

LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES IN STUDENTS' REFLECTIVE TALK ON TEAM TEACHING IN THAI UPPER SECONDARY ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

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Received: 5 May 2026
Revised: 27 May 2026
Accepted: 10 June 2026
Published: 14 August 2026

Citation:
Srisuk, J., & Jiraborvornkit, C.
(2026). Linguistic strategies
in students' reflective talk on
team teaching in Thai upper
secondary English
classrooms: A pragmatic
analysis. *Humanities, Arts
and Social Sciences Studies*,
26(2), 552–561.
[https://doi.org/10.69598/
hasss.26.2.285754](https://doi.org/10.69598/hasss.26.2.285754)

This study investigates the linguistic strategies used in students' reflective talk on team teaching in English classrooms and examines how these strategies relate to students' perceptions of team-teaching effectiveness in a Thai upper secondary school context. Drawing on pragmatic and emancipatory pragmatic frameworks, the study analyzes reflective conversational data obtained from semi-structured interviews with 20 upper secondary students who had experienced team teaching by Thai and foreign English teachers. The analysis identifies five main linguistic strategies used in students' reflections: feeling-expressing language, opinion-expressing language, presupposition, explication, and hedging. Among these, feeling-expressing and opinion-expressing language occurred most frequently, indicating the central role of affective and evaluative meanings in students' reflective processes. The findings show that students perceived team teaching as effective in six dimensions: understanding of teacher roles and instructional models, respect for teachers, responsiveness to feedback, emphasis on learning development rather than outcomes, a sense of trust and security in the classroom, and confidence in their ability to achieve learning goals. The results further demonstrate that students' linguistic choices reflect Thai socio-cultural orientations characterized by interdependence, fun-oriented learning, and collectivist values, which shape how students express opinions, manage politeness, and construct relationships with teachers. By linking pragmatic analysis with classroom reflection and cultural perspectives, this study contributes to research on reflective practice in English language education. It highlights the importance of culturally informed team-teaching approaches in multilingual educational settings.

Keywords: Team teaching; pragmatics; reflective talk; linguistic strategies; Thai EFL classrooms

1. INTRODUCTION

Reflection plays a crucial role in language learning as it enables learners to examine their experiences, regulate their learning processes, and develop greater self-awareness. In English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, reflective interaction allows students to articulate their thoughts, evaluate their learning, and construct meaning through communication. Classroom conversations that encourage reflection can therefore support deeper learning, promote learner autonomy, and strengthen relationships between teachers and students. In recent years, team teaching—particularly collaboration between Thai and foreign English teachers—has become increasingly common in Thai upper secondary schools as a way to enhance communicative learning environments and provide students with diverse linguistic and pedagogical input.

Team teaching has been widely reported to offer several pedagogical benefits, including increased learner support, exposure to different teaching styles, and opportunities for more interactive classroom participation. Students may benefit from the complementary roles of Thai and foreign teachers, gaining both linguistic models and accessible explanations. At the same time, team teaching presents challenges related to role coordination, communication, and instructional planning. While previous studies have examined teacher collaboration and student attitudes toward team teaching, most research has focused on instructional effectiveness, classroom management, or teacher perspectives rather than on how students linguistically construct their reflections on these experiences.

Reflection has also been studied extensively as a cognitive and pedagogical process, and pragmatics has provided useful tools for analyzing language use in context. However, limited research has explored the linguistic strategies students use when expressing reflection in classroom conversations, particularly in team-teaching settings. Even fewer studies have examined how such reflective language is shaped by socio-cultural orientations in Thai educational contexts. Understanding how students express opinions, emotions, and evaluations through language can provide valuable insights into their perceptions of learning environments and their relationships with teachers.

This study adopts a pragmatic perspective, which views language as meaning in context, together with an emancipatory pragmatic approach that emphasizes the influence of socio-cultural values on communication. These frameworks are appropriate for analyzing students' reflective talk because they allow for the examination of linguistic forms, interactional meanings, and culturally grounded communication patterns within classroom discourse.

