

## **Teachers' Integration of Multimodality into 21st Century EFL Classrooms in Thailand: Practice and Perception**

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### **Abstract**

In Thailand, there is a growing need for Thai undergraduate students to be well-equipped with necessary English skills that can be used in real life situations. One way to prepare them is by introducing multimodality to English pedagogical practice. Multimodality is associated with the use of visuals, sounds, texts, gestures, and technology that students can engage with as parts of their daily lives (Choi & Yi, 2016; Jones, 2012; Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2015). To date, there is no research on whether multimodality in Thailand helps Thai undergraduate students improve their English. This study, therefore, aimed at exploring university English teachers' integration of multimodality into their English classroom practices as well as investigating both Thai university English teachers' and undergraduate students' perceptions towards the integration of multimodality into English classroom practices. 10 English teachers at the university level from different regions across Thailand were observed to explore the actual classroom practices and 317 students enrolled in English courses with them were asked to complete a questionnaire. The findings revealed that English teachers at the university level in Thailand integrate multiple semiotic modes in their classroom practices which contribute to enhancing students' English skills and enabling them to apply their knowledge and skills to real life situations. Consequently, the application of the multimodal approach is encouraged for the 21st century English language classroom.

**Keywords:** integration of multimodality, multimodal approach, 21st century EFL classroom, classroom-based research

### **Introduction**

In recent years, English language educators at every level have focused on improving students' knowledge and skills to meet the framework established by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. According to this framework, learners should be able to use English to convey concepts and cultures to a global society. In addition, there are six key elements for fostering 21st century learning. These are: (1) emphasizing learning skills (including information and communication skills), thinking and problem-solving skills, and interpersonal and self-directional skills, (2) using 21st century tools to develop learning skills including the use of information and communication technologies, (3) teaching and learning in a 21st century context in which students learn academic content through real world application and experience both inside and outside of the classroom, (4) teaching and learning 21st century content including global awareness, (5) financial, civic, and economic and business literacy, and (6) using 21st century assessments that measure 21st century skills.

For Thailand in particular, the notion of the 21st century learning has been promoted at all levels of educational institutes. Since English is a required subject for students from grade one up to university level, it is an important tool in the current learning environment that helps students to keep up with societal changes, communicate in real life situations, and search for information in the digital age. Therefore, there is a need to work on pedagogical

practices associated with or aligned with the use of digital and multimodal literacy practices that students can engage with as part of their lives (Yi, 2014). However, there is neither empirical nor explorative research on the integration of multimodality regarding whether it helps Thai students become successful language learners in the 21st century.

Consistently, there has been an increase in the emphasis on English language education in Thailand, especially English proficiency level of Thai learners (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). In addition, Thai undergraduate students are expected to be well equipped with academic and professional knowledge for communication in various context according to Commission of Higher Education (2016). Therefore, there is a significant change in English language teaching and learning to improve Thai learners resulting in the change in teaching practices in Thailand. Consequently, teachers should design their classroom that adhere to develop learners' ability to communicate in English, to analyze, interpret, and transform information received from various resources through different types of modes, and to apply 21st century skills in their real life situation (Kern, 2012).

In the efforts of English teaching and learning at the level of tertiary education to align with the 21st century learning framework, this research paper investigates the teacher's integration of multimodality, or the use of different modes in teaching English, including visuals, texts, animations, gestures, communication and instructional technology (Choi & Yi, 2016; Jones, 2012; Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2015) in their classroom practices and the perception of students regarding this integration. In addition, the researcher seeks to understand how multimodality helps students in terms of improving students' English in terms of its relationship to the 21st century learning framework to create a 21st century EFL classroom.

## **Review of Literature**

### **The Integration of Multimodality in English Language Teaching**

The theoretical framework of this research revolves around various studies which provide concepts and definitions with regard to the integration of multimodality into English language teaching (e.g. Hafner, 2014, 2015; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 2010, 2017; New London Group, 1996; Ryan, Scott & Walsh, 2010; Siegel, 2012; Van Leeuwen, 2015; Vungthong, Djonov & Torr, 2017; Yi & Choi, 2015). Theoretically, the integration of multimodality into the classroom means that it becomes part of instructors' pedagogy and increasingly requires both teachers and students to make use of the digital and multimodal practices. As the main focus of this research is on the integration of multimodality in the English language classroom at university level, the perception and actual practices in the classrooms of English teachers in different regions of Thailand are emphasized.

