Enhancing Thai EFL Undergraduate Students' Grammar Competence through Literary Texts in a Collaborative Learning Classroom: A Quasi-Experimental Study

Tanwalai Kongwut – Sukanya Kaowiwattanakul

DOI: 10.18355/XL.2026.19.04.08

Abstract
This study aimed to investigate the effects of using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach to enhance Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence. A quasi-experimental one-group pre-test-posttest design was employed with 20 Thai EFL undergraduate students enrolled in Grammar for Business Communication at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Thailand. The research instruments consisted of four lesson plans and a 50-item grammar competence test. The test was designed to assess students' grammar competence across four cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: remembering, understanding, applying, and analyzing. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, and a paired-samples t-test. The findings revealed that students' posttest scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores at the 0.05 level. The overall mean score increased from 27.25 in the pre-test to 40.60 in the post-test for all grammar topics and all four cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. The results revealed that literary texts offered valuable and productive input, while collaborative learning activities allowed students to discuss, analyze and use grammatical structures with their peers' support. These findings suggest that using literary texts together with collaborative activities may support grammar learning among Thai EFL undergraduate students.
Key words: literary texts, collaborative learning, grammar competence, Bloom's taxonomy, EFL students, CEFR

Introduction

Grammar is important in language learning because it helps students to learn the rules and structures that they need to make expressive sentences and communicate well. In EFL contexts, grammar is important not only for communication but also for academic success. Students are often required to demonstrate their knowledge of grammar through formal assessments such as quizzes, midterm examinations, final examinations, and standardized English tests. Therefore, the students' academic performance is significantly affected by their ability to identify the correct grammatical forms, understand sentence structures and apply grammar rules appropriately.

In relation to English standardized assessment, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has been widely used as a guideline for developing instructional courses, examinations, learning materials, and other language-related purposes (Marijana et al., 2020). The CEFR classifies learners' language proficiency into three broad levels, each with two sublevels: Basic User (A1 and A2), Independent User (B1 and B2), and Proficient User (C1 and C2) (Council of Europe, 2001). The CEFR has also been adopted in Thailand as an important framework for teaching and learning English (Anantapol et al., 2018). Although the CEFR refers to communicative performance in listening, speaking, reading and writing, not to grammar as an isolated component, grammatical competence remains an essential factor for good language performance. According to Ellis (2006), "grammar is the basic blueprint for making messages in a language. On this basis, grammar is the basis

upon which learners can understand, produce and evaluate language accurately in both communicative and examination contexts.

In Thailand, English is typically taught as a foreign language, and grammar instruction has been an important element of classroom instruction and academic assessment. Thai EFL students are often required to identify grammatical forms, select the correct structures and analyze sentence patterns in tests and examinations. However, English grammar is still difficult for many Thai EFL learners because English grammatical rules and sentence structures differ considerably from those of Thai. In order to produce accurate language and communicate effectively, students need to be aware of differences in grammar. Thai EFL learners struggle to employ correct grammatical structures in spoken English, particularly verb forms and agreement (Pawabutra & Sutakote, 2024). Similarly, Kampookaew (2020) found grammatical problems in the written English of Thai EFL learners. These difficulties suggest a need for grammar instruction that gives learners opportunities to use grammatical knowledge in contexts. While traditional grammar instruction may help learners notice grammatical forms, it may not adequately support their understanding of how grammar works in contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Ellis, 2006). In this study, literary texts were combined with collaborative learning activities to provide contextualized grammar practice. Literary texts offer expressive and contextualized input that allows students to see grammatical structures in authentic language use. At the same time, collaborative learning encourages learners to discuss, analyze, and apply grammar through peer interaction and collaborative problem-solving (Collie & Slater, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978).

Therefore, using literary texts within a collaborative learning approach may help Thai EFL students develop grammar competence not only by recognizing grammatical forms but also by understanding and applying them in contexts. Accordingly, the present study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach enhance Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence?
2. How does using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach affect students' grammar competence across Bloom's cognitive levels?

Literature Review

Grammar Teaching and Learning Approaches

Grammar teaching has long been an important issue in second and foreign language education because grammar provides learners with the rules and structures needed to use language accurately. Learning grammar also supports learners' ability to construct sentences and communicate effectively (Petraki & Hill, 2011). Thornbury (1999) emphasizes that grammar instruction helps learners generate a wide range of sentences and reduce ambiguity in meaning. In language learning, grammar teaching approaches can generally be divided into two broad types: explicit grammar teaching, which focuses on rules and forms, and implicit grammar teaching, which focuses on grammar in contexts.

