

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Language Teacher Agency in English for Medical Purposes in the Thai Tertiary Context

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Applied Linguistics

at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

Kanokphan Tongpong

2025

ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences and perspectives of English for Medical Purposes (EMP) teachers in the Thai tertiary context, with a focus on teacher agency. As Thailand aims to become a leading destination for medical tourism by 2027, English proficiency among medical professionals is crucial for effective communication with international patients and colleagues. To address this need, Thai universities, particularly medical faculties, have implemented compulsory EMP courses tailored to equip students with specialised language skills. However, despite the increasing significance of EMP in Thailand, little research has been conducted on EMP teachers and the challenges they face.

This qualitative dominant mixed-methods study investigates the factors influencing EMP teacher agency, including teachers' knowledge, prior experience, institutional conditions, and Thai cultural factors. Data is drawn from questionnaires from 33 teachers of EMP at tertiary institutions across Thailand, and two rounds of interviews with 14 EMP teachers at a single institution, Khon Kaen University, the largest university in the north east of Thailand. Drawing on the sociocultural approach and situating EMP as a specialised branch within English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the research highlights the unique teaching requirements, such as medical terminology, communication strategies, and professional context-specific skills. The findings identify both affordances and constraints affecting teacher agency, such as their existing knowledge of communicative English, a lack of medical background, limited instructional materials, large class sizes, and time constraints. Sociocultural factors, particularly the Thai value of face-saving, further influence how teachers navigate challenges in their roles.

This study addresses a critical research gap by providing insights into the experiences of EMP teachers and the ways they exercise agency to address challenges. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of teacher agency within the EMP field, offering practical implications for enhancing teaching practices and professional development. Ultimately, the study aims to support the improvement of EMP instruction in Thailand, helping to better prepare medical students for real-world professional communication.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am truly grateful to all those who supported, helped, and encouraged me throughout my long journey. Without their contributions, this thesis would not have been a success.

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude and respect to my main supervisor, Professor Cynthia White, who believed in my ability and encouraged me to pursue a doctoral degree at Massey University, New Zealand. I am particularly grateful for her critical view and invaluable professional guidance.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to Associate Professor Dr. Karen Ashton and Dr. Gillian Skyrme, my co-supervisors, for their expertise, kindness, and understanding. Both have played a vital role in shaping this study, devoting countless hours to reading my drafts with care and attention. Their thoughtful feedback and insightful suggestions have been invaluable, offering guidance that has greatly enriched the work. Specifically, I am deeply grateful for their emotional support and encouragement during my challenging moments. I have been very fortunate to have all of them as my supervisors.

I am indebted to Khon Kaen University, and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University, Thailand, for granting me a full-time doctoral scholarship to study at Massey University. I would also like to thank my colleagues and staff at the university for their assistance and support concerning my study leave. Moreover, I thank the School of Humanities, Media and Creative Communication and Massey University for granting me a scholarship for the data collection phase and the Massey University Doctoral Conference Grant.

My sincere appreciation goes to all my participants who kindly participated in this study. Thank you very much for your time and effort to share your experiences and significant perspectives. This thesis would not have been completed without your willingness to help.

My special thanks are due to my friends in the Postgrad study room: Meow, Siti, Anne, Noor, Barira, Lin, Chujie, Hong, Shirley, Somayyeh, Ami, Andri, Blair, Enya, Amos, Nailul and Nat. Thank you for the friendship, shared foods from different countries and valuable academic perspectives. Without them, my life would have been lonely and boring.

In addition, heartfelt thanks goes to all my Thai and international friends in Palmerston North. A big thank goes to my Thai family here; their unwavering support and kindness have created a strong bond that makes me feel safe and loved. My life overseas would have been much harder and less joyful without the warmth and generosity from all of them.

Finally, my eternal gratitude goes to my parents, my sisters and extended family for their support, understanding, and love throughout my study. Special thanks go to my husband Viroch, who has stood by my side through all the highs and lows. To my son, Pann, who brings so much joy to my life, and has also shared in my challenges and celebrated my successes with me. I could not have completed this long and complex journey without their support and unconditional love. My profound silence honours my late aunt, Wasana, who always supported me and Pann. The endless care and encouragement she offered us will forever be appreciated.

Thank you/ Ngā mihi nui/ ขอบคุณค่ะ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF APPENDICES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiii
Chapter One INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction to the Study	2
1.2 Background to the Research Context.....	3
1.3 English for Medical Purposes (EMP) in the Thai Tertiary Context	5
1.4 Teacher Agency	6
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.6 Overview of the Thesis	8
Chapter Two LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 Teacher Agency in Language Teaching	10
2.2.1 Conceptualising Agency from a Sociocultural Perspective	12
2.2.2 Conceptualising Agency from an Ecological Perspective	16
2.2.3 Sociocultural Factors in the Thai context.....	18
2.2.4 Teacher Agency and Teachers' Professional Identity.....	21
2.2.5 Research on Language Teacher Agency	24
2.3 Defining English for Specific Purposes (ESP)	32
2.3.1 Differentiating ESP and EGP	37
2.4 Understanding English for Medical Purposes (EMP).....	38
2.4.1 Defining EMP	38
2.4.2 Research on EMP	40
2.5 Research Questions.....	42
2.6 Summary	43
Chapter Three RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	44
3.1 Introduction.....	44

3.2 Research Paradigm	44
3.3 Research Design	48
3.4 Research Instrument Design.....	50
3.4.1 Questionnaires	50
3.4.2 Phase 2: Interviews	55
3.4.3 Piloting the Instruments.....	57
3.5 Ethical Considerations.....	58
3.6 Research Setting and Participants	60
3.6.1 Research Setting	60
3.6.2 Participants	61
3.7 Data Collection Procedures and Research Instruments.....	62
3.7.1 Phase One: Questionnaires	64
3.7.2 Phase 2: Interviews	65
3.8 Data Analysis	67
3.8.1 Quantitative data analysis	68
3.8.2 Qualitative data analysis	69
3.9 Role of the Researcher	72
3.10 Summary	72
Chapter Four Findings from the Questionnaires.....	74
4.1 Introduction	74
4.2 Overview of Participants	74
4.3 EMP in the Thai Tertiary Context.....	81
4.3.1 Early Experience in Teaching English for Medical Purposes	82
4.3.2 Current EMP Teaching Practices.....	86
4.4 Transition from General English to English for Medical Purposes	96
4.4.1 Differences between GE and EMP	96
4.4.2 Teachers' Views on EMP Influences	98
4.4.3 Actions to Improve EMP Teaching	99
4.5 Teachers' Perspectives on EMP teaching Scenarios.....	100
4.2.1 Teachers' Focus on the EMP students.....	107
4.5.2 Collaborations.....	110
4.6 Teachers' Thinking about the Career of EMP Teaching.....	116
4.6.1 The Role of an EMP Teacher	116
4.6.2 Professional Requirements	119
4.6.3 Perspectives on Teachers' Professional Development Scenarios.....	120

4.7 Summary	125
Chapter Five Becoming an emp teacher.....	126
5.1 Introduction.....	126
5.2 Overview of Participants	126
5.3 The Trajectory to Becoming EMP Teachers	129
5.3.1 Early Experience in Teaching EMP	130
5.3.2 Cultural Factors Impacting Teacher Agency and Professional Identity	136
5.4 (Re)Negotiating Teacher Identity	140
5.4.1 Being a Competent EMP Teacher.....	140
5.4.2 The Classroom Environment and Instructional Materials	144
5.5 Teachers' Perspectives on English for Medical Purposes (EMP): The Teaching Scenarios	149
5.5.1 Teachers' Perspectives on the Most Preferred Fictional Teacher for the EMP Course	150
5.5.2 Teachers' Perspectives on the Least Preferred Fictional Teacher for the EMP Course	156
5.6 Summary.....	162
Chapter Six FACTORS MEDIATING TEACHER AGENCY	164
6.1 Introduction.....	164
6.2 Teacher Knowledge	164
6.2.1 Enactment of Agency.....	176
6.2.2 Impact on Professional Identity	179
6.3 Student Factors and Their Impact.....	181
6.3.1 Working with Knowledgeable and Able Students	182
6.3.2 Impact on Professional Identity	190
6.4 Experience as a Mediating Factor.....	195
6.5 Support and Collaboration	199
6.6 Summary.....	204
Chapter Seven DISCUSSION	207
7.1 Introduction.....	207
7.2 The Thai Cultural Context	208
7.2.1 Power Distance and Hierarchy.....	208
7.2.2 Face-saving	212
7.3 Sociocultural Theory of Teacher Agency.....	214
7.3.1 Initiative or Self-regulation	215
7.3.2 Mediating Factors.....	216

7.3.3 Awareness of the Responsibility	231
7.4 Teacher Identity Construction and Negotiation	232
7.4.1 Professional Identity	232
7.4.2 Identity Construction and Negotiation	235
7.4.3 The Interconnectedness of Agency and Identity	241
7.5 Research Questions	242
7.5.1 Research Question One	243
7.5.2 Research Question Two.....	245
7.5.3 Research Question Three.....	251
7.6 Summary	253
Chapter Eight CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	255
8.1 Introduction	255
8.2 Summary of Key Findings	255
8.2.1 Research Question One: What kind of competencies do Thai teachers perceive they need to teach English for Medical Purposes (EMP)?	255
8.2.2 Research Question Two: What affordances and constraints do EMP teachers identify in their work that affect their decisions and actions?	257
8.2.3 Research Question Three: How do EMP teachers enact their agency and in what ways does their agency influence their professional identity negotiation?	258
8.3 Contributions of the Study	259
8.3.1 Theoretical Implications	260
8.3.2 Methodological Implications	261
8.4 Limitations of the Study.....	262
8.5 Suggestions for Future Research.....	263
8.6 Implications of the Study	264
8.6.1 Implications for Research	264
8.6.2 Implication for Institutions	265
8.6.3 Implications for Teachers	267
8.7 Final Reflections.....	268
REFERENCES.....	270
APPENDICES	282

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Agency typology.....	15
Figure 2.2 The Tree of English Language Teaching (ELT).....	34
Figure 2.3 ESP classification by professional area.....	36
Figure 3.1 Steps for the implementation of all research approaches.....	50
Figure 3.2 Data analysis process.....	72
Figure 4.1 Help seeking strategies.....	88
Figure 4.2 Suitability of teachers.....	105
Figure 4.3 Degree of collaboration with EMP staff.....	112
Figure 4.4 Frequency of collaboration with medical teachers.....	114
Figure 4.5 The role of an EMP teacher.....	119
Figure 4.6 Professional knowledge the teachers thought important to their EMP career.....	121

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Study phases and participants.....	64
Table 4.1 Ages and gender of questionnaire respondents.....	77
Table 4.2 Respondents' fields of undergraduate study.....	78
Table 4.3 Respondents' fields of postgraduate study.....	79
Table 4.4 Respondents' Professional Status.....	79
Table 4.5 Respondents' Professional Status.....	81
Table 4.6 Teacher training in EMP prior to begin teaching EMP.....	83
Table 4.7 Factors impacting on the early teaching experience.....	85
Table 4.8 The most significant challenge impacting ability to teach EMP.....	89
Table 4.9 Challenges most affect EMP teaching.....	90
Table 4.10 Materials used in EMP teaching.....	95
Table 4.11 Most useful material.....	96
Table 4.12 Differences between EMP and GE.....	99
Table 4.13 Aspects EMP has changed the respondents.....	100
Table 4.14 Actions to improve EMP teaching.....	101
Table 4.15 Teaching scenarios.....	102
Table 4.16 Most preferred teacher.....	106
Table 4.17 Least preferred teacher.....	108
Table 4.18 What students should gain from EMP course?	109
Table 4.19 Three most important benefits for students.....	110
Table 4.20 Most important factors affects teaching.....	111
Table 4.21 Forms of collaboration.....	113
Table 4.22 Fields of collaboration with medical teachers.....	115
Table 4.23 Decision as a result of collaboration.....	116

Table 4.24 Teaching scenarios.....	121
Table 4.25 Role Model Teacher.....	122
Table 5.1 Overview of interview participants.....	127

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: The full version of the questionnaire.....	282
Appendix B: A list of interview questions as a guideline.....	298
Appendix C: A complete set of interview questions.....	303
Appendix D: Ethics approval document	306
Appendix E: The letter asking for permission.....	307
Appendix F: Consent forms.....	309
Appendix G: Information sheets.....	310
Appendix H: An example of the coding process	312
Appendix I: An example of the themes analysis	315

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.E.	Buddhist Era
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGP	English for General Purposes
ELP	English for Legal Purposes
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMP	English for Medical Purposes
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EST	English for Science and Technology
IAEA	International Association for Educational Assessment
RELC	Regional Language Centre (RELC Journal)
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In today's global education landscape, English has become essential, especially in medicine. English for Medical Purposes (EMP) presents both opportunities and challenges for educators and students. In Thailand, as the demand for English-proficient medical professionals rises, universities are enhancing EMP programs to prepare students for the international medical community.

Teacher agency is key to the success of these programs, highlighting teachers' ability to shape their teaching environments and methods. This study delves into how EMP teachers in Thai universities exercise their agency in such contexts, exploring their beliefs, practices, and decision-making. It also aims to identify factors that support or hinder their agency and highlight how they overcome challenges to improve their teaching in a demanding field.

The chapter begins in an introduction to the study with a personal outlook on the reasons for conducting the investigation. Next, background information on the research context is provided. Then, a description of teacher agency and the significance of the study are described. And finally, an outline of the thesis contents is presented.

1.1 Introduction to the Study

Prior to starting my PhD journey in New Zealand, I worked as an English teacher at Khon Kaen University in Thailand for almost ten years. I was assigned to teach EMP from the beginning of my teaching career. Having no medical knowledge, I struggled with this teaching at the beginning. I questioned the degree to which my English language teaching met students' needs. To take one instance: a lot of medical terminology is rooted in Latin which was hard for me to understand. I needed to study a lot before each class, yet I was still worried when teaching those medical terms. At times I wondered if my approach and understanding were accurate in terms of medical science. I consistently aimed to create enjoyable and supportive learning environments to capture my students' interest. However, I was still unsure whether my approach was the most suitable in terms of topics, tasks, and assessment.

After a period of teaching, I was appointed as course coordinator for the EMP courses. Typically, EMP teachers have been general English teachers, and then are assigned to teach EMP, although many of them do not have a background in medical studies. After talking to other EMP teachers, I found that most of us shared the same feelings of inadequacy or concern. On the other hand, I learned from EMP teachers who also had medical backgrounds that they felt comfortable with teaching as their background equipped them with knowledge of the terminology and enabled them to realise potential challenges for medical practitioners. Therefore, my attention then focused on finding out how EMP teachers who have a medical background and those who have no such background view the field and what meanings they attach to their practices. This study emerged from that interest.

1.2 Background to the Research Context

From a national perspective, Thailand is actively working to become a world leader and the top destination of medical tourism (Thailand Investment Review, 2017). With its medical foundation, medical services and qualified healthcare specialists, the Thai government's ongoing goal is to turn Thailand into an affordable medical services hub in Asia. This intention, reiterated more recently in the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023-2027), outlines Thailand's goal of becoming a high-value medical and wellness hub by 2027 (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2022). Even as early as 2003, Thailand's Ministry of Public Health was predicting that hospitals in Thailand would earn 19 billion Baht (currently approximately 380 billion NZD) from 730,000 foreign patients annually by 2023 (Harryono et al., 2006). There are a number of requirements to achieve these goals: supporting medical hub policies, strengthening Thai public health systems and developing medical staff in terms of English language skills. Thus, the ability to communicate in English is seen as crucial for medical practitioners who work in hospitals where English-speaking patients come to use their services (NaRanong & NaRanong, 2011). Effective English teaching is undeniably essential to reaching the national goals (Office of the Education Council, 2017).

In Thailand, English has been taught as a foreign language (EFL) at every level including tertiary (Sukamolson, 1998). In light of the government plans for medical tourism, those institutions providing medical education have recognised the need to add compulsory EMP courses such as English for Medical Professionals and Reading and Writing for Medical Purposes for their students to prepare them to cope with the situation where English becomes a medium of communication (Tipprachaban, 2022). For example, for students who are studying in the Faculty of Medicine at Khon Kaen University, the curriculum requires them to study six

courses of English. The English courses are divided into four fundamental courses and two professional courses (Faculty of Medicine, 2019). Students have to pass each course in order to progress to the next level.

Khon Kaen University (KKU), situated in the north-East of Thailand in a predominantly rural area, is the key site for this study. Note, as outlined in section 3.5, permission was granted by the institute to use the name in this study. It is a central hub of tertiary education for the region; it offers a wide range of disciplines including agriculture, architecture, engineering and medical sciences. Srinagarind Hospital, established in 1975, is the main teaching hospital for the Faculty of Medicine, KKU, and its quality and potential in medical diagnosis and treatment have been widely recognised. For example, patients from neighbouring countries in the Mekong sub-region, including Myanmar, Laos, South China, Cambodia and Vietnam, travel to Khon Kaen for medical services (Srinagarind Hospital Press, 2015). In 2018, KKU launched the project: “Srinagarind Hospital of Khon Kaen University” with the aim of becoming the biggest hospital in Thailand and ASEAN with a 5,000-bed capacity (KKU News, 2018). This project also corresponds to the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan as well as the government’s policy to elevate the quality of the country’s medical establishments in terms of better services, modern equipment and specialized medical personnel (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2022). The English language proficiency of medical staff is obviously a key part of their ability to meet the needs of international patients and partners.

1.3 English for Medical Purposes (EMP) in the Thai Tertiary

Context

Medical English has been categorised under English for Specific Purposes (ESP), sometimes as English for Medical Purposes (EMP), which is regarded as a branch of ESP. English for Medical Purposes refers to “the teaching of English for doctors, nurses, and other personnel in the medical professions” (Maher, 1986, p. 112). Broadly speaking, EMP is designed to meet the specific English language needs of students of medicine. It also focuses on themes and topics specific to the medical fields. Moreover, at times it has also focused on a restricted range of skills which medical students may need to master, such as writing medical papers or presenting at medical conferences. Therefore, an important part of this field is that medical professionals need to have comprehensible English skills in order to communicate with their international patients and colleagues effectively. As indicated earlier, Thailand aims to become a world leader and the top destination for medical tourism by 2027, and the teaching of EMP has become a vital ingredient to the project.

In the Thai tertiary context, the EFL courses which universities provide generally include Foundation courses 1 and 2, and General English 1 and 2, which are integrated language skills and study skills courses; other courses may be English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or ESP courses as required by each major. As well as teaching courses for all students, some of these teachers were also teaching English majors. The time normally allocated for English teaching is three to four periods of 50 minutes per week (Faculty of Medicine, 2019). In the Faculty of Medicine in the university which was the major site of this research for the interview phase, students are required to complete 15 credits from 6 EMP courses (Faculty of Medicine, 2019).

To date, the study of EMP teachers has remained unexplored in the Thai tertiary context, despite the significance of the field to current practice and Thai policy. This research gap presents an opportunity to delve more deeply into the unique experiences and perspectives of these teachers. By exploring the nature of EMP as a subject and the teachers who teach it, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform teaching practices and professional development initiatives. Moreover, the study can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing EMP teacher agency, as well as identifying strategies for enhancing agency. Thus, it is hoped that this study will ultimately contribute to enhancing the quality of teaching EMP in Thailand.

1.4 Teacher Agency

The term "teacher agency" is used to refer to a teacher's ability to make choices and decisions about their teaching practices. Teacher agency plays a crucial role in shaping how educators approach their classrooms and interact with their students. This concept highlights the importance of teachers being empowered to make decisions that influence their teaching practices and determining the results of change efforts at institutional and national levels (Tao & Gao, 2017).

In language teaching, where student needs and cultural contexts can vary significantly, teacher agency allows educators to tailor the actions they take and their methods to better support language learning. Teachers who exercise agency are more likely to adapt their lesson plans, choose relevant materials, and implement innovative strategies that resonate with their students' experiences and backgrounds (Pantić et al., 2022). This adaptability can lead to more effective language learning outcomes and increased student engagement. By supporting teachers in

exercising their agency, educational institutions can create a more dynamic and effective language learning environment. This is even more important for EMP teachers, given that typically they have been re-routed from General English classes and may face difficulties in knowing how to adjust their teaching of English to meet new needs.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to fill a critical gap in understanding the role and agency of EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context. As the demand for English proficiency in medical fields continues to grow globally, the role of EMP teachers has become increasingly important in equipping medical professionals with the linguistic skills necessary for effective communication in their field. Despite this, little research has been conducted to investigate the unique challenges, teaching strategies, and professional development needs of EMP teachers in the Thai context.

This study aims to contribute to the field by examining the pedagogical approaches, institutional support systems, and sociocultural factors that shape the agency of EMP teachers. Such insights are essential for developing tailored training programs and support mechanisms that enhance teacher agency and effectiveness in this specialised domain. Additionally, the study supports the strategic development of English language education in Thailand in alignment with the country's broader goals for academic and professional excellence in the global context (Kirkpatrick, 2012). By addressing these gaps in the literature, this study could significantly contribute to the field, helping EMP teachers in Thailand to better understand their roles and improve their teaching strategies. It is hoped that this study will ultimately contribute to

enhancing the support available for teachers working in EMP as well as to enhancing the overall quality of teaching of EMP in Thailand.

1.6 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters. In Chapter One, the introductory chapter, I have presented an overview of the thesis, the research context, followed by the research aims. After that, the rationale and significance of the study were described.

In Chapter Two, the literature on educational change, along with teacher agency, EMP is reviewed. The chapter also identifies the gaps in the literature. The research questions for the current study are then presented at the end of the chapter.

In Chapter Three, the methodology used in the current study, including the mixed-methods research paradigm and research design are described. Then the ethical considerations relevant to this study are presented. Finally, the research setting followed by an explanation of data collection procedures and data analysis are discussed.

Findings are presented in three chapters. First, in Chapter Four, the findings from the questionnaire regarding teachers' understanding and how they enact their agency when teaching EMP in the Thai tertiary context are presented. In Chapter Five, the findings from the semi-structured interviews with teachers are presented. These findings depict how EMP teachers understand and enact their agency in the Thai tertiary context. Chapter Six includes further in-depth findings from the semi-structured interviews. The findings in this chapter focus on

teachers' perspectives on the mediated factors, affordances and constraints for EMP teachers in enacting their agency.

In Chapter Seven, the key findings of the current study are discussed in relation to the existing literature on educational change processes and EMP. They are discussed in response to the research questions, emphasising how teacher agency is shaped by affordances and constraints across different contexts. In Chapter Eight, the final chapter, a summary is provided of the current study's key findings and its contributions to theory and methodology. The implications arising from the research, and the limitations of the study are then presented, along with suggestions for future research and practical recommendations. The chapter ends with some final reflections on my research journey.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter starts by exploring teacher agency, covering the conceptualization of agency in general and different approaches to understanding agency before narrowing its focus to the sociocultural approach which underpins this study. The chapter then moves onto discussing the concept of teacher agency and language teachers' professional identity, before examining sociocultural factors in the Thai context, and a review of prior research on language teacher agency. Following this, the chapter discusses English for Specific Purposes (ESP), specifically the different concepts of ESP and the differences between ESP and English for General Purposes (EGP). Thereafter, the definition of English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and prior research on EMP are discussed. Lastly, the research questions for this study are presented and the chapter ends with a summary.

2.2 Teacher Agency in Language Teaching

While teacher agency has been researched less than student agency, recently teacher agency has attracted more interest and grown in popularity as a subject of research (White, 2018b). To date, the notion of teacher agency has been discussed in the field of applied linguistics and relevant disciplines in combination with different aspects, such as emotion (White, 2018a;

White & Pham, 2017), professional agency (Eteläpelto et al., 2013), and identity negotiation (Kayi-Aydar, 2015a; Vähäsantanen, 2015). Consequently, this has contributed to a variety of definitions proposed by different scholars based on different theoretical approaches.

In general, the term “agency” refers to the capacity of actors to “critically shape their responses to problematic situations” (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p. 11). Biesta and Tedder (2006) explicate this term more specifically by adding that agency can be conceptualized as the actions individuals carry out “by means of their environment rather than simply in their environment” (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, p. 137), and these actions are attributable to the interaction of personal endeavours, resources at their disposal, and contextual or institutional influences which intersect in unique situations or specific contexts for each individual. In the meantime, Bandura (2001, 2002) strongly links agency to self-efficacy – the belief that one can make a difference – and describes it as intentional actions one takes to bring about or effect changes. Therefore, it is typically labelled as the ability to act intentionally, which reflects determination, autonomy, freedom, and choices, as stated by Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011). This is in line with the definition proposed by Sherman and Teemant (2021, p. 5) which describes agency as “action taken not accidentally, unknowingly, unwittingly or unwillingly”. Duff’s (2012) definition seems to intertwine with the definitions by Bandura (2001, 2002) and Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011), suggesting that agency is concerned with one’s capacity to make decisions, self-regulate, and as a result work towards one’s personal aspirations, ultimately contributing to personal or societal change.

Based on the concepts given above, one common aspect of agency lies in purposiveness or goal orientation. Agency is characterised as intentional actions which individuals undertake to respond to issues or to achieve certain goals, which would bring about personal or social

transformation. Expanding on this aspect, Porter et al. (2022) point out that agency is not solely associated with deliberate actions but may manifest in the form of intentional inaction as well. This is driven by individuals' willingness and capacity to act, so they can afford a deliberate choice, i.e., decisions not to take actions. Moreover, these agentic actions are impacted by different factors, such as individual effort, autonomy, and resources. Therefore, built on these views, agency refers to individuals' capacity to initiate purposeful actions in the face of challenges or obstacles or with the intention of attaining particular goals, which would lead to personal change or, on the contrary, to chosen inaction. Agentic actions stem from the interplay of not only individual factors but also contextual and structural dimensions. Hence, different teachers may display different agentic actions, irrespective of being in similar situations, due to factors such as educational policy, new curricula, pedagogical changes, teachers' prior experience and knowledge (Tao & Gao, 2021), or sociocultural structures such as cultural and linguistic resources, cultural practices, and individuals themselves (Ishihara et al., 2018).

Considering the different factors at play in shaping or influencing agency, different approaches have been utilized to conceptualize agency. Two of the most common approaches are the sociocultural approach (e.g., Ahearn, 2001; van Lier, 2008; Vygotsky, 1986) and the ecological approach (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Eteläpelto et al., 2013; Priestley et al., 2015b).

2.2.1 Conceptualising Agency from a Sociocultural Perspective

As noted above, the enactment of agency may vary among individuals who face the same circumstances. Differences in demonstrating agency may be attributable to the interaction of a diverse range of factors. For example, Lasky (2005) argues that agency “starts with the belief that human beings have the ability to influence their lives and environment while they are also

shaped by social and individual factors” (p. 900), while White (2018b) notes that in the case of educational contexts, agentic actions may entail forming and sustaining relationships with others, e.g., students and colleagues, navigating new curricular requirements, and adapting to requirements of professional environments. These two points remind us that social components come into play, since agency can be shaped by social factors, such as work settings, policies, and workplace relationships. This aligns with Bandura’s (2002, p. 278) view that agency functions within “a broad network of sociostructural influences”. This resonates with the reality that individual actions are inevitably mediated by social, cultural and historical aspects (Tao & Gao, 2021), leading to differences in teachers’ agentic actions. This underscores the intertwining of contextual aspects and agency, and that agency is both individually and socially resourced (Tao & Gao, 2021; Vähäsantanen, 2015). Hence, contextual factors should be considered through a sociocultural lens to account for what shapes or influences enactment of agency.

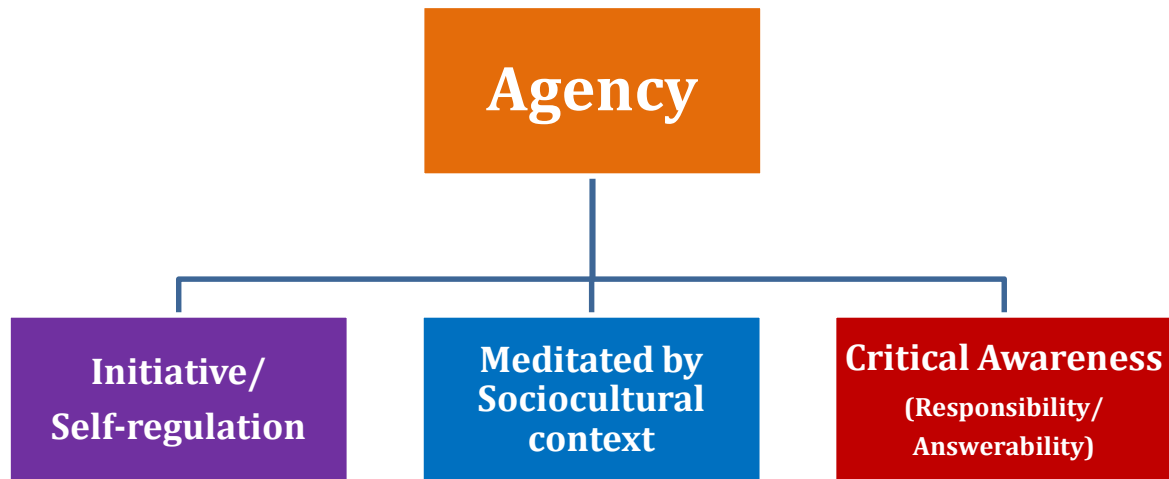
A sociocultural approach has been adopted by many scholars to elaborate on teacher agency, and in turn has laid a strong foundation for studies on teacher agency (White, 2018b). Conceptualisation of agency through a sociocultural perspective gives precedence to the social contexts in which agency arises (Kalaja et al., 2016). Specifically, agency is viewed by these scholars as individuals’ capacity to initiate actions which are relevant to and shaped by their social contexts (Feryok, 2012; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a; Tsui, 2007). Vygotsky’s work (1978, 1986) , which has informed the way in which researchers have understood and developed the sociocultural approach to teacher agency, conceptualises agency as individuals’ actions in sociocultural contexts; it considers that agency is shaped through interactions within different settings, so social contexts and cultural experiences which may influence those actions are emphasised. In line with this, Ahearn (2001), whose conceptualisation of agency is commonly

adopted by researchers in this area, recognises the relevance of sociocultural factors to agency or actions, hence explaining it as “the socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (p. 112) in relation to one’s environment.

Elaborating on how agency is socioculturally mediated, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) state that agency involves attributing importance and meaning to objects and situations, and recognise that whether agency or actions can be achieved is attributable to the constraints and affordances of the context. Built on the notion of these constraints and affordances on agency, Gao's (2010) definition associates agency with individuals’ will to act as well as their capacity to act in contexts or contextual conditions influenced by matters such as material resources (e.g., computers and books), discursive resources (e.g., beliefs and motivational discourses), and social resources (e.g., social networks) at their disposal. These resources may contribute to shaping or influencing the enactment of agency. That is, their availability can enable individuals to exercise their agency. On the other hand, a lack of these resources can constrain their agency, specifically hindering their ability to take actions. This is in resonance with van Lier’s (2008, p. 171) notion of agency which indicates that it is regarded as “*action potential*, mediated by social, interactional, cultural, institutional, and other contextual factors” (emphasis in original). Taken together, these views are grounded in the belief that the social and cultural factors play a role in shaping an individual’s capacity to initiate agentic actions in response to a particular environment or context; these factors can serve as either affordances or constraints on one’s capacity to demonstrate agency. Evidently, agency is not a static trait with which an individual is equipped (Tao & Gao, 2021), but is characterised as dynamic (Ashton, 2021), and essentially “a contextually enacted way of being in the world” (van Lier, 2008, p. 163) as depicted in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

Agency Typology



Adapted from van Lier, 2008 in White, 2019

Through the sociocultural lens, precedence is given to social contexts and cultural tools which influence individuals' beliefs, values, and agency (Lasky, 2005; Tao & Gao, 2021). To elaborate, one's agentic actions are potentially enabled, reinforced, or possibly constrained by social, cultural, and historical structures or contexts. These structures or contextual conditions are embedded in mediational tools, i.e., resources at individuals' disposal on which they draw to refine their understanding and actions, thus allowing them to address situations (Tao & Gao, 2021). Such tools are represented by different aspects, such as curriculum guidelines and state standards (Lasky, 2005), and policy mandates, new curricula, and adjustments in assessment (Tao & Gao, 2021). For example, a new curriculum may constrain teachers' demonstration of agentic actions (Tao & Gao, 2021), while language and cultural knowledge might enable teachers to enact agency by developing teaching practices which are suitable within the local context (Ishihara et al., 2018). Also, the reality of the teaching context might deter teachers

from exercising agency (Dhammarungruang & Wudthayagorn, 2021). Hence, it can be concluded that a sociocultural approach views agency as shaped or mediated by contextual aspects, i.e., social, cultural, interactional, institutional, and historical factors. These factors are portrayed through mediational tools, constructed by different aspects, such as technology, beliefs, curriculums, state standards, or language. They can result in individuals exhibiting agentic actions in different manners, regardless of similar circumstances.

2.2.2 Conceptualising Agency from an Ecological Perspective

The ecological view derives from sociocultural theory, and, according to Emirbayer and Mische (1998), within this perspective, agency is shaped or influenced by the social context and the interaction between agents themselves and their environment. They view agency as a dialogical process which occurs over the course of individuals' lifetimes. This is the key new feature of this perspective which is added to the sociocultural approach. They further state that agency is linked with individuals' temporal elements. Originating in their work, the temporal elements of agency are associated with present, past, and future; that is, one's actions in the emergent present are shaped by their experiences in the past and by their future goals. Considering this, the ecological approach views agency as not something that people have or possess, but as something that is achieved through the interaction between temporal elements, individuals' capacity, and the social and material conditions in which people act (Biesta, 2014; Priestley et al., 2015a).

Priestley et al.'s (2015a) model of the ecological approach to agency underscores a spatial-temporal aspect and views agency as a contextual and temporal achievement. Drawing on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) work, this approach views agency as having three dimensions,

namely iterative, projective, and practical-evaluative (Priestley et al., 2015b). First, in terms of the iterative dimension, agency is rooted in past experience. Consequently, those with a wide repertoire of experience may achieve agency more than those who have less experience. Secondly, in the projective dimension, agency is oriented to the future through the setting of goals. Thus, through this instance, agency is influenced by both short and long-term goals. Third, in the practical-evaluative dimension, agency is always acted on in the present, shaped by judgements about what is actually possible given the existing resources and constraints of the context (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). The practical-evaluative dimension covers three aspects of resources, namely cultural (e.g. ideas, beliefs, language, and values), social (e.g., power, relationships, and roles), and material (e.g., resources and physical environment) (Priestley et al., 2015a). Availability or a lack of these resources may enable or constrain individuals' exercise of agency. Therefore, agency from an ecological perspective is believed to be relational in that an individual's agency is enabled or limited by the affordances and constraints found in the environment "and the individual is seen also as able to be reflective and creative in taking actions which are counter to particular constraints" (White, 2018b, p. 200).

As discussed above, both the sociocultural approach and the ecological approach stem from sociocultural theory, so they consider sociocultural factors which may shape or influence individuals' demonstration of agentic actions. The difference lies primarily in incorporating a temporal dimension in the ecological approach, covering past experiences, present conditions and future goals, which may shape agency as well. Given that the present study placed its focus on teacher agency among EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context and specifically aimed to shed light on which sociocultural factors shaped or influenced their agency, and the ways in which they did this, within this unique context, the sociocultural approach was preferred for this work. While, as is common in studies exploring teacher agency, some attention is paid to

temporal aspects such as a teacher's background and experience, examining temporal dimensions and their influence on teacher agency was not the focus of this study. Thus, it is grounded in the sociocultural perspective which posits that agency is mediated or shaped by sociocultural factors. Simply put, agency or agentic actions exercised among individuals are spurred or constrained by social, cultural, historical contexts and other contextual factors reflected in mediational tools. Considering this, teacher agency can be understood as a teacher's capacity to initiate actions in response to certain situations, which is shaped by sociocultural structures. Specifically, the present study adopted van Lier's (2008) framework, given that it is the most applicable and comprehensive approach which primarily revolves around sociocultural contexts, a focal issue in this study. Delving into teacher agency through this sociocultural lens will help uncover what social, cultural, and historical factors have enabled the participants to initiate certain actions or constrain them from enacting agency, as well as how the influences of those factors contribute to particular actions or outcomes in EMP classrooms.

2.2.3 Sociocultural Factors in the Thai context

In the Thai educational context, there are sociocultural factors which serve as affordances and/or constraints in supporting teachers' enactment of agency. These factors can shape both how teachers teach their students and how Thai students learn. This is evidenced in existing literature which discusses certain sociocultural factors affecting English language teaching and learning among Thais (e.g., Baker, 2008; Foley, 2005; Kaur et al., 2016; Nguyen, 2005; Young, 2021).

2.2.3.1 Hierarchy

Thai society and education are shaped by Theravada Buddhism, a religious belief deeply rooted and practiced among Thais (O'Sullivan & Tajaroensuk, 1997). As asserted by Saengboon (2004), Thai education has given precedence to cooperation in order to maintain a natural, hierarchical, and social order in accordance with such a religious belief. This can be clearly attributed to adherence to the concept of “karma”, which cultivates a sense of acceptance of the status quo to prevent confrontation (Foley, 2005). This religion also promotes a hierarchical society, which has long been ingrained in Thai values (Young, 2021). Its hierarchical organization is defined by several factors, such as age, occupation, and education (Young, 2021), along with authority and rank (Hallinger, 2010).

With its hierarchical nature, there exists high power distance in Thailand (Hofstede, 2001), in which people acknowledge the difference of power in relationships or organizations. Recognising the power distance embedded in this hierarchy, individuals are likely to defer to those with a higher status rather than confronting them, even when they disagree with them; they may follow orders or comply with the requests made by those with a higher status owing to the lack of authority on their part or power to resist (Dhammarungruang & Wudthayagorn, 2021; Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000b). Viewed in an educational context, this hierarchy and difference of power is reflected in the high status of teachers with their students. Consequently, teachers may not seek cooperation or input from their students, given that teachers and students are assigned different roles as knowledge givers and inexperienced individuals respectively (Baker, 2008). Additionally, Thais are not encouraged to argue or articulate their different views (Nguyen, 2005) and are taught to show respect to those older than them. Possessing this cultural trait, students, and novice/junior teachers may not be willing to express their ideas to senior departmental staff.

2.2.3.2 Face-saving

Due to the highly hierarchical nature of society in Thailand, Thai people tend to be humble and avoid engaging in confronting those with a higher status or greater power. This is noticeable between teachers and students. The practice of avoiding confrontation with their teachers may be reinforced by 'Krengjai'. 'Krengjai' can be described as a feeling of diffidence, deference and consideration (Klausner, 1993). That is, Thais tend to comply with the orders or requests made by individuals holding a higher status or authority, although they may disagree with them, as a result of their courteous and respectful nature (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2001). This feeling is typically expressed by students or novice/junior teachers towards teachers with a higher degree of seniority. This might restrain them, for example, from requesting that their teachers provide an explanation when they do not understand something (Foley, 2005).

Moreover, the practice of not posing questions or challenging individuals with a higher status may result from avoidance of conflict and protection of one's face (Young, 2021). In Thai culture, "face" refers to a person's reputation, dignity, and social standing. Maintaining face means keeping this image intact and avoiding situations that could damage it. Moreover, it includes not just protecting your own face but also preserving the face of others to whom one owes respect. Thais generally avoid actions that could cause others to lose face, as this is considered disrespectful and can damage social harmony. For Thais, a loss of face can contribute to high emotional damage. In terms of education, face-saving is typically performed by students in the form of being reticent and adhering to orders rather than sharing views and doubting teachers (Young, 2021). This can be explained by the fact that, in the hierarchical society in Thailand, teachers have a high status and are considered knowledgeable individuals (Loh & Teo, 2017), so students are presupposed to have confidence in their teachers' knowledge and show respect to them. The act of speaking up might be interpreted as having doubts about

their teachers' knowledge and therefore being disrespectful, so this may result in the teachers losing face. In addition, violating this cultural value might hurt their teachers' pride and be deemed highly disrespectful. Therefore, Thai students are naturally compliant with their teachers. This encourages students to demonstrate passivity, obedience, and respect towards their teachers (Maskhao, 2002 cited in Nonkukhetkhong et al., 2006).

These characteristics are not applied in the same way to students and teachers, and show that face has two sides, the self-preserving aspect and the protection of others' face. Students preserve teachers' face, and teachers preserve their own face. This can be attributed to the fact that a teacher acts as a reservoir of knowledge respected among individuals. Given such a role, Thai teachers are typically not inclined to seek advice or engage in discussions, for it is presumed that they are already equipped with adequate knowledge (Foley, 2005). Additionally, young teachers may be unable to implement novel teaching approaches, despite their training and better understanding, but adhere to traditional approaches due to their senior colleagues' beliefs in such approaches (Vanichakorn, 2003), because they are expected to show respect to their colleagues (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000a) in order to save their colleagues' face and protect their pride. Consequently, they might avoid soliciting assistance or seeking advice from others in order to save their own face and they might avoid proposing new ideas to save others' face.

2.2.4 Teacher Agency and Teachers' Professional Identity

Research on teacher identity(ies) has become more prominent in the applied linguistics literature over recent decades, as can be observed in a proliferating number of studies focusing on this issue (e.g., Eteläpelto et al., 2014; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a; Vähäsantanen & Billet, 2008;

Vähäsantanen et al., 2008). Contemporary educational research suggests that teachers use their understanding of self, i.e., identity, to make sense of their environment (Coldron & Smith, 1999). Through a Vygotskian sociocultural lens, describes identity as individuals' self-perception and perception of their status and others' views towards them. However, identity extends beyond the personal dimension. For example, it can be considered in relation to one's profession. Teachers' professional identities refer to the way in which teachers portray themselves to the outside world (Lasky, 2005), and also their perception of themselves and their roles in educational contexts (Vähäsantanen & Billet, 2008). Put simply, professional identities are concerned with how teachers perceive themselves as professionals (Eteläpelto et al., 2014; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009), including the personal and institutional aspects of being a teacher (Beijaard et al., 2004).

In particular, these identities capture professional interests, aspirations, beliefs and values, obligations, perspectives on instruction and learners' learning, and teachers' views of their significant duties at work (Eteläpelto et al., 2014; Lasky, 2005; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011; Vähäsantanen et al., 2008; Van Veen & Slegers, 2009). In respect of professional competencies, professional identities can also encompass teachers' understanding of their professional knowledge and expertise, along with awareness of their capabilities and limitations in these areas (Van Veen & Slegers, 2009). Importantly, these professional identities are pertinent to their future prospects, occupational ambitions, and their ideals of the type of professional they intend to become (Davey, 2013; Van Veen & Slegers, 2009).

Each individual teacher might exhibit different professional identities. This is attributed partly to the fact that such attributes develop through different stages of their career (Huberman, 1993). As their experience grows through the course of their careers, teachers reconstruct their

professional identities continually. Additionally, the diversity of professional identities may lie in different personal experiences, abilities (Vähäsantanen, 2015), social interactions, norms, structures and cultural influences (Eteläpelto et al., 2014). Different professional identities are also attributed to distinct management cultures (Vähäsantanen et al., 2008).

Professional identities are not static in nature but rather are fluid, owing to the fact that they evolve over time and are shaped by different personal, social, and cultural factors. Moreover, given changes in economy, society, politics and technology, teachers' work practices and organizational cultures tend to transform to keep pace with those changes (Haapakorpi & Alasoini, 2018; Harteis, 2018). In addition, teachers face increasing instability in their environments due to educational diversity, educational reforms (Ketelaar et al., 2012), and innovations and transitions (Czerniawski, 2011). These factors are reflected in the instability of professional identities and might drive teachers to negotiate new professional identities. Although environmental change can positively enrich teacher identities and pedagogic repertoires (Guskey, 2002), the possibility also exists that change can negatively impact both (Moate, 2011). In short, a change in their environment can serve to either enable or constrain teachers' professional identities and thus also impact their sense of agency.

Given this link between teacher professional identity and agency, these two concepts are said to be closely intertwined (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Pease-Alvarez et al., 2010), and together have become the subject of wider interest in teacher development and teacher education (Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Eteläpelto et al., 2013). To elaborate, as mentioned by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), teachers' commitment to their own identity in teaching contexts can contribute to a sense of agency. In their study, it was found that teachers' commitment towards their identity as an ESP teacher led them to demonstrate a stronger sense

of agency. In particular, the teachers employed various strategies to enhance their performance, such as gaining access to workplace materials, utilising subject textbooks written in English for their courses, and improving their teaching techniques through research. The literature states that teachers use their agency in a way that is compatible with their perceived identity (Sloan, 2006) or the professional identity desired for their future selves (Edwards, 2019). Additionally, teacher agency itself can influence teachers' professional identities. Particularly, it serves to construct their professional identities (Tao & Gao, 2017; Vähäsantanen, 2015) and may contribute to retaining or developing or renegotiating such identities (Day et al., 2006; Vähäsantanen, 2015). It can be concluded that there exists interconnection between teacher agency and professional identities, with teachers' identities mediating or shaping their choices of teacher agency or agentic actions and vice versa.

2.2.5 Research on Language Teacher Agency

As mentioned previously, the issue of teacher agency has gained increasing research attention in recent years. This has led to a proliferating amount of research on teacher agency. The research in this area has focused on the demonstration of teacher agency among teachers. Of particular interest to this study is the focus in the field of language teaching or ESP, on different aspects, including dealing with changes and overcoming challenges (e.g., Castro et al., 2010; Qi & Wang, 2022; Tao & Gao, 2017; Yayli, 2017), dealing with classroom management (e.g., Ashton, 2021, 2022; Shelley et al., 2013; Thumvichit, 2021; White, 2018a), professional teacher agency (e.g., Kusters et al., 2023; Lai et al., 2016), and identity negotiations and teacher agency (Kayi-Aydar, 2015b).

Some studies (e.g., Castro et al., 2010; Yayli, 2017) have shown that novice teachers exhibited their agency in overcoming issues by employing what Castro et al. (2010, p. 622) refer to as “help-seeking strategies”, such as resilience strategies and coping strategies. Castro et al. (2010) explored how novice teachers enacted their agency adopting different resilience strategies to deal with challenges. Their sample was 15 novice teachers, including rural teachers, urban teachers, and special education teachers. The data were obtained using semi-structured interviews. It was found that the challenges facing these novice teachers were bureaucratic demands, curriculum delivery, college-parent communication, classroom management, and a shortage of resources and support. Teachers exhibited agency in tackling those issues by adopting various resilience strategies, namely help-seeking (finding mentors, seeking resources), problem-solving (trial and error, consulting others, and finding alternative approaches), managing difficult relationships (seeking allies, avoidance, and collecting documentation), and finding rejuvenation and renewal (establishing work-life balance, caring for their well-being, and obtaining a sense of satisfaction during teaching).

Corroborating these findings, Yayli (2017) demonstrated that pre-service teachers enacted their teacher agency in dealing with tensions through different strategies. The study aimed to shed light on pre-service language teachers’ demonstration of agency through their adoption of coping strategies in the face of tensions. Eight pre-service Turkish teachers were participants of the study. The data were obtained using reflective journals and interviews. The results showed that the tensions faced by these teachers were associated with role change, providing support to students, and conflicting conceptions of learning to teach. In easing such tensions, they displayed their agency by applying four strategies, including seeking a solution themselves, putting up with a situation, seeking help by discussing the tension with a significant other, and receiving help without taking initiative themselves.

Similarly, Tao and Gao's (2017) study found that agency was enacted in individualised manners among ESP teachers in response to educational changes, in this case curricular reform. Their study explored eight ESP teachers' enactment of agency to facilitate their professional development and engagement with the implementation of a new curriculum. Semi-structured life-history interviews were conducted with these participants; this process was also supplemented by other sources of data, namely observations, conversations with administrators, field notes, and related school documents. It was discovered that these teachers' agency manifested in relation to continuous learning, such as professional training, voluntary reading, and undertaking a scholarly visit. The participants also exhibited a strong sense of agency in overcoming pedagogical challenges, such as using workplace materials, subject textbooks, a research-based approach, and contextual resources. Finally, they enacted agency in sustaining their research practice by conducting research projects relevant to the new curriculum.

The research has shown that language teachers have demonstrated agency in managing their classroom in different ways. Ashton (2021) investigated professional agency enacted by novice teachers in the multi-level language classroom, together with affordances and constraints in enactment of agency. Eight novice teachers within the first five years of teaching experience were selected as the participants. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were carried out with these participants. It was found that agency was enacted among these participants in individualised ways. For example, for some participants it was exercised in the form of help-seeking strategies and through trial and error. Help-seeking strategies encompass various approaches individuals utilise to obtain assistance when facing challenges (Castro et al., 2010). Enactment of agency was influenced by the teachers' contexts and conditions, which served as affordances and constraints. Specifically, a shortage of materials and a lack of professional development imposed constraints in enacting their agency. In contrast, particular

characteristics of the learners and particular school environments such as compliant students and a supportive school environment, as well as collaboration with their colleagues, were perceived as affordances in taking pedagogical decisions.

In a more recent study, Ashton (2022) illustrated how sociocultural structures can influence language teachers' agency. The study investigated the agency enacted among four language teachers in emergency online teaching as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the affordances and constraints impacting their agency. The participants were four teachers without online or virtual teaching experience, and the data were obtained over a period of six months. In-depth retrospective interviews were primarily used to collect the data along with teachers' notes and reflections on online teaching experiences, informal conversations, and emails. The study found that teachers enact their agency in ways that aligned with their sense of professional identity, and these were mostly social factors, as teachers were motivated by the desire to support students as best they could. For example, being successful in increasing class participation, being able to provide individualised support, learning about students' lives and meeting their parents, being free from the role as the holder of knowledge, and increasing confidence with online teaching were factors that spurred teacher agency. The affordances and constraints were weighed up when determining actions within the practical-evaluative dimension of the ecological framework. For example, while one teacher weighed up concerns about cultural expectations when considering how to enact her agency, she determined that the affordances outweighed these constraints. Evidently, sociocultural factors can serve to spur or constrain how teachers exercise their agency.

Shelley et al. (2013) investigated how language teachers from the UK and Australia coped with the transition from face-to-face teaching to distance and blended teaching. The findings indicate

that teachers' agency was influenced by their past experiences and their emotional development. This is in line with Kitade (2015), who conducted a longitudinal study on two Japanese language teachers' challenges and their responses to practising computer assisted language learning (CALL). She focused on how those challenges could relate to the development of teachers' agency. It was found that teachers were aware of the changing technology through the challenges they encountered. Those changes impacted their teaching pedagogy and also shaped their agency. To sum up, both Shelley et al. and Kitade focus on language teachers who are working within specialised areas and these teachers have been asked to make a move to a very different kind of teaching during the course of their careers. This aligns with the situation of the teachers in the current study who had been moved from General English courses to EMP.

White (2018a) examined how a language teacher demonstrated agency to manage the conflict resulting from classroom interactions in an English language classroom. Specifically, the narrative accounts of incidents of conflict arising in classes given by Anna, one of the participants, were analysed. The accounts of conflict were presented in three formats, namely a written account, an individual interview, and a group discussion. It was found that affective stance attribution and agency were interrelated. Affective stance attribution means figuring out how someone feels or what their attitude is, based on what they say or how they act. Particularly, agency was enacted by the teacher as a means of controlling affective stance attribution and managing her feelings. The findings also indicated that emotion was portrayed as spurring and constraining agency. This corroborates with the notion that agency stems from the process of confrontation with others' voices and multiple internal voices revolving around the tension between personal aspirations and perceived responsibilities.

In another case, a single language teacher, the subject of research by Qi and Wang (2022), displayed agency growth over time in the face of a unique teaching environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. They investigated how the Chinese language teacher's agency development manifested in a blended classroom and what the key components of the language teacher's agency system were. A semi-structured written reflection, follow-up interviews, stimulated recall, and email interviews were utilised. The results showed that during the first week, the teacher carried out a series of actions to respond to the shift to a blended classroom, such as improving her video clips and revisiting resources. Her agency growth was advanced in the later weeks as she became more adventurous, such as trying out new ideas and attending workshops. Moreover, seven sub-systems shaped the participant's teacher agency development, including values (teaching philosophies, beliefs), environment (collegial support, technological/institutional affordances), self-identity (facilitator, learning designer), andragogical/pedagogical competency (interactive learning, digital literacy), reflection, reaction to demands (actions, emotions), and prior experiences (teaching, use of technology). The interplay between these sub-systems led to her specific responses to different issues at different times.

Additionally, other studies (Kusters et al., 2023; Lai et al., 2016) revealed that teachers have exhibited professional teacher agency in their teaching practice. In a recent study, Kusters et al. (2023) delved into how English language lecturers demonstrated three aspects of professional teacher agency in academic teaching, covering factors influencing university teaching, developing university teaching, and negotiating teacher identity. The sample was 35 lecturers in the Netherlands, and interviews were employed as the research instrument. It was found that in relation to influencing university teaching, the participants reported 'having influence' or control in teaching, such as freedom to design a course and to express ideas. As for developing

university teaching, they perceived that they contributed to teaching development, such as developing their own courses. In terms of negotiating teacher identity, although professional development represented teacher agency, the participants did not see the need for professional development.

Language teachers have also been found to exercise their professional teacher agency in different cultural teaching contexts, yet some factors have been found to limit their agentic actions. For example, Lai et al. (2016) explored how language teachers enacted professional teacher agency to shape professional learning. Fourteen Chinese language teachers were selected as the participants of the study, and open-ended interviews were conducted with them. The results revealed that these teachers exhibited several forms of agency, including learning about teaching pedagogy, learning how to interact with students, and learning how to interact with colleagues. The study found that Chinese teachers learned from their Western colleagues in various ways, including pedagogical techniques, classroom interactions, and professional relationships. This learning was facilitated through professional development events, co-teaching experiences, and classroom observations. However, the extent of their learning was influenced by factors such as their social position within the school, cultural norms, and personal beliefs. The teachers' agency, or ability to make choices and take action, played a significant role in shaping their learning experiences.

Moreover, Kayi-Aydar (2015b) found that identity negotiation and perceived identity could influence agency of preservice teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs). The sample was three preservice teachers pursuing their English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement at a research university in the United States. The data were collected using interviews and teacher journals. It was uncovered that teachers adopted a variety of positional identities in relation to

their contexts. Especially, with regard to ELLs, all participants' self-positional identity was that they were teachers for all students; they also perceived themselves as a bridge between ELLs and society as well as a guide in their language learning. They also positioned themselves as effective, invested, and caring teachers. Their teacher agency and self-reported classroom practices were in turn shaped by those positionings; the participants endeavoured to understand the learners' needs and feelings and promote positive experiences among them.

The final study considered is one of the very few studies in the Thai context. Thumvichit's (2021) study shows that English language teachers have been found to demonstrate their agency in the face of online teaching. The study examined the ways in which tertiary English teachers in Thailand exercised teacher agency in online teaching due to the COVID-19 outbreak. A questionnaire was distributed to 162 teachers, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with three teachers. The results showed that despite tensions or challenges arising from this crisis, the participants still demonstrated agency to facilitate their teaching and students' learning. Specifically, several forms of agency were exhibited, including making efforts to foster an interactive learning atmosphere, utilising social media to supplement in-person interaction, joining their efforts with students to adapt teaching methodologies, adopting diverse instructional approaches, encouraging autonomous learning, and using formative assessment.

