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How Teaching Experience Shapes EFL Teachers' Integration of Extramural English in Thai Classrooms

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Article information

Abstract

Teachers' integration of extramural English (EE) into formal instruction to support students' informal language learning remains underexplored, particularly in relation to the role of teaching experience. This mixed-methods study examines how teaching experience (novice, transitioning, and experienced) influences the integration of EE into classrooms. A one-way ANOVA conducted with 81 Thai EFL teachers revealed no statistically significant differences across the experience groups ($p > 0.05$). Complementary qualitative data were gathered through interviews with 12 purposively selected teachers (4 per group). Qualitative findings revealed that EE integration is influenced more by individual beliefs, institutional constraints, and access to professional development than by teaching experience. Transitioning and experienced teachers employed EE more structurally but relied on familiar tools and methods, whereas novices showed enthusiasm for integrating diverse EE yet faced implementation challenges. These findings are interpreted through the TPACK framework and inward and outward bridging concepts to highlight how differences in teachers' technological and pedagogical practices related to EE integration across experience levels. These insights underscore the need for more differentiated, context-specific professional development programs to bridge classroom teaching with students' informal digital learning opportunities in EFL contexts.

Keywords

Extramural English (EE), informal and formal language learning, TPACK, teaching experience, professional development

APA citation

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1. Introduction

Due to technological advancements, students in EFL contexts now have expanded opportunities to engage in Extramural English (EE), which refers to informal language learning activities they engage in voluntarily beyond the classroom, such as listening to music, watching TV series, and interacting on social media platforms. Because of limited time allocated to formal instruction, EE is increasingly viewed as a valuable complement to classroom-based language learning (Arndt & Kusyk, 2026; Reinders et al., 2022; Sundqvist, 2024). Prior studies have shown that exposure to EE is linked to positive language outcomes and beneficial second

language psychological constructs such as grit, enjoyment, and willingness to communicate (Imsa-ard, 2025; Lee, 2026; Tsang & Lam, 2025), displaying its strong potential for integration into formal English instruction.

While many studies have extensively examined students' engagement with EE, the pedagogical role of teachers, teacher cognition, and how teaching experience shapes their integration of EE into classroom instruction has not yet been systematically examined. As a result, persistent challenges in effective EE integration remain unresolved, highlighting the critical need for further research (Lee et al., 2024; Upara & Lee, 2026; Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025), especially in Thai EFL contexts where test-driven instruction dominates. Although prior studies (e.g., Lai et al., 2016; Schurz & Sundqvist, 2022; Toffoli & Sockett, 2015) have reported teachers' positive perceptions of EE, these do not necessarily translate into teachers' meaningful integration of EE into their lessons since EFL teachers generally adopt different approaches while adopting EE into their classrooms (Schurz & Sundqvist, 2022; Upara & Chusanachoti, 2023). These circumstances underscore the necessity of additional investigation into teacher-related factors, such as teaching experience that could influence teachers' capacity and beliefs in integrating EE into formal instruction.

Teaching experience, a nonlinear developmental process, may act as a mediating factor shaping teachers' EE-related perceptions, pedagogical decisions, and implementation strategies. However, evidence for the relationship between teaching experience and instructional quality remains unclear due to different research methodologies and mixed results (Gore et al., 2024; Graham et al., 2020). The common assumption is that experienced teachers are less comfortable using technology than novice teachers, with notable differences in their confidence in digital learning tools (Nazari et al., 2019). These differences in technological familiarity may influence how EFL teachers at different career stages apply EE in classroom instruction. Despite these findings, the question of which teaching experiences facilitate or constrain EE integration remains underexplored. Therefore, this study addresses this critical gap by investigating how years of teaching experience influence Thai EFL teachers' approaches and pedagogical reasoning to bridge in-class and extramural learning through integration of EE. Understanding this will provide crucial pedagogical insights into how teaching experience affects EE integration, enabling more targeted teacher training and policy decisions to bridge formal and informal English learning in EFL contexts.

Research question

How does teaching experience influence Thai EFL teachers' approaches to integrating extramural English (frequency, duration, pedagogical strategies, and perceived challenges)?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Extramural English

Extramural English (EE) refers to the informal learning of English that occurs outside formal educational settings, involving both intentional and incidental student-initiated activities in offline or online environments (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). In the digital era, EFL students' engagement and exposure to EE have greatly increased as they can easily access resources and activities such as listening to English-language songs, podcasts, or writing social media posts through informal digital platforms (Lee, 2026). Previous studies have shown that EE positively affects students' language acquisition (Puripunyavanich, 2021), improves

language skills development (Tsang & Lam, 2025), increases students' motivation (Lee & Drajati, 2019), develops cultural understanding (Liu et al., 2025), and enhances willingness to communicate (Lee & Taylor, 2022; Imsa-ard, 2025). Sundqvist (2024) suggested that EE could be considered another type of individual difference factor contributing to students' language proficiency development. Collectively, these findings indicate that EE is a valuable complement to formal instruction, particularly in EFL contexts where opportunities for authentic language use are limited (Lai & Sundqvist, 2026). Therefore, how EE can be effectively integrated into practices requires greater attention to the role of teachers in synergizing in-class and out-of-class language learning.

