



Filipino Teachers' Experiences in Contextualizing Grammar Instruction for EFL Learners in Thailand

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Abstract

This study examined how English grammar teaching has evolved towards more contextualized methods to improve communication skills. However, challenges remain in EFL settings like Thailand, where exposure to English is limited. Even with a notable number of Filipino teachers in the Thai education system, research on how they adapt their grammar instruction has not been done. This study investigated the experiences and teaching methods of Filipino ESL teachers in Thailand, focusing on how they contextualize grammar lessons. Using a descriptive qualitative research design, data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews with Filipino teachers currently working in Thai schools. The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis to find common patterns in teaching practices and challenges. Key findings showed that teachers adjusted their roles through significant cultural adaptation. They often included Thai cultural norms and the use of native language support to help bridge language gaps. Participants encountered major challenges, such as students' first language interference and limited vocabulary. They addressed these issues with learner-centered methods like role-playing, authentic materials, and real-life scenarios. Additionally, the study highlighted that these teaching experiences led to professional growth. This growth improved the teachers' ability to adapt their teaching styles and manage their classrooms, despite facing systemic challenges. The study concludes that effective grammar instruction in this context requires a mix of cultural sensitivity and creative support rather than strict adherence to traditional rules. These findings have important implications for teacher training programs and curriculum design, highlighting the need for culturally responsive teaching in foreign language education.

1. Introduction

English is widely used as a global language, serving as a lingua franca among people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In learning this language, grammar instruction continues to become an important role in English Language Teaching (ELT). Traditionally, it is taught based on rules and rote memorization which questions its effectiveness as students struggle to use them in authentic communication. Over the years, grammar instruction shifted language learning from repetitive drills to a more dynamic, learner-centered method that emphasizes real-world communication (Mag-atas, 2025). By focusing on real-world communication, learning the language becomes more engaging, relevant and effective. Approaches that promote student-centered classroom instruction over the traditional method like interactive communication activities enhances learners' fluency, accuracy, and ability to retain language skills over time (Salmanova, 2025). Other research has consistently shown that

teaching grammar in context is effective. Approaches like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) have been found to improve grammatical skills, critical thinking, and learner independence by incorporating authentic and task-based interactions (Ellis et al., 2019; cited in Mag-atas, 2025). Students will benefit from the contextualized grammar instruction that promote grammatical competence and enhance their learning in language skills through authentic and interactive tasks. Professional organizations such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, n.d.) similarly suggest that teaching grammar as a meaningful concept within a specific context, aligning with the communicative approach widely adopted worldwide in English language teaching (ELT).

In Southeast Asia, Thailand is a key setting for studying grammar pedagogy due to its high demand for English language skills in sectors such as tourism, education, and business. In Thailand, English is not commonly spoken or used on a daily basis (Saengboon et al., 2022), and it's not the typical language of instruction in most subjects of schools and universities. As a result, many Thai students struggle with speaking and understanding English (Ulla, 2018). This limited exposure contributes to Thai students' difficulties in mastering the variety skills of the language. Because of the demand of learning the English language, it leads to a significant presence of foreign teachers, especially from the Philippines (Ulla, 2018; Nomnian et al., 2023). Filipinos though considered as non-native English speakers, they have found and secured teaching positions in Thailand, where their English skills are valued (Ulla, 2018). With strong English proficiency, cultural flexibility, and communicative teaching approaches sharpened through multilingual experiences, Filipino teachers are well equipped to teach English effectively (Amurao & Sunanta, 2020). Although Filipino teachers play an increasing and important role in Thai education system, there's a lack of research on their grammar teaching methods, particularly regarding the contextualized approaches in local classroom settings (Mag-atas, 2025). Exploring their teaching practices could provide valuable insights into cross-cultural teaching and adapting to local contexts in English language education.