### **Multimodal Approach and the 21st Century English Classroom in Thailand**

In the 21st century, advanced technology is one of the most significant forces to bring new challenges and opportunities along with major paradigm shifts to English language teaching and learning (Sakulprasertsri, 2017; Vibulphol, 2015). According to P21 or the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2015), learners are required to have 21st century skills in order to survive changes throughout the world. Thus, teachers and educators are forced to reconsider how to employ different teaching methodologies to foster 21st century skills in order to prepare their students for real world situations. There are three main skills that 21st century learners are required to have: information and communication skills, thinking and problem-solving skills, and interpersonal and self-directional skills.

Further regarding these 21st century skills, it has been suggested that traditional teaching practices undergo a transformation from the model in which teachers are at the center of the classroom to the one in which learners become the most important part of

teaching and learning processes according to the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2015). It is undeniable that information and communication technology (ICT) in the form of computers, social networking, audios, videos, media and multimedia and other technologies play an important role in the 21st century learning context. They enable learners to utilize what they have gained from their studies more effectively. Thus, digital and multimodal practices are essential in providing opportunities for both teachers and learners in the 21st century classroom. (Van Leeuwen, 2015).

Emerging technologies can support learning outcomes, increase learners' engagement, and prepare them to become successful learners (Hafner, 2014; Sakulprasertsri & Vibulphol, 2016; Sakulprasertsri, 2017). According to New London Group (1996), Jewitt & Kress (2003), and Kress (2010, 2017), students can construct meaning through multiple modes e.g. written and oral language, gestures, visuals, sounds, and movements. Therefore, teachers should recognize the value of multimodality and be able to integrate multimodal practices for both academic and social purposes in their classrooms.

In terms of second and foreign language pedagogies, multimodality has also received attention from several researchers (Hafner, 2014, 2015; Ryan, Scott & Walsh, 2010; Siegel, 2012; Van Leeuwen, 2015; Vungthong, Djonov & Torr, 2017; Yi & Choi, 2015). For classroom teachers, the integration of multimodality into their classroom has become part of their practice and increasingly requires both teachers and students to make use of digital and multimodal technologies. For instance, the teacher designs his own lesson through the use of multiple modes and students can orchestrate multiple modes to communicate their ideas with the teacher effectively. To date, there are no empirical studies on the integration of multimodality in English language classrooms at the university level in Thailand which focus upon perceptions of multimodality and multiple modes practices. This research thus attempts to fill the gap by exploring the actual classroom practices of English teachers in terms of the integration of multimodality and both teachers' and students' perceptions and opinions towards the integration of multimodality in English classrooms in Thailand. Thus, the present study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent do university English teachers integrate multimodality into their English classrooms practices?
2. What are university English teachers' perceptions towards the integration of multimodality into their English classrooms practices?
3. What are undergraduate students' perceptions towards teachers' integration of multimodality for their English classrooms?

## **Methodology**

### **Population and Sample**

To select the participants, stratified sampling method was applied at the beginning of the sampling selection process to divide the sampling groups by region. This was done to ensure that participants were selected from different regions to represent a range of sociocultural background, economies, and lifestyles. The participants of this study consisted of 10 English teachers at the university level who were randomly selected from different regions of Thailand. Of these teachers, 6 were female and 4 were male. Two of the teachers were from the northern region, three from the northeastern region, two from the central region, two from the southern region, and one from the eastern region. Their ages ranged from 27 to 48 years old. In addition, they all held a degree in teaching English as a foreign / second language, English language teaching, or a related field. In addition, all of them had at least two years of experience in teaching at the university level. Additionally, a total of 317 undergraduate students including 73 males, 228 females, and 16 students who identified themselves as

LGBTQ were also selected. They were first-year to fifth-year undergraduate students enrolled in English courses with the selected English teachers in the second semester of academic year 2018.

The participants were informed of the objectives of the study and were aware that their participation was not a part of study in their program. They were also informed that their real identity would be kept confidential and pseudonyms would be used. In addition, to meet the standards of research ethics involving human subjects, each participant was asked to complete a consent form before participating in this study.

### **Data Collection and Data Analyses**

Data were collected in the second semester of academic year 2018 using mixed-method research. In terms of collecting qualitative data, classroom observation was employed to explore the actual classroom practices (See Appendix A) and semi-structured interview was also conducted after the classroom observation in order to explore university English teachers' perception toward the integration of multimodality into English classroom (See Appendix B).