The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to identify the linguistic strategies used by Thai upper secondary students when reflecting on team teaching in English classrooms, (2) to examine how these strategies relate to students' perceptions of team-teaching effectiveness, and (3) to explore how Thai socio-cultural orientations shape these linguistic choices. To achieve these aims, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What linguistic strategies do Thai upper secondary students use when reflecting on team teaching in English classrooms?
2. How do these linguistic strategies relate to students' perceptions of team-teaching effectiveness?
3. How are these linguistic strategies influenced by Thai socio-cultural orientations?

By providing a culturally informed pragmatic analysis of students' reflective talk, this study contributes to research on classroom discourse, reflective practice, and team teaching in Thai EFL contexts and offers insights for developing more effective and culturally responsive collaborative teaching approaches.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Pragmatics and emancipatory pragmatics in classroom discourse

Pragmatics examines how meaning is constructed and interpreted in context, taking into account speaker intention, linguistic form, and situational factors (Hurford & Heasley, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001; Yule, 1996). In classroom interaction, pragmatic analysis helps explain how participants manage roles, express attitudes, and negotiate meaning through language. Utterances are interpreted not only through their linguistic content but also through contextual elements such as participants' relationships, beliefs, and communicative goals (Saeed, 2009; Yule, 1996). These contextual dimensions are particularly relevant in teacher-student interaction, where differences in status, knowledge, and expectations shape communication patterns.

However, scholars have questioned the universality of Western pragmatic frameworks, arguing that they may not fully account for culturally specific interactional norms (Gu, 1990; Wierzbicka, 2003). Emancipatory pragmatics extends traditional pragmatics by emphasizing the role of socio-cultural values in shaping language use and interpretation (Hanks et al., 2009). This perspective views language as interdependent and embedded within cultural systems, where speakers orient their linguistic choices toward

shared norms such as collectivism, affiliation, and interdependent self-construal. Research in Thai pragmatics has similarly demonstrated that cultural concepts influence communicative practices, including politeness, face management, and expressions of interpersonal alignment (Panpothong & Phakdeephasook, 2014). From this perspective, analyzing students' reflective talk requires attention not only to linguistic forms but also to culturally grounded interactional meanings.

2.2 Reflection and reflective talk in language learning

Reflection is widely recognized as a process through which learners examine their experiences, evaluate their understanding, and construct new knowledge (Dewey, 1938; Moon, 2004). In language education, reflective activities support critical thinking, learner autonomy, and deeper engagement with learning processes (Mann & Walsh, 2017). Reflection can occur in various forms, including written journals, group discussions, and spoken interaction, each providing opportunities for learners to articulate their thoughts and negotiate meaning with others (Grossman, 2009; Hess, 1999).

Previous research has primarily focused on reflection as a tool for teacher development (Farrell, 2007, 2013, 2018; Richards & Farrell, 2005) or as a cognitive process that promotes learning outcomes. While these studies highlight the pedagogical value of reflection, less attention has been paid to how students linguistically construct reflective meaning in classroom discourse. Spoken reflection, or reflective talk, is particularly significant in communicative language classrooms, because it reveals how learners express opinions, emotions, and evaluations in interaction. Analyzing the linguistic features of reflective talk can therefore provide insights into learners' perceptions of instructional practices and their relationships with teachers.

2.3 Team teaching in EFL classrooms

Team teaching, defined as collaborative planning, instruction, and evaluation by two or more teachers, has been widely implemented in language education (Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend et al., 2010). In EFL contexts, collaboration between native and non-native English-speaking teachers is often viewed as beneficial since it combines complementary linguistic and pedagogical strengths (Carless & Walker, 2006). Research has shown that team teaching can enhance classroom interaction, provide increased learner support, and create more engaging learning environments (Carless, 2006a, 2006b; Conderman, 2011). Students may benefit from multiple explanations, greater opportunities for participation, and improved confidence in using the target language.

Despite these advantages, team teaching also presents challenges related to communication, role distribution, and collaborative planning (Canaran & Mirici, 2020; Dugan & Letterman, 2008; Money & Coughlan, 2016). Studies have examined teacher collaboration and student attitudes toward co-teaching, but most have focused on instructional effectiveness or classroom management rather than on students' linguistic responses to team-teaching experiences. In the Thai context, where hierarchical relationships and collectivist values influence classroom interaction (Komin, 1991; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), students' perceptions of team teaching may be expressed through culturally shaped communicative strategies.