Research highlights the benefits of teaching grammar in context, but tends to focus on student results, leaving a gap in understanding how teachers actually deliver contextualized grammar instruction (Saengboon et al., 2022; Mart, 2013). Up to this day, there hasn't been much research on how teachers from specific linguistic and cultural backgrounds understand the concept of teaching grammar in context and apply this understanding in their everyday teaching practices. In other words, most studies focus on the effectiveness of contextualized grammar instruction, but don't explore how teachers from diverse backgrounds actually implement it in their classrooms. This lack of research makes it hard to understand how teachers' cultural and linguistic backgrounds influence their teaching practices, and how they adapt contextualized grammar instruction to their specific teaching contexts. Existing research on Filipino ESL teachers in Thailand primarily addresses their professional experiences, identity, and challenges (Ulla, 2018; Nomnian et al., 2023) rather than their classroom pedagogies. Furthermore, contextual factors like policies in school, curriculum planning, design and limitations, and student expectations as well as their beforehand knowledge towards the English language may restrict teachers' ability to use communicative grammar methods. The connection and its influence between policy goals and actual teaching practices hasn't been thoroughly explored. A study on Filipino ESL teachers' approaches to contextualized grammar in Thailand could provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers and stakeholders that will address a significant gap in research and practice.

This research aims to explore and describe the approaches used by Filipino ESL teachers in Thailand in teaching grammar in context. It also seeks to identify the factors that influence their teaching decisions and explore the challenges they face by documenting the teaching practices that identify the strategies, tasks, and materials used by Filipino ESL teachers in teaching grammar in context. Additionally, this examines the influencing factors by analyzing how personal aspects such as beliefs and training and other contextual factors for example institutional, learner, and resource constraints that shape and influence their teaching practices.

Lastly, it is to analyze teacher perceptions by understanding teachers' views on the effectiveness and challenges of contextualized grammar instruction for Thai learners.

In this study, contextualizing grammar instruction is defined as the intentional practice of teaching grammatical structures through meaningful, communicative, and culturally relevant situations drawn from learners' real-life experiences. This approach involves the use of authentic materials, local cultural references, role-playing, task-based activities, and situational examples that enable learners to use grammar for genuine communication rather than treating it as a set of isolated rules. Within the context of this research, contextualized grammar instruction is understood through teachers' described strategies, observed classroom practices, and instructional choices that link grammar teaching to Thai learners' everyday lives, cultural values, and communicative demands.

Research Questions:

This study will address the following research questions:

1. How do Filipino Teachers Describe their Experiences in Contextualizing Grammar Instruction for EFL Learners in Thailand?
2. What pedagogical insights may be derived from Filipino Teachers' Experiences in Contextualizing Grammar Instruction for EFL Learners in Thailand?

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT) by linking underexplored aspects that connect contextualized grammar pedagogy and Filipino teachers' transnational practice and conducting teacher training about curriculum by providing insights for teacher training programs and curriculum design, planning and implementation in Thai educational contexts. By exploring the approaches and challenges faced by Filipino ESL teachers in Thailand, this study aims to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the region.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded on three theoretical foundations such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Teacher Cognition, and Sociocultural Theory (SCT), which collectively inform our understanding of effective language instruction. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the overarching pedagogical theory guiding the concept of "contextualized grammar instruction" itself. CLT views the primary goal of language teaching as the development of communicative competence, which involves not just knowing the grammatical rules (linguistic competence) but also knowing how and when to use them appropriately in real social contexts (sociolinguistic competence). CLT directly supports the idea that grammar must be taught in context. This is achieved through using authentic materials and interactive tasks (like role-plays, discussions, or problem-solving) that necessitate the use of the target grammatical structure. This aligns with findings that contextualization enhances learners' fluency, accuracy, and retention (Salmanova, 2025). While CLT addresses the ideal practice, the Teacher Cognition framework addresses the practical, human elements that influence and often constrain that practice. The Teacher Cognition framework posits that teachers' beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, and practical theories which are the primary factors that shape during their class pedagogical decisions, often overriding external mandates like curriculum design, planning and implementation or policy goals of the schools. A teacher's beliefs which are often deeply rooted in their own learning experiences and cultural background filter the ways they interpret and apply general theories like CLT (Amurao, 2019). By using CLT to define the ideal contextualized grammar instruction and Teacher Cognition to explain the reality of how teachers adapt and modify that ideal, this theoretical framework provides a strong foundation for a comprehensive exploration of the approaches used by Filipino ESL teachers in Thailand. Lastly, Sociocultural Theory (SCT) complements CLT. Vygotsky's foundational idea is that higher mental functions are socially mediated and internalized through coordinated interaction with more knowledgeable others and cultural tools (Vygotsky, 1978). Applied to SLA, SCT (and later articulations by Lantolf & Thorne) explains how grammatical knowledge develops