Explicit grammar teaching, or teaching grammar from rules, is often regarded as a traditional approach to grammar instruction. In this approach, teachers usually present grammatical rules, explain sentence structures, and provide examples before students practice the target forms. This approach is related to prescriptive grammar, the grammar-translation method, deductive teaching, and form-focused instruction. Although newer communicative approaches have been introduced, explicit grammar teaching is still widely used in EFL classrooms because it provides learners with clear explanations of grammatical forms and structures. Spahiu and Kryeziu (2021) note that the Grammar Translation Method remains popular among some teachers because

it allows them to explain grammar rules in the students' native language. Similarly, Elmayantie (2015) suggests that some teachers prefer rule-based grammar instruction because many students have limited English proficiency and may find it difficult to understand lessons conducted entirely in the target language. However, explicit grammar instruction also has limitations. Ellis (2006) argues that explicit grammar knowledge does not always lead to effective language use in real communicative contexts. Krashen (1982) similarly explains that consciously learned grammatical rules may not automatically become part of spontaneous language production. In addition, an excessive focus on accuracy may reduce learners' fluency and confidence because they may become overly concerned about making grammatical errors (Truscott, 1996).

Implicit grammar teaching, or teaching grammar from context, introduces grammatical structures through contextualized language use rather than direct rule explanation. This approach allows learners to observe how grammar functions naturally in authentic texts, conversations, and communicative situations. Mart (2013) explains that teaching grammar in contexts helps learners understand grammatical concepts through language exposure. Similarly, Nunan (1998) states that implicit or inductive grammar teaching supports learners in developing a more natural understanding of grammar through real language use. Thornbury (1999) also argues that learners need to encounter grammar in its context of use, particularly in texts, in order to make sense of grammatical meaning and function. This view is supported by communicative language teaching, which emphasizes that grammar should be learned through purposeful language use (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Moreover, Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis supports implicit grammar learning by suggesting that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly above their current level. In this sense, contextual grammar teaching can help learners notice grammatical patterns, understand their functions, and apply them in appropriate situations. Widodo (2006) further suggests that implicit grammar teaching can encourage learner autonomy and problem-solving skills, especially when learners work collaboratively.

Accordingly, both explicit and implicit grammar teaching approaches have important roles in EFL grammar instruction. Explicit teaching can provide learners with clear explanations of rules, forms, and structures, which may be useful for students with limited language proficiency or for examination preparation. However, relying only on rule-based instruction may not sufficiently develop learners' ability to use grammar effectively in real contexts. On the other hand, implicit grammar teaching encourages students to learn grammar through authentic language use, contextualized examples, and communication. Nevertheless, contextual grammar teaching should not completely replace explicit instruction. Effective grammar instruction should integrate both explicit and implicit approaches by helping learners understand grammatical rules while also providing opportunities to apply grammar in communicative contexts.

Grammar Competence and Assessment

Grammar competence is an important foundation of English language learning because it allows learners to recognize, understand, and apply grammatical structures accurately in sentences. In EFL learning, grammar is not only related to language accuracy but also to learners' ability to construct messages in academic and communicative contexts. Larsen-Freeman (2001) argues that grammar should not be viewed only as a set of forms, but as a combination of form, meaning, and use. Therefore, grammar competence involves more than memorizing grammatical rules; it also requires learners to understand how grammatical structures are used appropriately in contexts.

The assessment of grammar competence has traditionally included several test formats. Heaton (1988) identifies common types of grammar tests, including multiple-

choice items, error correction items, completion items, transformation items, word-changing items, broken sentence items, and pairing or matching items. Among these, multiple-choice items are widely used because they allow grammar knowledge to be measured objectively and consistently. However, many of these assessment formats are considered discrete-point testing methods because they focus on separate grammatical features rather than language use in broader contexts. Although discrete-point tests are useful for measuring learners' knowledge of grammatical forms, they may not fully reflect learners' ability to apply grammar effectively in communication. Therefore, grammar assessment should consider not only grammatical accuracy but also learners' ability to use grammar effectively for comprehensible communication.

More recent perspectives on grammar assessment emphasize the importance of contextual and functional grammar use. Purpura (2004) argues that grammar assessment should evaluate learners' ability to use grammatical structures accurately within authentic or simulated communicative tasks. This view is consistent with Larsen-Freeman (2001), who emphasizes that grammar should be understood as a skill to be used rather than merely a set of rules to be memorized. In relation to EFL undergraduate students, grammar competence assessment can also be aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which provides a standardized framework for evaluating language proficiency across levels. Assessment methods may include contextualized grammar tasks, error correction exercises, multiple-choice items, and production tasks that reflect real-world language use. Therefore, the main purpose of grammar assessment should be to measure learners' grammatical knowledge as well as their ability to apply that knowledge appropriately in academic, professional, and communicative contexts.