As can be seen, there has been a growing interest in teacher agency, thus leading to the emergence of different theorisation or conceptualisation and an increasing number of recent studies. These studies have provided insights into the display of teacher agency among language teachers in different aspects, such as resolving incidents, managing classroom teaching, and coping with change. Moreover, the conceptualisation of teacher agency through a sociocultural perspective helps account for how sociocultural factors can result in teachers enacting agency

differently even if faced with the same situation. At the time of writing, I have not managed to locate any studies on teacher agency among ESP teachers in the Thai tertiary context. Consequently, little is known about how or to what extent sociocultural factors may shape or influence teacher agency practiced by language teachers in the Thai context where particular social and cultural values are deeply rooted. Considering this, van Lier's framework will be applied to investigate language teacher agency. This is the most applicable and useful approach for my study as van Lier's framework focuses on the sociocultural context, a key concern of my study also.

2.3 Defining English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Defining ESP has proven to be challenging for researchers and “producing a simple definition of ESP is not an easy task” (Strevens, 1987, p. 109). Through time, scholars have provided different definitions of ESP.

In general, ESP refers to English language programmes tailored for either individuals or groups engaged in learning with a specific learning purpose and well-defined needs (Johnson & Johnson, 1998) and to the teaching of English for various specific purposes, namely academic, occupational, and professional purposes (Basturkmen, 2019). The definition proposed by Munby (1978, p. 2) attempts to draw a distinction between ESP and General English (GE): “ESP syllabus and materials are designed by the prior analysis of communication needs of the learners, rather than by non learner-centered criteria”. The key terms in his definition are communication needs and learners (Vasavakul, 2006).

Building on Munby's (1978) definition, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 16) considered ESP as "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning". As for a broader definition, they presented a tree of English Language Teaching (ELT) (see Figure 2.2), showing the relationship and distinction between EGP and ESP. Consequently, English for Medical Purposes (EMP) is categorised under English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Science and Technology, and (EST) English for Academic Purposes (EAP) respectively.

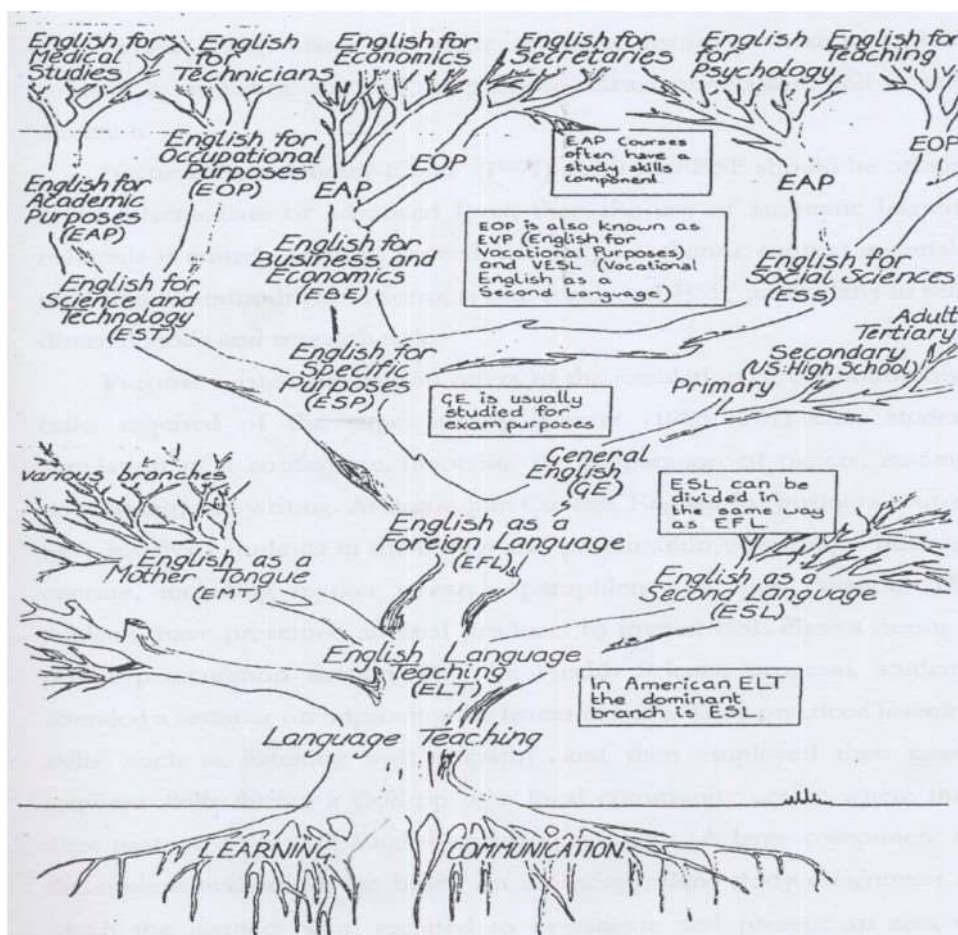
Later, Strevens (1988) presented absolute and variable characteristics of ESP to give a more specific definition by making a distinction between four absolute and two variable characteristics of ESP. The four absolute characteristics are as follows:

1. ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner;
2. ESP is related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities;
3. ESP is centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, and analysis of this discourse; and
4. ESP is in contrast with GE.

The two variable characteristics are as follows:

1. ESP may be restricted as to the language skills to be learned; and
2. ESP may not be taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

Figure 2.2
The Tree of English Language Teaching (ELT)



(Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 17)

ESP courses for Strevens (1987) are:

those in which the aims and the contents are determined, principally or wholly, not by the criteria of general education as when English as a foreign language is a subject in school but rather by functional and practical English language requirements of the learners (p. 90).

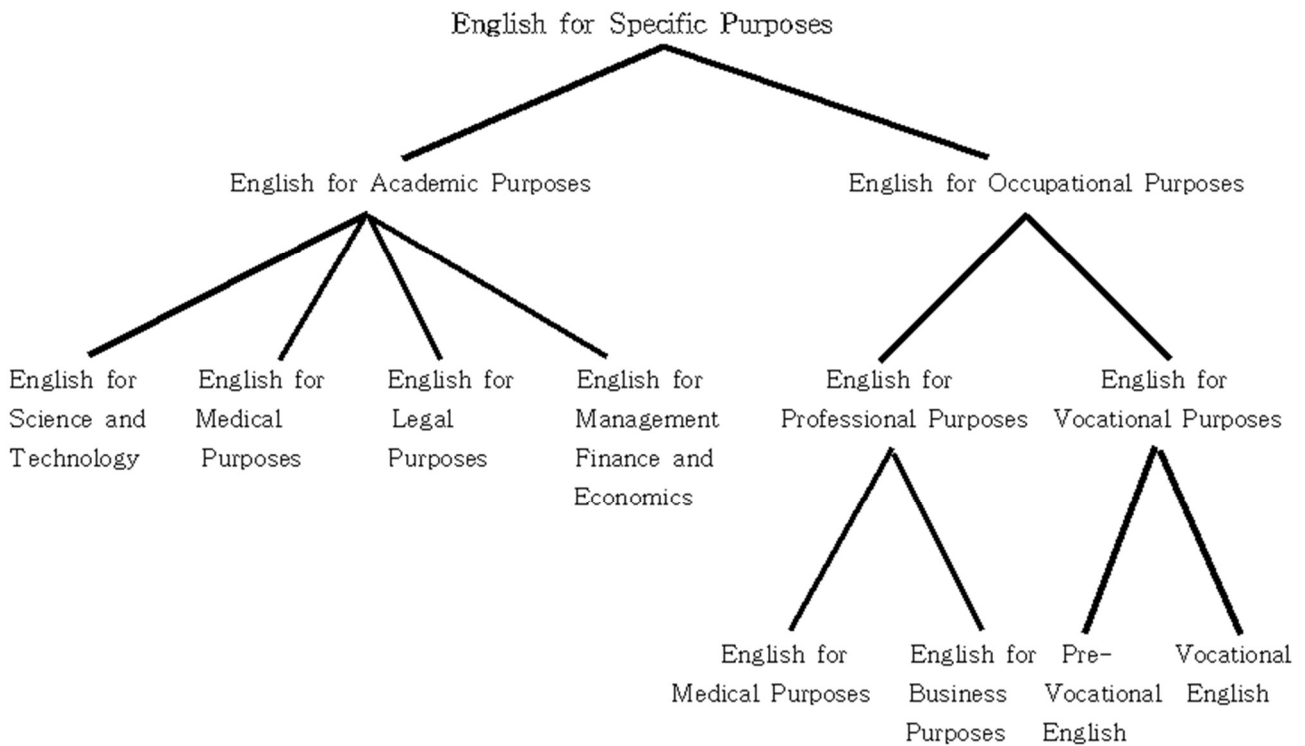
Key terms here are functional and practical English language requirements and learners (Vasavakul, 2006).

While Hutchinson and Waters (1987) classify English language teaching (ELT) into various subcategories according to specific varieties of language use, offer an ESP classification by professional area as illustrated in **Error! Reference source not found.** They classify ESP into two branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), which appear to be different only in situational context. EAP is further classified into four branches, as English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Medical Purposes (EMP), English for Legal Purposes (ELP) and English for Management, Finance and Economics. Thus, EMP is obviously notable as it was identified as a significant branch of ESP as early as the 1990s. Moreover, it has been categorised in both branches; EAP and EOP. EMP is categorised in two places: EMP for professional practitioners, and EMP for medical students in academic study. This research focus of this study is therefore EMP for medical students in academic study.

The ESP classification proposed by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) points out that the teaching of English caters to students learning the language with different goals, especially study or professional pursuits. This is in line with Robinson (1991) who describes learners' reasons for learning the language as follows: "generally the students study English not because they are interested in the English language or English culture, but because they need English for study or work purposes" (p. 2). Additionally, Anthony (1998, p. 9) argued that "some people described ESP as simply being the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified. Others, however, were more precise describing it as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes". This indicates that the role of ESP is to help language learners to build up the needed abilities in order to use them in a specific field of inquiry, occupation, or educational context.

Figure 2.3

ESP classification by professional area



(Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 6)

In addition, based on the ESP classification and description above, Basturkmen (2003) relates ESP to the different needs for English learning among learners and the implications that has for teachers. She asserts that ESP courses are formulated on the basis of specific work-related or academic needs of the learners and each course offers descriptions of language use in the disciplines or occupations they serve. ESP teachers therefore need to develop their knowledge of specialist discourse, that is, language used in particular disciplines, professions or occupations, such as language used in law studies or in the medical profession (Basturkmen, 2017).

As discussed above, unlike EGP, that aims to develop proficiency in general English skills which naturally require an extensive amount of time to pursue, ESP aims for clear and specific objectives to be achieved. ESP stands out due to its willingness to embrace the methodologies and understandings of diverse fields, setting it apart from many other approaches (Hyland, 2022). Consequently, learners aim to be able to achieve their target skills in order to perform a professional or an academic role after the courses have been completed (Strevens, 1988). Moreover, ESP teachers often need to design additional tasks that teachers of EGP may not require, or which do not feature as essentially in their work compared to the teachers of ESP (Basturkmen, 2017).

2.3.1 Differentiating ESP and EGP

While the definition of ESP shows the differences between ESP and EGP, it does not completely distinguish ESP from EGP, given that it is impossible for one part of language or skill to be independent (Holme, 1996). However, “ESP courses are narrower in focus than ELT courses”. The focus of ESP courses is language, skills, and genres suitable for specific situations learners need to deal with in English (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). Moreover, it is obvious that a key feature of ESP is learners’ needs analysis, because ESP courses are developed with the aim to fulfil learners’ specific needs, both educational needs and professional needs (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013).

A further distinction between EGP and ESP is that learners of the latter are mainly adults with a certain degree of awareness concerning their language needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). On the other hand, EGP courses are often delivered as compulsory modules at schools, with a unique purpose of succeeding in the examinations. Students have to pass the EGP courses in order to accomplish their studies.

Basturkmen (2006) maintains that EGP teaching tends to set out from a definite point to an indeterminate one, whereas ESP aims to direct students through to a known destination in order to reach specific objectives. She notes that “The emphasis in ESP on going from A to B in the most time- and energy-efficient manner can lead to the view that ESP is an essentially practical endeavour” (p. 9).

To further clarify their interrelationship, Widdowson (1983) establishes the distinctive features of ESP and EGP as follows. The most important EGP features are that the focus is often on education; as the learners’ future needs are impossible to predict, the course content is more difficult to select; and considering those features, its content in the syllabus should have a high surrender value. To elaborate, surrender value is a term borrowed from the insurance world. The surrender value of a life insurance policy is the amount of money we receive if we decide that we no longer wish to continue with the policy (Collins Dictionary, 2019). In teaching terms, this is the overall utility (value) of the English taught by the end of a specific course; the higher the surrender value the greater the utility (usefulness) of the English taught (Far, 2008).

It is difficult to draw a clear line where EGP courses stop and ESP courses start. To conclude, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that there is no difference between ESP and EGP in theory; however, there is a great deal of difference in practice.

2.4 Understanding English for Medical Purposes

2.4.1 Defining EMP

EMP is considered as a subset of ESP. EMP involves the teaching and learning of English for a practical purpose with the focus on teaching aspects of medical English, especially the

terminology (Hull, 2006). Meanwhile, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) characterise ESP for medical practitioners as follows; first, it is designed to meet the English language needs of doctors, dentists and nurses. Second, it includes themes and topics needed in the medical field. And lastly, it focuses on skills required by medical learners e.g., for writing medical papers or preparing a talk for a medical meeting.

There are, as indicated in the previous section, however, two levels for EMP. First, there are the medical students who are studying and soon to be doctors, dentists, nurses and so on. Second, there are the healthcare professionals who work in the medical field. The concern of this study is with the medical students, and their needs differ slightly from those of qualified healthcare professionals. Medical students need to focus more on understanding terminology and how it is structured. In contrast, medical professionals' focus is more on the application of the terminology and concepts. They need to be able to utilise medical terminology on a day-to-day basis at work. For the purpose of this research, I am focusing on EMP at the first level, which is for medical students who are soon to be healthcare professionals.

EMP can be further divided into English for doctors, English for dentists, English for nurses, etc. Concomitantly, there are differences in EMP for nursing students and for trainee doctors. Each medical area has its own characteristics which sometimes leads to the discussion of how EMP courses should be taught (Allum, 2012). Some people feel that only current or former healthcare professionals have the ability to teach EMP. Others feel that EMP is still based around basic communication skills and reading and writing skills which just need to be put in context. Therefore, a view in the literature aligns with the realities of the Thai context and with Basturkmen's (2021) statement that ESP/EMP teachers do not need to be expert in the field, given that collaboration between ESP/EMP teachers and subject specialists can help reduce any sense of inadequacy as ESP teachers.

Liaison between ESP teachers and subject specialists is sometimes possible. ESP teachers are not necessarily experts in the learners' subject specialism and collaboration is a means by which teachers may work around limitations in their knowledge of the specialism.

2.4.2 Research on EMP

To date, not many scholars have undertaken research on EMP. Orr (2002) examined a two-year EMP course designed for student nurses at an Australian university which was intended to prepare nurses who were non-native speakers of English. The main focus was English for admission into the course and to become registered nurses. The course materials were designed by both a nursing instructor and an English teacher, which brings to light the significance of content instructors' input in designing and delivering an EMP course. In other words, an EMP course needs to cover not only the linguistic and communicative features of the topic, but also the content areas related to medical topics such as conversations among patients, doctors and nurses.

Chetsadanuwat (2012), an English lecturer who has worked as an international relations officer at an international hospital in Thailand, conducted research on an EMP course for student nurses from the nursing school in a Thai university. The study aimed to develop self-instructional materials for enhancing English listening skills for student nurses. It was conducted in two phases including development of materials and materials implementation/evaluation. The development of materials phase was based on the results obtained from a needs analysis of the 300 student nurses; the results of this part provided information regarding needs of academic and physical aspects of the self-instructional materials. The self-instructional material developed was validated by three experts, namely two ESP teaching experts and one nursing specialist. It was found that the material was effective, the students' listening ability after using

it was significantly higher, and the student nurses' level of satisfaction with the materials was at a good level. Therefore, the study provides an example of how ESP self-instructional materials could be designed and implemented.

Regarding the teacher's role in ESP, Swales (1985) states that ESP teachers must be thoroughly involved in the content language of the discipline. EMP courses should be conducted with care. Boshier and Smalkoski (2002) emphasise that needs analysis plays an important role in determining EMP course material selection and delivery. They conducted a needs analysis of ESL students enrolled in a nursing program in the USA, to determine why many of them were not succeeding academically. They claimed that a needs analysis should be based on interviews with teachers and students, students' questionnaires about the complexities of the health-care language and observations of different EMP classes. They also found that communication was the main difficulty healthcare students faced. It can then be concluded that EMP courses need to focus on enhancing students' communicative skills such as speaking, and hence EMP materials should represent that focus.

Moreover, the recent study by Khalili and Tahririan (2023) aimed to understand the state of ESP in Iranian medical schools. It focused on several aspects: identifying teaching challenges, assessing medical students' needs and lacks, evaluating EMP instructors, gauging course effectiveness, and determining the optimal timing for EMP courses. Data collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews from medical students, EMP teachers and medical professionals revealed key challenges. The main challenges of teaching ESP to medical students were identified as inappropriate materials, low motivation and self-confidence of students, and large heterogeneous ESP classes. The research highlighted a gap between the perceived importance of language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) for medical

professionals and their systematic practice within ESP courses. Additionally, it found that ESP teachers didn't follow essential teaching principles, leading to less effective courses. The results indicated that the ESP courses were mainly teacher-centred, compromising the learner-centeredness approach identified as characteristic of ESP. The study emphasised the importance of conducting a needs analysis and understanding the needs of learners in developing ESP courses. The study also expressed contradictory opinions on the proper time for offering ESP courses. Ultimately, these findings aim to enhance ESP classes by integrating fundamental principles into the curriculum.

This review of literature has highlighted the importance of several key factors in the successful implementation of EMP courses. Firstly, collaboration between content and language experts is crucial to ensure that the curriculum aligns with the specific needs of medical students. Secondly, needs analysis is essential to identify the language skills and knowledge gaps of students and to tailor the course content accordingly. Thirdly, the role of the teacher is paramount in creating engaging and effective learning experiences. Teachers should be well-trained in ESP pedagogy and have a deep understanding of the medical context. Finally, the use of appropriate materials and resources can significantly enhance student learning.

2.5 Research Questions

This study focuses on understanding teacher agency in the field of EMP in the Thai tertiary context. It aims to explore the decisions and choices that Thai EMP teachers make when teaching Thai medical students. Moreover, it aims to identify the affordances and constraints that affected their decision in working. It also investigates how they cope with those affordances

and constraints. Lastly, it aims to identify how their agency shapes or influences them to become EMP teachers. Thus, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What kind of competencies do Thai teachers perceive they need to teach English for Medical Purposes (EMP)?
2. What affordances and constraints do EMP teachers identify in their work that affect their decisions and actions?
3. How do EMP teachers recognise their agency and in what ways does their agency influence their identity negotiations?

The literature review shows that we still know very little about how teachers enact their agency when teaching EMP. Few studies have explored teachers' personal experiences and choices in shaping their EMP classes. This highlights a real need for my study, which aims to understand how EMP teachers navigate challenges and make meaningful decisions to best support their students.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has covered the literature on language teacher agency, exploring its various concepts and interpretations across different theoretical perspectives. The sociocultural approach was specifically adopted as the study's theoretical framework because it underscores the impact of social and cultural factors on the development of agency within learning contexts. Additionally, the research delved into understanding the interconnectedness of agency, identity, and ESP. These studies serve as valuable resources, enriching the analysis of the teaching dynamics observed in the current study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology employed in the study is described in detail. The chapter starts by providing an overview of the mixed-methods paradigm that has informed it, followed by a discussion of the research design, which contains two phases: questionnaires and interviews. The chapter then moves onto the development and piloting of the questionnaire and interview instruments. The ethical concerns are then discussed. After that, the research setting and the participants of the study, the sampling methods, and the characteristics of the participants are described. A detailed description of the data collection procedures follows, outlining the methods used to gather the data. The chapter then provides an account of the data analysis procedures before discussing the role of researcher. The chapter ends by providing a summary.

3.2 Research Paradigm

In this study, a mixed-methods paradigm, combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, was adopted, with the qualitative approach being the dominant element. In general, the quantitative paradigm is founded on positivism, where science is determined by empirical research (Sale et al., 2002). It assumes that any phenomenon can be translated to empirical

indicators, which portray the truth or reality. Ontologically, this paradigm holds that there exists a singular truth, which is essentially an objective reality not influenced by individual perceptions. Techniques typically utilised here are, for example, random sampling, statistical inference, and questionnaires consisting of close-ended questions (Lan, 2002; Sale et al., 2002), and research using this paradigm generally comprises large sample sizes, reflecting the larger population (Carey (1993). Moreover, it is primarily dependent on statistical analysis; hence, the results are presented using numerical values.

The foundation of the qualitative paradigm, by contrast, lies in two viewpoints, i.e., interpretivism (Altheide & Johnson, 1994) and constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Unlike its counterpart, subjectivity is the nature of this paradigm. It is opposed to the view of a singular truth or reality. Instead, it posits that a variety of truths or realities exist which are influenced by individuals' perception of reality (Sale et al., 2002). In fact, a social construct is at play, shaping reality, and this leads to continual changes or dynamic states of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Sale et al., 2002). Techniques employed through this paradigm include in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, and observation (Sale et al., 2002). Additionally, unlike the quantitative paradigm, sample sizes are relatively smaller, specifically focusing on those who can offer insightful information (Reid, 1996). Furthermore, this approach can aid in uncovering changes as well as offering deep insights into behaviours or actions (Gonzalez et al., 2008). Hence, the dominance of the qualitative approach here could allow Thai EMP teachers to share their extensive experiences, offering a richer understanding of their agency and their perception.

Despite differences between them, the two paradigms can combine effectively within a single study, as the strengths of each are drawn on to reduce their limitations. Specifically, the

quantitative paradigm could ensure a greater variety and larger number of participants in a survey, while its counterpart – the qualitative paradigm – would enable the participants to articulate extensive experiences of the phenomenon in focus through interviews. Using the latter would also allow, for example, for emphasis on a particular institution, which would yield results in a more specific context. Consequently, the combination would provide broader and more comprehensive data, contributing to a richer understanding of any issue and more compelling evidence than would be possible through a purely quantitative or qualitative approach (Denzin, 1970; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As pointed out by Johnson et al. (2007), combining both methods entails taking into account a variety of “viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints” (p. 13). As a result, it would contribute to a deeper understanding of any phenomenon by capturing not only the breadth but also the depth of the data (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009). Additionally, the use of the mixed-methods approach can aid in increasing the reliability of the data collection. This lies in the fact that each approach is inherited with its limitations, so that utilising diverse research instruments provided by each of them for data collection could bridge those limitations and, in turn, contribute to rich data, spanning different dimensions (Creswell, 2014). Thus, using two methods together not only allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the issues in question but also provided comprehensive insights into Thai EMP teachers’ perceptions.

As indicated, while adopting a mixed-methods paradigm combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the present study was predominantly qualitative. To elaborate, many of the questions in the questionnaire were open-ended, allowing for the collection of qualitative data. However, it also included quantitative elements, demonstrating its mixed-methods approach. Considering that this study sought to examine EMP teachers enacting their agencies in the EMP classrooms, the primary utilisation of the qualitative paradigm allowed the

participants to express their own experiences of the agency they enacted in their classrooms, which may have been influenced by their unique experiences and backgrounds, and their different perceptions of reality and the different contexts in which they worked. According to Dörnyei (2007), questionnaires are recognised as a reliable and efficient tool for gathering information about people's points of view. The questionnaires provided a snapshot of the participants' agency and experiences whereas the interviews allowed me to explore individual experiences in more depth and to explore the range of factors that impacted on their agency. On the other hand, heavy reliance on the quantitative paradigm may have offered more limited information. This can be explained by the fact that its techniques, by and large, have pre-determined answers (Sale et al., 2002); this potentially provides participants with choices limited by the researcher's pre-conceptions, prevent participants from expressing views different from the pre-determined ones. Hence, the qualitative paradigm was employed as a dominant paradigm in this study.

Specifically, the philosophical foundation underpinning the qualitative phase of this study is social constructivism. As pointed out by Croker (2009), constructivists hold that distinct perspectives held by each person shape their different understandings of the world, and this contributes to multiple potential possibilities in which reality is constructed or interpreted, which may vary according to time and circumstances. It can be stated that "reality is socially constructed" (Mertens, 2015, p. 16). In constructivism or interpretivism, knowledge is contextually built on interpretations or various realities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This is allied with Creswell's (2014) view that in social constructivism, each person is thought to develop knowledge based on their experiences within historical and social settings. In essence, people seek to make sense of the situations which they encounter in their contexts and, in turn, construct various subjective meanings according to their experiences. This view is in line with

the present study, given that it sought to examine Thai EMP teachers' demonstration of teacher agency which may vary according to social contexts at play, such as teaching experiences, educational background, and career trajectories. Additionally, it is consistent with van Lier's (2008) framework adopted in this study (see Section 0), arguing that teacher agency is socioculturally mediated; the teachers may exhibit different forms of teacher agency, despite being in similar situations, as a result of sociocultural influences. Considering all these points, social constructivism was drawn on as a paradigm as it fitted the objective of the study and the theoretical framework.

3.3 Research Design

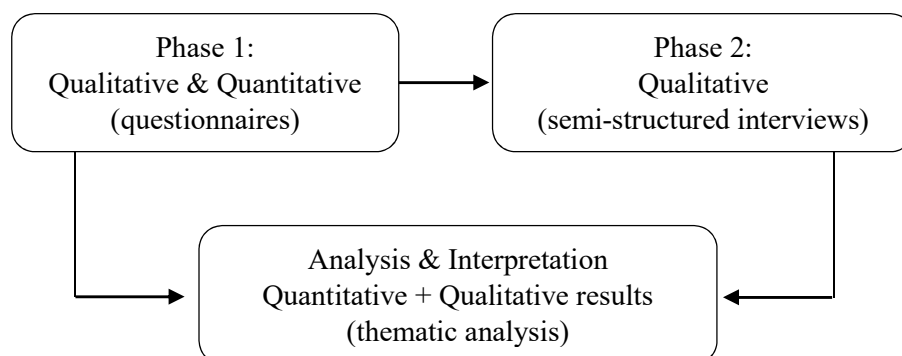
A mixed-methods approach was drawn on to design the study. Initially, this study had been planned to include three sequential phases: 1) questionnaires for EMP teachers; 2) two rounds of semi-structured interviews with EMP teachers; and 3) focus-group interviews with medical staff. However, as a result of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand during the stage of data collection, the plans for data collection had to be amended. During the pandemic, lockdown measures were enforced by the government to manage the crisis, and medical teachers and staff were overwhelmed with cases of COVID-19 patients. This rendered the final phase of focus groups with medical staff unachievable due to the inconvenience posed by the circumstance. Additionally, on reflection, due to the richness of the interview data, it was determined that the data collected from the first two phases sufficed for the analysis and responding to the research questions.

Essentially, therefore, the design consisted of two phases: questionnaires reflecting qualitative and quantitative approaches, and interviews reflecting a qualitative approach (see Figure 3.1).

Phase one was conducted with a wide range of participants from different tertiary institutions across Thailand; it provided an overview of the perspectives and experiences of a wider range and greater number of teachers that provided a foundation from which I could then probe in more depth in the interviews, phase two.

Afterwards, the second phase was conducted with a smaller number of participants, 14 interviewees, within a single institution, KKU. This phase was designed to elicit more in-depth data through the use of semi-structured interviews. The results derived from the second phase provided richer insights into the Thai EMP teachers' agency in their teaching of EMP to Thai medical students. The two phases worked in tandem to fulfil the focus of the study, i.e. EMP teachers' enactment of agency in Thai EMP classrooms, the influences of affordances and constraints on their choices about their teacher agency, and the influences of teacher agency on their professional identity. Figure 3.1 illustrates the sequential steps for carrying out these research methods.

Figure 3.1
Steps for the implementation of all research approaches



The integration of quantitative and qualitative data occurred during the data collection procedures, as suggested by (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009). The earlier data obtained from Phase 1 contributed to the data gathering process in Phase 2 (see Section 3.4.2). In particular, a preliminary review of the survey data helped to inform the design of the interviews. By combining quantitative and qualitative data, I could achieve triangulation, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research problem. This approach also helped contextualize findings and enhance the overall validity and reliability of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative data were analysed and interpreted using thematic analysis to provide the results of the study (see Section 3.8).

3.4 Research Instrument Design

This section outlines the development and implementation of the research tools used in both phases of the study. Following this, the chapter discusses the piloting of the research instruments.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are particularly useful in cases where individual interaction with a large number of participants is not feasible (Gall et al., 2005). They enable the researcher to gather data from a larger number of the participants in a rapid and affordable manner (Ary et al., 2013). Therefore, I chose to employ the questionnaire in the first phase to obtain data about participants' points of view toward teaching EMP with the main focus on their teaching experiences.

Developing questionnaires and scenario activities

The questionnaires were created and distributed via Google Forms since this provided the respondents with ease of access, thereby allowing them to complete questionnaires at their convenience. To examine EMP teachers' agency on teaching Medical English to Thai medical students in the Thai tertiary context, both close-ended and open-ended questions were used to elicit the participants' perspectives. The development of the questionnaire was informed by the review of literature on teacher agency, particularly van Lier's (2008) theory of agency typology (see Section 2.1), encompassing three aspects of agency: self-regulation; mediation by sociocultural context; and awareness of responsibility/answerability (see Figure 2.1). Using this typology to frame questions would help delve into how the participants practiced teacher agency in the EMP classroom contexts. Moreover, my own experience as an EMP teacher and my observation of colleagues helped me develop different scenarios of EMP teaching practices which represent different kinds of teachers in Scenario task 1, which I discuss in further detail below. In the survey, a wide range of question types were included to ensure that a comprehensive questionnaire was developed (Elomaa, 2022).

The questionnaires consisted of 44 items in total. Specifically, they were divided into the four following sections: (1) Starting out as an EMP teacher; (2) Course content and concerns; (3) Collaborating with others; and (4) Background information. The questionnaire was anonymous. All of the question items were written in English. Notwithstanding the sole use of English in the questionnaires, the respondents were freely invited to fill out the questionnaires in their preferred language, namely English or Thai, whichever they were comfortable to express themselves in. The full version of the questionnaire is shown in Appendix A.

The range of questions in the questionnaire included 5-point rating scale questions, categorical questions (checkbox questions), ranking questions, and open-ended questions. Each of these question types is discussed in further detail in the next section. The reasons for choosing them follow here.

A 5-point rating scale is a preferable choice owing to its ease of implementation (Choudhury & Bhattacharjee, 2014); specifically, scaling questions are typically straightforward and can be conducted and interpreted with ease (Duff, 2008). Furthermore, categorical questions, as in checkbox questions, can allow for investigation of activities which respondents had carried out and their thoughts about them (National Foundation for Educational Research, 2014); inclusion of the option to add an expanded answer for these questions can also ensure the accuracy of their response since respondents are invited to provide their own choices which may differ from the predetermined ones (Danieluk et al., 2023). Ranking questions also enabled the respondents to rank the importance of certain aspects or qualities from most preferable to least preferable (Krosnick & Alwin, 1988). On the other hand, open-ended questions can aid in obtaining genuine, comprehensive, in-depth, and truthful responses from the respondents (Cohen et al., 2011); they enable the respondents to answer the questions without any influence from the researcher's preconceptions (Reja et al., 2003). Thus, all of these questions work in collaboration to enable a deeper understanding of EMP teacher agency in the Thai tertiary context. An overview of each of the four sections is provided below.

Section 1: Starting out as an EMP teacher

The first section of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) consisted of 13 items, nine of which were close-ended and four of which were open-ended. For the close-ended questions, a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *(1) the least* to *(5) the most*, and checkbox responses were used; on

the other hand, the respondents were asked to write approximately 100 words to answer open-ended questions. This section was designed to explore the Thai EMP teachers' initial experience in the field. Specifically, the questions attempted to elicit the respondents' perspectives on the years of experience, their first experience of teaching EMP and professional attributes required in this field. The respondents were asked to select and rank challenges affecting their teaching and to choose one significant challenge from the given list which most impacted their EMP teaching. Additionally, the respondents were requested to rank their teaching practices as well as to detail other approaches, if any, used to enhancing their teaching.

Section 2: Course content and concerns

In Section 2, there were eight questions, six of which were close-ended and two of which were open-ended. Similar to the previous section, the close-ended items adopted a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *never* to (5) *very regularly* and checkbox answers, whereas the open-ended items prompted a written response. This section elicited the respondents' perceptions of differences between teaching GE and EMP and changes in professional identity influenced by EMP. The respondents were also to choose and rank skills or knowledge that medical students should acquire from EMP courses and the degree to which the courses they taught contributed to those skills and knowledge. They were asked to choose and rank the usefulness of instructional materials they used in classrooms. The questions also elicited their perspectives on issues which they were concerned about as an EMP teacher, together with approaches taken to overcome those issues.

Section 3: Collaborating with others

This section comprised six questions, four of which were close-ended and two of which were open-ended. Similar to the two previous sections, a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *never*

to (5) *very regularly*, and checkbox answers were provided in the close-ended items, while a written answer was required for the open-ended items. In particular, the questions in this section concerned the respondents' collaboration with other EMP staff, frequency of collaboration with medical teachers, and tasks on which they collaborated. Moreover, the respondents were asked to share how their decision-making was influenced by collaboration. Included in this section were two scenario tasks as detailed below.

Scenario task 1: English for Medical Purposes teaching practices

To delve into the Thai EMP teachers' perspectives on the types of EMP teachers and teaching practices suitable for teaching EMP in the Thai tertiary context, a scenario task was created following the approach of White (1999) and Amatayakul (2019). Scenario tasks offer significant advantages in eliciting nuanced behavioural insights from respondents. By presenting realistic scenarios, I could better understand perceptions and decision-making processes that may not have been easily observable in direct questioning. Specifically, they detailed four fictional EMP teachers, namely Keeri, Nara, Fahsai, and Payu, each of whom possessed different educational qualifications and distinct teaching practices. The respondents were required to consider the degree of suitability of each teacher's practices for their own context. To do so, teachers were asked to rate each teacher using one of four options, *Definitely not suit*, *Probably not suit*, *Probably suit*, and *Definitely suit*. Moreover, the respondents were asked to choose which teachers were the most and least preferable choices to be recruited in their EMP teams and provide explanations for their decision.

Scenario task 2: English for Medical Purposes teachers' professional skill

development

To elicit the teachers' perspectives on the type of teacher they would like to be, scenario task 2 was developed. Just like the previous task, this one presented four fictional experienced EMP teachers, Tantawan, Mali, Chaba, and Kajon, each of whom adopts a unique strategy for achieving professional skill development. As with the scenario task 1, the respondents were required to select which of the four teachers they would prefer to be and provide reasons to justify their selection. They were also asked to select one of *Definitely not suit*, *Probably not suit*, *Probably suit*, and *Definitely suit* for each of the four fictional teachers in the task.

Section 4: Background information

The last section of the questionnaire was designed to obtain demographic data from the respondents. Faure (2016) observed that there was a chance that many EMP teachers might not have initially begun teaching in Medical English. Thus, respondents were prompted to indicate the subjects they had taught and the duration of their teaching experience in each area. Specifically, the questions elicited some information in relation to their highest educational degree, fields of study in their bachelor's and highest degree, workplace, teaching experiences, their previous working experience in other fields, their background in medical or relevant areas, training in EMP, and any professional development.

3.4.2 Phase 2: Interviews

Interviews, as mentioned by Merriam (1998), serve as a primary method for obtaining data in qualitative studies. They play a crucial part in offering evidence, historical data, and explanations which incorporate personal perspectives, such as experiences, perceptions, and

meanings (Creswell, 2014). Interviews are the most common data collection tool used for researching teacher agency. Therefore, interviews were drawn on as a research tool to obtain deeper data in this study. I conducted two rounds of semi-structured interviews with each participant. In the first round, the preliminary interviews were used to gain general information and ascertain the teachers' attitude toward their EMP teaching. In the second round, the interviews were carried out to elicit further data on the language teacher agency of EMP teachers. The selection of semi-structured interview lies in the fact that it enables the researcher to delve into unclear or inexplicit aspects and obtain insightful and detailed accounts among the participants (Edwards & Holland, 2013), which would ensure adequately rich data. Hence, these instruments would contribute to clarifying the issues and insights derived from the questionnaire responses. The development of the interview questions was informed by both the questionnaire responses, and the guiding framework on teacher agency, namely van Lier (2008) agency typology (see Section 2.2.1).

Before meeting with the EMP teachers taking part in the interview sessions, I prepared a list of interview questions as a guideline (see Appendix B). I started with simple questions to create a relaxing atmosphere and put the interviewees at ease in preparation for more probing questions. The first few questions concerned their attitudes towards teaching EMP and their impression of the field, and changes to their teaching pedagogy through comparisons between GE and EMP. Then, the interviewees were asked to do a scenario task, which was the same scenario task as contained in the questionnaires, and to continue sharing past experiences. Afterwards, I inquired about the most memorable incident in their classrooms, and their attitudes towards being an EMP teacher. Finally, they were invited to freely share any advice for a new EMP teacher and express their feelings about teaching EMP. A complete set of interview questions is shown in Appendix C.

The interviews were conducted with EMP teachers selected through purposive sampling. As pointed out in Section 3.3, it had been planned that medical teachers would also be recruited as interviewees; however, the surging pandemic of COVID-19 in Thailand put paid to that plan. Hence, EMP teachers were the sole source of interview data. The interviewees were recruited from KKU EMP teachers who expressed consent to participate in this phase. Interviews were conducted in whichever language they felt most comfortable in to prevent any confusion or misunderstanding as well as to establish a comfortable environment, following the suggestions given by Dörnyei (2007); and participants responded using whichever language they wished, on occasions using both languages in a single interview.

3.4.3 Piloting the Instruments

The questionnaire and interview were piloted. Piloting the instruments enables researchers to address any potential issues before finalising them (Mackay, 2013), so that they would not pose any difficulties for the participants in the study during the actual implementation (Bell, 2010). This process can aid in enhancing its validity and reliability. Piloting the instruments is deemed important since this process can aid in identifying any misleading or unclear questions and in ensuring that the instrument can collect the necessary data to fulfil the research objectives and address the research questions (Denis, 2010; Gray, 2014). More importantly, it allows for gathering insights and constructive feedback on the effectiveness of the research instrument from individuals with profiles similar to the prospective participants (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009; Maxwell, 2013). Their feedback can provide insights into whether any redundant or ambiguous questions were present (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993) and whether all the questions and instructions were easily understandable (Bell, 2010). This allows for further refinement of the questionnaire, enhancing conciseness and the clarity of the wording, prior to implementation

for data collection. Therefore, following its development, the questionnaire was piloted with some Thai teachers with experience of EMP teaching similar to the prospective participants.

During the pilot, the average duration required for filling in the questionnaire was also recorded. It was found that the survey required roughly 30 minutes to complete. Additionally, the pilot participants offered valuable feedback to enhance its effectiveness. I asked for further feedback regarding any redundant questions, along with any suggested change of wording. Their recommendations were taken into account to refine the questionnaire. Specifically, their feedback enabled me to revise questions and answer choices, where these were pointed out as unclear. This helped enhance the clarity of the questions and choices given in the questionnaire. Once it had been revised, this final version was employed for the data collection process.

After finishing the questionnaire pilot, I piloted interviews with three teachers who matched my target participants. I timed each one; they averaged about an hour. The main benefit of this pilot was refining the interview: we spotted unclear or repetitive questions, reworded to avoid leading, and rearranged the order for a smoother flow from general to specific topics. These changes eased fatigue and helped participants give clearer responses.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

According to the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants (Massey University, 2017), research involving the participation of humans requires approval from the Massey University Human Ethics Committees. Therefore, once the data gathering instruments of this study had been finalised, a Massey University Human Ethics application was submitted to gain approval for the project. It was accepted as a low-risk project

(See Appendix D). Voluntary informed consent procedures were then undertaken with potential participants.

Initially, I asked permission from the president/dean of the research site university, KKU to conduct research conducting interviews with EMP staff at that site, and to use the name of the university in my thesis. In the letter asking for permission, I provided detailed information of the purpose of the research and research methodology (See Appendix E). Once the dean returned approval letters, an invitation and consent forms (See Appendix F) were then sent to prospective participants. All participants were fully informed of the objectives and design of the research, their commitments, and their freedom to withdraw from the research up until a certain time (See Appendix G). They were also assured of confidentiality through the use of anonymous questionnaires and pseudonyms in the research report for interview participants.

Furthermore, considering my previous affiliation with the research site, it should be noted that some participants in this research were my former colleagues. Despite that, I had no influence over their decisions to take part in the research and had not been teaching at the institution for five years. Their involvement was solely based on their availability and willingness to participate.

Qualitative data collection was later conducted after signed consent forms were returned. Prior to each interview, participants were informed of the audio recording and reminded of their rights, especially their rights to have the recording turned off at any time during the interview. Following this stage, the transcripts of the interviews were sent to them, allowing them to check their correctness.

3.6 Research Setting and Participants

This section starts with describing the research setting in which the present study was conducted and moves onto providing descriptions of the participants.

3.6.1 Research Setting

The present study was conducted with teachers working in tertiary institutions across Thailand, where EMP courses were provided. The research setting is described below considering the methods of data collection, namely questionnaires and interviews.

The questionnaires were administered to EMP teachers in the universities situated in four main regions of Thailand; a total of 33 completed questionnaires were returned. The respondents were EMP teachers from nine universities. Three of these universities are located in Central Thailand, one in the North, one in the South and the other four are located in different provinces in the Northeastern region.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 Thai EMP teachers working in a single tertiary institution, KKU, most of whom were the researcher's former colleagues; they were largely selected among the questionnaire respondents based on their consent to be interviewed. These interview sessions took place in each interviewee's preferred location which was convenient for them and that they felt most comfortable in, including cafés, their offices, and homes or via a video call due to the ongoing and changeable COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

3.6.2 Participants

The details of the participants are provided according to the two phases of the study, the questionnaires and interviews.

Phase 1: Questionnaires

In this phase, the participants were EMP teachers in the universities situated in four main regions of Thailand. They were chosen via a non-probability sampling method, namely convenience sampling. As pointed out by Dörnyei (2007), this method entails selecting the sample or participants according to specific criteria, such as geographical proximity, accessibility, availability, or the willingness to join this phase of study. As the survey was online, for the current study, three criteria were established to aid in recruiting the participants: availability, accessibility, and willingness to join. Invitation letters were sent to EMP teachers in the focal institutions asking for their confirmation based on those predetermined criteria.

As a result, there were 33 EMP teachers who responded to the study, including seven males and 26 females. In respect of their educational background, the majority of them (70%) held a master's degree, while a fair share of them (30%) had a doctoral degree. More than half of the respondents had majored in English, while the rest studied in different majors, such as Applied Linguistics, English Linguistics, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Further details about the participants of this phase are provided in Chapter Four.

Phase 2: Interviews

After the questionnaires were returned, a purposive sampling method was utilised to recruit the participants to be interviewees in this phase of study. This method is recognised as appropriate and effective since it allows for the selection of distinctive cases which can offer valuable

insights, contributing to a better understanding of any phenomenon (Neuman, 2014). The interviewees were recruited among KKU EMP teachers, only one research site, in recognition of the value of investigating how teachers who shared many sociocultural elements might enact agency. The challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, which will be discussed more in section 3.7.2.2, were another factor in this decision.

At the end of the survey, participants were asked whether they would be willing to join the second phase, the interview. Among 33 questionnaire respondents were 10 KKU EMP teachers who agreed to take part in the interviews. Four other KKU EMP staff who had not been able to participate in the first phase also expressed an interest in joining the interview phase, and they were included as they fitted the purposive nature of the recruitment. Therefore, there were a total of 14 interviewees, all of whom were currently teaching at KKU. There were approximately 20 KKU EMP teachers at the time of the study. This meant that the design facilitated an in-depth examination of a single institution. Given the impact of COVID-19, interviewing teachers from the same institute was also more practical. This sample included teachers with a range of experiences, i.e., novice and experienced EMP teachers. Specifically, the former refers to those recently having entered the EMP field, while the latter included those with over five years of working experience in this field. Hence, this is consistent with the study, considering that this phase required respondents who could share a rich body of information and insights specifically related to teacher agency in EMP in the Thai tertiary context.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures and Research Instruments

The actual procedures around data collection from each research instrument employed in this study are outlined. As previously mentioned, this study adopted a mixed-method approach,

hence utilising both quantitative and qualitative instruments for data collection. Specifically, the questionnaires consisted of close-ended questions as well as open-ended questions requiring writing short texts, explaining reasons, and the scenario tasks; the data were predominantly qualitative since they were mostly obtained through open-ended items and the tasks. As the first phase, the link to complete the questionnaires via Google Forms was sent to the EMP teachers in Thai Universities which had been identified as having medical schools and offering EMP courses. In the next phase, conducted after the questionnaires were returned, the data were obtained by means of the qualitative instrument, interviews. Table 3.1

Study phases and participants below depicts the research procedures, specifying each phase, its participants and research questions.

Table 3.1

Study phases and participants

Phases	Participants	Research questions
Phase one: Questionnaires	33 EMP teachers	Research Questions 1,2,3
Phase two: Interviews (Two rounds)	14 Thai EMP teachers	Research Questions 1,2,3

In the following sections, the process for implementation of the research instruments in both phases are described in detail.

3.7.1 Phase One: Questionnaires

In this study, questionnaires containing both close-ended questions and open-ended questions were administered to EMP teachers in higher education institutions in Thailand.

Challenges with questionnaires

The survey period took about 10 months in total. It commenced with the first questionnaire sent out in early August 2020 and concluded with the last one being returned in early June 2021. The duration extended beyond the initial expectations. As the questionnaire served as a means to recruit interview participants for phase two, I allocated approximately two months for respondents to return the questionnaire after receiving it. Nevertheless, during the questionnaire collection period, Thailand was struggling with a severe COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a year-long lockdown. As a result, after two months, only a limited number of questionnaires had been returned. In order to boost the response rate, I implemented follow-up protocols recommended by Creswell (2014). I contacted my designated university contacts via telephone or email to verify if they had received the questionnaires. Subsequently, for those universities that reported not receiving the questionnaires, I re-sent them. From the discussions with some universities, I discovered that EMP teachers were busy with preparing and adapting to the new form of teaching because all classes would have to be taught online due to the COVID-19 lockdown. So, I extended the deadline for returning the questionnaires. At the beginning, it had been expected that roughly 90 Thai EMP teachers would be available to participate in this phase. However, after the invitations were sent to request and confirm their participation, not all of them were available or willing to join due primarily to issues concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite that, the reduced sample number was still deemed appropriate since, as per Dörnyei (2007), it is not required to examine the entire population to yield accurate results.

Moreover, I had data coverage across institutions and sufficiency in terms of my exploratory research purpose.

3.7.2 Phase 2: Interviews

3.7.2.1 Conducting interviews with EMP teachers

In this phase, there were 14 interviewees, namely EMP teachers at the research site. The interviews were conducted during the period of July-October 2021, roughly three months apart between interviews 1 and 2. Initially, I reached out to each participant via phone and/or email. Afterward, I verified their availability and created an interview schedule accordingly. Each interview was conducted at the interviewee's convenience, both time and place. As mentioned earlier, the interviewees were offered a choice of languages since it could help prevent any misunderstanding during the interviews, and the interviews were primarily carried out in Thai. Some sessions were conducted in English, considering that the interviewees possessed a command of spoken English and chose to use English throughout their sessions.

Prior to each interview, the interviewees were informed of the purposes of the present study, data collection procedures, and their rights. In addition, their consent for audio-recording the interviews was obtained. The interviews followed the structure explained in 3.4.2, including a request to complete the same scenario task they had done in the questionnaire, namely choosing a preferred EMP teacher among four fictional EMP teachers and provide any explanation to support their selection. Although it was a repetition, given the limited time during the initial phase, the respondents may not have provided adequate insights. Also, it allowed me to discuss this and probe participants' thoughts in more detail and in a relaxed environment. Moreover, there were also some interviewees who had not participated in the questionnaire phase. Hence,

the scenario task was conducted to clarify and expand the answers through the interview phase. After the task was finished, the interviews continued delving into more specific topics relevant to EMP, such as their worries and challenges affecting their teaching. Finally, the interviewees were asked to share the most memorable incident in their EMP classrooms, any recommendation for a potential EMP teacher in the future, the nature of their collaboration with other teachers or medical teachers, and their feelings about teaching EMP.

Throughout the interviews, the interviewees were allowed to share their thoughts freely and provide explanations or examples to clarify their perspectives. The first round of interviews lasted around 30 minutes and the second round sessions lasted around one hour. With consent from the interviewees, I audio-recorded the interview and took some notes. Subsequently, the recordings of each interview session were transcribed verbatim, which would be later used in data analysis.

3.7.2.2 Challenges with the interview

The interviewing process lasted approximately four months. It began with the initial interview in early July 2021 and concluded with the final interview in late October 2021, exceeding the initial anticipated timeframe. Due to the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic, arranging in-person interviews with all participants was not possible. As a result, I had to conduct the interviews for two participants through Zoom instead. Organising interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic proved challenging, as everyone had to adhere to the country's measures in response to the situation, such as keeping distance or avoiding traveling across areas. Additionally, the interviewees and I were at risk of infection since there was a surge in confirmed cases of COVID-19 patients. This circumstance exacerbated the difficulty in arranging face-to-face interviews.

Regarding the Zoom interviews, they were carried out similarly to the face-to-face interviews. Participants were familiar with Zoom which had become a common videoconferencing platform during the pandemic and provided an opportunity to enable remote participation in different activities (Shah et al., 2020). According to Berg (2009), a Zoom interview remains the most suitable method for the researcher to involve participants whom they could not meet in person and who were situated in diverse geographic locations. Considering that people could not meet in person and travel across provinces due to the lockdown measures during the pandemic, interviews through this synchronous meeting were deemed ideal for this circumstance as Zoom could allow people to interact remotely at any time and place. Moreover, as I already had some familiarity with participants, some of the reported concerns with zoom over face-to-face, e.g., building a rapport, were less problematic.

Another aspect to note is that conducting the interviews yielded an additional advantage. As most interviewees were former colleagues, I gained additional insights from their perspectives. Some participants acknowledged that they might not have spoken as candidly if the researcher had been someone else. Specifically, my role as the researcher and my relationship with participants have yielded benefits in eliciting rich data.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data analysis was based on the types of collected data and hence was separated into two methods, namely quantitative and qualitative. Each of the methods is explained in more detail below.

3.8.1 Quantitative data analysis

The responses to close-ended questions in the questionnaire used in Phase 1, namely rating scales and the checkbox questions, were given numerical values. This is the initial stage of quantitative data analysis, as stated by Dörnyei (2007). Before proceeding with the analysis, the data cleaning process was conducted (Dörnyei, 2003). During this process, the data were cleaned by being checked and corrected in case of mistakes arising during the phase of data entry, such as spelling or data duplication. For instance, a respondent may have unintentionally duplicated their responses via Google Form, resulting in two respondents; in this case, the duplicated responses would be omitted to prevent redundancy of data. Afterwards, they were analysed by means of descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage. This statistical technique is typically utilised to analyse responses from a survey since it helps identify patterns or trends embedded in the data clearly (Nitko & Brookhart, 2007; Norman & Streiner, 2014). Additionally, it enables the researcher to summarise and portray survey results efficiently (De Leeuw et al., 2008), contributing to a display of results in a vivid manner and with ease of understanding. As the questionnaires were created via Google Forms, the responses were automatically stored in Google Spreadsheet and computed using those statistics (Vasantharaju & Harinarayana, 2016). The statistical results calculated from this instrument were accurate and reliable, similar to any other software packages. Afterwards, the results were entered into Microsoft Excel to generate visual representations of the data to be further presented.

For the ranking tasks, a scoring system was created to analyse the data. Each participant ranked the factors from most to least important, and 5 points were assigned to most important and 1 to least. The total points for each factor were calculated to determine the overall importance. This approach ensured that all factors were considered, even if not all participants ranked them all.

This method provided a more accurate representation of the participants' views, especially when some questionnaires had incomplete rankings.

3.8.2 Qualitative data analysis

The responses to open-ended questions in both the questionnaire and interviews were analysed through a qualitative approach, specifically thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis comprised the six steps as recommended by Braun and Clarke: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. As explained by Braun and Clarke (2012), this method of analysis entails identifying recurring themes regarding a particular issue as well as interpreting the significance of those themes. It contributes to organising data and uncovering patterns embedded in the collected data systematically as well as enabling the adoption of deduction and induction to identify or establish relevant themes. Using this analytical method would allow for uncovering common forms of teacher agency practised or resisted among the participants clearly. Prior to analysis, I listened to all the recordings of the interview sessions and transcribed them verbatim using InqScribe. The data were digitally stored in a .docx format for further reference.

The data obtained from both instruments were in either Thai or English. Those written or spoken in Thai were retained and analysed in their original language in order to prevent any loss of meaning arising from translation, which may affect the researcher's interpretation of the data (Esfehani & Walters, 2018). Also, the explanation for this process lies in the fact that preserving the data in Thai would enable the examination of the original data, the development of the initial themes within the original language used by the participants, and continuous verification and refinement of coding across the first three steps, thus increasing the reliability of the identified

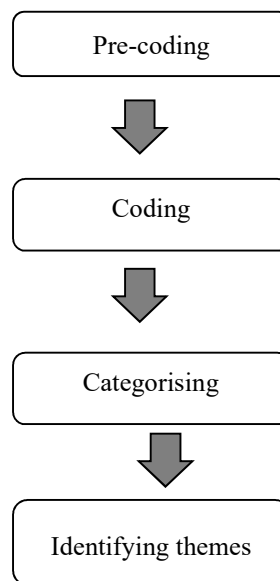
emerging themes. After the analysis, the data to be presented in the findings were translated by the researcher, and they were cross-checked by an expert translator to ensure accurate translation, determining whether meanings were lost in translation. In the findings section, each English translation of the responses will be presented accompanied by their original Thai text.

The coding analysis procedure is illustrated in

and an example of the coding process is shown in Appendix H. These steps were applied to both sources of data, i.e., responses from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the interview. Throughout the steps of the analysis, the analysis software *ATLAS.ti* was utilised since it could organise, categorise and visually represent the data. Initially, the analysis was performed by carefully reading the written responses and transcripts, and noting any thought or idea embedded in those sets of data. This process – precoding – allows the researcher to grasp a general sense of the data. Moving onto the next step, which is coding, any statement which was considered intriguing or related to the objective of the study was identified. During this stage, I highlighted certain words in transcripts and labelled them with some codes, for example ‘responsible’ and ‘confident’. After that, considering that certain codes shared the same characteristics and overlapped each other, I classified them into the same category (categorising phrases) and later re-coded it using a specific theme or label to represent that category (identifying themes), an example of the themes is shown in Appendix I. During this stage, I reviewed and, if necessary, changed the codes established in the coding phase to ensure that codes with the same characteristics were unified and that the name of each theme was clear and appropriate. For example, “responsible” and “confident” were categorised as “teacher characteristics”. All other codes were re-checked and categorised into the same theme if they shared similar features. As a result, the coding analysis determined significant themes which were further categorised into sub-themes, if any. To illustrate, one of the key themes in relation

to challenges most affecting teaching was “student related”, of which sub-themes were “the level of English ability of my students” and “student interest”. Afterwards, all the transcripts were re-annotated with the new codes and themes.