A questionnaire regarding undergraduate students' perceptions towards integration of multimodality into English classroom practices was constructed by the researcher and used for collecting quantitative data. Subsequently, classroom observation was conducted to collect the qualitative data for this study. The questionnaire consisted of 14 items with positive and negative statements that covered two dimensions, namely modes of teaching and the integration of multimodality employed in the English classroom (See Appendix C). A standard Likert scale of six options was also provided in order to avoid the neutral option and receive more accurate results for analyzing the data. The participants were asked to indicate the degree of agreement and disagreement for each item. The scale ranged from 1 'strongly disagree' to 6 'strongly agree' in accordance with the instructions. In addition, three open-ended questions regarding which modes of teaching impressed or aided them the most in improving their English skills, the modes of teaching that did not impress or aid them in improving their English skills, and the modes of teaching that they most wished their English teacher to utilize in the classroom were also included in the last section of the questionnaire (See Appendix C). Validity of the questionnaire was checked by the three experts in teaching English as a second and foreign language and reliability was checked through IBM SPSS Statistics program version 25. The questionnaire was found to be reliable according to Cronbach Alpha value (14 items;  $\alpha = .771$ ) and acceptable to be employed in this study.

To analyze the data, the classroom observation sheet was used to explain the teachers' integration of multimodality into their English classroom practices and illustrated whether they apply the use of different modes in their actual classroom practices. In addition, the qualitative data from the semi-structured interview was analyzed using content analysis to explore the perceptions of teachers towards the integration of multimodality into their English classrooms practices method. Moreover, descriptive statistics including mean scores and standard deviation of the scores obtained from the questionnaire. In this study, the means scores obtained from the questionnaire was interpreted according to the criteria as follows:

5.20 – 6.00	means	students reported strongly agree
4.36 – 5.19	means	students reported moderately agree
3.52 – 4.35	means	students reported slightly agree
2.68 – 3.51	means	students reported slightly disagree
1.84 – 2.67	means	students reported moderately disagree
1.00 – 1.83	means	students reported strongly disagree

Additionally, data from the open-ended section were used to analyze the perceptions of the participants in this study.

## Results and Discussion

### **Research Question 1: To what extent do university English teachers integrate multimodality into their English classrooms practices?**

According to the qualitative data obtained from the multimodality checklist and the observation of classroom interaction notes, the results indicated that all of the English teachers who participated in this study practiced a multimodal approach in their English classrooms. They included multiple modes of teaching in their classroom practices through semiotic resources including visuals, texts, gestures, communication, and technology. Similarly, they conducted lessons by introducing the topic, teaching both language focus and skills, organizing language activities to check their students' comprehension both individually and a group, debriefing the lesson and assigning tasks. From the observation notes, all of the English teachers used L2 (English) except when they needed to explain the grammar rules, for which they used L1 (Thai).

### **Research Question 2: What are university English teachers' perceptions towards the integration of multimodality into their English classrooms practices?**

To explore teachers' perceptions towards the integration of multimodality into English classroom practices, the data obtained from the interviews were analysed by using content analysis. It was revealed that there are five main aspects including: familiarity and definition of the term "multimodality", modes of teaching in actual English classroom practices, successful or appropriate modes of teaching employed in English classroom, benefits and challenges of integrating multimodality into English classroom practices, and integration of multimodality into the 21st century English classroom.

Regarding the familiarity and definition of the term "multimodality", only one participant stated that she has heard the term "multimodality" when she was studying for her master degree. The rest of the participants were unfamiliar with the term. Regarding the definition of the term "multimodality" as defined by each participant, data revealed that seven lecturers from the northern, central, eastern, and southern regions perceived multimodality as various methods of teaching. Meanwhile, three lecturers from the northeastern region perceived multimodality as teaching materials in the classroom. According to modes of teaching in actual English classroom practices, most participants employed multiple modes into their classrooms. Additionally, technologies such as sound and video clips, PowerPoint slides, animated pictures, and online games were also employed in the classroom.

Based on interview data, there were also benefits and challenges in terms of integrating multimodality into English classroom. As for benefits, multimodality was found to motivate as well as engage students to learn English more. Moreover, English lecturers from the northern, northeastern, and southern regions reported that integrating multimodality in the classroom is suitable and applicable for students with different learning styles. Furthermore, English teachers from the northeastern and southern regions stated that students can improve their English as well as other skills by experiences in the English classroom that integrate multimodality in the lesson. English teachers from the northeastern, central, and eastern regions viewed the integration of multimodality itself as beneficial in terms of guiding and helping them to select appropriate activities. On the contrary, there were some challenges found from integrating multimodality into English classroom. English teachers from the northern, central, and southern regions reported that time management is one of the challenges of integrating multimodality into the classroom. In addition, English teachers from the northern, northeastern, and southern regions found integration challenging in terms of designing tasks, activities, and learning resources, as well as planning lessons with the application of a multimodal approach. Moreover, limited classroom facilities and technical

problems in the classroom was viewed as yet another challenge for teachers from the northeastern and southern regions. Furthermore, distractions can occur if the teacher uses various modes at the same time, according to one English teacher from the northeastern region.

All of the English teachers in this study agreed that 21st century skills including information and communication skills, thinking and problem-solving skills, and interpersonal and self-directional skills (P21 or The Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015) can be developed by integrating multimodality into English lessons.