Teaching grammar in the Thai EFL context

In the Thai EFL context, English grammar instruction has traditionally been influenced by teacher-centered approaches and explicit rule presentation (Darasawang & Watson Todd, 2012; Wongsothorn et al., 2019). This emphasis is partly due to the structural differences between Thai and English, which often make English grammar challenging for Thai EFL learners. For example, English uses verb tenses to indicate time, whereas Thai relies more heavily on context rather than verb inflections to express chronological meaning (Iamsirirak & Phoocharoensil, 2023). As a result, Thai EFL students often face difficulties in understanding and applying English grammatical structures accurately. These linguistic differences require teachers to provide clear explanations of unfamiliar grammar points while also helping learners understand how structures are used in contexts.

At the same time, English has become increasingly important for communication in academic, professional, and globalized workplace contexts. In Thailand, the Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 promotes Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an approach to developing learners' communicative competence in English (Ministry of Education, 2008). However, English education in Thailand still faces challenges in balancing communicative language use with traditional grammar-focused instruction. Standardized tests such as the General Aptitude Test (GAT), the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET), TOEIC, and IELTS continue to influence English teaching and learning, as they are often related to university admission, graduation requirements, and employment opportunities. Consequently, many students may develop test-related skills, particularly grammar recognition and reading comprehension, but still struggle with applying English in authentic communication. This situation reflects the need for grammar instruction that supports both examination performance and language use.

In brief, although explicit grammar instruction remains useful for helping learners understand difficult grammatical forms, relying solely on rule explanation and

memorization may not sufficiently promote communicative grammar use. Recent discussions have therefore highlighted the value of more balanced approaches that combine explicit grammar focus with contextualized and communicative learning. Pianpadungporn (2024) suggests that explicit instruction can support grammar development. However, relying only on explicit grammar teaching may not sufficiently support learners' ability to use grammar in communicative contexts. Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis emphasizes that language acquisition occurs through exposure to comprehensible input, while DeKeyser (2003) argues that adult second language learners may benefit from a combination of explicit rule learning and implicit language exposure. Thus, grammar instruction for Thai EFL learners should balance direct explanation of grammatical rules with contextualized input and communicative practice.

Literary Texts and Collaborative Learning in Grammar Instruction

Literary texts can be used as significant materials for grammar instruction by providing learners with contextualized examples of grammatical structures in authentic language use. Unlike isolated grammar exercises, literary texts allow students to observe how grammatical forms function within narrative situations, dialogues, descriptions, and character interactions. Collie and Slater (1987) argue that literary texts offer rich language resources for language learning, while Brumfit and Carter (1986) emphasize the academic value of literature in connecting language form with meaning. In grammar instruction, this suggests that literary texts can help learners notice grammatical structures and understand their communicative functions in contexts.

In addition to literary texts, collaborative learning can further support students' grammar development by encouraging interaction, discussion, and shared problem-solving. Through pair and group activities, students are able to compare grammatical patterns, explain rules to peers, clarify misunderstandings, and apply grammatical knowledge in learning tasks. This process is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural view of learning, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and support from others in cognitive development. Therefore, when literary texts are used in group activities, learners can examine grammatical forms in context while discussing their interpretations with peers.

In the present study, literary texts were used as contextualized input, while collaborative learning activities were used to support students' understanding and application of grammar. This combination was expected to help students move beyond memorizing isolated grammar rules toward recognizing, understanding, applying, and analyzing grammatical structures in contexts.

Bloom'sTaxonomy and Cognitive Levels

Bloom's Taxonomy provides a framework for examining learners' cognitive development in educational assessment. It classifies learning outcomes from lower-order thinking skills to higher-order thinking skills, allowing researchers and teachers to identify the depth of students' learning. In the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) categorize cognitive processes into six levels: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. In language learning, this framework can be used to assess not only whether students can recall grammatical rules, but also whether learners can understand, apply, and analyze grammatical structures in contexts.

In relation to the present study, Bloom's Taxonomy was used to examine Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence across four cognitive levels: remembering, understanding, applying, and analyzing. At the remembering level, students were required to recall grammatical forms and rules. At the understanding level, they needed to demonstrate comprehension of grammatical meanings and

sentence structures. At the applying level, students were expected to use grammatical knowledge to select appropriate forms in specific contexts. At the analyzing level, they were required to identify errors, distinguish sentence patterns, and examine how grammatical structures functioned in contexts. This classification is consistent with the view that grammar learning should involve more than memorization; learners should be able to understand and use grammar as an effective system of language (Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Ellis, 2006).

Conceptual Foundation of the Present Study

Based on the reviewed literature, grammar competence remains essential for Thai EFL learners, particularly in academic and examination-based contexts. However, traditional grammar teaching that emphasizes isolated rules and memorization may not sufficiently promote effective understanding and application of grammar. Literary texts can provide contextualized input that helps students observe grammar in authentic language use, while collaborative learning offers interactional support through discussions, peer explanation, and shared problem-solving. Bloom's Taxonomy further allows the study to examine students' grammar competence across different cognitive levels. Therefore, this study investigates the effects of using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach on Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence.

