Navigating the Landscape of CEFR-CLIL-Based Language Pedagogy in the Thai Context: A Captivating Journey Through Needs Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) is a more comprehensive approach to determining international standards. It is essential to note that the CEFR is more than just an assessment since it emphasises the processes of learning, teaching, and assessment. CEFR has recently been recognised nationally in Thailand for designing and developing school curriculums, facilitating teaching and learning, and choosing teaching material. Through a quantitative survey method, this study conducted a needs analysis to investigate the understanding and requirements of 20 senior high school English teachers and 850 learners from selected schools in Chiang Mai regarding the CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents in English Language Teaching (ELT). The research utilised a structured questionnaire to gauge the depth of teachers' and learners' understanding of the CEFR and ascertain their needs to enhance English competencies within the CEFR-CLIL framework. Findings from this extensive sample highlighted a more profound comprehension and specific needs necessary for designing a CEFR-CLIL-based course adapted to the Thai context. These insights from teachers and learners demonstrated the need for a more integrated approach to English instruction. By shedding light on the specific needs and understandings, the results offered educators an outline for refining ELT strategies, formulating relevant unit topics, and implementing pedagogical techniques in tune with the aspirations of Thai learners, ensuring alignment with the foundational principles of the CEFR guidelines.

Keywords: CEFR; CLIL; needs analysis; course design; English Language Teaching (ELT)

INTRODUCTION

In the late 19th century, John Dewey founded the Progressive Education Philosophy in the United States, which has impacted the expansion of schools in Thailand. Progressivists believe education should focus on the whole child, emphasising social development rather than just content or the teacher. Through interaction with peers and experiencing both breakthroughs and setbacks, students are better prepared for the real world as adults. Moreover, modern progressive education builds on this philosophy with ongoing discussions and concerns that emphasise learning through

experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). As a result, progressive education in Thailand has been characterised by a student-centred approach that promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Also, the English language plays an essential role in education because educational institutions and colleges worldwide, including Thailand, are pushing to advance their curricula to be more international. Consequently, the Ministry of Education (MoE) announced the "English Language Teaching Reform" policy in 2014 to enhance the quality of English education, incorporating CEFR as a framework and CLT as a teaching method.

In addition, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Thailand has encouraged kindergarten students to start learning English to prepare better and introduce them to the English language at a higher level (Ministry of Education, 2014). In other words, the MoE has emphasised the vital role of English as an international language (EIL) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as an international standard and guideline for English proficiency. EIL is a form of English used by non-native speakers worldwide, serving as a lingua franca for international communication and emerging in response to the challenges of English expansion (Sharifian & Marlina, 2012). Briefly, the CEFR serves as a guideline and standard for English proficiency in Thailand's progressive education system, which emphasises social development and a student-centred approach to ensure that Thai students achieve international competency in English, with EIL to achieve this proficiency level. English language teaching (ELT) in the 21st century is communicative and task-based. This method develops students' real-life language skills through tasks and activities that simulate real-life situations. ELT has developed throughout the years, with different approaches emerging to meet language learners' needs better. One such approach is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which has grown in popularity recently. Specifically in the Thai context, numerous CLIL studies underscore the efficiency of this approach.

Regarding the CLIL pilot study in Thailand, Prasongporn (2009) concluded that CLIL can be a practical language learning approach in Thailand. Nevertheless, a study by Tachaiyaphum and Sukying (2017) in the same context disclosed challenges in melding content and cultural elements into CLIL lessons, thus bringing to light a significant research gap that needs addressing. This scenario emphasises the need for continuous evolution and adaptation in the Thai EFL context to enhance students' learning experience in various contexts. Additionally, according to Marsh (2002), CLIL is an innovative approach that integrates language teaching and subject-specific content to enhance language and content learning outcomes. ELT has adopted CLIL in the 21st century as a practical approach for improving students' language proficiency and subject-specific knowledge while promoting critical thinking skills and intercultural competence. CLIL, to develop engaging and interactive learning environments, offers students a unique opportunity to enhance their language skills in a meaningful and relevant context. When selecting CLIL course topics based on CEFR levels, it is important to consider language competencies for each level and provide opportunities for learners to develop skills in all four domains. According to the standards of relevance and balance, topics should integrate language and content objectives. As such, the study sought to ascertain 1) how both teachers and learners recognise the CEFR and its implementations and 2) the needs of teachers and learners regarding CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents to enhance English competencies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is one of several frameworks that characterise individual language competency. There are several frameworks with comparable objectives, such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL), the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), and the Interagency Language Roundtable Scale (ILR). Moreover, a widely used language proficiency framework classifies language ability into six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. The CEFR is used globally and is applied to many languages, including English. However, according to Byram and Parmenter (2012), since CEFR's first introduction, this framework has quickly established a dominant role in language education throughout Europe and, probably more significantly, in many countries worldwide. The main goal of the CEFR is to encourage and facilitate the process for people from different European countries and further afield to work together in other languages. This means designing the basic framework for mutual understanding and language qualifications and helping learners, teachers, course designers, and educational administrators work together to indicate language learners as competent users who can act in society and take responsibility for their own learning (North, 2011). The widespread implementation of the CEFR influences language education in terms of instruction and material implementation, curriculum and course design, testing and assessment, and other dimensions.