2.2 Teacher Variables in EE integration in EFL Classrooms: Beliefs, Experience, and Technology Integration

Existing literature has revealed teachers' positive attitude towards students' learning language through EE (Lai et al., 2016; Liu & Wang, 2024; Schurz & Sundqvist, 2022; Toffoli & Sockett, 2015). In contrast, favorable perceptions might not be linked to the integration of EE into actual practices because teachers are required to have a certain level of pedagogical skills and language awareness to effectively integrate EE into the classroom (Henry et al., 2018).

To account for this discrepancy, at the pedagogical level, Schurz and Sundqvist (2022) identified three factors that influence how teachers integrate EE into their lessons in EFL European countries: the perceived importance of linking EE to classroom instruction, strategies for incorporating EE materials, and the need to use formal instruction to compensate for the limitations of informal language learning. However, it is noted that the circumstances may differ in Asian EFL contexts, where students have more limited exposure to authentic English outside the classroom. Recent studies (Liu & Wang, 2024; Lai & Shi, 2025; Upara & Lee, 2026; Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025) have reported that teachers' willingness to incorporate EE is influenced by both internal factors (e.g., lack of pedagogical readiness and attitudes) and external factors (e.g., school culture, societal expectations, exam-oriented education systems).

Lai and Shi (2025) found that the prominent predictor for the bridging activities is teacher's awareness of students' behaviors in EE and also distinguished two types of bridging activities which are between inward bridging, driven by teachers' perceptions toward EE to create an engaging lesson, and outward bridging which is influenced by external factors such as students' out-of-class habits and parents' expectations to prepare students for independent informal language learning. However, Upara and Chusanachoti (2023) reported that Thai EFL teachers generally do not place high emphasis on students' out-of-class behaviors when incorporating EE into their teaching, but heavily focus on creating engaging in-class activities. While many scholars (e.g., Dressman & Sadler, 2020; Lai, 2018; Lee, 2022; Reinders et al., 2022) have proposed methods to integrate EE into classrooms by embedding EE materials into lessons, gradually shifting responsibility to students, and designing tasks that link formal and informal contexts, the relationship between EE and formal instruction deserves further investigation because of the lack of empirical evidence to guide EFL teachers on how to effectively adopt EE into their classrooms (Lai & Sundqvist, 2026).

Teaching experience is a contributing factor to teaching quality (Irvine, 2019; Podolsky et al., 2019). Prior research (e.g., Kim & Klassen, 2018; Wolff et al., 2017) has focused on differences in teachers' cognition and pedagogical practices across their varying levels of

teaching experience. The findings revealed that experienced teachers face fewer challenges in lesson planning, classroom management, and understanding students' needs. This leads to the common assumption that experienced teachers are generally believed to be more effective than novice teachers. However, relevant literature supporting this claim remains unclear (Gore et al., 2024; Graham et al., 2020) because other contextual factors, such as the location of the school, resource availability, underlying beliefs, and institutional cultures, also contribute to teaching expertise and the evolution of teachers' beliefs and practices over time (Gore et al., 2024; Schoenfeld, 2011). Thus, the relationship between teaching experience and effectiveness is inherently context dependent.

As technology evolves and EE becomes increasingly intertwined with digital tools, the role of teaching experience in technology-mediated contexts has grown more complex. Unlike general pedagogy, teaching experience may not consistently predict stronger EE adoption. For instance, studies in EFL contexts (e.g., Mahdi & Al-Dera, 2013; Shafie et al., 2023) found no significant correlation between teaching experience and technology integration. From a Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) perspective (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), TPACK suggests that teaching experience may differentially affect teachers' technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and content knowledge (CK). This, in turn, reflects uneven development across knowledge domains. Research indicates a divergence in expertise: novice teachers often excel in TK and technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK) whereas more experienced teachers exhibit greater PK, CK and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Nazari et al., 2019; Tseng et al., 2022) Given that TK and TPK are tied to technology and EE integration, this imbalance may highlight a critical gap, showing that experienced teachers may struggle to incorporate technology and EE despite their pedagogical strengths. To date, no study has explicitly investigated how teaching experience influences the pedagogical enactment of EE integration in EFL classrooms. This highlights the need for targeted research to determine whether teaching experience facilitates or hinders EE and technology adoption in Thai EFL context.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) to examine differences in EE integration among Thai EFL teachers with varying years of teaching experience. The quantitative phase initially provided a broad overview of patterns, while the qualitative phase was designed to explain and interpret these patterns in depth.