Research Methodology

Research Participants

The participants in this study were 20 Thai EFL undergraduate students at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Thailand, enrolled in Grammar for Business Communication. The participants were studying English grammar as part of their course requirements and had similar learning backgrounds as EFL learners. The grammar topics used in this study were selected from the course content, including modal verbs, comparison, conditional sentences, and reported speech. All participants were involved in the same instructional treatment and completed both the pre-test and post-test.

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design using a one-group pre-test and post-test design to examine the effects of using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach on Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence. The participants first completed a grammar competence pre-test to measure their initial knowledge of the selected grammar topics. They then received instruction through literary texts integrated with collaborative learning activities. After the implementation, the same group completed a post-test to determine whether their grammar competence had improved.

Research Procedures

The research procedures were conducted in several stages in semester 2/2025. First, the researcher prepared the instructional materials based on the selected literary text and the target grammar topics. The literary text was used as contextualized input to present grammatical structures in context. The learning activities were designed based on a collaborative learning approach, allowing students to work in pairs or groups, discuss grammatical patterns, complete worksheets, analyze sentence structures, and apply grammar knowledge through classroom tasks. Second, the grammar competence test was developed to measure students' knowledge and application of the four grammar topics: modal verbs, comparison, conditional sentences, and reported speech. The test consisted of 50 multiple-choice items and was designed to assess

students' grammar competence across four levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: remembering, understanding, applying, and analyzing. Before implementation, the test was reviewed by three experts to ensure that the items were appropriate for the students' proficiency level and aligned with the learning objectives. Third, the participants took the pre-test in order to measure their initial grammar competence, then participated in the instructional treatment, which integrated literary texts with collaborative learning activities. During the lessons, the teacher guided students to understand the literary texts, notice grammatical structures, discuss grammar use with peers, and apply grammar knowledge in learning tasks. Finally, after the completion of the instructional treatment, the participants took the posttest to measure their grammar competence after learning through the proposed approach.

Research Instrument

The research instruments used in this study consisted of four lesson plans and a grammar competence test. The lesson plans were developed based on the integration of literary texts and a collaborative learning approach. The selected literary text was used as contextualized input to present grammatical structures in situations, while collaborative activities were designed to encourage students to discuss, analyze, and apply grammar through peer interaction.

The four lesson plans covered four grammar topics: modal verbs, comparison, conditional sentences, and reported speech. All lessons were developed based on one literary text, *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, which was selected as a CEFR B1-B2-level graded reader published by SE-ED, a Thai publisher. Each lesson included learning objectives, instructional procedures, classroom activities, materials, and assessment tasks. To ensure the quality and appropriateness of the lesson plans, three experts evaluated the lesson plans using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) to determine whether the lesson objectives, content, activities, materials, and assessment tasks were consistent with the research objectives and suitable for Thai EFL undergraduate students. The lesson plans were then revised according to the experts' comments and suggestions before being implemented in the study.

The second instrument was a grammar competence test used as both the pre-test and post-test. The test consisted of 50 multiple-choice items designed to measure students' grammar competence before and after the instructional treatment. The test covered the four selected grammar topics and was also constructed according to four cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: remembering, understanding, applying, and analyzing. Multiple-choice items were used because they allowed the researcher to assess students' grammar competence objectively and consistently, reduce scoring bias, and compare students' pre-test and post-test scores statistically. The grammar competence test was also validated through the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) by experts in English language teaching and assessment. The experts reviewed the test items in terms of content validity, alignment with the learning objectives, appropriateness of language level, clarity of instructions, and relevance to the target grammar topics. After the IOC evaluation, the test items were revised based on expert feedback. The revised test was then piloted with a group of students who had similar characteristics to the research participants in order to examine the clarity, difficulty, discrimination, and overall suitability of the test items. The results of the pilot study were used to improve the final version of the grammar competence test before it was used with the participants in the main study. The following tables present the distribution of grammar topics and the corresponding levels of Bloom's Taxonomy:

Table 1 Grammar Topics Distribution

Grammar Topic	Count	Percentage
Conditionals	14	28%
Comparison	12	24%
Reported Speech	13	26%
Modal Verbs	11	22%
Total	50	100%

Table 2 Bloom's Taxonomy Levels Distribution

Bloom's Level	Count	Percentage
Remembering	11	22%
Understanding	9	18%
Applying	18	36%
Analyzing	12	24%
Total	50	100%

Data Collection

The data were collected quantitatively through the grammar competence test before and after the instructional treatment. The pre-test was used to identify students' grammar competence prior to learning grammar through literary texts in a collaborative learning classroom. The posttest was used to examine students' grammar competence after the instructional treatment.