CEFR IMPLEMENTATION IN THAILAND

CEFR is a globally recognised language teaching, learning, and assessment framework. The Council of Europe developed it and uses it as a guide for curriculum development, teaching, and evaluation. In 2014, Thailand adopted the CEFR, emphasising the significance of English language competence in today's globalised world. This strategic move aimed to enhance the standard of English education at all levels, from primary to tertiary, in the country (Ministry of Education, 2014). Thailand adopted the CEFR to promote a nationwide action-oriented language learning approach emphasising real-life communication skills and practical language use. The CEFR's action-oriented approach develops learners' communicative competence, including linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic skills. This method encourages learners to engage actively in authentic, real-world situations, enabling them to acquire language skills directly applicable to everyday life. The use of the CEFR in the current English language policy in Thailand has significantly impacted English teachers in two main areas. Firstly, it is a guideline for creating teaching and learning activities, including assessment. Secondly, it has encouraged teachers to improve their English language competence on the Global Scale, leading to greater awareness of self and professional development (Charttrakul & Damnet, 2021). In summary, the CEFR has become vital to the country's current English language policy.

Furthermore, the CEFR framework in Thailand emphasises an action-oriented approach, necessitating a deep understanding by teachers for effective implementation. Clear guidelines, administrative adjustments, and teacher cooperation highlight the complexity of successful CEFR implementation in Thailand's educational context. Adequate support and resources are essential for enhancing teachers' understanding and application of the CEFR, aligning teaching methods with global standards, and significantly improving English language learning and teaching in Thailand (Supunya, 2022). Despite its central importance, the CEFR framework's full adoption

faces challenges in Thailand and other Asian contexts, underscoring the need for reforms to empower local stakeholders, including teachers and learners, more effectively (Savski, 2019). In short, the CEFR's adoption in Thailand emphasises practical language use and cooperation, aiming to enhance English learning and align with global standards while highlighting the need for further local adaptation and support.

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL)

According to Coyle et al. (2010), CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning, which is an approach to teaching that integrates the teaching of content and language. CLIL is "an umbrella term used to describe a range of educational practices in which a language other than the learner's mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction for content-based learning." CLIL aims to develop students' language skills by learning subject-specific content like science, history, or geography. CLIL is commonly employed in bilingual or multilingual education programs and is intended to facilitate the meaningful and engaging development of students' language skills. CLIL aims to develop students' language skills meaningfully and engagingly by providing them with opportunities to learn and practice language skills in a real-life context. In addition, CLIL can be applied in various educational contexts, from primary to higher education, and is becoming increasingly popular to improve students' language proficiency and subject knowledge.

THE 4CS FRAMEWORK OF CLIL IN THE THAI CONTEXT

The 4Cs Framework (Coyle et al., 2010) attempts to integrate four key contextual components of CLIL into a holistic framework (see Figure 1). The 4Cs (Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture) are the essential elements that form the foundation of the Content and Language Integrated Learning approach. Subsequently, this approach seeks to integrate content and language teaching, thereby supporting the holistic development of learners' language and content knowledge. Content involves the teaching of subject-specific content in the language being learned. Communication refers to using language as a tool for learning and social interaction. Cognition is about developing higher-order thinking skills, critical thinking, and the ability to analyse and evaluate information. Culture involves the development of intercultural competence and an understanding of cultural diversity. According to Marsh (2012), integrating the 4Cs in CLIL programs can provide learners with a more comprehensive and engaging learning experience that helps them develop their language and content knowledge while also building their communicative and critical thinking skills and cultural awareness. Furthermore, the constant development of CLIL over the past two decades highlights the complexity and variety of how integrated learning is interpreted and developed in many contexts (Bower et al., 2020). Therefore, it aims to develop multilingual competence in students, which includes language proficiency in two or more languages, as well as intercultural communicative competence, critical thinking skills, and subject-specific knowledge (Cenoz, 2009; Coyle et al., 2010; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010).

Despite its worldwide recognition and application, adapting the 4Cs framework within the CLIL approach in Thailand continues to be a work in progress. In Thailand, a teaching and learning approach based on the CLIL 4Cs Framework faces challenges due to time-consuming planning and a lack of training for Thai English teachers. To achieve its 2025 vision, Thailand needs to invest significant time in CLIL preparation, including teachers, to ensure its national policy and vision align with the CLIL approach (Suwannoppharat & Chinokul, 2015). Moreover, a study by

Taylor (2022) reveals that CLIL knowledge and skills in Thai schools are not solely influenced by native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) or non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), but rather by opportunities for professional learning, ongoing professional development, and the involvement of authorities and schools in the process. In short, the successful implementation of CLIL in the Thai context, based on the 4Cs framework, necessitates an integrative environment that integrates language learning with content mastery, thereby ensuring Thai students' holistic development.
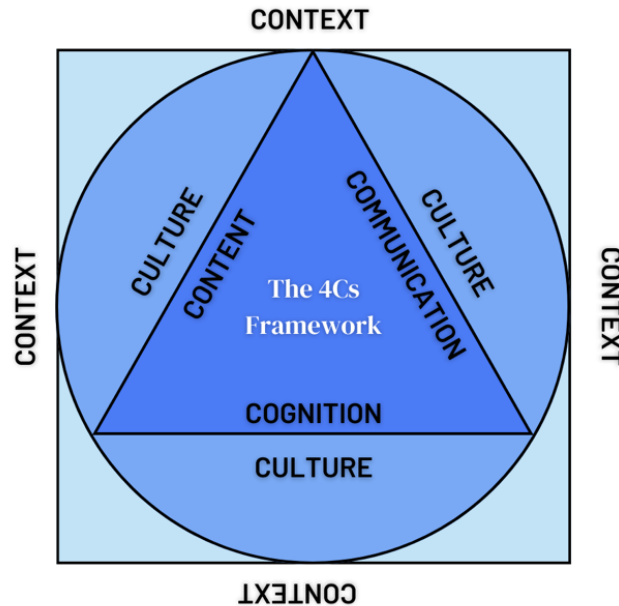

FIGURE 1. The 4Cs Framework of CLIL (Adapted from Coyle et al., 2010)