through scaffolding, dialogic interaction, and collaborative problem-solving in classroom activity. From an SCT perspective, the moment a teacher provides a recast, an elicitation, or a metalinguistic prompt during a meaning-focused task, those interactional moves are forms of mediation that can support internalization of grammar especially when learners are engaged in joint activity that makes forms meaningful. This theoretical strand therefore draws attention to small interactional processes that includes teacher moves and peer talk and their institutional tools used in school setting such as textbooks, tests, and classroom norms that shape those processes. By combining together these three perspectives, we can gain a more clear understanding of how to promote internalized grammatical competence in specific cultural and educational environments.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret human experiences, meanings, and perspectives within their natural contexts rather than to test hypotheses or measure variables (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A descriptive qualitative design is particularly suitable when the goal is to provide a rich, straightforward account of participants' lived experiences and interpretations of a phenomenon (Sandelowski, 2000). According to Sandelowski, descriptive qualitative studies stay close to participants' words while producing an interpretive summary that represents "the facts of the case" as described by those who lived them.

This design is appropriate for the present research because the purpose is to describe Filipino teachers' experiences in contextualizing grammar instruction for EFL learners in Thailand and to derive pedagogical insights from those experiences. The focus is not to build a grand theory but to present detailed, accurate, and contextualized descriptions of what teachers actually do, think, and feel in their teaching situations. In line with Creswell and Poth (2018), a qualitative descriptive approach allows flexibility in data collection such as interviews, reflections, and emphasizes participants' meanings rather than the researcher's prior theoretical assumptions.

In descriptive qualitative inquiry, reality is viewed as multiple and socially constructed; meanings emerge through interaction between researcher and participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher acts as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, engaging directly with participants to elicit their stories and reflections. This epistemological orientation fits the present study's goal to foreground Filipino teachers' voices within the Thai EFL context, revealing how they make sense of contextualizing grammar instruction amidst institutional, cultural, and linguistic challenges.

Participants and Sampling

The study's participants are Filipino English language teachers who are currently teaching in Thailand. Filipino teachers represent a major segment of foreign English teachers in both Thai private and public schools due to their strong English proficiency and cultural adaptability. Furthermore, Filipino teachers are widely present in urban and provincial schools all over Thailand.

Participants teach English to learners for whom English is a foreign language (EFL) which means students who typically use Thai as their first language and encounter English primarily in classroom settings. The research context includes lower and upper secondary schools where grammar instruction forms part of the English curriculum alongside the macro skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria are:

- Filipino nationality;
- Minimum of at least one year of English teaching experience in Thailand;

- Currently teaching grammar or integrating grammar instruction into EFL lessons; and
- Willingness to participate in a recorded in-depth interview and provide informed consent.

Exclusion criteria are:

- Filipino teachers not teaching English (e.g., teaching other subjects in English);
- Teachers on short-term substitute or volunteer positions of less than one semester; and
- Participants unwilling to be recorded or whose English teaching experience in Thailand was under one academic year.

Sampling Technique

Sampling followed a purposive sampling strategy, which is common in qualitative research where participants are selected because they can provide rich, relevant, and diverse insights into the studied phenomenon (Patton, 2015). Purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberately recruit individuals who have direct experience with contextualizing grammar instruction in Thai classrooms. Palinkas et al. (2015) explain that purposive sampling is appropriate when the objective is to gain in-depth understanding rather than to generalize statistically.

The sample size was set between 10 and 15 participants, depending on data saturation. This range aligns with recommendations for qualitative interview studies emphasizing depth over breadth (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data saturation is the point at which additional interviews yield no substantially new information which serves as the guiding criterion for final sample size (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Preliminary studies indicate that saturation often occurs within 12 interviews for relatively homogeneous groups (Guest et al., 2006), which justifies the target number for this study.