Figure 3.2
Data Analysis Process



To address the integration of data more explicitly, it is important to clarify how the quantitative and qualitative findings were combined during the analysis and interpretation phase. While the earlier diagram (see Figure 3.1) illustrates this integration, a brief explanation is necessary here to emphasise its role in the research process.

The analysis combined quantitative results, which provided measurable points of view, with qualitative findings, which added depth by uncovering themes and contextual details through thematic analysis. Bringing these two data sets together allowed the study to connect numerical data with participants' experiences and perspectives. This integration offered a well-rounded

understanding of the findings and strengthened the overall results. For example, most EMP teachers in the survey said they felt confident when adapting their course materials. But when talking to them in interviews, many explained that this confidence didn't come from official training. Instead, it grew from exchanging ideas with colleagues and learning through real classroom experiences. By looking at both the numbers and these personal stories, the study was able to show not just how confident teachers were, but also the reasons behind that confidence, painting a much clearer picture of how EMP teachers enact their agency.

3.9 Role of the Researcher

The researcher recognises her multiple responsibilities in carrying out this study. While primarily acting as a researcher in this context, I was attentive to my secondary position as a lecturer in the Thai tertiary context. Throughout the study, I initiated and sustained a positive relationship and professional rapport with the participants. Specifically, my relationship with the interviewees was helpful in creating rapport and making them feel comfortable in revealing things they wouldn't to someone they didn't know so well. Each participant received respectful treatment, acknowledgment for their contributions, and guaranteed anonymity. The researcher followed Duff's (2008) guidelines for presenting results with integrity, precision, and accountability.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, the methodological framework adopted in the present study was discussed. To address the research questions, a mixed-methods paradigm was utilised. As a mixed-methods approach was employed, different types of research instruments, both questionnaires and

interviews, were drawn on, which helped capture the breadth and depth of data. These would contribute to providing insightful findings on language teacher agency demonstrated among Thai EMP teachers. Following this, the ethical considerations were addressed.

In addition, the research setting, the characteristics of the participants, research instrument development, and data collection procedures were elaborated. In particular, the sample was EMP teachers with a range of experience, i.e. novice and experienced teachers. Considering both quantitative and qualitative data were collected, different methods were employed to analyse the data. That is, quantitative data obtained from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data acquired from the open-ended questions in the survey and the interviews were analysed through thematic analysis. Finally, the role of researcher was discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, findings are presented from phase one of the study, the questionnaire regarding teachers' agency in teaching EMP in the Thai tertiary context. Firstly, an overview of the participants is provided, drawing on the data from the closed questions in the questionnaire. Following this, information about how the teaching of EMP is carried out in the Thai Tertiary context is reported. Findings concerning teaching practices, experiences and challenges in teaching EMP are then presented. This is followed by findings related to teachers' perspectives about their transition from teaching General English (GE) to teaching EMP, and the focus teachers have on their students and on collaboration which were found to mediate their teacher agency. Where relevant, I have drawn on open response data from the questionnaires. Each participant has been assigned a number to ensure anonymity. To conclude the chapter, teachers' thinking about their own careers in EMP are presented through their responses to the scenario questions. Finally, a summary of the key findings is provided to conclude the chapter.

4.2 Overview of Participants

The questionnaires were distributed to 100 EMP teachers in 24 universities situated in four main regions of Thailand; a total of 33% completed questionnaires (n=33) were returned. The respondents were EMP teachers from nine universities from various regions in Thailand (see

3.6.1). There were also five respondents who did not specify the medical and nursing schools they worked in. In reference to the respondents' workplaces, more than 88% (n=29), worked at a government university. The remaining four participants stipulated the following as their workplace: private university, independent contractor, retired, uncertain whether their workplace is a government or private university.

All 33 questionnaire respondents were academic staff teaching EMP. The majority (n=31) of respondents were Thai but there was also one American and one Indian. Participants were asked to provide demographic information such as gender, age, educational background, academic position, and the number of years in teaching English. The age and gender of the participating EMP teachers are indicated in

Ages and gender of questionnaire respondents. The results showed that in respect of gender, most of the respondents, as in 79% (n=26), were female, and 21% (n=7) male. In terms of the respondents' age, approximately 40% (n=13) of the respondents were between 41-50 years of age, while over a third (n=12) were aged between 31 and 40 years, with a few younger or older than these age ranges.

The respondents also had a range of educational backgrounds. With respect to the highest education qualification earned, the results indicated that all participants held an educational degree higher than a bachelor's degree. That is, nearly three-quarters of the respondents (n=23) had completed a master's degree, with the remaining number (n=10) holding a doctoral degree.

Table 4.1*Ages and gender of questionnaire respondents*

Age (years)	Gender		Total	Percentage
	Female	Male		
under 30	2	0	2	6
31-40	7	5	12	36
41-50	11	2	13	40
51-60	5	0	5	15
61 and over	1	0	1	3
Total	26	7	33	100

The respondents' fields of undergraduate study are revealed in Table 4.2. Over 60% of participants (n=20) held a bachelor's degree in English, with the remaining participants typically completing a field of study related to English language. A few participants completed qualifications in other areas, e.g., Nursing and Sciences, which are likely to be helpful for their role as an EMP teacher. Two respondents did not provide details about their undergraduate background.

Table 4.2
Respondents' fields of undergraduate study

Item	Frequency	Percentage
English	20	61
English Language & Literature	3	9
English Language Teaching (ELT)	1	3
Business English	1	3
Sciences	2	6
Management & Marketing	2	6
Unspecified	2	6
Nursing	1	3
Physical Therapy	1	3
Total	33	100

At undergraduate level, English was also the most common major at postgraduate level. As can be observed in Table 4.3, more than half of the respondents (n=19), majored in English. The rest of them had diverse majors in disciplines relevant to teaching English Language. One respondent did not provide his/her postgraduate background.

In relation to the professional status shown in Table 4.4 the results revealed that well over half of the respondents (n=20) were lecturers, while approximately a third (n=10) held the title of assistant professor. Out of the three remaining participants, one was a professor, one was an associate professor and the other a part-time lecturer.

Table 4.3
Respondents' fields of postgraduate study

Item	Frequency	Percentage
English	19	58
Teaching English	7	21
Applied Linguistics	2	6
ESP	2	6
English Literature & Linguistics	1	3
Linguistics	1	3
Unspecified (MA)	1	3
Total	33	100

Table 4.4
Respondents' Professional Status

Professional Status	Frequency	Percentage
Lecturer	20	61
Assistant Professor	10	30
Associate Professor	1	3
Professor	1	3
Part-time Lecturer	1	3
Total	33	100

In regard to teaching experience, almost half of the respondents (n=14) had more than 10 years of teaching experience in GE while just a quarter (n=11) had 5-10 years of experience. A smaller

number (n=3) were relatively new to teaching GE with only 1-4 years of experience. When asked specifically about their experience teaching EMP, respondents were much less experienced, with 58% (n=19) having only 1-4 years of experience, a quarter (n=8) having 5-10 years of teaching experience and only six respondents with more than 10 years' EMP teaching experience. Unfortunately, five respondents did not provide information on the length of time they had been teaching in GE. A possible reason for this might be that some teachers did not teach only GE or EMP courses but also taught other English language courses. Moreover, it may have been because of the limitation of the questionnaire design that I did not make this question compulsory. The overall length of time the respondents had spent teaching GE and EMP is illustrated in Table 4.5

Other than experience in teaching GE and EMP, seven respondents demonstrated that they had some experience in teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) e.g., EAP Science and EAP Architecture and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) such as English for engineering, English for communication and Business English. Three of these had taught ESP for a period of 1-4 years, while two possessed longer experience of teaching ESP. In terms of EAP, it was found that two respondents had more than 10 years of experience teaching EAP. This experience in teaching ESP and EAP could be beneficial to teaching EMP as in the literature EMP is classified as a subset of both ESP and EAP.

In terms of having a background in medical or other relevant areas, it was found that only three of the respondents possessed such experience. This includes having worked as a nurse, as a physical therapist, or completing their undergraduate education in Sciences and Physical Therapy which may be useful for their EMP teaching.

Table 4.5
Respondents' Teaching Experiences

General English (GE)			English for Medical Purposes (EMP)		
Years	Frequency	Percentage	Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-4 years	3	9	1-4 years	19	58
5-10 years	11	33	5-10 years	8	24
Over 10 years	14	42	Over 10 years	6	18
Not specified	5	15	Not specified	0	0
Total	33	100	Total	33	100

In summary, the demographic data show that the majority of participants were female and aged between 31-50 years old. All participants had completed at least a master's degree, most commonly in English or an English related field, while ten participants hold a doctoral degree. At undergraduate level there was a bit more variety in terms of majors undertaken; while most participants majored in an area related to English language, a few majored in a Medical related field such as Nursing and Physical therapy, which is likely to be useful in their role as EMP teachers. Interestingly, almost half of the respondents (n=14) were highly experienced GE teachers with more than 10 years teaching experience whereas more than half (n=19) had less than 4 years of experience teaching EMP. This illustrates that the respondents, while generally speaking highly experienced GE teachers, remained relatively new to EMP teaching.

4.3 EMP in the Thai Tertiary Context

Thailand's aspirations in relation to medical tourism, and the consequential need to upgrade the English skills of medical practitioners, have been discussed in Chapter 1.

In the Thai tertiary context, all Thai students in every university and major are required to take at least four compulsory English courses. Generally, the types of courses provided include Foundation courses 1 and 2, and General English 1 and 2, which are integrated language skills and study skills courses; other courses offered may be EAP or ESP courses as required by each major. The time normally allocated for English teaching is three to four periods of 50 minutes per week (Faculty of Medicine, 2019). In the Faculty of Medicine, KKU, the university that was the site of this research, students were required to complete 15 credits from 6 EMP courses (Faculty of Medicine, 2019).

In alignment with the data above on teaching experience (see Table 4.5), it is common for teachers who are teaching EMP to have begun their teaching career by teaching GE and then at a later stage to be assigned to teach in EMP without having received specialised training. In this study, as can be seen in Table 4.6, three-quarters of the respondents (n=24) did not receive teacher training in EMP before embarking on their teaching in this field. For the nine respondents (27%) who had received prior training, this appeared to be ad hoc and included EMP lesson planning, EMP teaching techniques, ESP course design, a practicum class, and a Medical English workshop.

Table 4.6

Teacher training in EMP prior to begin teaching EMP

Field of Training in EMP	Frequency	Percentage
Medical English workshop	1	3
Teaching EMP during MA practicum	1	3
ESP course design/ EMP research	1	3
EMP teaching techniques	3	9
ESP lesson planning	3	9
None	24	73
Total	33	100

The data show that the majority of the EMP teachers in this study were not equipped with EMP training prior to teaching it. This could be a constraint in enacting agency for teachers as they lacked knowledge of how to teach EMP.

4.3.1 Early Experience in Teaching English for Medical Purposes

Participants were asked to reveal their early impressions of their EMP teaching and were invited to respond to an open-ended question. The respondents expressed different impressions or experiences at the beginning period of their teaching of EMP (see Table 4.7). Notably, a considerable number of them, 68% (n=28), were impressed by their students, asserting that they had high levels of motivation and self-discipline (n=20). One respondent described medical students as “the most disciplined students I have ever met” (Q6). This was also exemplified by other teachers, who noted that they were very “attentive to classroom activities and lessons” (Q1), they have “great motivation despite their strong skills” (Q7) and undertook “great

preparation: they learned vocabulary beforehand” (Q12). Perhaps as a result, Q2 said “they understand what I explain to them quick.”

Moreover, teachers mentioned students’ high level of English proficiency (n=8) as exemplified by the following teacher, “I was impressed by the high level of English language competence of the medical students” (Q20). Two respondents noted that this was particular to EMP students, commenting that the students’ high level of English skill facilitated a more efficient teaching and learning environment: “Students have excellent language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which makes the teaching and learning process to progress very quickly” (Q23), and “I would say, they had good basic English skills. As they had a good command of English, when I taught them and gave them some exercises and assigned projects, they did a good job” (Q21). Another noticed that medical students’ language ability tended to be higher than that of nursing students (Q14).

Interestingly, one respondent detailed how she enacted her agency by showing a courageous investment in a creative way to get her point across. She intentionally made some pronunciation mistakes and let the students correct her to show that everyone can learn from mistakes: “Initially, students were not open to speaking in English...I made pronunciation problems and students corrected me. They then realised I was willing to make mistakes to learn, so can they when speaking or learning English” (Q26).

In addition to the positive aspects outlined above, teachers discussed some of the uncomfortable experiences they had early on in their teaching of EMP. For example, almost one third of the respondents (32%, n=13) reported that they had experienced anxiety when they first started teaching in this field. In particular, nearly half of these teachers (n=6) mentioned that their

anxiety resulted from what they perceived as their inadequate medical knowledge. For example, one respondent stated that, “I felt nervous teaching nursing students because I didn’t have a degree in Nursing” (Q31). For some teachers, their anxiety or nervousness spurred on their agency as they worked hard to overcome these challenges: “After I was assigned to teach EMP, I worked so hard to both learn some new unfamiliar words, and I wasn’t confident for the first time” (Q12) and “I was a bit nervous at the first time...I don’t have much medical knowledge so I have to work very hard” (Q9).

Table 4.7
Factors impacting on the early teaching experience

Items	Frequency*
Student factors	28
- High motivation and discipline	20
- High proficiency	8
Teacher factors	13
- Anxiety about medical knowledge	6
- Anxiety at high expectation and students’ characteristics	4
- Anxiety at inexperience	3
Total	41

Note: *This is a frequency count of how many times something was selected.

Participants were welcome to select more than one aspect.

As seen in one of the quotes above from Q9, Q12 and Q31, terminology represented a particular challenge, and this was also mentioned by four other respondents in relation to lesson preparation. For example, “When I first started teaching EMP, I was very nervous as it was

very challenged for me with all terminologies” (Q29). One respondent said they felt overwhelmed with unknown medical terms, “I felt overwhelmed with all the medical terms, most of them I had not known” (Q24). Similar to the examples above where participants’ challenging early experiences led to their enactment of agency, one respondent stated that medical terminology played an important role in his class preparation, “Preparing for class was more difficult and time consuming due to the medical terminologies involve” (Q25).

Four respondents talked about a mixture of emotions, referring to both their anxiety and excitement at the high levels of students’ abilities and expectations. For example, one respondent stated that, “When I started teaching EMP, I felt so excited and nervous...for the faculty of Medicine, all the people around me see it as a high standard subject with high expectation” (Q2). Another respondent stated that she sometimes felt challenged by students’ questions, “Sometimes I felt like I was challenged by the students' questions with those unfamiliar terminologies” (Q7). However, two respondents commented on the characteristics of medical students and stated it was a good opportunity for them as teachers to teach medical students. For example, one respondent said they felt excited to share their experience with medical students, “Mostly the mental health of this group of students are very strong. So, I feel very excited and want to share the experiences with them” (Q11). While the other respondent viewed the good characteristics of medical students as an affordance in teaching, “It was a great opportunity and really challenging because as we all know that medical students are good at all subjects” (Q19).

4.3.2 Current EMP Teaching Practices

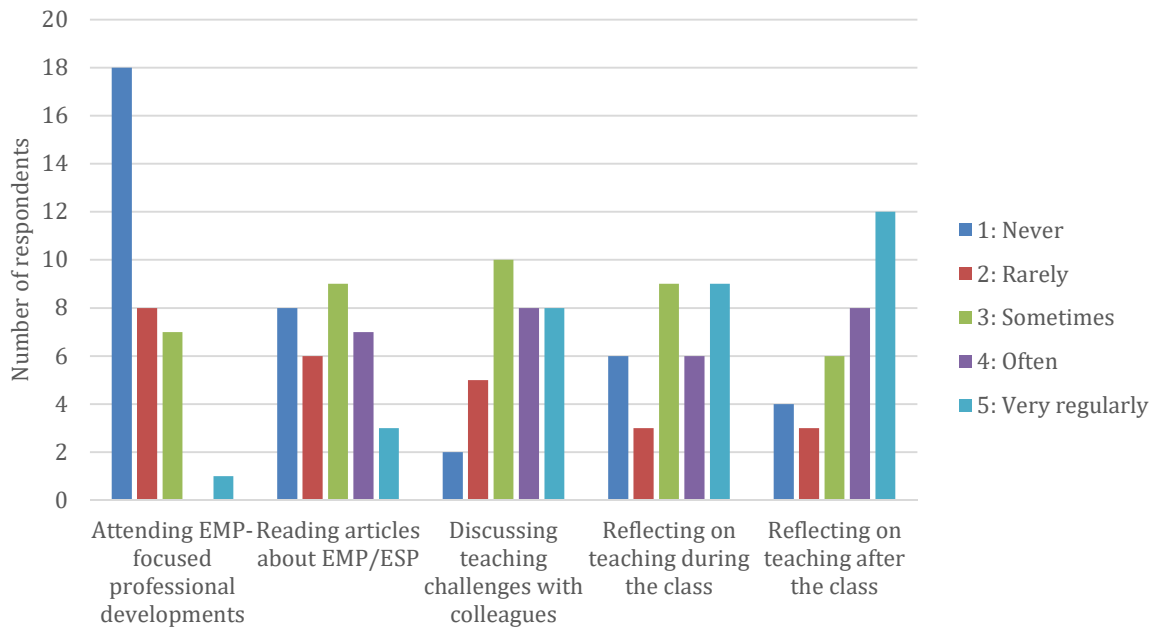
This section presents the findings regarding the practices teachers reported using when teaching EMP. It is divided into three subsections. To begin with, EMP teaching practices are presented, then the challenges impacting EMP teaching are outlined before providing an overview of the teaching materials used.

4.3.2.1 EMP Help-Seeking Strategies

Teachers reported enacting their agency through seeking help in a range of ways as illustrated in Figure 4.1. For example, reflecting on their teaching at the end of their class was the most regularly used and commonly rated item, while discussions with their colleagues on instructional challenges were sometimes practiced. This illustrates that teachers collaborated with colleagues and shared the difficulties they faced after their lessons. Earlier, in Section 1.3, it was reported^{1.3} that the vast majority of teachers had not received specialist professional development to support their teaching of EMP prior to teaching EMP, and this lack of training also continued during the period they taught EMP. Notably, 18 of the respondents had never attended professional development activities on EMP. Presumably professional development was either not provided, or if it was, they chose not to attend or were not supported to attend such events.

Figure 4.1

Help Seeking Strategies



4.3.2.2 The most Significant Challenge impacting EMP Teaching

Questionnaire participants were asked to rank challenges in terms of what they considered to be the top three most important challenges affecting their ability to teach EMP. A breakdown of respondent numbers is in Table 4.8.

Medical knowledge was ranked as the first challenge for almost all the respondents (n=24). Meanwhile, the number of students per classroom was ranked the second challenge, with slightly lower rates than medical knowledge. In addition, the third highest rated challenge was the level of students' English abilities. Interestingly, while most of the respondents ranked the medical knowledge as the biggest challenge, some of them (n=6) indicated it as the smallest. Indicates that not all EMP teachers treated medical knowledge as the biggest challenge impacting their ability to teach EMP. Moreover, it could be that medical knowledge was not

seen as such a necessity in the tool kit of an EMP teacher who might draw on other skills, such as knowledge of English and its use.

Table 4.8

The most significant challenge impacting ability to teach EMP

Rank	Challenges
1	My Medical knowledge
2	Number of students per classroom
3	The level of English ability of my students
4	My English language knowledge
5	My workload
6	Limited availability professional development opportunities
7	Materials and class equipment
8	My working atmosphere
9	The small number of colleagues

The questionnaire respondents were provided with a further open-ended question asking them to choose the one challenge from the same list which they thought most affected their teaching. This question was asked to invite them to delve deeper into one of the factors to reveal more clearly what the nature of their concern about it was. Teacher-related factors were ranked by most respondents as the most significant challenge affecting their EMP teaching followed by factors related to classroom, students, and course materials, as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9
Challenges most affect EMP teaching

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher related factors	19	58
- My medical knowledge	12	36
- My workload	2	6
- My English language knowledge	1	3
- Integrating both English and medical knowledge	1	3
- Time/energy consuming	1	3
- Small number of colleagues	1	3
- Limited availability of professional development opportunities	1	3
Classroom	10	30
- High number of students per classroom	7	21
- Small Classroom size	3	9
Student related factors	2	6
- The level of English ability of my students	1	3
- Student interest	1	3
Course material	2	6
- Textbook	2	6
Total	33	100%

The results show that slightly more than half of respondents (n=19) considered that factors relating to themselves as teachers and their teaching practice posed the most significant challenge to their teaching, though not all in their control – some are presumably impacted by institutional level factors, e.g., workload, number of colleagues and personal development.

Specifically, these related to concerns about a lack of medical knowledge affecting their instruction and a heavy workload. To address the challenge of medical knowledge, they exercised their agency to improve their knowledge of the medical field; as one respondent commented, “I have to improve my knowledge on medical science.” (Q1). However, this shows an awareness of the agency they needed to enact but not that they have actually enacted anything. Two respondents sought advice from people with more medical expertise as follows:

I think that medical knowledge is very important in teaching EMP which is sometimes very hard to acquire as we are not in the field and sometimes it is very specific. So we need to ask from medical teachers/doctors. (Q4)

As I have no background knowledge in medical field, I need to study more and I always consult with teachers who had more experience in teaching this course. (Q31)

On the other hand, some respondents prepared themselves beforehand by reading more medical texts. For example, “I was really concerned about my medical knowledge, and I spent a lot of time to prepare myself before the class began.” (Q19), “I have to read to get more knowledge beyond teaching preparation. So, I can teach with confidence.” (Q14). And one asked for students’ explanation on particular medical knowledge, “Sometimes I wasn’t sure with some medical related, I ask students to explain it in simple English to me.” (Q8). This clearly showed that teachers apply help-seeking strategies, such as asking experts in the field and their medical students, to enact their agency in teaching EMP. However, this warrants special mention as counter to Thai face-protecting expectations, an aspect that is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

Other challenges expressed include having a small number of colleagues, a lack of opportunities for professional development, their own level of English proficiency, integration of English knowledge with medical knowledge, and the time-consuming nature of teaching EMP. Teachers proposed a range of measures to tackle these challenges including increasing the number of teachers proportionate to that of students (Q30), and more preparation time for classes (Q27 and Q24). One respondent talked about their sense of responsibility towards their students demonstrating how they enacted their agency to “try to find time to prepare my teaching beforehand and think about the benefits that the students will get from this course” (Q24). This aligns with earlier data in section 4.3.1 where some teachers described how the challenging experiences that they encountered early on in their teaching spurred them to spend additional time preparing for their classes. Another respondent showed their strong sense of agency in how they saw their role and responsibility as an EMP teacher to students as:

How to combine English language knowledge and medical knowledge for my students is the thing that challenges me the most. We, as language instructors as well as medical professionals, need to make EMP easy, understandable, and practical for our students to get knowledge. (Q2)

Ten teachers reported factors relating to the class size, the high number of students per class and the small classroom size, as the most significant factors affecting their teaching. Nearly all these respondents (n=7) perceived that what affected their teaching the most was the high number of students in a classroom. This is evident in the open-ended comments by a range of participants. One respondent stated that teaching 50 high English proficiency students should be fun and create enthusiasm, but sometimes teaching went dully because students couldn't move around (Q23). Another respondent said that there was not enough time for everyone to

participate in some of the activities with more than 60 students in the class (Q16). A third emphasised how hard it is to manage classes of 50-70 students, as the large class size leaves learners with fewer opportunities to use and practise the language (Q12).

Three respondents considered the small size of the classroom as the challenge to their instruction. As one respondent said, “It was challenging to handle big class especially the room was small that we packed and couldn’t even walk around or move our chairs. English learning needs dynamic classrooms.” (Q18). So, they saw this as constraining their agency.

Therefore, various strategies were proposed by participants to support teachers in offsetting the impact of these challenges e.g., better use of grouping and group activities during classes, role-play activities and more focusing on presentation. This is interesting as they were aware of some potential solutions but hadn't implemented them. However, one participant commented that they had to teach with very few activities to be able to comply with the limitation of too many students in a small classroom. They stated that,

to have 40 students pack in a small classroom is really not applicable for an English class. We need more space and more time to practice conversation and to do some hands-on activities. I then had to teach with very few activities to be comply with that limited. (Q29)

In addition, student-related factors and course materials were viewed as equally significant challenges to teaching, each chosen by two respondents. Student-related factors concern students’ English proficiency and student interest. As one respondent stated, it was not easy to maintain the students’ interests for an hour and a half after their long hours of medical practices

(Q33). Another respondent said, “The level of my students was not ready for academic purpose. I needed to offer basic grammar lessons as well” (Q17). Hence, it is interesting to notice some respondents commented that students had low levels of English proficiency, which is in contrast to the earlier views where most respondents said medical students had high levels of English proficiency.

The final factor concerned course materials, as one respondent stated, “we lack of good and real example for students. Most of materials (textbook, example videos, e.g.) are in some certain therapeutics culture with limited number.” (Q5). Another one said that the teaching material dictated the direction of the course as they viewed the textbook as sufficient. They felt that it was impossible for someone without a medical degree to teach the course without a credible medical textbook (Q25).

Therefore, the respondents reported on appropriate measures to respond to the challenge of student-related factors and the inadequate textbook by suggesting that extra classes could be arranged to equip students with fundamental grammatical knowledge (Q17), using pair or group activities in their class (Q33), and relying on a commercial book (Q25), all of which would facilitate their teaching. These measures are in line with the suggestions above, where teachers also talked about applying more effective grouping and additional use of grouping to overcome challenges relating to the high number of students per class and the small classroom size.

4.3.2.3 Teaching Materials

As previously discussed in 4.3.2.2, the course material was regarded as having a significant impact on how teachers taught EMP. This section will discuss more about the teaching materials for EMP courses. With respect to the respondents’ choices of materials for teaching EMP

courses as illustrated in Table 4.10, the results revealed that commercial textbooks or course books were most utilised (n=28), followed by teacher-developed PowerPoint presentations (n=25), with medical articles and authentic audio-materials with a focus on EMP used by approximately half of the respondents (n=18). The materials rated as the least used included TV series, student video clips, “a jeopardy game” for medical term review and additional medical vocabulary, each of which was used by only one respondent.

Table 4.10
Materials used in EMP teaching

Item	Frequency
Commercial textbooks/course books	28
PowerPoint presentations by teachers	25
Authentic EMP focused audio materials	18
Medical articles	18
EMP focused video clips	17
Websites designed for English learning	15
PowerPoint presentations by students	13
Self-created Materials	13
Websites designed for medical practitioners	13
Self-compiled textbooks/coursebooks	13
Medical news	12
Others (TV series, student video clips, medical vocabularies, games)	4
Total	189

Note: *This is a frequency count of how many times something was selected.

Participants were welcome to select as many materials as relevant.

The majority of teachers preferred existing material, with not much agency being enacted in this respect. However, alongside this, a relatively high number of teachers used their agency to locate resources and were even more agentic in creating their own material, e.g. PowerPoint presentations (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11
Most useful material

Item	Frequency
Commercial text	16
Others (Background knowledge, Audiovisual materials, TV series)	7
Medical articles	3
Medical news	3
Authentic EMP focused video	2
Self-compiled textbook	1
Websites designed for medical practitioners	1
Total	33

The key finding here is that most teachers preferred existing materials due to their ease of use and because it saved them the time of developing their own materials. For some teachers, having ready-to-use materials was helpful because they ensured coverage of essential content, language use, and vocabulary for students.

4.4 Transition from General English to English for Medical

Purposes

In this section, the teachers' views on the differences between GE and EMP are firstly presented, followed by teachers' views on EMP influences. Finally, teachers' views on the actions needed to improve EMP teaching are reported.

4.4.1 Differences between GE and EMP

Item 14 investigated the respondents' point of view on the differences between EMP and GE. The results showed that 12 of the respondents asserted that the distinction lay in a need for self-improvement in terms of specific knowledge in the field of medical English, and knowledge of technical vocabulary, as exhibited in Table 4.12. Two respondents stated that you need to equip yourself and keep up to date with knowledge in the EMP field. Another three respondents said that EMP needs good preparation, "Just well prepare and be confident" (Q19). These responses signify strong teacher awareness of their roles and responsibility in accordance with van Lier's (2008) model of teacher agency.

Over one third of the respondents (n=12) believed that what distinguished EMP from GE was the nature of EMP and student characteristics. Six respondents stated the technical difficulty of the content was what differentiated them, while the other six respondents emphasised the student characteristics, stating that EMP students possess a high level of motivation, intelligence, and concentration. For example, Q6 said, "The students are very smart and disciplined" and Q28 said, "Students are highly motivated." This aligns with earlier findings presented in Section 4.3.1 on Early Experience in Teaching EMP, where several teachers

discussed a distinctive characteristic being that EMP students' advanced English proficiency facilitated a more effective teaching and learning environment.

A relatively small number of participants (n=5) considered medical/English skills and knowledge, such as technical terminology or background knowledge of medical problems or situations, as a unique feature of EMP, e.g., “It's different because the teacher has to have a working knowledge of basic medical vocabulary and situations” (Q28). This is also exemplified by another participant: “The differences are the vocabulary that mostly are the technical terms and the texts that are mostly about medical contexts.” (Q20). Interestingly, respondent Q30 viewed that teaching EMP had benefitted her, “Teaching in this area allows us to have a broader knowledge especially through medical terminology and medical knowledge.”

The rest (n=4) described teaching practices, as in preparation of activities or use of resources related to medical issues, as what differentiates the two fields (Q8, 26, 2 and 21). For example, one respondent stated that the EMP classes were bigger than GE classes,

The class sizes are much bigger and there is too much focus on the book. However, there are times when you can supplement the book with videos and discussions about medical issues and also doctor issues which are happening now. (Q26)

Another wrote: “I will tell them to prepare more lessons and activities, as students need to get involve with those activities in medical contexts” (Q21).

Table 4.12
Differences between EMP and GE

Item	Frequency
Self-improvement	12
Nature of EMP	6
Student characteristics	6
Medical/English skills & knowledge	5
Teaching practices	4
Total	33

4.4.2 Teachers' Views on EMP Influences

As shown in Table 4.13, the results demonstrated that over three-quarters of the respondents (n=27) said EMP had changed them in a range of different ways. Specifically, more than half of them (n=16) mentioned that it cultivated a sense of self-improvement such as an opportunity to acquire knowledge in a new field, or motivation to broaden their knowledge. Four respondents suggested that it transformed them into life-long learners. Meanwhile, eight stated that teaching EMP had prompted them to prepare themselves beforehand by designing a lesson tailored to students' needs or learning more about the field. While teaching EMP clearly spurred teachers to learn more about the field and to ensure they were well-prepared, only three respondents said that they had changed their teaching approaches in this field by implementing ESP-based practices or sharing their professional experiences with the students. This finding may suggest that teaching approaches for EMP and GE were not significantly different, so there was no need for them to change the types of activities or methods they implemented in classrooms.

Table 4.13*Aspects EMP has changed the respondents*

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Self-improvement	16	59
Preparation	8	30
Teaching practices	3	11
Total	27	100%

4.4.3 Actions to Improve EMP Teaching

In reference to the results demonstrating the respondents' actions to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching (see Table 4.14), notably, some of them (n=11) carried out self-improvement through various activities, in line with the data in 4.4.1, where participants talked of undertaking a variety of activities, such as reading medical articles and watching television series related to medical science. Two respondents said, "I keep reading online journal articles in medical" (Q13 and Q8), while Q10 read prescriptions and Q5 stated they "watch some well selected TV series."

Several of them, as in 21.4 % (n=6), used help-seeking strategies by seeking advice from their colleagues, experts, or their students (Q13, Q5, Q8 and Q18). For example, one respondent spoke about "talking with my friends and colleagues about the details within medical field" (Q13), and another one stated they "discuss with medical practitioners" (Q5). This is an example of a help-seeking strategy where teachers enact their agency by seeking help from various kinds of sources.

Table 4.14*Actions to improve EMP teaching*

Item	Frequency
Self-improvement	11
Consult friends/colleagues/experts	6
Attend workshops	4
Do more preparation	4
Develop activities	3
Nothing	3
Ask for student feedback	1
Class observation	1
Total	33

In addition, it was found that four of them participated in workshops and seminars, and three developed some activities, such as a self-study session, an audio-visual resource, or inviting native speakers to join a role play (Q23, Q26 and Q33), in order to improve their EMP teaching. In addition, two of the respondents devoted time to preparing the lesson beforehand (Q6). Finally, one of them sought feedback from their students: “I asked them to give some feedbacks” (Q33), and another did a class observation (Q31).

4.5 Teachers’ Perspectives on EMP teaching Scenarios

To investigate the perspectives of EMP teachers on different approaches used in teaching, the questionnaire put forward four teacher scenarios representing different approaches to EMP

teaching (see Table 4.15). The questionnaire respondents were asked to rate how well they thought each scenario suited EMP teaching in Thailand at present.

Table 4.15

EMP teaching scenarios

EMP Teachers	Teaching Scenarios
Keeri	Has recently joined the EMP team. He assesses some of the medical courses his students are studying so he knows what they are studying. He decides to read medical articles in English on the topics his students are studying in class. He develops class readings by adapting short passages from the articles. He follows the course that has been provided for him by the institution. There are aspects of the course that could be improved, but he does not have the confidence in his deep knowledge of EMP to make changes.
Nara	Has recently joined the EMP team. She asks one of the experienced teachers whether she can borrow the course material she uses, and then she bases her classroom teaching on these. When she doesn't understand a medical term, she looks it up in a dictionary and keeps a vocabulary list. She sometimes felt that changes should be made to the course but didn't feel empowered to make them.
Payu	Has recently joined the EMP team. He bases his courses on general proficiency in English, structuring the around grammatical structures as he did for general English courses. When he can find them, he uses readings from English textbooks on medical themes, and introduces medical vocabulary into the lessons.
Fahsai	Has recently joined the EMP team. She participates in an online group for ESP teachers and downloads ideas and lessons from them. She searched book publishers' websites to find a good EMP course book and asked her department to buy it for her courses. She joins meetings of the Medical Faculty so she can learn more about their work and what students need.

In the scenarios, each teacher navigates their role with a unique blend of initiative and constraint. First, **Keeri** demonstrates a strong sense of agency through his proactive research; he actively seeks out medical articles to tailor his lessons. However, his capacity to act is significantly mediated by his newness and the rigid syllabus. He takes a very active role in expanding his exposure to medical English, but lacks the confidence to make the changes he sees as beneficial in improving courses.

Second, **Nara's** agency is expressed through diligent, habitual preparation. She looks up unfamiliar terms, and keeps her own vocabulary list. Leaning on experienced colleagues and established resources makes her feel safe. She knows improvements are needed and cares about getting things right, but without the authority or confidence to push changes, she keeps her focus on accuracy and thorough preparation.

Third, **Payu** exercises his agency by strategically relying on his established strengths in grammar, a familiar and secure teaching identity. His past experiences as a general English teacher and a lack of access to specialised resources act as powerful factors that mediate his choices. His agency is therefore directed toward the goal he feels most responsible for and equipped to handle: building general language proficiency, while he works to integrate the medical context.

And lastly, **Fahsai** exemplifies a highly enacted form of agency. She actively builds a support network – from online communities to faculty meetings – which expands her resources and her confidence. She treats her understanding of the students' needs as a continuous process, and her agency is defined by this ongoing responsibility to align her course directly with the evolving realities of the medical program.

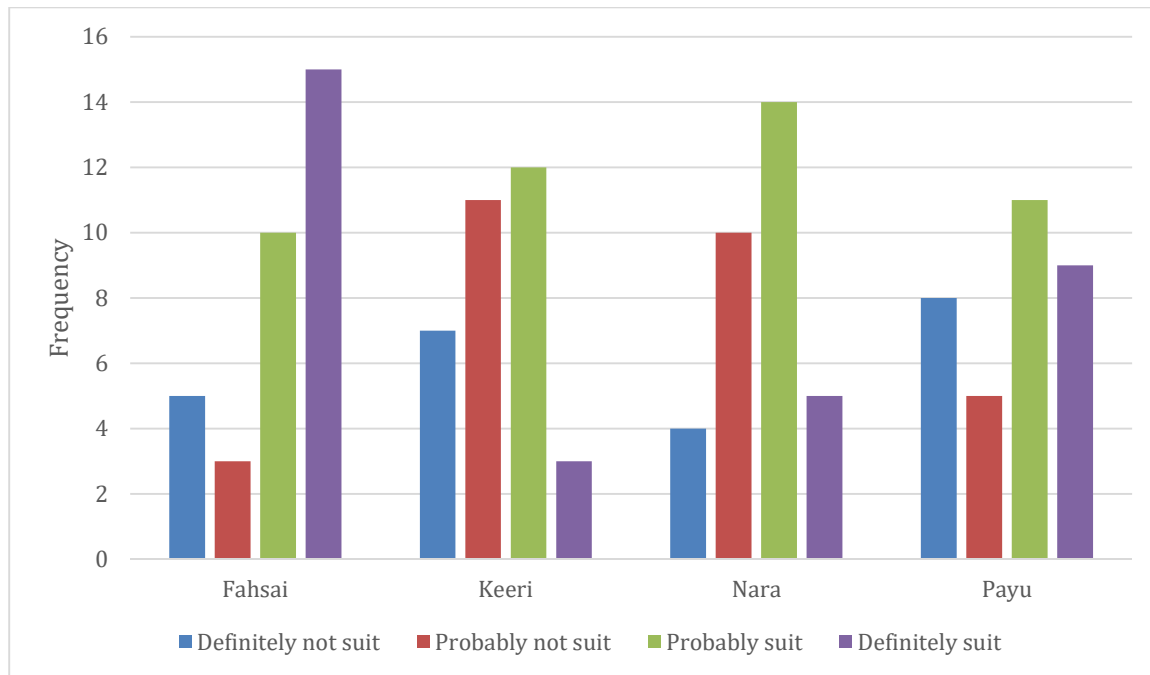
When requested to assess the suitability of the fictional teacher, as shown in Figure 4.2, it is noticeable that three-quarters of the respondents were in favour of Fahsai as an EMP teacher. In particular, almost half of them, constituting 15 participants, held that she would definitely be a suitable EMP teacher; in the same manner, 10 participants considered her as probably suitable.

On the other hand, the respondents had mixed views for Keeri. Based on the scenario, Keeri explored the students' medical courses to learn what they were studying, read medical articles in English and developed class reading materials from those articles. He thought some aspects of the provided course could be improved, but he did not have the confidence to make changes. Particularly, 11 respondents held that he would probably be suitable in their teaching context. In contrast, the same number had an opposing opinion in that he would probably not fit the context. It is very interesting to see that the same number of respondents have totally different points of view toward this teacher. However, only a small proportion of the respondents ($n=3$) viewed that he would definitely be a suitable EMP teacher.

Different views as to whether Nara would be a good choice for the EMP context are also observed. That is, 14 of the respondents believed that this teacher would probably be a suitable EMP teacher, while 10 participants considered her as unsuitable. The rest of the respondents had different views as well; five of them considered that she was the most suitable EMP teacher, with four not seeing her as at all suitable.

For the last one, Payu, the results showed that more than half of the respondents shared the view that Payu was suited to becoming an EMP teacher. Notably, a good number of them, 11, viewed him as a possible choice for the team, and nine saw him as definitely suitable one.

Figure 4.2
Suitability of teachers



In line with views about the teacher's suitability as shown in Figure 4.2 and with reference to Table 4.16, the results revealed that when asked to choose one of the fictional teachers as their EMP team member (see Table 4.16), nearly three-quarters of those responding to the question had a preference for Fahsai because of her personal characteristics and ability, including a sense of self-improvement, comprehensive knowledge and enthusiasm. For instance, one respondent who chose Fahsai indicated that this was “because she seems to be creative and she would understand the students' need. She can be the one who improve the course to suit the students well” (Q16). Another respondent explained: “She is enthusiastic, has the willingness to teach and understand the basic needs of her students” (Q14). In a further example, one respondent commented on her collaboration with medical faculty: “because she has contact with Medical faculty and is learning about what the students actually need” (Q28).

Different preferences were observed among the rest of them. Keeri was the next most preferred teacher with 15 % of teachers preferring him, particularly appreciating his knowledge of nursing and medical fields. One respondent stated why they chose Keeri: “He is ready to launch the class but seemly he needs more encouragement to stimulate himself” (Q11). Another respondent said their preference was “because he seems to prepare more about the medical contexts and might understand what is more suitable for students” (Q13).

A small number of teachers chose Nara and Payu as the most preferred teacher. Twelve percent chose Nara over other candidates largely due to her personality, especially her willingness to learn from those with more experience, according to the statement made by one respondent: “as she tries to learn from experienced teachers and puts emphasis on medical terms” (Q24). Another respondent emphasised this point further: “everyone needs a guideline and experienced mentor. After a while, that teacher can develop his/her own materials from teaching/learning experience gained” (Q18). The others said they would recruit Payu as a member of their staff because of his English knowledge.

Table 4.16
Most preferred teacher

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Fahsai	20	61
Keeri	5	15
Nara	4	12
Payu	4	12
Total	33	100

These results align with the responses when teachers were asked about their least preferred teacher (see Table 4.17). One third of those responding to the question (39%) did not chose Payu to be in their EMP team, with the explanation that his ability and attitude may not be suitable for this field, including overemphasis on grammar and a lack of self-improvement or adaptability. For example, one respondent rejected him “because he focuses too much on grammatical structures” (Q20). Another one stated that he “tries to get medical students to speak perfect grammatical English which is over the practical needs of future medical professionals under the scope of their usage” (Q25). Moreover, one respondent explained: “because he only teaches in his comfort zone, has no passion for self-development nor apply more appropriate teaching techniques” (Q14).

Nara was the least preferred teacher for nearly a third of respondents (26%) due to her lacking ability and empowerment, particularly a lack of understanding about EMP practices and inadaptability. For instance, one respondent indicated that “It is because she cannot change and does not try to change” (Q19). And one respondent agreed on the same reason: “because she doesn’t understand how to teach EMP” (Q15). On the other hand, one respondent talked about a different aspect: “because she didn't feel empowered to make her class” (Q2). Also, Keeri was selected as the least preferred teacher by 20% of respondents for the same reason as Nara. One respondent indicated it was due to his lack of confidence, “because he is only use part of the academic journals and is lacking confidence. If they don't know something medically, they should learn it and be more confident, but it seemed like they wouldn't do that” (Q26).

Interestingly, only 15% of them chose Fahsai as the least preferred. This finding suggests that Fahsai is the most preferable choice, which is consistent with the responses to the previous item.

Table 4.17
Least preferred teacher

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Payu	13	39
Nara	9	26
Keeri	7	20
Fahsai	4	15
Total	33	100%

To sum up, most teachers gravitated toward Fahsai, praising her enthusiasm, drive for self-improvement, strong EMP knowledge, and links with the medical faculty – very few put her last. Views on the others were more mixed: some valued Keeri’s preparation and Nara’s willingness to learn, but many steered away from Payu for focusing too much on grammar and from Nara (and to a lesser extent Keeri) for limited adaptability, confidence, and sense of empowerment.

4.5.1 Teachers’ Focus on the EMP students

Table 4.178 portrays the finding on what teachers believed the students should gain from EMP courses. Participants could tick as many items as they thought were important. It was discovered that almost all of the respondents (n=31) agreed that English communication skills and practices for talking to doctors, nurses and patients are of importance for their professional practice in the future, followed by cross-cultural communication (n=22). Interestingly, two items rated equally important by 20 of the respondents were life-long learning skills and knowledge of the English for medical terms. Considered least important among all choices were layman English

for medical terms, understanding of research papers, variations by teaching materials and learning activities.

Table 4.18

What students should gain from EMP course?

Item	Frequency
English skills for communication with Medical staff	31
Cross-cultural communication	22
Knowledge of the English for Medical terms	20
Life-long learning skills	20
English language structures	17
Practical Medical knowledge	13
Understanding of Medical contents	10
Skills for exam success	8
Others	3
Total	144

Note: *This is a frequency count of how many times something was selected.

Participants were welcome to select as many aspects as relevant.

As can be observed in Table 4.199, when asked to rank the three most important benefits for the students, the respondents rated English communication skills and practice of talking to doctors, nurses and patients as the most crucial aspect, considering that they could contribute to better communication and professional development, be applied to real situations, and were to be achieved according to the course objectives. What ranked second was knowledge of English for medical terms which could be useful for their learning and future careers. Moreover,

one respondent stated that it would also advance students in the academic field, “English for medical terms is important for writing and getting published in an academic journal” (Q26). Lastly, the third one was practical knowledge in medicine and medical practices, with the respondents explaining that the students could really apply these in their work, and they could be applied to many people particularly patients and doctors.

Table 4.19

Three most important benefits for students

Rank	Most important benefits
1	English communication skills & practice talking to doctors, nurses and patients
2	Knowledge of English for medical terms
3	Practical knowledge in medicine & medical practices
4	Cross-cultural communication
	Life-long learning skills
5	Understanding of medical content
6	English language structures
7	Others (please specify)

In Table 4.20, nearly one third of the respondents (27%) stated that the item rated as the most important factors affects their teaching was influenced by course objectives, in that their courses focused on communication, hence English communication skills and practice talking to doctors, nurses and patients being their priority. In addition, the same percentage of them (27%) mentioned materials, especially the contents of the book or other materials, as what influenced them to judge a particular item as most important. On the other hand, only a small number of

them (6%) asserted that experience and feedback were the factors influencing their choice given in the prior question, about the three most important benefits for students.

Table 4.20
Most important factors affecting teaching

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Course objectives	9	27
Materials	9	27
Class activities	8	24
Class size	3	10
Experience	2	6
Feedback	2	6
Total	33	100%

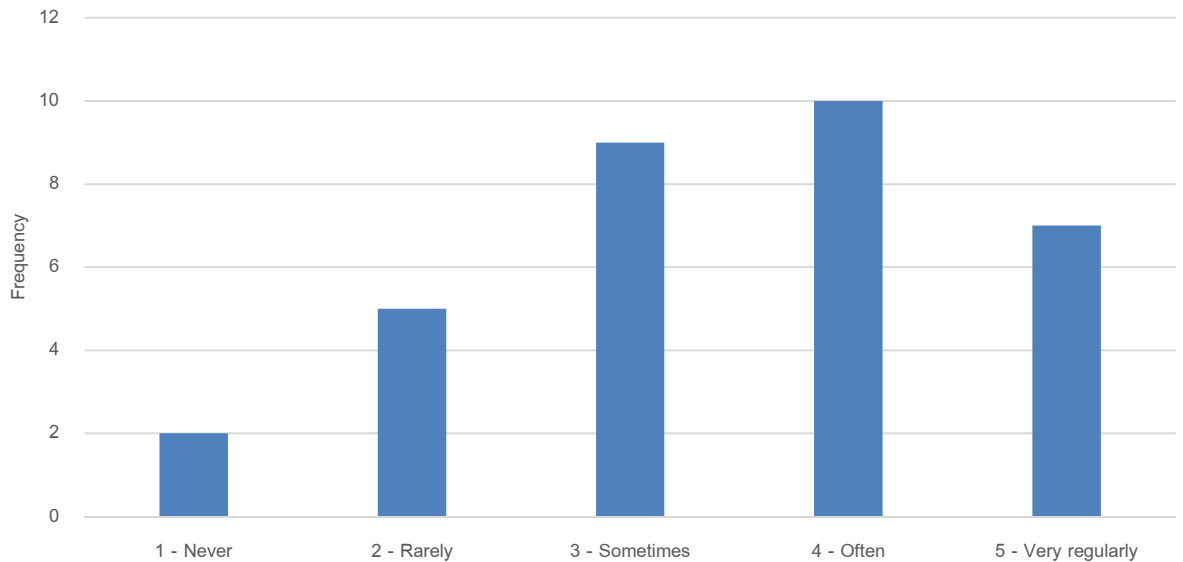
From this it can be inferred that teachers were influenced by the priority given to the item by the textbook. They perhaps didn't have strong views themselves. Perhaps with reference to their memories of experience as novice teachers they were influenced by existing materials such as textbooks rather than their own teaching experience.

4.5.2 Collaboration

As displayed in Figure 4.3, the results showed that respondents had a varying degree of collaboration with their EMP colleagues. Specifically, 10 of them often collaborated with other EMP staff, with seven having collaboration on a regular basis and two never having any such collaboration.

Figure 4.3

Degree of collaboration with EMP staff



In respect of forms of collaboration, where teachers could tick as many items as applied, it was discovered that the majority of the respondents (n=23) collaborated with other EMP staff on teaching materials, with 18 of them collaborating equally on assessment of the students and concerns over students' progress (see Table 4.21). Despite that, a single respondent collaborated on almost everything including the answer keys of course books; another respondent never had any collaboration since they deemed it unnecessary.

Only one respondent collaborated with EMP practitioners in a different fashion to the others, including checking the accuracy of answer keys, giving emotional support, and complaining about the workload, as evidenced in the following statement: “accuracy of the answer keys of the course book, giving moral support and venting out about the workload” (Q24).

Table 4.21
Forms of collaboration

Item	Frequency
Course design	15
Teaching materials	23
Student assessment	18
Concerns about students' progress	18
Concerns about the program's quality	8
Ways to improve teaching	15
Almost everything as a team	1
No collaboration related to teaching	1
Answer keys, moral support, talking about workload	1
Total	100

Note: *This is a frequency count of how many times something was selected.

Participants were welcome to select more than one aspect.

Figure 4.4 illustrates the frequency of their collaboration with medical teaching staff, indicating that a fair share of the respondents (n=12) never had collaboration with medical teachers. Only four of them were found to collaborate with the medical teachers on a very regular basis, leaving the rest with a lesser degree of collaboration.

As depicted in Table 4.22, where teachers could tick as many as applied, more than half of the respondents, namely 18, indicated that they usually collaborated with medical teachers on course design, which is in line with the responses about their collaboration with other EMP

staff. Additionally, almost half of them (n=15) had collaboration with those medical teachers on instructional materials and assessment of the students, which was similar to the previous item again. Compared to their collaboration with other EMP staff, fewer of them collaborated with the medical teachers on the students' progress. What's more, a small proportion of them, particularly n=5, never collaborated with the medical teachers.

Figure 4.4

Frequency of collaboration with medical teachers

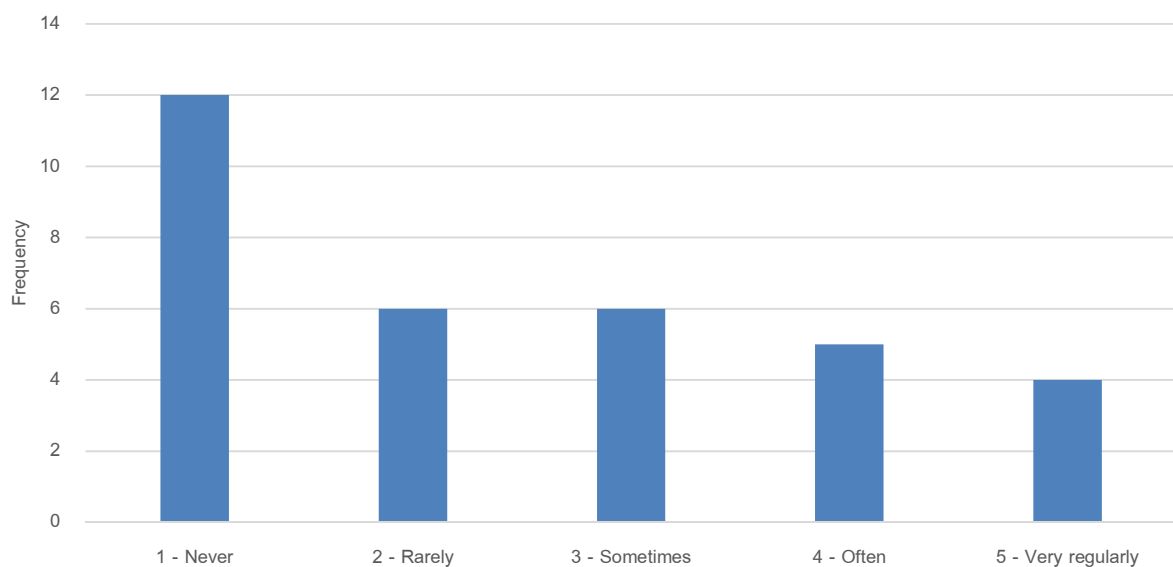


Table 4.22*Areas of collaboration with medical teachers*

Item	Frequency
Course design	18
Teaching materials	15
Student assessment	15
Course evaluation	12
Concerns about students' progress	10
Concerns about the program's quality	8
Ways to improve teaching	9
Never	5
Total	92

Note: *This is a frequency count of how many times something was selected.

Participants were welcome to select more than one aspect.

In relation to the decisions made from collaboration with other teachers, there were mixed responses, as indicated in Table 4.23. For example, one third of them (n=11) collaborated with those teachers on EMP materials, such as selecting a suitable textbook, adjusting the contents to suit students' levels, or designing the course. One respondent stated, "Our decision on the process of using the teaching material greatly affects the classroom atmosphere and students' output" (Q25), which shows her sense of agency on the responsibility to the classroom and the students.

The same number of them (n=11) also collaborated on teaching preparation, for example, choosing class activities, sharing teaching experiences and discussing students' needs, to design

the course. For instance, one respondent said, “We work together and decide on the class activities that can benefit the students as the health care professional” (Q16). Another respondent said, “I collaborated with other teachers to talk lessons and classroom activities” (Q21). One respondent indicated, “I worked with the coordinator and shared my experiences from the previous semester to help make the new semester better” (Q28).

A small number of them (n=6) discussed teaching problems such as a classroom size with other teachers. One respondent said, “About the classroom size I mentioned, students also felt uncomfortable in a packed classroom. I pointed out this and made sure they reassure their faculty to provide a better room for them” Q18, while other respondents collaborated on student performance, as in grading. An interesting comment made by Q33, namely, “I used to discuss about a student who did not collaborate in learning and the suggestion was to ignore him or her but to focus on the majority. I took the suggestion into consideration”, suggests that their sense of agency was strongly impacted by students’ characteristics.

Table 4.23

Decision as a result of collaboration

Item	Frequency
EMP text	11
Teaching preparation	11
Instructional problems	6
Student performance	5
Total	33

According to the data, half of the respondents had collaborations which in some way differed from those listed in the questionnaire. Three-quarters (n=12) of these had collaboration with their colleagues or medical practitioners for different reasons, including seeking help/advice on the workload, facilities and teaching and asking for additional information, with the remaining proportion (n=4) working directly with their students to explore their needs and ask for explanation of medical terms.

In summing up, there was a clear difference in whom the respondents collaborated with and on what. Collaboration was more frequent and pedagogically focused with EMP colleagues, while collaboration with medical teachers was less common and more concentrated on course design and evaluation.