THE CLIL PYRAMID

The CLIL Pyramid is expected to be employed throughout an entire unit rather than just one lesson, and it gives an operationalised visual representation of CLIL course design (Meyer, 2013) (see Figure 2). Also, in Meyer's CLIL Pyramid, a method for developing CLIL quality materials is fundamental to scaffolding in facilitating the learner's progress from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking. To produce high-quality CLIL materials, scaffolding strategies must be considered during the Choice of Media phase (texts, images, films, etc.) and the Task-Design phase. As shown in Figure 2, the amount and type of input and output scaffolding needed depend on the type of input chosen and the desired output, such as a document, presentation, painting, or outline (Meyer, 2010).
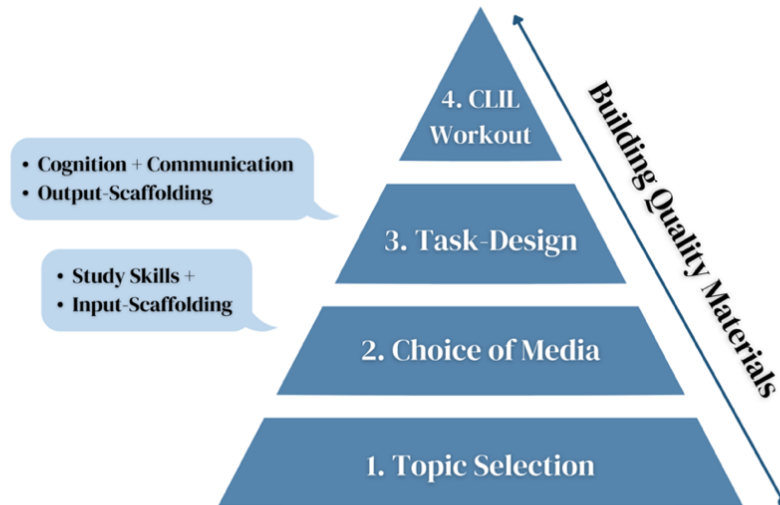
FIGURE 2. The CLIL-Pyramid (Adapted from Meyer, 2010)

As shown in Figure 2, the CLIL-Pyramid proposes a methodical, implemented process for planning CLIL units and materials. This process begins with topic selection and concludes with a review of essential content and language elements, referred to as the CLIL workout. In addition, planning a CLIL unit is not a one-time event but a continuous process that requires regular reflection and adjustment. Therefore, beginning with topic selection is just the fundamental or initial stage of the CLIL-Pyramid. Also, every CLIL course requires a unique approach considering the subject's particular needs. To achieve this, CLIL courses are designed around broad concepts (topics) that involve several curricular (content and language) subjects or curriculum areas. Additionally, to create engaging learning materials and ensure effective instruction, every CLIL lesson's strategic focus is on the unique aspects of the subject matter, which serves as the foundation for the course design (Meyer, 2013). In brief, the CLIL-Pyramid process for planning CLIL units and materials starts with topic selection, employs scaffolding to facilitate learning, and focuses on unique subject matter aspects.

NEEDS ANALYSIS AND ITS THAI CONTEXT

The evaluation of needs serves as the foundation for various implementations of the English language for specific purposes. The purpose of assessing students' needs is to evaluate how English competency is developed in the language classroom through reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The definition of needs analysis by Brown (1995) has been the most referenced until now. According to him, needs analysis is the process of acquiring information, and course designers will employ the information to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of a specific group of learners. Needs analysis is the foundation for developing teaching materials, classroom activities, testing and assessment, and program evaluation (Brown, 2001). Also, needs analysis is an integral part of creating all language courses, but it is vital for ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses because they have to take into account not only the needs of students but also the needs of teachers, administrators, employers, institutions, etc. (Brown, 2006). In this regard, the findings and recommendations of a needs analysis are essential not only to course designers but also to a wide variety of individuals, such as future learners and instructors of the course,

testing specialists, textbook authors, etc. (J. Richards, 2001). To conclude, needs assessment is an essential component of systematic curriculum design.

Needs analysis and the questionnaire are discussed in this paper as they are of utmost importance and can significantly help both EIL teachers and learners. According to J. Richards (2001), the definition of needs analysis is "the procedures used to acquire information about the needs of the learners." Thus, it is conducted in various ways and phases to collect informative data about the needs of learners in establishing appropriate objectives and designing tasks that represent real-life purposes. Also, the needs analysis process became a part of the curriculum development for language planning (Nunan, 1988). The technique used by the teacher to perform a needs analysis study was a questionnaire, which collects information directly from learners and is the most practical and, hence, the most preferred of all techniques (Ayakli et al., 2004). A critical concept behind ESP approaches to language teaching is that a course and syllabus should be designed with the reasons why a learner needs to learn a language. ESP was made with a backward-design method instead of a forward-design method. The first step was to figure out what the learner needed. ESP advocates that learners' learning and language requirements should be supported. As a result, needs are specific and should determine course content (J. C. Richards, 2017).

In recent years, the conduct of needs analysis in Thailand has emerged as a crucial step for curriculum designers to ensure effective language instruction. A study by Watanapokakul (2022) investigated the needs of English primary undergraduate students and stakeholders regarding studying English for event management. The findings guide the design of an English for Event Management course in Thailand, aligning with the university's policy to promote language skills, entrepreneurship, and 21st-century learning. The University of Phayao also conducted a needs analysis with Thai civil engineering students to develop an appropriate ESP syllabus that met the student's needs. The findings revealed a high demand for communicative topics, mainly speaking and listening in work-related situations. This highlighted the importance of needs analysis in ESP course development (Thepseenu, 2020). These studies emphasise the essential role of needs analysis in shaping language curricula tailored to the unique requirements of Thai EFL learners. As a result, these studies underline the imperative of aligning course content with the specific needs identified, reaffirming Richard's assertion that needs are particular and should dictate the course content.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two primary research questions guided the study:
- RQ1: In what ways are the CEFR and its implementations acknowledged by both teachers and learners?
- RQ2: What are the needs of teachers and learners regarding CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents to enhance English competencies?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH AIMS

This research aimed to conduct a needs analysis of CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents to enhance the English competencies of teachers and learners in Chiang Mai, Thailand. To accomplish this goal, the researcher concentrated on three major tasks: (1) determine the respondents' understanding of the CEFR, (2) address the needs of teachers and learners regarding CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents to enhance English competencies, (3) identify the contents the respondents wish to include in the CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum.