Recruitment Procedure

Participants were recruited through professional networks of Filipino teachers in Thailand, such as Facebook groups, teacher associations, and school contacts. An invitation letter will explain the purpose, confidentiality procedures, and voluntary nature of participation. Interested teachers who meet inclusion criteria will complete a short background form (years teaching, school type, levels taught) before scheduling an interview.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument is a semi-structured, in-depth one-on-one interview guide developed by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews combine open-ended questions with flexible probing, allowing the interviewer to explore emerging themes while ensuring coverage of core topics (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This method elicits personal narratives, examples, and reflections that illuminate teachers' lived experiences in contextualizing grammar.

Each interview lasted 20–30 minutes, depending on participants' responses. Interviews may be conducted face-to-face at a mutually convenient, quiet location or online via secure video-conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom or Google Meet) if distance or scheduling constraints apply. With participants' consent, interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription.

Interview questions:

1. How did your journey as a Filipino English language teacher in Thailand begin?
2. How would you describe your general experience teaching grammar to Thai EFL learners?
3. What does “contextualizing grammar instruction” mean to you as a teacher?
4. How do you make grammar lessons meaningful and relevant to Thai students' everyday experiences or cultural backgrounds?
5. Can you share a specific example of a grammar lesson you contextualized successfully for Thai learners?

6. What strategies or techniques do you commonly use to link grammar instruction with real-life situations?
7. How do your students respond when grammar lessons are contextualized or connected to their local context?
8. What challenges do you encounter when trying to contextualize grammar instruction in Thailand?
9. How do you address or overcome these challenges?
10. How do Filipino values, communication styles, or educational training influence your approach to grammar teaching in Thailand?
11. In what ways do you adapt your teaching materials or classroom activities to fit Thai students' needs and culture?
12. How has teaching grammar in Thailand contributed to your professional growth and understanding of language pedagogy?
13. What insights have you gained about teaching grammar to learners with a different linguistic and cultural background?
14. What recommendations can you offer to Filipino teachers who wish to contextualize grammar teaching for EFL learners abroad?
15. If given the chance, what improvements or innovations would you suggest to better support contextualized grammar instruction in EFL classrooms in Thailand?

The interview guide will be validated through expert review or qualitative research specialists to ensure content relevance and clarity. Minor revisions will be made based on feedback before data collection begins.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection will proceed in sequential stages:

Participant Recruitment and Consent

Potential participants will receive an electronic or printed Participant Consent Form describing the study's aims, voluntary nature, confidentiality safeguards, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Those agreeing to participate will sign an Informed Consent Form (digital or paper).

Scheduling and Conducting Interviews

Individual interviews will be arranged at convenient times. Each session will begin with rapport-building and reiteration of consent. The interviewer will use the semi-structured guide, prompting follow-up questions as needed. Interviews will be recorded and field notes will document contextual observations (tone, non-verbal cues).

Transcription and Translation

All recordings will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Any occasional Filipino or Thai phrases will be translated into English, ensuring meaning equivalence. To protect identity, pseudonyms will replace real names and identifiable information.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using reflexive Thematic Analysis (TA) as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019). Thematic analysis is a flexible, theoretically informed method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasize that TA involves the researcher's active engagement and reflexive interpretation, not mechanical coding.

Reflexive TA is appropriate for this study because it aligns with the descriptive qualitative design and the aim to capture and interpret teachers' experiences rather than to quantify them. It allows the researcher to produce a coherent, compelling narrative of teachers' perspectives on contextualizing grammar while remaining grounded in the data.

The six recursive phases of Braun and Clarke's framework will guide the process:

1. Familiarization with the data

All audio interviews will be transcribed verbatim. The researcher will read each transcript repeatedly and listen to the recordings to immerse in the data. Initial notes about potential meanings, emotions, or patterns will be recorded in a reflexive journal. This stage builds an overall sense of the dataset and begins analytic reflection.

