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FROM EFL TO EMI: A CASE OF THAI INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' L2 LEARNING MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN CHINA

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Abstract
This study aims to explore Thai international students' attitudes towards teaching approaches maximizing their second language (L2) learning motivation and engagement and the motivating and demotivating factors influencing their L2 learning experiences during the transition from EFL to EMI contexts. The participants, selected by the purposive sampling method, were five senior Business English major undergraduates in southern Thailand who were enrolled as international students in a Chinese multilingual university for two semesters. Semi-structured interviews were employed, and qualitative data was inductively analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicated that all participants felt motivated and engaged to take the English for International Business and Trade course within the field of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the EMI Business Program. They tended to sustain their intended effort to complete communicative-based tasks and term projects related to their future professional goals, acquire specialized business knowledge, and develop digital literacy skills. Despite experiencing fluctuating motivation and transitional challenges, they reported their native-speaker teacher helped them reduce their constraints regarding English language use by editing their writing tasks and presentation scripts. Furthermore, they developed their English language proficiency, L2 self-confidence, and intercultural competence. These findings illuminate several factors influencing the student sojourners' L2 learning motivation and engagement in EMI settings. The study sheds light on the pedagogical implications of implementing practical courses and developing the instructional quality of the curriculum in internationalized higher education institutions.

Keywords: CLIL, EMI, internationalization, L2 motivation and engagement, student mobility

Introduction
Due to the impact of promoting internationalization in higher education and the importance of English as an international language, several universities in non-anglophone countries have offered academic and professional courses and programs using English as a medium of instruction (EMI). Hence, many international EFL students tend to relocate from their home countries to pursue overseas education at international universities in foreign countries worldwide. In

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line with Galloway and Sahan's (2021) study, EFL students' significant motivation for enrolling in EMI programs in Thailand and Vietnam was future job advancement, developing their English proficiency, and opportunities to study abroad. However, based on the literature review, no official guidelines have been found for implementing EMI courses and programs in Thailand's higher education. Consequently, there is an urgent need to explore international Thai students' perceptions of effective pedagogical practices and how to overcome language-related challenges in EMI classroom settings. If the matter is not seriously considered, EFL Thai students may not be sufficiently proficient in English, negatively influencing their English language use in overseas education, particularly in mainland China.

During the pre-COVID 19 period, one of the growing destinations for Thai international students was China. According to the recent statistical report by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2018 (MoE, 2019), the number of international students by country of origin in Chinese higher education was South Korea (50,600), Thailand (28,608), and Pakistan (28,023), respectively. The records show numerous Thai international students were enrolled in Chinese tertiary education institutions, thus making them the second largest group of foreign students, after South Koreans.

Due to the impact of internationalization, the Project 211 policy was initiated by the Chinese Ministry of Education (MoE) in 1995 to develop over 100 universities' quality standards in the 21st century. The initiative is deemed one of the most significant strategies for the internationalization of Chinese higher education (Huang, 2015). Hence, several universities in mainland China have revised and internationalized their curriculum in accordance with global standards by shifting from teaching Chinese as a medium of instruction to EMI instruction. After achieving a huge success of the educational reform, the Double First-class Construction policy was implemented to replace the Project 211 and Project 985 policies. The first phase of the Double First-class Initiative was launched in 2016 and completed in 2020, and 147 universities were listed for support in the second phase of the initiative (MoE, 2022). The Double First-class policy's major objectives include transforming the selected universities into world-class universities and developing academic disciplines to first-class standards by the end of 2050. Additionally, the Belt and Road policy was one of the major strategic initiatives aiming at building and fostering international collaborations between Chinese universities and partner universities around the globe (Rose et al., 2020). Thus, EMI programs in China have been increasing in number and popularity, thereby causing a major impact on universities' policies, academic mobility, and teaching and learning approaches in several countries around the globe.

Compared to EMI settings in China, Thailand's instructional design is more traditional, with less emphasis on practical language use or subject-specific content. In Thailand, English is not an official language and is taught as a foreign language. Due to the influence of internationalization, Thailand's educational policies and language education have been influenced by the integration with the ASEAN Economic Community. Subsequently, numerous universities in Thailand are striving to become international universities by cooperating with leading international universities and tailoring global mobility programs. However, the implementation of the top-down policy to develop EFL undergraduates' English

proficiency in classroom settings is a controversial issue. The major objectives of the policy are to raise the standard of the quality human resource with English fluency to serve the job market in global contexts and benefit several key sectors such as tourism, trade, investment, and research (Bangprapa, 2024). Additionally, based on the TOEIC (ETS, 2023) report of test-takers worldwide in 2023, Thailand's test scores seem to be low with a mean score of 524 out of 990. These records reflect that Thailand's EFL students have low English language proficiency; consequently, teaching methods need to be revised and improved.

To contextualize the current study's research settings, a leading Chinese university, in cooperation with the researcher's home university, is currently one of the Double-first Class universities which are aiming at the bidirectional internationalization for both outbound Chinese students and inbound international students. The university has implemented several English-only EMI courses and programs to cater the high number of international students from several continents, such as Asia, Africa, and Europe, particularly from Thailand. More specifically, the researcher's home university has incorporated a mobility program (a 3+1 Bachelor's Degree Program) in the Business English program in collaboration with a large public university in China since 2012. The key driving forces behind the cooperation are to improve EFL students' English language proficiency and academic subject content, as well as to develop their intercultural competence and global citizenship through overseas education. Thus, this study explores international EFL students' motivational trajectories to understand their reflections on L2 learning experiences and academic success in internationalized EMI settings. Furthermore, undertaking academic research on this topic provides comprehensive insights into international EFL students' attitudes towards quality of pedagogical approaches and language-related challenges. Hence, language teachers and curriculum developers may equip students with sufficient language-related and professional support to improve the language standards of internationalized EMI programs.