CONTEXT AND RESPONDENTS

This research was carried out at selected private and public high schools in Chiang Mai, Thailand, a region that was specifically chosen as the research area. Living in Chiang Mai enabled the researcher to employ a convenience sampling technique to collect respondents from all over the area. Thus, 20 senior high school English teachers and 850 learners agreed to participate in this research project. Although the respondent group appears large, this intentional choice, guided by the Yamane formula, ensures the inclusion of diverse views and backgrounds. This methodological approach underscores the significance of an inclusive and comprehensive sample, thereby enhancing the study's reliability and providing expansive insight into the educational landscape of Chiang Mai. Consequently, the study group selected provides a suitable balance of variety and inclusiveness, allowing for a more thorough investigation and understanding of the research topics.

INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire was primarily employed as a research tool in this study to address the understanding of the CEFR and its applications and the needs of the CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the first section gathered background information on the respondents, the second section focused on their understanding of the CEFR in Thailand, and the third section inquired about their needs concerning the contents of a CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum for English language learning management, specifically addressing four separate unit plans. The researcher evaluated and adjusted questions about CEFR and CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents with input from two associate professors and two senior high school English teachers to improve the questionnaire's validity. The value for Cronbach's alpha in the teachers' questionnaire was $\alpha = .973$, considered excellent. In addition, the value for Cronbach's alpha for the learners' questionnaire was $\alpha = .958$, regarded as excellent. Therefore, the instrument used in this study to collect data was both valid and reliable.

Note: George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of thumb: $\alpha > 0.9$ (Excellent), > 0.8 (Good), > 0.7 (Acceptable), > 0.6 (Questionable), > 0.5 (Poor), and < 0.5 (Unacceptable).

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND CONTENT STRUCTURE

This study addresses the issue of some upper secondary students in Thailand scoring below the CEFR standards for English proficiency and proposes a solution. The researcher analyses relevant concepts, theories, and research before emphasising the part of teachers and students in selecting compelling topics for unit plans. The questionnaire used a rating scale to gather quantitative insights into learner needs. After studying, the CEFR is an internationally recognised standard for language proficiency, and teachers must understand its "Can-Do" statements and integrate them

into their practices. Also, the MoE in Thailand requires Mathayom 6 (Grade 12) students to reach a B1 level. EF Education First (2022) states that a B1-level student can perform tasks beyond those of an A2-level student. These tasks include discussing personal and professional hopes and dreams, arranging and interviewing for a job, discussing television and music preferences, describing education and plans, giving and receiving advice about healthy habits, discussing relationships and dating, ordering and paying for food in a restaurant, participating in negotiations with some assistance, reporting injuries, and responding appropriately to impolite behaviour. Additionally, the common reference levels, global scale (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24) and CEFR descriptors for B1 (Nagai et al., 2020) were referenced to better understand the CEFR's B1 Level before designing unit topics. According to the global scale of the B1 level, the following is stated:

> *"can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans."*

(Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24)

These documents detail the language learning competencies of independent users (B1). Thus, the last section of the questionnaire explores the needs of B1-level language learners about CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents. The questionnaire is divided into four sections, each corresponding to one of the four units. Each unit focuses on different topics, with the first unit primarily covering leisure activities and social media. The second unit covers media, film, and TV programmes, while the third unit focuses on travel, lifestyles, and current events. The final unit discusses topics related to experiences, dreams, hopes, and ambitions.

DATA COLLECTION

In order to collect data more efficiently in the COVID-19 circumstance, the researcher utilises an online survey tool, Google Form, since it has proven useful for designing, developing, and gathering respondents' responses more easily. The researcher provided a permission request letter for research data collection and a QR code to complete the questionnaire. The researcher then circulated the research instrument to both public and private schools in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The duration of the data collection was three months, from September 2022 to November 2022. In addition, the researcher has observed complete confidentiality and secrecy of information among the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

Following data collection, the responses from the structured survey questionnaire were subjected to quantitative analysis. The focus of the analysis was the distribution patterns of the closed-ended questions. The data was analysed and interpreted systematically using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistical devices that were employed are listed:

1. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire.
2. The respondents' background information was classified as frequency (f) and percentage (%).

3. The 5-point Likert scale was applied to evaluate the level of both teachers' and learners' understanding of the CEFR and its applications, as well as the level of needs in CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for each unit plan.

Scale	Mean Range	Level of Understanding	Level of Needs
5	4.50 – 5.00	Very high	Most Important
4	3.50 – 4.49	High	Important
3	2.50 – 3.49	Moderate	Moderate
2	1.50 – 2.49	Low	Slightly Important
1	1.00 – 1.49	Very Low	Least Important

4. Descriptive statistics, including the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), were implemented to determine the average level of understanding and needs. The highest mean score (M) indicated a higher level of understanding and needs, whereas the lowest mean score indicated a lower level of understanding and needs. The standard deviation (SD) measures the dispersion or variation of the values of a variable around its mean value.