2. Generating initial codes

Using manual annotation or qualitative software (e.g., NVivo or Atlas.ti), transcripts will be coded line-by-line for meaningful units related to the research questions such as teaching strategies, contextual challenges, or reflections on learner response. Codes represent descriptive labels, not final themes.

3. Constructing candidate themes

The researcher will review all codes and group them into candidate themes capturing broader patterns or concepts (e.g., “Adapting grammar lessons to local culture,” “Balancing communicative and exam requirements,” “Identity and professional pride”). Memos and diagrams will visualize how codes cluster and relate to each other.

4. Reviewing and refining themes

Candidate themes will be checked in two iterative passes:

- (a) Do coded extracts form a coherent, internally consistent theme?
- (b) Do the themes collectively represent the dataset’s overall story and answer the research questions?

Themes may be merged, split, renamed, or discarded. The emphasis is on analytic judgment rather than frequency counts.

5. Defining and naming themes

For each finalized theme, the researcher will write a clear analytic definition, a concise descriptive name, and an explanatory narrative connecting it to the research questions. Each theme will be supported with verbatim participant quotes and interpretive commentary illustrating its meaning and significance.

6. Writing up

The final report will weave together analytic narrative and participant extracts to tell a coherent interpretive story of Filipino teachers’ experiences. The write-up will highlight not only what teachers said but also what these patterns imply for contextualized grammar pedagogy.

To ensure analytic rigor, a peer reviewer experienced in qualitative analysis will examine a subset of coded data and thematic maps to provide peer debriefing and critical feedback on coherence and transparency.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical conduct is fundamental in qualitative research where participants share personal experiences. The study will adhere to established ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Belmont Report, 1979).

4. Results and Discussion

Transnational Motivations and the Formation of Teaching Pathways

This theme gives emphasis on how Filipino teachers embarked on teaching professions in Thailand because of the interconnected motivations such as economic mobility, career progression, professional curiosity, and the willingness to thrive in global experiences. Their narratives reflect a blend of practical, realistic and aspirational decisions. Many teachers described transitioning from unrelated professions, pursuing better economic options or being encouraged by peers already working abroad. These motivations reflect the broader phenomenon of Filipino transnational mobility where teaching abroad becomes an economic strategy and professional aspirations.

As one teacher said, *"I got a direct direct hired by one of the schools in Prachinburi... I got here in Thailand with the Non-B Visa that it was processed in Makati... it was in 2023."* (P4). The participants' journey to Thailand was planned and facilitated through an official hiring process where it reflects intentional migration motivated by a structured employment opportunity abroad.

Another teacher stressed, *"I went here right after graduating... this is my first like long term career... I really want to upgrade my professional career."* (P5). This reveals the strong aspiration and career-driven reasons for entering the Thai education system that emphasize on immediate professional growth and advancement right after graduation.

One teacher also uttered about finding better economic mobility, *"My journey... began when I decided to work abroad and look for better opportunities... teachers from the Philippines are underpaid."* (P6). This highlights the motivation for improved compensation as teachers in the Philippines typically receive low salaries and career stability.

The experiences of participants reflect a common trend in international teacher migration research. Filipino teachers often seek opportunities abroad to get better compensation and benefits in global markets (Tantay et al., 2024). Social connections play a significant role in facilitating migration, especially for new teachers with limited local experience (Snodin et al., 2021). Their move to Thailand is an example of "skill mobility pathways," where professionals gain experience, improve finances, and boost global employability (De Oca & Malaga, 2025). This transition also shapes their professional identity as they adapt to new cultural and institutional contexts (Perales et al., 2025), leading to a redefined role as EFL teachers in Thailand.

Filipino teachers' entry into the Thai educational system demonstrates a blend of personal aspirations, economic motivations, and professional repositioning. Their narratives mirror broader global patterns of migrant teachers seeking stability, identity formation, and career growth while navigating new educational landscapes.