Literature Review

Definitions and nature of EMI and CLIL

According to Marcaro et al. (2018), EMI is defined as "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English." (Marcaro et al., 2018, p.19) In this study, the nature of EMI involves using English as a medium for learning academic content (e.g., economics, business) and developing the learners' proficiency in English as a lingua franca in Chinese EMI settings. This concept is related to content and language-integrated learning (CLIL), which is defined as a dual-oriented educational approach for learning subject content through a foreign or second language (Coyle et al., 2010). Thus, CLIL and EMI approaches facilitate effective teaching and learning practices for international EFL students encountering language-related and transitional challenges.

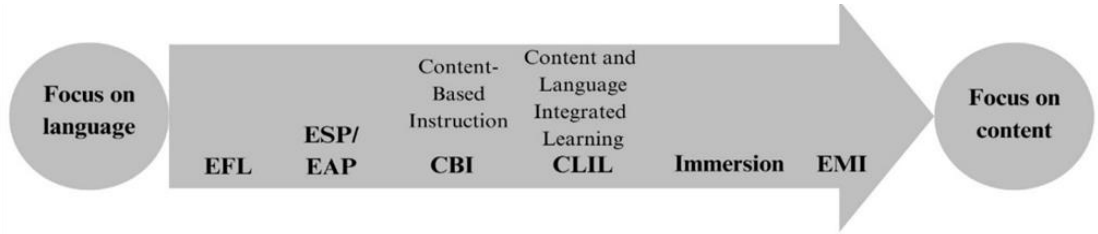


Figure 1. Continuum of English classrooms in EMI settings

As illustrated in Figure 1 (adapted from Thompson & McKinley, 2018), which presents the continuum of teaching and learning objectives of English language classrooms, EFL students would be at the left end of the continuum before entering the EMI Chinese university, which would be placed at the right end of the continuum. Due to EMI's rapid growth, pedagogical approaches for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the Asia Pacific region are distinct and aim to equip students with English language needs in professional contexts (Basturkmen, 2022). Based on Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), ESP is divided into two branches: 1) English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and 2) English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), with English for Business Purposes (EBP) being included within EOP. During the transition to EMI settings, EFL students have to immerse themselves in new learning environments, that are focused equally, or almost equally, on English language proficiency and subject content. This concept is relevant to the terms CLIL and EMI.

Nevertheless, the definition and scope of CLIL and EMI are controversial and need to be clarified as to what extent and whether course objectives should focus on subject matter or dual purposes, e.g., both the acquisition of the English language and subject content. According to Carrió-Pastor (2021), the EMI and CLIL approaches share similar methodologies that aim to improve students' English proficiency and communication abilities; consequently, the approaches should be implemented concurrently. In this paper, the terms CLIL and EMI are used interchangeably because both methodologies are based on communicative and content-based approaches in internationalized classroom settings. Indeed, English language proficiency is the expected learning outcome of both CLIL and EMI classrooms.

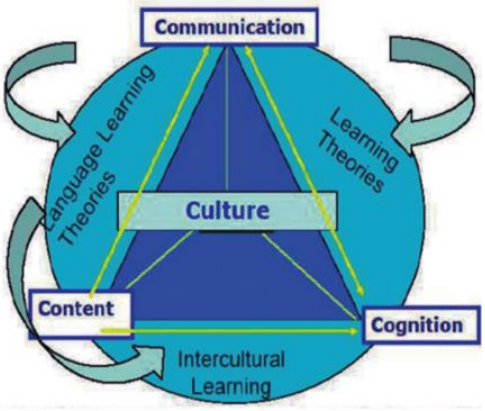


Figure 2. The 4 C's framework (Coyle et al., 2010)

In practice, CLIL is regarded as one of the innovative teaching approaches applied across several different educational settings. As illustrated in Figure 2, the 4 C's Framework initiated by Coyle et al. (2010) consists of four major elements. First, **c**ontent refers to subject content delivered in English. Teaching and learning materials are relevant, challenging, and accessible to students with different levels of English proficiency. Second, **c**ommunication relates to using English as a medium for learning and interacting with teachers and international students through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Third, **c**ognition refers to the cognitive processes involved in learning. Students are required to understand, analyze, and apply subject content in alignment with adequate and appropriate language support from the teacher. Finally, **c**ulture relates to integrating cultural aspects into the learning process. International students are required to incorporate content knowledge and language, allowing them to develop their intercultural competence. To conclude, the 4 C's framework is regarded as a holistic approach for designing and implementing effective pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, little research on this approach has been conducted to explore international EFL students' perceptions about their motivational trajectories at the tertiary level.

L2 motivation and engagement in EFL settings

Motivation is regarded as an essential component in acquiring a second language (L2) and the connection between motivation and identity has been explored in language education for several decades. Creating a motivational classroom environment is one of the key factors in second language acquisition and achievement (Dörnyei, 2001, 2009). Applied and validated widely in several EFL contexts, Dörnyei' s (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self system (L2MSS) model consists of three components. First, the ideal L2 self is regarded as a powerful motivator for learning L2 and having "a desirable self-image" of the L2 users for their personal, social, or professional purposes (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p.87). Instrumentality-promotion is equivalent to the ideal L2 self which is related to the regulation of the personal goals for approaching English-speaking communities and becoming successful language learners. For instance, highly motivated language students can create their vision of being fluent speakers and regulate themselves to communicate in English in diverse contexts. Second, the ought-to L2 self is related to the external elements of language learners' motivational behaviors. The ought-to L2 self has a "prevention" which refers to the regulation of duties and obligations by using prevention-focus strategies. For instance, language learners believe that they ought to gain L2 proficiency to meet others' expectations and avoid negative outcomes such as getting bad grades or failing exams. Third, L2 learning experiences refer to students' situated learning environment and experiences which affect their motivation and self-identity. Dörnyei (2019) pinpointed that the interaction of the third component is still undertheorized and need to be defined as the perceived quality of learners' motivational behaviours and engagement in their language learning process, particularly in classroom settings.