PRESENTATION OF MAIN RESULTS (TEACHERS)

Based on the analysis of the answers from the questionnaires, the results were as follows:

TABLE 1. General Information about Respondents

Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	2	10.00
Female	14	70.00
LGBTQI+	2	10.00
Prefer Not to Answer	2	10.00
Total	20	100.00
Age		
21-30 years	5	25.00
31-40 years	6	30.00
41-50 years	6	30.00
51-60 years	3	15.00
Total	20	100.00
Highest Level of Education		
Bachelor's degree	10	50.00
Master's degree and above	10	50.00
Total	20	100.00
English Language Teaching Experience		
0-5 years	4	20.00
6-10 years	3	15.00
11-15 years	5	25.00
16-20 years	2	10.00
21 years and over	6	30.00
Total	20	100.00
Education System		
Private school	12	60.0
Public school	8	40.0
Total	20	100.00

Table 1 presented general information about respondents, emphasising the significant number of female teachers (70%). Additionally, 50% of respondents held bachelor's degrees, while the other 50% had master's degrees or higher qualifications. The largest age groups were 31-40 and 41-50 years old, each at 30%. Most respondents (30%) had over 21 years of English

teaching experience, and 60% were from private schools. Given their education and experience, it is reasonable to conclude that the respondents were experienced in English teaching and able to provide accurate understanding and needs regarding CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents.

TABLE 2. Teachers' understanding of the CEFR and its applications (n=20)

Items	Statements	Mean	SD	Level of Understanding
1	CEFR stands for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.	4.40	.88	High
2	CEFR is an international standard for describing learners' proficiency in a language they are learning.	4.40	.88	High
3	CEFR descriptors specify progressive mastery of each skill, which is graded on a six-level scale (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2).	4.40	.88	High
4	The Ministry of Education (Thailand) has required that students in Mattayom 6 (Grade 12) must reach a B1 level (Independent User).	4.25	1.02	High
5	CEFR's Independent User (B1) can understand clear standard input on familiar topics encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can handle most situations while travelling in a language-speaking area. They can produce simple connected text on personal interests and describe experiences, events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions, and provide explanations for opinions and plans.	4.25	1.02	High
6	The Ministry of Education's introduction of its "English language teaching reform policy" in 2014 established a connection between CEFR as a framework and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a teaching method.	4.25	1.02	High
7	Standardised tests like the TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, and CU-TEP were mapped to the CEFR so that their scores could be recognised and compared.	4.20	.77	High
8	CEFR 'Can-Do' descriptors are included that demonstrate learners' proficiency in five skills: listening, reading, writing, spoken interaction, and spoken production.	4.15	.75	High
9	In 2014, the Ministry of Education announced the use of CEFR as the standards to be adopted at all levels of education. Thus, CEFR is adopted as a fundamental conceptual framework for English language teaching in all aspects, e.g., learning objectives, curriculum development, testing and assessment, etc.	4.10	1.02	High
10	The CEFR primarily relies on two approaches, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and plurilingualism, in teaching and lesson planning in the classroom.	4.05	1.00	High
	Total Average	4.25	.72	High

Table 2 showed teachers' understanding of the CEFR and its applications. The total average level of understanding was high (M = 4.25, SD = 0.72), with each aspect having a high level of understanding. The highest aspect was that CEFR stands for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR is an international standard for describing learners' proficiency in a language they are learning, and CEFR descriptors specify progressive mastery of each skill, which is graded on a six-level scale (M = 4.40, SD = 0.88), while the lowest aspect was that the CEFR primarily relies on two approaches, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and plurilingualism, in teaching and lesson planning in the classroom (M = 4.05, SD = 1.00).

TABLE 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs in the CEFR-CLIL-Based Curriculum Contents for Each Unit Plan (n=20)

Items	Unit Plan	Mean	SD	Level of Needs
1	Leisure Activities & Social Media	4.05	.59	Important
2	Media, Film & TV Programmes	4.10	.62	Important
3	Travel, Lifestyles & Current Events	4.20	.64	Important
4	Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions	4.22	.58	Important
	Total Average	4.14	.55	Important

Table 3 revealed that the level of needs in CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for each unit plan was regarded as important, as shown by M = 4.14 and SD = 0.55. The analysis further suggested that each content for unit plans was regarded as important. The highest level of needs for CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for each unit plan was identified as Experiences, Dreams, Hopes and ambitions (M = 4.22, SD = 0.58), followed by Travel, Lifestyles & Current Events (M = 4.20, SD = 0.64), Media, Film & TV Programmes (M = 4.10, SD = 0.62), and Leisure Activities & Social Media (M = 4.05, SD = 0.59).

TABLE 4. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs for Unit 1: Leisure Activities & Social Media (n=20)

No.	Topics	Mean	SD	Level of Needs	Rank
1	Playing Board Games	4.10	.79	Important	2
2	Road Trips/Get into Nature	3.95	.94	Important	8
3	Movie Nights	4.10	.72	Important	2
4	Art and Crafts	3.90	.79	Important	10
5	Go Virtual (Free Virtual Tours)	4.05	.83	Important	6
6	Social Media: Its Real Value	4.20	.77	Important	1
7	The Future of Social Media	4.10	.72	Important	2
8	Social Media vs. Celebrities	4.05	.83	Important	6
9	The Culture of Photography on Social Media	4.10	.79	Important	2
10	Social Media in Enhancing Happiness	3.95	.76	Important	8
	Total Average	4.05	.59	Important	

Table 4 revealed that the level of needs in CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for Unit 1: Leisure Activities & Social Media was important (M = 4.05, SD = 0.59). Among the content items, "Social Media: Its Real Value" received the highest mean score (M = 4.20, SD = 0.77), followed by "Playing Board Games," "The Culture of Photography on Social Media," "Movie Nights," and "The Future of Social Media" (M = 4.10, SD = 0.72-0.79). Conversely, "Art and Crafts" received the lowest mean score (M = 3.90, SD = 0.79).