In the quantitative section, teachers reported frequency and duration they integrated EE into their classroom. While these self-reported data provide only a broad snapshot of EE integration, their primary purpose was to explore general trends across experience levels and inform the design of the qualitative phase. Despite ANOVA showing no significant differences, this result prompted deeper investigation as it shaped both the purposive selection and follow-up questions to explore the reasons and barriers to EE integration across teaching experience levels. The qualitative phase was used to explain and add depth to the patterns seen in the survey, especially in understanding why similar levels of EE adoption may mask differences in pedagogical practices.

3.2 Research Context and Participants

The context of this research is schools in urban areas of Bangkok, Thailand, where both teachers and students who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) can consistently access EE and digital devices. By focusing on this area, the researchers were able to analyze the role of teaching experience in EE integration while minimizing potential confounding variables. Furthermore, this context enabled the researchers to examine the specific factors influencing EE integration across varying levels of teaching experience.

All participants participated in this study on a voluntary basis, and they were informed of the study's objective and ethical considerations. Eighty-one Thai EFL secondary school teachers were recruited through convenience sampling methods to complete the questionnaire. They were categorized into three groups based on levels of teaching experience: novice teachers (0-4 years), transitioning teachers (5-9 years), and experienced teachers (10 or more years), following prior work on teacher career stage (OECD, 2025), to reflect differences in professional development trajectories. Table 1 presents a summary of the demographic profiles of the participants who completed the questionnaire.

Table 1

Demographics of the Participants for the Questionnaire

Teaching experience	*n*
Novice teachers (0-4 years)	35
Transitioning teachers (5-9 years)	23
Experienced teachers (10 or more years)	23

N=81

Twelve participants (four per group) were purposively selected to ensure diverse representation while allowing in-depth comparative analysis. The participants were involved in follow-up interviews to explore how their teaching experience influenced their integration of EE, how they integrated EE in their lessons, and the underlying reasons and contextual factors shaping their teaching practices. In the qualitative findings, participants were labeled according to their experience group: novice teachers as N1–N4, transitioning teachers as T1–T4, and experienced teachers as E1–E4 to maintain participant anonymity and ensure confidentiality.

3.3 Research Instruments

3.3.1 EE Integration Questionnaire

The questionnaire, adapted from Upara and Chusanachoti (2023), comprised two parts. The first part collected demographic information. The second part measured the frequency and duration of EE integration in EFL classrooms. EE integration was measured using a 5-point Likert scale for frequency[1] and a 4-point Likert scale for duration[2]. This section covered 11 types of EE materials: movies, songs, podcasts, digital books, games, websites, social media platforms, digital screens, instant messaging, online news, and emails, which were categorized based on their characteristics and nature.

[1] Frequency: 'Always' = 75%–100%, 'Often' = 50%–74%, 'Sometimes' = 25%–49%, 'Rarely' = 1%–24%, and 'Never' = 0% of lesson within a course.

[2] Duration: 'High' = 50%–100%, 'Average' = 25%–49%, 'Low' = 1%–24%, and 'Not at all' = 0% of the class time in a lesson.

The questionnaire was developed and subsequently validated by three experts using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index. It was then piloted with non-participants, showing high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89.

3.3.2 Interview Questions

Follow-up interview questions were designed to gather in-depth insights and rich data from participants with varying levels of teaching experience on how their teaching experience shapes their EE integration practices and how these approaches vary across career stages, as well as to triangulate data collected from the questionnaire, and to enhance trustworthiness of the data collected via the survey response. The initial questions were prepared by the researchers and validated by three experts in the field using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index. The questions were piloted with a group of non-participants and subsequently revised according to their suggestions to enhance the clarity. Additional probing questions were tailored and subsequently adapted during the interviews to address the research question.

3.4 Data Collection and Data Analysis

3.4.1 EE Integration Questionnaire

The data for this study were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via teacher networks, school administrators, and social media platforms, which aimed for broad outreach across diverse schools in Bangkok and access to EFL teachers with varying levels of teaching experience and engagement with EE. The official invitation letter and consent form were subsequently sent to the participating teachers. Descriptive statistics, including means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*), were computed for each group of teaching experience to summarize the frequency and duration with composite scores of the 11 EE activities to capture overall trends of EE integration across levels of teaching experience, rather than focusing on analyzing each specific type of EE, which was beyond the scope of this study.

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate any significant differences in the overall frequency and duration of EE integration based on varying levels of teaching experience. One-way ANOVA was chosen as the appropriate statistical method because it allows for the comparison of means across multiple groups to assess whether teaching experience influences the frequency and time spent on EE integration.