2.4 Research gap and analytical framework

Although reflection, pragmatics, and team teaching have been studied extensively, limited research has investigated how students use language to construct reflection in team-teaching English classrooms. In particular, there is a lack of studies that examine the linguistic strategies of students' reflective talk and how these strategies relate to their perceptions of collaborative teaching within specific socio-cultural contexts. To address this gap, the present study applies pragmatic analysis to identify linguistic strategies in students' reflections and uses an emancipatory pragmatic perspective to interpret how Thai cultural orientations shape these communicative practices. By focusing specifically on students' reflective talk in team-teaching English classrooms, this study provides new insights into how linguistic strategies and cultural orientations interact in shaping learners' perceptions of collaborative teaching.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This study employed a qualitative research design using a pragmatic analytical framework to investigate linguistic strategies in students' reflective talk on team teaching in English classrooms. Pragmatic concepts (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001; Verschueren, 1999) and conversation analysis principles (Sacks et al., 1974) were applied to examine how meaning was constructed through language use in context. In addition, an emancipatory pragmatic perspective (Hanks et al., 2009) was used to interpret the influence of socio-cultural orientations on students' communicative practices. The analysis was informed by Tannen's (1984) conversational interview approach, which emphasizes naturalistic interaction and minimizes hierarchical interviewer-interviewee relationships.

3.2 Participants and research context

The participants were 20 upper secondary students who had experienced team teaching in English classes conducted collaboratively by Thai and foreign teachers. The students were selected through voluntary participation to ensure that they were willing to share their learning experiences and reflections. All participants had prior exposure to team-teaching classroom environments and were able to describe their perceptions and experiences in conversational interviews. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were used and identifying information was removed.

3.3 Data collection

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured conversational interviews. The conversational format was designed to create a relaxed and non-hierarchical interactional setting in which participants could express their reflections freely. Open-ended prompts encouraged students to discuss their experiences of team teaching, their feelings toward classroom interaction, and their perceptions of teacher roles and learning processes. The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

The unit of analysis in this study was the utterance, defined as a meaningful segment of spoken discourse (Hurford & Heasley, 1983). The analysis proceeded in four stages.

First, interview transcripts were segmented into utterances representing students' reflective talk on team teaching experiences. These utterances were examined to identify conversational features and contextual meanings related to students' thoughts and emotions.

Second, linguistic strategies were identified through analysis of both linguistic form and communicative function. Utterances were categorized into strategy types based on recurring patterns of language use, including opinion-expressing language, feeling-expressing language, hedging, presupposition, and explication. These categories were derived from pragmatic principles concerning stance, evaluation, and contextual meaning.

Third, the relationship between linguistic strategies and students' perceptions of team-teaching effectiveness was analyzed by examining how specific language forms conveyed evaluative meanings, attitudes toward teachers, and reflections on learning experiences.

Fourth, an emancipatory pragmatic perspective was applied to interpret how Thai socio-cultural orientations, such as interdependence, collectivism, and relational politeness, influenced students' linguistic choices and interactional styles.

3.5 Trustworthiness and ethical considerations

To enhance analytical credibility, the study employed systematic coding procedures and repeated examination of the data to ensure consistency in the identification of linguistic strategies. Interpretations were grounded in representative excerpts from the interview transcripts. Ethical guidelines for research involving human participants were followed. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from students and their parents or legal guardians, and all data were anonymized using pseudonyms.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Linguistic strategies in students' reflective talk on team teaching

The analysis identified five linguistic strategies used by upper secondary students when reflecting on their experiences of team teaching in English classrooms: (1) feeling-expressing language, (2) opinion-expressing language, (3) presupposition, (4) explication, and (5) hedging. These strategies were realized through recurrent lexical and structural patterns in the interview data.