TABLE 5. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs for Unit 2: Media, Film & TV Programmes (n=20)

No.	Topics	Mean	SD	Level of Needs	Rank
1	Superheroes in the Cinematography	4.25	.72	Important	2
2	Walt Disney vs. His Characters	4.15	.67	Important	4
3	The Role of Color in Movies	4.10	.79	Important	5
4	Good vs. Evil concept in movies	4.20	.62	Important	3
5	Hollywood vs. Bollywood	3.95	.83	Important	9
6	Zombies in contemporary cinema	4.05	1.05	Important	7
7	Monster movie culture in the 21st century	3.85	.93	Important	10
8	Hollywood cinema	4.10	.79	Important	5
9	Advertising in magazines and on billboards	4.05	.76	Important	7
10	Mass Media: TV Show	4.30	.80	Important	1
	Total Average	4.10	.62	Important	

Table 5 indicated that the level of needs in the CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for Unit 2: Media, Film & TV Programmes was important, with M = 4.10 and SD = 0.62. "Mass Media: TV Show" received the highest mean score (M = 4.30, SD = 0.80), followed by "Superheroes in the Cinematography" (M = 4.25, SD = 0.72). However, "Monster movie culture in the 21st century" scored the lowest mean (M = 3.85, SD = 0.93) compared to other aspects.

TABLE 6. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs for Unit 3: Travel, Lifestyles & Current Events (n=20)

No.	Topics	Mean	SD	Level of Needs	Rank
1	A perfect journey to a new place	4.35	.81	Important	1
2	Travelling is the best therapy for your soul.	4.30	.80	Important	2
3	The importance of travelling with your friends	4.20	.70	Important	6
4	The benefits of travelling alone	4.30	.80	Important	2
5	Healthy Lifestyle and Mental Health	4.20	.83	Important	6
6	Country Lifestyles vs. City Lifestyles	4.25	.79	Important	4
7	Cooking at Home vs. Eating Out	4.10	.72	Important	9
8	Are we living in a digital world?	4.25	.79	Important	4
9	Cryptocurrency	3.90	1.02	Important	10
10	Life lessons that the coronavirus taught us	4.15	.75	Important	8
	Total Average	4.20	.64	Important	

Table 6 showed that the level of needs in the CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for Unit 3: Travel, Lifestyles & Current Events was important, as indicated by M = 4.20 and SD = 0.64. According to the table, the highest mean score was given to "A perfect journey to a new place" (M = 4.35, SD = 0.81), followed by "Traveling is the best therapy for your soul" (M = 4.30, SD = 0.80), and "The benefits of traveling alone" (M = 4.30, SD = 0.80). Nevertheless, when compared to all other aspects, "Cryptocurrency" received the lowest mean score (M = 3.90, SD = 1.02).

TABLE 7. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs for Unit 4: Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions (n=20)

No.	Topics	Mean	SD	Level of Needs	Rank
1	The bravest moment	4.10	.72	Important	8
2	An event that changed your life	4.20	.70	Important	5
3	If you could switch lives with someone	4.40	.75	Important	1
4	The most beautiful thing you've ever seen	4.40	.75	Important	1
5	The Best Holiday in My Life	4.40	.68	Important	1
6	Dear Future Me	4.20	.70	Important	5
7	Life after School/University	4.00	.79	Important	9
8	The Ways I Will Invest in My Future	4.20	.77	Important	5
9	The Real Meaning of "Lessons in Life"	4.25	.72	Important	4
10	Words that stung	4.00	.73	Important	9
	Total Average	4.22	.58	Important	

Table 7 showed that the level of needs in the CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for Unit 4: Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions was important, as shown by M = 4.22 and SD = 0.58. The top three highest mean scores were for "If you could switch lives with someone" (M = 4.40, SD = 0.75), "The most beautiful thing you've ever seen" (M = 4.40, SD = 0.75), and "The Best Holiday of My Life" (M = 4.40, SD = 0.68), followed by "The Real Meaning of Life Lessons" (M = 4.25, SD = 0.72). However, "Life after School/University" (M = 4.00, SD = 0.79) and "Words that stung" (M = 4.00, SD = 0.73) received the lowest mean scores when compared to all other aspects.

PRESENTATION OF MAIN RESULTS (LEARNERS)

Based on the analysis of the answers from the questionnaires, the results were as follows:

TABLE 8. General Information about Respondents

Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	450	52.94
Female	290	34.12
LGBTQI+	75	8.82
Prefer Not to Answer	35	4.12
Total	850	100.00
Age		
15 years	240	28.24
16 years	254	29.88
17 years	225	26.47
18 years	131	15.41
Total	850	100.00
Level of Education		
Mattayom 4 (Grade 10)	428	50.35
Mattayom 5 (Grade 11)	113	13.29
Mattayom 6 (Grade 12)	309	36.35
Total	850	100.00
English Language Learning Duration		
less than five years	15	1.76
6-10 years	202	23.76
11-15 years	518	60.94
16 years and over	115	13.53
Total	850	100.00
Education System		
Private school	728	85.65
Public school	122	14.35
Total	850	100.00

Table 8 showed that most senior high school students who responded to the questionnaire were male (52.94%), with similar age groups of 15-17 years old. Half of the respondents were in Grade 10, 36.35% were in Grade 12, and 13.29% were in Grade 11. Most of the respondents (60.94%) had spent 11-15 years learning English. The study included a diverse group of respondents from private schools, enabling a detailed insight into their understanding and needs regarding CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents.