### **Research Question 3: What are undergraduate students' perceptions towards teachers' integration of multimodality for their English classrooms?**

As for undergraduate students' perceptions towards teachers' integration of multimodality into English classroom practices in Thailand, questionnaire data were analyzed using mean scores, and standard deviation. Table 1 illustrates students' overall perceptions towards integration of multimodality into English classroom practices from all five regions in Thailand ( $n = 317$ ).

As can be seen in Table 1, there are two dimensions related to the integration of multimodality into the English classroom in this study: modes of teaching employed in an actual classroom and teacher's integration of multimodality in the English classroom. According to the modes of teaching employed, the participants reported that their English teacher usually integrated multiple modes including written and oral language, gestures, visuals, sounds, and movements into English classroom practices ( $M = 5.44$ ,  $SD = .627$ ). Moreover, the results revealed that English teachers often use PowerPoint Slides with various pictures and animations ( $M = 5.28$ ,  $SD = .931$ ), assign tasks for which students can utilize multiple modes to illustrate knowledge gained from learning ( $M = 5.18$ ,  $SD = .752$ ), and design many activities to involve students in the class ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = .793$ ). The participants also reported that their English teachers generally use online tools such as Kahoot, Plickers, Quizlet, and Google Applications ( $M = 5.14$ ,  $SD = .964$ ). Though the use of technology can be perceived from the findings, it was found that English teachers in Thailand normally write important concepts on the board while teaching ( $M = 4.68$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ).

Regarding perceptions towards teacher's integration of multimodality in English classroom practices, the findings revealed that the participants strongly agreed that adding related visuals and sounds in English lessons aided in their learning ( $M = 5.61$ ,  $SD = .615$ ). Furthermore, participants reported that English teachers were able to maximize their ability to create effective learning environments by integrating multimodality into English classroom practices ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = .717$ ) which can also help them to improve their English skills and achieve their goals in language learning ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = .696$ ). There was also strong agreement that the English teacher may consider using L1 or Thai to explain some grammatical features or abstract ideas rather than using L2 or English ( $M = 5.38$ ,  $SD = .752$ ). Contrarily, they also strongly agreed that the most effective way to improve English skills is to learn English with the teacher who only speaks and communicates with the students in English ( $M = 5.37$ ,  $SD = .787$ ). Participants moderately agreed that another effective way to learn English is to learn English with teachers who walk around the room to monitor the class while teaching ( $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = 1.368$ ). Regarding distractions, the findings showed that the participants disagreed that the use of different gestures ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 1.706$ ) while teaching can distract from the teaching and learning process ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = 1.536$ ).

In observing comparative data (see Table 1), it can be seen that the participants in this study reported similar level of agreement to each statement in the questionnaire. However, there were some slight differences in the participants' responses. Participants in all five regions reported that their English teachers usually integrate multiple modes of teaching into

English classroom practices. To begin, undergraduate students in the northern region responded with the highest level of agreement ( $M = 5.63$ ,  $SD = .522$ ). Students in the northeastern ( $M = 4.99$ ,  $SD = .759$ ) and southern regions ( $M = 5.04$ ,  $SD = .969$ ) reported that their English teachers design many activities to get students involved. Meanwhile, students in the northern ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = .673$ ) and central regions ( $M = 5.26$ ,  $SD = .739$ ) reported that their English teachers usually assign tasks that utilize multiple modes to illustrate knowledge gained from learning more than English teachers of the eastern ( $M = 5.15$ ,  $SD = .621$ ), southern ( $M = 5.08$ ,  $SD = .763$ ), or northeastern region ( $M = 5.06$ ,  $SD = .845$ ).

As for the use of technology in classroom, undergraduate students in the eastern region stated that their English teacher often utilizes online tools, e.g. Kahoot, Plickers, Quizlet, and Google Application in their classrooms ( $M = 5.51$ ,  $SD = .690$ ) which is in line with undergraduate students in the central ( $M = 5.38$ ,  $SD = .952$ ) and northern regions ( $M = 5.20$ ,  $SD = .846$ ). Meanwhile, students who study in the northeastern ( $M = 5.04$ ,  $SD = .943$ ) and southern regions ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 1.126$ ) reported that their English teachers also use the new technology, but not as frequently as those who teach in other regions. Finally, undergraduate students in all regions reported that their English teachers use PowerPoint Slides with various pictures and animations in their class, with students in the northeastern ( $M = 5.10$ ,  $SD = 1.114$ ) and southern regions ( $M = 5.10$ ,  $SD = 1.015$ ) reporting use to be less frequent.