4.1.1 Opinion-expressing language

Students frequently used verbs and clauses indicating stance and evaluation, such as *think that*, *believe that*, *agree that*, and *suppose that*. These forms were used to present judgments about instructional effectiveness, teacher roles, and learning preferences. For example, one student stated that having two teachers allowed content to be "supplemented" when one teacher omitted information, indicating an evaluative comparison between teaching approaches. Another student explained a preference for explanations from the Thai teacher when grammatical content was difficult, demonstrating reflective decision-making about learning strategies.

Student A: "I think learning with two teachers is better because if I don't understand the foreign teacher, the Thai teacher can explain again in a different way."

Student B: “I believe team teaching helps us understand more because each teacher explains different parts.”

These examples show stance markers such as “I think” and “I believe,” which clearly signal evaluative judgment. Opinion-expressing language enabled students to articulate comparisons, identify advantages of team teaching, and propose practical solutions to learning difficulties.

4.1.2 Feeling-expressing language

Feeling-expressing language was the most frequently occurring strategy. Students used affective vocabulary such as comfortable, confident, fun, interested, and reassured to describe their classroom experiences. These expressions often co-occurred with references to teacher support and classroom atmosphere. For instance, students reported feeling more confident speaking English when both Thai and foreign teachers were present and described having “another option” for asking questions when they felt uncomfortable with one teacher.

Student C: “I feel more confident speaking English when there are two teachers in the class because if I make a mistake, they help me and I don’t feel embarrassed.”

Student D: “It is more fun learning English with two teachers because the class feels more relaxed.”

These examples demonstrate affective evaluation. This strategy highlighted the role of emotional engagement and perceived support in students’ reflections on team teaching.

4.1.3 Hedging

Hedging was realized through modal verbs, approximators, and vague expressions such as *seem*, *might*, *probably*, *some*, and *a little*. These forms were used when students discussed potential challenges or expressed uncertainty. Hedging allowed students to present opinions cautiously, particularly when referring to teachers or instructional practices.

Student E: “Sometimes it might be a little confusing when both teachers explain at the same time, but usually it helps us understand better.”

This example shows hedging through words such as “sometimes,” “might,” and “a little,” which soften potential criticism. This strategy suggests that students were attentive to interpersonal relationships and used mitigated language when expressing evaluative comments.

4.1.4 Presupposition

Presupposition appeared through change-of-state verbs (*increase*, *begin*, *occur*), temporal clauses (*since*, *after*), and iterative forms (*again*, *further*). These structures indicated shared assumptions about previous learning experiences and classroom norms. For example, students contrasted their current team-teaching experience with prior single-teacher instruction, presupposing differences in classroom support and opportunities for speaking.

Student F: “Since we started learning with two teachers, we have more chances to ask questions compared with before when there was only one teacher.”

The clause “since we started...” presupposes the change in teaching format. Presupposition enabled students to construct reflective comparisons between past and present learning contexts.

4.1.5 Explication

Explication involved detailed narrative descriptions of classroom interaction. Students explained how teachers divided roles, provided individual support, and created opportunities for participation. These narratives often included comparisons between English and other subjects and between Thai and foreign teachers.

Student G: “Usually the foreign teacher explains the activity first, and then the Thai teacher helps explain the difficult words and checks if we understand.”

This is a descriptive narrative explaining classroom interaction, which fits explication. Explication allowed students to elaborate on specific classroom practices and illustrate how team teaching influenced their learning processes.

4.2 Frequency of linguistic strategies

Table 1 presents the frequency of the five linguistic strategies identified in the data.

Table 1: Frequency of linguistic strategies in students' reflective talk

Linguistic strategy	Frequency (%)
Feeling-expressing language	25.90
Opinion-expressing language	23.30
Presupposition	19.00
Explication	18.23
Hedging	13.57

Feeling-expressing language was the most frequent strategy, followed by opinion-expressing language. Hedging occurred least frequently. These results indicate that students' reflections were primarily affective and evaluative, with less frequent use of mitigated or uncertain expressions.