TABLE 9. Learners' understanding of the CEFR and its applications (n=850)

Items	Statements	Mean	SD	Level of Understanding
1	CEFR descriptors specify progressive mastery of each skill, which is graded on a six-level scale (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2).	3.59	1.09	High
2	CEFR's Independent User (B1) can understand clear standard input on familiar topics encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. They can handle most situations while travelling in a language-speaking area. They can produce simple connected text on personal interests describing experiences, events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and providing explanations for opinions and plans.	3.51	1.03	High
3	The Ministry of Education (Thailand) has required that students in Mattayom 6 (Grade 12) must reach a B1 level (Independent User).	3.46	1.05	Moderate
4	CEFR is an international standard for describing learners' proficiency in a language they are learning.	3.33	1.03	Moderate
5	CEFR stands for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.	3.10	1.09	Moderate
	Total Average	3.40	.90	Moderate

Table 9 summarised learners' understanding of the CEFR and its applications. Overall, understanding was moderate (M = 3.40, SD = 0.90). The highest level of understanding was for CEFR descriptors specify progressive mastery of each skill, which is graded on a six-level scale

(M = 3.59, SD = 1.09), while the lowest was for CEFR stands for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (M = 3.10, SD = 1.09).

TABLE 10. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs in CEFR-CLIL-Based Curriculum Contents for Each Unit Plan (n=850)

Items	Unit Plan	Mean	SD	Level of Needs
1	Leisure Activities & Social Media	3.90	.67	Important
2	Media, Film & TV Programmes	3.80	.74	Important
3	Travel, Lifestyles & Current Events	3.87	.71	Important
4	Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions	3.89	.74	Important
	Total Average	3.87	.64	Important

Table 10 showed that the level of needs in CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for each unit plan was regarded as important, as shown by M = 3.87 and SD = 0.64. All unit plans were regarded as important, with Leisure Activities and Social Media having the highest level of needs (M = 3.90, SD = 0.67), followed by Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions (M = 3.89, SD = 0.74), Travel, Lifestyles & Current Events (M = 3.87, SD = 0.71), and Media, Film & TV Programmes (M = 3.80, SD = 0.74).

TABLE 11. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs for Unit 1: Leisure Activities & Social Media (n=850)

No.	Topics	Mean	SD	Level of Needs	Rank
1	Playing Board Games	4.02	.95	Important	2
2	Road Trips/Get into Nature	3.96	.93	Important	3
3	Movie Nights	4.27	.88	Important	1
4	Art and Crafts	3.90	1.00	Important	4
5	Go Virtual (Free Virtual Tours)	3.86	.94	Important	6
6	Social Media: Its Real Value	3.87	.94	Important	5
7	The Future of Social Media	3.83	.94	Important	8
8	Social Media vs. Celebrities	3.74	.98	Important	9
9	The Culture of Photography on Social Media	3.74	.96	Important	9
10	Social Media in Enhancing Happiness	3.85	.93	Important	7
	Total Average	3.90	.67	Important	

Table 11 showed that the level of needs in CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for Unit 1: Leisure Activities & Social Media was important, as shown by M = 3.90 and SD = 0.67. "Movie Nights" obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.27, SD = 0.88), followed by "Playing Board Games" (M = 4.02, SD = 0.95), while "Social Media vs. Celebrities" (M = 3.74, SD = 0.98) and "The Culture of Photography on Social Media" (M = 3.74, SD = 0.96) received the lowest.

TABLE 12. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs for Unit 2: Media, Film & TV Programmes (n=850)

No.	Topics	Mean	SD	Level of Needs	Rank
1	Superheroes in the Cinematography	3.80	.96	Important	5
2	Walt Disney vs. His Characters	4.05	.96	Important	1
3	The Role of Color in Movies	3.83	.93	Important	3
4	Good vs. Evil concept in movies	3.83	.98	Important	3
5	Hollywood vs. Bollywood	3.90	.97	Important	2
6	Zombies in contemporary cinema	3.74	1.02	Important	8
7	Monster movie culture in the 21st century	3.80	.96	Important	5

8	Hollywood cinema	3.75	1.00	Important	7
9	Advertising in magazines and on billboards	3.68	1.00	Important	9
10	Mass Media: TV Show	3.66	1.01	Important	10
	Total Average	3.80	.74	Important	

Table 12 indicated that Unit 2: Media, Film & TV Programmes had an important level of needs in CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents with M = 3.80 and SD = 0.74. The top-rated aspects were "Walt Disney vs. His Characters" with M = 4.05 and SD = 0.96, and "Hollywood vs. Bollywood" with M = 3.90 and SD = 0.97. However, "Mass Media: TV Show" had the lowest mean score of M = 3.66 and SD = 1.01 when compared to other aspects.

TABLE 13. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs for Unit 3: Travel, Lifestyles & Current Events (n=850)

No.	Topics	Mean	SD	Level of Needs	Rank
1	A perfect journey to a new place	3.96	.90	Important	3
2	Travelling is the best therapy for your soul	3.94	.92	Important	4
3	The importance of travelling with your friends	4.03	.93	Important	1
4	The benefits of travelling alone	3.82	.94	Important	7
5	Healthy Lifestyle and Mental Health	3.92	.92	Important	6
6	Country Lifestyles vs. City Lifestyles	3.94	.92	Important	4
7	Cooking at Home vs. Eating Out	4.00	.95	Important	2
8	Are we living in a digital world?	3.82	.94	Important	7
9	Cryptocurrency	3.56	1.04	Important	10
10	Life lessons that coronavirus taught us	3.71	.93	Important	9
	Total Average	3.87	.71	Important	

Table 13 showed that for Unit 3: Travel, Lifestyles & Current Events, the level of needs in CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents was important (M = 3.87, SD = 0.71). The highest mean scores were given to "The importance of traveling with your friends" (M = 4.03, SD = 0.93) and "Cooking at Home vs. Eating Out" (M = 4.00, SD = 0.95), while "Cryptocurrency" received the lowest mean score (M = 3.56, SD = 1.04).