4.6 Teachers' Thinking about the Career of EMP Teaching

This section illustrates how the EMP teachers looked at the field in terms of their career. The teachers' perspectives on their role, their professional requirements, and the professional development scenarios are presented below.

4.6.1 The Role of an EMP Teacher

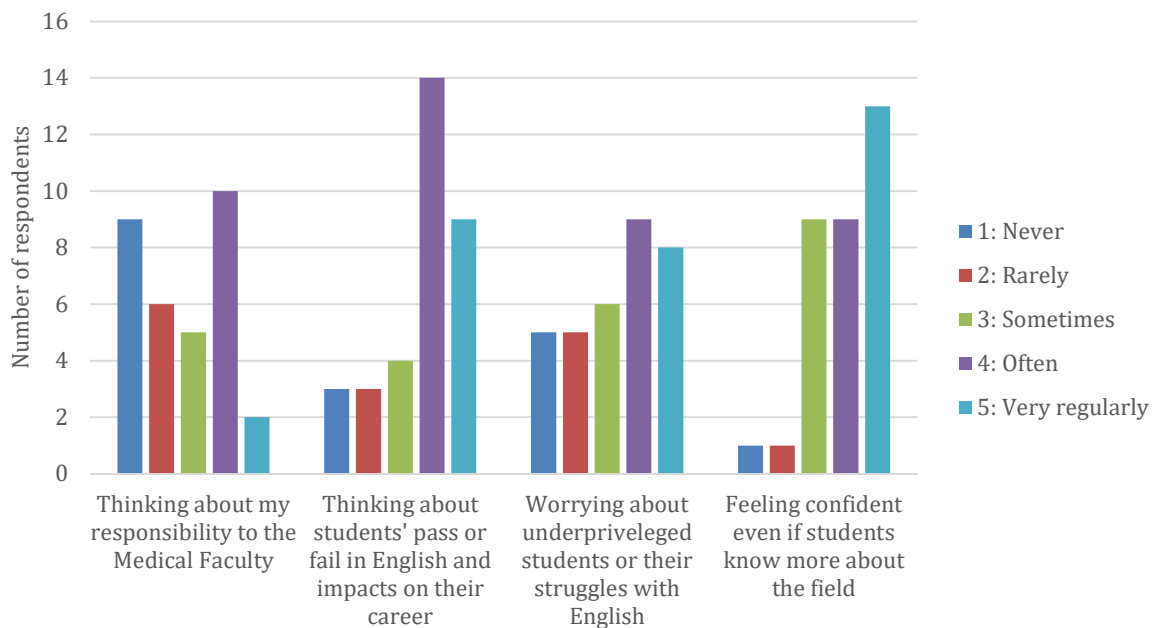
A major consideration for some EMP teachers was the significance of the success or failure of the students in their classes and the subsequent impact on their own future careers as teachers. As Figure 4.5 shows, the results demonstrated that a substantial number of the respondents (n=23) agreed that they were concerned over the students' pass or fail results in their English courses and the potential impacts on future careers. Although students had more comprehensive knowledge about the field than the EMP teachers, this sense that they were in fact fallible

enabled 13 respondents to maintain their sense of confidence as teachers. On the other hand, nine participants never had any thought about their responsibility to the Faculty of Medicine at their university; this might hint at minimal or no collaboration between the teachers and the faculty.

As can be seen in Figure 4.5, the results demonstrated that a substantial number of the respondents, $n=22$, did not lose any confidence, despite the fact that their students were well equipped with more medical knowledge. Some of the respondents used this to inform their class activities, allowing students to share their knowledge or explain the issue in English, for example: “Let them share to the class so that everyone and also the teacher can understand more” (Q12). Others attempted to prepare themselves better and improve their knowledge, “I need to boost my knowledge of ground-level medical practices in order to earn the confidence of my students” (Q25), “I just need to be more prepare and familiarize myself with the lesson before going to teach” (Q29). However, two respondents emphasised that they always told their students they were English teachers, not medical teachers, “I always remind them of my language training not medical” (Q25), “My area of expertise was to help them speak better (or read)” (Q28). Interestingly, one respondent mentioned accepting that your students know more than you in the field is an affordance, “If you are honest with the students in things you don't know, they respect you ”(Q26).

Figure 4.5

The role of an EMP teacher



In addition, two thirds of the respondents (n=23) were found to be concerned for students' performance in the course; to ease their concern, they mentioned offering assistance to those struggling with the course, for example, "I offer part-time teaching that will be able to make students understand and able to catch up with other students" (Q30), "I help them to pass the course so that they can focus with their major rather than English courses" (Q1). Some respondents added more activities to improve their understanding, "I add some activities to assist their future works" (Q32). Three of them were worried about those from a disadvantaged background who struggled with English proficiency; they provided those students with some forms of support, such as emotional support and advice: "I talked to students and give recommendations to them. Also, to tell them in which English skills they need to improve. They liked the feedback" (Q21). A few respondents (n=12) were concerned with their responsibility to the Faculty of Medicine; this may hint that the collaboration between the teachers and the faculty did not seem to be so rare.

4.6.2 Professional Requirements

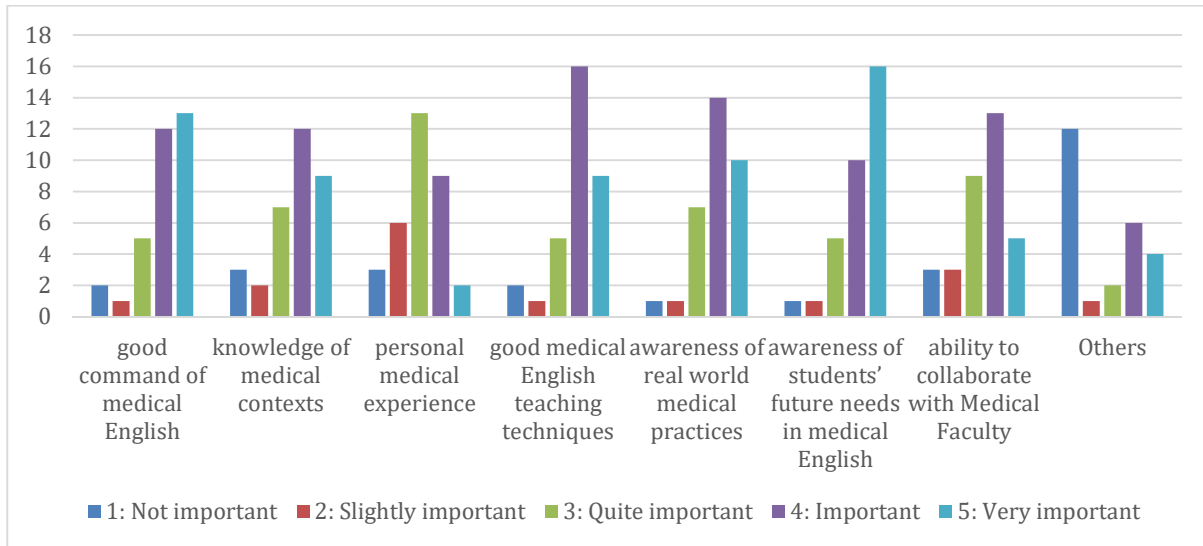
As many teachers reported entering EMP by chance, it was interesting to see what qualifications they thought an EMP should have. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to rate from 1 (*not important*) to 5 (*very important*) the features which they thought were important in terms of EMP teachers' professional knowledge.

In Figure 4.6, concerning the significance of each aspect required for EMP teachers, it can be seen that overall the item of highest importance rated by about half of the respondents, namely 26, was awareness of students' future needs in Medical English, along with a good command of Medical English which was rated by 25 as important. In the meantime, good medical English teaching techniques, followed by awareness of real-world medical practice and the ability to collaborate with the Faculty of Medicine, achieved an important level as well. What was considered important by the lowest number of respondents included the ability to design authentic activities, attitudes, and knowledge of the field.

Nevertheless, the results showed other aspects which 10 of the respondents considered crucial for EMP. Six among them viewed that the essential trait for EMP was being able to design authentic activities. On the contrary, the rest had different opinions, in that one mentioned attitudes as a crucial quality, while the others argued that knowledge of the field was of importance.

Figure 4.6

Professional knowledge the teachers thought important to their EMP career



Regarding professional development, some of the respondents had carried out professional development in different aspects. Almost half of them (n=15) had joined conferences or seminars, with two respondents each conducting research, attending training courses or stand-alone talks and pursuing higher education. Similarly, two of the respondents were found to have undertaken professional development in various other areas, namely communication skills, job-related skills, medical English, medical practices, and teaching strategies.

4.6.3 Perspectives on Teachers' Professional Development Scenarios

To find out what the EMP teachers would do to develop their professional skills, the questionnaire provided four scenarios representing four different methods of professional development shown in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24
Teaching scenarios

EMP Teachers	Methods of professional development
Tantawan	Usually reads medical articles in English and participates in an online group for EMP teachers to download ideas and lessons from them. She believes that EMP teachers need to be up to date with medical related knowledge as well.
Mali	Often attends both national and international TESOL conferences held in Thailand because she thinks it is the best way to update her English teaching knowledge.
Chaba	Would like to learn and develop her teaching techniques in EMP. She usually attends TESOL workshops arranged by different institutes in Thailand, but thinks that these are not specific enough for her work in EMP. She talks with colleagues about the need to have opportunities focusing on EMP.
Kajon	Loves to conduct research and participate in both national and international TESOL conferences held in Thailand where he has opportunity to discuss and exchange idea with other teachers. He believes these experiences enhance his professional skills. However, he struggles to find time to conduct research and he worries about the impact on his professional future.

As displayed in

Table 4.25, the results demonstrated that when asked to choose one of the four teachers as a role model, the majority of the respondents, representing n=19, would opt for Tantawan, whereas 11 would prefer Chaba as their role model.

Table 4.25*Role model teacher*

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Tantawan	19	58
Chaba	11	33
Mali	2	6
Kajon	1	3
Total	33	100%

Regarding the respondents' reasons to choose a fictional teacher in the previous item, over half of them (n=19) preferred Tantawan, largely due to her sense of constant self-improvement through reading and participation in training courses, followed by attitudes, personal attributes and abilities, as in knowledge of medical content (n=9). One respondent stated: "EMP teacher should attend training courses, sometimes visit hospital and clinic, maybe ask subject matter teachers, try to practice medical language with medical staff, and use some medical specialized dictionaries" (Q2). Another wrote, "This person looks focused and promising as EMP teacher" (Q18). Moreover, some respondents chose Tantawan due to the benefits of online sessions she participated in (n=2), "Tantawan mixed with the right group of teachers who are in the same specific field, so they can share information needed for improving their teaching" (Q33).

Nine of the respondents chose Chaba, valuing her self-improvement, such as attendance in workshops, conferences, and seminars, "Chaba because she would be able to apply the knowledge from the conference to improve her teaching to suit students' need" (Q16). Her personality and ability, as in activeness and teaching techniques, were considered by two respondents, "As Chaba is an active person to learn and gain more knowledge for her work in EMP" (Q21). The same proportion were impressed with her appropriate practices such as

collaboration with others: “Chaba collaborates with her colleagues and attends workshops – both feasible activities for me” (Q28).

Meanwhile, the two respondents choosing Mali took into consideration her ability, as in strong basic knowledge and the benefit of her teaching knowledge: “Teaching knowledge can be applied to any field of subjects” (Q12). The single participant who had a preference for Kajon chose him because of his attitude, particularly open-mindedness, “He sounds open-minded” (Q5).

It appears that respondents chose scenarios that reflected skills or knowledge that they thought they might lack. For example, the respondents who chose the scenario of Tantawan, who attended teaching workshops, thought that they had inadequate knowledge about EMP teaching techniques: “I don't see the benefits of general TESOL training from my previous experiences and would rather attend a focused live/online group more” (Q25).

Although professional development seemed to be a personal issue, it plays an important role in language teacher agency. The professional development activities represented in the scenarios above were also regarded as tertiary teachers' duty. The more professional development teachers received, the more confident they believed they would be in teaching EMP. Moreover, the benefits from participating in these activities were likely to contribute to the improvement in both teachers' and students' achievements.

4.7 Summary

The findings from the questionnaires revealed that language teachers have positive impressions and experiences in teaching EMP in the Thai tertiary education. The teachers who participated in this study considered student factors as the most important impacting their teacher agency. They stated that the good characteristics of medical students, which are different from other students, enhanced their ability to enact their agency. At the same time, those characteristics of medical students could be challenges requiring teachers to enact their agencies. Moreover, teacher factors were also crucial. They mentioned that their emotional state, and their lack of confidence and knowledge in the medical field could act as constraints in enacting agency. However, they reported that through collaboration and help-seeking through many ways such as through experts in the medical field, their colleagues and their students, those constraints could become affordances. Therefore, the participants believed that the ideal EMP teacher should have a good command of English and some, but not necessarily extensive, experience in medical knowledge. They shared that teachers in this field were also required to take part in professional development activities. These activities not only helped teachers to develop their skills but also increased the effectiveness of the course.

In conclusion, it seems that the teaching of EMP in Thailand was influenced by students' characteristics, teachers' qualifications, and the government education policy.

CHAPTER FIVE

BECOMING AN EMP TEACHER

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, findings are presented from phase two, semi-structured interviews, regarding teacher agency in teaching English for Medical Purposes (EMP) in the Thai tertiary context. Firstly, demographic information from participants is reported. This is followed by in-depth findings concerning teacher agency in teaching English for Medical Purposes, presented under two themes: (1) The Trajectory to Becoming EMP Teachers, (2) (Re) Negotiating Teacher Identity. The last section of this chapter reports on the findings in relation to the four scenarios which were used to elicit participants' perspectives on particular (teaching) activities and the role of teachers. All names of teachers in this chapter are pseudonyms. The word "Ajarn", which means "teacher or lecturer" in Thai, was added in front of the pseudonyms in line with how Thais address a teacher or lecturer to show respect. Quotes from the teachers are provided in English and Thai, depending on the language used in each session; remarks from the sessions conducted in Thai are presented in Thai and accompanied by the English translation, while those expressed in English are quoted directly.

5.2 Overview of Participants

A total of 14 interviewees participated in phase two of the study (see Table 5.1). They were selected from questionnaire respondents who showed an interest and volunteered to take part

in this phase of the research. Four other teachers, having not participated in the first phase of the study, i.e. the questionnaire, were also recruited. The interviewees were located in a single university, KKU, in the northeast region of Thailand. The interviewees included 13 females and one male. Most of them (n=9) ranged in age between 41 and 60 years, with five interviewees in the 31-40 age range. In terms of their educational background, four interviewees hold a Doctoral degree, and the rest hold a Master's degree. Most of them had majored in either English (n=10) or Applied Linguistics (n=4) in their previous studies. Only two interviewees had educational backgrounds in areas relevant to the field of medicine before entering the teaching profession; one interviewee had a bachelor in nursing (Ajarn Jaru), while another (Ajarn Nawa) had a bachelor in physical therapy.

With regard to academic position, at the time of the interviews, five interviewees were assistant professors. Concerning teaching experience, three interviewees had been teaching English for less than 10 years, while the remaining 11 interviewees had been teaching for between 10 and 30 years. At the time of the study, only two interviewees had been teaching EMP for more than 10 years, six interviewees had been teaching EMP for between 5 and 8 years, and the remaining six interviewees were relatively less experienced with only 1-4 years of EMP teaching experience. However, among the 6 'novice' interviewees, two – Ajarn Thida and Ajarn Chompoo – had taught EMP since the very beginning of their teaching careers. Overall, the interviewees can be regarded as quite an experienced group of teachers.

Table 5.1*Overview of interview participants*

No.	Pseudonyms	Gender	Age Range	Educational Background	Academic Position	Teaching Experience (Years)	
						GE	EMP
1	Ajarn Sasi	Female	41-60	Master in English	Assistant Professor	20+	20+
2	Ajarn Dara	Female	41-60	Ph.D. in Education	Assistant Professor	20+	11-15
3	Ajarn Wipakorn	Female	41-60	Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics	Assistant Professor	20+	6-10
4	Ajarn Thida	Female	41-60	Ph.D. in TESOL	Assistant Professor	20+	1-5
5	Ajarn Pornpiya	Female	41-60	Ph.D. in Language and Communication	Assistant Professor	11-15	1-5
6	Ajarn Jaru	Female	41-60	Master in English (Bachelor in Nursing)	Lecturer	11-15	6-10
7	Ajarn Nawa	Female	41-60	Master in English (Bachelor in Physical Therapy)	Lecturer	6-10	6-10
8	Ajarn Panisa	Female	31-40	Master in English	Lecturer	11-15	6-10

No.	Pseudonyms	Gender	Age Range	Educational Background	Academic Position	Teaching Experience (Years)	
9	Ajarn Thipsutha	Female	41-60	Master in English	Lecturer	11-15	6-10
10	Ajarn Nantida	Female	31-40	Master in English	Lecturer	6-10	1-5
11	Ajarn Wanna	Female	31-40	Master in English	Lecturer	6-10	1-5
12	Ajarn Supa	Female	31-40	Master in English	Lecturer	6-10	1-5
13	Ajarn Chompoo	Female	41-60	Master in English	Lecturer	20+	1-5
14	Ajarn Panu	Male	31-40	Master in English	Lecturer	1-5	1-5

Notes: GE stands for General English, EMP stands for English for Medical Purposes.

Having provided a brief overview of the interviewees, the following sections report on two key themes from the data.

5.3 The Trajectory to Becoming EMP Teachers

The teachers discussed a range of experiences which contributed to their trajectory and to achieving an assured and recognised identity as EMP teachers, many of which revealed the enactment of agency supporting these changes. In becoming EMP teachers, most teachers started with teaching General English (GE) for a few years and were then assigned to teach

EMP, with a specific focus on medical sciences. The EMP programme at the site of this research consisted of four courses, namely two basic courses for first-year students and two advanced courses for second and third-year students. In short, students do two courses in the first year then one in each subsequent year, each of which involves three to four hours of class time per week, on two separate days. Since the teaching was located in the Faculty of Medicine or Faculty of Nursing, teachers had to travel to the designated faculty either by using their own vehicle or by means of transportation provided by the faculty, such as a van. This could be time-consuming and required some teachers to finish their prior class early in order to arrive at the designated faculty on time, or to finish their EMP class early to commute back for the next class. Consequently, this could cause a sense of pressure or stress since teachers needed to commute back and forth, which impacted their teaching time.

5.3.1 Early Experience in Teaching EMP

The results showed that most of these teachers were not positive about their early experiences of teaching EMP. In fact, they exhibited different emotional responses when assigned to teach EMP. Some interviewees felt nervous; for example, Ajarn Panisa said that medical terminology caused her to feel nervous because she was not used to being confronted with terminology which she knew less well than her students. As a result, she felt that this was an affront to her sense of teacher identity. She mentioned that technical words used in EMP are not words often used in daily life, so the rare exposure or opportunities to use them led to unfamiliarity. Consequently, she was worried that she would be unable to respond adequately to student questions about the meaning of complex terminology, as evidenced in the following remark.

So, like when I started teaching for the third-year students, kind of really nervous. Because, you know, like since, as we know that the technical, the words right? We call it terminology right?...

It's kind of difficult because we're not really using it for our daily life. . . . I was so scared like if my students gonna ask me something that I couldn't answer. (Ajarn Panisa)

Ajarn Thipsutha also experienced nervousness, yet this did not stem from the medical terminology but rather from perceptions about medical students in Thai contexts. In Thailand, medical students are perceived to excel in all academic subjects including English. Ajarn Thipsutha felt uneasy about teaching English to such high-achieving students:

At first, I was nervous because as you know in Thailand, medical students, particularly for medicine students, they are good at academic subjects, including English. So, I felt nervous at first because I never taught competent students before. (Ajarn Thipsutha)

In the same way, Ajarn Thida and Ajarn Panu, who were novice EMP teachers with only one year of EMP teaching experience, had experienced quite a high level of nervousness when tasked with teaching EMP courses. Their reactions and attitudes towards teaching EMP were predominantly negative early on. They had strong feelings and expressed that they were initially unhappy and not willing to teach EMP.

Ajarn Panu felt apprehensive about teaching EMP and was reluctant to take on this new role, saying that he initially did not want to teach EMP but was assigned to it by his department. His anxiety largely resulted from his lack of experience teaching EMP, as well as concerns about his knowledge of medical terminology. While he felt that he had no agency to say no to taking on this new role, his concerns pushed him to work hard to broaden his knowledge of medical terminology:

I admit that I was very nervous because I had never taught that kind of course before...

I have to admit that I wasn't willing to teach that course, but I was asked to do so. So,

before the course started, I had to learn a lot about some key technical terms in medical sciences. (Ajarn Panu)

In the case of Ajarn Thida, her concern did not derive from a lack of experience or knowledge of terminology but rather stemmed from the investment of time needed in preparing for EMP classes which contained difficult technical terms. As with Ajarn Panisa, Ajarn Thida felt that she was unfamiliar with medical terminology and had limited previous exposure to this vocabulary. Hence, taking on the role of EMP teaching required her to dedicate time to learning these terms which she did not want to do, as shown in her remark:

When I first assigned to teach those students, I felt like I was quite unhappy because I realized that I will need to study more about medical content. And at that time I thought in general, this field has difficult technical terms, and I don't really want to invest on that. (Ajarn Thida)

The emotional response of these teachers in their initial EMP teaching could on the one hand be a constraint but on the other hand it could also spur agentic actions. In fact, some teachers regarded it as a positive driving force and used it to motivate themselves to prepare before entering class to ensure that their teaching was engaging and effective. For example, Ajarn Wipakorn, who also felt nervous at the beginning of her EMP teaching, was, on reflection, able to view her nervousness as an affordance in enacting her agency to better prepare for her teaching:

Very first time when I had less experience, I felt very nervous for being a teacher of those doctors. We know that they're good students, and their English is quite good. Actually, it's a good thing to be nervous because I have to prepare a lot in order to teach them. So, I need to read the book and then understand it like totally understand

everything in the book, in one chapter. So, I spend a lot of hours to prepare the lesson.
(Ajarn Wipakorn)

This same kind of positive reaction was seen in Ajarn Chompoo's case. In spite of her substantial experience of over 30 years in GE before embarking on EMP a year before the interviews were held, she felt that teaching EMP could be challenging for her. However, while other teachers were apprehensive about teaching EMP due to the difficulty of the content, terminology, and perceptions about students' levels of English proficiency, Ajarn Chompoo's comments below indicated that she was not really bothered by these aspects but was enthusiastic and willing to teach these competent students. She viewed the opportunity to teach EMP positively and as a valuable opportunity for development:

Well, actually, it's kind of exciting, interesting, challenging. Let's say challenging because most of them are very, very good at English. Their English level is pretty high, higher than students in general. ... Not really confused. As you see that, the content is not difficult at all. The thing that difficult might be just only few words that I am not familiar to, some pronunciations that we need to check before we go to the class. (Ajarn Chompoo)

While Ajarn Chompoo's response shows mixed feelings of excitement and nervousness, Ajarn Pornpiya and Ajarn Sasi exhibited almost entirely positive feelings toward teaching EMP. They said they were happy, excited and had no concerns when they began teaching EMP. Ajarn Pornpiya treated the high ability of medical students as a positive challenge. However, there was slight tension in how she saw the students' abilities. That is, while their competence was perceived positively, she was more concerned about how to engage high ability students. This response seemed to spur her agency, encouraging her to make the course more engaging to ease

boredom which may arise if the learning was too easy for them, evidenced in the following statement:

Quite happy and no worries because as everybody knows that English abilities and also performance of the medical students are quite high... So, no worries about their capacity. But, my worry is about how to get them engaged. I mean interacting in class because like I said, because they already know well about the English language. So, some of them may be quite bored in class, too easy for them. And, my concern is that what I prepared may be too easy for them, how to get them engaged. So, we're like familiarise them with the simple words and then I also ask the students themselves at the point that I'm not clear like about their procedures, interview, in check-up the doctors. So, I try to be like sharing between the teacher and the students. And let them discuss among themselves. (Ajarn Pornpiya)

Similarly, Ajarn Sasi viewed the task of teaching EMP as an exciting experience. She stated that she initially felt excited about the unknown vocabulary. Unlike other teachers, such as Ajarn Panisa, Ajarn Thida, and Ajarn Panu, who experienced a sense of nervousness due to unfamiliarity with medical terminology, Ajarn Sasi viewed it as an opportunity to expand her vocabulary knowledge in this field. She developed her sense of happiness from gaining new knowledge and experience from her students and doctors:

The first time, I feel very excited because I have never known about the vocabulary and how to communicate them in medical contexts because I studied English in general but not specific in the medical science. And now, I feel very happy because I get a lot of knowledge and experience from the students and some doctors. (Ajarn Sasi)

It is perhaps not surprising that teachers without a prior background or experience in a medical related field initially had an emotional response and found the initial stages of teaching EMP a challenge. However, the findings also reveal that the two teachers with previous experience as health professionals, Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa, found it challenging. They found that they had much to learn in using that knowledge to develop effective teaching material for their students. They viewed their EMP teaching as a challenge, and one which spurred their agency in spending time to prepare for their teaching to support student learning. This meant that they found teaching EMP demanding since it required considerable effort preparing the class. This can be seen from their statements as follows:

I think it's really challenge. We need to use a lot of medical terms. We need to make it easier for our students. (Ajarn Nawa)

When I first start, I concerned about the difference between general English and EMP. I'm thinking about how much the difference is between these two classes...during the first week of the course, it was overwhelming, and how much the work that we have to put into this to make it work. (Ajarn Jaru)

In summary, it is evident that upon starting their EMP teaching, teachers exhibited different emotional responses. A few teachers, such as Ajarn Panisa, Ajarn Panu, and Ajarn Thida, experienced a sense of apprehension largely due to their unfamiliarity with medical terms, lack of experience, and the need to invest time in preparation. However, although feeling slight tension, other teachers, such as Ajarn Wipakorn, Ajarn Pornpiya, and Ajarn Sasi, found EMP teaching a positive challenge and an exciting opportunity. These emotional responses, whether positive or negative, could further influence them, specifically serving as an affordance or constraint to their agency.

5.3.2 Cultural Factors Impacting Teacher Agency and Professional Identity

While EMP teachers experienced a range of emotions when teaching the subject, they all sought to maintain professional identity as competent educators. As can be seen in the earlier section (see Section 5.3.1), EMP teachers displayed emotional responses to teaching EMP in different ways. Regardless of these responses, they seemed to make attempts to portray or preserve their identity as a competent teacher. The presentation of their professional identity appeared to be shaped in part by sociocultural factors in the Thai context. In particular, face-saving seemed to be at play, influencing the ways in which teachers presented themselves. Two groups which had the potential to pose a threat to the teachers' face were teachers' colleagues and their students.

In general, experienced colleagues should be regarded as a source of support from which one can seek assistance or advice. However, on occasions the opposite was seen in this study. For example, some teachers avoided enacting their agency by reaching out to their peers to seek help. This was seen as a face-saving measure and was attributed to their belief that asking for help could undermine their image of being competent teachers. This is illustrated in the following remarks from Ajarn Thida who attempted to conceal her lack of knowledge from her colleagues:

And, sometimes, you know it's very difficult for us to come and talk to the colleagues in Thailand. It's like if you say things, you might look stupid. That's why a lot of teachers choose not to talk to their colleagues. It's for the colleagues who are also your friends that you can talk to. So, we generally avoid doing that with the colleagues that we aren't familiar with. It's like face-saving right? To save our face. That happens everywhere in Thailand, I think. (Ajarn Thida)

Her avoidance of displaying a gap in her knowledge was meant to save face. This indicates a certain degree of protecting herself from having her ability questioned or being judged by colleagues. In the Thai context, this displayed a sense of her fear of being judged since asking a question could highlight her inadequacy. The necessity of preserving her image as a competent teacher may be explained by the fact that teachers in Thailand are expected to possess sufficient knowledge. This means that some teachers may be unwilling to seek help or support from their colleagues. While asking a question may have deprived Ajarn Thida of the support or assistance she needed in her teaching, this was seen as a way to protect her image or identity as a competent and knowledgeable teacher rather than risk being judged as incompetent.

However, as a contrast, some teachers enacted their agency by seeking support or help without a concern about losing face or the impact on their professional identity. As evidenced in Ajarn Supa's case, she consulted those with expertise in the field about medical terms. She asked for explanations about technical words in the field of medicine from medical practitioners or teachers. This suggests that Ajarn Supa had a strong sense of professional identity and was confident in herself.

Support from colleagues aside, students were another group of potential informants. However, as pointed out earlier (see Section 2.2.3.2), in the Thai context, teachers are considered as knowledgeable individuals, so exposing their limited knowledge to students could jeopardise their credibility, specifically losing face and being judged as incapable. Despite that, some teachers were not averse to seeking help from their students. For example, when Ajarn Supa encountered medical terms that she was not familiar with, she asked her students to explain those words to ensure mutual understanding, which portrayed her enactment of agency through collaborative help-seeking strategies:

They know more than me, so I asked them to explain to me what it meant. Unless they are sure, I will find additional information. It's like sharing knowledge. ... Sometimes, I asked the nursing teachers about the meaning of the words as well. (Ajarn Supa)

[เขารู้เยอะกว่าเรา ลองอธิบายให้เราฟังสิ อย่างนี้หรือว่าถ้าเขาไม่แน่ใจเราจะไปหาข้อมูลมาให้เขาเพิ่มเติมจากที่อื่น เหมือนเป็นการแลกเปลี่ยนกัน...เราก้ไปถามอาจารย์เขาบางทีก็มี อาจารย์พยาบาล (Ajarn Supa)]

Viewing students as collaborators rather than as potential threats to face and their sense of professional identity was also evident in other cases. In fact, some teachers acknowledged to their students that they did not have specific knowledge related to medicine or nursing and admitted that the students were the experts. As a result, they asked the students to share their knowledge or provide explanations related to medical or nursing fields, such as medical procedures or technical terms, as evidenced in the following remarks:

I don't know, like, some of the technical terms or, you know, the terms that they'll use in their field. ... But I'll let them share what they know and, you know, if that's something that I didn't know about their field, I will ask them to share with me. (Ajarn Nantida)

I knew it beforehand. So, I'm not worried about it because I'm not in the medical sciences. But, at the very beginning of every course, I would let the students know that I'm an English teacher, you're a doctor, so you know more than me, of course, in your own field, and I may know more than you in my field. (Ajarn Wikaporn)

This shows that they had a strong sense of professional identity as a language teacher and did not feel undermined by their lack of knowledge about technical or medical terminology. Rather, seeking help from their students was used as a class activity to foster students' classroom interaction. These teachers considered that asking the students to share their knowledge was

practical and engaging since the students were cooperative and expressed a sense of pride: “If I ask some medical concern, problem, question, they give me interesting explanation. They like to show that they know”, said Ajarn Chompoo.

The fact that these teachers did not feel threatened by their limited knowledge of technical or medical terminology highlights their strong sense of professional agency. They exercised confidence in their identity as language teachers, focusing on their primary expertise — facilitating language learning — rather than perceiving their lack of technical knowledge as a limitation. This perspective allowed them to reframe potential challenges as opportunities to engage students in collaborative and interactive learning. By turning to their students as resources, they reinforced their role as facilitators and maintained control over the learning process. This approach illustrates how teacher agency enables teachers to respond flexibly to challenges, utilising available affordances – and, in this case, students’ knowledge – to enrich learning outcomes.

As discussed above, in the Thai context the cultural value of *saving face* strongly influences how teachers present their professional identity and enact agency. For many teachers, protecting their image as competent professionals is essential to avoid being perceived as lacking ability. However, some teachers resisted these constraints by employing help-seeking strategies. Help-seeking allowed these teachers to shift the classroom dynamic in a way that supported their professional identity while engaging students in a meaningful way. Instead of undermining their authority, asking students for input became a collaborative strategy that reinforced their role as facilitators of learning. This shows how agency is relational and depends on building trust and mutual respect with students. The role of peers is another important factor. Teachers likely

chose when and how to seek support from colleagues, balancing the need to maintain their professional image with the benefits of collaboration.

Ultimately, this interplay between cultural norms, professional identity, and agency highlights the complexity of teachers' decision-making processes. In some cases, cultural values constrained teachers' actions, while in others, these norms enabled creative solutions. Teachers who enacted agency through help-seeking strategies showed that it is possible to balance cultural expectations with professional responsibilities, finding ways to maintain their identity as competent educators while fostering collaboration and engagement in their classrooms.

5.4 (Re)Negotiating Teacher Identity

Teacher identity and teacher agency are interconnected concepts, and the significance of teacher identity to teacher agency is substantial. Teacher identity acts as a foundation, offering self-awareness and purpose. When teachers grasp and embrace their identity, it empowers them to exercise agency in classrooms. This section discusses how EMP teachers kept their professional identities and presented themselves as competent teachers. Following this, the classroom environment and instructional material are addressed.

5.4.1 Being a Competent EMP Teacher

For EMP teachers in Thailand, presenting themselves as knowledgeable and competent is an essential part of their professional identity, shaped by the high respect and status that teachers hold. The data revealed that, for the majority of teachers, projecting an image of being a competent teacher was a key part of their professional identity. This, in line with the high status and concomitant expectations of teachers in Thailand, appeared to influence how they presented

and negotiated their identity within the role of EMP teacher. This can be seen from Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa who attempted to establish and present themselves to their students as well-equipped teachers. The fact that they did this for their students is important as it is performativity. For example, as Ajarn Jaru states: “We know more than them, so we try to let them know that we know enough to teach them. That will gain more respect from them.” Thus, for these teachers, clearly establishing this identity at the outset may be seen as a strategy to reinforce their status as teachers and demonstrate their superior knowledge, designed to gain students’ trust and confidence in their ability.

However, the high status of teachers ingrained in the Thai culture also appeared to contribute to negative emotional responses from teachers in their attempts to preserve their identity as knowledgeable individuals. This is evident in the way that Ajarn Supa discussed her experiences as a beginning teaching of EMP. She noted that as a teacher, she expected herself to possess greater knowledge than her students, so she was quite upset that she was unable to provide adequate explanation to her students:

At first, I thought as a teacher, I should know more than them. But after I had started teaching—this may apply to not only nursing students but also engineering students who had their technical terms. Initially, I did not feel comfortable, like why could I not explain to them. Still, later on, I started to realize that this was not my field of study. So, I thought of it as a knowledge exchange. As I have said, they know more than me, so let them try explaining those terms to me. Or, if they were not sure, I would find more information elsewhere for them. It became more of a mutual exchange. So, I no longer felt uncomfortable. But, I felt a little embarrassed with myself in the beginning, like why did I not know this. (Ajarn Supa)

[คือตอนแรกอะ หนูก็คิดว่าเราเป็นครูเนอะ เราต้องรู้มากกว่า แต่ทีนี้หลังจากที่สอนไป อันนี้อาจจะไม่ใช่แค่พยาบาลเนอะ ทาง engineer ด้วยอะ ไรจี้ละ เขาจะมีศัพท์เฉพาะ ตอนแรกก็จะแบบรู้สึกไม่ค่อยโอเคเท่าไรหรอก ที่แบบว่าเสีย ทำไมเราอธิบายให้เขาฟังไม่ได้อย่างงี้ แต่หลังๆมาก็เริ่มแบบว่า เออมันก็ไม่ใช่ field ของเรางี้ละ คั้งนั้นถึงเป็นการแลกเปลี่ยนคะอาจารย์ที่บอกตามตั้งแต่แรกเนอะ ว่าเขารู้เยอะกว่าเรา ลองอธิบายให้เราฟังสิ อย่างงี้หรือว่าถ้าเขาไม่แน่ใจเราจะไปหาข้อมูลมาให้เขาเพิ่มเติมจากที่อื่นเหมือนเป็นการแลกเปลี่ยนกัน หลังๆก็เลยจะรู้สึก ไม่ได้รู้สึกแย่หรือรู้สึกอะไรแล้วละ แต่ตอนแรกจะแอบอายนิดนึง ทำไมไม่รู้อะไรแบบนี้ (Ajarn Supa)]

As the quote illustrates, Ajarn Supa felt uncomfortable when she was not able to explain technical terms to students. This was confronting for her both in terms of her expectations of the role of a teacher and her sense of professional identity. For teachers who felt competent as EGP teachers, it was confronting to not have the same sense of competence in their roles as EMP teachers. This was the key change and a key part of the need to develop a new sense of professional identity. The change in role and becoming an EMP teacher might have negatively impacted their sense of pride as a teacher and gone against the culturally ingrained values where Thai teachers are seen to be more knowledgeable than students.

Similarly, Ajarn Panu experienced a great deal of discomfort at being novice to EMP because he felt that he knew less than his students. Despite being an experienced teacher of ESP, he felt that this was not helpful for his teaching of EMP. His limited knowledge of EMP and medical matters appeared to significantly undermine his confidence in his ability in this new teaching role. He asserted that EMP was not his expertise, so he constantly felt tremendous pressure and considered himself as a teacher with inadequacy:

Even though I have learned and taught English for quite a long time, I still believe that English for medical science specifically is not my cup of tea. So, with this attitude, with this thought in mind, it kind of put me under pressure, so I was equipped with this thought all the time throughout this course...I don't think that I'm good enough to teach

them, and some of them, even most of them, must have known something more than me. (Ajarn Panu)

Ajarn Panu considered himself an experienced and competent EGP teacher. The experience of teaching EMP was confronting for him as he did not feel he had the knowledge to take on this role. As a result, he questioned his own ability and deemed himself unqualified as a teacher for EMP. He did not meet the cultural expectations in Thailand of teachers being more knowledgeable than students. Unlike other teachers who used the initial feeling of discomfort to learn more about EMP and to renegotiate their professional identity, Ajarn Panu was resolute that being an EMP teacher was not a good fit for him and did not see it as part of his desired professional identity. However, it is clearly shown that he was a competent teacher of EGP and so this shift was confronting, and particularly so in relation to the Thai culture, but not only due to cultural aspects.

Becoming an EMP teacher required the majority of teachers interviewed to reflect on their professional identity, from being competent and experienced teachers of EGP to experiencing discomfort in not being the holders of knowledge. This was culturally uncomfortable. The different ways in which teachers responded to this situation was interesting. Some teachers such as Ajarn Nawa and Ajarn Jaru, used their agency to work hard to establish a new professional identity as competent EMP teachers, which, in turn, inspired the confidence of their students in line with cultural expectations in Thailand. On the other hand, however, as seen in the case of Ajarn Panu above, while he expressed the same initial discomfort as other teachers, he did not use his agency to establish his professional identity as a teacher of EMP. Rather the experiences seem to reaffirm for him his professional identity as a teacher of EGP. His agency is seen in his clear articulation of this professional identity and his inaction in taking steps towards seeing

EMP as part of a renewed professional identity. Therefore, different responses were observed in the ways that teachers preserved or renegotiated their sense of professional identity.

5.4.2 The Classroom Environment and Instructional Materials

Teachers identified large class sizes and insufficient teaching hours as major challenges that constrained their agency, limiting their ability to teach in ways that aligned with their professional identity and effectively support their students' learning needs. Class size was seen by some teachers as a significant factor that could negatively impact on their teacher identity or agency. Specifically, they perceived that classes containing an excessively large number of students posed difficulty for them in managing their classes and student learning, as illustrated by the following remark:

The number of students in class, if they tell you to teach this section which has, for example, like 45 students, you have to do that. You cannot change. As the English teacher, you know that if there are too many students in class, it's very difficult to practice, to manage sometimes. (Ajarn Thipsutha)

Ajarn Chompoo expanded on these concerns and noted the impact of having such a large number of students in a small space on how she would like to teach:

The first semester, the difficult thing is the size of the classroom is very tight. I got like 50 students in very small space. I cannot walk around, but for the second semester, I have to teach online. So, it's pretty difficult to draw them attention for the whole period of the class. ... I want the bigger classroom, so I can ask my student to do the role play in the class, in group or do some kinds of activities that need more movement. (Ajarn Chompoo)

As these quotes illustrated, these teachers felt constrained by this structural issue which they had no agency to change. They were unable to implement certain class activities or to undertake classroom activities in a way that aligned with their sense of professional identity as teachers. In addition, this caused Ajarn Chompoo to question her identity of being a competent teacher as she reflected on whether she was able to adequately support students in developing their knowledge: “Okay. One thing that I’m worried about is, do students learn more, something more from me? Do I provide with enough chance for them to practise?” Furthermore, she expressed concern that unmanageable class sizes limited her agency in being able to pay attention to weak students, check their understanding, and in implementing role play activities:

Some students may not be fluent, but since the class went fast, so I wasn’t sure if those weak students understood. ... I didn’t know how to check since the class was really large. ... Sometimes, I couldn’t use role-play activities because of the time, the number of the students, and the classroom itself. (Ajarn Chompoo)

[แต่ก็มีบางคนที่จะไม่ได้ fluent มาก ไม่ได้เก่งมาก แต่ที่นี้คลาสมันไปเร็วเนอะบางครั้ง เราก็ไม่แน่ใจคนที่ยังไม่ค่อยเก่งเท่าไรนี่ เขาโอเคม๊ย... ไม่รู้จะเช็คยังไงเพราะคลาสมันใหญ่มากด้วย ... บางทีเราไม่สามารถจะให้ role play ในห้องได้ เวลามันไม่พอ เด็กมันเยอะ แล้วสภาพห้องมันแคบ (Ajarn Chompoo)]

Another structural constraint mentioned by teachers was the number of teaching hours. Ajarn Thida mentioned that three hours of class time per week (two classes of 1.5 hours duration) was not enough because there were a lot of materials to be covered and the time was further limited because she had to travel to the Faculty of Medicine, not to mention students’ late arrival. Although transportation was mostly provided, it could still be time-consuming (approximately 15 minutes each way), as she needed to travel to the other side of a very large campus (around 2,000 acres). These factors limited her agency, and she felt powerless as she had no control over the circumstances.

And, the thing that I didn't like the most is the travel thing I don't want. It wastes the time. You didn't teach the students here in the faculty, but you need to go to faculty of Medicine. And sometimes students were late. Sometimes, I was late. And, the time was like so limited. It wasn't the happy moment for me at that time at all. ... three hours, if it is actually three hours, it's enough. But it's never been like that. I arrived late, the students arrived late from the previous class. So, it ended up 45-50 minutes, not one and a half hour. Sometimes, they played, they wasted the time also in class. That's why I couldn't catch up my lesson very well. If medical students come to study in the [English] faculty, it'll help a lot in terms of time management. Because I finish one class here, and I travel there. It takes time. (Ajarn Thida)

Furthermore, the choice of instructional materials was mentioned by some teachers as another constraint on their ability to enact teacher agency or as hampering their teacher agency in line with their professional agency. Teachers felt that the commercial EGP textbooks that were available to them were not suitable for their EMP courses, expressing concerns that these materials lacked depth and relevance in terms of medical content. This was because they contained a considerable number of units, but with very few related to health. Hence, they were not oriented to the professional context they were teaching in:

General English textbooks on medical themes might not include something deep enough to teach medical students...there were like 60 units in that book. And, only three of them are about medical contexts. And, with those three units of medical contexts, the contents included in those units are still general (Ajarn Panu)

While the use of commercial EGP textbooks was not ideal, teachers did not have the agency to choose their own textbooks as textbook selection was done by someone with greater authority,

such as a course coordinator. Therefore, teachers felt constrained in not being able to choose their own textbooks and in having to teach materials that they did not think were appropriate for these students. The impact of this was that teachers felt they were limited in their agency and ability to effectively teach the practical skills and in-depth knowledge needed by their medical students. Therefore, they considered that creating instructional materials would be the best choice for their EMP courses, enabling them to equip students with essential knowledge and skills consistent with their needs or real-world contexts. “If I had a chance, I’ll do it. I’ll construct the new material just for the section first”, said Ajarn Thida. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Ajarn Thipsutha, this choice was not available to them as they had no authority: “The book, also. It’s the decision of the course coordinator, right? ... I can’t change too”.

The lack of control teachers had over choosing instructional materials significantly influenced how they negotiated their professional identity. When teachers were required to use textbooks that didn’t meet the specific needs of their medical students, they often felt frustrated and constrained. For example, Ajarn Panu pointed out that a textbook might have a lot of units, but only a few related directly to medical contexts. This mismatch made it difficult for teachers to provide relevant and effective lessons. This lack of agency – the ability to make choices about how they taught – could significantly impact how teachers saw themselves in their roles. They wanted to deliver lessons that connected with their students’ real-world needs and helped them succeed, but being forced to use unsuitable materials limited their ability to do so:

About the book, teacher Be had used a commercial book, but it didn’t quite align with what we wanted. (Ajarn Supa)

[เหมือนพี่เบเคยใช้หนังสือที่แบบเป็น commercial book ไข่ม้อยคะ แล้วมันอาจจะแบบมันไม่ได้ตรงกับที่เราอยากได้ทุกอย่าง]

Actually, right now I'm still thinking that the text wasn't good for those students, and I felt bad about it because the content of the text was so basic and it wouldn't help medical students to use all the knowledge or the knowledge and English skills that they really want to use from those commercial texts. (Ajarn Thida)

Some teachers expressed a strong desire to take control of their curriculum by creating their own instructional materials. For instance, Ajarn Thida stated that if given the opportunity, she would develop tailored resources that would better align with her students' requirements. Yet, as noted by Ajarn Thipsutha, the reality was that the decision-making power regarding textbooks lay with course coordinators and other higher authorities. This lack of agency left teachers feeling powerless and diminished their sense of ownership over their teaching.

In summary, the inability to choose relevant instructional materials not only marred teachers' effectiveness in the classroom but also affected their professional identity. When teachers could not adapt their lessons to fit the needs of their students, it created a disconnect between their motivations and their reality. This may have left them frustrated and undervalued. Ultimately, this constraint compromised their ability to exercise agency as well as to enact their professional identity. Promoting teacher agency – particularly by enabling autonomy in terms of material selection – may allow teachers to align their instruction with their professional contexts, thereby strengthening their professional identity.

5.5 Teachers' Perspectives on English for Medical Purposes

(EMP): The Teaching Scenarios

To investigate the perspectives of EMP teachers on different approaches used in teaching, the interview put forward four teacher scenarios representing different approaches to teaching EMP (see Appendix B). In response to the scenarios, the interviewees were asked to express their preferences in terms of the fictional teachers, discussed in the previous chapter, that they would most prefer and least prefer to join their EMP teams. The scenarios included: Keeri, who develops his lessons by adapting medical articles while adhering to the institutional syllabus owing to limited confidence; Nara, who bases her teaching on her experienced colleague's materials and improves her knowledge by learning medical terminology; Payu, who develops his course structure around GE courses with a primary focus on grammar and occasionally integrates medical texts and terminology; and Fahsai, who utilizes resources from an online ESP community, seeks suitable textbooks, and collaborates with medical faculty. This has given insight into the competencies teachers believed EMP teachers need to have, which responds to my first research question: "What kind of competencies do Thai teachers perceive they need to teach English for Medical Purposes (EMP)?" Moreover, the information that emerged when the interviewees compared their own teaching practices with those of the fictional teachers provided more in-depth insights on how the teachers' practices aligned with the scenarios. Hence, these scenarios enabled this study to capture specific competencies required of EMP teachers, facilitating a deeper understanding of teacher agency and professional identity within the EMP context.

5.5.1 Teachers' Perspectives on the Most Preferred Fictional Teacher for the EMP Course

The four potential colleagues described on the scenario cards (See Appendix Two) were Fahsai, Keeri, Payu and Nara. Fahsai was chosen as the most preferred recruit in the EMP team by the highest number (eight) of the interviewees, followed by Keeri by five teachers and Payu by one, while Nara was not chosen by any interviewees. The interviewees' views regarding each of these fictional teachers are detailed below in order of preference. Teachers' quotes are drawn on to highlight their justifications for ranking particular fictional teachers as most preferred.

Fahsai

In the given scenarios, the most frequently selected recruit by eight of the 14 interviewees, Fahsai, enacted her agency in two spheres. First, she sought out information for herself. She joined an ESP-teacher online group to access ideas and lessons and had searched for a good commercial EMP course book and asked her department to buy it. Second, she exercised her agency by collaborating with others. To do that, she attended meetings with the Faculty of Medicine to learn more about students' needs. Nearly all of those who chose Fahsai (n=5) pointed out that what made her the most desired colleague choice lay in her agency. As one interviewee stated, "By joining the ESP group, she could download instructional materials, so she may get some ideas from other ESP teachers" [เหมือนมีการไปเข้า group ของครูที่สอนแบบ ESP ด้วยเนอะ เพราะฉะนั้นเขาจะมีการดาวน์โหลดพวก ไม่ใช่แผนการสอน เขาเรียกอะไรอะ ตัวที่เอามาสอน (Ajarn Supa)]. This aligned with Ajarn Supa's own agency as she actively approached nursing teachers to learn from them, and this enabled her to develop her own material to better support the needs of the nursing teachers and students:

So, I tried designing the material by myself. I talked to the nursing teacher. She told me that she didn't have English knowledge, but she wanted something like this and asked me to design the material based on her description. (Ajarn Supa)

[ก็เลยเหมือนเปลี่ยน มาลองทำเองค่ะ ก็เนี่ยไปคุยกับอาจารย์พยาบาลเขา อาจารย์เขาก็บอกว่าไม่ได้มีความรู้เรื่องภาษาอังกฤษนะ แต่ว่าอยากได้อันนี้ ให้อาจารย์ช่วยจัดเอกสารมาให้ประมาณนี้ค่ะ (Ajarn Supa)].

Ajarn Chompoo said that she preferred Fahsai because she (Fahsai) seemed eager to learn and was similar to her in some ways. This was in resonance with her own practice as Ajarn Chompoo did not solely rely on the textbook but acted with agency in seeking additional information, which demonstrated her enthusiasm for learning and ongoing self-development as an EMP teacher:

I did not just depend on the textbook. I had the textbook, and it was most suitable for my course. But, I did not use the contents from the textbook. I sought more information from other sources. (Ajarn Chompoo)

[คือจะไม่ได้ยึดติด คือมีหนังสือ หนังสือเราก็เลือกมาแล้วว่าเออันนี้แหละเหมาะที่สุดกับคอร์สเรา แต่เราก็ไม่ได้ยึดแต่ในหนังสือ เราก็หาข้อมูลอย่างอื่นมาด้วย (Ajarn Chompoo)]

Teachers also perceived Fahsai as the most desirable colleague due to her collaboration with the medical faculty; one interviewee explained “By her joining the meeting of the medical faculty, I'm sure that she will learn more about the content” (Ajarn Thida). Ajarn Thida's own consideration of designing EMP lessons based on the needs of the medical faculty suggests a potential for future agency in EMP teaching. However, her decision to discontinue teaching the subject after only one year due to several reasons – such as her desire to focus on English-major students, the inconvenience of logistics, and the difficulty of medical terms – limited the opportunity to fully explore this potential. As she said:

My lesson should be in line with the faculty of medicine. And, that thing did not happen in our department, right? I wasn't sure because when the teacher chose the text, they

probably didn't take a look at the things, contexts that students should learn.” (Ajarn Thida)

Therefore, Ajarn Thida's reflections on Fahsai's scenario highlighted areas where she believed improvements could be made, particularly in terms of collaboration between her faculty and the Faculty of Medicine. She felt that a stronger partnership would have led to better course and material design, more closely aligned with the needs and expectations of medical students.

Additionally, three teachers complimented Fahsai on using appropriate materials, e.g., a commercial book, as evidenced in the following statement: “Because I think she based her teaching on the EMP course book. I think that is the best of all. Because before they launched the book, they should research first. I think this one is suitable for me” (Ajarn Thipsutha). In fact, Ajarn Thipsutha mentioned that the textbook used in her course was not suitable for her students: “The book, also. It's the decision of the course coordinator, right? To select the book. If we use this book, I feel that it's not right for the students. I can't change too”. This is because it was not tailored to EMP courses. Consequently, her selection of Fahsai reflected her own frustration about the constraint she faced.

Finally, Ajarn Thida was impressed with Fahsai as she made tremendous efforts to seek support to facilitate her teaching. In particular, she requested her department to purchase an EMP-tailored commercial book for her course. The selection of this fictional teacher may reflect Ajarn Thida's own feelings about her agency; that is, Ajarn Thida pointed out that she did not make recommendations to the course coordinator about materials for the EMP courses because she viewed herself as “not an experienced teacher of EMP”. Therefore, Fahsai's agency seemed to reflect what Ajarn Thida wished she would have done if she had continued teaching EMP.

Keeri

Keeri was ranked as the most preferred candidate by five of the interviewees, making him the second most preferred fictional teacher. Based on the scenario, Keeri attempted to learn about the students' medical courses to learn what they were studying, read medical articles in English and developed class reading materials from those articles. Teachers selecting Keeri mentioned that they were impressed by his efforts to develop reading materials by himself. As one interviewee said, "He may get along well with me because I also adapt some contents for my own material" (Ajarn Sasi). This aligned with Ajarn Sasi's enactment of agency as she invested significant effort into developing materials for her own course: "I tried to find the materials by myself and developed it for whatever I want to teach them, but don't focus only on the vocabulary and grammar but tried to follow the course syllabus but add something more".

In addition, over half of those who chose Keeri mentioned his eagerness for self-improvement and keen interest in the field, as seen in the following remark: "Because he's very into the medical class, he has good preparation for himself in reading medical articles" (Ajarn Wipakorn). Her reason for recruiting Keeri may have been driven by her own lack of agency; specifically, she did not prepare her class by reading any medical articles: "Like I've never read the medical articles in English that much even though I can skim it to feel that medical research are written like this... I don't really read it all because I know I don't understand it for sure". This reflects skills she wishes she had, and the agency she wishes she could take.

Other reasons for considering Keeri the optimal choice concerned his attention to the students. He was committed to identifying students' needs by reviewing their current courses. This approach enabled him to recognize the students' level of knowledge and to design materials which better suited students' needs and context. The justification for this selection may reflect

an alignment with the actual enactment of agency of the teachers interviewed. For example, Ajarn Wanna mentioned that she worked to develop materials that related to students' lives as she believed that this would promote more engagement and participation:

And also, we try to make the materials relate to their lives. I think when they see it is useful and they can link it with their knowledge, they have more fun and they're more willing to participate in the activities. (Ajarn Wanna)

Payu

The third most preferred choice of the fictional teachers was Payu, chosen by only one interviewee. In his scenario, his course largely relied on General English courses and gave precedence to grammatical structures; other than that, he adopted medical reading materials from his English textbooks and integrated medical terms into his course, only if achievable. Ajarn Jaru explained that what prompted her to express a preference for him was his use of medical theme-based readings and integration of medical vocabulary. This aligned with her own agency and beliefs about how to teach EMP as she mixed General English with medical English to teach medical students:

We just need to integrate general English and medical English together and make it work in a positive way and make it more interesting and give the environment as a guidance or organizer rather than the traditional teaching. That's the best way for medical students. (Ajarn Jaru)

In addition, it was in line with her belief that considering medical students are equipped with general English knowledge, medical knowledge should be integrated with English knowledge to promote their learning:

That suits me because for me like I said, medical students already know about general English, so we need to just apply the medical knowledge into their general English and then we teach them and let them know grammatical or learn about the rules of English by themselves, by integrate the medical terms in that structure. I choose Payu, the most one. (Ajarn Jaru)

In summary, slightly over half of the interviewees expressed their preference for Fahsai to join their EMP team largely due to her sense of eagerness for self-improvement, help-seeking strategies for her teaching, selection of suitable materials, and collaborative efforts with the Faculty of Medicine. Keeri was the second most preferred teacher whose motivation for self-improvement, adaptation of passages for readings, and sense of responsibility to students drew the interviewees' attention. Finally, Payu was identified as the third most preferable choice, which was influenced by his use of readings related to medical themes from English textbooks, together with the incorporation of medical terms in the lessons. However, none of the teachers chose Nara to be recruited; their disfavour of her was evident, which will be discussed in the next section.