4.3 Students' perceptions of team-teaching effectiveness

Analysis of the relationship between linguistic strategies and reflective content revealed six dimensions of perceived team-teaching effectiveness:

1. Understanding of team-teaching models and teacher roles
2. Respect and positive attitudes toward teachers
3. Responsiveness to teacher feedback
4. Emphasis on learning development rather than outcomes
5. Trust and sense of security in the classroom
6. Confidence in using English for communication

Students described team teaching as providing multiple sources of explanation, increased opportunities for asking questions, and greater individual support. The presence of both Thai and foreign teachers was perceived as facilitating comprehension and reducing anxiety in speaking English. Table 2 summarizes the relationship between linguistic strategies and these perception categories.

Table 2: Linguistic strategies and perceived dimensions of team-teaching effectiveness

Linguistic strategies Reflection goals	Feeling-expressing language	Opinion-expressing language	Presupposition	Explication	Hedging language
Understanding team teaching models and teacher roles		✓		✓	
Respect and admiration for teachers	✓				✓
Responsiveness to teacher feedback		✓	✓		
Prioritizing development over outcomes	✓			✓	
Trust and security in co-teaching	✓		✓		
Acknowledging teacher confidence in achievement	✓	✓			

4.4 Thai socio-cultural orientations in students' reflective talk

The data also revealed patterns consistent with Thai socio-cultural communication norms. Two broad orientations were identified.

4.4.1 Fun-oriented learning

Feeling-expressing and opinion-expressing language frequently conveyed enjoyment, comfort, and a positive classroom atmosphere. Students described team teaching as fun, relaxing, and supportive, indicating the importance of affective engagement in their learning experiences.

4.4.2 Relational and collectivist orientation

Hedging and explication reflected attention to interpersonal relationships and social appropriateness. Students used mitigated language when referring to teachers and emphasized cooperation, support, and mutual understanding. These patterns suggest that reflective talk was shaped by relational norms and respect for classroom hierarchy.

Figure 1 summarizes the relationship between linguistic strategies and Thai socio-cultural orientations identified in the students' reflective talk.

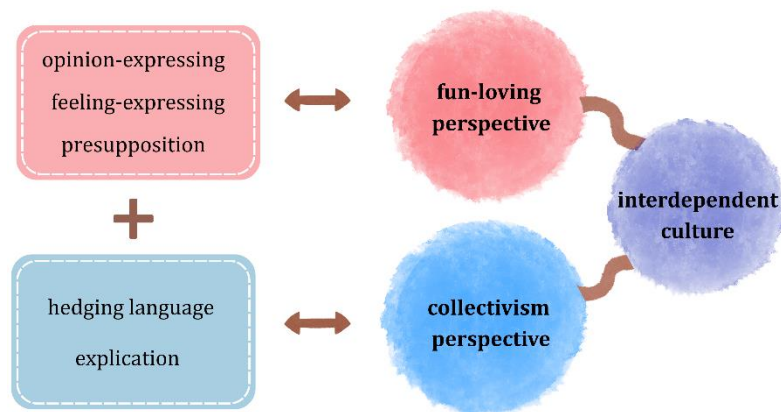


Figure 1: Relationship between linguistic strategies and Thai socio-cultural orientations in students' reflective talk

As shown in Figure 1, feeling-expressing language, opinion-expressing language, and presupposition are associated with a fun-oriented learning perspective, reflecting students' emphasis on enjoyment and emotional engagement in the classroom. In contrast, hedging and explication are linked to a relational and collectivist orientation, indicating attention to politeness, interpersonal relationships, and social appropriateness when reflecting on teachers and classroom interaction.

5. DISCUSSION

This study examined linguistic strategies used in students' reflective talk on team teaching in Thai upper secondary English classrooms and explored how these strategies relate to students' perceptions and socio-cultural orientations. The findings showed that feeling-expressing language and opinion-expressing language were the most frequent strategies, indicating that students' reflections were primarily affective and evaluative. This supports previous research highlighting the role of emotion and personal stance in reflective learning processes (Mann & Walsh, 2017). The prominence of affective language suggests that students evaluated team teaching not only in terms of instructional effectiveness but also in relation to classroom atmosphere, confidence, and perceived support.

The use of presupposition in students' reflective talk indicates that learners drew on shared classroom experiences and prior learning contexts when evaluating team teaching. From a pragmatic perspective, this reflects the role of contextual knowledge in meaning construction (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001). Students compared team-teaching classrooms with single-teacher environments, presupposing differences in opportunities for participation and access to assistance. This finding demonstrates how reflective talk functions as a site for constructing experiential contrasts and negotiating learning identities.