In regard to the students' perceptions of teacher's integration of multimodality into English classroom practices (see Table 1), undergraduate students in all five regions of Thailand responded at a similar level of agreement for each statement in the questionnaire. At the highest level of agreement, the findings revealed that the undergraduate students in all five regions, including the undergraduate students in the northern ( $M = 5.71$ ,  $SD = .559$ ), northeastern ( $M = 5.71$ ,  $SD = .618$ ), central ( $M = 5.55$ ,  $SD = .567$ ), eastern ( $M = 5.51$ ,  $SD = .605$ ), and southern regions ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SD = .699$ ) strongly agree that adding some related visuals and sounds to English lessons helps them learn English better.

Concerning distractions caused by the integration of multimodality, the findings revealed that undergraduate students from all five regions shared similar levels of agreement as shown in Table 1. All of the students disagreed that teacher's integration of multimodality in English classroom practices including the use of different gestures while teaching distracts from the teaching and learning process. To some extent, the findings revealed that undergraduate students in this study including the students from the northern ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 1.314$ ), northeastern ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD = 1.510$ ), central ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 1.243$ ), eastern ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 1.398$ ), and southern regions ( $M = 4.42$ ,  $SD = 1.258$ ) moderately agreed that learning English with the teachers who walk around the room to monitor their classes while teaching is an effective way to learn English. Furthermore, undergraduate students in all five regions strongly agreed that learning English with teachers who only speak and communicate with students in English is the most effective way to improve English skills. Interestingly, they also reported that English teachers should use L1, which is Thai in this case, to explain some grammatical features or abstract ideas rather than using only L2 or English.

Additionally, undergraduate students strongly agreed that the integration of multimodality into classroom practices not only helps English teachers maximize their teaching ability for creating an effective English classroom, but also improves their English skills and helps them to achieve their goal of learning English. The findings also revealed that undergraduate students in the southern region reported a slightly different level of agreement regarding the use of L1 and L2 in terms of teaching ( $M = 5.27$ ,  $SD = .910$ ) and that the teacher's integration of multimodality into English classroom practices help teachers maximize their teaching ability ( $M = 5.23$ ,  $SD = .877$ ) and improve students' English skills ( $M = 5.27$ ,  $SD = .819$ ) compared to undergraduate students in other regions.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Undergraduate Students' Perceptions Towards Teacher's Integration of Multimodality into English Classroom Practices in Thailand (n = 317)**

Statements	<i>North</i>		<i>Northeast</i>		<i>Central</i>		<i>East</i>		<i>South</i>		<i>Overall</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Modes of Teaching Employed in English Classroom</b>												
1. My English teacher integrates multiple modes including written and oral language, gestures, visuals, sounds, and movements into English classroom practices.	5.63	.522	5.45	.562	5.43	.704	5.33	.610	5.37	.742	5.44	.627
2. My English teacher designs many activities to get students involved in his/her class.	5.44	.702	4.99	.759	5.41	.750	5.29	.685	5.04	.969	5.21	.793
3. My English teacher utilizes online tools e.g. Kahoot, Plickers, Quizlet, Google Applications in his/her class.	5.20	.846	5.04	.943	5.38	.952	5.51	.690	4.58	1.126	5.14	.964
4. My English teacher uses PowerPoint Slides with various pictures and animations in his/her class.	5.58	.700	5.10	1.114	5.34	.785	5.38	.782	5.10	1.015	5.28	.931
5. My English teacher writes all important concepts on the board while teaching.	4.97	.890	4.74	1.141	4.28	1.136	4.53	1.052	4.83	.879	4.68	1.061
6. My English teacher often assigns tasks that allow students to utilize multiple modes to illustrate knowledge gained from a particular module or unit.	5.41	.673	5.06	.845	5.26	.739	5.15	.621	5.08	.763	5.18	.752
7. Teacher's integration of multimodality into English classroom practices distracts from the teaching and learning process.	2.98	1.824	3.39	1.701	2.41	1.427	3.29	1.548	3.58	1.808	3.15	1.706