Cultural Adaptation and Negotiated Identities in the Thai Educational Context

Participants revealed that effective teaching in Thailand requires deep cultural adaptation, sensitivity, and an effective negotiation of professional identity. Filipino teachers developed an understanding of Thai cultural norms, student values, communication behaviors, and local school expectations. These adaptations included adjusting their communication styles, employing Thai translations, respecting cultural norms, and managing contrasting educational values.

As one teacher said, *"I use the way how they portray as a Thai person... carrying the cultural background within them as their pride also."* (P4). The teacher recognizes how deeply these students value cultural identity and the teacher adapts his teaching approach ensuring that the lessons respect and incorporate cultural perspectives.

Also, another response from the teacher, *"Thai people are very patriotic... it's very hard to push their limits to learn the English language because they love their language."* (P5) This reflects the teacher's awareness of the strong national pride that shapes the Thai learners and their attitudes towards English language. Most of the Thai students prefer their language and find it challenging to motivate them to engage deeply with the English learning. These insights highlight the cultural barrier that a teacher must consider in his teaching.

A teacher also stated, *"Sometimes I have to use their language just to explain... it's challenging but rewarding."* (P7). The use of the Thai language is a big factor to support the bridge in helping the students to understand the English grammar concepts. Though this approach is difficult for a foreign teacher but it is worthwhile because it improves student comprehension and engagement.

Cultural adaptation is widely recognized as a central component of expatriate teacher integration (Fenech et al., 2020). Filipino teachers' efforts to align teaching with Thai norms reflect Gay's (2018) framework of culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasizes

respecting and integrating learners' cultural identities into instruction. Moreover, navigating cultural expectations requires relational competence and intercultural intelligence. Research shows that migrant teachers must negotiate their professional identities while adjusting to host-country norms that influence communication style, authority, and instructional delivery (Gong et al., 2021). Participants' experiences using Thai translations exemplify adaptive linguistic strategies aligned with studies suggesting that minimal L1 support enhances comprehension and reduces anxiety among EFL learners (Auerbach, 2019). The participants' responses show that cultural awareness fosters stronger teacher-student relationships and enhances contextual learning which is consistent with findings by Ladson-Billings (2021).

Filipino teachers negotiate their identities through cultural adaptation, respect for Thai values, and strategic adjustments in communication and instruction. Their culturally attuned practices reinforce learner engagement and foster intercultural understanding within the Thai EFL classroom.

Linguistic, Instructional, and Classroom Management Challenges in English Teaching

The participants described facing significant linguistic and instructional challenges in teaching grammar to Thai EFL learners. These included issues related to students' limited English vocabulary, difficulties in grammatical transfer, varying proficiency levels, and the need for modified instructional pacing. Classroom management challenges also emerged due to behavioral differences and limited English exposure outside school.

One teacher said, *"I observed that their first language causes common structural errors needing targeted practices at the same time."* (P1). The teacher pointing out that Thai students' grammatical mistakes in English often come from the structure of their first language (Thai). Because Thai grammar is very different from English, students naturally transfer L1 patterns into their English writing and speaking. This means the teacher must frequently address recurring errors and provide focused, repeated practice to correct them.

Also, another teacher claimed, *"Limited English exposure outside the school... very difficult... the difficulty of balancing grammar rules with cultural or real-life examples."* (P6). This is evidence that Thai learners rarely encounter English outside the classroom, making it hard for them to remember and apply grammar rules. Without real-world exposure, students depend entirely on classroom instruction. At the same time, the teacher struggles to strike a balance between teaching grammar accurately and making it relevant to students' cultural experiences.

The teacher described, *"Their vocabs, their words are limited... it's hard for me to expand... hard for me to elaborate some grammar lessons."* (P7). Expressing that students' limited vocabulary makes teaching grammar more difficult. Because students know only a small range of English words, it becomes challenging for the teacher to explain or expand grammar lessons in ways the learners can fully understand.

These challenges align with research highlighting systemic barriers in EFL countries where English is seldom used socially (Sripathum, 2013). Thai students often struggle with vocabulary, verb tenses, and English syntactic structures due to L1 interference (Bennui, 2008).

