence the linguistic behavior of L1 Thai learners. Their study found

that the continuative perfect was the most dominant usage in the sampled textbooks, followed by resultative perfect. By contrast, the experiential perfect was the least frequently represented in the PP examples. This similar frequency pattern — observed both in the avoidance behavior of L1 Thai learners and in the textbook corpora — possibly emphasized that the lower frequency and less accessibility of semantic/pragmatic function of the experiential perfect may contribute to processing difficulties, leading to avoidance behavior in the use of experiential perfect.

Essentially, the results confirmed FNAH as avoidance behavior is not always observed: there was a tendency for L1 Thai learners not to avoid the continuative and resultative perfects. However, they tended to avoid the experiential perfect, even though Thai has the TAM k^hɤɤj, which can convey meanings of experiential perfect. The findings supported the hypothesis that the Thai learners' (non-)avoidance behavior could be explained by intralingual transfer, differences in L1–L2 semantic mappings that lead to overgeneralization of rules, and transfer of training (Mahmoud, 2011; Selinker, 1972). The findings were in line with Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013, 2019) and Wang and Pongpairoj (2021), supporting FNAH.

CONCLUSION

The present study investigated avoidance behavior of the English PP among L1 Thai learners. Using a mixed-methods approach, the findings indicated that intralingual transfer (Mahmoud, 2011), which was caused by the syntax-semantics interface of the PP, differences in L1–L2 semantic mappings that can lead to overgeneralization of rules (Jiang & Liu, 2024), and transfer of training (Selinker, 1972) contribute to (non-)avoidance behavior of L2 learners in using a specific L2 target-like representation.

The findings yielded some pedagogical implications, particularly regarding the role of L2 instruction and input in influencing avoidance behaviors. The results of this avoidance study revealed a frequency pattern that parallels the use of the English PP found in textbooks used in Thai ESL classrooms (see Chareonkul & Wijitsopon, 2020). This similar pattern suggests that L2 instruction may contribute to either the avoidance of certain linguistic structures or the adoption of particular patterns of language use, thereby shaping learners' language production in a manner consistent with the frequency of structures presented in classroom instruction and instructional materials. As noted by Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013, 2019) as well as Wang and Pongpairoj (2021), frequent exposure to the target structure can improve familiarity with the target form. Educational practitioners can leverage them to inform the design of the instructional materials, lesson plans, and curricula that teach the use of the structure while emphasizing the semantic nuances of the English PP to enhance learners' familiarity with the target structure. In other words, educators should consider revisiting curriculum design to ensure it aligns with the linguistic patterns that learners are most likely to encounter, thereby reinforcing both the form and function of their language use.

While the study provided insight into avoidance behavior in the use of the English PP among Thai learners of English, caution is warranted when interpreting the findings, as the data were

primarily based on the IPE task. The reliance on this single task type may not fully capture learners' natural, spontaneous language use or account for contextual factors that could influence their avoidance behavior, limiting the generalizability of the results. Future research may incorporate natural production tasks, such as storytelling and picture description tasks, which would allow for a comparison between different task types and provide a deeper understanding of how contextual factors impact language production. Additionally, investigating whether different types of verbs (e.g., telicity, atelicity, achievement, and accomplishment) or the distinction between regular and irregular verbs (e.g., 'play' and 'played' vs. 'drink' and 'drunk') influences learners' avoidance behavior of the PP would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how specific linguistic features affect the use of the English PP among Thai learners of English.

Ethical Concerns

The research project has been approved by the Research Standards and Animal Research Center, Kasetsart University (KUREC-SSR67/198, COE67/155). The researcher adhered to the three ethical principles of research involving human subjects. First, respect for human dignity was maintained by ensuring informed consent was obtained with full and clear information, allowing participants to make a voluntary, informed decision without coercion or inducements. Additionally, participants' privacy was respected, and confidentiality was ensured by not including identifying information in the data collection tools. Vulnerable participants were treated with respect. Second, beneficence and non-maleficence was observed to minimize risks and maximize benefits. Although there may be physical or mental risks, these would be mitigated through thorough information and voluntary participation. Participants would gain both direct and indirect benefits, such as improved English education methods, which could enhance teaching quality and better prepare students for a globalized world. Lastly, justice guided the researcher to ensure that inclusion and exclusion criteria are clear, and benefits and risks were distributed fairly, with no bias or discrimination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is funded by Kasetsart University Research and Development Institute under YF(KU)17.67. Special thanks go to Associate Professor Dr. Nattama Pongpairoj, whose expert guidance and valuable insights were instrumental in shaping this study. Any remaining errors, however, are solely my own.

THE AUTHOR

Pichet Prakaianurat is a university lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages at the Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Thailand. His research interests include language variation, language attitudes and identities, and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).
pichet.pr@ku.th

REFERENCES

Arakkitsakul, Y. (2008). *An error analysis of present perfect tense: Case study of freshman students at Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University: Academic year 2008* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University]. Thammasat University.