Based on the review of literature, the key component is the notion of an ideal L2 self which is focused on the EFL learners' creation of a vision for their aspirational future L2 self in their language learning process. In terms of second language acquisition, Dörnyei and Muir (2019) highlighted that language teachers

have played a crucial role in creating a pleasant learning environment in classrooms and ensuring that

> *the educational context provides sufficient inspiration and enjoyment to stimulate language learners' ongoing motivation. Boring but systematic teaching can be effective in producing, for example, good test results, but rarely does it inspire a lifelong commitment to the subject matter* (p.720).

These statements affirmed that language teachers, curriculum developers, and educational researchers have increasingly focused on the key issues to develop motivational teaching practice that benefit students' inspiration and long-term goals. In addition, Stockwell and Reinders (2019) highlighted the challenges of sustaining motivation and promoting autonomous behavior through technology. The aspects are intertwined with several additional factors, such as students' and teachers' goals, attitudes, and the institutional environment. Nevertheless, little empirical research regarding L2 learning motivation and engagement in classroom settings has been conducted, specifically regarding the transition from EFL to EMI contexts in non-Anglophone settings.

Students' attitudes about EMI across the Asian region

More specifically, studying abroad provides opportunities for students to develop intercultural communication skills as part of their immersion in EMI programs and create their L2 self-identities. Previous empirical studies (Li, 2024; Siridetkoon & Dewaele, 2017) have affirmed the positive influences of EMI instruction on students' English language development, L2 learning motivation, and engagement. This aligns with Li's (2024) recent study investigating the L2 motivational trajectories of English major students transitioning from an EFL context to the Chinese EMI context. The key findings pinpointed that the student's motivation and engagement were sustained by several influencing factors such as the ideal L2 self, ought-to self, international posture, and instrumentality. Additionally, enrolling in an internationalized EMI program allowed EFL students to exert their L2 learning motivation and engagement to improve their English skills and practical subject content in the Chinese EMI university. Hence, teachers play a crucial role in integrating students' aspirations and functional academic content which fosters intercultural interaction to develop the students' meaningful English learning and intercultural experiences.

Nevertheless, several empirical studies have also reported students' perceived challenges and difficulties encountered by EFL learners in EMI programs across the Asian region. Based on Rose et al.'s (2020) study exploring the academic language-related skills and challenges of EFL learners in Chinese EMI settings, speaking and writing skills were deemed the most productive skills students strived to achieve, particularly communicating ideas confidently and writing academically. In contrast, their findings reported that productive skills, namely, using visual aids and notes to enhance speaking and presentation, were perceived as the easiest language-related tasks in EMI classrooms. Similarly, Puspitasari and Ishak's (2023) findings indicated that Indonesian students could not completely understand lectures in English and express their ideas in group discussions in EMI classroom

settings due to their limited proficiency in English language use. To conclude, EFL students encountered several constraints in English language proficiency, especially in speaking and writing in EMI classroom settings.

After investigating teachers' challenges of implementing EMI courses in China, Rose et al. (2020) reported that the greatest barriers to successful implementation of EMI were students' mixed language abilities and differences in academic abilities in the same course. In addition, based on previous empirical studies (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2018; Li, 2024), EFL learners tended to strive to overcome language-related challenges in internationalized EMI settings. For this reason, teachers encountered several challenges related to designing and developing EMI courses using relevant and effective pedagogy in order to equip EFL students with essential competences in both English language use and the different content subjects.

Empirical research on L2 motivation and engagement in EFL contexts

Recent empirical studies in EFL classroom settings have affirmed various significant benefits of the ideal L2 self as a powerful element of motivation among L2 learners in four Saudi universities (Altalib, 2019; Pazoki & Alemi, 2020). Employing the L2MSS questionnaire, Altalib (2019) investigated the L2 motivation of 4,043 university students enrolled in ESP and EGP (English for General Purposes) courses and found that the respondents in ESP courses had higher levels of the ideal L2 selves than those in EGP courses. It appeared that the ideal L2 self positively influenced and contributed to respondents' L2 achievement. In contrast, the ought-to L2 self negatively influenced the respondents' L2 achievement. In conclusion, the notion of the ideal L2 self is crucial to learners' L2 motivation and learning experiences.

To better understand students' motivational fluctuation in EFL settings, Pazoki and Alemi (2020) explored which significant factors influenced engineering students' motivation to study technical English at three public universities in Iran. The key findings revealed that the 152 participants' five motivational components were ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, instrumentality-promotion motivation, learning conditions, and learning experience. They tended to feel more motivated to study technical English due to its practicality in their daily life rather than as an obligation or burden. Although some participants indicated that the course could meet their long-term goals and needs, other participants expressed negative perceptions about their learning experiences such as boring course content, locally published teaching materials, and ineffective teaching methods. Likewise, by investigating 163 Iranian students' perceptions of fluctuating motivation based on different teaching and learning activities in EFL classroom settings, Mauludin (2021) reported that the respondents perceived a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment as the most motivating teaching practice, followed by giving clear instructions for assigned tasks and teacher's leading by example. In contrast, the undergraduates perceived that the least motivational teaching strategies were the teacher's explanation that mistakes were a natural part of learning. However, few empirical studies employed a qualitative design to gain insights into the L2 motivation and learning processes that affect learners' L2 self-identity in CLIL and EMI classrooms in overseas education.