The mean scores from the 5-point Likert scale were interpreted using interval-based criteria to ensure uniform differences between categories: always (≥4.20), often (3.40–4.19), sometimes (2.60–3.39), rarely (1.80–2.59), and never (1.00–1.79). For the 4-point Likert scale, the intervals were: high (≥3.25), average (2.50–3.24), low (1.75–2.49), and not at all (1.00–1.74). These interpretations minimize bias by maintaining consistent intervals.

3.4.2 Interviews

To complement the quantitative data, four participants from each teaching experience group were selected to participate in semi-structured interviews. The interview sessions were conducted in Thai via Zoom to reduce language barrier and allow participants to express themselves freely. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interviews, which were audio-recorded and later translated into English. Translation accuracy was subsequently verified by

an expert, and member checking was conducted to enhance its credibility. To protect participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms were used throughout the analysis.

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, influencing factors, and key themes related to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The data underwent a rigorous process of review, transcription, and analysis, involving iterative stages of open, axial, and selective coding independently conducted by the two researchers, with discrepancies resolved through multiple rounds of discussion. These processes led to the emergence of themes from the data such as *Integration style*, *Barriers*, *Attitude toward EE*, *Perceived change over time*, *Bridging activities*, and *Intention of using EE*. These themes illustrated how individual beliefs and local contexts shape EE integration across experience groups.

TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) and the concepts of inward and outward bridging activities (Lai & Shi, 2025) were later applied as interpretive lenses to analyze emerging patterns regarding teachers' technological and pedagogical practices, particularly across different experience levels. These frameworks were introduced after initial inductive coding to support theoretically informed interpretation without constraining data-driven nature of theme development.

4. Findings

4.1 Quantitative Findings

In terms of the average frequency of engagement in EE presented in Table 2, experienced teachers reported the highest mean (M = 3.00, SD = 0.78), followed by transitioning teachers (M = 2.94, SD = 0.59) and novices (M = 2.78, SD = 0.70). In addition, for the average duration, the transitioning group had the highest mean (M = 2.40, SD = 0.48), followed closely by the experienced (M = 2.38, SD = 0.61) and the novice groups (M = 2.23, SD = 0.44).

A one-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of teaching experience on the average frequency and duration of EE integration. The participants were divided into three groups based on their years of experience. Prior to conducting ANOVA, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was tested using Levene's test. The results indicated that the assumption was not violated for average frequency, F (2, 78) = 1.31, p = .277, or for average duration, F (2, 78) = 1.16, p = .319.

Table 2 shows no statistically significant differences in average frequency, F (2, 78) = 0.76, p = .47, η^2 = .019, or in average duration, F (2, 78) = 1.03, p = .36, η^2 = .026. The effect size for both variables was small. Thus, years of experience did not significantly affect the frequency or duration of EE integration. Despite observable mean differences, ANOVA results and a measure of effect size revealed no statistically significant effects of experience levels on EE integration. Similarly, relatively large standard deviations across groups also indicated substantial within-group variability as it suggested that teaching experience does not produce homogeneous patterns of EE integration.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way ANOVA Results for Frequency and Duration by Experience Group

	0-4 years (n = 35)	5-9 years (n = 23)	10 or more years (n = 23)	*F* (2, 78)	*p*	η2
Frequency				0.762	0.47	0.019
M	2.78	2.94	3			
SD	0.7	0.59	0.78			
Duration				1.032	0.361	0.026
M	2.23	2.4	2.38			
SD	0.44	0.48	0.61			

$p < .05$

4.2 Qualitative Findings

To further examine the quantitative results, qualitative data were analyzed to explore the role of teaching experience in integrating EE. The qualitative findings also revealed that teaching experience alone does not directly affect EE integration. However, its interaction with several contextual factors appears to influence the frequency, duration, and pedagogical strategies of EE use in the classroom. Five themes emerged from the data analysis.

4.2.1 Decline of EE Frequency and Duration with Teaching Experience

While the ANOVA displayed no significant differences regarding frequency and duration of teachers' EE integration, the qualitative data revealed a declining trend of EE integration as teaching experience increased, shaped by contextual barriers and pedagogical constraints such as class time limits, curriculum demands, heavy workload, students' limited language proficiency, and lack of pedagogical skills for EE integration. Novice and Transitioning teachers described their early teaching years as a period of experimentation as they incorporated EE frequently and with a wide variety of EE, as mentioned: *"At that time, I still wanted to experiment and try using various teaching methods and resources*" (N2). However, over time, the enthusiasm diminished. N4 also admitted, *"I feel like back then I really tried harder to bring online resources into my classes, now I already have textbooks to cover. I just don't know how to adapt other online materials."* This trend indicates that, over time, teachers become more inclined to maintain stable, curriculum-driven routines rather than pursue innovative or student-centered practices.