The agency of interviewees in the context of teacher preferences reveals significant insights into their motivations and professional identities. The preference for Fahsai, Keeri, and Payu highlights the importance of self-improvement, adaptability, and relevant content in teaching. While the interviewees expressed strong preferences for these teachers, it is essential to consider that agency can also be constrained by systemic factors such as curriculum mandates and lack of institutional support, which may limit teachers' ability to fully exercise their agency.

5.5.2 Teachers' Perspectives on the Least Preferred Fictional Teacher for the EMP Course

In addition to their highest preference, the scenario task elicited their least preferred fictional EMP teacher, along with justifications. Nearly half of the interviewees (n=6) were in agreement that Payu was the teacher they would least prefer to join the EMP team out of the four fictional EMP teachers, followed by Nara (n=5), Fahsai (n=2), and Keeri (n=1). The interviewees' reasons for their lowest preference regarding these fictional teachers are presented through descriptions in the following paragraphs, along with some statements quoted.

Payu

As stated, Payu was least favoured. To reiterate the scenario, Payu's course was mainly built on General English with a focus on grammatical structures and readings based on medical topics from English textbooks, with medical vocabulary incorporated. The majority of the interviewees rating him as least preferred stated that this was mainly because of his pedagogy, as illustrated in the following quote: "I should prepare the course based on English for Medical Purposes, not the General English. ... He shouldn't use General English which only focus on grammatical structures in the ESP course." (Ajarn Wipakorn). Despite Payu's efforts to integrate medical terms into his course, his pedagogical practice was deemed ineffective and incompatible with the nature of the EMP course, which requires a focus on ESP – medical English in this case – and does not place much emphasis on grammatical rules. Ajarn Wipakorn's view was in alignment with the practice of her own agency; she gave importance to content in her class where students were allowed to discuss different topics in relation to their professional aspirations: "But for the medical, like I said, we specialize in focuses on two skills only, speaking and listening. The content is about the practice that they do in their job, in their duty as a doctor". This view was also reflected in Ajarn Wipakorn's agency as she used content-

based learning in combination with communicative language teaching to design the tasks for her class: “But for EMP, not only the communication but content sometimes play very important roles. So, content-based learning integrated with CLT for me, I think it's very important”.

Two of the interviewees explained that Payu lacked passion for self-improvement and possessed insufficient knowledge. As Ajarn Thida stated, “Because he seems to be a bit lazy... he doesn't actively explore this knowledge for medical students”. This perspective may be linked with reflections on her own agency as when she was asked what she wished she could have done if she had continued teaching EMP, she mentioned developing her own material by searching for new knowledge and integrating that into the material:

For EMP, I'd like to create one suitable textbook for them. But, it has to be within my interest. I mean I'm not going to go into the heavy medical theory reading and pick those. But, I'll use like the one that I can handle. But, I'll give them the updated English knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, and English skills as I believe that if students had appropriate textbook or appropriate activities, they would then use all the knowledge they learn to work on their doctor lives. (Ajarn Thida)

Nara

Nara was identified as the second least preferred teacher by five of the 14 interviewees. In the scenario, Nara's instruction was primarily dependent on her colleague's material and consulting a dictionary for medical vocabulary. Despite recognizing the need for certain changes, she did not feel empowered to take any further action. Interviewees disapproved of her potential as a new recruit because of her lack of leadership, confidence, and creativity, since Ajarn Nantida stated, “She's trying to follow the track like what has been done before, and she didn't feel

confident to make any changes”. This is the opposite of how Ajarn Nantida enacted agency in her own context, where she developed class activities or materials based on the stakeholders’ needs and the courses:

I started by reviewing medical courses that my students are studying and also like looking for some articles, collect some articles, reading articles from the medicine faculty teachers. And I also like asking them what they want to see their students to be able to do. (Ajarn Nantida)

Other teachers also commented on her reliance on others’ materials: “I would prefer her to develop her own materials using her own expertise or her own interests, so that she can add something new to the existing course.” (Ajarn Dara). Again, corroboration between the reasoning and the teacher’s own demonstration of agency was observed. For example, Ajarn Dara mentioned adjusting lessons based on the courses or students she taught: “But, what I changed is like the lesson, will be according to the lesson which I teach. Engineering students, then I need to find some activities or some extra reading passages in the area. The same to nursing students” (Ajarn Dara).

In addition, two interviewees explained that their disinclination to recruit Nara stemmed from her dependence on a dictionary. Stumbling upon unfamiliar medical terms, she regularly used a dictionary. These interviewees pointed out that with solely consulting a dictionary, she may have misunderstood the terms if used in different contexts. As stated by Ajarn Chompoo, “Nara only relies for her teaching on the dictionary. When you teach EMP courses only dictionary is not enough, you need to be open to everything, look for knowledge from other sources such as YouTube or something”. This is also supported by Ajarn Chompoo’s practice of agency, as she consulted her friends with medical expertise about some technical terms to ensure her

understanding: “Sometimes, I asked some experts because some of my friends are doctors. I just ask to check my understanding”.

Finally, Nara was an unappealing choice for one interviewee due to her lack of passion for the field, as per the following statement: “Because I see that she didn't have a passion to do it, to teach in the course. Even though she feels something that she needs to change, but she didn't feel empowered to make it any change for them” (Ajarn Nawa). Ajarn Nawa's views are reflected in how she demonstrated agency in her own class where she planned how to make her teaching engaging:

I need to make a plan about how to make it interesting for the students so that students have acquired some knowledge from the class....The teaching process, it should be in accordance with the students' needs also. We need to focus on the thing that they use within their career and teach them how to adapt the EMP to their future career”. (Ajarn Nawa)

This indicates that she considered making necessary changes about materials or lessons to suit students' needs.

Fahsai

The third least appealing choice for the EMP team was Fahsai, chosen by two of the interviewees. To recapitulate, she took part in an online platform for ESP teachers granting her access to ideas and materials, sought support from her department to purchase an EMP course book, and collaborated with the Faculty of Medicine through meetings. Ajarn Jaru, among others, felt that Fahsai was too reliant on others' ideas and materials, and implemented unnecessary tasks: “She downloads the idea and asks for the textbook. At the end, she said she

joins meetings of the medical faculty... I don't think this one is necessary for her". This view is reflected in Ajarn Jaru's own choice to not actively collaborate with staff from the Faculty of Medicine. While this may reflect a lack of agency, it may also be attributable to the fact that she was medically trained, so she may already have more awareness of the expectations and content needed.

Ajarn Wanna explained that Fahsai was her least preferred teacher due to her heavy focus on materials. That is, Fahsai's attention was given to the instructional materials. This may be linked back to Ajarn Wanna's act of agency mentioned earlier; for her own EMP class, she developed materials in relation to students' lives as she thought it would contribute to increasing participation and promoting an enjoyable learning experience.

Only one interviewee, Ajarn Panisa, nominated Keeri as the least preferred new recruit. To reiterate his scenario, he delved into his students' medical courses, along with medical English articles, and constructed reading materials based on passages from those articles. Although aware of other aspects in need of improvements, he lacked confidence in his knowledge to make changes. Ajarn Panisa stated that her reluctance to recruit Keeri was due to his self-doubt in his own knowledge, as reflected in the following remark:

He doesn't have the confidence in his knowledge of EMP to make changes. But, I mean he doesn't have the knowledge of EMP, but he kind of feels that there must be something that we should change, maybe we can discuss and find out what it is, something like that. (Ajarn Panisa)

She further pointed out that: "I'd like to work with somebody who wants to share what they think would be best for students, for the sake of students". This may be supported by the display

of her own agency as she worked collaboratively with medical teachers to learn how they expected to benefit from the course:

Oh, for the medical teachers, so they actually offered the help on some issues. Because we went to work with them for, you know like what they gonna learn. Because they asked us to go and discuss what they want students to practice for English class. And then, when we wrote the plan for them to study. (Ajarn Panisa)

In conclusion, slightly under half of the interviewees expressed the highest disapproval of recruiting Payu as their new EMP teacher on account of his pedagogical approach heavily focusing on General English and grammar, along with a lack of self-improvement and inadequate knowledge. Meanwhile, Nara was identified as the second least favoured teacher because of her self-doubt, lack of leadership and creativity, heavy dependency on others' course materials, sole reliance on a dictionary, and a lack of enthusiasm. This is followed by Fahsai who was least preferred for a few of the interviewees, largely attributable to her exclusive focus on materials or textbooks rather than students and her engagement in irrelevant tasks beyond her responsibilities. Lastly, Keeri was ranked the last least preferable choice for the EMP team, stemming from his self-doubt in his EMP knowledge.

Interestingly, one interviewee (Ajarn Jaru) who had a background in a medical field as a nurse had different preferences from other interviewees. While Fahsai had the highest number for the most preferred EMP teacher, this interviewee preferred her the least. Moreover, Payu had the highest percentage for the least preferred among the other interviewees, but Ajarn Jaru ranked him highest. Her reasons for these are very interesting compared to other interviewees.

5.6 Summary

This chapter focused on the experiences and perspectives of EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context, offering insights into their journey toward becoming skilled in this specialised area of education. The chapter revealed the wide range of emotions and challenges these teachers encountered, starting from feelings of nervousness and uncertainty to eventually achieving confidence and expertise in their roles.

One of the key findings related to the emotional responses of teachers to EMP teaching. They experienced a variety of feelings, including excitement and challenges. While some teachers felt apprehensive due to the specialised nature of the subject matter, others welcomed the opportunity for professional development. Another important point is the role of teacher agency; those who actively sought out chances to enhance their skills had different experiences compared to those who took a more passive approach.

The chapter also examined how cultural factors play a role in these experiences. For instance, Thai cultural norms around face-saving and the expectations of teacher authority influenced the interactions between teachers, students, and colleagues. The teachers' sense of professional identity was shaped by their experiences and the expectations set by others. In Thai culture, teachers are regarded as high status, and are expected to be more knowledgeable than their students. This cultural expectation led many teachers to experience discomfort when they couldn't answer students' questions or had to seek help.

There was considerable variation in how teachers responded to these identity challenges. Some redefined themselves as facilitators or language experts rather than subject authorities, drawing on student expertise to co-create classroom knowledge. Others continued to feel that EMP was

not a good fit for them and reaffirmed their primary identity as General English teachers, ultimately not seeing EMP as part of their professional future. These contrasting responses underline the dynamic nature of teacher identity and agency in the context of EMP.

Overall, this chapter offers valuable insights into the complexities of teaching EMP within the Thai context, emphasising the importance of understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that these teachers faced.

CHAPTER SIX

FACTORS MEDIATING TEACHER AGENCY

6.1 Introduction

This chapter continues to present findings from phase two, semi-structured interviews, regarding teacher agency in teaching English for Medical Purposes (EMP) in the Thai tertiary context. It focuses on the factors which mediated the agency of the teachers in this study. Findings are presented under four themes, which are (1) Teacher Knowledge, (2) Student Factors, (3) Experience as a Mediating Factor and (4) Support and Collaboration. The chapter ends with a summary.

6.2 Teacher Knowledge

Teacher knowledge was found to mediate teacher actions and decision-making in different ways, ranging from pushing them to consider and assess viable approaches to teaching EMP classes, to acting on that assessment and actively seeking to acquire further knowledge or adopt different teaching approaches. This factor functioned as either an affordance or a constraint, depending on the teachers. All interviewees, except for Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa who had existing knowledge in the medical field, found a lack of medical knowledge to be a major constraint in their teaching of EMP. However, not all of these teachers were discouraged by this limitation. Rather, some considered this constraint as a positive challenge, enabling them to seek different methods to improve their EMP teaching. Simply put, teacher knowledge, while

initially a constraint for teachers, could serve as a mediating factor which prompted agentic responses. For Ajarn Wanna, Ajarn Dara, and Ajarn Supa, the gaps in professional knowledge did not constrain them but shaped their actions in proactive ways. They exercised their adaptive responses to bridge those gaps through self-study, use of collaborative learning, or help-seeking. For Ajarn Wanna, her awareness of the gaps in subject-matter knowledge boosted her motivation to engage in self-directed learning. Specifically, Ajarn Wanna took an agentic response to coping with this particular challenge by investing significant time and effort to learn about technical words and prepare well for her classes:

At the beginning, I was nervous, of course, because it started with the medical students and at that time I had to use a lot of technical terms ... so I didn't really know how to call different parts of the body. I mean yes for here, but you know the Latin root words, those stuffs, so I had to like read a lot and had to study a lot, and had to prepare a lot for each class. (Ajarn Wanna)

Ajarn Wanna demonstrated strong agency as she recognized the gap in her knowledge and actively took steps to rectify the situation for herself. Gaps in knowledge prompted her to act proactively – engagement in self-directed learning – which built confidence and pedagogical competence over time.

Facing the same challenge, Ajarn Dara took a different approach to using her agency. As illustrated in the following remark, she was open about her lack of knowledge with students and made this a part of her activities in the classroom:

So, it started from, for example, in English for nursing profession, you must know the terms that they use in emergency rooms. I think even the native speakers will have the same problem. But, when we teach English, we ask students and they usually know

more than we know. So, they have some experience in using these words, so I myself ask them "what does it mean?", "what kind of this, sterile?", "these medical devices, what do you call it?" (Ajarn Dara)

This case illustrates that teacher knowledge mediated her agency by prompting her to transform classrooms into a co-learning space. As discussed in section 5.3.2, Ajarn Dara expected that her students possessed knowledge of the technical terms as it was their field. Consequently, when her students used some medical terms in her lessons, she exercised agency, using a help-seeking strategy by asking them to share their explanation with her and the class. In this way, Ajarn Dara clearly showed her own agency in seeking student assistance and also allowed students agency in demonstrating their knowledge to collaborate and co-construct the learning. Unlike some of the teachers reported on in section 5.3.2, Ajarn Dara was not afraid to show students that she did not know everything as is the cultural expectation of teachers in Thailand.

Using a different approach, Ajarn Supa overcame the constraint of a lack of familiarity with nursing or medical terms by searching the Internet to find additional information and by consulting an experienced colleague, as evidenced in her remark:

If it's about nursing or medicine, there are like some technical words. So, at first I didn't know where to acquire some knowledge. So, I just used Google and asked Be (my colleague). (Ajarn Supa)

[ถ้าเป็นเกี่ยวกับพยาบาล แพทย์นี่ มันจะต้องมีแบบไปอ่านเพิ่มพวกคำศัพท์เฉพาะอะไรนี่ค่ะ ตอนแรกที่เข้าไปก็ไม่มีรู้เหมือนกันว่า จะต้องไปหาความรู้จากตรงไหน ก็ google ไปเลย แล้วก็ถามพี่เบนี่ค่ะ (Ajarn Supa)]

This example indicated that teacher knowledge was a mediating factor that prompted her to take an adaptive response. Instead of making a passive response, she drew on available resources – whether support from her colleague or the online tool – to enhance her competence.

As illustrated through these three cases, the factor of teacher knowledge mediated teacher agency in different ways. Specifically, Ajarn Wanna's awareness of knowledge gaps afforded self-directed learning as a means of bridging the limitations, while Ajarn Dara utilised this constraint to implement collaborative and co-learning practices – involving her students in knowledge sharing. In the meantime, Ajarn Supa took an agentic response by seeking assistance from colleagues and utilising available resources. These differing agentic responses highlight that the same factor – teacher knowledge – may have mediated how teachers exercised their agency uniquely, enabling a range of adaptive strategies.

Nevertheless, not every teacher reacted to this knowledge factor in the same way. While some seemed to accept and deal with the gaps without distress, Ajarn Thipsutha responded emotionally. That is, her lack of knowledge in the medical field led to her feeling confused, upset and also inadequate in her role as a teacher. Her sense of inadequacy as a teacher was not only due to the limited knowledge itself but also triggered by cultural expectations placed on teachers in Thailand. These cultural norms appeared to mediate her agency by increasing the pressure she felt and causing emotional distress. The interplay between culture and the knowledge factor shaped the choice of agentic responses that she perceived as available to her.

Despite experiencing emotional distress, Ajarn Thipsutha's case also illustrated that while teacher knowledge – influenced by cultural expectations – triggered a sense of inadequacy, it served as a mediating factor. In a similar way to Ajarn Supa, Ajarn Thipsutha enacted her agency through a help-seeking strategy, that is, by turning to individuals with relevant expertise and by using technology, i.e. the Internet, to find explanations for the medical content.

In terms of the content, sometimes the content is mostly related to the medical text. That may cause confusion sometimes because as we didn't have the knowledge in that field.

I asked some of my friends who are in the area and sometimes searched for more information in the Internet. (Ajarn Thipsutha)

This case shows that while limited knowledge caused emotional insecurity, it still served as an affordance. It empowered Ajarn Thipsutha to enact agentive strategies, helping her bridge such a limitation. Negative emotional responses and perceptions of inadequacy as teachers due to a lack of knowledge in the field were experienced by other teachers in this study. Teacher knowledge as a mediating factor contributed to emotional distress for teachers but also shaped teacher agency. For the following cases, it triggered the need to maintain their professional image, prompting the use of help-seeking strategies that they considered professionally acceptable. Two interviewees, in particular, showed a strong level of discomfort. For example, when she had begun teaching EMP five years earlier, Ajarn Nantida was apprehensive about various aspects, such as the content or terminology. Coping with this situation in the same way as Ajarn Thipsutha, she not only sought help from her friends in the field of nursing or medicine, but learned the expectations for the course from other stakeholders, including her former students. Her agency was enacted differently to that of Ajarn Dara since Ajarn Nantida resorted to her past students instead of exposing the gaps in her knowledge to her current students. This can be seen in her following statement:

I concerned a lot about it because I really have no idea of what they should be focusing on in that field. So, that makes it kinda like difficult for me to think about what to teach them So, I started by talking to some of the teachers from those faculties. Like I have some friends who're teaching at the Faculty of Nursing or Medicine. So, I talked to them to get some ideas in general of what their purposes are or what they want to see their students to be able to (do) in English. ... So I just started by interviewing this teacher

and also asking, collecting some information from my students. My ex-students, my former students. (Ajarn Nantida)

Instead of embracing vulnerability and turning classrooms into a co-learning space as in Ajarn Dara's case, the knowledge factor prompted Ajarn Nantida to seek external support. This reflects that teacher knowledge mediated her agency by influencing her perception of safe and professionally accepted agentic responses in context. Ajarn Nantida may have felt that she had a closer relationship, developed over a longer period of time, with her past students than she did with her current students who she was still getting to know and so felt more comfortable revealing her lack of knowledge and that there was less risk of losing face. Her agency – to seek support through familiar and trusted relationships – was shaped by how her limited knowledge posed a threat to her image of a competent teacher. In doing so, she preserved her professional image while addressing the constraint.

While some teachers, like Ajarn Nantida, drew on their previous experience to navigate the challenges of teaching EMP, others, such as Ajarn Panu, struggled with feelings of inadequacy and stress. Similar to other cases discussed above, limited knowledge influenced teachers' emotions and responses to this challenge. For Ajarn Panu as a novice EMP teacher, this factor heightened his anxiety due to his limited experience and made him question his suitability for the role (see 5.3.1). As he pointed out, EMP was beyond his comfort zone and beyond his expertise, and he was reluctant to teach it. These feelings influenced the adaptive responses he chose to adopt.

So, before the course started, I had to learn a lot about some key technical terms in medical sciences and also consult those foreign teachers who had experience before in order to reduce my anxiety or my stress. ... The first person who I turned to was Ajarn

Emilyn. Because I had known her for a long time when I was a student, doing a B.A. in business English, so she seemed to have closer relationship to me, compared to other Ajarns who have experience with EMP (Ajarn Panu)

In this case, teacher knowledge was a mediating factor which influenced his emotional distress and prompted him to employ strategies he perceived as safe and professionally acceptable. He turned to a low-risk form of support which enabled him to retain his sense of adequacy and avoid losing face. Specifically, he found ways to relieve his emotional discomfort, studying medical terminology before he began his teaching. He also turned to external support from trusted colleagues whom he knew well and felt comfortable sharing his concerns with. This choice of support may suggest that he viewed foreign teachers as less judgemental – Ajarn Emilyn being Filipino – thereby reducing the threat to his professional image. This knowledge factor prompted his agentic responses which fostered a sense of emotional safety while preserving his professional identity.

Ajarn Panu's case also demonstrates that teacher knowledge mediated agency in terms of long-term professional decisions. Despite taking steps to address his concerns, such as studying medical terminology and seeking support from colleagues, his sense of inadequacy persisted. He continued to view himself as underqualified for the role and expressed a reluctance to teach the subject again. This demonstrates that the lingering sense of inadequacy constrained his agency to improve his teaching of EMP and further engage with the field. Rather, he enacted his strong agency by rejecting any further assignments to teach EMP. His strong feelings towards EMP may have stemmed from his relative lack of teaching experience more generally since he had only taught General English for two years. His case was atypical because teachers,

in general, were expected to have substantial experience of teaching GE before being assigned to EMP.

But, if you ask me “would I do it again?” my answer would be “no”. Because even though I had better attitudes towards teaching this course or this type of English for Specific Purposes in medicine, I still feel that this is still out of my comfort zone because I realized that I still need more teaching experience and more medical experience, I mean indirect medical experience, in order to equip myself with better understanding, better expertise, because I don't consider myself to be able or capable to teach them.

(Ajarn Panu)

This case illustrates that although agentic actions, such as preparation and help-seeking, were taken, they were unable to alleviate his sense of inadequacy. Teacher knowledge acted as a mediating factor by reinforcing insecurity and prompting disengagement from the field. Thus, it led him to exercise his agency in a form of self-protection – preserving emotional security and his professional identity.

Similar to Ajarn Panu, Ajarn Thida's case showed how teacher knowledge mediated agency in terms of professional trajectories, particularly through risk avoidance and disengagement. She viewed herself as a teacher not adequately equipped with knowledge of medical English to teach EMP for second- and third-year students. This indicates that in addition to the experience of the teachers, the experience and level of the learners impacted teachers' self-efficacy. She was concerned that courses at higher levels were more technical – in terms of words and language – which shaped her perception of preparedness. These concerns prompted her to withdraw from this teaching responsibility. In this sense, her strong agency was enacted in the form of avoidance, serving as a form of self-protection.

At this moment, I don't feel that teaching medical students, year 1, was difficult for English teachers. But I'm not sure about when they move up to the higher level because I've never taught the technical English for the medical students. But I believe that some teachers probably had difficulty with those courses because there should be more technical terms. There should be more difficult reading in terms of different sub-fields in those medical field, I believe. That's why I avoid teaching technical English for Medical students.... I don't like to invest, not only for EMP. So, if I can choose, I'll choose not to. Because if I jump into that, I'll need to invest. (Ajarn Thida)

Her decision not to continue teaching EMP courses did not represent a lack of agency; rather, teacher knowledge – perceived inadequate expertise – mediated her agency by prompting a deliberate decision to withdraw. She was fully aware of the expectations she would have to fulfil and additional demands of teaching EMP at more advanced levels. In this case, she weighed the costs and benefits and ultimately chose disengagement from the field as a self-protective response.

Ajarn Thida's case further shows how teacher knowledge mediated agency through her professional commitment and sense of responsibility. Her view of her professional role influenced how she enacted agency by assessing the value of and commitment to EMP. Interestingly, she further commented that she did not want to invest much time in this field because it was time-consuming, and she did not like dealing with medical content. Her primary focus and concern were on students majoring in English and based in the English department rather than the medical students.

I don't like to invest a lot for those students who are not mine. Because I feel like medical students are not really my students. I think that my students are the ones who study in

English major. ... I don't like to invest, not only for EMP. I'm okay with the students. The only thing that I feel is that they're not really my students, but I still love them. I don't want to invest because I realize that I will not be with them for long. (Ajarn Thida)

This illustrates that she positioned her professional identity as an English-major teacher rather than an EMP teacher. Her reluctance to invest time in EMP students did not stem from any characteristics related to the students or the course itself, but rather from her sense of professional identity and responsibility towards 'her students', students of GE. She considered her primary responsibility as teaching English-major students and saw EMP students as outside her main responsibility, as EMP was only part of a compulsory course to complement their medical courses. She may therefore have considered that devoting her time and effort to these 'temporary' students was too demanding. Consequently, she decided not to teach EMP further because it did not align with her interest, expertise, and her responsibility as an English-major teacher.

This case clearly emphasises that teacher knowledge served as a mediating factor by defining her sense of responsibility. Thus, teacher knowledge influenced her sense of competence and her perception of her professional role and engagement.

While teacher knowledge may have served as a constraining factor for some teachers, it acted as an affordance that enhanced Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa's agency. Their prior medical knowledge increased their sense of adequacy and competence, empowering them to approach the challenges of teaching EMP confidently. In contrast to other interviewees, Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa, who had a background in medical knowledge, did not struggle with the medical terms but saw them as a positive challenge. They stated that EMP is different from GE which

students had studied in their early years through schooling and were now continuing at university. That is, while GE courses were based on everyday vocabulary and language, EMP courses consisted of new terminology which students may never have learned. Therefore, it challenged them as teachers to find approaches to support their students in being able to understand technical words easily:

I think it's really challenging. We need to use a lot of medical terms. We need to make it easier for our students because our students are just like normal students. They've learned some many English, I mean general English. But not medical English. When they come into our class, everything, I mean the subject matter in our class is full of jargon, technical terms, anatomy, and everything mixes up in medical. It's very hard for them to learn. We need to concentrate and make it to be easy for them to learn. (Ajarn Nawa)

This case indicates that teacher knowledge mediated agency not as a constraint but as an enabling factor. That is, Ajarn Jaru and Nawa's familiarity with the subject matter was a source of confidence. This enabled them to embrace the challenges of EMP. Here, knowledge reinforced their sense of adequacy. They saw their own background knowledge in the medical field act as a significant affordance which made their EMP teaching more manageable. Ajarn Jaru emphasised the benefit of her background in a medical field as it eased her teaching as follows:

Because we work in a healthcare, medical field, so we have some knowledge about this. I think it makes it easier for me to teach this class. I'd like to say how much I learn and how much the students gain from this course. It's rewarding when you go out of the class setting, and the students mention or they said how much they appreciate about this

course. That's the way it's so rewarding for us. That's the way it's so rewarding for us.

(Ajarn Jaru)

Consequently, this emphasises that contrary to other teachers, Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa's existing medical knowledge functioned as a mediating factor that empowered them to teach EMP with confidence and anticipate student needs. That is, their expertise allowed them to see opportunities for growth, instead of perceiving EMP as a struggle, while tailoring their pedagogy proactively. Moreover, their in-depth knowledge allowed them to see more nuance in students' needs. They were able to more easily determine their students' needs in EMP vocabulary, whereas for other teachers this was a gap, because they had more limited knowledge and they relied on co-construction with students. Hence, the strong knowledge of these two teachers fostered a sense of adequacy, contributing to confident teaching practices.

Across all these cases, teacher knowledge emerged as a mediating factor – either as a constraint or an affordance, depending on the individual context. It influenced how teachers reacted emotionally and practically in response to the challenges of EMP. For many teachers with insufficient medical knowledge or experience, this factor triggered a sense of inadequacy, insecurity, and emotional distress. As a result, it mediated the agentic responses they enacted, such as seeking external support, use of collaborative learning, and utilisation of resources. Conversely, for those with medical background, this factor increased their sense of adequacy, and it helped them recognise student needs and adapt pedagogical strategies appropriately. Additionally, teacher knowledge mediated teacher agency through its impact on professional identity. For some teachers, such as Ajarn Panu and Ajarn Thida, limited knowledge in this field drove them to view themselves as inadequate and perceive EMP as too demanding and beyond their professional responsibility. This contributed to disengagement from the field. On

the other hand, for those with medical backgrounds, prior knowledge led them to perceive EMP as part of their professional identity. This allowed them to act agentively with more confidence. Ultimately, teacher knowledge shaped how teachers responded to challenges and influenced their perception of professional roles in the EMP context.

6.2.1 Enactment of Agency

As pointed out in the previous section, teacher knowledge – which can vary between those with limited knowledge and those with a medical background – functioned as a mediating factor which shaped how teachers acted agentively. In the face of emotional distress or a sense of inadequacy caused by limited knowledge, many of the teachers were driven to exercise agency proactively in different ways. Specifically, some sought help from experts or colleagues in relevant fields and colleagues, such as consulting about technical terms, medical knowledge, and instructional materials. This helped ease their nervousness where the teachers took specific measures to enhance their teaching.

Be (my colleague) recommended some books to me and told me where I could find some materials. Alternatively, I borrowed some books from her. (Ajarn Supa)

[ที่เบจะแนะนำหนังสือ มีหนังสือก็อะ ก็จะไปอ่านจากที่ไหนได้บ้าง หรือยืมที่เบด้วยก็อะ (Ajarn Supa)]

This example shows how Ajarn Supa undertook an agentive response to the gaps in knowledge by actively consulting and seeking help from her experienced colleague. This mediated her agency by providing access to resources and pedagogical knowledge, which enabled her to bridge her knowledge gap and reinforced her instructional practice over time.

Additionally, teacher knowledge mediated teachers' enactment of agency through their use of digital tools to address the gaps in knowledge. Some of the teachers employed technology,

especially Google or YouTube, to widen their knowledge. In particular, they browsed through these search engines to seek information about aspects of the medical profession or nursing, to find out the meanings of unfamiliar technical terms, and to collect materials for their EMP courses.

I looked at the previous materials and also other available materials on the Internet as well... So, I googled those themes and tried to read, tried to watch the videos on YouTube related to those themes in order to prepare myself for that. (Ajarn Panu)

I asked some of my friends who are in the area and sometimes searched for more information in the Internet. (Ajarn Thipsutha)

These cases illustrate how limited knowledge prompted Ajarn Panu and Ajarn Thipsutha to undertake proactive actions by improving their knowledge through self-directed learning. These measures allowed them to gain more confidence and be better prepared to answer students' questions. This highlights how engagement in self-initiated learning could help bridge the knowledge limitations and foster a sense of preparedness, which could potentially enable agentic teaching responses.

In addition, teacher knowledge mediated teachers' enactment of agentic responses through adaptive strategies, where they adjusted their roles and classroom practices to address their knowledge gaps. Similar to Ajarn Dara's case of embracing vulnerability, some teachers acknowledged their limited knowledge and turned this into a collaborative opportunity. They mentioned that medical students' high proficiency was utilised to overcome the challenges resulting from their own lack of knowledge in the field. That is, these teachers used their agency to draw on students' high proficiency so that they did not need to be an acclaimed expert in the field. They turned this to an engaging collaborative activity where students could share their

medical or nursing knowledge with the teachers. So, they viewed it positively and as a benefit to both students and teachers:

I see it as an advantage, a benefit because like I said, at any point that I don't understand, I ask them. So, they can share what they know and they can practice explaining those technical terms in simple English. I think it's a good way to practice, like I ask them "what is this term, the disease?" And they try to explain in simple English for me to understand. So, I'd say I see it as a benefit. (Ajarn Pornpiya).

This case indicates that the gaps in knowledge allowed Ajarn Pornpiya to transform challenges into pedagogical opportunities. Her willingness to rely on students' knowledge enabled her to address those limitations and foster a co-learning environment. It highlights how limited teacher knowledge could influence teachers' agentic choice to embrace vulnerability and move beyond traditional practices by creating a collaborative classroom.

Unlike teachers who had limited medical knowledge, teachers with a medical background demonstrated how existing medical knowledge could mediate their exercising of agency differently from those with the gaps in knowledge. It allowed them to approach EMP more confidently by integrating this knowledge into their teaching. For example, Ajarn Jaru drew on such knowledge to make her class more engaging, facilitating students' learning, while Ajarn Nawa asserted that she was able to overcome challenges at the beginning of her EMP teaching largely owing to collegial collaboration: "For me, because I have a very good co-worker, so we work together to go over the obstacles, the problems that we have. We always discuss and find out the way out to the problem that we have at that time."

These examples show how prior medical knowledge could mediate their ability to act more confidently and flexibly in the classroom. Ajarn Jaru's ability to utilise her medical background

contributed to engaging lessons, while Ajarn Nawa's expertise and collegial support empowered her to navigate challenges. Overall, these examples demonstrate that teacher knowledge could influence teachers' ability to respond adaptively in the EMP context.

In summary, teacher knowledge – whether limited or well-established – emerged as a mediating factor in influencing how teachers acted agentively in the EMP context. Specifically, this factor encouraged those with the gaps in knowledge to respond to the challenges of EMP through help-seeking strategies, self-initiated learning, or utilising student knowledge, while the two teachers armed with a medical background exercised their agency more confidently through drawing on their existing knowledge and collaboration with colleagues. In essence, all these enactments of agency were used by teachers as a way of resolving the challenges they faced and fostering a stronger professional identity, i.e. a sense of adequacy as an EMP teacher.

6.2.2 Impact on Professional Identity

Teacher knowledge was observed as a factor that mediated teachers' sense of professional identity in the EMP context. As teachers exercised their agentive responses through help-seeking strategies, collaboration, the utilisation of technology, utilisation of student proficiency, and medical background knowledge, their knowledge – existing or limited – shaped how they perceived and positioned themselves professionally. As discussed earlier, although Ajarn Panu experienced emotional distress, he took agentic responses by consulting experienced teachers and engaging in self-directed learning. However, these efforts did not ease his sense of inadequacy. Rather, the persistent gaps in his medical English reinforced that sense of self-doubt and his perception of being “not capable” or “not suitable” to teach EMP. In this case, limited knowledge contributed to his perception of his professional identity as an inadequate EMP teacher, regardless of his proactive efforts to bridge those gaps.

Additionally, as with Ajarn Panu, teacher knowledge mediated Ajarn Thida's perception of her professional identity. Notwithstanding her extensive experience in teaching GE and English-major courses, she showed resistance to EMP as it required expanding her medical knowledge. Her reluctance to "invest" time and efforts in learning medical content, along with her preference for English-major courses, reflected that she did not identify with EMP: "At that time, I already immersed myself into the English major subjects which its nature is quite, it suits me well", she explained. This comment indicates that her teacher knowledge led her to view herself as not fit for EMP. Her self-positioning was underscored when she referred to students in English-major courses as "my students". Together, these examples clearly illustrate her alignment and commitment to the field. In this sense, teacher knowledge allowed her to recognise and affirm her professional identity as an English-major teacher rather than an EMP teacher.

In contrast to the two teachers who viewed themselves as unfit for EMP owing to the gaps in medical English, teacher knowledge was seen to positively mediate the professional identity of Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa, with their medical backgrounds. Ajarn Jaru's prior knowledge empowered her to integrate relevant content into her teaching easily, which fostered her confidence and contributed to a sense of competence and suitability for EMP: "I will say that because we come from the medical background, that's a good point for us. That's why we accept this EMP course because we have medical background", she explained. Similarly, Ajarn Nawa's previous professional experience and knowledge enabled her to identify with the field: "We have enough background knowledge to teach them", she stated. These insights reflect that teacher knowledge strengthened their sense of adequacy and empowered them to position themselves professionally as competent EMP teachers.

In conclusion, teacher knowledge functioned as a mediating factor in shaping how teachers perceived their professional identity and positioned themselves in the EMP context. For teachers with gaps in knowledge, as in the cases of Ajarn Panu and Ajarn Thida, these limitations contributed to a sense of inadequacy and, in turn, led them to judge themselves as not suited for the field. They perceived their professional identity as inadequate in the context. On the contrary, those with a medical background – Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa – drew on their prior knowledge to increase confidence, affirming a sense of adequacy. This enabled them to see themselves as competent EMP teachers. These cases illustrate that teacher knowledge, whether limited or extensive, could shape teachers' perception of their professional identity and self-positioning.

6.3 Student Factors and Their Impact

Student-related factors emerged as a crucial aspect which mediated teachers' agentic responses in the EMP context. These factors, such as student proficiency or autonomy, influenced teachers' pedagogical decisions and encouraged them to adopt strategies which were responsive to those factors, ranging from combining teaching methods and focusing on communicative abilities to undertaking further preparation. These student-related factors served as either constraints or affordances, depending on different teachers. On the one hand, knowledgeable and able students were one of the factors that shaped teachers' decisions to act agentively in different ways and influenced how they saw themselves in their professional roles, affecting their sense of adequacy. On the other hand, these factors mediated teachers in terms of not only how they exercised agency but also how they perceived themselves professionally in the EMP context.

6.3.1 Working with Knowledgeable and Able Students

Among student-related factors, working with knowledgeable and able students was identified as crucial to the way in which teachers undertook agentic responses in the EMP classrooms. EMP students – whether medical or nursing students – were consistently characterised by EMP teachers as highly knowledgeable and competent students. The majority of teachers interviewed agreed that EMP students possessed high levels of intelligence and autonomy, and were well-prepared and more engaged, compared to students from other faculties. Specifically, while in the early stages of teaching EMP students, teachers experienced anxiety (see Section 5.3.1) and were concerned that teaching such capable students might expose their own lack of knowledge, many found working with competent and knowledgeable students to be highly positive. Ajarn Chompoo stated that the students exhibited a high level of English fluency. They typically outperformed students from other faculties, and these students may possess higher fluency than teachers themselves: “Their English level is pretty high, higher than students in general... Students can speak fluently, maybe more fluent than me”, she explained. Notably, the superior knowledge to which she referred here is of English, not of medical knowledge. Ajarn Wanna also observed that these students had a strong sense of responsibility. These features contributed to a perception among teachers that EMP students were highly capable, reinforcing positive expectations about student engagement and performance.

Nevertheless, not all teachers shared this view. Ajarn Thida, for example, stated that the medical students in her class possessed a low level of English proficiency. This is interesting in that medical students or doctors are typically believed to be good at a variety of subjects, including English, but in this case, she was of the opinion that her students had poor English proficiency:

Sometimes I firstly thought that the students from this faculty must be very smart, they must at least know some grammars that were listed in the book. However, it ended up

that half of the class had problems. So, they were weak, compared to the second year English-major students in terms of grammatical knowledge. (Ajarn Thida)

Despite such differences, this recognition of student characteristics prompted teachers to act agentively in various ways, adjusting their practices and re-positioning themselves. Students' knowledge and disciplinary expertise were seen to mediate how Ajarn Pornpiya turned to a collaborative approach and a facilitative role. She explained that when experiencing uncertainty, she would ask her students to clarify technical terms (see section 5.3.1). In doing so, these competent students were encouraged to share their knowledge and take an active role in the learning process. This highlights that acknowledging that her students possessed greater disciplinary knowledge prompted in Ajarn Pornpiya a shift from a teacher-centred approach to a more interactive approach where students co-constructed learning. Her decision to embrace her role as a facilitator transformed student competence into pedagogical opportunities within the EMP context.

This factor also prompted some teachers to adopt proactive strategies in anticipation of potential challenges. This is evident in Ajarn Pornpiya's case, where she noted, "Because they know more than us. So, we need to prepare and think about the activities, class activities to get the one who're tired from work to get engaged in class. And also, sometimes for preparation also means find the information about the terms... maybe they'll ask or even challenge us about our knowledge." Her comment suggests that knowledgeable students could undermine her professional image, so it motivated her to prepare more thoroughly and design engaging lessons. In this sense, this served to mediate her agency by developing thorough lesson planning and content review.

Additionally, some teachers used student-centred pedagogical approaches in their EMP classes in response to the specific characteristics of these students, particularly their autonomy and active learning style. Rather than relying on lecture-based methods commonly used for teaching General English, Ajarn Nantida, Ajarn Thida, and Ajarn Panisa used a task-based approach. They assigned group activities which encouraged collaboration. They considered this to be suitable for their classes since the students responded enthusiastically when taking part in these activities. Ajarn Nantida's case, for example, illustrates how her perception of students as autonomous learners encouraged her to adjust her teaching practice:

I have to change a lot because as the EMP students, they're very active, they like to, you know, try out to do things themselves. So, the pedagogy that I changed from other, from teaching general English, is more like task- and project-based. I have to like prepare something or some kind of task for them in the class. And instead of, you know, teacher explaining or telling them what to do, and it's just like give them a task and let them work in groups collaboratively and find out the answer. And they were very eager to present to share the idea they have within the group. (Ajarn Nantida)

This instance shows that students' enthusiasm and independent learning style led her to shift from a teacher-centred approach to a task- or project-based one which promoted collaborative learning. In doing so, the autonomous nature of these students mediated her agency, enabling her to adopt a facilitative role – much like Ajarn Pornpiya – and develop engaging, student-driven activities.

Besides, the presence of knowledgeable students prompted some teachers to act agentively by adjusting how they addressed content-related challenges. Ajarn Thipsutha noted that students with high competency often posed difficult questions – either out of their curiosity or a desire

to challenge – which tested her subject knowledge: “They might ask you difficult questions. If I could answer, I answer. But if I couldn't answer, I tell them to read. So, I come back and find the answer for them. It might be a little bit embarrassed, but I think it's okay than say something that you don't know and it's wrong” (Ajarn Thipsutha).

This example shows that teaching knowledgeable students functioned as a mediating factor that encouraged Ajarn Thipsutha to adopt a responsible practice. Instead of attempting to preserve her professional image by risking misinformation, she acknowledged her gaps in knowledge and returned with well-researched answers. This reflects her strong sense of commitment – both to her students and to safeguarding her professional integrity. In this way, highly competent students mediated her agentic response by motivating transparency and reflective practice.

In contrast to the teachers who responded to competent students with confidence and pedagogical flexibility, Ajarn Panu exercised a form of agency which was shaped by his perception of these students. He stated that his creativity was hindered when he was teaching EMP. He also acknowledged that his students were equipped with more technical knowledge than he had:

When I taught medical students, I feel that I got caught in a frame of the content prepared in the course syllabus, and my creativity didn't flow at all. ... I think my role is limited to only facilitator because I'm not brave and I don't think, again, I'm suitable or even capable enough to help them about medical situations or medical context if they would like me to help them or give them any advice about that. I believe that those medical students have better understanding and experience in medical context than me, so I just let them talk, let them share their thoughts, their experience, their knowledge with their

own classmates. So, that's why I believe that collaborative learning is very important for teachers who have limited experience of teaching certain areas in English. (Ajarn Panu)

In this example, encountering knowledgeable students served as a mediating factor that forced Ajarn Panu to exercise his agency through an adaptive response. He shifted his traditional role as a teacher to a facilitative role while resorting to collaborative learning, which allowed his students to share their knowledge and engage in discussions. This process reflects that his adaptive agency was influenced by his perception of inadequacy. Thus, the presence of highly competent students mediated his agentic decision by undermining his role and confidence, potentially limiting his perception of the instructional strategies available to him.

Moreover, the highly competent nature of EMP students, as seen in several cases, mediated teacher agency by prompting responses to the perceived knowledge gap between teachers and their students. For example, Ajarn Panisa noted that her students possessed a high level of competence, and reading her students' work in advance served as a means of avoiding the exposure of her vulnerability.

So, as the teacher, I have the time to read and understood it before like went back to discuss with them or like with the presentation, the final product just like to present in a video. I feel safer. (Ajarn Panisa)

This case highlights how the presence of knowledgeable students served as a mediating factor in prompting her agentic response through strategic planning. In order to protect herself from exposing her limited knowledge of medical terms to students in real time, Ajarn Panisa ensured that she had time to review students' work in advance before engaging in discussion. Instead of reacting spontaneously in class, this approach provided her with a sense of safety and allowed

her to feel more prepared and adequate. In this sense, the competent nature of EMP students mediated her agency by prompting pre-emptive strategies that helped sustain her confidence and a sense of self-efficacy as a teacher of EMP.

Notably, while the highly competent students prompted a shift to teachers as facilitators or use of pre-emptive strategies, in Ajarn Wanna's case, they mediated teacher agency by inspiring more creative and experiential practices. Specifically, she shared that thanks to her students' professional experience, she could adopt a role-playing approach to create more engaging lessons:

Every day they would come with their experience in the hospitals because they also work at the hospitals. Then, I need to ask them about things that happened there, and then they loved to share. We can share like for the caregiver's point of view and patient's. I pretend to be a patient and I like to ask them like silly questions that patients might ask at the hospitals. (Ajarn Wanna)

This case depicts how the students' first-hand nursing experience mediated Ajarn Wanna's agency by encouraging her to implement creative pedagogical approaches, where she positioned herself as a patient and encouraged students to engage from a caregiver's perspective. Doing this promoted interactive and experience-based learning. This reflects that instead of viewing her students' competency as a threat, she transformed it into a valuable resource. In this sense, student expertise expanded her pedagogical choices, contributing to a more responsive classroom environment.

Besides, student competence was found to mediate Ajarn Chompoo's agency by prompting the development of instruction tailored to challenge students. Recognising the high competence

and autonomy of her EMP students, she found that the materials were too easy and quickly completed by students, which required her to act agentively.

So, when I teach EMP, I use more English in the class. And, I don't have to wait too long for the answer when I ask questions. Students are ready to give me the answer and we don't have to spend much time on exercise because the exercise from the book is not difficult. They might just take a look and give me the answer. So, the class went very fast. But what I need to do is prepare extra exercise for them. To prepare something more challenging. (Ajarn Chompoo)

This example demonstrates how student autonomy and high proficiency drove her to adapt her teaching by developing more challenging materials in line with their learning pace. As a result, her agentive response helped sustain student engagement and motivation. This also reflects that unlike many teachers whose agency was influenced by the need to address their own challenges, Ajarn Chompoo's actions were primarily driven by her dedication to meet student needs. In this sense, the high competence of EMP students mediated her agentic response through pedagogical adaptation and a proactive, student-centred approach.

Similarly, the expertise of EMP students – especially their diverse medical specialisations – emerged as a mediating factor in shaping instructional design. Acknowledging that students in her course possessed medical knowledge across fields beyond her expertise, Ajarn Wipakorn developed tasks which motivated them to share content knowledge from their own domains:

Since I'm an English teacher, I don't know every content. I don't know everything about medical science. So, what I can do is I create some tasks that aim to elicit the doctors' knowledge about the content that we would like them to share. ... It's fun because it's

their field, it's not boring. Because they learn from other departments as well. (Ajarn Wipakorn)

This underscores how she acted agentively by incorporating content-based learning into communicative language teaching to foster language and content engagement. In doing so, she not only bridged her content-related knowledge but also transformed students' specialisations into pedagogical resources in a co-constructive learning environment – much like Ajarn Wanna who drew on student expertise to facilitate experiential learning. This reflects how student knowledgeability mediated teacher agency by affording pedagogical resources and opportunities.

In summary, working with knowledgeable and able students emerged as a mediating factor in how teachers exercised their agency in the EMP context. Evidently, some teachers embraced the characteristics of these students – whether their disciplinary expertise, autonomy, or active learning style – and responded in different ways, such as adopting a collaborative approach or pre-emptive strategies to address the gaps in technical knowledge. As an example, Ajarn Pornpiya and Ajarn shifted their role to facilitators, allowing students to engage in a co-learning environment. Others, such as Ajarn Thipsutha and Ajarn Panisa, acted agentively through careful planning to safeguard their confidence and sense of adequacy. Additionally, Ajarn Chompoo's case showed that student competence motivated her to design more challenging materials to foster student engagement, while Ajarn Wanna's case further highlighted how the competence of EMP students fostered pedagogical creativity; she drew on students' practical experience by designing interactive activities, especially role plays. Similarly, Ajarn Wipakorn took an agentive response to her students' distinct medical specialisations by designing content-based activities that enabled them to share knowledge from their own areas. Overall, these cases

illustrate that knowledgeable students mediated teacher agency by prompting a variety of responses, ranging from pedagogical shifts to adaptive strategies, shaped by how teachers perceived and negotiated the characteristics of their students.

6.3.2 Impact on Professional Identity

Interaction with highly competent EMP students emerged as a factor that mediated teachers' professional identity. As they acted agentively in various ways such as designing student-centred discussions or incorporating real-world medical scenarios, this also influenced the way in which they positioned themselves professionally, either fostering or challenging their sense of adequacy. Ajarn Wipakorn's case, for example, illustrates how working with competent EMP students initially challenged, but ultimately reshaped her professional identity within the EMP context. She had experienced emotional tension as she realised that her EMP students possessed strong technical knowledge and relatively high English proficiency, but she perceived this challenge as ultimately beneficial because it pushed her to prepare extra material and to read and understand medical texts (see Section 5.3.1). Her response reflects her strong sense of professional responsibility and an initial attempt to position herself as a knowledge deliverer – potentially as a means of compensating for the perceived gap in expertise.

Nevertheless, she seemed to realise that she did not need to affirm herself as an expert in this technical domain, and she started to see her students' expertise as a resource to be drawn on: "I would let the students know that I'm an English teacher, you're a doctor... So, the challenge of us is I'm going to share what I've known in English and you have to share with me the content or the knowledge in medical science." This comment depicts her shift toward affirming her identity as a language specialist, and she repositioned herself as a facilitator who enabled

students to articulate their medical knowledge clearly. This identity acknowledged the difference in expertise between herself and the students, while maintaining her value as an educator. Similar facilitative roles were observed in the cases of Ajarn Wanna and Ajarn Pornpiya. Ajarn Wanna adopted a collaborative facilitator role by allowing her students to share clinical experiences and take ownership of communication activities (see Section 6.3.1). Although initially concerned about the high level of her medical doctor students, she took the same role and encouraged active student engagement through discussions: “My concern is that what I prepared may be too easy for them, how to get them engaged... Let them discuss is what I was told from the experienced teacher.” Ultimately, these cases show how teachers redefine their professional identity – from authoritative knowledge providers to facilitative partners who fostered learning by drawing on student expertise.

Meanwhile, some teachers projected a dual professional identity mediated by their experience with competent and motivated EMP students. Specifically, Ajarn Thipsutha recognised that these students were equipped with higher levels of effort and determination than others:

They have more competency than other students, so they are willing to study. They try hard to, what, overcome obstacles in English.... Sometimes you have to spend time a lot to be good in what you have to teach these students.

Her comment reflects that instead of feeling undermined, she responded with professional investment. Student competence motivated her to move beyond her traditional role, prompting her to engage with medical content: “If you teach medical students, you have to know a little bit about medical content.” This illustrates the development of a dual professional positioning – an expanding language teacher and a content-aware practitioner. In this way, her case

highlights how working with competent students served as a mediating factor in negotiating her professional identity.

Additionally, working with competent students was identified as a factor that mediated teachers' professional identity towards collaboration over authority. Contrary to teachers positioning themselves as facilitators enabling learning through guided interaction, Ajarn Dara reframed the classroom as a co-learning space. Fully aware of her students' familiarity with technical vocabulary and medical procedures, she was willing to ask them for clarification about unknown terms (see Section 6.2). Rather than viewing her students' expertise as a threat, she actively treated it as a source for mutual learning, encouraging them to explain particular terminology or functions of medical devices. In doing so, this reversed the typical teacher-student roles and empowered learners to contribute to the construction of knowledge. Hence, her identity was shifted from that of a sole knowledge transmitter to a collaborator engaged in reciprocal exchange.

In contrast to teachers whose professional identities were redefined in response to student competence, some teachers experienced identity shaped by professional self-questioning. Although Ajarn Chompoo acknowledged that her students were competent or even advanced, this recognition led her to doubt the adequacy of her teaching. She was particularly concerned about whether she had provided students with sufficient opportunities to practice and her (see Section 5.4.1). She noted that the class often moved quickly owing to the proficiency of many students, yet some students with less competence might have found themselves struggling quietly. This comment reflects how the presence of highly competent students could result in learning variations among individual students, causing her to question whether all learners were equally supported. Here, her experience with these students mediated professional identity

through self-evaluation. Ajarn Chompoo's case depicts that teacher identity in the EMP context is not always affirmed but may be challenged by the demand of meeting diverse learner needs.

Notwithstanding earlier doubts, Ajarn Chompoo's teacher identity was also affirmed through engagement with capable students. She shared that while she had questioned her role, teaching knowledgeable and motivated students turned out to be a rewarding experience for her: "Within our team, no one wanted to let go of this work. Because once we got involved, it was engaging. It made us want to keep doing it. I also felt proud of myself to teach such capable students" [ในทีมกันเอง ทุกคนกลับรู้สึกไม่อยากวางมือ เพราะว่าพอเข้าไปแล้วมันก็ engaging ทำให้เรารู้สึกอยากจะทำต่ออะไรแบบนี้ เราก็ proud ในตัวเองเหมือนกัน ว่าเราได้สอนนักศึกษาที่เก่งอะไรแบบนี้]. It created a sense of emotional and professional engagement. This underscores how professional identity may evolve through a sense of purpose and value derived from teaching EMP students.

Moreover, in some other cases, engagement with competent students functioned as a mediating factor in reinforcing teachers' professional identity in the EMP context – especially when roles were clearly distinguished. Recognising that her nursing students possessed greater technical knowledge, Ajarn Sasi did not perceive this as a threat. Rather, she approached the interaction as mutually beneficial, drawing a clear distinction between her role and student expertise:

The students, they know a lot of contents in nursing more than me. But they still have some problems about how to talk to the patients, how to talk to the foreign staff. Because I think I can took advantage from them about the content and gave them about the English. So, win-win.

Her comment suggests that she could draw on students' disciplinary knowledge while guiding them in how to communicate in professional contexts. This positioning portrays an affirmed identity as a language specialist. Rather than needing to renegotiate her roles, her case illustrates how professional identity can be preserved through proactive engagement with capable learners. In this sense, experience with these students served as a resource that reinforced her sense of professional purpose.

These varied accounts illustrate how engagement with competent students could serve as a mediating factor in affirming or reshaping teacher identity. In contrast, Ajarn Panu's case highlights that such competence may trigger emotional pressure and challenge one's sense of adequacy. He reported feelings of anxiety stemming from his limited disciplinary knowledge and teaching experience, expressing doubt his ability to teach students with medical expertise. His reaction suggests that he may have felt overshadowed by his students, undermining his confidence in his role. In response, he adopted a facilitative role to encourage students' active engagement in discussion (see Section 6.2). However, this pedagogical shift did not relieve his sense of inadequacy; in fact, he continued to see himself as "not capable" of teaching medical students. His case reflects a vulnerable sense of professional identity, where highly knowledgeable students were perceived as a threat to teacher identity rather than a resource.

Overall, these cases illustrate that engagement with highly competent EMP students mediated teacher identity in diverse ways. For some, such as Ajarn Wipakorn and Ajarn Thipsutha, such competence led to a shift in positioning, from traditional roles towards hybrid ones which integrated language teaching with disciplinary content. In others' cases, such as those of Ajarn Dara and Ajarn Sasi, working with these students affirmed their roles as language experts. Meanwhile, Ajarn Chompoo's case revealed an evolving identity, where initial self-doubt

paved the way for a deeper sense of professional purpose. Contrary to those teachers, Ajarn Panu's case demonstrated how student competence could contribute to a persistent sense of inadequacy. Together, these accounts highlight that working with knowledgeable and capable students not only enabled or constrained agency but also mediated how teachers interpret their roles and negotiated their professional identities in the EMP context.