In addition to the mediating factors influencing students' L2 learning experiences, intercultural competence plays a crucial role in the level of international EFL students' L2 motivation and intended effort they invest in multilingual and multicultural EMI classroom settings. According to Byram (1997), the notion of intercultural communication competence (ICC) refers to an individual's "ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction" (p.52). Similarly, based on Deardorff (2006), adopting a respectful and open attitude and building knowledge related to cultural self-awareness can lead to the development of intercultural competence of a student as an outcome of internationalization. Thus, international EFL students need to communicate and interact with speakers of other languages, respect their identities, and adapt to the new learning environment in overseas settings. Additionally, students are required to develop cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that help them increase their awareness of their own identity and culture in alignment with others (Byram, 2021). Due to the impact of global Englishes, the spread of English implies that many non-native speakers of English use the language to communicate with other non-native speakers. Few empirical studies have investigated the relationship of EFL learners' ideal L2 self and ICC in study abroad contexts. The findings of Fathi et al. (2023) emphasize the necessity of considering the interplay of several mediating factors, such as ideal L2 self, foreign language enjoyment, and ICC, as predicators of EFL learners' willingness to speak English, particularly in EMI classroom settings. These components do not exist in isolation but rather interact multidimensionally.

Based on the literature review, there is a paucity of research which has been undertaken to explore international EFL students' attitudes towards their L2 motivation and engagement and transitional challenges in international EMI programs. To address the highlighted gaps, the current study aims to explore Thai international students' attitudes towards effective pedagogical approaches and transitional challenges and engagement in EMI contexts. The research questions framing the scope of the study are as follows:

1) What are international EFL students' attitudes towards teaching methods maximizing their L2 learning motivation and engagement in an EMI Chinese university?
2) What are the demotivating and motivating factors influencing their L2 learning experiences during the transition from EFL to EMI contexts?

Method

Research design

A qualitative research design was employed to explore the participants' attitudes towards effective pedagogical practices sustaining their English learning motivation and engagement in study abroad settings. In addition, the qualitative case study method was adopted to explore the various dimensions of language-related challenges and the interplay of the mediating factors during the transition from EFL to EMI settings. According to Riazi (2016), a case study exploring classroom settings may use various methods of data collection such as course syllabuses, student scores, and tasks.

Participants and settings

The purposive sampling method was applied in the study. The criteria for recruiting the participants were as follows: 1) they were senior business English major students at a public university in southern Thailand, 2) they completed the two semesters of CLIL and EMI courses in China based on the degree program's Memorandum of Agreement, 3) they gained a wide exposure to native and non-native teachers and international students, and 4) they were willing to share their L2 motivation and in-class learning experiences in study abroad contexts (Appendix A).The participants were five senior Thai students, aged 22-23, enrolled as international students in the 2020-2021 academic year at a prestigious public university in China, one of the Project 211 and Double First-Class universities. After the participants completed their courses in China, their academic credits were transferred in accordance with the agreement between the two universities. They were provided with information about the research's objectives, the interview process, a consent form and assurance of the confidentiality of their data and identities. Based on the voluntary basis, they participated in the individual interview as shown in the following table.

Table 1. The participants of the interview

No.	Code	Gender	Years of study	Duration of Interview
1.	S1	F	4th	1.26 hours
2.	S2	F	4th	56.08 minutes
3.	S3	M	4th	1.13 hours
4.	S4	M	4th	55.09 minutes
5.	S5	F	4th	1.12 hours

Data collection

In this study, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the interview questions framing the scope of the interview (Appendix B). Before collecting data, a pilot study was undertaken to test the appropriateness of questions and validity of the research. In addition, individual interviews could qualitatively provide insights into the sojourners' awareness of their motivation, attitudes, and biases and how their study abroad experiences change their values and interactions with others (Bleistein & Wong, 2015). In addition to the qualitative data from interviews, the participants' writing assignments, presentation slides, and an example of a business-oriented textbook (See Appendix C) used in the EMI course were collected to gain more understanding of their language tasks and learning process. The interviews were conducted in Thai, their mother language, and translated into English by the researcher. To ensure the trustworthiness of the interview data, the transcribed data was sent to each participant to check and validate the accuracy of the interview transcripts. To clarify some aspects in the interview transcripts, the researcher communicated with the participants through their personal email and direct messages on Facebook.

Data analysis

The qualitative data of interview transcripts were inductively coded. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013, 2021) and Saldana's (2015) "In Vivo", or "inductive", coding techniques were applied in the study. The coding

process was conducted as follows. First, the interview transcripts were read and reread carefully to get an overview of the dataset. Second, to perform the initial coding, some sections of the text were extracted, highlighted, and coded in the table. Third, the patterns within dataset were categorized and themes were generated to explore the similar meanings of the themes related to the research questions. Fourth, potential themes which matched the coded data were identified, Fifth, the themes were defined and named. Finally, the final analytic report was produced. The examples of quotes related to the themes used for coding were presented in italics in the Findings section. For instance, S1 refers to Student 1. In terms of the inter-rater reliability of the emerging themes, the qualitative data set was analyzed by two independent raters from an EFL program. Cohen's Kappa was calculated using SPSS Version 26 and the result was in the good level of agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977; Riazi, 2016).

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The results of this current study presented the key major themes emerging from the data. The data from the five participants' interviews regarding their in-class learning experiences and engagement were inductively analyzed using thematic analysis. The major themes are presented based on the research questions as follows:

Students' attitudes towards teaching methods maximizing their L2 motivation and engagement in the EMI Chinese university

Course and content preferences

Although some participants (S3 and S4) reflected that the tasks seemed challenging, they positively reported they could create and personalize their own product in local and international markets based on their personal interests and preferences.