Although participants shared their positive attitudes towards EE and were generally aware that students extensively engaged with EE beyond the classroom, their integration of EE varied among groups with different teaching experiences. Novice teachers tend to be more open and experimental than transitioning and experienced teachers. For example, N1 remarked, *" I think any kind of media can be used. It just depends on what teachers are trying to do with it."* In contrast, transitioning teachers recognized a disconnect between the EE and technology they used and those commonly accessed by their students. T2 explained, *"I feel that students don't really use the same platforms as I do,"* which can limit their confidence in adapting materials. For experienced teachers, hesitation and anxiety about trying new tools emphasized the need for familiarity with EE before implementing it in their classrooms were obvious. E1 admitted, *"I'm afraid of making mistakes with the technology, so I only use it once I feel confident."*

From the quantitative data based on self-reported quantitative data, experienced teachers reported the highest frequency and second-highest duration of EE integration, as shown in Table 2. However, the qualitative findings revealed contradictions. They only started using EE more recently, as Internet access improved, not because they used it consistently throughout their careers. They reported that they now use EE more often than before. However, compared to other groups, their use of EE was generally more limited in terms of variety and frequency. E1 reflected, *"I cannot fully say that I can keep up with technology, but I never stop trying to understand what students are engaged in."* Also, E2 observed that teachers within the same range of experience tended to reach a *"stabilized stage,"* where teaching becomes *"routine,"* decreasing their willingness to try new or unfamiliar practices like EE integration. This contrast suggests that experience alone does not equate to meaningful or innovative EE use.

These findings indicate that teaching experience alone is not a reliable predictor of effective EE integration. With time, teachers may prioritize stability over innovation, becoming less responsive to students' digital engagement outside the classroom.

4.2.2 Changing Patterns in EE Use: Confidence Over Innovation

The findings revealed a shift in EE integration as teaching experience increased over time. Although more experienced teachers used EE less frequently, for shorter durations, and with less variety, they reported that they perceived their practices as they integrated EE more strategically and with greater pedagogical skill. Across experience levels, participants reflected on their failure while integrating EE, particularly when materials were misaligned with students' proficiency and instructional goals. For example, T4 shared, "*When I used the news and podcasts in the class, the students went blank because the language used was too complex for them*." Similarly, N3 noted that *"Some tools will make the lesson even more complicated."* Reflecting a similar concern as E3 shared, the students once asked, *"Why make this so complicated when the simple way works just fine?"* However, participants reflected that their earlier experiences helped them refine their subsequent practices and tool selection in class. For example*, N2 noted that he had "become more mindful in choosing materials,"* selecting EE that *"better fit the lesson rather than using them just for the sake of using them.*" Similarly, T3 shared that when he was a novice, he lacked teaching skills and content knowledge but used *"many materials out of teacher's interest,"* whereas later, he learned to choose EE that better supported the lesson. E3 also reflected a shift in her practice, explaining that while she initially had *"lots of ideas with tools,"* her poor time management affected instruction; over time, she became *"more efficient"* and learned how to manage class time more effectively. Overall, although EE use declined with experience, many teachers perceived this as a shift toward more intentional and pedagogically appropriate integration.

4.2.3 Inward Bridging under Grammar-Controlled Instruction

Across all levels of teaching experience, participants revealed that their primary pedagogical aim in integrating EE into the classroom was to spark students' interest and enhance their engagement. Teachers reported that EE resources were frequently employed not only to capture students' interest. As N1 shared, *"I use it to help motivate the lesson."* Acknowledging the age gap between teachers and students, T3 reflected, "*If I do not adjust the content, my students will lose interest. So, I bring what they like into class instead."* These

examples highlight that EE is mostly treated as a motivational tool rather than a core instructional strategy. However, only songs and videos were commonly used materials to engage students and illustrate language features within meaningful contexts. Additionally, participants admitted the heavy reliance on textbook-prescribed content and course syllabi, which the nature of such courses appeared to shape and limit the scope of EE integration. For instance, N2 shared, *"I use songs as a lead-in, for example, to show how 'I wish' is used in real contexts before starting the lesson.", and* E1 shared that *"I use videos to initiate discussion on the lesson topic."* T3 further shared "*I will select materials based on the content, like if a certain grammar point needs to be taught, I adapt the material to fit that grammar point."*

The data indicate that while teachers used EE to enhance engagement, inward-bridging integration was often shaped by curricular grammar targets, which potentially limit opportunities to promote learner autonomy or authentic language interaction.

4.2.4 Outward Bridging in Only Elective Courses

Regardless of teaching experience, only a few participants reported potentials for outward-bridging practices, typically found only in elective courses where curricular constraints were less rigid or in schools where teachers had greater autonomy in course and instructional material design. N1 described, "*I teach interviews using TikTok duets. I record myself as the interviewer, and students just duet the video to practice speaking."* E1 also shared the idea of an assignment she received from her novice colleague, "*After we go over the author's purpose and tone ...., I'll have them find online articles, song lyrics, or reviews to analyze and share with the class."* However, teachers noted that such activities may not be practical in required courses because of the high volume of prescribed content. Moreover, the participants reported providing limited explicit instructions and guidance on how to use EE tools because they assumed that students were already familiar with these platforms. This suggests that outward bridging practice remained limited among teachers. Moreover, it was constrained by institutional structures and rigid prescribed content.