The grammar competence test contained 50 multiple-choice items covering the four selected grammar topics. The items were categorized according to Bloom's cognitive levels in order to examine students' grammar development in more detail. The use of multiple-choice items allowed the researcher to measure grammar competence objectively and consistently. It also allowed for statistical comparison between the pre-test and post-test scores.

The data collected from the pre-test and post-test included:

1. overall grammar competence scores,
2. scores by each student, and
3. scores across Bloom's cognitive levels.

These data were used to determine whether the instructional treatment contributed to measurable improvement in students' grammar competence.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores, standard deviations, and score differences, to provide an overview of students' grammar competence before and after the instructional treatment. The pre-test and posttest mean scores were compared to examine the overall improvement in students' grammar competence.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted using the SPSS statistical program to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. The significance level was set at 0.05. The analysis was conducted to answer the first research question regarding the extent to which using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach enhanced Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence.

In addition, students' scores were analyzed according to the four grammar topics and Bloom's cognitive levels. This analysis was conducted to answer the second research question by examining whether students improved only in basic grammar recognition or also in higher cognitive levels, such as applying and analyzing grammatical structures.

The findings were then interpreted in relation to grammar competence, contextualized grammar instruction, collaborative learning, and Bloom's cognitive levels.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to collecting the data, ethical approval for conducting this study was obtained from the University of Phayao under the research project code HREC-UP-HSS 2.3/005/68. The researchers initially informed the participants about the course objectives and how the research would be conducted. This important stage ensured that all students knew their roles in the study and the objective of all the tasks they would participate in. The researcher provided a clear explanation of how the literary texts would be used to enhance grammar learning within a collaborative framework, setting clear expectations for the participants.

Results

Answer to research question 1) To what extent does using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach enhance Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence? This section presents the grammar test scores before and after the implementation of learning grammar through literary texts in a collaborative learning classroom. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed to determine the effects of the instructional approach on students' grammar competence. The results of both tests are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Comparison of Pre-test and Posttest Scores on Grammar Competence Test (overall image)

Test	Mean	N	Std.	t-test	p-value
Pre-test	27.25	20	9.909	9.175	P<0.05
Posttest	40.60	20	6.386		(p=0.000)

Note: *Level of significance at p<.05

Table 3 shows that the students' posttest scores on the grammar competence test were significantly higher than their pre-test scores at the 0.05 level of significance after learning English grammar through literary texts in a collaborative learning environment. The mean score of the post-test ($\bar{x}$ = 40.60) was higher than the pre-test ($\bar{x}$ = 27.25). The results indicate that the students' grammar competence improved after learning grammar through literary texts in a collaborative learning environment.

Table 4 Comparison of Pre-test and Posttest Scores on Grammar Competence Test (Each Student)

No.	Pre-test (50)	Posttest (50)	Result	Difference	Percentage of improvement	Interpretation
GS01	10	31	Improved	+21	42%	High
GS02	23	39	Improved	+16	32%	High
GS03	38	49	Improved	+11	22%	Moderate
GS04	36	47	Improved	+11	22%	Moderate
GS05	40	44	Improved	+4	8%	Low
GS06	43	47	Improved	+4	8%	Low
GS07	35	45	Improved	+10	20%	Moderate

No.	Pre-test (50)	Posttest (50)	Result	Difference	Percentage of improvement	Interpretation
GS08	19	38	Improved	+19	38%	High
GS09	29	41	Improved	+12	24%	Moderate
GS10	26	46	Improved	+20	40%	High
GS11	37	45	Improved	+8	16%	Moderate
GS12	39	47	Improved	+8	16%	Moderate
GS13	12	30	Improved	+18	36%	High
GS14	28	45	Improved	+17	34%	High
GS15	27	34	Improved	+7	14%	Moderate
GS16	11	37	Improved	+26	52%	High
GS17	22	31	Improved	+9	18%	Moderate
GS18	26	36	Improved	+10	20%	Moderate
GS19	22	33	Improved	+11	22%	Moderate
GS20	22	47	Improved	+25	50%	High

Table 4 presents a comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores of the 20 participants. The results show that all 20 participants obtained higher scores in the posttest than in the pre-test, indicating that every participant improved after learning English grammar through literary texts in a collaborative learning environment. The students' pre-test scores ranged from 10 to 43, while their post-test scores ranged from 30 to 49, showing an overall increase in grammar competence among the participants.

In terms of specific improvement, all students were categorized as having improved. Eight students, representing 40%, showed a high improvement rate; ten students, representing 50%, showed a moderate improvement rate; and two students, representing 10%, showed a low improvement rate. The greatest improvement was found in GS16, whose score increased by 26 points, followed by GS20 with an increase of 25 points and GS01 with an increase of 21 points. Meanwhile, GS05 and GS06 showed the lowest improvement, with an increase of four points each. However, these students already had relatively high pre-test scores, which may explain the smaller gains in their post-test results.