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (1997). Another piece of the puzzle: The emergence of the present perfect. *Language Learning, 47*, 375–422. https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00015

Boonyapatipark, T. (1983). *A study of aspect in Thai* [Doctoral dissertation, University of London].

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Chareonkul, C., & Wijitsopon, R. (2020). The English present perfect in authentic use and textbooks: A corpus-driven study. *PASAA Journal, 60*(1), 275–308. https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.60.1.10

Comrie, B. (1976). *Aspect: An introduction to the study of verbal aspect and related problems*. Cambridge University Press.

Dagut, M., & Laufer, B. (1985). Avoidance of phrasal verbs—A case for contrastive analysis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 7*(1), 73–79. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263100005167

Dhanvarjor, R. (1973). *The characteristics of the thai function words* [Master's thesis, Chulalongkorn University]. Chulalongkorn University Intellectual Repository. https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/chulaetd/15175/

Duckworth, M., Hughes, J., & Turner, R. (2018). *Business result upper-intermediate student's book.* Oxford University Press.

Eastwood, J. (1994). *Oxford guide to English grammar.* Oxford University Press.

El-Dakhs, D. A. S. (2016). The lexical knowledge and avoidance of phrasal verbs: The case of Egyptian learners of English. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 5*(1), 132–144. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.5n.1p.132

Fuchs, R., Götz, S., & Werner, V. (2016). The present perfect in learner Englishes: A corpus- based case study on L1 German intermediate and advanced speech and writing. In V. Werner, E. Seoane, & C. Suárez-Gómez (Eds.), *Re-assessing the present perfect* (pp. 297–338). Mouton de Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110443530-013

Fujimoto, K. (2017, July 25–28). *Do English textbooks reflect the actual use of English?: The present perfect and temporal adverbials* [Paper presentation]. The 9th International Corpus Linguistics Conference, University of Birmingham.

Ghabanchi, Z., & Goudarzi, E. (2012). Avoidance of phrasal verbs in learner English: A study of Iranian students. *World Journal of English Language, 2*(2), 43–54. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v2n2p43

Hewings, M. (2013). *Advanced grammar in use with answers: A self-study reference and practice book for advanced learners of English.* Cambridge University Press.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar*. Edward Arnold.

Howard, K. (2000). The notion of current relevance in the Thai perfect. *Linguistics, 38*(2), 373–407. https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.38.2.373

Hundt, M., & Smith, N. (2009). The present perfect in British and American English: Has there been any change, recently. *ICAME Journal, 33*(1), 45–64.

Inoue, K. (1979). An analysis of the English present perfect. *Linguistics, 17*, 561–589. https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.1979.17.7-8.561

Iwasaki, S., & Horie, I. P. (2005). *A reference grammar of Thai*. Cambridge University Press.

Jenny, M. (2001). The aspect system of Thai. In K. Ebert & F. Zúñiga (Eds.), *Aktionsart and aspectotemporality in non-European languages* (pp. 97–140). Arbeiten des Seminars für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ASAS). https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-110203

Jiang, N., & Liu, D. (2024). Lexicosemantic development. In T. Ionin, S. Montrul, & R. Slabakova (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition, morphosyntax, and semantics* (pp. 13–23). Routledge.

Karpava, S., & Agouraki, Y. (2013). L2 acquisition of English present perfect interpretations. *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics, 12*(1), 145–175. https://doi.org/10.5334/jpl.81

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitive research interviewing*. Sage.

Kearns, K. (2011). *Semantics*. Macmillan.

Kleinmann, H. (1977). Avoidance behaviour in adult second language acquisition. *Language Learning, 27*, 93–107. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1977.tb00294.x

Kosolsombat, P., & Pongpairoj, N. (2017). Avoidance of L2 English phrasal verbs by L1 Thai learners. *Journal of Letters, 46*(2), 171–216.

Kullavanijaya, P., & Bisang, W. (2007). Another look at aspect in Thai. *Manusya: Journal of Humanities, 10*(3), 61–86. https://doi.org/10.1163/26659077-01003004

Kwan, E. L., & Wong, B. E. (2016). Acquisition of the present perfect and the simple past by Malaysian Chinese ESL learners. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, 24*(2), 867–888.

Laufer, B. (2000). Avoidance of idioms in a second language: The effect of L1-L2 degree of similarity. *Studia Linguistica, 54*(2), 186–196. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9582.00059

Laufer, B., & Eliasson, S. (1993). What causes avoidance in L2 learning: L1-L2 difference, L1-L2 similarity, or L2 complexity? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 15*(1), 35–48. https://doi:10.1017/S0272263100011657

Leech, G. (2004). *Meaning and the English verb.* Longman.

Lekawatana, P., Littell, J., Palmer J., Scovel. T., & Spenser, S. (1969). *A contrastive study of English and Thai.* The English Language Center.