Classroom management concerns are also expected in multilingual and multicultural settings. Studies show that students with low proficiency tend to disengage quickly, requiring teachers to adjust pacing and scaffold learning (LeGere, 2023). Additionally, the participants' emphasis on behavioral differences and classroom management challenges mirrors research noting that Thai learners' classroom management needs and limited exposure to English may affect their readiness to engage in communicative grammar tasks. (Abasha'ar et al., 2021). The difficulty of balancing accuracy and contextual relevance is consistent with the literature suggesting that grammar instruction must address both structural correctness and communicative competence (Ellis, 2016).

The linguistic and instructional challenges experienced by Filipino teachers in Thailand highlight the complex interplay between L1 interference, limited English environment, and

diverse proficiency levels. Effective grammar teaching requires patience, strategic scaffolding, and adaptive classroom management grounded in contextual realities.

Culturally Relevant, Learner-Centered, and Contextualized Teaching Practices

Participants consistently emphasized integrating contextualized grammar instruction to make it meaningful and relatable to the students. This includes using authentic materials, real-life Thai scenarios, festivals, local food, places, role-play, multimedia, and everyday situations. Their descriptions show an intentional effort to bridge grammar learning with students' lived experiences.

A teacher stated, *"making grammar relevant as well and memorable using Thai related contents example temples or dishes for them to make it more relatable with the Thai students since we are here in Thailand"* (P1). This highlights that grammar becomes easier to understand when it is connected to familiar cultural elements by using Thai-related content.

One teacher said, *"usually I use or I implement the role playing strategy... like for example they are at the Thai restaurant ordering food so they are going to use it and make it like their own."* (P2). This explains that role-playing is an effective strategy because it places students in realistic Thai settings, such as ordering food in a local restaurant. This approach allows learners to practice grammar in situations they encounter in daily life, helping them internalize language structures through active and personalized use.

"Incorporating the local beliefs and culture of Thai means grammar more engaging to the learners." (P3) Added by one teacher. Emphasis and integration of Thai beliefs, customs, and cultural practices into grammar lessons increases student engagement. When lessons reflect their cultural identity, students become more interested and are more willing to participate, making grammar instruction more effective.

These strategies align with sociocultural learning theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs meaningfully when tied to learners' real-world contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Culturally contextualized grammar teaching strengthens comprehension, lowers anxiety, and increases motivation (Mart, 2013). Authentic, culturally relevant materials enhance learners' retention and engagement (Brown, 2014). Furthermore, learner-centered approaches such as role-play, task-based learning, and communication-based activities have been shown to improve grammatical accuracy and fluency in EFL settings (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Willis & Willis, 2007). The participants' examples align with research asserting that contextualization enables learners to see grammar as a tool for communication rather than isolated rules (Celce-Murcia, 2016; Savignon, 2018).

Filipino teachers employ culturally relevant and student-centered strategies to contextualize grammar instruction. Through authentic materials, local examples, and interactive techniques, they promote meaningful learning and improve students' confidence and communicative competence.

Professional Growth, Collaboration, and Systemic Influences on Teaching

In this theme, it emphasizes that teaching in Thailand provided opportunities for professional growth, including improved pedagogical skills, cultural sensitivity, classroom management, and adaptability. They also cited structural factors such as teacher training, school support, curriculum expectations, and collaboration with Thai coordinators.

One teacher responded, *"I joined lecturers, symposiums, seminars, workshops, conferences... for effective delivery of lessons."* (P4). The participation in professional activities such as lectures, symposiums, seminars, workshops, and conferences has strengthened their teaching practice. These continuous learning opportunities help them update their knowledge, refine their instructional skills, and ensure that they can deliver grammar lessons more effectively to Thai learners.

The teacher stated, *"Teaching grammar in Thailand has improved my skills in lesson planning... classroom management... adapting strategies to the students' level."* (P6). Teaching in Thailand has enhanced several areas of their professional competence. By handling

diverse student needs, they have improved in lesson planning, classroom management, and adapting teaching strategies to match students' varying English proficiency levels. Their growth is a direct result of navigating real classroom challenges in the Thai context.