Statements	<i>North</i>		<i>Northeast</i>		<i>Central</i>		<i>East</i>		<i>South</i>		<i>Overall</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Teacher's Integration of Multimodality into English Classroom Practices</b>												
8. Learning English with teachers who walk around the room to monitor the class while teaching is an effective way to learn English.	4.78	1.314	4.38	1.510	4.41	1.243	4.56	1.398	4.42	1.258	4.50	1.368
9. English teachers who use different gestures while teaching distracts from learning.	2.24	1.478	2.37	1.495	2.38	1.520	2.38	1.394	3.15	1.696	2.48	1.536
10. Adding related visuals and sounds to English lessons helps students learn English better.	5.71	.559	5.71	.618	5.55	.567	5.51	.605	5.46	.699	5.61	.615
11. Learning English with teachers who only speak and communicate with students in English is the most effective way to improve English skills.	5.46	.597	5.41	.811	5.21	1.056	5.40	.655	5.35	.711	5.37	.787
12. English teachers should use L1 (Thai) to explain some grammatical features or abstract ideas rather than using L2 (English).	5.44	.702	5.40	.739	5.38	.721	5.40	.710	5.27	.910	5.38	.752
13. English teachers are able to maximize their teaching ability for creating effective English classroom by integrating multimodality into English classroom practices.	5.63	.522	5.54	.652	5.43	.797	5.38	.707	5.23	.877	5.46	.717
14. If my English teacher integrates multimodality into English classroom practices, I will be able to improve my English skills and achieve my goal in English learning.	5.58	.593	5.45	.730	5.31	.681	5.42	.599	5.27	.819	5.41	.696

To further explore the opinions of the participants towards teachers' integration of multimodality into actual English classroom practices, content analysis was employed to analyze the answers from three open-ended questions. According to Table 2, the data obtained from students' answers revealed that the undergraduate students in the northeastern region felt that teachers' integration of various modes of teaching including visuals, texts, animated images, instructional media and technology into English classroom impressed and helped them to improve their English skills ( $f = 32$ ). Undergraduate students in other regions including those in the southern ( $f = 29$ ), northern ( $f = 24$ ), central ( $f = 20$ ), and eastern ( $f = 15$ ) regions said that they were impressed by English teachers who use various types of activities and games in English lessons which helped them improve their English skills. Additionally, undergraduate students from the northeastern region ( $f = 13$ ) reported that they were impressed with English teachers who not only use L2 (English) for teaching and communication, but also use L1 (Thai) for providing explanations of certain grammatical features in the classroom. There was no sign of concern about using L1 in the classroom from the undergraduate students in the eastern part of Thailand.

In addition, the data obtained from students' answers for open-ended question 2 (see Table 2) revealed that undergraduate students from the northeastern ( $f = 38$ ), southern ( $f = 21$ ), eastern ( $f = 18$ ), central ( $f = 17$ ), and northern ( $f = 11$ ) regions were not impressed with English teachers who only read teaching slides or texts, do not give examples, clear explanations, or communicate with students; therefore, these modes of teaching do not help them improve their English. In addition, undergraduate students in the southern region ( $f = 22$ ) stated that they were not impressed with those English teachers who do not employ activities or games in the classroom. Furthermore, undergraduate students in the northern, northeastern, central, and southern regions, except those who study in the eastern region, were not impressed with English teachers who use L2 (English) only in the classroom since it is hard for them to follow, especially when the lessons involve grammatical explanations. Surprisingly, there were a few undergraduate students from the northeastern ( $f = 2$ ), eastern ( $f = 1$ ), and southern ( $f = 1$ ) regions who claimed that they do not like their English teachers to walk around to monitor the class because it distracts from the teaching and learning process.

Additionally, data obtained from the students' answers showed that the undergraduate students in the southern ( $f = 34$ ), eastern ( $f = 29$ ), northern ( $f = 22$ ), and central ( $f = 19$ ) regions prefer their English teachers to use various activities and games into classroom practices. On the contrary, undergraduate students in the northeastern region prefer their English teachers to integrate various modes of teaching including visuals, texts, animations, instructional media and technology into classroom practices ( $f = 29$ ). They believe that the English teacher's integration of multimodality into classroom practices will enable them to apply their knowledge to real life situations and they will become familiar with different accents through the use of various types of instructional media. Nevertheless, undergraduate students in all five regions prefer English teachers to use both L2 (English) for teaching and communication and L1 (Thai) for providing explanation on certain grammatical features. Additionally, undergraduate students in the eastern ( $f = 11$ ), northeastern ( $f = 10$ ), southern ( $f = 10$ ), and central ( $f = 6$ ) regions wish to improve their English skills by having more opportunities to practice in the classroom.

Based on the quantitative analysis, the findings from the present study suggest that a discussion can be divided into three aspects: modes of teaching used in the English classroom, teacher's integration of multimodality into English classroom practices, and potential of integrating multimodal approach for 21st century English classroom practices in Thailand.