6.4 Experience as a Mediating Factor

Besides teacher knowledge and student-related factors, experience functioned as a mediating factor in shaping teacher agency and professional identity among EMP teachers. In particular, the amount and relevance of teaching experience influenced how teachers navigated the challenges of EMP. Many teachers reported feelings of anxiety and uncertainty at the beginning, stemming from their unfamiliarity with the medical context and limited experience in the field, as observed in Ajarn Nantida's reflection: "I would admit that it's kinda difficult for me because I haven't, haven't taught this, you know, EMP before." However, when the interviewees gained more experience in teaching EMP, most began to feel more positively about their roles, with only a few continuing to feel uncomfortable. Three interviewees stated that increased EMP teaching experience not only enhanced their confidence but also increased their ability to meet the students' need and manage the class more effectively. As Ajarn Dara explained:

In my first year, I did not have a lot of teaching experience. So, I feel I teach with low confidence...But, when the time passed by, I feel that I feel more relaxed and I can handle the situation better...So, learning from the past and with the age that adds up to myself, I think I handle it better. (Ajarn Dara)

In this way, accumulated experience became a mediating factor by enabling her to regain confidence and respond more effectively.

Building on this, for some teachers, growing experience contributed to increased confidence and mediated teacher agency by enabling the development of practical skills to address the challenges of EMP. Ajarn Thipsutha, for example, described how she improved her capacity through information-seeking and instructional design, enabling her to feel increasingly equipped for EMP classes: “I feel confident and I know that I can manage it. I could find. I know how to search for information, how to arrange everything for any classes.” Here, experience served as a mediating factor for her agency by fostering a growing sense of adequacy and contributing to greater autonomy in her classes.

Similarly, in Ajarn Nantida’s case, experience acted as a mediating factor in shaping her agency through a gradual process of trial, reflection, and adjustment. Instead of relying on a fixed set of strategies, she experimented with different approaches. Although her attempts did not always yield the fruitful outcomes she wished, she still continued experimenting, and this contributed to more confident and effective teaching over time. As a student-oriented teacher, she highlighted that learning more about her students and their needs helped build her confidence and guide her instructional decisions:

I feel more confident in the direction that I'm going to... At the beginning, I was like tried this and that and see what worked or what's not work. And once I know more about the students, the level that they are at, and started to know what they need to know and what they need to be used in their careers, so, I feel more confident about the lesson and the course that I have designed with my co-teachers. (Ajarn Nantida)

In her case, experience mediated agency by expanding her repertoire of strategies through trial and error, reflective decision-making, and attention to students' professional needs.

These cases demonstrated how confidence and strategy development gradually emerged from growing experience. Additional cases also reveal an increase in agency over time. Particularly, Ajarn Sasi's experience over time empowered her to exercise greater agency. After several years of teaching EMP, she felt confident enough to develop her own material tailored to what she believed suited her students' needs better

After about 3 years, I tried to find the materials by myself and developed it whatever I want to teach them... tried to follow the course syllabus but add something more. That makes me happy.

In this way, experience not only enhanced her confidence but also fostered a greater sense of autonomy, empowering her to move beyond prescribed materials in ways that brought personal fulfilment. This sense that experience mediated agency – affording teachers greater agency and confidence in responding to classroom challenges – was also reported by other teachers. For some, growing familiarity with EMP contexts enabled them to recognise student expectations and classroom challenges clearly, thereby contributing to greater ease in their teaching. This is evident in Ajarn Pornpiya's account:

Yeah, more confident. Because when we gain experience, so we know what the students expect and what kind of problems or questions the students may come up. So, feel more relaxed but still quite some part worried because the students each year are different. (Ajarn Pornpiya)

In this way, her case illustrates how experience contributed to greater confidence and mediated her agency by enhancing her ability to adapt to changing student needs and recurring classroom challenges.

However, while the above cases show how experience served as a mediating factor in shaping teacher agency by fostering confidence and adaptability, this was not true for all teachers. Two teachers, namely Ajarn Supa and Ajarn Panu, noted that gaining experience in teaching EMP did not change their emotional responses or engagement with the field. In fact, Ajarn Supa said that she still felt nervous although it was not her first time teaching EMP. Despite the course and the materials remaining largely unchanged, the possibility of unexpected changes continued to trigger anxiety: “I’m still nervous only a little better than when I first start teaching EMP. It is because the course is similar to the previous ones and we also use the same material. But I’m still nervous because there might be some changes in detail though.” This suggests that she may not have built sufficient confidence to respond adaptively, despite her accumulated experience. In this sense, experience did not appear to mediate either her agency or professional identity. Rather, her ongoing nervousness suggests a sense of inadequacy and a lack of confidence to act agentively, even with growing familiarity with the same course.

Much like Ajarn Supa, Ajarn Panu’s case highlights that accumulated experience did not necessarily translate into greater comfort. Notably, his case revealed a more explicit form of resistance. As illustrated earlier, Ajarn Panu reported feelings of apprehension. He further commented that although his attitude had slightly improved over time, he still felt a clear desire not to engage with the field. This shows his enactment of strong agency – not through adaptation but through refusal to conform to demands made on him. Despite gaining experience and developing a relatively better attitude, he acted agentively by distancing himself from the role

and the field itself. This reflects that he continued to perceive himself as incapable of, or unsuitable for, EMP. It illustrates how experience did not mediate a stronger sense of adequacy or foster a secure professional identity in this context.

Overall, all these cases illustrate how teacher actions were mediated and influenced by contextual and experiential factors within a sociocultural perspective. Most interviewees felt nervous or ill at ease when they started teaching EMP. Over time, growing experience enabled some of them to become more confident and feel more relaxed. Even if experience may have contributed to increased confidence in exercising agency, it did not always lead to a stronger sense of adequacy or the integration of EMP into their professional identities, however. Rather, for some teachers, experience gave them some confidence, but the self-doubt persisted, and being an EMP teacher never became part of how they perceived themselves professionally.

6.5 Support and Collaboration

Support and collaboration functioned as factors that mediated agency and professional identities. Teachers described receiving both department-level and collegial support, which enabled them to negotiate the challenges of teaching EMP. These forms of support contributed to not only their pedagogical practices but also how they positioned themselves professionally in the EMP context.

In many cases, department-level support helped enable or reinforce teacher agency. Ajarn Panu, for example, mentioned that he received support from his department or individuals with higher authority in the form of funding instructional materials:

Actually, I think the Department of English Language has provided certain levels of support, like if I'd like to buy course book or any material related to the course that I teach, I can ask for fund or grant in order to buy those.

This reflects that the department-level support mediated his agency by providing resources that contributed to his pedagogical choices. Here, institutional funding afforded him the autonomy in choosing instructional materials aligned with his needs. However, the institution could have offered support, but Ajarn Panu doesn't seem to take this up, so this could be a case of rejected agency.

Similarly, Ajarn Sasi shared that the department had supported her attendance at a seminar in the past: "From the Department of English, they let me join the seminar, but in the past many years ago." In this case, the support reinforced her agency by offering access to professional development opportunities. Participation in such events contributed to her professional learning. Nevertheless, it may be worth noting that her reference to this form of support as occurring "many years ago" suggests that it may no longer be provided since such opportunities were neither widespread nor current practice.

In addition to pedagogical and professional development support, Ajarn Thida shared that institutional support was given in the form of logistics and transportation: "They prepared the van. We have the coordinator. The coordinator works very well. I forgot who the coordinator was at that time. I was supported fully, travel, texts. I usually talk to the coordinator if I have problems." Here, the department's logistical support served as a mediating factor in enabling her agency by reducing burdens that could otherwise hinder teaching and empowering her to

focus on teaching responsibilities. Institutional support facilitated her engagement with the course without necessarily shaping how she positioned herself professionally.

Beyond institutional support, collegial collaboration emerged as a significant mediating factor that contributed to teachers' ability to engage with their work. The majority of them reported that collaboration with their colleagues' particularly in relation to pedagogical and emotional support – sharing materials, advice, ideas – allowed them to navigate the demands of EMP teaching. Among many teachers, Ajarn Panisa's case demonstrates how collegial support enabled agency in relation to the content demands of EMP teaching. She noted: "The colleague is good. They help a lot, like helping on. As I told you that, they're really helpful for the activities and stuff like that, to think about all medical problems and stuff like that." This comment reveals that collaboration with her colleagues allowed her to engage with medical content. This form of assistance may have contributed to alleviating a sense of inadequacy and reinforcing her agentic responses to the challenges of EMP. Much like this case, Ajarn Pornpiya received support from her colleague, as evident in her comment: "In terms of help from the ones in the same team, yes. She gives advice, provides the materials." In this way, it emerged in the form of pedagogical assistance that facilitated her instructional planning. This shows how such collaboration mediated teacher agency by providing access to resources and guidance.

While most teachers shared that they had received support within their own departments, only a few mentioned collaborating with other faculties, such as the Faculty of Medicine or Nursing. These instances were not widespread, but some teachers were able to give tangible examples of collaboration. Such collaboration mediated agency by creating opportunities to align with institutional goals and make informed instructional decisions in the EMP context. As an

example, Ajarn Thipsutha noted that she received support from the Faculty of Medicine in the form of faculty-driven efforts to improve students' English proficiency:

Yeah, especially for medical faculty. They tried hard to, what, they want their students to be good in English. So, they support everything. They create workshop for you to, what, participate in all the demand that they want for their students.

Here, such collaboration enabled her to act agentively in response to the demands set by the faculty. She assumed a contributing role in fulfilling shared goals for student English development.

In contrast, Ajarn Wanna described a more reciprocal relationship with experts in the field: "We help each other to develop the materials...Because for us, we think this may be good for the students, and then we discuss with them [medical or nursing teachers]. They might give us advice of how to do it." Her case shows that faculty-level collaboration served as a factor in mediating agency by allowing her to engage in joint material development. She actively co-developed materials through discussions with the experts, addressing content relevance and appropriateness. This collaboration not only enabled her to act agentively but also mediated her professional identity – positioning her as both a language expert and a material designer.

A contrasting example can be illustrated in Ajarn Chompoo's case, where collaboration supported agentive decision-making. She described leading the course while consulting experts in the medical field, as she explained: "For this course, I'm the head of the course, so I design almost everything. But I consult them [medical teachers] if it's okay. And I kind of, they can do anything they like. But this is what I requested." In this instance, such collaboration enabled her agency by affording autonomy and decision-making authority, with the experts acting as

content validators. This also reinforced her professional identity as an autonomous EMP instructor while remaining open to expert input.

While many teachers benefitted from institutional or collaborative support, not all chose to engage with professional development opportunities although such support was given. For example, Ajarn Thida shared that when she was provided with support to join EMP-related training courses, she declined because it was not aligned with her area of interest or professional positioning: “Actually, we were welcomed to do every single professional development, but it was my decision not to because I realized that teach only a short time period, I don't invest.” In this case, she demonstrated agency through withdrawal from the EMP teaching role. This was largely due to her focus on English-major students over EMP students, whom she considered “not my students”, and the perceived misalignment with her sense of professional belonging. This reflects how her identity was shaped by self-positioning.

Overall, support and collaboration emerged as factors that mediated both teacher agency and professional identity in the EMP context. Support from departments enabled many teachers to act agentively by enabling access to materials, funding, and logistical assistance. In the meantime, collegial support contributed to pedagogical development and emotional comfort through sharing resources, ideas, and advice. Additionally, in some cases, cross-faculty collaboration allowed teachers to engage with medical experts to adapt their instruction in line with faculty expectations, consult with the experts, and co-develop materials. Such collaboration led to diverse professional roles. However, not all teachers embraced those forms of support. For some teachers, agency was enacted through intentional withdrawal due to their professional priorities and self-positioning. Ultimately, these cases highlight that support and

collaboration mediated not only teachers' agentic responses but also their professional self-perceptions.

6.6 Summary

This chapter presented findings from semi-structured interviews about teacher agency in EMP within Thai higher education. The discussions were organised into four themes: (1) Teacher Knowledge, (2) Student Factors, (3) Experience as a Mediating Factor, and (4) Support and Collaboration.

First, teacher knowledge – particularly medical knowledge – significantly mediated their sense of adequacy, actions, and decision-making. The study revealed that most interviewees experienced a lack of medical knowledge, which they primarily viewed as a challenge, but some considered it a motivational factor to improve their teaching methods. Teachers enacted agency through diverse strategies, such as seeking help from colleagues and utilizing technology to enhance their knowledge. By utilising student expertise, some teachers fostered a collaborative classroom environment. For others with medical backgrounds, this knowledge enhanced their confidence and allowed for more pedagogical choices, reinforcing their professional roles as EMP teachers. The various ways teachers exercised agency contributed to their development of a stronger professional identity. Ultimately, these agentic responses mediated by teacher knowledge facilitated instructional decision-making and fostered a growing sense of adequacy and professional identity.

Second, student-related factors – especially the competence of EMP learners – served as a strong mediating factor. EMP students were generally perceived as knowledgeable and capable,

which motivated teachers to undertake a variety of agentic responses. Some teachers responded to this factor by adopting collaborative and student-centered approaches, while others turned to lesson planning, classroom activities, and content-based instruction to meet student needs and manage feelings of inadequacy. These responses improved their confidence and affirmed their professional roles, though some teachers experienced persistent self-doubt. Working with knowledgeable students served as a resource and a challenge, influencing teachers' emotional responses, instructional decisions, and their professional positioning.

Third, overall teaching experience acted as a mediating factor that gradually enhanced teachers' confidence in teaching EMP. Initially, many teachers showed emotional distress at the beginning of EMP teaching. With growing experience, they generally felt better equipped to handle classes and address student needs, allowing them to enact agency with increased confidence. However, this growing confidence did not contribute to a stronger sense of adequacy in all, so some teachers experienced ongoing self-doubt, and they did not perceive themselves as EMP teachers.

Finally, support and collaboration mediated both teacher agency and professional identity. Teachers received various forms of support from their departments, such as access to instructional resources, funding, and logistical assistance, empowering them to act agentively with greater confidence. Meanwhile, collegial support and cross-faculty collaboration offered instructional guidance and emotional encouragement, enabling them to co-develop materials, consult with medical experts, and adapt their instruction. However, some teachers did not embrace available support. They expressed agency by withdrawing themselves from professional development opportunities that did not align with their interests or commitment.

In this way, support alone was insufficient to promote engagement with the field, but its mediating impact depended on how teachers perceived its relevance to their roles and identities.

In summary, this chapter has explained how teacher knowledge, student factors, personal experience, and support systems critically shaped the agency of EMP teachers within the Thai tertiary context. The enactment of agency manifested in diverse strategies that ultimately contributed to their professional identity and competence as EMP teachers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

The preceding three chapters, Chapters Four to Six, have illustrated the dynamic nature of the influences shaping teachers' actions and decisions in EMP teaching. By revealing insights from teachers' interviews and responses to the questionnaire, critical moments have been highlighted, showcasing not only the teachers' words and actions but also how sociocultural factors, personal experiences, teaching beliefs, and their perceptions of the situation all intertwined to influence their actions.

The chapter is structured as a series of interconnected discussions. It first explores how Thai culture, especially issues of power and face-saving, influences teachers' agency. Next, it connects the findings to important sociocultural theories about teacher agency, explaining how teachers take initiative or feel held back by their environment. It reviews how key factors such as student abilities, teacher knowledge and experience, and institutional support shape day-to-day teaching and broader professional identities. Then, it discusses how these experiences lead to either constructing a new teacher identity or maintaining old patterns. The final sections directly address the research questions, summarising what teachers see as their core competencies, the forces that help or hinder them, and the ways their sense of agency shapes (and is shaped by) their professional identity.

7.2 The Thai Cultural Context

As Tao and Gao (2021) have pointed out, among other factors, contextual factors can contribute to variation in the ways that individuals respond to change and in their enactment of agency. This resonates with the findings of this study where it was found that the Thai cultural context acts as a mediating factor for teachers' enactment of agency in the EMP classroom, at times constraining them from demonstrating agency while allowing some teachers to exercise autonomous forms of agency that navigate around prevailing social norms. In particular, two aspects of Thai culture were found to be associated with teacher agency, namely power distance and hierarchy, and face-saving.

7.2.1 Power Distance and Hierarchy

In Thai culture, as discussed in Section 2.2.3, individuals with a lower status or level of authority are expected to respect those above them and comply with their commands (Dhammarungruang & Wudthayagorn, 2021; Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000b). Thus, Thailand has what is referred to as a high power distance society (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000a). The existence of power distance in Thai culture reflects a hierarchical system, e.g., organisational hierarchy and a hierarchical social structure. With adherence to Buddhism, a hierarchical society has been deeply embedded in Thai values for a long period of time (Young, 2021). As stated by Hallinger and Kantamara (2001), Thai people are inclined to follow orders from individuals with a higher social status including age, professional status, educational background, and authority, even where they may disagree with the thinking behind the orders. This is connected with the concept of 'Krengjai' (see Section 2.1.3), deeply ingrained in Thai culture – a sense of deference and consideration. With this cultural norm, younger teachers are likely to follow their seniors' decisions since they are supposed to show respect to their senior

colleagues or those with a higher rank (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000b; Vanichakorn, 2003). This aligns with what was found in this study, where decisions tended to be made by individuals with greater authority, leaving EMP teachers and novice teachers with limited room to act agentively. While a lot is known about how the hierarchical system generally works in Thailand, the present study illustrates the impacts of this within an EMP teaching context, making a connection not detailed in previous research.

While studies in other contexts have found that power distance impacts teacher agency, for example, Lai et al. (2016) in relation to teachers in international schools in Hong Kong, the current study adds to the literature by showing how power distance influences teachers' agency in an EMP environment. It served as a constraining factor, limiting teachers' ability to fully exercise their agency. Specifically, the hierarchical structure inherent in Thai culture was found to prevent some EMP teachers from acting independently, thereby curbing their ability to enact agency.

In line with expectations of adhering to the hierarchical structure in Thai society, it was found that the relationship with senior colleagues could impede EMP teacher agency. Foley's (2005) research reached a similar conclusion, which suggests that Thai teachers often avoid seeking help from or sharing opinions with more senior colleagues. This cultural tendency can hinder professional growth and limit opportunities for collaboration, potentially impacting a teacher's agency.

In particular, two aspects of hierarchy were found to mediate teachers' agency, namely social status and their relationship with colleagues. According to Hallinger and Kantamara (2001), in Thai culture, people are likely to follow requests made by those whose status outranks them. In

resonance with this, this study found social status to be a constraining factor in EMP teachers' enactment of agency. Specifically, teachers felt unable to enact their agency in making changes when seniority or rank was involved. For example, Ajarn Thipsutha wished to change the course book which she personally deemed unsuitable, but she could not take any action due to her limited role as a course teacher, rather than a course coordinator (see Section 5.8.1). This is similar to Ajarn Dara, who had no agency to adjust the curriculum because this was determined and designed by nursing teachers in the Faculty of Nursing. Therefore, the EMP teachers in this study needed to comply with the organisational hierarchy and the rules and roles imposed by this. This shows their sense of identity as a teacher was constrained as they had no authority to make changes. While their professional development and experience as teachers allowed them to recognise students' needs, they were not able to use this to overcome the barriers imposed by the organisational hierarchy.

Building on the previous point, social status also mediated the amount of autonomy teachers felt they had in making personal choices about their teaching responsibilities. For example, Ajarn Panu stated that he could not decline the assignment to teach EMP courses, despite his unwillingness due to his limited experience in the field. This indicates a form of reluctant acceptance of power inequality, where as a novice teacher, his power was greatly limited, so he needed to abide by the request even though he did not consider himself ready for the assignment. The instances of these teachers clearly portray that with lower authority, their power and roles were limited, and that their agency was constrained. These findings support the broader literature on teacher agency in Thailand where Dhammarungruang and Wudthayagorn (2021), and Hallinger and Kantamara (2000b, 2001), explain, that individuals with limited power are required to comply with those with greater authority. Thus, it is evident that social status is also a mediating factor for teachers in an EMP context and impacts their agency in making decisions

about both their role and teaching practice. However, there is an interesting development in the case of Ajarn Panu that his sense of agency has changed. He seems to suggest in the future he will resist teaching EMP because the actual experience has steeled his resolve that he is unsuited and so he is able to exert more determination.

As a contrast to the above findings, the high status of teachers was found to support EMP teachers in enacting their agency when interacting with their students. As pointed out by Loh and Teo (2017), teachers are typically characterised as individuals well-equipped with knowledge. Consequently, some EMP teachers used their agency to portray and maintain their image as competent and knowledgeable teachers to their students. Specifically, Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa, who both had medical backgrounds, exhibited their expertise in the field so that the students were aware of their knowledgeability and both teachers were confident of their competence. Nevertheless, this was not the case for other teachers, especially those without medical knowledge. Ajarn Supa and Ajarn Panu seemed to feel concerned that as teachers, they were presumed by students to have superior knowledge. Consequently, they were worried that their lack of medical knowledge would deprive them of respect from their students. Notably, their concern that limited knowledge could undermine their social status as teachers in such a high-power distance context, served as a significant prompt for agency. Many teachers responded through proactive strategies such as investing significant time in preparation and seeking information, which were reflected across interviews. Interestingly, albeit sensitive to top-down hierarchical norms, some teachers resisted such norms by consulting the students. This reversal of traditional power norms is discussed in the following section.

7.2.2 Face-saving

The notion of "face" has been extensively investigated within the field of sociology over an extended period. Goffman (1967) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself" (p. 5). Moreover, Young (2021) interpreted the concept of face as "dignity" or "honour" (p.20). As stated by Young (2021), individuals tend not to ask questions or seek help if they are attempting to save face, highlighting a close connection between the concept of face and hierarchical structures in Thai culture. In fact, many Thais have low tolerance for any threat to their ego or dignity, so they tend to avoid situations which might lead them to lose face or any form of embarrassment since it can result in emotional damage and loss of honour (Ukosakul, 2003). The findings of this study illustrate how this works within an EMP teaching context. This cultural value was found to emerge between teachers and their colleagues. Trying to save face, some EMP teachers reported being reluctant to ask questions of or seek assistance from their colleagues, with whom they did not have close relationships or who were senior to them. This was shown in the incident of Ajarn Supa. Ajarn Supa reported that at the beginning, she often sought help or advice from a colleague she was familiar with, Ajarn Wanna. This indicated that she was averse to asking questions or calling for assistance from unfamiliar colleagues, possibly due to a fear of being judged about her level of knowledge. Hallinger and Kantamara (2000a) noted that Thai teachers generally avoid actions that might threaten the face or pride of their senior colleagues, such as questioning established teaching practices, while Vanichakorn (2003) similarly observed that younger teachers might hesitate to implement innovative approaches to prevent potential face-loss among senior colleagues. My findings expand their observations by demonstrating that teachers' concerns around face-saving are not exclusive to interactions with their senior colleagues; instead, their concerns about saving their own face were particularly pronounced in their avoidance of interactions with unfamiliar colleagues, irrespective of their hierarchical status. Thus, teachers might refrain from seeking

assistance or collaboration even from colleagues of similar or lower status if they do not have a close relationship with them. This extends findings from prior work (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000a; Vanichakorn, 2003), highlighting a broader impact of face-saving on teacher agency.

As an interesting contrast to the above finding, this study found that when interacting with their students, some teachers seemed less concerned about face-saving. This finding sheds new light on the existing literature, given that teachers are typically viewed as knowledgeable individuals and students are likely to have the expectation of learning from knowledgeable teachers (Jeanjaroonsri, 2018). Due to this, Thai teachers generally feel the need to portray themselves as well-rounded/competent teachers to their students, concealing any inadequacy, and not encouraging the students to share their opinions. Teachers often resort to preventative strategies rather than engaging in open dialogues with students, which may stem from their desire to maintain an image of authority and competence (Amornpaisarnloet & Arthur-Kelly, 2023). Interestingly, some of the EMP teachers in this study did not adhere to this cultural value and were willing to ask students to provide explanations or share their knowledge without a fear of losing face. For instance, when encountering medical terms in lessons, Ajarn Supa asked her students to explain the meanings of those words (see Section 5.3.2). Ajarn Wipakorn also acknowledged to her students that they had greater medical knowledge than her, saying she was an “English teacher”. Thus, this phenomenon may have emerged due to the fact that some of the teachers considered themselves as expert language teachers, even in some cases overtly presenting themselves as such to their students, so they were not burdened with the need to possess medical knowledge. Considering this, they were willing to sacrifice being knowledgeable in one specific area and maintain their sense of knowledgeability in their area of expertise. This was not a typical response as some teachers navigated this challenge through agentive and inventive strategies which allowed them to preserve their professional image while

managing limited medical knowledge – such as reviewing students’ writing in advance to prepare for class discussions or assigning student explanations as homework. The findings from this study show that there are varied agentic responses to face-saving across different teachers. The current study adds to the literature by illustrating that there is more nuance and complexity to the way face-saving works in practice, particularly how teachers negotiated their professional image to save face in student-teacher interactions.

7.3 Sociocultural Theory of Teacher Agency

The discussion now moves from one specific aspect of the sociocultural framework to a more general view. Van Lier (2008, p. 172) outlines three essential features that define agency in the context of learning (see Section 2.2.1.). The first feature emphasises that agency involves initiative or self-regulation. Teachers are not passive actors, rather they are active in setting goals, making decisions, and taking actions that align with their objectives. Teachers can also exercise agency by facilitating environments that encourage this active participation and by adapting strategies that suit individual or group learning needs.

The second feature van Lier highlights is that agency is interdependent, it mediates and is mediated by the sociocultural context. Agency does not exist in isolation; rather, it is mediated by social interactions, cultural norms, and the broader environment. Teachers and learners’ actions are influenced by the resources, people, and structures surrounding them, but they also play a role in shaping these same contexts. This interdependence highlights the dynamic nature of agency, where individual and collective actions continuously influence and are influenced by the social world.

Lastly, agency encompasses an awareness of the responsibility for one's own actions, especially in relation to the surrounding environment and others who may be affected. Regarding teacher agency, this feature underscores the ethical dimension of agency, where teachers must consider the impact of their choices not only on themselves but also on the community, peers, and the broader social environment. Recognising this responsibility fosters a more reflective and conscientious approach to teaching and decision-making, as individuals weigh the potential consequences of their actions on others.

The results of this study are akin to van Lier's (2008) theoretical concept, in that teacher agency exercised by EMP teachers entailed the three aspects above.

7.3.1 Initiative or Self-regulation

In this study of EMP, it became clear that many teachers showed a strong sense of agency through their initiative and self-regulation. This ability to take charge of their own teaching helped them adapt to different situations and better meet the needs of their students. This idea connects to what van Lier (2008) discusses, which is that teacher agency involves both personal choices and the influence of the surrounding environment.

For instance, Ajarn Nantida demonstrated self-regulation by trying out different teaching methods. She took the time to reflect on which methods worked best for her class, showing her willingness to adapt her approach based on what she observed. This kind of reflective thinking is important because it allows teachers to improve their practices over time, which is something van Lier (2010) emphasises.

Similarly, Ajarn Wipakorn showed self-regulation when planning her EMP courses. She thought carefully about how her students could communicate in English while using their medical knowledge. By focusing on both language skills and medical content, she was able to create lessons that engaged her students effectively. This approach reflects van Lier's idea that teacher agency involves connecting different aspects of learning to create a richer educational experience.

Both of these teachers recognised that they could improve their teaching on their own, rather than just following instructions from others. This belief in their own judgment is a key part of what it means to have agency. According to van Lier (2008), teacher agency isn't just about being independent; it's also about how teachers interact with their environment and the people around them.

In summary, Ajarn Nantida and Ajarn Wipakorn are examples of how teachers have managed to take initiative and regulate their own practices. Their experiences highlight the importance of being reflective and responsive in teaching, showing how this connects to the broader social and educational context that they operate within.

7.3.2 Mediating Factors

The findings demonstrated that in responding to their new role as EMP teachers and the challenges encountered, teachers' agency was shaped by a range of factors. While the role of the Thai cultural context in influencing the EMP teachers' enactment of agency in this study has already been discussed, other factors were also found to have a mediating influence. These

factors include student-related factors, experience which covers both knowledge factors and prior experience, and institutional factors.

7.3.2.1 Student-related Factors

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature by illustrating that in the Thai EMP tertiary context, student factors were a major factor in driving teacher agency and decision-making. The teachers shared that EMP students were highly competent and responsible. The teachers were aware that in this specialised field the students' needs were often quite different from those of their EGP students, and they were concerned to adjust their teaching to meet those needs, a concern that is characteristic of ESP teaching (see Section 2.3.1). These attributes of students led teachers to act agentively in different ways. To exemplify, Ajarn Nantida demonstrated her agency by recognising the high level of English proficiency among her medical students. This understanding prompted her to exercise her agency by experimenting with and adapting her instructional approach. Instead of adhering to a pre-determined curriculum, she strategically emphasised higher skills and communication within authentic medical contexts. Similarly, with students' varied specialisations, Ajarn Wipakorn acted agentively by creating tasks or exercises that encouraged them to incorporate their knowledge in learning, which fostered student engagement. Additionally, with student proficiency, Ajarn Panisa was able to incorporate some additional tasks and group activities outside the class. This gave her time to prepare for in-class discussions and this, in turn, assured her of being adequate and safe from revealing a gap in her knowledge.

Nonetheless, this was not the case for other EMP teachers. While students' high competence and autonomy enabled some teachers to take agentive actions, these attributes posed a challenge for others. This was particularly presented in the case of Ajarn Panu. He asserted that he did

not feel sufficiently capable to teach medical students whose medical expertise outperformed his. As a consequence, he ended up feeling restricted and avoided innovating his teaching approaches, leading him to shift his role to that of facilitator. This clearly indicates that the nature of students weakened his confidence, thereby constraining his agency.

This study adds to existing sociocultural literature by highlighting how student competence, often overlooked in discussions of teacher agency, serves as a significant factor in shaping professional decisions. Pantić et al. (2021a) found that teachers enacted agency to support student capacity building by tailoring lessons based on students' needs, and Kirby (2024) revealed that proactive student contributions empowered teachers to utilise more innovative approaches. My findings expand these notions by illustrating that in the EMP context, student competence mediated teacher agency – prompting Ajarn Nantida and Ajarn Wipakorn to adapt their pedagogy and employ authentic tasks, while limiting Ajarn Panu's role to that of a facilitator, which constrained his autonomy to act agentively. These findings provide insights into how student attributes and student needs serve as either affordances or constraints in teachers' professional decision-making. While much research on teacher agency focuses on structural and institutional factors (Priestley et al., 2015), this study underscores the enabling or disabling role of students as active participants in the learning process.

Moreover, it enriches the sociocultural understanding of agency by illustrating how cultural norms in Thailand intersect with individual and relational factors. By situating the findings within the Thai EMP tertiary context, the study provides a culturally nuanced perspective, demonstrating how sociocultural dynamics influence teachers' ability to navigate their roles effectively.

7.3.2.2 The Influence of Experience

Experience can have an impact on teachers' enactment of agency (Tao & Gao, 2021). This is in line with the finding of this study, demonstrating that experience could lead different teachers to use agency in different manners. Specifically, two aspects were seen as mediating factors, knowledge and past experience.

The Knowledge Factor

Knowledge factors appeared to influence how EMP teachers exercised their agency. In particular, existing medical knowledge could facilitate or spur teachers to enact their agency. A clear example could be observed from the two teachers with medical knowledge, namely Ajarn Nawa and Ajarn Jaru. Rather than struggling with the medical content or terms as other teachers did, their medical background enabled them to act agentively by anticipating student needs and designing lessons or activities that bridged complex content with accessible language. As discussed in Section 6.2, their subject knowledge strengthened a sense of adequacy and empowered them to view EMP as a positive challenge rather than a source of anxiety. Thus, knowledge was a mediating factor that encouraged them to exercise agency proactively and confidently.

However, as pointed out by Tao and Gao (2021), knowledge gaps could result in different enactment of agency among teachers, depending on how they interpret and respond to their circumstances. The results of this study illustrated how EMP teachers acted agentively in response to the gaps in subject-matter knowledge in individualised ways. Specifically, some teachers interpreted their limited knowledge as a positive challenge that pushed them to take action and improve. For example, Ajarn Wanna recognised her inadequate knowledge of technical vocabulary related to her subject but exercised agency to bridge it through self-

directed learning. She spent additional time studying the new vocabulary and preparing to use it in her teaching. This approach aligns with the idea that facing challenges can lead to personal growth and deeper learning (Biesta et al., 2017). In this case, Ajarn Wanna's self-initiated learning to expand her repertoire of medical vocabulary reflected a form of teacher agency, in which she engaged with the challenge instead of avoiding it. She turned the challenge into an opportunity for self-improvement and pedagogical development.

While Ajarn Wanna primarily took a self-directed approach, Ajarn Thipsutha responded differently in line with Tao and Gao's (2021) emphasis on teacher agency as individually enacted. She sought help from experts in her field and made use of digital tools to expand her knowledge, rather than feeling hindered by more limited knowledge immediately available to her. Her agentive responses reflect what Castro et al. (2010) describe as help-seeking strategies, where teachers draw on external resources – colleagues, administrators, or professional development opportunities – to navigate professional challenges. In this way, her use of collegial expertise and technological tools demonstrates agency through proactive use of available tools and networks.

While gaps in subject-matter knowledge functioned as an enabling factor for some teachers, this was not the case for all. For others, similar limitations were seen as a constraining factor. That is, a lack of subject knowledge caused a high level of discomfort among some EMP teachers, which limited their enactment of agency. Ajarn Panu perceived that he had inadequate medical English knowledge, leading to his sense of incompetence and, in turn, disengagement. Rather than adapting his instructional practice, he adopted a facilitative role which he felt limited his ability to act agentively. For Ajarn Thida, seeing herself as a teacher with limited knowledge of medical English for EMP courses at higher levels, she chose to retreat from the

field. In these cases, the perceived gaps in knowledge led to constrained agency and disengagement, underscoring how the same context can contribute to different acts depending on individual interpretation.

This illustrates how low self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks (Bandura, 1997), can limit teachers' willingness to take on challenging roles. These feelings of inadequacy can lead to avoidance behaviours, like Ajarn Thida's retreat from the field, and create tensions in professional identity, as seen in Ajarn Panu's reluctance to reconcile his broader identity as a skilled English teacher with his perceived gaps in EMP. This is in line with the work of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), who point out that individuals with low self-efficacy are less likely to engage with challenging tasks or may withdraw when confronted with difficulty. Such findings highlight how self-belief about the adequacy of content knowledge can mediate agentic responses in nuanced ways.

These contrasting cases show that teacher knowledge mediates agency, depending on how teachers perceive and respond to their perceived limitations. While some teachers viewed knowledge gaps as challenges to be addressed through self-directed learning or help-seeking strategies, others saw them as a constraining factor that undermined their ability and confidence. This is consistent with Priestley and Biesta's (2013) notion that teacher agency involves making choices and taking action within one's teaching context. The challenges faced by these teachers inspired them to actively enact their teacher agency. In line with Tao and Gao (2021), these findings indicate that knowledge – whether limited or extensive – serves as a mediating factor, prompting teachers to act differently according to how they engage with the challenges in their teaching context.

These challenges demonstrate how teacher agency is mediated by perceived gaps in knowledge and the emotional responses they generate. As Priestley et al. (2015) argue, teachers who see themselves as competent are more likely to enact agency, while those perceiving knowledge gaps may feel constrained. In the Thai context, cultural norms such as saving face (Hofstede, 2011) further intensify these struggles, as teachers may avoid situations that expose their limitations, increasing their reluctance to engage in difficult teaching roles or to seek help. This interplay between self-perception, emotional challenges, and cultural expectations demonstrates how personal and contextual factors shape teacher identity and agency.

Past Experience

Past experience, whether in teaching or a related professional field, can mediate how teachers enacted agency. As pointed out by Tao and Gao (2021) and Qi and Wang (2022), experience as one of the mediating factors could lead different teachers to enact agency in individualised ways, just as knowledge factors did. In this study, past experience, especially in the medical field, could serve to enhance some of the teachers' sense of adequacy and confidence while spurring them to enact agency. This was observed from Ajarn Nawa and Ajarn Jaru, where prior experience in the medical field allowed them to feel sufficiently capable of teaching medical students and empowered them to act agentively by integrating their medical knowledge into English instruction and designing lessons to foster student engagement and learning. This resonates with the explanation of agency given by Ahearn (2001) as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (p.112), emphasising that the ability to act is closely related to one's social and historical context. In this sense, prior experience acted as a mediation resource, drawing on practical knowledge and understandings that informed how teachers could engage with the technical content and act agentively.

Besides professional background in the medical field, long-term teaching experience in the field itself emerged as another aspect of experience that supported teachers to navigate through the challenges of EMP. This typical form of experience aligns with Hiver and Dörnyei's (2015) concept of "teacher immunity", which describes the resilience that teachers develop over time as they navigate the challenges inherent in the teaching profession. This "immunity" emerges from their experiences in coping with various difficulties encountered in the classroom, such as disruptive student behaviour, unexpected challenges, and stressful teaching environments. Additionally, extensive experience as a language teacher could help the teachers develop immunity to anxiety. This could be observed in the cases of Ajarn Wipakorn and Ajarn Thipsutha, whose accumulated experience in language teaching put them at ease when teaching EMP and enabled them to handle challenges arising from the field, for example, limited medical knowledge. As they sustained their engagement with the field, they developed the resilience which as noted above Hiver and Dörnyei (2015) refer to as teacher immunity. While this did not alleviate the pressure of EMP teaching it functioned as a foundation for their agency, which enabled them to respond to EMP pedagogical challenges with flexibility and confidence.

While past experience in a relevant field and accumulated teaching experience appeared to support teachers in enacting agency more confidently, the absence of such experience served as a constraint. The significance of past experience as a mediating factor could also be observed from incidences where limited past experience could exacerbate a sense of inadequacy. This was evident in the cases of Ajarn Sasi and Ajarn Thipsutha, both of whom reported a certain degree of nervousness as they started teaching EMP. Despite that, as they gained more experience in EMP, they became better equipped to deal with challenges more effectively. The progression from discomfort to confidence as EMP teachers gain experience reflects the dynamic nature of agency which aligns closely with the literature on teacher agency,

particularly from a sociocultural perspective. Teacher agency is not static but evolves through teachers' interactions with their environment and cumulative professional development (Priestley et al., 2015). In this study, the teachers' increased confidence and ability to adapt did not derive from training but accumulated experience and reflection. Their ability to respond to challenges in the field with increasing flexibility over time demonstrates how agency emerges through experience and is shaped by teachers' changing self-perceptions.

Drawing on the sociocultural view that agency is influenced by contextual affordances and constraints (Priestley et al., 2015), Ajarn Panu's case shows how limited experience can pose a challenge to teachers' confidence and limit their capacity to act. In contrast with more experienced teachers, such as Ajarn Wipakorn, Ajarn Sasi, and Ajarn Thipsutha, Ajarn Panu, a novice EMP teacher with just two years of GE teaching, experienced a high level of anxiety. His limited experience undermined his confidence, making him see himself as an inadequate teacher for teaching EMP.

However, this apprehensiveness drove him to enact agency and to change his role from that of a content expert to be a facilitator. He noted that when teaching GE or ESP courses in business contexts, he could take on different roles, including as a guide or an observer, and could draw on his relevant experience and expertise, such as adding additional information to the course or giving help to students. However, he acted as a facilitator in EMP courses since he experienced difficulty in giving students advice in the medical context. This led to his desire to retreat from the field since he saw himself as in need of more medical experience if he wished to fulfil this role, which could enhance his sense of being a competent teacher.

In contrast to other teachers who gained confidence through cumulative experience, Ajarn Panu continued to experience limitations. His case highlights how limited relevant experience can pose as a constraint rather than an affordance for agency, consistent with sociocultural perspectives that teacher development is shaped by interaction and experience (Ahearn, 2001; Priestley et al., 2015). This case deviates from typical institutional practice though – in general, teachers were expected to possess comprehensive experience of GE before being assigned to EMP. Ajarn Panu’s assignment to this role may underscore the institution’s lack of understanding of EMP teachers, in that teaching EMP appears to require past experience. As a result, it assigned a teacher with limited experience to teach EMP, which proved to be unsuccessful. This emphasises that teachers were reliant on years of past experience for effective EMP teaching. Hence, it can be stated that past experience could serve as a mediating factor – an affordance or a constraint to teacher agency.

7.3.2.3 Institutional Factors

Institutional support emerged as the other mediator of teacher agency. Prior research has discovered that institutional structures – such as professional development (Ahmad & Shah, 2022; Zhang et al., 2024), resource provision (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Pantić & Florian, 2015; Pantić et al., 2021b), and administrative support (Steiner et al., 2023) – can play a mediating role in shaping teacher agency, contributing to different forms of agency enacted among EMP teachers. These forms of support affect how teachers exercise autonomy, make decisions, and navigate professional challenges. The findings in this study add new insights to the existing literature on factors mediating agency by highlighting institutional support as a mediating factor specifically within the EMP context.

Absence of Professional Development

Some teachers stated that at the beginning of teaching EMP, they felt a sense of discomfort and apprehensiveness owing to a gap in their knowledge or experience in medical contexts. This can be seen from the case of Ajarn Sasi. She shared that she had limited knowledge of medical terms, so she needed to ask for guidance from her colleague. Although she received informal guidance from a colleague, this collegial support was limited in scope and did not compensate for the lack of formal or institutional support, leading her to continue experiencing distress for a few years. The same reaction was pronounced in the case of Ajarn Panu. Unlike other teachers, he had minimal experience of GE and EMP, so he inevitably experienced a greater sense of anxiety to the point that he decided to retreat from EMP after completing the course. These instances point to a recurring issue, corroborated by the questionnaire and interview data, revealing that many teachers in this study had not received any professional development prior to or during their assignments. This absence of institutional support left teachers underprepared and contributed to ongoing anxiety or disengagement, as observed in the cases of Ajarn Thida and Ajarn Panu.

The existing literature has found that institutional support – particularly in the form of professional development – serves as a crucial factor in mediating teachers' ability to act agentively (e.g., Ahmad & Shah, 2022; Chaaban et al., 2023; Priestley et al., 2015a). Professional development programmes can enhance teacher agency by cultivating a sense of confidence, enhancing knowledge, and facilitating professional decision-making (Noonan, 2016; Tao & Gao, 2017; Wang et al., 2021; Xu & Fan, 2021). Ahmad and Shah (2022) further point out that such programmes offered by institutions can contribute to teacher agency, provided that they are in line with teachers' needs. This is also reflected by Yahya et al. (2023), who found that responsive professional development – tailored to teachers' needs – could create

conditions conducive to agency by promoting professional growth and instructional improvement. Likewise, as reported by Leijen et al. (2024), structured, inquiry-based professional development fostered agentic spaces which empowered teachers to exercise greater autonomy in exploring pedagogical choices. This reflects one of the ways teacher agency is enabled – through institutional practices that align support structures with professional autonomy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, the findings in this study illustrate instances where there was an absence of such institutional support, so gradual development was not possible, leaving many teachers feeling underprepared and constrained in their capacity to undertake agentic actions. Considering this, professional development, such as induction courses, special training or mentoring, would support new EMP teachers. It would support gradual development, enhance their EMP competence, and equip them with rudimentary medical knowledge and necessary skills, potentially promoting their ability to take agentic actions effectively and thus further the institution's own interests in offering effective education. This aligns with Li et al. (2023), who underscore how meaningful institutional support and structured professional learning are key to enhancing teacher agency and competence. In the absence of these supports, teachers are left to confront challenging teaching environments without sufficient preparation, which constrains their ability to act with autonomy and confidence.

Logistical Challenges

Additionally, several teachers asserted that logistics caused a certain degree of inconvenience. As shared by Ajarn Thida, she needed to travel between two faculties back and forth, and this was inconvenient since she sometimes had to finish her class earlier or arrived later than the official class starting time. It undermined her motivation to continue teaching EMP. This

indicates that the schedules organised by the institution were not sufficiently conducive to teaching in different venues. Although the literature directly linking logistical challenges to teacher agency is limited, related research points to their adverse impact on teachers' professional engagement. For example, Önen and Doğaner (2021) found that longer commuting time predicted lower job satisfaction among rural teachers in Turkey owing to exhaustion, limited time for instructional planning, and disrupted work-life balance. In their study, teachers who commuted long distances reported "losing teaching ambitions," feeling "mentally and physiologically negatively affected," and in some cases, even contemplating leaving the profession altogether (Önen & Doğaner, 2021, p. 4). Besides, studies by Chong and Kong (2012) and Mon et al. (2016) revealed that the absence of logistical support caused frustration among teachers. These findings suggest that logistical issues can curtail teachers' motivation and emotional well-being as they lead to increased workload and reduced capacity to engage meaningfully in professional tasks. These conditions may, in turn, restrict their ability to act agentively. This study contributes to the existing literature by identifying logistical arrangements as an institutional factor that may hinder agency.

In responding to this issue, the institution should take further actions to ensure convenience for EMP teachers, potentially enabling or spurring their agency. Specifically, it may establish EMP teachers' affiliated faculty as a main location for EMP courses, easing the inconvenience of commuting and allowing them to have time for class preparation. Alternatively, the institution could work with relevant faculties to ensure that timetables are appropriately established for teaching at two different venues in a manner that gives teachers adequate time for traveling and preparation. This would ensure that teachers' needs were met, which would enhance their agency and their ability to better serve their students. These things, however, were not provided which meant that teachers were constrained in enacting their agency.

High Power Distance within Institutions

As pointed out in Section 7.2.1, some teachers were unable to make adjustments to EMP teaching since hierarchical power structures restricted their autonomy. This can be noticed in the instance of Ajarn Thipsutha; she was not able to change the course material to suit the course because her course coordinator held greater power, making decisions in material selection. This applies to the case of Ajarn Dara as well. She had no authority to make any adjustments to the curriculum since teachers of other faculties or campuses developed it. This is akin to findings by Al-Mahdy et al. (2024), who discovered that in high power distance within schools, instructional leadership undermined teacher agency since top-down authority tended to dominate decision-making. Similarly, Aslan's (2022) study indicated that such hierarchies in institutions often foster compliance, thereby discouraging teachers from voicing opinions or exercising professional autonomy. Together, these findings highlight that power distance within institutional contexts curtailed teachers' autonomy to exercise agency and thus their competence to provide optimum teaching.

In light of these findings, institutions should consider distributing decision-making power more equitably across academic roles, particularly in curriculum development and material selection, to enhance teacher agency. To achieve that, they may establish collaborative curriculum committee or course review systems that empower teachers across ranks to contribute to course design. Such practices may help reduce the constraining impact of power distance, thereby enabling teachers to act more agentively.

Large Class Sizes

As noted by some teachers, class size functioned as a mediating institutional factor which dampened teacher agency. Specifically, Ajarn Thipsutha pointed out that being assigned to

large classes, with approximately 45 students, constrained her capacity to implement interactive activities and face difficulty in managing the class. Ajarn Chompoo also reported that teaching in an overcrowded classroom inhibited her use of activities such as role-play and undermined teacher-student interactions where she could provide individualised support to students. These conditions illustrate how class size can suppress teacher autonomy. This finding is consistent with Blatchford et al. (2002), who revealed that smaller class sizes facilitate more individualized support and flexible teaching strategies, enhancing teacher agency. Likewise, Wosyanju's (2005) study found that large classes undermined morale, reduced the quality of feedback and assessment and forced teachers to focus on classroom organization over student needs. Li and Konstantopoulos (2017) also pointed out that densely populated classrooms resulted in behavioural issues and inefficient use of time, thereby compounding teacher workload. Recent studies (Ayeni & Olowe, 2016; Lin & Gao, 2023) illustrated that these conditions weakened teacher autonomy and curtailed teachers' capacity to plan creatively and adapt to student needs. Thus, these findings underscore how large class sizes constrained autonomy and impeded teachers' enactment of agentive practices in the classroom.

To address these class size issues, institutions should recognise that such conditions can affect the instructional and assessment quality, as well as EMP teachers' ability to exercise professional autonomy in the classroom. While reducing class sizes may not always be possible, institutions may distribute student numbers across classes more equitably or provide training or resources for dealing with large classes, such as classroom management strategies or adaptation of interactive activities for large groups. These could help teachers maintain their agency while reducing the constraining impact of overpopulated classrooms, thereby promoting conditions more conducive to the enactment of teacher agency.

7.3.3 Awareness of the Responsibility

Finally, awareness of responsibility significantly influences how EMP teachers exercise their agency in the classroom. In many cases, this seemed to involve a sense of their responsibility or answerability towards their class or students. Revealing again their ongoing assessment of the needs of these specialised students and their desire to meet them.

Ajarn Supa, when faced with unfamiliar technical vocabulary, felt a strong sense of responsibility to ensure her students understood these terms. As a result, this encouraged her to enact agency by seeking help and consulting her colleague. This aligns with the literature suggesting that teachers who recognise their responsibility towards student learning and student needs are more likely to engage in collaborative practices and seek support when needed (Castro et al., 2010; Ashton 2021).

Furthermore, Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa, equipped with substantial medical backgrounds, tailored their teaching to meet the specific needs of their medical students. Their awareness of the students' context drove them to design lessons that would be relevant and beneficial for students' future careers. This finding aligns with research on student-centred teaching, which emphasises the importance of understanding and responding to student needs and learning styles (Tomlinson, 2001) a key feature of ESP as discussed in Section 2.3.

Interestingly, while Ajarn Supa, Ajarn Jaru, and Ajarn Nawa faced similar challenges related to their teaching contexts, their responses varied based on their individual perceptions of responsibility and agency. This highlights the complexity of teacher agency, where similar conditions can lead to different actions depending on the teachers' backgrounds, experiences, and awareness of their responsibilities. The study emphasises that teacher agency is not simply

an individualistic trait but rather emerges from the dynamic interactions between these various factors (Priestley et al., 2015).

In summary, the awareness of responsibility among EMP teachers plays a crucial role in shaping their agency and teaching practices. By recognising their obligations to their students, teachers are motivated to seek support, tailor their instruction, and ultimately enhance the learning experience.

7.4 Teacher Identity Construction and Negotiation

In this section, teacher identity construction and negotiation are discussed in the light of existing literature. I will firstly look at the professional identity, and then at identity construction and negotiation. Finally, the interconnections between agency and identity are discussed.

7.4.1 Professional Identity

The existing literature indicates that teachers' professional identities vary according to such aspects as personal experience and capabilities (Vähäsantanen, 2015; Van Veen & Slegers, 2009), culture (Eteläpelto et al., 2014), and perception of their roles (Vähäsantanen & Billet, 2008). The findings of this study align with and extend the current literature by revealing the same findings in this new context. It reveals that EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context perceived and exhibited their professional identity differently. That is, some of them viewed themselves as merely a language teacher. For example, Ajarn Wipakorn, Ajarn Dara, and Ajarn Chompoo considered themselves as an "English teacher", so not knowing medical contents or terms as well as their students was normal. Additionally, with that identity, their responsibilities

involved teaching the language and designing activities to improve students' language abilities. This may indicate that they felt this identity was sufficient for them to add value to EMP students. This can be attributed to how they perceived their roles in this context (Vähäsantanen & Billet, 2008). In particular, they perceived that their main responsibility was teaching the language to students, so changes to their professional identities were not necessary.

Even more specifically, Ajarn Thida perceived herself as a teacher of English majors. Since medical students would study with her temporarily, she considered them as “not really my students”. Seeing herself that way, she would rather devote her energy and time to English-major students since the significance of English knowledge for their future careers may outweigh that of medical students. As a contrast to other teachers, as a novice teacher, Ajarn Panu felt that his identity was limited when teaching EMP. He mentioned that when teaching other courses such as Business English, he felt that his identity was an ESP teacher. With EMP courses, he viewed himself merely a “facilitator” since he experienced a sense of inadequacy and, in turn, was unable to be of help for his students in medical contexts. Therefore, both Ajarn Thida and Ajarn Panu chose not to negotiate a new identity in line with their new role, instead maintaining the identity that they understood, of being an English teacher without other complexities.

This finding contributes to the existing literature on teachers' professional identity. Unlike the novice ESP teacher in Kim's (2023) study, who gradually reconstructed her identity – from feeling scared and inexperienced to viewing herself as a competent ESP teacher – neither Ajarn Thida nor Ajarn Panu pursued such development. Instead, they chose not to adopt a more agentive role or a new identity. This finding aligns more closely with Huberman (2000) and Quirino et al. (2024), who point out that while identity development is dynamic, it can enter a

state of stasis depending on contextual pressures. Such identity stasis was evident in both cases. Ajarn Thida's attachment to her pre-existing identity as a teacher of English majors may reflect identity foreclosure – a premature commitment to a professional identity without exploring alternatives (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Marcia, 1966). In contrast, Ajarn Panu's experience may illustrate a form of identity stagnation – typically characterised by a lack of growth or development (Erikson, 1968) – rooted in his low self-efficacy in the medical context. Although he reframed his role as a “facilitator,” this shift did not reflect identity growth, but rather a retreat from teacher-as-expert to a more limited and safer position. These cases highlight that teacher identity in the EMP context may not always progress; it can remain static, stalled, or prematurely foreclosed – shaped by both internal self-perceptions and contextual constraints.

This finding also resonates with Colbert's (2025) investigation of identity tensions among novice ESP teachers, which revealed that misalignments between claimed identities and assigned roles could pose challenges for the teachers. This was evident in both cases: Ajarn Thida saw herself as a teacher of English majors while Ajarn Panu identified as a GE or ESP (non-medical) teacher. However, the assigned roles of EMP teaching triggered content-related tensions, particularly around teaching unfamiliar areas. Colbert (2025) emphasises that ESP instruction often requires teachers to teach specialised subjects without sufficient training – conditions which can cause discomfort or uncertainty. In this study, such tensions reinforced a sense of inadequacy and a reluctance to negotiate new identities, thereby deepening the state of identity stasis.

As a contrast, some teachers viewed themselves as EMP teachers. For instance, Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa perceived that their professional competence was compatible with the nature of EMP courses since they both possessed medical backgrounds. This portrays their understanding

of what counts as professional knowledge and expertise within this context (Van Veen & Slegers, 2009). That is, their medical experience and expertise allowed them to consider themselves qualified to take the identity of an EMP teacher. This reflects the importance of content familiarity in ESP teaching as pointed out by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), which allows teachers to communicate confidently and establish credibility. Similarly, Basturkmen (2010) notes that ESP teachers frequently experience a sense of inadequacy without content knowledge, indicating that professional background fit can contribute to a more confident professional identity. Recent research by Truong et al. (2024) reinforces the idea that subject-matter expertise and perceived role fit with institutional or curricular roles lead to stronger professional identity positioning. These cases also resonate with Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) who argue that teachers' professional identities are shaped by their perceptions of their knowledge in relation to the contextual demands. In this way, the two teachers' confidence in their disciplinary knowledge and perceived role fit enabled them to perceive themselves as linguistically and professionally competent and as legitimate EMP teachers.