Another teacher said, *"I need to be creative... use various strategies and methods to cater the different needs of my students."* (P7). The importance of creativity in the teaching process. They emphasize that using varied teaching strategies and methods is essential to address the different learning needs of students. This shows that flexibility and resourcefulness are key components of effective grammar instruction in a culturally diverse classroom.

Professional development is essential to sustaining instructional quality, and international teaching contexts accelerate teacher learning (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Migrant teachers often grow through intercultural exposure, adaptive pedagogy, and reflective practice (Gong et al., 2021). Collaboration with local teachers and coordinators, as described by several participants, aligns with research on professional learning communities that enhance teacher competency and contextual teaching effectiveness (Stoll et al., 2006). Systemic influences such as curriculum design, school autonomy, and training disparities also shape teaching practices. Studies argue that effective EFL instruction requires supportive institutional frameworks and continuous professional development (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

Filipino teachers' professional growth in Thailand is shaped by reflective practice, ongoing training, collaboration, and navigating systemic differences. These experiences enhance their pedagogical adaptability and contextual teaching competence.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of Filipino teachers in contextualizing grammar instruction for EFL learners in Thailand, highlighting how pedagogical practices are shaped by cultural awareness, professional background, and classroom realities. The findings revealed that teachers consistently employed contextualized grammar teaching strategies such as real-life examples, communicative activities, and culturally familiar contexts to enhance learners' comprehension, interest, and engagement. Participants emphasized that contextualization helped bridge linguistic gaps, reduced learners' anxiety toward learning the language, and supported more meaningful language use. However, the study also identified persistent challenges, including learners' limited English proficiency, reliance on rote learning, time constraints, and the pressure to align instruction with standardized curricula and assessments. These challenges underscored the tension between innovative, learner-centered practices and structural limitations within the Thai EFL context.

Overall, the study concludes that contextualized grammar instruction is an effective and necessary approach in EFL classrooms, particularly in multi-level learning environments. Filipino teachers' adaptability, creativity, and intercultural sensitivity played a crucial role in responding to learners' needs and fostering supportive learning spaces. The findings suggest that sustained professional development, institutional support, and curriculum flexibility are essential in strengthening teachers' capacity to implement contextualized grammar instruction consistently. By recognizing teachers' lived experiences and pedagogical insights, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of grammar teaching in EFL settings and offers implications for teacher education programs, curriculum designers, and policymakers seeking to improve English language instruction in Thailand.

This study has several limitations despite its contributions. It needs to be acknowledged first is the given sample size which was relatively small and limited to Filipino English teachers only who are currently teaching in Thailand. While this is tolerable with qualitative research aims of depth rather than breadth, the findings may not be generalizable to other non-native English-speaking teacher groups or EFL contexts. Second, the study relied on self-reported data gathered through interviews, which may be influenced by participants' recall, personal interpretations, or social desirability bias. Although reflexive thematic analysis and verbatim quotations were used to enhance credibility, participants' accounts remain subjective

representations of their experiences. Third, the study focused exclusively on Filipino teachers' perspectives and did not include classroom observations or student voices, which could have provided additional triangulation of teaching practices and learning outcomes. Lastly, contextual factors such as school policies, curriculum mandates, and assessment systems were examined through teachers' perceptions rather than institutional documents, which may limit the scope of contextual analysis.

Future researchers can further extend the findings of this study in several important directions. Longitudinal investigations may be conducted to examine how Filipino teachers' practices in contextualizing grammar instruction evolve over time as they gain increased familiarity with Thai learners, curricular demands, and institutional expectations. Comparative studies involving other non-native English-speaking teacher groups, including educators from neighboring ASEAN countries or local Thai teachers, would allow for a broader examination of how linguistic and cultural backgrounds influence grammar pedagogy in EFL contexts. Additionally, research which are based on interventions may be conducted by evaluating the effects of targeted teacher training programs on contextualized grammar instruction is recommended, particularly programs grounded in communicative, culturally responsive, and task-based approaches. Future studies may also strengthen empirical rigor by incorporating classroom observations, student perspectives, or mixed-method designs to triangulate findings and to more systematically explore the relationship between instructional practices, learners' grammatical development, and communicative competence.

6. References

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