TABLE 14. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Level of Needs for Unit 4: Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions (n=850)

No.	Topics	Mean	SD	Level of Needs	Rank
1	The bravest moment	3.68	.88	Important	10
2	An event that changed your life	3.88	.91	Important	5
3	If you could switch lives with someone	3.85	.94	Important	8
4	The most beautiful thing you've ever seen	4.00	.92	Important	2
5	The Best Holiday in My Life	4.01	.94	Important	1
6	Dear Future Me	3.98	.95	Important	3
7	Life after School/University	3.98	.93	Important	3
8	The Ways I Will Invest in My Future	3.86	.94	Important	7
9	The Real Meaning of "Lessons in Life"	3.88	.98	Important	5
10	Words that stung	3.75	.91	Important	9
	Total Average	3.89	.74	Important	

As shown in Table 14, the level of needs in CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for Unit 4: Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions was important, as shown by M = 3.89 and SD = 0.74. "The Best Holiday in My Life" and "The most beautiful thing you've ever seen" received the highest mean scores (M = 4.01, SD = 0.94 and M = 4.00, SD = 0.92, respectively), while "The bravest moment" had the lowest mean score (M = 3.68, SD = 0.88) among all other aspects.

DISCUSSION

This study explored teachers' and learners' understanding and needs regarding CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents. Results indicated that both groups had a relatively high level of understanding of the CEFR and its potential benefits for language learning. However, variations were observed in how they perceived different aspects of the framework. Teachers had a good understanding of the CEFR but scored lower in their knowledge of using Communicative Language Teaching and plurilingualism in teaching. This finding highlights the need for more teacher training and support in implementing the CEFR framework effectively. In brief, the study found that English teachers have a relatively high level of awareness of the CEFR and its potential benefits for language learning. This is consistent with Nii and Yunus (2022), who asserted that English teachers are showing positive responses to the implementation of the CEFR. Additionally, the study found that learners have a moderate level of understanding of the CEFR and its applications. They have a good understanding of the assessment system and potential benefits for language learning, as indicated by the highest mean score of understanding for CEFR descriptors. However, the lowest mean score of understanding was observed for the concept of the CEFR, indicating a need for more explicit guidance from teachers on its purpose and relevance.

The needs analysis shows that both teachers and learners consider CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents to be important for language learning outcomes. Teachers and learners perceive every content item in unit plans as important. Teachers value the integration of content and language learning and recognise the potential benefits of using CLIL-based materials that align with the CEFR framework, with "Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions" having the highest mean score of needs. Learners value the incorporation of authentic and relevant materials and activities into language learning, which can help them develop their language competencies in real-world contexts, with "Leisure Activities & Social Media" having the highest mean score of needs. Also, the results of the study indicated that the questionnaire used in the study was effective in identifying the specific topics that teachers and learners consider important for each unit plan, providing valuable insights for language curriculum development. As such, Meyer's CLIL-Pyramid's first stage, topic selection, is consistent with the study's findings regarding the specific topics that teachers and learners consider important for each unit plan (Meyer, 2010). By identifying the specific topics that teachers and learners consider important, the researcher, as well as curriculum developers, can design CEFR-CLIL-based materials and activities that align with the CEFR framework and meet the needs of both teachers and learners. Also, the results of the study are consistent with the 4Cs of CLIL proposed by Coyle et al., (2010). Integrating content and language learning can promote language competencies (communication) and critical thinking skills (cognition), while using authentic and relevant materials can develop intercultural understanding and awareness (culture).

In the Thai context, the needs analysis results align with local educational goals. Both teachers and learners in Thailand underline the importance of CEFR-CLIL-based curriculum contents for enhancing language skills, reflecting global trends. Studies by Watanapokakul (2022) and Thepseenu (2020) reinforce this, emphasising the need for practical language skills in Thailand, especially those related to work. This focus on real-world use and improving communication aligns with the needs analysis, where teachers and learners value using real and relevant materials in language learning. However, challenges persist in the Thai context. Despite a national vision for strong CLIL implementation by 2025 (Suwannoppharat & Chinokul, 2015), issues like extensive planning and teacher training remain significant hurdles, echoing the

problems outlined by Tachaiyaphum and Sukying (2017). Lastly, within the Thai context, teachers particularly value the "Experiences, Dreams, Hopes & Ambitions" unit, signalling their commitment to language learning and personal and emotional development. Their preference underscores the importance of a well-rounded learning environment that prepares learners for various life scenarios. On the other hand, the Thai learners' preference for "Leisure Activities & Social Media" underscores their awareness of the global digital landscape and the importance of seamlessly integrating into it. This selection illustrates their awareness of these platforms' significant role in modern, global communication and interaction.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that the CEFR-CLIL-based language pedagogy in Thailand is effectively tailored to meet Thai learners' distinct needs and goals within the country's cultural and linguistic framework. The findings illuminate the intertwining of the 4Cs of CLIL – communication, cognition, content, and culture – in shaping the courses. In addition, Thailand emphasises the CEFR to ensure that learners are competent in the language and proficient at its practical application, aligning with global language standards.

Regarding unit topics, the findings revealed a structured alignment with the thematic areas of interest and relevance to Thai learners, ensuring language proficiency, contextual comprehension, and application. This specific strategy within unit topics fosters increased learner engagement and meaningful learning experiences. In line with the 4Cs framework, the course design within this study embodies a well-rounded approach, ensuring not just language skill acquisition but also fostering cognitive growth, cultural understanding, and effective communication. Providing a thorough and appropriate language learning experience for Thai learners, these elements, which form the foundation of the 4Cs, are integrated throughout the course design. This integration enhances the applicability of the pedagogical approach, enabling Thai learners to navigate real-world situations easily and ensuring the course's compatibility with current and future educational goals in Thailand. The conclusion reinforces the robustness of the CEFR-CLIL-based language pedagogy, presenting a clear pathway for its continuous evolution and enhancement in the Thai educational landscape.

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