7.4.2 Identity Construction and Negotiation

Since the majority of the teachers had transferred from teaching GE to EMP, they may have needed to (re)construct or (re)negotiate their identity in light of new expectations and contextual demands. A change in teaching role often necessitates a renegotiation of professional identity (Ashton, 2022; Comas-Quinn, 2011; Vähäsantanen, 2015), particularly when such changes are accompanied by challenges (Kim & Asbury, 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020). As teachers take on new roles, they may experience identity conflict, particularly when their established professional identity does not align with the expectations associated with the new roles. As Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto (2011) point out, teachers tend to respond to this misalignment

through reflection and adaptation. However, responses to such changes are varied. As Vähäsantanen (2015) explains, identity construction varies among teachers since they possess personal experiences, values, abilities, and agency.

Importantly, teacher identity is not static or individualistic but evolves through interaction with others and the surrounding context. Sachs (2005) describes identity as being shaped through experience. Similarly, Olsen (2008) emphasises that identity emerges as teachers navigate shifting environments and relationships in real time. In this study, some teachers not only redefined their own sense of professional identity but also reflected on how they might be viewed by students, taking agentic actions accordingly to maintain credibility while adapting to the expectations of the roles.

This variation in identity construction was particularly evident among teachers who had prior experience in the medical field. In particular, Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa established their identity as English teachers with a medical background. They were equipped with medical experience and knowledge, so they drew on their expertise to foster or strengthen their identity of being competent. This aligns with Davey's (2013) view that when a teacher's desired professional identity connects with past experience, identity development is strengthened, and is consistent with the findings of Kim's (2023) study, which illustrated how enhanced content knowledge enabled a previously insecure general English teacher to evolve into a confident ESP professional. As noted by Champion (2016) and Wu and Badger (2009), teachers with a lack of discipline-specific knowledge tend to experience low confidence and struggle to claim professional authority. In contrast, Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa with medical backgrounds felt more confident and saw themselves as competent EMP teachers. Such an identity could, in turn, help foster students' confidence in their abilities. With their relevant experience, they were also

able to anticipate what skills medical students needed for their future career. As a result, they were not bothered by medical terminology but focused on integrating their existing background with GE in response to students' future needs, creating effective and engaging EMP classes. This was not the case for teachers without such backgrounds, who had to navigate the demands of EMP differently.

In contrast to Ajarn Jaru and Ajarn Nawa, other teachers were seen to alter their professional identity. In negotiating their changing identity in line with their new role, these EMP teachers were observed to take agentic actions to portray themselves as competent teachers. This process of identity negotiation is widely recognised in the literature as central to professional transitions. Sachs (2005) emphasises that identity is constructed through reflection and experience in response to shifting professional contexts. Identity negotiation emerges when teachers recognise a misalignment between their former professional identity and the expectations of the new role and work to redevelop their identity accordingly (Vähäsantanen, 2015). Similarly, Campbell et al. (2024) describe identity as a fluid, reflexively constructed process through ongoing adaptation to new knowledge, shifting roles, and institutional demands. In this study, this effort was undertaken in order to uphold the status of teachers as a source of knowledge and to practice face-saving. For example, many EMP teachers reported encountering medical terminology with which they were unfamiliar. The gap in their knowledge contradicted the expectation they and others had of them as language teachers to be familiar with the language they were teaching. Their inability to fulfil that expectation led them to perceive themselves differently, as learners and teachers at the same time.

In fact, their efforts in taking agentic actions helped transform their identity from a GE teacher to an EMP teacher – an English teacher with strong knowledge of medical terms. This is

reflected in their flexibility and willingness to adapt and learn. Ajarn Sasi and Ajarn Pornpiya sought help from their students by asking them to provide explanations or share their knowledge as a class activity, repositioning themselves as co-learners and language facilitators. Similarly, Ajarn Supa and Ajarn Chompoo consulted experts in the field directly, such as medical teachers or doctors. Additionally, some others, such as Ajarn Wanna, devoted their time to engaging in self-directed learning, such as using online resources or dictionaries, to enhance their content knowledge and classroom confidence. These actions allowed them to manage their professional image while navigating the unfamiliar demands of EMP. Such approaches illustrate the agentic actions taken to protect themselves as competent figures in the classroom, regardless of knowledge limitations.

These cases indicated that teachers negotiated their changing role by acting agentively and developing their identity based on their perceived requirements of the new role. This process reflects what Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) describe as teachers continuously shaping their professional identity through experience and reflection. Similarly, Kayi-Aydar (2015a) underscores that identity is negotiated through teachers' actions and roles across various social contexts. This is also consistent with Castro et al.'s (2010) study, uncovering that in dealing with professional challenges – particularly professional identity in this case – teachers may adopt help-seeking strategies, such as finding mentors or resources, and problem-solving strategies, e.g. consulting others. Essentially, those agentic actions allowed them to become more confident and be better equipped with medical knowledge, and to develop their professional identity, potentially fostering a sense of adequacy.

Nonetheless, while those teachers were willing to negotiate their identity through agentic actions to establish themselves as competent, others chose different responses. To elaborate,

they experienced discomfort or unwillingness to teach as a result of transferring to EMP teaching. Therefore, such a transfer was perceived as constraining their agency, thus leading them to resort to intentional inaction, as pointed out by Porter et al. (2022). For instance, Ajarn Thida deliberately chose not to invest her efforts or time in making further preparations, such as finding information about medical contents, since the EMP classes typically had difficult terminology. This also stemmed from her strong identification as an English-major teacher, prompting her to prioritise those students. This, in turn, led her eventually to withdraw from the field; she no longer teaches EMP. In addition, feeling tremendously uncomfortable and nervous, Ajarn Panu displayed a desire to retreat from the field. This is due to his perception of himself as an inexperienced teacher in EMP.

These cases demonstrated a form of identity stasis, in which agency was exercised through the intentional maintenance of a preferred or established professional identity. Rather than adapting to expectations associated with the new role, these teachers made deliberate choices to remain aligned with professional roles in which they felt confident. Such a response is in line with what Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto (2015) describe as a form of agency enacted to preserve individuals' professional identity in the face of institutional demands for change. It is also consistent with Pennington and Richards' (2016) view that teacher identity may be intentionally sustained when new expectations conflict with self-perception. Ultimately, these cases highlight that in the face of misalignment between context and identity, teachers may choose to disengage from the field rather than compromising their preferred professional identity.

Unlike those who departed from the field, other teachers retained their professional identity as English teachers while continuing to engage with the EMP field. Simply put, they retained their English teacher identity, thereby reaffirming their identity as an English teacher with no

knowledge of medical terms. Unlike those teachers who identified as an English teacher with medical background and / or strong knowledge of medical terminology, these teachers did not focus on technical or medical terms but chose to devote their attention to components of language itself, such as communication in specific contexts. To illustrate, Ajarn Wipakorn and Ajarn Thipsutha continued to assert their identity in this context by focusing on teaching language to their students rather than medical or technical content. They took agentic decisions to align with the nature of students, such as using communicative language teaching and a task-based approach. The choice of agency remained the same as what they did when teaching GE, highlighting their intention to preserve their professional identity.

The cases presented in this study demonstrate the varied ways in which individual teachers negotiated their professional identity in the face of the shift from GE to EMP. While some embraced the role change and redefined their professional identity, others maintained their existing identity by adapting teaching approaches or disengaging from the new role. This variation highlights the fluid and individualised nature of identity construction in shifting professional contexts. As pointed out by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and Akkerman and Meijer (2011), teacher identity is a dynamic process evolving through personal reflection and social interaction. Vähäsantanen (2015) also notes that identity negotiation or reconstruction is shaped by individual agency, values, and professional backgrounds, thereby contributing to varied identity trajectories within the same context. Hence, the findings in this study underscore that identity construction is a complex and individualised process, shaped by how individual teachers draw on different forms of agency in response to the challenges posed by shifting professional contexts.

7.4.3 The Interconnectedness of Agency and Identity

The literature discusses the interconnections between teacher agency and teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Pease-Alvarez et al., 2010), and as the above sections highlight, this interconnection was also evident in this study. On the one hand, identity drove agency. This is consistent with the existing literature, highlighting that teachers enacted their agency in alignment with their perceived or desired identities (Edwards, 2019; Sloan, 2006; Vähäsantanen, 2015). This was observed in the case of static identity. In this instance, teachers chose to retain their existing identity and exercise agency based on such an identity. As an example, rather than establishing a new identity, Ajarn Wipakorn embraced her identity as a language teacher and demonstrated teacher agency to facilitate her teaching, such as integrating content-based learning with communicative language teaching. Therefore, this allowed her to preserve her identity and establish herself as an English teacher with no special knowledge of medical terms. In addition, Ajarn Panu as a novice EMP teacher experienced anxiety and pressure, so he enacted his agentic actions based on this identity. He reported seeking assistance from other experienced teachers, which Castro et al. (2010) refers to as help-seeking strategies. The collegial support, indeed, eased his apprehensiveness and enabled him to face challenges at hand. This is in line with Castro et al.'s (2010) argument that novice teachers can navigate challenges or shape their professional identity by finding mentors or seeking support.

On the other hand, the reverse relationship was also seen, i.e., agency impacted identity. This aligns with the literature, which notes that teacher agency has a role to play in the development of their professional identities (Day et al., 2006; Tao & Gao, 2017; Vähäsantanen, 2015). This was typically the case where student factors/reactions influenced teachers. This can be observed in the case of Ajarn Supa. As she did not have a medical background, she consulted her colleague, who had more experience in teaching EMP, about knowledge of medical terms,

which is one of the help-seeking strategies proposed by Castro et al. (2010). Asking for advice from a teacher with more experience provided her with agency and more confidence (Ashton, 2021) to widen her knowledge of medical terminology through different resources and to ask her students for explanations about medical terms. Over time, this led her to develop her identity as an EMP teacher with stronger knowledge of medical terms. Additionally, the same instance was also seen in the case of Ajarn Nantida, who exercised her agency by taking pedagogical decisions to suit the nature of medical students. Given their autonomous learning style, she adopted task- or project-based approaches to prepare some group tasks, which is a student-centred approach with “students taking charge of their own learning” (Ashton, 2021, p. 8). Taking pedagogical decisions in response to student characteristics, such as learning styles, led to the transformation from a GE teacher to an EMP teacher.

In conclusion, there is a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between identity and agency (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Pease-Alvarez et al., 2010; Vähäsantanen, 2015). While identity can contribute to informing teachers’ agentic actions, teacher agency itself can enable teachers to preserve their existing identity or establish a new identity. The findings of the present study cast additional light on the relationship between teacher agency and teacher identity, particularly in the Thai EMP tertiary context, indicating that they empowered each other.

7.5 Research Questions

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research questions, providing insights into how various factors influenced teacher agency in the context of EMP. The discussion highlights key themes, including the role of teachers’ knowledge, prior experience,

student dynamics, and sociocultural influences, in shaping their professional decision-making and agency.

7.5.1 Research Question One

RQ1: What kind of competencies do Thai teachers perceive they need to teach English for Medical Purposes (EMP)?

Within a sociocultural framework, this study found that the key competencies Thai teachers identified as vital to EMP teaching reflect their role as active agents who adapt to the needs of their students and the demands of the medical context. Van Lier's (2008) framework of agency, which highlights initiative/self-regulation, interdependence, and awareness of responsibility, can help explain why certain skills and attributes were prioritised.

Firstly, awareness of students' future needs in Medical English and having a good command of Medical English were rated as the most important competencies for EMP teachers in the questionnaire responses. These elements align with teachers' enactment of their agency as part of their initiative and awareness of responsibility. Teachers used their agency by taking the initiative to understand the specific linguistic demands their students would face in medical contexts, such as patient communication and medical terminology. This awareness enabled teachers to tailor their lessons and materials to meet these future needs, ensuring their students were prepared for real-world medical environments. Furthermore, a strong command of Medical English reflected some of the teacher's self-regulation and mastery over the subject matter, which is critical for delivering accurate, relevant, and effective instruction.

The second set of competencies include good Medical English teaching techniques and awareness of real-world medical practice. These aspects underscore the interdependent nature of agency, where teaching is not only about imparting knowledge but also about understanding the sociocultural and professional context of the medical field. Effective teaching techniques that reflect real-world medical practice allow teachers to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Additionally, the ability to collaborate with the Faculty of Medicine further highlights the interdependent nature of agency. Specifically, several teachers believed that engaging with medical professionals and the faculty was essential for ensuring their teaching aligned with the demands of the medical field and equipped students with the most relevant and up-to-date skills.

On the other hand, aspects such as the ability to design authentic activities, attitudes, and knowledge of the field were considered less important by teachers. This might suggest that while these aspects contribute to a teacher's overall professional development, they may not be seen as directly impacting immediate student outcomes or the practical aspects of medical communication. Authentic activities, while valuable, may not always align with the highly specific and technical nature of Medical English. Similarly, attitudes and field-specific knowledge, though important for general teaching effectiveness, may not be perceived as crucial in the highly specialised context of EMP. Rather, teachers placed greater importance on practical application and technical command of language. While this linguistic competence can be seen as a component of field-specific knowledge, the teachers appeared to draw a distinction between knowing about the medical field in general and possessing the specific language skills required for teaching medical content effectively. In this sense, it involved the ability to use and teach medical terminology accurately which was perceived as an essential competency, not medical knowledge per se.

To sum up, the findings suggest that in a sociocultural framework, awareness of student needs and real-world medical practice, alongside collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine, were perceived as key competencies in the context of EMP. These competencies were considered vital to effective EMP teaching. In particular, they enabled teachers to actively enact their agency with their professional context and shape their teaching to meet the demands of both their students and the medical field. Less emphasis on attitudes or activity design might reflect the highly focused and technical nature of Medical English instruction, where precision and alignment with professional standards are paramount.

These findings are in line with the existing ESP literature. For example, as foundational work in ESP, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) identified key roles of the ESP teacher as “practitioners”, including collaborators, course designers, and material providers – rather than acting solely as instructors. This notion resonates with the findings of this study, in which EMP teachers perceived collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine as an essential competency. Additionally, Cao et al. (2022) note that EMP teachers are expected to take on responsibilities such as designing courses and developing materials on their own. To do so effectively, they must be equipped with a strong command of the relevant English language and find ways to compensate for their limited expertise in the medical domain. This view is consistent with the present study’s findings, in which EMP teachers prioritised linguistic competence and collaboration with content experts to address gaps in their medical background.

7.5.2 Research Question Two

RQ 2: What affordances and constraints do EMP teachers identify in their work that affect their decisions and actions?

The findings of the study showed that many factors mediated agency in an individualised manner. The study highlighted that the same factors could serve as either affordances or constraints, varying among teachers, affecting their agentic actions. Specifically, it was found that teachers' knowledge or background could mediate their agency. The findings shed additional light on mediating factors, underscoring that knowledge, prior experience, and student factors mediated teachers' decisions to act agentively in varied ways. Similarly, institutional factors and sociocultural factors mediated teachers' agency – often acting as constraints on their autonomy to take agentic actions.

Where there were gaps in their knowledge of medical matters and terminology, some teachers responded agentively by looking for pedagogical approaches to facilitate their EMP teaching, such as investing time to learn about medical terms or using a help-seeking strategy to ask for assistance from more experienced teachers. However, this was not the case for other teachers. For them, limited knowledge was a constraint, which caused negative emotional responses such as anxiety or discomfort. This could constrain their agency. This is consistent with the sociocultural understanding of teacher agency, in which teachers' capacity to act agentively is mediated by their interpretations and responses to affordances and constraints in their professional context (Davies, 1990 cited in Jiang et al., 2022). It also resonates with Eteläpelto et al.'s (2013) conceptualisation of professional agency as the capacity to make choices, take stances, and exert influence over one's work and professional identity. In line with these views, some EMP teachers perceived knowledge gaps as manageable and enacted agency through proactive strategies, whereas others who viewed such gaps as insurmountable constraints tended towards intentional inaction or eventually left the field, highlighting the individualised nature of agency.

Likewise, prior experience could serve as either an affordance or a constraint. Teachers with more past experience in the medical field or as a language teacher expressed a sense of adequacy in teaching medical students and enacted agency in different ways to cope effectively with challenges, such as drawing upon student autonomy. It was obvious the reverse situation pertained for teachers with less experience – particularly those who were new to EMP or had just made a shift from teaching GE. This finding is in line with existing literature on novice teacher agency, which highlights the role of emotional and psychological challenges in mediating teachers' capacity to act agentively. For instance, Mosqueda (2025) underscores how emotional distress such as anxiety, uncertainty, or frustration can influence the way in which teachers perceive their ability to manage classroom demands and implement change. Similarly, as noted by Höl (2024), factors such as limited self-efficacy, lacking experience, and inadequate institutional support hinder novice teachers' capacity to take agentive actions. These closely resonate with the findings of this study. The EMP teachers with minimal experience often reported a sense of inadequacy and anxiety, particularly in the face of unfamiliar medical content or expectations associated with the role. In some cases, these emotional responses constrained their agency, contributing to reduced engagement with instructional planning or a more passive classroom role. For a few teachers, this emotional discomfort prompted them to retreat from the field, suggesting that limited experience – when combined with other factors – can hinder sustained engagement with the field.

Meanwhile, student factors were at play, acting as both an affordance and constraint to teacher agency. For some teachers, student factors, such as high proficiency or autonomy, allowed them to demonstrate agency, such as using a task-based approach, role-play, or group activities. These features contributed to engaging classes and provided some teachers with a sense of safety from exposing their inadequacy to students. However, for others, particularly those with

limited confidence or experience in EMP, these same student traits posed emotional and pedagogical tensions. In such cases, teachers perceived a misalignment between their expertise and the students' expectations or capabilities. This finding corroborates Tsou and Chen (2014), who observed that ESP teachers may experience challenges when working with students who are equipped with disciplinary knowledge, contributing to identity-related tensions. Similarly, as noted by Kim (2023), teachers' inferiority in content knowledge emerged when working with domain experts – students included – undermining their sense of professional adequacy. As a result, some chose to adopt a more facilitative or cautious teaching approach, and avoided more experimental or creative pedagogical practices. Here, it was not the students' competence that impeded agency, but rather the teachers' interpretation of that competence in relation to their own professional identity.

The institution was identified as a mediating factor, constraining teacher agency in varied ways. As noted by Blatchford and Russell (2020), large class sizes reduce opportunities for interaction, feedback, and personalised pedagogies. This is in line with the findings of this study, in which EMP teachers shared that densely populated classrooms dampened teachers' capacity to act agentively – particularly when implementing interactive activities, managing the class, or offering support to individual students. Smaller class sizes, on the other hand, are more conducive to teacher agency, allowing for individualised support and flexible teaching approaches (Blatchford et al., 2002).

Meanwhile, another significant institutional factor which constrained teacher agency was the lack of professional development. Some teachers in this study were initially assigned to EMP teaching without professional development, leaving them underprepared. This resulted in a sense of distress, which undermined their confidence and ability to take agentic actions

effectively. Existing literature (e.g., Noonan, 2016; Tao & Gao, 2017; Xu & Fan, 2021) notes that provision of professional development can increase teachers' confidence, knowledge, and decision-making, which will enhance their ability to act agentively. Recent research by Ahmad and Shah (2022) further highlights that professional development aligned with their professional needs contribute to teacher agency. In this study, however, the absence of such support triggered feelings of inadequacy and anxiety, thereby reducing teacher agency.

Furthermore, logistics emerged as key institutional constraints for EMP teachers. They reported the burden of traveling back and forth to different faculties or locations. This disrupted their time for class preparation or reflective practice and led to the decision to retreat from EMP. This is akin to Önen and Doğaner's (2021) findings, in which longer commuting time among rural teachers triggered emotional exhaustion and thoughts of leaving the profession. Likewise, Mon et al. (2016) note that a lack of logistical support can negatively affect teachers' motivation and emotional well-being, which directly impacts their capacity to engage in agentive actions. Therefore, support to overcome such difficulties – if available – can support teacher agency.

Power distance within the institution functioned as another constraint on teacher agency. This form of power inequality deprived some teachers of the ability to make changes to the curriculum or be involved in choosing instructional materials for EMP courses. This lack of involvement reflected the issue of institutional power distance, which significantly limited their autonomy. These findings corroborate those of recent research by Al-Mahdy et al. (2024), which revealed that the existing power distance can suppress teachers' ability to exercise agency by restricting their involvement in decision-making. In the same way, Aslan (2022) points out that hierarchical institutional cultures prioritise compliance over autonomy, discouraging teachers from taking initiative. In line with these perspectives, EMP teachers in

this study were unable to exercise agency freely and creatively as they inevitably needed to adhere to organisational hierarchy rather than tailoring instruction based purely on student needs.

Lastly, Thai cultural factors were seen to impose a significant constraint on teacher agency. Specifically, two hierarchical aspects, namely social status and collegial relationships, limited teachers' ability to demonstrate agentic actions. In some cases, they were not allowed to change the course materials due to being in the lower ranks. This reflects the influence of high-power distance within Thai institutions, where teachers' freedom to make decisions is often shaped by their status or position within the hierarchy. Chinpakdee (2022), who notes that in Thailand's high power distance culture, professional autonomy is linked to individuals' social position, educational background, and seniority, had similar findings. In line with this view, EMP teachers in this study found their autonomy constrained when they lacked institutional seniority or were new to the context, contributing to reduced involvement in decision-making or curricular adjustments.

Additionally, face-saving served as a constraining factor. Some teachers were concerned with a fear of losing face or appearing incompetent, which could potentially jeopardise their professional image and identity. They ended up feeling uncomfortable using help-seeking strategies, which essentially deprived them of collegial support. This was often observed in the case of relationships with unfamiliar colleagues. This finding is akin to Foley's (2005) findings, where Thai teachers tend to avoid seeking support or voicing disagreement with senior colleagues. Doing so could expose vulnerability or threaten one's professional image (Young, 2021). Prior research in Thai school settings has shown that teachers tend to avoid actions that could challenge authority or provoke discomfort among colleagues, especially senior ones

(Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000a; Vanichakorn, 2003). In this study, such tendencies restricted teachers' engagement in professional dialogue and collegial collaboration – including with peers of similar or lower status when relationships lacked familiarity – which in turn constrained their agentic capacity.

Interestingly, this was not applicable for some of them when they interacted with their students. While prior research suggests that Thai teachers often avoid open dialogue with students to preserve an image of authority and competence (Amornpaisarnloet & Arthur-Kelly, 2023), some EMP teachers in this study demonstrated a different pattern. They were not bothered with formality or protecting their image, possibly because they considered their students as partners in learning or adopted a student-centred approach, so this enabled them to exercise agency, such as by asking for help from their students or incorporating students' specialist knowledge in class activities, and fostering student engagement and learning.

7.5.3 Research Question Three

RQ 3: How do EMP teachers enact their agency and what is the relationship between their agency and their professional identity?

The results revealed that there was a dynamic relationship between teacher agency and professional identity. In particular, these two aspects appeared to influence each other in meaningful ways. This aligns with existing literature, which conceptualises identity and agency as interconnected. In this study, some EMP teachers enacted their agency based on their identity – which might be regarded as identity driving agency. Eteläpelto et al. (2013) support this view, pointing out that teacher agency is embedded with identity negotiations or reconstructions and

is enacted through teachers' capacity to influence their work. Similarly, recent research by Wu (2023) found that a teacher's identity tension – such as discomfort with being viewed as a “teaching machine” – prompted agentic responses in pursuit of a more meaningful professional identity. In this study, EMP teachers were found to enact agency in ways consistent with their established identities. Some teachers who had a strong professional identity as a language teacher exercised their agency by taking pedagogical decisions to suit medical students, for example, using content-based learning and communicative language teaching. Alternatively, those who saw themselves as an English teacher with medical background exercised agency by combining medical knowledge with GE to equip students with necessary skills for their future careers. This was also seen in the case where novice EMP teachers employed help-seeking strategies in the face of challenges posed by EMP classes.

Furthermore, the reverse relationship emerged – agency driving identity. It was observed that the agentic actions taken by EMP teachers helped shape their identity. Evidently, considering student factors such as autonomy or the need to learn medical terms, English teachers with no medical background exercised agency in different ways, such as seeking advice from more experienced teachers and experts about medical terms, or using a project-based method. In doing so, a new identity was established, including that of an English teacher with specialised knowledge of medical terms and an EMP teacher. This finding resonates with Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), who note that identity is shaped through experiences and enactment of agency. Likewise, Wu (2023) showed that consistent agentic actions – such as engaging in research or adapting instructional approaches – enabled her participant to reshape her professional identity over time. In this sense, agency served not only as an expression of identity but as a means of constructing it. These findings contribute to existing literature by illustrating how teacher

agency and identity are mutually reinforcing, particularly within the specialised and evolving context of English for Medical Purposes.

7.6 Summary

Chapter Seven underscores the complex interplay between cultural, institutional, and personal factors influencing teacher agency within the Thai EMP educational context. It highlights the significant roles of sociocultural dynamics and individual experiences in shaping both agency and professional identity among EMP teachers.

Contextual factors found to be significant in the study and discussed in detail in the chapter include the Thai cultural context, alongside the core factors identified in van Lier's (2008) sociocultural framework: initiative/self-regulation, the mediating factors of sociocultural context, and the awareness of responsibility.

Transition from GE to EMP was then discussed, requiring the navigation and negotiation of identity changes by adapting pedagogical practices and seeking support, influencing their perceptions of competence and agency. Teachers' professional identities varied widely, with some identifying strictly as language teachers and others embracing the role of EMP teachers due to their medical expertise. This aspect significantly influenced their teacher agency.

Thus, the study reveals a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between agency and identity. Teachers' existing identities informed their actions and decision-making, while the exercise of agency helped shape their professional identities as they navigated the challenges of teaching EMP.

The chapter closed by forming direct answers to the study's research questions, which will be summarised further in the next chapter.

In sum, this chapter illustrates that EMP teaching in Thai universities is influenced by a complex mix of personal, cultural, and institutional factors. Teacher agency is not static; it is continually being shaped by experience, support, confidence, and the willingness to confront or adapt to shifting expectations.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis and discusses the implications of the findings. It starts with a review of the study, revisiting the answers to the research questions and emphasising the importance and main results of the research. It then examines the theoretical and methodological implications of the work. Following this, the chapter addresses the study's limitations and proposes suggestions for future research. Finally, it offers several practical recommendations based on the study's findings. This chapter ends with some concluding remarks.

8.2 Summary of Key Findings

This section summarises the key findings of the study based on three research questions.

8.2.1 Research Question One: What kind of competencies do Thai teachers perceive they need to teach English for Medical Purposes (EMP)?

This study explored teacher agency within the context of teaching EMP in Thai tertiary education. The findings suggest that EMP teachers who had adapted to that role prioritise

competencies that align with van Lier's (2008) framework of agency, which emphasises initiative, self-regulation, and awareness of responsibility.

Teachers recognised the crucial importance of proactively understanding the future needs of their medical students, such as their communication needs within the medical profession. This proactive approach demonstrates their initiative in seeking out information and adapting their teaching accordingly. Furthermore, a strong command of Medical English was deemed essential, reflecting teachers' self-regulation in mastering the subject matter and ensuring they could effectively deliver instruction.

The findings also highlight the interdependent nature of teacher agency in the EMP context. Teachers emphasised the importance of good Medical English teaching techniques and an awareness of real-world medical practice. This underscores the need for teachers to understand the broader context of medical education and collaborate with medical professionals to ensure their teaching is relevant and effective.

While aspects like designing authentic activities and fostering positive attitudes were considered valuable, they were perceived as less critical compared to core competencies directly related to student success and the demands of the medical field. This suggests that in the highly specialised context of EMP, teachers prioritise practical skills, subject matter expertise, and a deep understanding of student needs.

This study provides valuable insights into the key factors that contribute to successful EMP teaching within a sociocultural framework. By understanding the interplay between teacher

agency, student needs, and the demands of the medical profession, educators can develop more effective support systems and professional development opportunities for EMP teachers.

These findings suggest practical implications for professional learning and institutional policy. Professional development and organisational supports can be purposefully designed to cultivate teacher agency – for example, by creating spaces for collaborative decision-making, aligning assessment and curriculum priorities, and recognising teachers' expert knowledge of context. By rethinking how we structure teacher learning and support, institutions can better enable EMP educators to enact and sustain changes that matter in specialised language teaching.

8.2.2 Research Question Two: What affordances and constraints do EMP teachers identify in their work that affect their decisions and actions?

The main findings relating to this research question were derived from both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with EMP teachers, shedding light on emerging affordances and constraints and the impacts of these aspects on their agency. Four factors could serve as either affordances or constraints to their agentic responses: teachers' knowledge, previous experience, student factors, and sociocultural factors. For instance, in some cases, inadequate knowledge or a lack of medical background could motivate teachers to take agentic decisions to ensure effective teaching, such as consulting more experienced teachers, asking for explanations from their students, and taking an initiative in widening their knowledge about terminology using the Internet or different resources. However, some teachers viewed this as a constraining factor, stating that it undermined confidence in their sense of adequacy and resulted in apprehensiveness. Another constraint was face-saving among sociocultural factors deeply

ingrained in Thai norms, so many teachers were preoccupied with saving face. As a result, regardless of encountering issues or challenges, they were averse to exercising agentic responses, such as seeking support or assistance from their colleagues or experts, since it could result in losing face. In relation to their students, however, the same norms can work differently: teachers can keep their core identity as language specialists while inviting students' content knowledge, framing it as respectful, student-centred co-learning that gives students recognition. In this way, face operates both as a constraint and an affordance, depending on who is involved, past experiences, and how the interaction is framed. This study moreover adds a simple but surprising twist to what we think we know about Thai face-saving. While past work suggests teachers avoid revealing gaps to protect their status, this study found EMP teachers who comfortably asked students about unfamiliar medical terms without "losing face." The contrast with colleague interactions – where asking for help can feel like exposing weakness – shows that face norms are not barriers. They work differently depending on who is involved and how the interaction is framed, turning a potential constraint into a resource for agency. This finding represents a significant contribution to the literature.

8.2.3 Research Question Three: How do EMP teachers enact their agency and in what ways does their agency influence their professional identity negotiation?

With regard to the enactment of their agency, the main findings illustrate that what drove teachers' enactment of agency was their identity. In particular, this relationship was observed in EMP teachers with contrasting types of identities, e.g., an English teacher with medical background and an English teacher with no medical background. On the other hand, those who

identified as English teachers with a medical background enacted agency by incorporating their prior knowledge into GE, e.g. teaching essential skills for students' future careers based on their background.

Some of the EMP teachers with no medical background considered themselves primarily as language teachers, so their agentic actions were largely relevant to teaching the language, with minimal attention to medical and technical content. This contributed to the adoption of different pedagogical approaches to accomplishing course objectives or developing class activities.

The findings also indicated that in some cases, agency influenced teachers' professional identity negotiation. Specifically, this was reflected in some EMP teachers who identified on entrance into the field as English teachers with no medical background. Initially, these teachers took agentic actions to address their primary challenge – limited knowledge of medical terms. Accordingly, their agency helped them construct their identity in the process, shifting from an English teacher with no medical knowledge to an English teacher evolving towards strong medical knowledge. Hence, it can be concluded that the relationship between agency and identity could be reversed among teachers – identity driving agency or agency driving identity.

8.3 Contributions of the Study

The present study provided a detailed overview of teacher agency among EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context, given an absence of studies in this context. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study of its kind to research teacher agency in EMP in Thailand, despite the increased importance of EMP as part of Thailand's goal to become a leading destination for medical tourism. Specifically, this study was able to gain valuable insights into the teacher

agency of EMP teachers and highlight the influences of sociocultural factors on their agency. The theoretical and methodological implications of this research are described in the following sections.

8.3.1 Theoretical Implications

The present study contributes to expanding the literature and theories on teacher agency demonstrated by EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context. As pointed out in Section 2.2.5, there was a lack of knowledge about how sociocultural factors could influence EMP teachers' agency in the Thai context. Accordingly, the findings of this study reduce the gap by showing the interplay between sociocultural factors and teacher agency in this context. This is in resonance with the premise that despite apparently facing the same situations or challenges, different teachers might enact agency in different manners owing to different factors (Ishihara et al., 2018; Tao & Gao, 2021). In this study, Thai cultural factors, among others, shaped how EMP teachers took agentic decisions in teaching EMP. Although facing some challenges such as limited knowledge about medical terms, those with concerns about losing face with unfamiliar colleagues were averse to using help-seeking strategies, for they needed to conceal their inadequacy and protect their identity so as not to be seen as an inadequate teacher. Otherwise, they may be judged "stupid". The reaction, however, shifted in the case of interactions with students. Teachers are generally concerned about face-saving in the Thai culture to establish themselves as a competent teacher as pointed out in Section 7.2.2, yet some EMP teachers were not preoccupied with that. Rather, they were willing to expose the gaps in their knowledge to their students and ask for explanations about unfamiliar terms. This indicates that overlooking a sense of face-saving could enable teachers to enact agency more effectively.

Thus, this study provides a highly nuanced examination of how a major cultural factor such as face-saving is enacted.

Another theoretical implication of this study lies in providing a more in-depth understanding about the role of hierarchy in an EMP teaching context. Despite the existing literature on the hierarchical system in Thailand, there were no insights into its impacts in the EMP context. In particular, the findings identified hierarchy as a mediating factor in influencing teacher agency exercised among EMP teachers. Social status and the relationship with colleagues could constrain them from taking agentic actions, as they had to adhere to the organisational hierarchy and avoid being judged by their colleagues.

In addition, the present study reveals the intertwining between teacher agency and identity in the EMP context. As mentioned earlier, there are no previous studies on teacher agency among EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context, so this resulted in an absence of knowledge about the relationship between teacher agency and identity in such a context. In this study, these two aspects were observed to shape each other. Specifically, identity could drive agency, and at the same time agency could have the same influence on identity. This highlights a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the two concepts.

8.3.2 Methodological Implications

Several methodological implications can be drawn from the present study. Specifically, the use of the questionnaire allowed for capturing comprehensive insights into teacher agency among EMP teachers in different tertiary institution contexts in Thailand. The inclusion of scenario tasks in the questionnaire invited participants to contemplate the practical implications of

different appointments and respond to the questions comfortably, which helped gain genuine insights into their demonstration of agentic actions.

This study contributes to our understanding of methodological approaches to researching teacher agency by further demonstrating the value of a mixed methods, mixed paradigm approach. A specifically designed initial questionnaire included quantitative aspects but relied heavily on open-ended questions as befitted an exploratory instrument, enabling the researcher to go beyond initial assumptions about the field. This provided thorough preparation for two sets of semi-structured interviews which successfully built on the first phase to provide rich triangulated data.

All in all, the outcome also demonstrates the value of flexibility of approach allowed by a multifaceted design, given the enormous impact of the COVID 19 pandemic which forced a rapid re-thinking of initial plans.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

The present study collected data from Thai EMP teachers in the tertiary context, thereby providing an in-depth understanding of teacher agency in this context. However, the data were obtained from a limited number of participants in both the survey and interview phases. As noted in Sections 0 and 3.7.2.2, many EMP teachers needed to adapt to online teaching as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, so they were not available to take part in the survey phase. This inconvenience led to a lower number of questionnaire respondents than anticipated. Additionally, given this circumstance, Thai EMP teachers from a single tertiary institution in north east Thailand were selected for the interviews. As a result, due to the limited number of

participants and the focus on one institution, the findings cannot be said to be generalisable to other contexts.

Furthermore, only two phases of the study were conducted and data was obtained only from EMP teachers. In the original plan, medical teachers were also to be recruited for interviews, with the hope that they could share practical perspectives on competencies for EMP teachers and the skill needed by medical students from a medical practitioner's point of view. Unfortunately, this was not feasible as they were overloaded treating patients, not to mention the risk of COVID-19 infection. During the time of data collection, the pandemic escalated quickly, so lockdown and social-distancing measures were implemented while medical staff was overburdened with cases of COVID-19 patients. This phase was, therefore, excluded from the plan. Consequently, this study only managed to derive the insights from the views of language teachers.

Nevertheless, the curtailed, more focused, final form had benefits, as well, allowing time for a deep investigation into a group of teachers sharing a single location. As a first study of this field, the eventual design worked well to open the field for further research, as suggested in the next section.

8.5 Suggestions for Future Research

In this section, recommendations for further studies on teacher agency among EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context are provided. First, it would be invaluable if perspectives from other stakeholders in the field were obtained about the competencies required for teaching EMP and important skills for medical students. For example, one valuable avenue for future research

could be a needs analysis of EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context through the views of other relevant stakeholders such as medical teachers and staff. The questions could investigate what skills they believe EMP teachers should possess and what skills are necessary for medical students. This would contribute to eliciting valuable insights into competencies for Thai EMP teachers and, more importantly, essential skills for medical students through the eyes of medical practitioners directly. The findings from this study could inform the design of training or professional development programmes to enhance the teachers' competencies, ensuring their ability to deal with challenges from EMP courses. Additionally, the results could be drawn on to develop instructional materials or course content to foster those skills among the students, which would help prepare them for the labour market and future careers.

8.6 Implications of the Study

The practical implications from the present study underscore issues which should be given more attention to facilitate EMP teaching in the Thai tertiary context. In this section, the implications for institutions, department management, and teachers are given below.

8.6.1 Implications for Research

The present study has shed light on teacher agency exercised by EMP teachers in the Thai tertiary context and the professional identities they negotiate or which drive their decision-making. The findings highlight the impacts of sociocultural factors on teachers' agentic decisions as well as the reciprocal relationship between agency and identity. The study also underscores a need for additional research in this field. In particular, to ensure effective EMP teaching, it would be invaluable if perspectives from other stakeholders in the field, e.g. medical

teachers and staff, were obtained about the competencies required for teaching EMP and important skills for medical students. Hence, the findings of the present study could prompt researchers to look into teacher agency exercised among EMP teachers across different institutions as well as into medical teachers' views about essential competencies for EMP teachers and the needs of medical students. It would also be valuable to research whether and how the findings about face-saving are replicated in other Thai ESP teaching contexts.

8.6.2 Implication for Institutions

The study highlights several issues which are in need of more attention from institutions to support EMP teachers. The study suggests that, as pointed out in Section 7.3.2.2, past experience plays a significant role in teachers' perception of EMP teaching. Institutions should consider assigning teachers with extensive experience of GE to EMP since it was proven that most of those with limited experience tended to encounter significantly more negative emotional responses than those with comprehensive experience, which could hinder their ability to exercise agency creatively. Specifically, the institutions should consider providing EMP teachers with opportunities to join appropriate professional development programmes. In doing so, the teachers will be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills, which would aid with teaching EMP courses.

To better support EMP teaching in Thailand, it would be helpful for every new colleague to start with a friendly, structured induction: a short reading pack on EMP and Thai medical education, chances to sit in on classes taught by experienced teachers, and an assigned mentor with strong EMP experience for their first months. Additionally regular, at least once-a-year, in-house get-togethers where EMP teachers swap ideas, materials, and what's working in their

classrooms would be useful in better supporting teachers. Right now, beyond a few ad hoc efforts, there doesn't seem to be a coordinated, nationwide path for EMP professional development. Given the government's push to raise English proficiency and internationalise health education, this is a gap worth closing. Bodies such as the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation – working with the Office of the Higher Education Commission, the Consortium of Thai Medical Schools, ThaiTESOL, and relevant professional councils – could co-create practical professional development: induction resources, mentoring networks, observation exchanges, and annual symposia that fit Thai curricula and clinical realities. Induction is essential, and the support should continue well beyond the first weeks.

Additionally, as noted in Section 5.4.2, the institutions ought to provide support for logistics. That is, some teachers encounter the inconvenience of traveling to other faculties impinging on their preparation, and more importantly, their teaching time and energy. Considering this, universities might discuss this issue with relevant faculties, such as the Faculty of Medicine, to ensure they accommodate EMP teachers' needs, such as using the teachers' affiliated faculty as the main venue or timetabling EMP teachers so that they teach for an entire afternoon or morning at the second site, so that they and the students can all present themselves in the classrooms for the full assigned period.

To facilitate EMP teaching, relevant departments should consider ensuring that class sizes for EMP classes are appropriate. As stated in Section 5.4.2, EMP teachers shared that excessively large classes could be difficult to manage since they were unable to give equal attention to all students or implement some activities effectively. Consequently, the departments should ensure that the number of students is proportional to classrooms, for this would foster an enabling environment for teacher agency among EMP teachers.

As noted in Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, EMP teachers did not feel they were able to change the course materials due to the organisational hierarchy. Considering this, departments should consider involving EMP teachers in selecting or designing course materials or planning the content because this could spur their agentic decisions in classrooms. And it would be more successful if there were ongoing processes by which teachers could be involved in curricular decisions. Such a process of collaboration among EMP teachers to discuss curricular and materials needs would in itself contribute to the professional upskilling and the opportunities for inexperienced teachers to learn from their more experienced colleagues implied in the previous paragraph. The study also highlights a lack of collaboration with relevant faculties, such as the Faculty of Medicine. Specifically, departments should consider promoting collaboration between EMP teachers and those faculties in different aspects, such as designing course materials or content of the course. As a result, this would contribute to effective EMP teaching while accommodating the expectations or needs of the faculties.

8.6.3 Implications for Teachers

The findings of this study demonstrated that EMP teachers on entry into the field typically possessed limited knowledge of medical English, especially medical terminology. This posed a constraint to their agentic actions in classrooms. Accordingly, they should invest efforts in expanding their knowledge through different methods, such as consulting medical teachers or experienced teachers, using the Internet, and joining relevant courses. This would promote a sense of adequacy, which would enable them to enact their agency more confidently and effectively. Additionally, as noted in Section 6.5, EMP teachers did not attend workshops or training courses, regardless of receiving support for professional development. This deprived them of necessary knowledge and skills for EMP courses, which in turn limited their ability to

demonstrate agency and undermined their sense of adequacy. Therefore, EMP teachers should consider joining those programmes to expand their expertise in the field.

8.7 Final Reflections

When I began this study, my goal was to gain a deeper understanding of teacher agency in teaching EMP in Thailand. Although EMP is an important subject at the tertiary level, it has not been extensively researched within the Thai context. To the best of my knowledge, there have been no prior studies examining teacher agency in EMP in Thailand, despite its significant impact for the country. Consequently, this study was conducted to explore how teachers enact their agency in this field and to understand the trajectory of EMP from the perspectives of those who teach it.

Throughout the research, it has been clear that teachers encounter both affordances and constraints. Recognising these affordances and constraints can help teachers be better prepared to effectively respond to and enact their agency in the field. Moreover, agency plays an important role in applied linguistics research. It helps us to be aware of the context that could influence both learners and teachers and how those influences could affect their outcome from classroom activities. Therefore, it is essential to investigate language teacher agency in order to identify teachers' thinking behind their decision-making in the classroom, and in the field of EMP in particular.

As an EMP teacher, I have developed a thorough understanding of teacher agency within the Thai tertiary context. I now recognise the steps I need to take to better prepare my students for their future careers. Additionally, as a member of the department, I see a critical need for both

myself and my colleagues to engage in relevant professional development to enhance our teaching.

As a conclusion of the study, a significant personal benefit has been the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss EMP-related issues with teachers from various universities across Thailand. Additionally, this experience has allowed me to build relationships with other EMP educators. I believe these connections will be invaluable for fostering future research and collaborative teaching efforts among EMP teachers in Thailand. Moreover, I am deeply grateful to all of those who have allowed me to gain these insights.

REFERENCES

- Ahearn, L. M. (2001). Language and agency. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30, 109-137.
- Ahmad, S., & Shah, S. (2022). Teacher agency and professional development: A study on Cambridge English teacher program in the Arabian Gulf. *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2080352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2080352>
- Akkerman, S. F., & Meijer, P. C. (2011). A dialogical approach to conceptualizing teacher identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 308-319. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.013>
- Al-Mahdy, H., Hallinger, P., Omara, A., & Emam, M. (2024). Exploring how power distance influences principal instructional leadership effects on teacher agency and classroom instruction in Oman: A moderated-mediation analysis. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362275931_Exploring_how_power_distance_influences_principal_instructional_leadership_effects_on_teacher_agency_and_classroom_instruction_in_Oman_A_moderated-mediation_analysis
- Allum, V. (2012). What does English for Medical Purposes cover? <http://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewarticle.asp?id=66339>
- Altheide, D. L., & Johnson, J. M. (1994). Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 485-499). Sage Publications.
- Anthony, L. (1998). Preaching to Cannibals: A look at Academic Writing in Engineering. In *The Japan Conference on English for Specific Purposes Proceedings*.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Irvine, C. K. S., & Walker, D. (2013). *Introduction to research in education* (9th ed.). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Ashton, K. (2021). Novice teacher agency in the multi-level language classroom. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 34(3), 242-256.
- Ashton, K. (2022). Language teacher agency in emergency online teaching. *System*, 105, 1-12.
- Aslan, M. (2022). Teachers' Perceived Power Distance and Organizational Silence. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 9(1), 217-227. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1354978.pdf>
- Ayeni, O. G., & Olowe, M. O. (2016). The Implication of Large Class Size in the Teaching and Learning of Business Education in Tertiary Institution in Ekiti State. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(34). <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/34320>
- Baker, W. (2008). A critical examination of ELT in Thailand: The role of cultural awareness. *RELC Journal*, 39(1), 131-146.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26.
- Bandura, A. (2002). Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Journal of Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 51, 269-290.
- Basturkmen, H. (2003). Specificity and Esp Course Design. *RELC Journal*, 34, 48-63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003368820303400104>
- Basturkmen, H. (2006). *Ideas and Options in English for Specific Purposes*. ESL and Applied Linguistic Professional Series: Eli Hinkel, Edition.

- Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Basturkmen, H. (2017). ESP teacher education needs. *Language Teaching*, 52(3), 318-330. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444817000398>
- Basturkmen, H. (2019). ESP teacher education needs. *Language Teaching*, 52(3), 318-330.
- Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: An overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(2), 175-189.
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 107-128.
- Bell, J. (2010). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science* (5th ed.). Open University Press.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Doubleday.
- Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2017). Talking about education: exploring the significance of teachers' talk for teacher agency. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 49(1), 38-54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2016.1205143>
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2014). *The beautiful risk of education*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Biesta, G. J. J., & Tedder, M. (2006). How is agency possible? Towards an ecological understanding of agency-as-achievement. *Working paper 5*.
- Biesta, G. J. J., & Tedder, M. (2007). Agency and learning in the lifecourse: Towards an ecological perspective. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 39(2), 132-149.
- Blatchford, P., Moriarty, V., Edmonds, S., & Martin, C. (2002). Relationships Between Class Size and Teaching: A Multimethod Analysis of English Infant Schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 39(1), 101-132. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312039001101>
- Blatchford, P., & Russell, A. (2020). *Rethinking Class Size: The complex story of impact on teaching and learning*. <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781787358799>
- Bosher, S., & Smalkoski, K. (2002). From Needs Analysis to Curriculum Development: Designing a Course in Health-Care Communication for Immigrant Students in the USA. *English for Specific Purposes*, 21, 59-79.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, M. N. Coutanche, L. M. McMullen, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology: Vol. 2. Research designs* (Vol. 2, pp. 57-71). American Psychological Association.
- Campbell, L., Cantali, D., Doig, N., Hulme, S., Kanaki, A., Robertson, S., Syme-Smith, L., & Waghorn, L. (2024). Transitioning identities in professional education: an appreciative enquiry. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 29(4), 623-641. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2024.2403822>
- Campion, G. C. (2016). 'The learning never ends': Exploring teachers' views on the transition from General English to EAP. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 23, 59-70. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2016.06.003>
- Cao, Z., Zhang, Z., Liu, Y., & Pu, L. (2022). Exploring English for medical purposes (EMP) teacher cognition in the Chinese context. *Front Psychol*, 13, 1003739. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1003739>
- Carey, J. W. (1993). Linking qualitative and quantitative methods: Integrating cultural factors into public health. *Qualitative Health Research*, 3, 298-318.

- Castro, A. J., Kelly, J., & Shih, M. (2010). Resilience strategies for new teachers in high-needs areas. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 622-629.
- Chaaban, Y., Al-Thani, H., & Du, X. (2023). University teachers' professional agency for learning and leading sustainable change. *Professional Development in Education*, 49(6), 978-993. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2021.2004292>
- Chetsadanuwat, K. (2012). *A Development of Self-Instructional Materials (SIMS) to Enhance English Listening Skills for Student Nurses* [Master's thesis, Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of English as an International Language, Graduate School].
- Chinpakdee, M. (2022). Understanding Teacher Autonomy Through EFL Teachers' Online Teaching Experiences. *REFlections*, 29(3), 586-602. <https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v29i3.262102>
- Chong, W. H., & Kong, C. A. (2012). Teacher Collaborative Learning and Teacher Self-Efficacy: The Case of Lesson Study. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 80(3), 263-283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2011.596854>
- Choudhury, S., & Bhattacharjee, D. (2014). Optimal number of scale points in Likert type scales for quantifying compulsive buying behaviour. *Asian Journal of Management Research*, 4(3), 432-440.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). Routledge.
- Colbert, L. C. (2025). Becoming an ESP Teacher: Conflicts, Tensions and Successes. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 15(3), 18-18. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v15n3p18>
- Coldron, J., & Smith, R. (1999). Active location in teachers' construction of their professional identities. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 31(6), 711-726.
- Collins Dictionary. (2019). <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/submissions/latest>
- Comas-Quinn, A. (2011). Learning to teach online or learning to become an online teacher: an exploration of teachers' experiences in a blended learning course. *ReCALL*, 23(3), 218-232. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344011000152>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. SAGE Publications.
- Croker, R. A. (2009). An introduction to qualitative research. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in Applied Linguistics: A practical introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Czerniawski, G. (2011). Emerging teachers—emerging identities: trust and accountability in the construction of newly qualified teachers in Norway, Germany, and England. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 34, 431-447.
- Danieluk, A., Niemcunowicz-Janica, A., Windak, A., & Chlabicz, S. (2023). Diagnosis and Treatment of Lower Extremity Arterial Disease—A Survey among Family Medicine Trainees in Poland. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(2), 1-9.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Burns, D., Campbell, C., Goodwin, A. L., Hammerness, K., Low, E.-L., & Zeichner, K. (2017). *Empowered Educators: How High Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World*. Jossey-Bass.
- Davey, R. (2013). *The professional identity of teacher educators: Career on the cusp?* Routledge.
- Day, C., Kington, A., Stobart, G., & Sammons, P. (2006). The personal and professional selves of teachers: Stable and unstable identities. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(4), 601-616.