4.2.5 EE Integration Without Training: Learning from Novice Peers

All participants acknowledged the lack of formal professional development opportunities related to EE integration. Most more experienced teachers reported informal professional development learning about EE integration from colleagues, especially the experienced group learning from novice teachers. As E4 shared, *"I have learned so many things from the new teachers. Honestly, sometimes I just cannot think of any activities or materials, but they always give me great suggestions."* Likewise, E1 adopted an idea from her novice colleague (see Outward Bridging in Only Elective Courses), and T3 reflected on gaining digital knowledge through supervising novice teachers: *"The new teachers introduced me lots of updated digital tools."* These examples show that, in the absence of formal training, more experienced teachers who have positive attitude towards EE integration rely on peer interaction and informal exchanges to keep up with digital tools and ideas, with knowledge often flowing from less experienced to more experienced colleagues.

5. Discussion

Unlike previous research, this study investigated how teaching experience shapes Thai EFL teachers' EE integration practices. The findings reveal that teaching experience interacts with contextual factors to influence the quality, purpose, and pedagogical enactment of EE integration.

Despite numerical differences in the means across groups, this study found no statistically significant difference in the frequency and duration of EE integration among EFL teachers across different experience levels. This finding suggests that teaching experience, in isolation, may not determine teachers' EE integration but when combined with qualitative results it fundamentally reshapes how, why, and with what pedagogical consequences EE is enacted. Instead, contextual factors such as curriculum demands, technological confidence, and students' readiness seem to play a more influential role. This is in line with previous studies (e.g., Gore et al., 2024; Schoenfeld, 2011), which highlight the greater influence of contextual factors over years of teaching experience on teaching quality. Similarly, Mahdi and Al-Dera (2013) and Shafie et al. (2023) found no significant difference in technology integration among teachers with different levels of teaching experience. It should be noted that measuring the frequency and duration of EE integration and teachers' positive attitude towards EE does not necessarily indicate the effectiveness of EE use. These findings suggest that teaching experience does not lead to mastery of EE integration and point to the possibility that EFL teachers at all levels of teaching experience can develop the capacity to integrate EE when provided with appropriate support and sustained professional development.

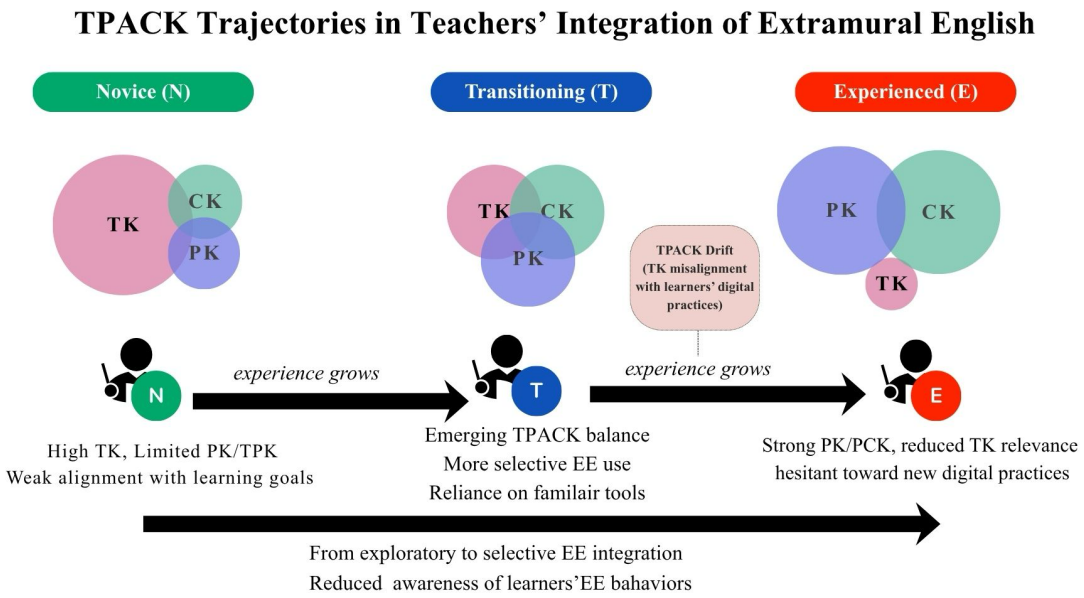
While quantitative results showed no significant differences in EE integration across experience levels, the qualitative data revealed pedagogical and attitudinal contrasts. This suggests that differences lie not in the extent of EE use, but in how it is enacted across experience levels. As their teaching experience increased, their adoption of EE tended to decline from openness to trying new EE and became limited to familiar tools. This shift was perceived as a reflection of their improved pedagogical judgment in selecting and strategically integrating EE. This result aligns with Nazari et al. (2019), who reported that experienced teachers typically demonstrate stronger pedagogical knowledge (PK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), whereas novice teachers tend to exhibit higher levels of technological knowledge (TK) and technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK). However, this study extends this work by demonstrating these differences reflect developmental shifts in teachers' TPACK profile (see Figure 1). Novices started with enthusiasm and were digitally fluent, indicating strong TK, however; they lacked PK and TPK to integrate EE effectively. As their teaching experience increases, their PK and PCK develop, and this enables more contextually aligned use of EE. However, their TK and TPK become less aligned with evolving digital practices as teachers became less familiar with the up-to-date technologies students engaged and relied only on their familiar tools. As a result, teachers across experience levels face distinct challenges in sustaining effective EE integration.