> *In the first half of the semester, the American teacher asked us to create a logo, slogan, and pricing for our product to match with our target market in local markets. In the second half, our product was distributed in international markets. This allowed us to apply our own ideas in creating products using reliable theory and methods in business contexts.* (S3)
> *Our tasks were not too difficult but challenging. We could represent our identity through our preferences and creating our product in the real world.* (S4)

All participants positively agreed that taking this course could allow them to apply their content knowledge to this subject matter and professional purposes in the future. Based on the findings, one participant reflected that, by taking this course, he had the opportunity to express his personal identity through creating the product. Table 2 shows the summary of participants' practical tasks and projects reflecting sustaining their L2 engaging learning experiences for the whole semester.

Table 2. The participants' product-promoting projects

Student (Code)	Product	Brand	Slogan	Country to export their product
S1	Jeans	Wonder	Be yourself, be your style	Korea
S2	Organic sanitary napkin	La Blume	You deserve it	Singapore
S3	Jacket	Black Jack	Make it yours	China
S4	Sneakers	BadBoy	We walk together	China
S5	Cleansing foam	Freshness	If you got to be clean, you got to use FRESHNESS	Singapore

To sum up, it seems that the participants could effectively develop and personalize their own products, in alignment with their individual interests and preferences. Importantly, the pedagogical approach and course content in this course enabled the participants to apply theoretical knowledge and practical methods in business contexts, thereby motivating the participants to sustain their L2 intended effort and active engagement in the EMI course.

Digital literacy

Based on the interview data, all the participants positively reported that they had extensive opportunities to access information utilizing digital technologies and the internet this course. The participants positively reflected that they felt motivated and created a logo, slogan, and pricing for their product to match with their target group locally and internationally.

> *Initially, I designed the logo and created a slogan using Canva. Then, I chose famous models and influencers, Sammy Cowell and Pooklook, to promote my products, and my product distribution channels were through Shopee and Instagram.* (S1)

> *Each class, we did enjoyable activities regarding our product. I had to research information regarding my product and write summary reports based on the topic given each week.* (S5) (See Appendix D)

On top of that, applying digital knowledge and skills in this course allowed them to regulate their learning process and develop their autonomous learning to complete their communicative tasks and individual term projects.

> *I had the opportunity to do everything by myself as if it were authentic, starting from the product's name and slogan, logo design, pricing, and market competitors.* (S2)

> *The lecturer allowed us to search for information from Thai websites. However, I had to translate from Thai into English using Google Translate and provide the references in my written report regarding the cleaning foam*

product. Then I searched for certification requirements for exporting the skincare product. (S5)

Initially, I searched on the internet for the polls reporting what countries people like wearing jeans and Korea was one of those. Then, I googled the website of Department of International Trade Promotion and retrieved key information regarding documentation required to export my products from Thailand to Korea. (S1)

To export our products, we learned about local and international laws, certifications, and transportation required for shipping. After googling my product, I wrote the report and made presentation slides using Canva. I enjoyed doing the project. (S2) (See Figure 3)



Figure 3. Example of the participant's product presentation slide using Canva

To conclude, the key findings reflected the participants utilized leveraging online or cloud-based tools such as Canva, Google, and Google Translate which allowed them to search for information, create digital content and oral presentations. By doing challenging and enjoyable tasks and projects, it is likely that they could sustain their L2 efforts and gain enjoyable learning experiences throughout the semester.

Students' attitudes towards the motivating and demotivating factors influencing their L2 learning experiences during the transition from EFL to EMI contexts

Teacher's English language support

All the participants positively reflected that their native speaker teacher played a crucial role in supporting their English learning proficiency, thereby increasing their L2 self-confidence and overcoming their constraints of the English language use. Initially, they encountered several challenges regarding English language use and communication skills, particularly limited speaking and writing skills during their transition from EFL to EMI. Nevertheless, they reported that they could develop English language knowledge and communication skills significantly in this course which helped them reduce their linguistic anxiety and successfully produce a quality project in the course.

> *The American teacher gave guidance to students individually and paid attention to students' difficulties in English usage. He could solve students' problems on the spot. So, I did not feel pressured while studying in class*. (S4)

> *During the third week, he assigned us to write the presentation script and submitted it to him for editing subject content, grammar, and vocabulary. After completing the script, I practiced presenting my task to him. He would provide me with constructive feedback on how to speak more clearly and understandably for my oral presentation in class. Our tasks were evaluated based on grammar, pronunciation, and overall presentation.* (S1)

In addition to revising their writing tasks, most participants revealed that their native teacher edited their presentation scripts to be grammatically correct and concise. Based on interview data, it seemed that all participants prioritized speaking and presentation skills and reflected that they felt motivated and more confident about challenging and useful language activities.

> *I felt more confident than the first semester. We studied in a small-sized class. For my first presentation in this course, my teacher gave me a compliment, causing me to feel more confident. I also applied presenting strategies learned from the English for Presentation course in the first semester*. (S3)

> *While studying in China, I noticed we improved our presentation skills. We spoke English more confidently. Self-confidence was one of the crucial elements of presenting our brands and products in English successfully. This course could push me to reach my fullest potential.* (S4)

By taking this course, all participants were aware of their improved oral presentation skills and English language proficiency although some participants initially felt anxious with their overall performance and academic achievement. Two participants revealed that they passed through their difficulties and got good grades despite initially experiencing linguistic anxiety in this course.