Answer to research question 2) How does using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach affect students' grammar competence across Bloom's cognitive levels? A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare pre-test and post-test mean scores for each cognitive level among 20 participants. The results are presented as follows:

Table 5 Comparison of Pre-test and Posttest Scores on Remembering Level

Test	Mean	N	Std.	t-test	p-value	Percentage of

						improvement
Pre-test	5.40	20	2.210	6.927	P<0.05	31.82
Posttest	8.90	20	1.619		(p=0.000)	

Table 6 Comparison of Pre-test and Posttest Scores on Understanding Level

Test	Mean	N	Std.	t-test	p-value	Percentage of improvement
Pre-test	5.40	20	2.010	6.379	P<0.05	24.44
Posttest	7.60	20	1.635		(p=0.000)	

Table 7 Comparison of Pre-test and Posttest Scores on Applying Level

Test	Mean	N	Std.	t-test	p-value	Percentage of improvement
Pre-test	11.25	20	3.477	6.630	P<0.05	19.72
Posttest	14.80	20	2.462		(p=0.000)	

Table 8 Comparison of Pre-test and Posttest Scores on Analyzing Level

Test	Mean	N	Std.	t-test	p-value	Percentage of improvement
Pre-test	5.85	20	3.483	5.974	P<0.05	31.25
Posttest	9.60	20	2.010		(p=0.000)	

Table 5-8 shows the comparison of students' pre-test and post-test mean scores across four cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: remembering, understanding, applying, and analyzing. The results reveal that students' posttest mean scores were higher than their pre-test mean scores in all four levels. This indicates that learning grammar through literary texts in a collaborative learning approach contributed to students' grammar development not only at the basic level of recalling grammatical rules but also at higher levels of cognitive processing.

Discussions

The effectiveness of using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach to enhance Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence

The findings of this study revealed that using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach was effective in enhancing Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence. The students' post-test scores were higher than their pre-test scores, indicating that the implementation contributed positively to their grammatical development. This improvement indicates that learning grammar was more effective when students were introduced to grammatical structures through literary texts instead of studying grammar as independent rules. This finding is consistent with Ellis (2006), who emphasizes that grammar provides a basis for constructing messages, and Larsen-Freeman (2001), who argues that grammar should be understood in terms of form, meaning, and use. Therefore, the improvement in students' grammar competence may be explained by the fact that literary texts allowed students to

observe how grammatical structures functioned within contexts. The effectiveness can also be interpreted through the relationship between explicit and implicit grammar teaching. In the present study, students were not only guided to notice grammatical rules and sentence patterns but were also encouraged to understand how these structures were used in literary contexts. This reflects a balanced approach to grammar instruction. Explicit grammar teaching helped students understand forms, rules, and structures, while implicit grammar learning through literary texts allowed them to encounter grammar in authentic language use. This supports DeKeyser's (2003) view that adult language learners may benefit from a combination of meaningful exposure and targeted grammar explanation. Similarly, Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis suggests that learners can acquire language when they are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current level. In this study, literary texts served as contextualized input that helped students connect grammar rules with language use.

The findings also support the idea that literary texts can be useful materials for grammar instruction. Unlike isolated grammar exercises, literary texts provide examples of grammar in narrative situations, dialogues, descriptions, and character interactions. Through the selected literary text, students were able to observe how modal verbs, comparison, conditional sentences, and reported speech were used in context. This is consistent with Collie and Slater (1987), who revealed that literary texts offer comprehensive language resources for language learning. In addition, Brumfit and Carter (1986) emphasize that literature can support language teaching by connecting language form with meaning. Therefore, the use of literary texts in this study may have helped students move beyond memorizing grammar rules toward understanding grammar as language use.

Collaborative learning also played an important role in supporting students' grammar development. Through pair and group activities, students had opportunities to discuss grammatical patterns, compare answers, clarify misunderstandings, and explain grammar points to one another. This interaction may have helped students develop greater grammatical awareness and confidence in using grammar. The finding is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and support from others. In the present study, peer discussions and shared problem-solving provided students with opportunities to construct grammatical knowledge collaboratively. As a result, collaborative learning not only supported students' understanding of grammar but also encouraged active participation in the learning process.

The improvement in students' grammar competence is particularly important in the Thai EFL context. As discussed in the literature review, Thai learners often experience difficulties with English grammar because of structural differences between Thai and English, especially in areas such as verb forms, tense, sentence patterns, and grammatical accuracy. English grammar instruction in Thailand has also traditionally relied on teacher-centered and rule-based approaches, which may help students recognize grammatical forms but may not sufficiently support grammar use. The present findings suggest that integrating literary texts with collaborative learning can provide an alternative approach that supports both grammar accuracy and contextual understanding. This approach may be useful for Thai EFL undergraduate students by allowing them to learn grammar through input and interaction rather than through memorization alone.