Teachers' awareness of students' EE use alone is insufficient (Lai & Shi, 2025). As key agents, teachers are expected to validate students' informal resources, curate materials, develop strategies for self-regulation, and connect formal lessons with out-of-class language learning (Lai & Sundqvist, 2026; Renandya & Floris, 2024). However, as TK and TPK become less aligned with students' EE engagement beyond the classroom, a pattern of TPACK drift emerges, where teachers struggle to respond pedagogically, reflecting inertia (Hubbard, 2024),

fear of failure (Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025) toward EE integration. These findings suggest the value of professional development that supports balanced TPACK growth, rather than assuming experience alone ensures integration expertise. Moreover, EE support should move beyond a one-size-fits-all model since novices may benefit from structured modeling and mentoring to foster their PK and PCK, while the more experienced need encouragement, TK enhancement, and supportive space to explore new tools.

Figure 1

TPACK Trajectories in Teachers' Integration of Extramural English



Note: Overlapping circles represent the interaction among technological (TK), pedagogical (PK), and content knowledge (CK) with TPACK framework

Although many participants reported integrating EE in their teaching, its application was largely confined to inward bridging activities, such as using songs or videos for motivation or contextual examples in grammar-driven instruction. This only demonstrates a surface-level application of TCK. In contrast, outward bridging activities, which aimed to prepare students for their autonomous out-of-class language learning are largely limited to elective courses, where greater curricular flexibility afforded teachers autonomy. This suggests that rigid curriculum demands and instructional norms of teacher-centered culture, where teachers are viewed primarily as content experts, may limit teachers' capacity for deeper EE integration (Liu & Wang, 2024; Upara & Lee, 2026; Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025). This finding is consistent with prior findings (Lai & Sundqvist, 2026; Schurz and Sundqvist, 2025; Upara & Chusanachoti, 2023), who noted that teachers often use EE resources mainly for motivational purposes. However, reliance on inward bridging activities may limit the potential of using EE to foster learner autonomy. When considered alongside the observed shift toward more selective of EE integration with increasing teaching experience, this limited use of outward-bridging activities reflects not only contextual constraints but also a gap in teachers' pedagogical and technological integration. This raises concerns about problematic situations in which formal language classrooms risk becoming disconnected from students' digital realities. Such a disconnect may hinder students' ability to transfer classroom learning to authentic

informal contexts. Therefore, these findings highlight the need to promote greater use of outward bridging, especially for the required courses, as a means to promote students' access to authentic resources and foster their self-efficacy for autonomous language learning beyond the classroom within a supportive classroom environment.

A key factor underlying this pattern is the absence of formal professional development related to EE integration. Teachers primarily rely on self-directed or informal peer learning, with several noting that they have gained creative ideas and tools from less experienced colleagues. While this reflects adaptive practices, it also results in diverse and experience-driven integration that is not always pedagogically effective. Given that EE allows for teachers to employ varied pedagogical designs (Henry et al. 2018; Lai et al., 2022), the effectiveness also depends on how technology and EE are pedagogically integrated. As prior research suggests, similar EE activities can produce markedly different learning experiences and outcomes depending on how they are enacted (Lai et al., 2022; Schurz & Sundqvist, 2022). Research has highlighted that both formal and informal professional development are essential for enhancing teachers' capacity to integrate technology and EE effectively (Lai & Shi, 2025; Nasari & Xodabande, 2022). However, limited training opportunities continue to hinder EE and technology adoption among EFL contexts (Doshmanziari & Mostafavi, 2017; Mishra et al., 2023; Poonpon, 2021; Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025). As Lai and Sundqvist (2026) observe, the literature still lacks a comprehensive understanding of how teachers can bridge out-of-class language learning with formal instruction. Incorporating context-sensitive reflective practices and guided assessment into training programs, such as those used by Matyakhan et al. (2024), may help build teachers' instructional confidence. Future research in EFL contexts should explore key influencing factors to guide the design of systematic professional development programs that address varying levels of teaching experience and specific contextual needs.