> *This course was challenging. Although I had limited vocabulary in Business, I could create a product to be unique. Due to the teacher's support, I could present my product successfully in English. I got an A grade in this course.* (S1)

> *Initially, I felt worried because there were no midterm and final exams. Everything was based on my own ability and individual tasks. However, I felt more confident and could present my product in English thanks to receiving great support from the teacher. Finally, I got a good grade.* (S2)

The key findings of this current study indicated that the students applied English communication skills to future professional situations and significantly developed their L2 self-confidence, compared to their previous performances. Thus, providing constructive feedback helped them reduce their linguistic anxiety and improve their speaking and oral presentation skills.

Intercultural awareness and competence

Apart from English language development, most participants (three out of five) reflected that they were able to develop their intercultural competence in classroom contexts in the second semester. Despite initially encountering difficulties with communicating and interacting with international friends during their transition from EFL to EMI in the first semester, they successfully adapted themselves and attempted to share ideas with their international peers in the multilingual classroom environment.

> *In the first semester, I felt anxious about presenting in front of the class. For instance, some of my international peers showed facial expressions or raised eyebrows that signaled wondering. I was not sure whether I said something wrong. However, to avoid these problems, I rehearsed making presentations several times and performed better in the second semester.* (S3)

> *In the second semester, I was not afraid of sharing my ideas in group discussion like the first semester. My French friends were supportive and helpful. I felt more confident in communicating in English and sharing my ideas with them.* (S5)

> *In the first semester, I did not dare to approach my international peers because I was not sure what they thought of me if I spoke broken English. However, after taking several courses with them, I found they were more confident in making oral presentations and raising questions in class. My peers did not care whether I spoke grammatically wrong if I could communicate with them understandably. To me, it was the starting point to communicate with international friends in out-of-class contexts.* (S1)

In sum, most participants expressed a broader understanding of intercultural differences in the multicultural EMI courses which could influence their L2 learning motivation and experiences in overseas education. They felt demotivated and experienced linguistic anxiety regarding presentations in the first semester, particularly with regard to the reception of their speech by their international peers in classroom settings. The findings pointed out that some participants realized that their peers prioritized effective communication over grammatical accuracy. This realization served as a catalyst for enhanced communication with international friends beyond classroom settings. However, one participant reported that he felt demotivated and attempted to communicate with his international friends in out-of-class settings.

> *On the first day, I went to an international dorm, and a Russian friend approached me. But I did not dare to communicate with him. I realized that it was not okay. Fortunately, my Italian roommate taught me how to pronounce English more correctly. I felt more confident to speak out and was not anxious about making errors like before. Then I started socializing with others.* (S4)

Based on the findings, the international peer's assistance boosted his L2 self-confidence, alleviating previous anxieties about making linguistic mistakes. Consequently, he became more inclined to socialize with others, marking a positive shift in their interaction with international peers.

In addition, in terms of subject content, some students incorporated their intercultural awareness and knowledge through the subject matter in the EMI course.

> *I learned that, to sell the product in the international market, the target market was the key. If I would like to export my product to Singapore, the packaging would be designed in red because most Chinese-Singaporean people believe that red represents luck. Also, the subject matter in the advertisement of my product should not convey a racist message which may unexpectedly cause negative results.* (S2)

The key findings reflected that the participant gleaned a crucial lesson regarding understanding the target market when marketing products internationally. Recognizing the cultural nuances of potential markets, she highlighted the importance of tailoring packaging designs to align with cultural beliefs. To summarize, teaching and learning materials and course design are crucial to expanding the participants' intercultural competence and communication skills in business contexts. To conclude, the participants all positively agreed that they felt motivated to study and experienced innovative teaching and learning approaches in the multicultural Chinese EMI classrooms (See Table 3).

Table 3. Instructional design and teaching and learning environment during the transition

EFL in Thailand	**EMI in China**
• Bilingual instruction, English and Thai, except ESP/EAP courses conducted by foreign lecturers • Monolingual (Thai-only) instruction in academic subjects • Grammar-translation and Communicative-based approach (focusing on the English proficiency of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing) • Experiencing limited exposure to English-speaking or native English teachers and international students in classroom settings • Using Thai language as a medium of communication in out-of-class settings • Formative and summative assessment (Measuring lexical and grammar competence, reading, and writing.)	• English-only instruction with the language-related and subject-content support of CLIL/EMI courses for international students • English-only instruction in academic subjects • Holistic approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Project-based Learning (PjBL) approaches • Using English as a medium of instruction in academic subjects/ classroom settings • Experiencing a wide exposure of multilingual and multicultural international students in classroom settings • Using English as a medium of communication or as a global language in out-of-class settings • Summative and formative assessment (Measuring students' ongoing English language development and subject content through CLT and PjBL throughout the course)

Discussion

Regarding RQ1, the qualitative results indicated that all the participants reflected that English for International Business and Trade as the most successful and engaging course that maximized their L2 learning motivation and engagement in the internationalized EMI classroom settings. Consistent with Galloway and Sahan (2021)'s study, all participants felt positively motivated to be enrolled in the EMI course that helped them develop their English language and would help them achieve career advancement in the future. Similarly, the findings supported Sahan et al.'s (2022) study that all participants preferred native-accented teachers and English-only instruction in study abroad contexts, compared to the monolingual or bilingual instruction in EFL settings.

In terms of the motivational teaching approaches, consistent with Pazoki and Alemi's (2020) findings, the participants of the current study indicated that the authentic, practical tasks and communicative language teaching approach could activate and sustain students' subject knowledge and English communication skills to achieve their ideal professions and future workplaces. Consequently, taking the participants' business English major into consideration, they reported that creating and promoting their product in local and international markets allowed them to apply theory and practice in business disciplines essential to their future careers and invest their intended efforts in this course. As Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) addressed, teachers play a pivotal role in helping students see themselves as potentially proficient language users, realizing the value of knowing English in their lives, and exerting intended efforts to acquire it. Specifically, the current study's result is consistent with Altalib's (2019) findings that learners in the ESP group had higher ideal L2 selves and more positive attitudes towards the L2 learning experience than those in the EGP group and the notion of an ideal L2 self could positively contribute to learners' L2 achievements. A possible explanation for the result is that the ESP learners' ideal L2 self could positively activate and sustain their classroom engagement and allow them to perform practical tasks and projects related to their needs and interests.