**Table 2: Undergraduate Students' Opinions towards Open-ended Question (n = 317)**

Undergraduate Students' Opinions	Frequencies of keywords / key phrases in the answer					
	<i>North</i>	<i>Northeast</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Overall</i>
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
<i>Question 1: What modes of teaching of your English teacher <b>impress</b> you and <b>help you improve</b> your English skills the most?</i>						
- Integrate various modes of teaching including visuals, texts, animated images, instructional media and technology into classroom	13	32	8	15	4	72
- Use various activities and games into classroom practices	24	18	15	20	29	106
- Use L2 (English) for teaching and communication in classroom	6	13	7	9	5	40
- Use L1 (Thai) for providing explanation on certain grammatical features	5	13	-	6	3	27
<i>Question 2: What modes of teaching of your English teacher <b>do not impress</b> you and <b>do not help you improve</b> your English skills the most?</i>						
- Read only teaching slides or texts without explanation or communication with students	11	38	18	17	21	105
- No activities or games	9	1	13	10	22	55
- Use only L2 in classroom	8	5	-	4	1	18
- Walk around to monitor the classroom	-	2	1	-	1	4
<i>Question 3: What modes of teaching do you want your English teacher to use the most in teaching English and why?</i>						
- Integrate various modes of teaching including visuals, texts, animated images, instructional media and technology into classroom	10	29	11	11	5	66
- Use various activities and games into classroom practices	22	18	23	19	34	116
- Use L2 (English) for teaching and communication in classroom	4	13	10	4	1	32
- Use L1 (Thai) for giving explanation on certain grammatical features	4	5	3	5	1	18
- Emphasis on practicing language skills	-	10	11	6	10	37

### **Modes of Teaching Used in English Classroom in Thailand**

Findings from the questionnaire revealed that English teachers at university level from all five regions in Thailand employ different modes of teaching (e.g. visuals, texts, animated images or digital graphics) in their classroom practices. As a result, this integration can provide many benefits as stated by the participants in this study. For instance, the participants reported that they were more engaged in the lesson since the class was fun, engaging and active. Moreover, they stated that they could apply knowledge gained from experiencing different modes of teaching in real life situations. Also, they were able to become familiar with various English accents through the use of real sounds from multiple semiotic resources such as voices, news reports, and video clips. In conjunction with multimodality research, the use of different semiotic modes (e.g. scripts, voice, music, and images) through multiple semiotic resources such as printed materials, voices, animated images or digital graphics, music, and video clips both offline and online could potentially have a tremendous impact on student's engagement in the lesson as opposed to the traditional classroom (Brown & Lee, 2015; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Yi, 2014; Van Leeuwen, 2015; Sakulprasertsri & Vibulphol, 2016; Sakulprasertsri, 2017).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that English teachers who teach at the university level in Thailand utilize online tools in their classrooms including Kahoot, Plickers, Quizlet, Google Applications, etc. These tools are considered as another mode of the multimodal approach and can be used as educational tools for not only educators but also language teachers at all levels in that they enable students to engage in the lessons, achieve their learning outcomes, and enhance 21st century skills (Pacansky-Brock, 2013; Hafner, 2014; Van Leeuwen, 2015; Sakulprasertsri, 2017). Additionally, adding visuals and sounds as well as PowerPoint slides with pictures and animations could also help teachers to engage their students and improve their learning as seen from the data obtained in the present study as well as previous studies (Yi, 2014; Choi & Yi, 2016; Vungthong, Djonov, & Torr 2017).

### **Teacher's Integration of Multimodality into English Classroom Practices in Thailand**

In addition to modes of teaching, students' perceptions of teachers' integration of multimodality in English classroom practices were also explored. The findings suggest that the participants strongly agreed that English teachers in Thailand can create effective English classrooms by integrating multimodality in classroom practices. According to Ryan, Scott, and Walsh (2010) and Yi (2014), one of the pertinent practicalities of multimodality in the English classroom is that it facilitates students to express themselves and be able to apply their English skills and knowledge through multimodal tasks which contribute to effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, data obtained from both questionnaire, open-ended questions, and classroom observation suggest that learning English with teachers who use only L2 to communicate with students is the most effective way to improve their English skills and help them to achieve their goals in learning English. Therefore, the results yielded positive teaching and learning outcomes in terms of teacher's integration of multimodality into English classroom.

### **Potential of Integrating Multimodal Approach for 21st Century English Classroom Practice in Thailand**

According to Wright (2012), key issues of the 21st century English classroom include dealing with pedagogical change, working with diverse student populations, and facing technological change. Integration of multimodal approach is perceived as an effective approach to deal with those issues (Ryan, Scott, & Walsh, 2010). In this study, English teachers at the university level in Thailand showed an awareness of these issues, and have integrated various types of modes in their classroom such as semiotic resources, technology, activities, and games to

enhance students' motivation and engagement in the lesson (Yi, 2014; Yi & Choi, 2015; Choi & Yi, 2016).

In addition, employing a multimodal approach in 21st century English classroom is suitable and applicable for students with different learning styles in that it guides and helps teachers to select appropriate activities for their students. Apart from the mentioned benefits, integration of multimodality or a multimodal approach was also found to associate with 21st century skills development such as information and communication skills, thinking and problem-solving skills, and interpersonal and self-directional skills (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2015), since students are required to apply these skills to complete tasks assigned both within the classroom and for real life situations. Therefore, there is a great potential for the application of a multimodal approach in English classrooms in Thailand.