Liao, Y., & Fukuya, Y. J. (2004). Avoidance of phrasal verbs: The case of Chinese learners of English. *Language Learning, 54*(2), 193–226. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2004.00254.x

Mahmoud, A. (2011). The role of interlingual and intralingual transfer in learner-centered EFL vocabulary instruction. *Arab World English Journal, 2*(3), 28–47.

McCawley, J. D. (1971). Tense and time reference in English. In C. J. Filmore & T. C. Langdoen (Eds.), *Studies in linguistic semantics* (pp. 96–113). Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

McCoard, R. W. (1978). *The English perfect: Tense choice and pragmatic inferences*. North-Holland Press.

McManus, K. (2015). L1-L2 differences in the acquisition of form-meaning pairings in a second language. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 71*(2), 155–181. https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.2070.51

Mittwoch, A. (2008). The English resultative perfect and its relationship to the experiential perfect and the simple past tense. *Linguistics and Philosophy, 31*, 323–351. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-008-9037-y

Murphy, R. (2002). *English grammar in use*. Cambridge University Press.

Nelson, G., & Greenbaum, S. (2018). *An introduction to English grammar.* Routledge.

Park, H. (2016). The present perfect in written L2 English. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal, 24*(2), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.24303/lakdoi.2016.24.2.1

Petchtae, K. (2011). *An error analysis of the present perfect tense: A case study of grade 11 students at Satri Wat Rakang School in the academic year 2010* [Master's thesis, Thammasat University]. Thammasat University Digital Collections. https://digital.library.tu.ac.th/tu_dc/frontend/Info/item/dc:119950

Prasithrathsint, A. (2006). Development of the thùuk passive marker in Thai. In W. Abraham & L. Leisio (Eds.), *Passivization and typology: Form and function* (pp. 115–131) John Benjamins.

Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language.* Longman.

Rastall, P. (1999). Observations on the present perfect in English. *World Englishes, 18*(1), 79–84. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-971X.00123

Rattanasak, S., & Phoocharoensil, S. (2014). Avoidance in processing English non-restrictive relative clauses in Thai EFL learners' interlanguage. *Asian Social Science, 10*(17), 265–277. https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n17p265

Salaberry, R. (2003). Tense aspect in verbal morphology. *Hispania, 8*6(3), 559–573. https://doi.org/10.2307/20062909

Schaden, G. (2009). Present perfects compete. *Linguistics and Philosophy, 32*, 115–141. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-009-9056-3

Schachter, J. (1974). An error in error analysis. *Language Learning, 24*(2), 205–214. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1974.tb00502.x

Schmidt, T. (1992). *A non-linear analysis of topic and aspect in Thai narrative* [Master's thesis, University of Texas at Arlington]. MavMatrix.

Scovel, T. (1970). *A grammar of time in Thai* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan]. Deep Blue Repositories. http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/157131/1/7115297.pdf

Scovel, T. (2001). *Learning new languages: A guide to second language acquisition.* Heinle & Heinle.

Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 10*(1-4), 209–232. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.1972.10.1-4.209

Smith, N. V. (1981). Grammaticality, time and tense. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. B, Biological Sciences, 295*(1077), 253–265. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.1981.0138

Sorace, A. (2011). Pinning down the concept of "interface" in bilingualism. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism, 1*(1), 1–33. https://doi.org/10.1075/lab.1.1.01sor

Suh, K. (1992). *A discourse-analysis of the English tense-aspect-modality system* [Doctoral dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles]. UCLA Library. https://search.library.ucla.edu/permalink/01UCS_LAL/17p22dp/alma9932614263606533

Swan, M. (1980). *Practical English usage*. Oxford University Press.

Syndicate, U. C. L. E. (2001). *Quick placement test.* Oxford University Press.

Thiamtawan, S., & Pongpairoj, N. (2013). Avoidance of the use of English participial reduced relative clauses among L1 Thai learners. *LEARN Journal, 1*(2), 12–34.

Thiamtawan, S., & Pongpairoj, N. (2019). A study of L2 English inversion structures by L1 Thai learners. *The International Journal of Communication and Linguistic Studies, 17*(1), 11–22. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7882/CGP/v17i01/11-22

Thumvichit, A. (2016). A comparative corpus analysis of the use of the present perfect by Thai EFL learners and by native speakers. *Journal of Studies in the Field of Humanities, 23*(1), 239–259.

Wang, Y., & Pongpairoj, N. (2021). Avoidance of the English passive construction by L1 Chinese learners. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 14*(1), 294–316.

Yoshimura, N., & Nakayama, M. (2009). Nominative case marking and verbal inflection in Japanese EFL learners' composition. In Y. Otsu (Ed.), *The Proceedings of the 10th Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics* (pp. 359–383). Hituzi Syobo.

You, Y. S. (1999). Avoidance phenomena of phrasal verbs by Korean learners of English. *English Teaching, 54*(3), 135–155.