In terms of pedagogical practices, the results reveal that the native English instructor promoted autonomous learning that motivated and sustained their aspirational L2 self within the participants' self-concept related to their future professional goals. Contrary to Pazoki and Alemi's (2020) findings, in terms of the limited use of technology in the ESP course, the participants in the present study reported that they had extensive opportunities to develop their digital literacy skills and create productive presentations utilizing Canva in China. Additionally, supported by the findings of Santosa et al. (2024), the findings of the current study demonstrated that the EFL participants utilized Google Translate as one of the digital tools to help them complete their academic writing tasks. It appears that the participants in this study developed their writing and oral presentation skills by applying digital technologies to complete their communicative tasks and projects in the CLIL/EMI course. Hence, it can be concluded that the pedagogical practices allowed them to take control of their language learning process and sustain their active engagement throughout the semester.

Regarding RQ2, the qualitative results indicated that all the participants encountered several transitional challenges in the multilingual EMI classroom settings in China. Consistent with Doiz and Lasagabaster's (2018), Galloway and

Ruegg's (2022), and Mauludin's (2021) findings, all participants in the present study valued the native English teacher's awareness of their limited English proficiency and the efforts to assist them overcome their obstacles and difficulties arising in the language learning process in the EMI classroom setting. Additionally, the findings of the current study support Galloway and Sahan's (2021) findings which indicated most EFL students believed that English teachers play a crucial role in providing language-related support in EMI content classes. Similarly, the result obtained from current research showed that teachers developed the participants' English language knowledge and communication skills. Based on the key findings, after receiving useful guidance and constructive feedback in editing their writing tasks and oral presentation scripts from the teacher, the participants' linguistic anxiety tended to be reduced, and they felt more confident to make oral presentations. In line with Li's (2024) study, the finding of the current study affirmed that the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator which inspires and pushes learners to speak English fluently and improve their academic performance despite encountering the various language-related challenges related to studying in EMI programs.

However, in terms of demotivating factors, some participants reported that they initially felt anxious about performing individual tasks and getting bad grades in this course after moving to an English-speaking, or EMI context. The result of this study collaborates with the findings of previous studies (Altalib, 2019; Dörnyei, 2009) that the ought-to L2 self was likely to have a negative influence on EFL students' L2 learning motivation and achievements. The present study found that the learners' decreased motivation and anxiety about their tasks and course achievement were affected by the interplay between the participant's L2 actual self and the contextual learning experiences in the EMI context. Consistent with several previous studies (Du & Jackson, 2018; Siridetkoon & Dewaele, 2017), the present study revealed that some participants could balance the gap between their ideal and actual L2 selves through boosting their intended efforts and active engagement to achieve academic success despite experiencing decreasing or fluctuating levels of L2 learning motivation. In alignment with the findings of previous studies (Doiz & Lasagabaster, 2018; Du & Jackson, 2018), the participants' ideal L2 self tended to be more powerful than their ought-to L2 self. Hence, it appears that they could overcome challenges in language learning and vividly envisioned themselves becoming proficient learners or speakers in regard to performing practical tasks.

In addition to language-related challenges, one of the transitional challenges among international EFL students was intercultural communication competence in multilingual EMI settings. The key findings reflected that they initially possessed negative assumptions and preconceptions about L2 in-class learning experiences in the multilingual tertiary context. It appears that the participants in the current study attempted to communicate in English more frequently with their international peers in diverse contexts. Consistent with Baker et al.'s (2022), the participants had to strive to improve their linguistic and intercultural communicative competences to meet their local lecturers and peers' expectations. In this regard, English is regarded as a medium of communication to bridge the differences among diverse groups of international students in multilingual settings. Consequently, they gained more exposure to a variety of English accents, particularly in English in a lingua franca setting, rather than solely focusing on Standard English or American and British

accents or pronunciation. Additionally, in alignment with the finding of additional previous studies (Fathi et al., 2023; Li, 2024), the results indicate the notion of an ideal L2 self influences ICC positively as the participants in the current study enhanced their intercultural communicative competence and increased their willingness to initiate interactions with their international friends in both in-class and out-of-class settings.

Conclusion

This study delved into five international EFL students' L2 in-class learning motivation and experiences in the EMI Business School of the multilingual and multicultural Chinese university. The key findings indicate that the participants felt highly motivated and could perform authentic, vision-building tasks and projects related to their future professional goals in the English for Business and Trade Course. Due to the constraints in learning English language, the participants highly valued their native English speaking teacher's constructive feedback in improving their writing and oral presentation skills. In addition, their teacher played a crucial role in promoting learner autonomy and digital literacy skills in the EMI course. In terms of the quality of the course, students could improve their understanding of course content and apply their English language knowledge to professional skills essential for businesses. Thus, it can be concluded that enrolling in the international program has created worthwhile, meaningful L2 learning experiences that developed students' English proficiency, specialized content knowledge, communication skills, and intercultural competence prior to entering into global and local workplaces.