- De Leeuw, E. D., Hox, J., & Dillman, D. (2008). *International Handbook of Survey Methodology*. Routledge.
- Denis, F. (2010). *How to write an undergraduate marketing dissertation proposal. Documentation*. University of Huddersfield. <https://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/7824/>
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The Research Act in Sociology: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. Butterworths.
- Dhammarungruang, B., & Wudthayagorn, J. (2021). Manifestation of Agency by English Language Teachers in Relation to Thailand's Language Assessment Policy. *REFlections*, 28(2), 168-187. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v28i2.251286>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Taguchi, T. (2009). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Duff, P. A. (2008). *Case study reserach in applied linguistics*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Duff, P. A. (2012). Identity, agency, and second language acquisition. In S. M. Gass & A. Mackey (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 410-426). Routledge.
- Edwards, E. (2019). English language teachers' agency and identity mediation through action research: A Vygotskian sociocultural analysis. In H. Kayi-Aydar, X. A. Gao, E. R. Miller, M. Varghese, & G. Vitanova (Eds.), *Theorizing and analyzing language teacher agency* (pp. 141-159). Multilingual Matters.
- Edwards, R., & Holland, J. (2013). *What is Qualitative Interviewing?* Bloomsbury Academic.
- Elomaa, T. (2022). *Measuring customer satisfaction at the operational level: Company X* [Bachelor Thesis, Turku University of Applied Sciences].
- Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962-1023.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Esfehani, M. H., & Walters, T. (2018). Lost in translation? Cross-language thematic analysis in tourism and hospitality research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(11), 3158-3174. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2017-0701>
- Eteläpelto, A., Vähäsantanen, K., Hökkä, P., & Paloniemi, S. (2013). What is agency? Conceptualizing professional agency at work. *Educational Research Review*, 10, 45-65.
- Eteläpelto, A., Vähäsantanen, K., Hökkä, P., & Paloniemi, S. (2014). Identity and agency in professional learning. In S. Billet, C. Harteis, & H. Gruber (Eds.), *International handbook of research in professional and practice-based learning* (Vol. 2, pp. 645-672). Springer.
- Faculty of Medicine, K. K. U. (2019). Bachelor Programme Curriculum. <http://202.28.95.21/acad/index.php/overview-of-the-program-2/>
- Far, M. (2008). On the relationship between ESP & EGP: A general perspective. *ESP World*, 7(1(17)). http://www.esp-world.info/Articles_17/issue_17.htm
- Faure, P. (2016). English for Medical Purposes: strategies to design and optimize a language course for French students in medicine. *LSP International Journal*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v3n1.33>

- Feryok, A. (2012). Activity theory and language teacher agency. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96(1), 95-107.
- Foley, J. A. (2005). English in...Thailand. *RELC Journal*, 36(2), 223-234.
- Gall, J. P., Gall, M. D., & Borg, W. R. (2005). *Applying educational research: A practical guide* (5th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gao, X. (2010). *Strategic language learning: The roles of agency and context*. Multilingual Matters.
- Gonzalez, L., Brown, M. S., & Slate, J. R. (2008). Teachers who left the teaching profession: A qualitative understanding. *Qualitative Report*, 13(1), 1-11.
- Gray, D. E. (2014). *Doing research in the real world* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117). Sage Publications.
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Does it make a difference? *Educational Leadership*, 59(6), 45-51.
- Haapakorpi, A., & Alasoini, T. (2018). Work organization and technology: Introduction to the theme of the special issue. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 8(3), 1-6.
- Hallinger, P. (2010). Making education reform happen: Is there an 'Asian' way? *School Leadership & Management*, 3(5), 401-418.
- Hallinger, P., & Kantamara, P. (2000a). Educational change in Thailand: Opening a window onto leadership as a cultural process. *School Leadership & Management*, 20(2), 189-205.
- Hallinger, P., & Kantamara, P. (2000b). Leading at the confluence of tradition and globalization: The challenge of change in Thai schools. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 20(2), 45-57.
- Hallinger, P., & Kantamara, P. (2001). Exploring the cultural context of school improvement in Thailand. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 12(4), 385-408.
- Harryono, M., Huang, Y. F., Miyazawa, K., & Sethaput, V. (2006). *Thailand Medical Tourism Cluster. Microeconomic of Competitiveness*.
- Harteis, C. (2018). *The impact of digitalization in the workplace: An educational view*. Springer.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations* (2 ed.). Sage Publications.
- Höl, Ş. (2024). Teacher Agency of Novice Teachers: A Scoping Review. *Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.52826/mcbuefd.1361625>
- Holme, R. (1996). *ESP Ideas*. Longman Group UK Limited.
- Huberman, M. (1993). *The lives of teachers*. Cassell and Teachers' College Press.
- Huberman, M. (2000). O ciclo de vida profissional dos professores. In A. Nóvoa (Ed.), *Vidas de professores* (2 ed.). Porto Editora.
- Hull, M. (2006). Whose needs are we serving? International Symposium on English for Medical Purposes, Beijing, China.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2022). English for Specific Purposes: What is it and where is it taking us? *ESP Today*, 10(2), 202-220. <https://doi.org/10.18485/esptoday.2022.10.2.1>
- Ishihara, N., Carroll, S. K., Mahler, D., & Russo, A. (2018). Finding a niche in teaching English in Japan: Translingual practice and teacher agency. *System*, 79, 81-90.
- Ivankova, N. V., & Creswell, J. W. (2009). Mixed methods. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in Applied Linguistics: A practical introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Jeanjaroonsri, R. (2018). *Thai University Students' Perceptions of the Learner-Centred Approach* [Newcastle University].
- Jiang, Y., Li, J., & Wang, Q. (2022). An ecological approach to understanding university English teachers' professional agency in implementing formative assessment [Original Research]. *Frontiers in Psychology, Volume 13 - 2022*.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.916980>
- Johnson, K., & Johnson, H. (1998). *Encyclopedic dictionary of Applied Linguistics: A handbook for language teaching*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational researcher, 33*(7), 14-26.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(2), 112-133.
- Kalaja, P., Ferreira, A. M., Aro, M., & Ruohotie-Lyhty, M. (2016). Key issue relevant to the studies to be reported: Beliefs, agency and identity. In P. Kalaja, A. M. Ferreira, M. Aro, & M. Ruohotie-Lyhty (Eds.), *Beliefs, agency and identity in foreign language learning and teaching* (pp. 8-24). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kaur, A., Young, D., & Kirkpatrick, R. (2016). English education policy in Thailand: Why the poor results? In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English Language Education Policy in Asia* (Vol. 11, pp. 345-361). Springer.
- Kayi-Aydar, H. (2015a). Multiple identities, negotiations, and agency across time and space: A narrative inquiry of a foreign language teacher candidate. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 12*(2), 137-160.
- Kayi-Aydar, H. (2015b). Teacher agency, positioning, and English language learners: Voices of pre-service classroom teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 45*, 94-103.
- Ketelaar, E., Beijaard, D., Boshuizen, E., & Brok, P. J. D. (2012). Teachers' positioning towards an educational innovation in the light of ownership, sense-making and agency. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*, 273-282.
- Khalili, S., & Tahririan, M. H. (2023). English for Medical Purposes in Iran: Needs Analysis, Challenges, and Prospects. *Iranian Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 12*(2), 49-68.
https://journalscmu.sinaweb.net/article_177853_2efabd0787d11fe9925b678a9b697a29.pdf
- Kim, L. E., & Asbury, K. (2020). 'Like a rug had been pulled from under you': The impact of COVID-19 on teachers in England during the first six weeks of the UK lockdown. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*(4), 1062-1083.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12381>
- Kim, M. (2023). An English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Teacher's Identity Transformation Process. *English Teaching, 78*(4), 113-134.
<https://doi.org/10.15858/engtea.78.4.202312.113>
- Kirby, S. A. (2024). *Empowering educators: A case study on the intersection of teacher agency and student engagement in high school classrooms* [Lesley University].
https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/education_dissertations/230/
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2012). English as an International Language in Asia: Implications for language education. In A. Kirkpatrick & R. Sussex (Eds.), *English as an International Language in Asia: Implications for Language Education* (pp. 29-44). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4578-0_3
- Kitade, K. (2015). Second Language Teacher Development through CALL Practice: The Emergence of Teachers' Agency. *CALICO Journal, 32*(3), 396-425.
- KKU News. (2018). Khon Kaen University, Thailand.
<https://www.kku.ac.th/news/v.php?q=0015397&l=en>

- Klausner, W. J. (1993). *Reflections on Thai culture* (4th ed.). The Siam Society.
- Krosnick, J. A., & Alwin, D. F. (1988). A Test of the Form-Resistant Correlation Hypothesis: Ratings, Rankings, and the Measurement of Values. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 52, 526-538.
- Kusters, M., van der Rijst, R., de Vetten, A., & Admiraal, W. (2023). University lecturers as change agents: How do they perceive their professional agency? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 127, 1-9.
- Lai, C., Li, Z., & Gong, Y. (2016). Teacher agency and professional learning in cross-cultural teaching contexts: Accounts of Chinese teachers from international schools in Hong Kong. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 54, 12-21.
- Lan, Y.-C. (2002). *Management of information technology issues in enterprise globalisation* [University of Western Sydney].
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of L2 development*. Oxford University Press.
- Lasky, S. (2005). A sociocultural approach to understanding teacher identity, agency and professional vulnerability in a context of secondary school reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(8), 899-916.
- Leijen, Å., Pedaste, M., & Lepp, L. (2024). Supporting teacher agency during a collaborative inquiry-based in-service teacher education course. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 47(4), 769-786. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2022.2132385>
- Li, W., & Konstantopoulos, S. (2017). Does class-size reduction close the achievement gap? Evidence from TIMSS 2011. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 28(2), 292-313. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2017.1280062>
- Li, Y., Cai, Y., & Tang, M. (2023). Linking Instructional Leadership and School Support to Teacher Expertise: The Mediating Role of Teacher Agency. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3440. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043440>
- Lin, Q., & Gao, X. (2023). Exploring the predictors of teachers' teaching autonomy: A three-level international study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104338>
- Lipponen, L., & Kumpulainen, K. (2011). Acting as accountable authors: Creating interactional spaces for agency work in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(5), 812-819.
- Loh, C. Y. R., & Teo, T. C. (2017). Understanding Asian students learning styles, cultural influence and learning strategies. *Journal of Education & Social Policy*, 7(1), 194-210.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (2020). Language teachers' coping strategies during the Covid-19 conversion to online teaching: Correlations with stress, wellbeing and negative emotions. *System*, 94, 102352. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102352>
- Mackay, J. (2013). 'Questionnaire Design and Analysis': Report on a workshop by Zoltán Dörnyei. *ELT Research*(28), 27-29.
- Maher, J. (1986). English for Medical Purposes. *Language Teaching*, 19(2), 112-145. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800012003>
- Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3(5), 551-558. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023281>
- Massey University. (2017). <https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Human%20Ethics/Documents/MUHEC%20Code.pdf?2F3CBE296DD2345CC01794BF9CFCA13A>
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (1993). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (3rd ed.). Harper Collins College Publishers.

- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from Case study research in education*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Mertens, D. M. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Moate, J. M. (2011). The impact of foreign language mediated teaching on teachers' sense of professional integrity in the CLIL classroom. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(3), 333-346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2011.585023>
- Mon, C. C., Dali, M. H., & Sam, L. C. (2016). Implementation of Lesson Study as an Innovative Professional Development Model Among Malaysian School Teachers. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 13(1), 83-111. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2016.13.1.5>
- Mosqueda, H. (2025). The Role of Emotions in Teacher Agency: A Study of Mexican English Language Educators. *El papel de las emociones en la agencia docente: un estudio de educadores de inglés en México. Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 27, 67-82. <https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v27n1.114867>
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative syllabus design*. Cambridge University Press.
- NaRanong, A., & NaRanong, V. (2011). The effects of medical tourism: Thailand's experience. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 89(5), 336-344.
- National Foundation for Educational Research. (2014). Develop a questionnaire survey <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/1qfp00bm/resm06.pdf>
- Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (7th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Nguyen, T. H. (2005). Thailand: Cultural background for ESL/EFL teachers. *Cuyahoga Community College*, 3.
- Nitko, A. J., & Brookhart, S. M. (2007). *Educational assessment of students*. Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Nonkukhetkhong, K., Baldauf Jr, R. B., & Moni, K. (2006). *Learner centeredness in teaching English as a foreign language: Teachers' voices*. Paper presented at the 26th Thai TESOL International Conference, Chiang Mai.
- Noonan, J. (2016). *Teachers learning: Engagement, identity, and agency in powerful professional development* [Harvard University]. Cambridge, MA.
- Norman, G. R., & Streiner, D. L. (2014). *Biostatistics: The Bare Essentials* (4th ed.). People's Medical Publishing House.
- O'Sullivan, K., & Tajaroensuk, S. (1997). *Thailand: A Handbook in Intercultural Communication*. NCELTR Macquarie University.
- Office of the Education Council. (2017). National Education Plan B. E. 2560–2579. <https://www.lampang.go.th/public60/EducationPlan2.pdf>
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2022). The 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023-2027). https://www.nesdc.go.th/article_attach/article_file_20230615134223.pdf
- Olsen, B. (2008). *Teaching What They Learn, Learning What They Live: How Teachers' Personal Histories Shape Their Professional Development* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315631684>
- Önen, D., & Doğaner, G. (2021). The examination of job satisfaction of teachers in terms of commuting time, motivation and some demographic characteristic. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 9(3), 1-7.
- Orr, T. (2002). *English for Specific Purposes: Case studies in TESOL practice*. TESOL.

- Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (2013). Introduction. In B. Paltridge & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes* (pp. 1-4). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Pantić, N., & Florian, L. (2015). Developing teachers as agents of inclusion and social justice. *Education Inquiry*, 6(3), 333-351. <https://doi.org/10.3402/edui.v6.27311>
- Pantić, N., Florian, L. M., & Hick, P. (2021a). Making sense of teacher agency for change with social and epistemic network analysis. *Journal of Educational Change*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348579662_Making_Sense_of_Teacher_Agency_with_Social_and_Epistemic_Network_Analysis
- Pantić, N., Florian, L. M., & Hick, P. (2021b). Making sense of teacher agency for change with social and epistemic network analysis. *Journal of Educational Change*, 23(2), 1-50.
- Pantić, N., Galey, S., Florian, L., Joksimović, S., Viry, G., Gašević, D., Knutes Nyqvist, H., & Kyritsi, K. (2022). Making sense of teacher agency for change with social and epistemic network analysis. *Journal of Educational Change*, 23(2), 145-177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-021-09413-7>
- Pease-Alvarez, L., Samway, K. D., & Cifka-Herrera, C. (2010). Working within the system: Teachers of English learners negotiating a literacy instruction mandate. *Language Policy*, 9(4), 313-334.
- Pennington, M., & Richards, J. (2016). Teacher Identity in Language Teaching: Integrating Personal, Contextual, and Professional Factors. *RELC Journal*, 47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688216631219>
- Porter, K., Miles, P. J., & Donaldson, D. I. (2022). Teachers' emotions in the time of COVID: Thematic analysis of interview data reveals drivers of professional agency. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1-18.
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G. J. J., & Robinson, S. (2015a). *Teacher agency: An ecological approach*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G. J. J., & Robinson, S. (2015b). Teacher agency: What is it and why does it matter? In R. Kneyber & J. Evers (Eds.), *Flip the system: Changing education from the bottom up*. Routledge.
- Qi, G. Y., & Wang, Y. (2022). Challenges and responses: A Complex Dynamic Systems approach to exploring language teacher agency in a blended classroom. *The JALT Call Journal*, 18(1), 54-82.
- Quirino, R., Pinheiro, A., Silvestre, E., & Herculano, G. Q. (2024). Identity, professional identity and teacher identity: Theoretical-conceptual notes. In *Interconnections of Knowledge: Multidisciplinary Approaches* (pp. Chapter 67). Seven Editora. <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.010-067>
- Reid, A. J. (1996). What we want: Qualitative research. *Canadian Family Physician*, 42, 387-389.
- Reja, U., Manfreda, K. L., Hlebec, V., & Vehovar, V. (2003). Open-ended vs. close-ended questions in web questionnaires. *Developments in Applied Statistics* 19, 159-177.
- Robinson, P. C. (1991). *ESP Today: A practitioner's guide*.
- Sachs, J. (2005). Teacher education and the development of professional identity: Learning to be a teacher. In P. M. Denicolo & M. Kompf (Eds.), *Connecting Policy and Practice: Challenges for Teaching and Learning in Schools and Universities* (pp. 5-21). Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Saengboon, S. (2004). Second language acquisition (SLA) and English language teaching (ELT). *PASAA*, 35, 11-34.
- Sale, J. E. M., Lohfeld, L. H., & Brazil, K. (2002). Revisiting the Quantitative-Qualitative Debate: Implications for Mixed-Methods Research. *Kluwer Academic Publications*, 36, 43-53.

- Shah, S. G. S., Nogueras, D., Woerden, H. C. v., & Kiparoglou, V. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic: A pandemic of lockdown loneliness and the role of digital technology. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(11).
- Shelley, M., Murphy, L., & White, C. J. (2013). Language teacher development in a narrative frame: The transition from classroom to distance and blended settings. *System*, 41(3), 560-574.
- Sherman, B., & Teemant, A. (2021). Agency, identity, power: An agentic triad model for teacher action. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(2), 1-25.
- Sloan, K. (2006). Teacher identity and agency in school worlds: Beyond the all-good/all-bad discourse on accountability-explicit curriculum policies. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 36(2), 119-152.
- Srinagarind Hospital Press, K. K. U. (2015). Khon Kaen University to be promoted as regional medical hub, Srinagarind Hospital, Faculty of Medicine. <http://www.intermed.kku.ac.th/index.php?module=news&id=72>
- Steiner, E. D., Woo, A., Suryavanshi, A., & Redding, C. (2023). *Working Conditions Related to Positive Teacher Well-Being Vary Across States: Findings from the 2022 Learn Together Survey*. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA827-15.html
- Stevens, P. (1987). English as an International Language. *English Teaching Forum*, 25(4), 56-63.
- Stevens, P. (1988). ESP after twenty years: A re-appraisal. In M. Tickoo (Ed.), *ESP: State of the art*. SEAMEO Regional Language Centre (RELC).
- Sukamolson, S. (1998). English language education policy in Thailand. *Asian Englishes*, 1(1), 68-91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.1998.10800995>
- Swales, J. M. (1985). *Episodes in ESP: A source and reference book on the development of English for science and technology*. Pergamon Institute of English.
- Tao, J., & Gao, X. (2017). Teacher agency and identity commitment in curricular reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 63, 346-355.
- Tao, J., & Gao, X. (2021). *Language teacher agency*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thailand Investment Review. (2017). https://www.boi.go.th/upload/content/TIR_Apr17_40465.pdf
- Thumvichit, A. (2021). English language teaching in times of crisis: Teacher agency in response to the pandemic-forced online education. *Teaching English with Technology*, 21(2), 14-37.
- Tiprachaban, B. (2022). Challenges of using English as a medium of instruction (EMI) In Thailand. *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning*, 6, 01-12. <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijtel.2022.62.0112>
- Truong, K. D., Ngo, C.-L., & Li, B. (2024). The interplay of language teachers' identity, cognition, emotion, and agency, and the role of context: A scoping review. *System*, 119, 103188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103188>
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(7), 783-805. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X\(01\)00036-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(01)00036-1)
- Tsou, W., & Chen, F. (2014). ESP program evaluation framework: Description and application to a Taiwanese university ESP program. *English for Specific Purposes*, 33, 39-53. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2013.07.008>
- Tsui, A. B. M. (2007). Complexities of identity formation: A narrative inquiry of an EFL teacher. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(4), 657-680.
- Ukosakul, M. (2003). Conceptual metaphors motivating the use of Thai 'face'. In E. H. Casad & G. B. Palmer (Eds.), *Cognitive linguistics and non-Indo-European languages* (pp. 275-303). De Gruyter Mouton.

- Vähäsantanen, K. (2015). Professional agency in the stream of change: Understanding educational change and teachers' professional identities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 47, 1-12.
- Vähäsantanen, K., & Billet, S. (2008). Negotiating professional identity: Vocational teachers' personal strategies in a reform context. In S. Billet, C. Harteis, & A. Eteläpelto (Eds.), *Emerging perspectives of workplace learning* (pp. 35-49). Sense Publishers.
- Vähäsantanen, K., & Eteläpelto, A. (2009). Vocational teachers in the face of a major educational reform: Individual ways of negotiating professional identities. *Journal of Education and Work*, 22(1), 15-33.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080802709620>
- Vähäsantanen, K., & Eteläpelto, A. (2011). Vocational teachers' pathways in the course of a curriculum reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(3), 291-312.
- Vähäsantanen, K., & Eteläpelto, A. (2015). Professional Agency, Identity, and Emotions While Leaving One's Work Organization. *Professions and Professionalism*, 5(3).
<https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.1394>
- Vähäsantanen, K., Hökkä, P., Eteläpelto, A., Rasku-Puttonen, H., & Littleton, K. (2008). Teachers' professional identity negotiations in two different work organisations. *Vocations and Learning: Studies in Vocational and Professional Education*, 1(2), 131-148.
- van Lier, L. (2008). Agency in the classroom. In J. P. Lantolf & M. E. Poehner (Eds.), *Sociocultural theory and the teaching of second languages* (pp. 163-186). Equinox.
- van Lier, L. (2010). Foreword: Agency, self and identity in language learning. In B. O'Rourke & L. Carson (Eds.), *Language learner autonomy: Policy, curriculum, classroom* (pp. ix-xviii). Peter Lang.
- Van Veen, K., & Slegers, P. (2009). Teachers' emotions in a context of Reforms: To a deeper understanding of teachers and reforms. In P. A. Schutz & M. Zembylas (Eds.), *Advances in Teacher Emotion Research* (pp. 233-251). Springer.
- Vanichakorn, N. (2003). *Constructivism in English as a foreign language secondary classrooms in Bangkok, Thailand* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Northern Colorado.
- Vasantha Raju, N., & Harinarayana, N. S. (2016). *Online survey tools: A case study of Google Forms* National Conference on Scientific, Computational & Information Research Trends in Engineering, GSSS-IETW, Mysore.
- Vasavakul, A. (2006). *A Business English Oral Communication (BEOC) for Customer Services Staff at International Banks: Translating Needs Analysis to A Course Development* [Doctoral dissertation, Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of English as an International Language, Graduate School].
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental process*. Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and Language* (A. Kozulin, Ed. revised ed.). Harvard University Press.
- Wang, T., Ramdeo, J., & McLaughlin, C. (2021). Experiencing and experimenting: An exploration of teacher agency in an international collaborative teacher professional development programme using experiential learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 104, 103389. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103389>
- White, C. J. (2018a). Agency and emotion in narrative accounts of emergent conflict in an L2 classroom. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(4), 579-598.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amw026>
- White, C. J. (2018b). Language teacher agency. In S. Mercer & A. Kostoulas (Eds.), *Language teacher psychology* (pp. 196-209). Multilingual Matters.

- White, C. J., & Pham, C. (2017). Time in the experience of agency and emotion in English language learning in rural Vietnam. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 11(3), 207-218.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use*. Oxford University Publications.
- Wosyanju, M. G. (2005, 2005/09). *Assessment of Large Classes* International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) Conference, Abuja, Nigeria.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267386302_Assessment_of_Large_Classes
- Wu, H., & Badger, R. G. (2009). In a strange and uncharted land: ESP teachers' strategies for dealing with unpredicted problems in subject knowledge during class. *English for Specific Purposes*, 28(1), 19-32.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2008.09.003>
- Wu, X. (2023). A Longitudinal Study of EFL Teacher Agency and Sustainable Identity Development: A Positioning Theory Perspective. *Sustainability*, 15(1), 48.
<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/1/48>
- Xu, J., & Fan, Y. (2021). Finding success with the implementation of task-based language teaching: The role of teacher agency. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 35(1), 18-35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2021.1879882>
- Yahya, N. A., Halim, L., & Osman, K. (2023). *Responsive Professional Development: A Facilitation Approach for Teachers' Development in a Physics Teaching Community of Practice*. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2310.11375>
- Yayli, D. (2017). Coping strategies of pre-service teachers of Turkish with tensions in achieving agency. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 17(68), 187-202.
- Young, D. (2021). The hierarchy of Thailand and its effects on English language learning. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 14(1), 15-27.
- Zhang, Z., Chen, P., & Deng, C. (2024). Teacher Agency and Continuing Professional Development in Chinese Universities. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 14(3).
<https://www.richtmann.org/journal/index.php/jesr/article/download/13799/13355>

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The full version of the questionnaire

English for Medical Purposes in the Thai Tertiary Context

RESEARCH PROJECT

This survey aims to explore the decisions and choices that you, as an English for Medical Purposes (EMP) teacher, make when teaching Thai medical students. Moreover, it aims to identify the affordances and constraints that affected your decisions in your work. And lastly, to investigate how you cope with those affordances and constraints.

This research is being undertaken by Miss Kanokphan Tongpong from the School of Humanities, Massey University for the Doctoral in Applied Linguistics at Massey University.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is assumed that filling in the survey implies your consent to participate. The information you provide will only be utilised for the purposes of the research, and any other publications or presentations arising from it. All information will be anonymised and should you provide your name this only be accessible by the researcher. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the survey, please contact Miss Kanokphan Tongpong (kanokphan@kku.ac.th) or my supervisors; Prof. Cynthia White (C.J.White@massey.ac.nz), Dr. Gillian Skyrme (G.R.Skyrme@massey.ac.nz), Dr. Karen Ashton (K.Ashton@massey.ac.nz)

COMPLETING THIS SURVEY

The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Click the arrow below to get started. If you wish to navigate back and forth through your responses, please use the arrow buttons provided within the survey.

As a thank you, if you would like to, you will go into the draw for a chance to win one of three \$500 gift cards. If you would like to enter the draw, please provide your contact details in the final question of the survey.

ETHICS

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named in this document is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Thank you for the thought, time, and effort you have put into completing this survey.

*** Required**

Section 1 You as an EMP teacher

A. Starting out as an EMP teacher and challenges

1. Are you teaching English for... ? *

Please check one that apply.

Doctors

Nurses

Both

2. When did you begin teaching EMP? *

.....

Example: January 7, 2019

3. Where was that? *

.....

4. When you began teaching EMP, can you tell me about an early experience that you had that made an impression on you? What happened? How did you feel about it? How did that affect what you later did as EMP teacher? (Please write about 100 words) *

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Please rate from 1 (not important) – 5 (very important) on the scale the importance of each quality in terms of English for Medical Purposes teachers’ professional knowledge. *

	1	2	3	4	5
5.1 good command of Medical English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 knowledge of Medical contexts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3 Professional experience in medical settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4 good Medical English teaching techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5 awareness of real world Medical practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.6 awareness of students’ future needs in Medical English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7 ability to collaborate with Medical faculty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.8 other (please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please rank the top 3 challenges that impact on your ability to teach English for Medical Purposes.

	1	2	3
my English language knowledge			
my Medical knowledge			
the small number of colleagues			
my workload			
limited availability professional development opportunities			
number of students per classroom			
the level of English ability of my students			
my working atmosphere			
other (please specify)			

7. Please choose the one challenge in the list from #6 that most affects your teaching and explain how you deal with it.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

B. My work as an EMP teacher

Please consider the following statements in relation to your EMP teaching practice, and rate each statement from 1 (never) – 5 (very regularly) on the scale.. *

	1	2	3	4	5
8. I attend professional development events with a focus on EMP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I read articles about EMP or ESP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I discuss teaching challenges with my colleagues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I reflect on my teaching during the class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I reflect on my teaching after the class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. I take other actions to improve my EMP teaching. What are they and how do you do it?

.....
.....
.....

Section 2 Course content and concerns

14. Imagine that you are talking to a colleague who is thinking about moving from General English Teaching to teaching EMP. They want to know how it is different teaching EMP. What would you tell them?"

.....
.....
.....

14.1 They ask you if EMP has changed you as a teacher. What would you tell them?"

.....
.....
.....

15. What do you think students need to gain from your EMP course for their future professional practice?

Please check all that apply.

- Knowledge of the English for Medical terms
- Understanding of Medical content
- Practical knowledge in Medical & Medical practices
- English language structures
- English communication skills & practices for talking to doctors, nurses and patients
- Skills for exam success
- Cross-cultural communication
- Life-long learning skills
- Other (Please specify)

15.1) Which three of the list from #15 do you think are the most important? Please explain why?

- 1. Reason:
-
- 2. Reason:
-
- 3. Reason:
-

15.2) To what extent do your courses at present allow you to give adequate weight to the factors which you think are the most important? Why, or why not?

.....

.....

.....

16. I use the following materials for my EMP course.

Please check all that apply.

- commercial textbooks/course books
- self-compiled textbooks/course books
- Medical news
- Medical articles
- Websites designed for medical practitioners
- Websites designed for English language learning
- Authentic EMP focused audio materials
- EMP focused video clips
- PowerPoint presentations by teachers
- PowerPoint presentations by students
- materials that I created myself
- Other (Please specify)

16.1. Please explain briefly your response to #16

Which do you find most useful as an EMP teacher?

.....
.....
.....

Please rate from 1 (Never) – 5 (Very regularly) on the scale. As an EMP teacher,... *

	1	2	3	4	5
17. I think about my responsibility to the Medical faculty at my university.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I think about whether the students' will pass or fail English and the impact on their future career as doctors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I worry about students' who are not from a privileged background, and those who are struggling with the level of English required to become doctors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I feel confident even when my students know more about the field than me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. Please choose one from the issues mentioned above and explain how you respond to this situation as a teacher? Are there any measures you take as teachers to address the issue? *

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Section 3 Collaborating with others

23. In your context, how often do you collaborate with other EMP staff? *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

.....
Never

Very regularly
.....

24. What do you collaborate about? *

Please check all that apply.

- Course design
- Teaching material
- Assessment of the students
- Course evaluation
- Concerns about students' progress
- Concerns about quality of the program
- Ways of improving teaching
- Other (Please specify)

25. How often do you collaborate with Medical teachers? *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

.....
Never

Very regularly
.....

26. What do you collaborate about? *

Please check all that apply.

- Course design
- Teaching material
- Assessment of the students
- Course evaluation
- Concerns about students' progress
- Concerns about quality of the program
- Ways of improving teaching
- Other (Please specify)

27. Can you identify some of the decisions you have made as a result of collaboration and explain briefly.

.....
.....
.....

28. Who else do you collaborate with, and for what purpose?

.....
.....
.....

29. Here are four scenarios showing the decisions and actions of several teachers who have just started teaching EMP. Please check to identify how well this would suit your EMP teaching context.

.....

29.1) Keeri has recently joined the EMP team. He assesses some of the medical courses his students are studying so he knows what they are studying. He decides to read medical articles in English on the topics his students are studying in class. He develops class readings by adapting short passages from the articles. He follows the course that has been provided for him by the institution. There are aspects of the course that could be improved, but he does not have the confidence in his deep knowledge of EMP to make changes.

Mark only one oval.

- Definitely not suit
- Probably not suit
- Probably suit
- Definitely suit

29.2) Nara has recently joined the EMP team. She asks one of the experienced teachers whether she can borrow the course material she uses, and then she bases her classroom teaching on these. When she doesn't understand a medical term, she looks it up in a dictionary and keeps a vocabulary list. She sometimes felt that changes should be made to the course but didn't feel empowered to make them.

Mark only one oval.

- Definitely not suit
- Probably not suit
- Probably suit
- Definitely suit

29.3) Payu has recently joined the EMP team. He bases his courses on general proficiency in English, structuring the around grammatical structures as he did for general English courses. When he can find them, he uses readings from English textbooks on medical themes, and introduces medical vocabulary into the lessons.

Mark only one oval.

- Definitely not suit
- Probably not suit
- Probably suit
- Definitely suit

29.4) Fahsai has recently joined the EMP team. She participates in an online group for ESP teachers and downloads ideas and lessons from them. She searched book publishers' websites to find a good EMP course book and asked her department to buy it for her courses. She joins meetings of the Medical Faculty so she can learn more about their work and what students need.

Mark only one oval.

- Definitely not suit
- Probably not suit
- Probably suit
- Definitely suit

29.5 Imagine you have the opportunity to choose a new colleague to come to teach English for Medical Purposes with you. All applicants have a Master's degree and the same amount of teaching experience. Which teacher would you most prefer from one of the teachers described above? Why?

.....
.....
.....

29.6 Which teacher would you least prefer from one of the teachers described above? Why?

.....
.....
.....

30. Here are four experienced EMP teachers describing their way of developing their professional skills.

Imagine you are a new EMP teacher; which teacher you would prefer to be like from one of the teachers described below?

Mark only one oval.

Tantawan usually reads medical articles in English and participates in an online group for EMP teachers to download ideas and lessons from them. She believes that EMP teachers need to be up to date with medical related knowledge as well.

Mali often attends both national and international TESOL conferences held in Thailand because she thinks it is the best way to update her English teaching knowledge.

Chaba would like to learn and develop her teaching techniques in EMP. She usually attends TESOL workshops arranged by different institutes in Thailand, but thinks that these are not specific enough for her work in EMP. She talks with colleagues about the need to have opportunities focusing on EMP.

Kajon loves to conduct research and participate in both national and international TESOL conferences held in Thailand where he has opportunity to discuss and exchange idea with other teachers. He believes these experiences enhance his professional skills. However, he struggles to find time to conduct research and he worries about the impact on his professional future.

30.1) From your answer to #30, can you explain why?

.....
.....
.....

Section 4 Background information

Directions: Please check to provide information on you.

1. Gender *

Male

Female

2. Age *

under 30

31-40

41-50

51-60

61 and over

3. Nationality

.....

4. Highest Education Degree *

Bachelor's

Master's

Doctoral

Post-Doctoral

5. Majored in

.....

6. Bachelor's degree in

.....

7. Where do you work? *

- Government
- University Private
- University
- Other (Please specify)

8. Which region of Thailand is your current university/institute located in? *

- Northern
- North-eastern
- Central
- Southern

9. Academic Position *

- Lecturer
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor Professor
- Other (Please specify)

10. Please give a brief description of your teaching experience.

E.g. 3 years tertiary General English, 5 years English for Medical Purposes etc...

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. Have you ever worked in any fields other than teaching? Yes No

If yes, what kind of job did you do? (Please identify)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

12. Do you have any background in Medical or related fields? Yes No

If yes, what kind of background do you have? (Please identify)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

13. How many teachers are teaching English for Medical Purposes in your university?

.....

14. What kind of teacher training in English for Medical Purposes have you received prior to begin teaching EMP? More than one answer is allowed. *

Please check all that apply.

- None
- Teacher training on EMP Lessons Planning
- Teacher training on EMP teaching techniques
- Teacher training on EMP Testing and Evaluation
- Other (Please specify)

15. What professional development have you received since starting to teach with a specific focus on EMP?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

16. If you are interested in participating in a lucky draw, please leave your name and contact details here:

.....
.....
.....

Appendix B: A list of interview questions as a guideline

EMP Teachers Interview Guide

Expected number of interviewees (approximately 1 hour each)

1. EMP teachers for Doctors = 8 people
2. EMP teachers for Nurses = 8 people

Research Questions

1. What kinds of knowledge and skills do Thai English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers need to teach English for Medical Purposes (EMP)
2. What decisions and choices do Thai ESP teachers make in their work as English teachers for Thai medical students?
3. What affordances and constraints do they identify in their work that affect their decisions? How do they work with the affordances and constraints and why?
4. How does their agency shape or influence them to become EMP teachers?
 - What do EMP teachers perceive as their task as EMP teachers?
 - How can EMP teachers meet the demands of that task?

Warming up

Begin the conversation by talking about the following aspects:

- The interviewee (professional background, tasks, work)
- The organization (vision, goal, structure)

Exploration of *Self-regulation*

1. How do you feel about teaching EMP? Can you tell me more about that?
2. I was very interested about what you wrote about being confused when you first began. What happened? And how do you manage to overcome it?
3. What you wrote about your feeling after you have gained some experience in teaching EMP has impressed me. Can you give me an example? When was that?
And how did you deal with it?

4. I have read what you wrote about your changing in teaching pedagogy from teaching General English (GE) to EMP and it looks really interesting. Can you talk more about it?
5. Have you ever felt that your students know more than you in the field? And how do you manage that? Is it a problem?

Exploration of *Meditated by Sociocultural Context*

Discuss the scenarios with the interviewee.

Here are four scenarios showing the decisions and actions of several teachers who have just started teaching EMP.

Keeri has recently joined the EMP team. He reviews some of the medical courses his students are studying so he knows what they are studying. He decides to read medical articles in English on the topics his students are studying in class. He develops class readings by adapting short passages from the articles. He follows the course that has been provided for him by the institution. There are aspects of the course that could be improved, but he does not have the confidence in his deep knowledge of EMP to make changes.

Nara has recently joined the EMP team. She asks one of the experienced teachers whether she can borrow the course material she uses, and then she bases her classroom teaching on these. When she doesn't understand a medical term, she looks it up in a dictionary and keeps a vocabulary list. She sometimes felt that changes should be made to the course but didn't feel empowered to make them.

Fahsai has recently joined the EMP team. She participates in an online group for ESP teachers and downloads ideas and lessons from them. She searched book publishers' websites to find a good EMP course book and asked her department to buy it for her courses. She joins meetings of the Medical Faculty so she can learn more about their work and what students need.

Payu has recently joined the EMP team. He bases his courses on general proficiency in English, structuring the around grammatical structures as he did for general English courses. When he can find them, he uses readings from English textbooks on medical themes, and introduces medical vocabulary into the lessons.

6. Imagine you have the opportunity to choose a new colleague to come to teach English for Medical Purposes with you. All applicants have a Master's degree and the same amount of teaching experience. Which teacher would you most prefer from one of the teachers described above? Why?
7. Which teacher would you least prefer as a colleague from one of the teachers described above? Why?
8. Which teacher do you think you are most similar to? Why?
9. Which teacher do you think you are most different to? Why?
10. Can you please tell me more about things that you would still like to do as an EMP teacher? There are some points that interested me. Why can't you do it?
11. Can you tell me about the situation when you were worried as an EMP teacher?
 - What happened?
 - Who did you talk to?
 - What was a result?
 - What do you do now about that?
12. What sort of challenges are affecting your teaching? How do you decide what you will do in the face of these challenges? Can you give me an example?

Exploration of *Awareness of Responsibility/Answerability*

13. I like what you wrote about the incident that you remember clearly from your EMP teaching, can you talk a more about that?
14. How many hours of English for Medical Purposes course a week do your students' study? Is it suitable for them? If not, what should it be?
15. How do you feel being an EMP teacher at this institution? Do you get support from your colleagues/ department? And is there any professional development provided for you? Can you tell me a little bit more on that?
16. I like your advices that you would give to a new EMP teacher. Could we discuss more on that?
17. How do you collaborate with Medical teachers? And does it help?

Finish

- Summarization (by the interviewer)
- Feedback on completeness
- Benefit for the interviewee
- Acknowledgement and leave-taking

Appendix C: A complete set of interview questions

EMP Teachers Interview Questions

Expected number of interviewees (approximately 1 hour each)

3. EMP teachers for Doctors = 8 people
4. EMP teachers for Nurses = 8 people

Research Questions

5. What kinds of knowledge and skills do Thai English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers need to teach English for Medical Purposes (EMP)
6. What decisions and choices do Thai ESP teachers make in their work as English teachers for Thai medical students?
7. What affordances and constraints do they identify in their work that affect their decisions? How do they work with the affordances and constraints and why?
8. How does their agency shape or influence them to become EMP teachers?
 - What do EMP teachers perceive as their task as EMP teachers?
 - How can EMP teachers meet the demands of that task?

Exploration of *Self-regulation*

18. How do you feel about teaching EMP? Can you tell me more about that?
19. (When I first start teaching EMP, I found myself confused about...)
I was very interested about what you wrote about being confused when you first began. What happened? And how do you manage to overcome it?
20. (After gaining more experience in teaching EMP, I feel...)
What you wrote about your feeling after you have gained some experience in teaching EMP has impressed me. Can you give me an example? When was that?
And how did you deal with it?
21. (My pedagogy in the classroom have change from teaching General English (GE) to EMP by ...)

I have read what you wrote about your changing in teaching pedagogy from teaching General English (GE) to EMP and it looks really interesting. Can you talk more about it?

22. Have you ever felt that your students know more than you in the field? And how do you manage that? Is it a problem?

Exploration of *Meditated by Sociocultural Context*

Discuss the scenarios with the interviewee.

23. Imagine you have the opportunity to choose a new colleague to come to teach English for Medical Purposes with you. All applicants have a Master's degree and the same amount of teaching experience. Which teacher would you most prefer from one of the teachers described above? Why?
24. Which teacher would you least prefer as a colleague from one of the teachers described above? Why?
25. Which teacher do you think you are most similar to? Why?
26. Which teacher do you think you are most different to? Why?
27. (As an EMP teacher, there are still things I would like to do, for example...)
Can you please tell me more about things that you would still like to do as an EMP teacher? There are some points that interested me. Why can't you do it?
28. Can you tell me about the situation when you were worried as an EMP teacher?
- What happened?
 - Who did you talk to?
 - What was a result?
 - What do you do now about that?
29. What sort of challenges are affecting your teaching? How do you decide what you will do in the face of these challenges? Can you give me an example?

Exploration of *Awareness of Responsibility/Answerability*

30. (One incident I remember very clearly from my EMP teaching was when..., from that I learned...)

I like what you wrote about the incident that you remember clearly from your EMP teaching, can you talk a more about that?

31. How many hours of English for Medical Purposes course a week do your students' study? Is it suitable for them? If not, what should it be?
32. How do you feel being an EMP teacher at this institution? Do you get support from your colleagues/ department? And is there any professional development provided for you? Can you tell me a little bit more on that?
33. (Some advices I would give to a new EMP teacher are...)
I like your advices that you would give to a new EMP teacher. Could we discuss more on that?
34. How do you collaborate with Medical teachers? And does it help?
35. Do you like teaching EMP? Why?

Appendix D: Ethics approval document



Date: 02 March 2020

Dear Kanokphan Tongpong

Re: Ethics Notification - 400022271 - LANGUAGE TEACHER AGENCY IN ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES IN THE THAI TERTIARY CONTEXT

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please contact a Research Ethics Administrator.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research."

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 350 5573; 06 350 5575 F 06 355 7973
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz W <http://humanethics.massey.ac.nz>

Appendix E: The letter asking for permission



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

The Dean of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand

20 July 2020

My name is Kanokphan Tongpong. I am currently a Ph.D Candidate in the School of Humanities at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. My dissertation topic is “Language Teacher Agency in English for Medical Purposes in the Thai Tertiary Context.” I would like to ask for approval to conduct data collection at your institution. My data collection process includes giving questionnaires to English for Medical Purposes (EMP) lecturers, interviews and focus group interviews with some English and Medical teachers. All data from participants in the research will remain confidential.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

I have attached an information sheet prepared for participants in this research for your consideration. Should you have any questions please contact me by email; kanokphan@kku.ac.th or my mobile phone (+66) 0857381200. Or, to my supervisors: Prof. Cynthia White (C.J.White@massey.ac.nz), Dr. Gillian Skyrme (G.R.Skyrme@massey.ac.nz), Dr. Karen Ashton (K.Ashton@massey.ac.nz) School of Humanities, Massey University, New Zealand. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Miss Kanokphan Tongpong

Ph.D. Candidate, School of Humanities, Massey University, New Zealand



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

School of Humanities

Private Bag 11222

Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand

20 กรกฎาคม 2563

เรื่อง ขอความอนุเคราะห์เก็บข้อมูล

เรียน คณะบดีคณะมนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น

ด้วยดิฉัน นางสาวกนกพรรณ ทองป้อง นักศึกษาปริญญาเอก สาขาวิชาภาษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยแมสซี ประเทศนิวซีแลนด์ (Massey University, New Zealand) กำลังทำวิทยานิพนธ์เรื่อง "Language Teacher Agency in English for Medical Purposes in the Thai Tertiary Context" ซึ่งในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ ได้กำหนดกลุ่มตัวอย่างในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลคือ อาจารย์ผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อวัตถุประสงค์ทางการแพทย์ และอาจารย์ประจำคณะแพทย์ ดังนั้น เพื่อให้การศึกษาครั้งนี้สำเร็จลุล่วงด้วยดี ดิฉันจึงใคร่ขอความอนุเคราะห์บุคคลดังกล่าวในการเข้าร่วมงานวิจัยโดยการตอบแบบสอบถามและการสัมภาษณ์ (ในระยะที่ 2)

ทั้งนี้ ดิฉันได้แนบหนังสืออนุมัติจริยธรรมวิจัยโดยคณะกรรมการ ณ มหาวิทยาลัยแมสซี และรายละเอียดเกี่ยวกับการวิจัยมาพร้อมกันนี้แล้ว จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดพิจารณา ดิฉันหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่าจะได้รับความอนุเคราะห์ และขอขอบพระคุณมา ณ โอกาสนี้

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

(นางสาวกนกพรรณ ทองป้อง)

อาจารย์ประจำสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ

คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น

Appendix F: Consent forms

LANGUAGE TEACHER AGENCY IN ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES IN THE THAI TERTIARY CONTEXT

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

Full Name - printed

Appendix G: Information sheets



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

LANGUAGE TEACHER AGENCY IN ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES IN THE THAI TERTIARY CONTEXT

My name is Kanokphan Tongpong. I am doing a research project on language teacher agency in English for Medical Purposes. This project is for my Doctoral in Applied Linguistics at Massey University. Before studying at Massey, I was an English Teacher at the Department of English at Khon Kaen University, Thailand. I have previously taught English in various universities in Thailand.

What is the project about?

I would like to investigate Thai tertiary teacher agency on teaching English for Medical Purposes. I am particularly interested in the influences on the actions teachers take in their classrooms with diverse contexts.

What am I going to do?

I would like to conduct interviews with you regarding your decisions and choices you make in your work as an English teacher for Thai medical context. I'd like to ask you about your language learning experiences, your teaching and training background and your teaching practice in relation to this question. Prior to the interview, I'd like to ask you to fill in the narrative frame. Each interview should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Will the interview be confidential?

I will record the interview on my recorder and transcribe it afterwards, but you can ask me to turn off the recorder at any time.

I will use some of the information you give me in my research project but I will not use your name or place of work.

The recordings and transcripts will remain confidential. If you would like, I can give you a summary of the information when the project is finished.

What rights do you have as a participant?

You may:

- Change your mind and decide not to participate until we have completed the interview.
- Ask me any questions about my study, any time.
- Talk to me knowing that I won't use your name, or any features that may identify you, unless you give me permission;
- Decide whether or not to answer any questions I might ask;
- Ask me to turn off my recorder at any time;
- Check and make any changes to my transcript of our interview, if you would like to;
- Receive a summary or copy of my project when it is finished.

Do you have any questions?

You can ask me any questions you might have about my research, or the interview, before you take part.

You can contact me by email; kanokphan@kku.ac.th or my mobile phone (+66) 0857381200

Or, you talk to my supervisors: Prof. Cynthia White (C.J.White@massey.ac.nz), Dr. Gillian Skyrme (G.R.Skyrme@massey.ac.nz), Dr. Karen Ashton (K.Ashton@massey.ac.nz) School of Humanities, Massey University, New Zealand.

Ethics

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director - Ethics, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix H: An example of the coding process

No.	Q.7	Q.13	
1	My medical knowledge - i have to improve my knowledge on medical science.	I do nothing because EMP is not main responsibility. I was just a temporary support in case that the lecturers were not sufficient.	<p>Commented [Ma1]: med knowledge</p> <p>Commented [Ma2]: med knowledge – improve knowledge on med sci</p>
2	How to combine English language knowledge and Medical knowledge for my students is the thing that challenges me the most. That's because for freshmen and second year medical students, most of the subjects they have learnt in the university are the fundamental subject matters like other university students studying in the other faculties, they do not have much knowledge in medical health especially the terminology together with the knowledge in medical professions like anatomy, physiology, pharmacology and so on. So, teaching EMP itself is not easy. We, as language instructors as well as medical professionals, need to make EMP easy, understandable, and practical for our students to get knowledge.	I keep reading online journal articles in medical and talking with my friends and colleagues about the details within medical field.	<p>Commented [Ma3]: integrate eng and med knowledge</p> <p>Commented [Ma5]: self-improvement</p> <p>Commented [Ma6]: consulting friends/colleagues</p>
3	other		Commented [Ma4]: integrating – simplification
4	I think that medical knowledge is very important in teaching EMP which is sometimes very hard to acquire as we are not in the field and sometime it is very specific. So we need to ask from medical teachers/ doctors.	Ask from the experts/ practitioners in the field.	<p>Commented [Ma7]: med knowledge</p> <p>Commented [Ma9]: consulting friends/colleagues</p>
5	The most affects is we lack of good and real example for students. Most of materials (textbook, example videos, eg.) are in some certain therapeutics culture with limited number.	watch some well selected TV series and discuss with medical practitioners	<p>Commented [Ma8]: med knowledge – consulting EMP staff</p> <p>Commented [Ma11]: self-improvement</p> <p>Commented [Ma10]: text</p> <p>Commented [Ma12]: consulting friends/colleagues</p>
6	my workload	I spend more time preparing for the class.	Commented [Ma13]: workload
7	It's necessary to strive for better medical knowledge.		Commented [Ma14]: preparation
8	เลือก My Medical knowledge เป็นความท้าทาย เพราะเราต้องเข้าใจเนื้อหาแต่ละเรื่อง/บทที่จะสอน นก ก่อน จึงต้องมีการเตรียมตัวเยอะมาก ทั้งอ่านข้อมูลต่างๆ เกี่ยวกับเนื้อหาต่างๆ หาสื่อประกอบการสอน เตรียมเทคนิคการสอนที่เหมาะสมกับเนื้อหาทางการแพทย์และเหมาะสมกับสไตล์การเรียนของ นศ บางเรื่องที่เตรียมมาแล้วมันไม่จริงจิงๆ ก็ต้องไป นศ สอบอธิบายให้ฟัง เป็นภาษาอีกทีเลย แต่ส่วนตัวตั้งแต่กลางมาจนถึง นศ ไร่แล้ว อาจารย์มีความรู้ทางภาษามากกว่าความรู้ทางการแพทย์ที่ นศ มี เน้นการสอนการใช้ภาษาในบริบทหรือเกี่ยวกับเนื้อหาทางการแพทย์ แต่อาจไม่เข้าใจลึกซึ้งในเนื้อหาบางหัวข้อที่เกี่ยวกับทางการแพทย์ ดังนั้น เราเตรียมรูไปพร้อมกันแลกเปลี่ยนกันได้	อ่านเนื้อหาทางการแพทย์ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับหัวข้อที่ใช้ในการเขียน การสอน หาสื่อการสอนที่เหมาะสมทั้งแบบออนไลน์และแบบ hard copy ดูกับอาจารย์หรือนศอาจารย์ทางด้านสาย การแพทย์เกี่ยวกับคำศัพท์หรือการใช้ภาษามักดูใน วีดิโอประจำวันของอาจารย์ ดู Youtube เกี่ยวกับการสอน EMP	<p>Commented [Ma15]: med knowledge</p> <p>Commented [Ma16]: med knowledge</p> <p>Commented [Ma19]: self-improvement</p> <p>Commented [Ma17]: med knowledge – self-preparation</p> <p>Commented [Ma20]: consulting friends/colleagues</p> <p>Commented [Ma18]: med knowledge – student explanation</p>
9	My medical knowledge is the most affected		Commented [Ma21]: med knowledge
10	ผู้สอนจำเป็นต้องเตรียมตัวและค้นหาข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับบทเรียนนั้นๆ ในการสอนแต่ละครั้ง เพื่ออธิบายและพูดคุยกับนักศึกษาในชั้นเรียนได้ เพราะการ	อ่านในเสรียา	<p>Commented [Ma23]: self-improvement</p> <p>Commented [Ma22]: med knowledge med knowledge – self-preparation</p>

	สอนภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับวิชาชีพพยาบาล ไม่ใช่สอนแต่การใช้ไวยากรณ์หรือพูดคุย ด้านเขียนภาษาอังกฤษ แต่ควรมีการแลกเปลี่ยนความคิดเห็นของหัวข้อต่างๆในบทเรียนวิชาชีพ เพื่อเข้าถึงบทเรียนของนักศึกษา	
11	There are huge numbers of students for each semesters. Alternatively, we divide students to at least 4 groups, especially in case of laboratories-listening, speaking, writing, and reading.	To attend the seminars and workshops.
12	For me, I would like my students to use and practice the language points, but it was hard to deal with when there were more than 50 to 70 students in one classroom.	Apart from learning new words, reading more information and understanding articles, I tried to find opportunities to attend medical-related workshop such as a first-aid practice. When I let myself in this related situation, I felt I was a tiny part of the medical people.
13	ความรู้ทางการแพทย์ที่น้อย ส่งผลต่อการนำความรู้ไปอธิบายให้นักศึกษาเข้าใจ เกิดความสับสน และ ความไม่พร้อมของภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษ การแก้ปัญหาคือเตรียมตัวให้นักเรียนด้วยการอ่านข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมที่ก่อนเริ่มสอน และก่อนการสอนแต่ละคาบ แต่กระนั้นก็มีปัญหาอยู่	
14	ความรู้ทางการแพทย์มีผลอย่างมากในการเรียนการสอน ทำให้ต้องหาความรู้หรืออ่านเพิ่มเติมนอกเหนือจากการสอน เพื่อให้สอนได้อย่างมั่นใจ	ได้เข้าร่วม workshop เกี่ยวกับการสอนภาษาอังกฤษให้ ค.แพทย์กับอ.แพทย์ และฝ่ายวิชาการคณะแพทยฯ
15	ความรู้ด้านการแพทย์และพยาบาล มีความสำคัญในการสอนพยาบาล เรื่องต้องใส่ใจเนื้อหาบทเรียนที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการแพทย์และพยาบาล หากไม่มีความรู้ด้านนี้เลย ก็จะไม่สามารถให้ความรู้แก่นักศึกษาได้ถูกต้อง แม้ปัญหาโดยการศึกษาหาความรู้เพิ่มเติม	หาหนังสือ หรือเอกสาร ที่เกี่ยวกับการแพทย์และการพยาบาล มาศึกษาเพิ่มเติม
16	Number of students in class was a big problem as I had more than 60 students in my class. We didn't have enough time for everyone in the class to participate in some of the activities. When we had small group discussion, students seemed to be happier and more confident, so they showed more participation.	I discussed with the people in the field - nurses and doctors about their work and tried to apply that to improve my teaching.
17	The level of my students were not ready for academic purpose. I needed to offer basic grammar lessons as well.	Look into other organisation's courses.
18	It was challenging to handle big class especially the room was small that we packed and couldn't even walk around or move our chairs. English learning needs dynamic classrooms. This was the serious limitation that I couldn't fix it yet.	For the limitation mentioned, I reported this to the faculty administrators. For medical knowledge, I talked to the doctor students and also read articles about specific illnesses.
19	I was really concerned about my medical knowledge and I spent a lot of time to prepare myself before the class began.	
20	Number of students per class. Most of the assignments are group works.	

- Commented [Ma26]: attend workshops
- Commented [Ma24]: number of students
- Commented [Ma25]: number of students – class management
- Commented [Ma28]: self-improvement
- Commented [Ma27]: number of students
- Commented [Ma29]: attend workshops
- Commented [Ma30]: med knowledge
- Commented [Ma31]: med knowledge – self-preparation
- Commented [Ma32]: med knowledge
- Commented [Ma34]: attend workshops
- Commented [Ma33]: med knowledge – self-preparation
- Commented [Ma35]: med knowledge
- Commented [Ma37]: self-improvement
- Commented [Ma36]: med knowledge – self-preparation
- Commented [Ma38]: number of students
- Commented [Ma40]: consulting friends/colleagues
- Commented [Ma39]: number of students – class management
- Commented [Ma41]: student level
- Commented [Ma42]: student level – extra lesson
- Commented [Ma43]: number of students
- Commented [Ma44]: consulting friends/colleagues
- Commented [Ma45]: self-improvement
- Commented [Ma46]: med knowledge
- Commented [Ma47]: med knowledge – self-preparation
- Commented [Ma48]: number of students
- Commented [Ma49]: number of students – class management

21 One of the challenges that I faced was the number of students per classroom. The class that I taught had about 50 students. So, when students had to present their projects, it took quite a long time for every group to finish. To deal with that, I made up a class focusing on presentation techniques, therefore, they could perform and practice their presentation skills.	In order to improve my EMP teaching, I have to improve my knowledge both vocabulary and medical fields.
22 My medical knowledge - i have to improve my knowledge on medical science.	I do nothing because EMP is not main responsibility. I was just a temporary support in case that the lecturers were not sufficient.
23 Actually the only one main challenge is the size of the "classroom" which was too small. Teaching 50 smart students who had high English proficiency should be fun and enthusiastic, but sometimes teaching went dully because they couldn't move around as what I had planned. Students could only talk to the same old friends sitting next to them. Therefore teacher needed to ask students to do communication (speaking roleplaying) activities out off the classroom, and recorded them to show the teacher later. Sometimes I asked students to do the one on one presentation (with me only) the rest of the class who were waiting for their turn needed to stay outside of the class or else they would be too noisy.	I use some websites and other teaching materials as well as adding more independent learning session to allow students freely practice and study outside the classroom.
24 Teaching this course consumes twice as much time as teaching 2 courses. I try to find time to prepare my teaching before hand and think about the benefits that the students will get from this course.	I try to understand the in-house course book more. I study it thoroughly. I also spend more time on preparation and what this course expects from the students, understanding how and what the students will be tested on. I give them some moral support in almost every class as students have to spend much time on this course as well.
25 The teaching material dictates the direction of the course. Since we use a commercial text, this makes class preparation easier. Although one still must use the teacher's manual as a guide for proper class preparation. I don't see how it's possible for someone without a medical degree to teach the course without a credible medical textbook.	I need to search online for topics that are new to me. I must sound knowledgeable in class. This gives the students confidence in following the lessons.
26 There is no professional development as an EMP teacher as the course is outsourced from another faculty. The lack of professional development will	I see what is currently affecting Thailand and use videos and examples in class. For example the fact that Thailand is an ageing society and the impacts on that.

Commented [Ma50]: number of student

Commented [Ma52]: self-improvement

Commented [Ma51]: number of students – class management

Commented [Ma53]: class size

Commented [Ma55]: develop other activities

Commented [Ma54]: class size - activity

Commented [Ma56]: time/energy consuming

Commented [Ma58]: self-improvement

Commented [Ma57]: time – self-preparation

Commented [Ma59]: preparation

Commented [Ma60]: text

Commented [Ma61]: text – use commercial text

Commented [Ma62]: self-improvement

Commented [Ma63]: limited professional dev

Commented [Ma64]: develop activities

Appendix I: An example of the themes analysis

Trajectory

Trace the change in her sense that she has an assured and recognised identity as an EMP teacher with particular attention to the enactment of agency in supporting changes.

Knowledge factors and their impact

- Lack of knowledge of field leads to some confusion and sense of inadequacy (now or only at the start?)

Resulting enactment of agency

- Seeking help from experts
- Using student autonomy so she does not need to be an acclaimed expert in the field

Student factors and their impact

- Students are smart
 - initially challenging, and scary
 - later a source of pride in meeting their needs, and of appreciation of their skills
- Students are autonomous, eager to know the answer and well prepared for lessons
- Some students' fluency may be greater than the teacher's
- Some students are defiant
- Students are potentially judgemental

Resulting enactment of agency

(facilitated by a 'good attitude' and recognised as personally fulfilling, but also as a burden)

- Further preparation

- Choosing between being wrong and admitting need to check (is that what is meant as the source of embarrassment?)
- Accepting that her role is to be the teacher and to push the students to study even though they have a high level (?)
- Recognising that she can use their autonomy to protect herself from needing to expose absence of medical knowledge
- Seeking help from experts
- Gaining medical knowledge and creating suitable activities

Impact on professional identity

Pushed beyond comfort zone, but that increases her confidence in her identity

Refreshes

Preparation enables her to experience these matters as positive and to remain calm

Reflects commitment to students

Reflects need to protect her own identity as competent