## **Conclusions**

The present study aims to explore the actual classroom practices and both teachers' and students' perceptions and opinions towards the integration of multimodality into English classroom practices at the university level in Thailand. Modes of teaching employed in the classroom and teachers' integration of multimodality in English classroom practices were identified. Findings suggest that teachers in five different regions of Thailand, notably the north, northeast, east, central, and south, employed different modes e.g. written and oral language, gestures, visuals, sounds, and movements in their English classrooms. There were no significant differences found among teachers who teach in different regions in terms of sociocultural background, economies, and lifestyles that could affect their English classroom practices. The findings also reveal that students from all five regions positively agree that the integration of multimodality in English classroom enrich classroom engagement, enhance their motivation, enable them to practice their English, and improve their English skills.

Furthermore, quantitative analysis shows the significance of the integration of multimodality in English classrooms in Thailand as positive perceptions of this approach were made clear by the participants. As suggested by educators and researchers in multimodality (Kress, 2010; Hafner, 2014, 2015; Yi, 2014; Van Leeuwen, 2015; Choi & Yi, 2016), multimodal practices can support students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly when digital platforms are used as instructional tools in English classroom. Moreover, students are able to apply their knowledge from learning in their real-life situations.

Although the research findings have illustrated the positive perceptions of undergraduate students from five regions in Thailand regarding teachers' integration of multimodality in English classrooms, future studies should include a large number of students in order to ensure the inferential quantitative findings as well as qualitative data to elicit more comprehensive findings. Additionally, future research in multimodality in English classrooms should include an exploration of intertextuality in English language instruction and an examination of using different modes for meaning making and communication in English classroom practices.

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## Appendix A Classroom Observation Checklist

### Multimodality Checklist

- Visuals:** .....
- Texts:** .....
- Animated images:** .....
- Gestures:** .....
- Communication:** .....
- Technology:**
  - PowerPoint slides:** .....
  - Interactive CD / program:** .....
  - Audio / Sound:** .....
  - Video Clips:** .....
- Others:** .....

### Classroom Interaction

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## **Appendix B**

### **Semi-structured Questions**

1. Have you ever heard the term “Multimodality” in English language teaching and learning? If yes, can you explain what it is. If no, can you define this term in your own word.
2. What modes of teaching you would normally plan to use in your English classroom when you design your English lessons? Do you consider using only one mode or multiple modes in teaching? Why?
3. What are the most successful / appropriate modes of teaching employed when you teach English in your classroom? And why do you think so?
4. What are the benefits of integrating multimodality into your English classroom practices?
5. What are the challenges of integrating multimodality into your English classroom practices?
6. Do you think integrating multimodality in English classroom can help your students improve 21st century skills? How?

## Appendix C

### Categories and Items for the students' perception towards teacher's integration of multimodality into English classroom practices questionnaire

#### Modes of Teaching Employed in English Classroom

1. My English teacher integrates multiple modes including written and oral language, gestures, visuals, sounds, and movements into English classroom practices.
2. My English teacher designs many activities to get students involved in his/her class.
3. My English teacher utilizes online tools e.g. Kahoot, Plickers, Quizlet, Google Application in his/her class.
4. My English teacher uses PowerPoint Slides with various pictures and animations in his/her class.
5. My English teacher writes all important concepts on the board while teaching.
6. My English teacher often assigns tasks that allow students to utilize multiple modes to illustrate knowledge gained from a particular module or unit.

#### Teacher's Integration of Multimodality into English Classroom Practices

7. Teacher's integration of multimodality into English classroom practices distracts from the teaching and learning process.
8. Learning English with teachers who walk around the room to monitor the class while teaching is an effective way to learn English.
9. English teacher who uses different gestures while teaching distracts from learning.
10. Adding related visuals and sounds to English lesson helps students learn English better.
11. Learning English with teachers who only speak and communicate with students in English is the most effective way to improve English skills.
12. English teachers should use L1 (Thai) to explain some grammatical features or abstract ideas rather than using L2 (English).
13. English teachers are able to maximize their teaching ability for creating effective English classroom by integrating multimodality into English classroom practices.
14. If my English teacher integrates multimodality into English classroom practices, I will be able to improve my English skills and achieve my goal in English learning.

#### Open-ended Questions

1. What modes of teaching of your English teacher impress you and help you improve your English skills the most?
2. What modes of teaching of your English teacher do not impress you and do not help you improve your English skills the most?
3. What modes of teaching do you want your English teacher to use the most in teaching English and why?