Nevertheless, the current study has some limitations. First, qualitative data is based on a small number of participants and is not generalizable. Second, qualitative interviews were conducted to explore students' attitudes towards their L2 in-class learning experiences at the end of the mobility program. It is recommended that further studies be conducted using a mixed methods approach employing questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. Using the mixed methods approach research may yield more comprehensive insights into several constructs of the L2MSS theoretical framework and its impact on sojourners' L2 learning motivation, engagement, and self-identity development in EMI settings. In addition, researchers may encourage participants to share their photos or artifacts such as in-class textbooks, teaching and learning materials, and language tasks that students feel comfortable discussing. These artifacts may become the starting point for initiating compelling interviews to gain insights into their L2 learning experiences (Lune & Berg, 2017). Moreover, researchers may investigate students' attitudes about their L2 learning experiences and challenges encountered in the pre-departure, post-departure, and post-study phases of overseas education. This may shed more light on students' L2 motivation, engagement, and challenges arising in the language learning process.

More specifically, the key findings of the study can serve as guidelines that can benefit several educational stakeholders such as language instructors, applied linguists, course and curriculum developers, and educators in effective ways. First, curriculum developers, language teachers, CLIL and EMI practitioners and subject specialists, should design practical lesson plans and teaching materials related to their students' language learning needs. To serve students' language learning needs,

interests, and preferences, students need to be equipped with sufficient and appropriate language input, course content, and digital literacy skills by integrating communication skills such as sharing ideas in group discussions and making oral presentations. Second, teachers are crucial in applying motivational strategies and facilitating a positive classroom environment. Thus, students may enhance their English language proficiency and professional skills in EMI settings. Teachers should also develop and employ the pedagogical skills to help students boost their L2 self-confidence and English language proficiency and enhance fulfilling learning experiences in classroom contexts. Third, providing teachers' constructive feedback and support regarding English language usage could enhance individual learners' skills and knowledge development. In-class, ongoing support may create a good rapport between teachers and students and enable students to perform tasks independently in out-of-class contexts. Promoting both formative and summative assessment with teachers' ongoing language-related support could enhance individual learners' skills and knowledge development for the whole course. Finally, policy makers and educators should incorporate course content to strengthen intercultural communicative awareness and competence among international tertiary students in multilingual contexts. Selecting teaching materials and implementing intercultural training activities are crucial to developing students' intercultural awareness and competence (Byram, 2021; Deardorff, 2019). To promote intercultural citizenship education, the integration of ICC in English language teaching and preparation courses is crucial in facilitating successful communication in overseas education and global communities.

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Appendices

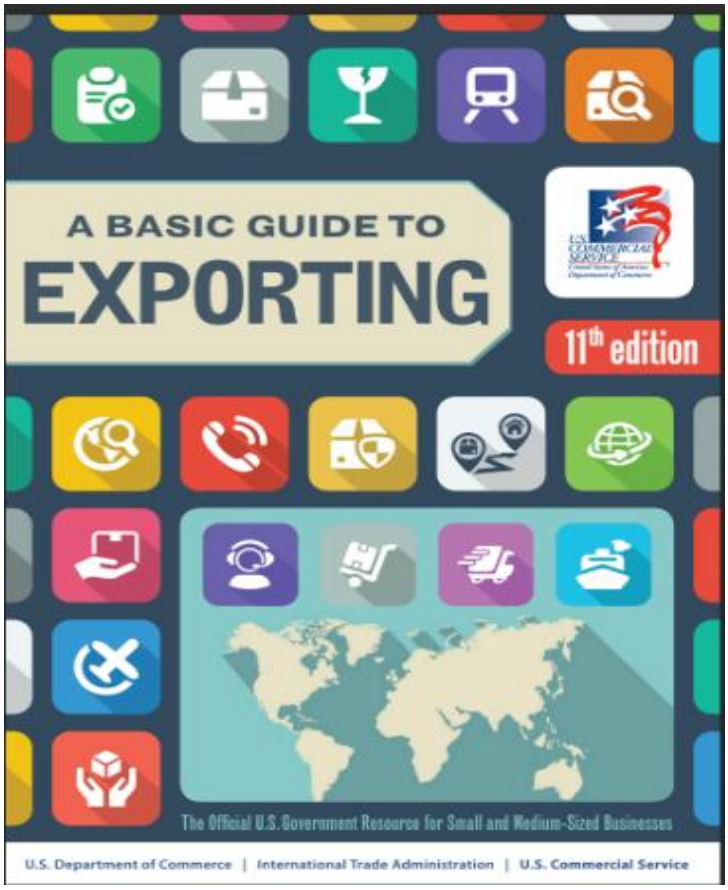
Appendix A Courses that the participants enrolled in the second semester

- English for International Business and Trade
- English Conversation in the Business Context
- Meeting and Business Interaction
- Global Operations and Supply Chain Management

Appendix B Interview questions framing the scope of the study

- What course did you like the most in the second semester in China? Please provide the reasons to support your answer.
- What were the benefits and challenges of taking the course in terms of improving your knowledge and English language skills?
- What elements of the teaching methods motivated you to study English in this course?
- Why do you feel motivated to engage in communicative tasks in the course? Please describe your in-class learning experiences.
- What difficulties or challenges did you encounter while performing tasks and activities?
- How could you overcome the difficulties and obstacles?

Appendix C Example of the commercial textbook used in the EMI course



Appendix D Participant's writing task regarding promoting the product

Freshness Cleansing Foam

My product is a cleansing foam, named Freshness. It includes organic ingredients and is suitable for all skin types. It is fragrant and alcohol free. The logo is Freshness, with a capital letter F which represents the first letter of the brand name. It uses a diamond frame to surround the product name which is a pale color that conveys softness and being organic. The slogan is "If you got to be clean, you got to use FRESHNESS" because my product will make your face clean and fresh. My target market is Thai women between 18 and 40 years old because they have problems with oily and sensitive skin. I set the price at 209 Baht for sensitive skin and 219 Baht for oily skin because it is affordable for students. I will advertise using billboards at bus stops and metro stations because they are easy to see.