Grammar Competence across Bloom's Cognitive Levels

Beyond overall grammar competence, the findings of this study further showed that students demonstrated statistically significant improvement across all four cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, namely Remembering, Understanding, Applying, and

Analyzing, following the implementation of using literary text in a collaborative learning approach to enhance grammar competence. The implementation supported grammar development not only at the surface level of recall and recognition, but also at deeper cognitive levels involving comprehension, application, and the analysis of grammar structures.

At the remembering level, the findings indicate that frequent engagement with grammatical structures presented in Gulliver's Travels improved students' ability to recall and recognize grammatical forms. Rather than relying on rote memorization of decontextualized rules, students found the same grammatical patterns across many story contexts, which may have strengthened retention more effectively. Then, the findings at the understanding level also indicate that students developed a greater conceptual understanding of grammatical structures beyond simple recognition, demonstrating the ability to interpret and explain how grammar functions within contexts. Although the applying level showed the smallest percentage gain among the four levels, the pre-test scores at this level were already the highest. The continued improvement at this level nonetheless indicates that collaborative activities, which required students to use grammatical structures in activities, further supported their ability to apply grammar expressively. Finally, the finding at the analyzing level suggests that engaging with grammatical structures through literary texts and collaborative activities promoted students' ability to distinguish, compare, and analyze grammatical patterns

To sum up, the improvement observed across all four cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy provides evidence that using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach supported grammar development across the full range of cognitive ability. The fact that the greatest percentage gains were recorded at the Remembering and Analyzing levels suggests that the approach was effective in concurrently strengthening initial grammatical recall and cultivating higher-order analytical skill. These data confirm that the implementation in this study increased grammatical competence in both cognitive and educational aspects.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach on Thai EFL undergraduate students' grammar competence. The findings revealed that students' posttest scores were significantly higher than their pre-test scores, indicating that the instructional treatment had a positive effect on students' grammar development. The improvement suggests that literary texts provided contextualized input that helped students observe grammatical structures in authentic language use. At the same time, collaborative learning activities encouraged students to discuss, analyze, and apply grammar through peer interaction and shared learning tasks. The results also showed that students improved across the selected grammar topics, including modal verbs, comparison, conditional sentences, and reported speech. This suggests that the integration of literary texts and collaborative learning supported students' understanding of different grammatical structures. Rather than learning grammar only through isolated rules and mechanical exercises, students were able to encounter grammar in contexts and apply knowledge through classroom activities.

In addition, the analysis based on Bloom's Taxonomy demonstrated that students' grammar competence improved across the cognitive levels of remembering, understanding, applying, and analyzing. This finding suggests that the instructional approach not only enhances students' ability to recall grammatical rules but also supports their ability to understand, apply, and analyze grammatical structures in contexts. The findings suggest that using literary texts in a collaborative learning approach can be a useful option for grammar instruction with Thai EFL undergraduate students.

Limitations of the Study

Although the findings of this study showed positive outcomes, some limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study focused on only four grammar topics: modal verbs, comparison, conditional sentences, and reported speech. These topics were selected from the course content. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent students' grammar competence in other areas of English grammar. Second, the research instrument used to measure students' grammar competence was a 50-item multiple-choice test. Although multiple-choice items are useful for measuring grammar knowledge objectively and consistently, they may not fully reflect students' ability to produce grammatical structures in real communication, writing, or speaking. Therefore, the results mainly represent students' ability to recognize, understand, apply, and analyze grammar in test-based contexts rather than their overall communicative grammar performance. Third, this study employed a one-group pre-test–posttest quasi-experimental design without a control group. As a result, the improvement in students' posttest scores cannot be attributed solely to the instructional treatment with absolute certainty. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the specific scope and design of this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should include a wider range of grammar topics in order to examine whether the use of literary texts in a collaborative learning approach can enhance students' grammar competence in other grammatical areas. Future research should also employ various types of assessment instruments in addition to multiple-choice tests. For example, sentence writing tasks, paragraph writing tasks, speaking tasks, grammar-in-context exercises, and error correction tasks could be used to assess students' ability to produce and apply grammatical structures in more authentic language-use situations. This would provide a broader picture of students' grammar competence beyond test-based performance. In addition, future studies should consider using a control group. Comparing students who learn grammar through literary texts and collaborative learning with those who learn through traditional grammar instruction would provide stronger evidence of the effectiveness of the approach.

Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to all research participants who actively took part in this study. Their commitment and cooperation contributed greatly to the successful completion of this study. The researcher would also like to extend deepest appreciation to the research advisor for her valuable guidance, constructive suggestions, academic support, and encouragement throughout the research process. Finally, the researcher gratefully acknowledges the approval and ethical consideration granted for this doctoral research project by the University of Phayao. This approval provided important support for the proper and ethical conduct of the study.

Declaration on AI used

The authors fully prepared the manuscript. An AI-assisted writing tool (Quillbot) was used to improve clarity and readability in specific areas (linguistic editing). The authors are fully responsible for the work's content, interpretations, and scientific integrity.

Bibliographic references

Anantapol, W., Keeratikorntanayod, W., & Chobphon, P. (2018). Developing English proficiency standards for English language teachers in Thailand. Journal of Studies in the Field of Humanities, 25(2), 1-35.

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. Longman.

Brumfit, C. J., & Carter, R. A. (Eds.). (1986). Literature and language teaching. Oxford University Press.

Celce-Murcia, M., & Olshtain, E. (2000). Discourse and context in language teaching: A guide for language teachers. Cambridge University Press.

Collie, J., & Slater, S. (1987). Literature in the language classroom: A resource book of ideas and activities. Cambridge University Press.

Council of Europe. (2001). Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Cambridge University Press.

Darasawang, P., & Watson Todd, R. (2012). The effect of policy on English language teaching at secondary schools in Thailand. Language Teaching Research, 16(4), 548–566.

DeKeyser, R. M. (2003). Implicit and explicit learning. In C. J. Doughty & M. H. Long (Eds.), The handbook of second language acquisition (pp. 313–348). Blackwell.

Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective. TESOL Quarterly, 40(1), 83–107.

Elmayantie, C. (2015). The use of grammar translation method in teaching English. Journal on English as a Foreign Language, 5(2), 125–132.

Heaton, J. B. (1988). Writing English language tests (New ed.). Longman.

Iamsirirak, E., & Phoocharoensil, S. (2023). The recognition of English tenses by Thai EFL learners. Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice, 23(19), 7–18. https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v23i19.6672

Kampookaew, P. (2020). An analysis of grammatical errors made by Thai EFL university students in an EAP writing class: Issues and recommendations. Reflections, 27(2), 246–273. https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v27i2.248862

Krashen, S. D. (1982). Principles and practice in second language acquisition. Pergamon Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). Teaching grammar. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), Teaching English as a second or foreign language (pp. 251–266). Heinle & Heinle.

Marijana, P., Valentina, G., & Nina, P. (2020). Towards a deeper understanding of the CEFR principles in grammar competence testing. DOAJ (DOAJ: Directory of Open Access Journals). https://doaj.org/article/bbfd57485c194f8baac896376d64c1bb

Mart, C. T. (2013). Teaching grammar in context: Why and how? Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 3(1), 124–129.

Ministry of Education. (2008). The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008). Ministry of Education.

Nunan, D. (1998). Teaching grammar in context. ELT Journal, 52(2), 101–109.

Pawabutra, P., & Sutakote, C. (2024). An analysis of grammatical errors in English speaking of Thai EFL learners. Journal of English Language and Linguistics, 5(3), 297–313. https://doi.org/10.62819/jel.2024.625

Petraki, E., & Hill, D. (2011). Theories of grammar and their influence on teaching practice: Examining language teachers' beliefs. University of Sydney Papers in TESOL, 6, 65–99.

Pianpadungporn, S. (2024). The development of English grammar learning skills by using explicit teaching method of university students: The case study of Thai university students. Higher Education Studies, 14(2), 70. https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v14n2p70

Purpura, J. E. (2004). Assessing grammar. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733086

Spahiu, I., & Kryeziu, N. (2021). The grammar translation method and its use in EFL classrooms. International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies, 9(1), 60–68.
Thornbury, S. (1999). How to teach grammar. Longman.
Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. Language Learning, 46(2), 327–369.
Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press.
Widodo, H. P. (2006). Approaches and procedures for teaching grammar. English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 5(1), 122–141.
Wongsothorn, A., Yordchim, S., Thitivesa, D., & Pongsurapipa, S. (2019). Innovative use of English language teaching as an international language in graduate studies in Thai universities. LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 12(2), 14–27.

Words: 7223
Characters: 52 070 (29 standard pages)

Tanwalai Kongwut
Department of English, School of Liberal Arts
University of Phayao
19 Moo 2, Maeka Sub-district
Mueng District, Phayao 56000
Thailand
66114604@up.ac.th
ORCID: 0009-0001-5142-8555

Assist. Prof. Dr. Sukanya Kaowiwattanakul (Corresponding author)
Department of English, School of Liberal Arts
University of Phayao
19 Moo 2, Mae Ka Sub-district
Mueang District, Phayao 56000
Thailand
sukanya.ka@up.ac.th
ORCID: 0000-0002-1127-5099