Hedging occurred less frequently but played an important interpersonal role. Students used mitigated expressions when referring to teachers or potential challenges, suggesting sensitivity to hierarchical relationships and face considerations in classroom discourse. This pattern aligns with research on politeness and relational communication in Thai culture, where speakers often employ indirect language to maintain social harmony (Komin, 1991; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). At the same time, the relatively low frequency of hedging compared with affective and evaluative language may indicate that team-teaching environments foster greater confidence in expressing opinions.

Explication enabled students to provide detailed narratives of classroom interaction, particularly regarding teacher roles, support mechanisms, and opportunities for participation. These narrative accounts illustrate how learners conceptualize team teaching as a collaborative learning environment rather than a

purely instructional arrangement. This finding is consistent with studies showing that co-teaching can increase learner engagement and access to individualized support (Carless, 2006a, 2006b; Conderman, 2011).

Taken together, the linguistic strategies identified in this study reflect two broad socio-cultural orientations. Feeling-expressing and opinion-expressing language were associated with a fun-oriented learning perspective, emphasizing enjoyment and emotional comfort. Hedging and explication were linked to a relational orientation, highlighting politeness, respect, and attention to interpersonal relationships. These patterns support an emancipatory pragmatic interpretation in which students' language use is shaped by interdependent cultural values (Hanks et al., 2009; Marcus & Kitayama, 1991). The findings suggest that team teaching may align with Thai learners' preferences for supportive, relationship-based classroom environments.

From a pedagogical perspective, the results indicate that team teaching can enhance students' confidence, provide multiple avenues for understanding, and create a secure learning atmosphere. The presence of both Thai and foreign teachers allowed students to negotiate meaning across languages and reduced anxiety in speaking English. These findings reinforce the importance of culturally responsive instructional design and collaborative teaching practices in multilingual classrooms.

6. CONCLUSION

This study identified five linguistic strategies—feeling-expressing language, opinion-expressing language, presupposition, explication, and hedging—in students' reflective talk on team teaching in Thai upper secondary English classrooms. The findings show that students perceived team teaching as supportive, confidence-building, and conducive to participation, particularly when multiple teachers provided complementary explanations and individualized assistance. Linguistic patterns reflected both affective engagement and relational communication norms, indicating the influence of Thai socio-cultural orientations on classroom discourse.

The study contributes to research on reflective practice and classroom pragmatics by demonstrating how students construct evaluative meaning through language and how these constructions are shaped by cultural context. The results highlight the value of analyzing reflective talk as a source of insight into learners' perceptions of instructional practices.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In practical terms, the findings suggest that team-teaching models should emphasize clear role coordination, opportunities for interaction, and supportive classroom relationships. Teacher training programs may benefit from incorporating awareness of culturally grounded communication patterns to enhance collaborative teaching effectiveness.

Future research could examine longitudinal changes in students' reflective language, compare different team-teaching models, and explore the relationship between linguistic strategies and learning outcomes in diverse educational contexts. These findings highlight the importance of examining students' language use as a lens for understanding classroom interaction and learning experiences in culturally diverse educational contexts.

DECLARATION

1. Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

2. Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

The authors used generative AI (ChatGPT 5.2) and AI-assisted language tools (Grammarly Pro) to support language editing, grammar checking, and clarity and organization improvements during the writing process. These tools were used only for proofreading and stylistic suggestions. They were not used to generate research data, conduct analysis, or produce original interpretations. All research design, data analysis, and final content are the sole responsibility of the author.

3. Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions, but are available from the author upon reasonable request.

4. Ethics statement

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and only students whose consent and parental or guardian consent were both obtained were included in the study. An information sheet explaining the research purpose, procedures, and participants' rights was provided prior to data collection. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. All data were anonymized, and pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities and confidentiality.

5. Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

6. Contributor Role Taxonomy (CRediT)

Jirapat Srisuk: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Project administration, Writing – review & editing.

Chunphrutkorn Jiraborvornkit: Methodology, Validation, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing, Supervision.

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