Barriers to EE integration among Thai EFL teachers, including heavy workloads, limited class time, curriculum demands, students' readiness, and a lack of pedagogical skills for integrating EE remain evident across experience levels. While similar challenges have been reported in other EFL contexts (Lai & Shi, 2025; Liu & Wang, 2024; Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025), these findings extend previous research in Thai EFL context (e.g., Upara & Lee, 2026) by demonstrating the complexity of how such interrelated constraints interact with teaching experience to shape changes in teachers' technology-related pedagogical practices over time, which reflects a shift from exploratory and diverse EE use to more selective, familiarity-driven practices.

6. Implications

The findings of this study suggest that teaching experience alone may not guarantee pedagogical innovation or the effective integration of EE and digital tools. While teaching experience can support classroom management and instructional confidence, it may not directly translate to readiness for technology-enhanced practice or EE integration. This may also indicate that teachers at all experience levels can build the ability to incorporate EE if contextually relevant support is continuously provided. This is particularly important for novice teachers, who often enter the profession with a strong enthusiasm for integrating EE. Ongoing support could help sustain their EE integration while simultaneously advancing

pedagogical skills. With continued development, novice teachers could become valuable resources for assisting other groups with EE integration.

The findings indicate that novice teachers' strong technological fluency positions them as valuable contributors to professional learning communities. This pattern may offer insights into how mentorship and professional development in EFL context should be reimagined to encourage more reciprocal or peer-based learning rather than relying solely on seniority-based models. For example, pairing novice teachers' technological fluency with experienced teachers' pedagogical expertise through collaborative lesson design should be promoted to address both TK and TPK gaps. Moreover, professional development should provide differentiated support, offering novices structured guidance and providing transitioning and experienced teachers with space to explore new tools in low-risk settings. Additionally, the reliance on peer support among experienced teachers could imply a need for more sustained and structured opportunities for teachers at all levels of teaching experience to stay current, explore innovative ideas, and experiment with EE integration in a supportive environment to address imbalances across TPACK domains.

Finally, curricular rigidity was frequently mentioned as a constraint, particularly in the required courses. While elective courses allowed for more innovative EE use, core curricula that constitute the majority of the instructional program appeared to limit such opportunities. These insights may be useful for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to explore ways of creating opportunities within existing structures for more flexible and outward-bridging tasks that connect formal instruction with students' digital lives. Furthermore, incorporating EE-related strategies or TPACK-informed frameworks into teacher education and training programs may help build teachers' competencies to meaningfully and pedagogically incorporate students' informal language experiences into formal instruction in EFL contexts.

7. Limitations and Future Research

Limitations of this study include the use of purposive selection to ensure access to teachers with diverse levels of experience during interviews. The sample was limited to Thai EFL teachers in Bangkok who volunteered to participate, possibly introducing self-selection bias favoring those already interested in EE. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from the questionnaire and interviews shows the potential for response bias. Therefore, it may not be possible to fully capture pedagogical practices or classroom impact of EE integration. Moreover, while teaching experience was a central variable, other contextual factors influencing and limiting EE integration were not examined in depth.

Future research should consider recruiting more research participants using stratified random sampling to mitigate selection bias. Classroom observations and lesson plan analysis should be employed to better assess teacher development across diverse school settings. Longitudinal studies could also explore how teachers' integration of EE evolves over time, particularly in response to training or policy shifts. Expanding the scope to include pre-service teachers, rural schools, or cross-cultural comparisons would also enrich the understanding of contextual influences. Finally, future studies should examine how professional development programs can support teachers in designing meaningful EE instruction that could enhance students' informal language learning. Addressing these insights through well-designed

professional development and curriculum reform may unlock the full potential of EE to support the connection between formal instruction and language learning beyond the classroom.

8. Conclusion

This study investigated how Thai EFL teachers with varying levels of teaching experience integrate EE into their classroom practices. The findings revealed that teaching experience alone did not significantly influence EE integration; instead, contextual factors such as curriculum pressure, technological confidence, and institutional culture were more decisive. Although teachers across all experience levels valued EE, they often applied it superficially, mainly for student engagement rather than for developing learner autonomy. Notably, more integrative practices were found primarily in elective courses, where teachers had greater autonomy over course and materials design. Interpreting these findings through the TPACK framework and the concepts of inward and outward bridging reveals how teachers' technological and pedagogical practices. Additionally, it shows the TPACK profiles for teachers across levels of teaching experience calling for differentiated professional development and explicitly supporting outward bridging strategies to better connect classroom practices with learners' digital lives.

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10. Declaration of AI Use

The authors utilized OpenAI's GPT-5.0 model to only enhance the clarity and readability of the manuscript. All ideas, analyses, and interpretations shown in the study are the authors' own, and the authors take full responsibility for all content.

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