Narratives of Social Construction: A Sociocultural Inquiry into Thai School Administrators' View on Filipino EFL Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Aim. As Asian schools employ increasingly diverse teaching staff, understanding the communication dynamics between administrators and teachers from different cultural backgrounds is crucial to fostering effective educational environments. This study explores the narratives of two Thai school administrators managing English-Program schools, focusing on their views of Filipino EFL teachers and how these views shape intercultural communication.

Methods. The study employs the sociocultural tradition of Communication Theory as its theoretical framework, which posits that communication creates, sustains, and transforms

social reality (Craig, 1999). It also uses narrative inquiry as the methodological approach, conducting in-depth interviews to capture the administrators' experiences and insights.

Results. The findings reveal that the administrators' view of Filipino EFL teachers as "Embracing of the Filipino EFL teachers' skills and teaching standards," describing the latter as valuable assets. This perspective has shaped communicative practices, including (1) assigning Filipino teachers to coach local students for English competitions, (2) enhancing collaboration between Filipino and local teachers, and (3) utilising Filipino teachers to create engaging teaching materials.

Conclusions. It can be concluded that this research suggests that embracing intercultural communication fosters better collaboration and resource utilisation in multicultural school environments.

Keywords: narratives, Thai school administrators, Filipino EFL teachers, sociocultural approach

Introduction

An Intercultural Approach to Understanding School Interactions

In the increasingly globalised landscape of education, intercultural communication within schools has become a critical area of study. As schools around the world embrace diverse teaching staff, understanding the dynamics of communication between administrators and teachers from different cultural backgrounds is essential for fostering effective educational environments. In Thailand, the employment of Filipino EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers has grown significantly, bringing unique opportunities and challenges to Thai schools (Farrell, 2015; Ulla, 2019; Yuan, 2018). Mark Ulla (2019), for instance, examined the views and experiences of these educators, noting that his respondents had positive perceptions towards teaching English in the host country. Despite the growing presence of Filipino teachers in Thai schools, to our knowledge, there is limited research on how Thai administrators perceive and interact with them. This study addresses this gap by exploring the sociocultural underpinnings of these interactions, offering insights into how administrators' views of Filipino teachers influence their communication strategies and leadership practices. The interactions between Thai school administrators and the Filipino teachers are shaped by complex sociocultural factors, which influence how both groups perceive their roles, communicate, and navigate their professional relationships. According to Betteke van Ruler (2018), the term 'interaction' encompasses feedback processes, direct interpersonal engagement, and a more abstract notion related to how individuals connect with various meanings to formulate their own interpretations.

This study seeks to explore these dynamics through the lens of the Sociocultural Tradition of Communication Theory and narrative inquiry as the methodological approach.

Focusing on the narratives of Thai school administrators, this sociocultural approach aligns well with narrative inquiry methodology as it allows for an in-depth exploration of administrators' lived experiences and how their communication practices are defined by broader social and cultural interactions. One significance of this investigation, is that, it could contribute to sociocultural communication research by examining how administrators' perceptions shape workplace discourse, power relations, and professional identity formation.

In other words, the current study enables the researchers to explore not only the content of the administrators' narratives but also the sociocultural contexts that shape and are shaped by these narratives, providing a rich, nuanced understanding of their interactions with Filipino EFL teachers.

Sociocultural Tradition of Communication Theory as the Theoretical Framework

The current investigation looks at how the school administrators' views of Filipino EFL teachers are socially constructed and how these views influence their communicative practices. Robert Craig (1999) identified seven traditions of communication theory. One of these is the Sociocultural Tradition (ST), which he described as the 'production or reproduction' of social order. In this study, the Thai administrators' perspective on the EFL teachers reveals how their interactions are created, maintained, or changed through daily engagement. In the context of teaching, ST focuses on how individuals use language and communication to construct their understanding of the world, identities, and relationships within a cultural and social context. This theoretical perspective aligns well with exploring how school administrators and Filipino EFL teachers co-construct their interactions and shared realities within a multicultural educational environment.

The Sociocultural Tradition of Communication Theory has been widely applied in educational research, particularly in exploring how communication in educational contexts is shaped by broader social, cultural, and historical factors. Marlon Sipe and Jean Saludadez (2021), for example, explored teaching as a communication phenomenon. Their study revealed that the traditional teaching in the host country has long been used in local classrooms, alienating ESL teachers' professional standards. This particular study emphasises that communication does not merely transmit information but actively constructs social realities. In multicultural or intercultural settings, where diverse cultural perspectives intersect, this approach provides a valuable lens for understanding how educational practices and relationships are negotiated and co-constructed.

The sociocultural tradition emphasises that communication is not just a means of exchanging information but a process that creates, sustains, and transforms social reality. Within this framework, the stories told by school administrators are not mere reflections of their experiences, but rather, active constructions of social reality that both shape and are shaped by the broader cultural and social contexts in which they operate.

This investigation hopes to address a significant intercultural workplace dynamic in Thai education, where Filipino EFL teachers play a crucial role. This paper, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions.

- What is the view of the school administrators on Filipino EFL teachers?
- How does this view define their intercultural communicative practices?

The interest of this study lies in understanding how Thai school administrators construct their views on Filipino EFL teachers and how these perceptions shape their intercultural communicative practices within the school setting.

Literature Review

Intercultural Communication in Educational Settings

The sociocultural approach has also been used to examine how intercultural communication is negotiated in educational settings, particularly between school leaders and teachers from different cultural backgrounds. The discussion below highlights Stella Ting-Toomey's (1988) Face-Negotiation Theory (FNT) which explains how people from different cultural backgrounds manage face (self-image), handle conflicts, and negotiate meaning in communication. It has been observed that although principals are crucial in establishing a school culture that values diversity and encourages inclusivity, teacher leadership is becoming more and more acknowledged as a crucial component of effective school development programmes. Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller (2004), for instance, proposed that teacher leaders have a special responsibility to play in transforming the school culture from individualism to professional community, in which members actively participate in their professional development to foster learning and the development of leadership skills in many students.

According to Ting-Toomey and Atsuko Kurogi (1998), Face-Negotiation Theory assumes that people in all cultures try to maintain and negotiate face in all communication situations. Muh Basri Wello, et al. (2017), for example, reviewed several studies which focused on university students' experience on intercultural communication from five different countries. Such a review found that culture is still the biggest issue that could block effective and relevant communication. This finding prompted them to believe that intercultural communication positively contributes to the development of cultural sensitivity and is open for adaptation to work in different contexts.

Maija Lanas and Geert Kelchtermans (2015) examined how student teachers' identities are shaped and reshaped in response to implicit norms around them. They used intentionally created narrative data from 60 student teachers' essays and performed a thematic analysis to understand how students navigate the hidden social and cultural expectations of teachers. Specifically, they analysed the accounts of Finnish student teachers regard-

ing their access to the teacher education programme as a way to identify and explore this process of constructing student teacher identities. According to the study's findings, one of the most common conventions among Finnish student teachers is the willingness to form one's identity. Cross-cultural issues are just one of the many challenges that teachers confront when working with diverse learners in the classroom. According to Martin Brown et al. (2022), schools are now more linguistically, culturally, religiously, and ethnically diverse than they have ever been due to the growing patterns of migration. School administrators must implement measures to guarantee equitable participation for kids from migrant backgrounds in light of the growing variety of their student body. In order to promote changes in teachers' perspectives, attitudes, and behaviour regarding cultural diversity, teacher-educators have employed a variety of strategies, according to Gretchen McAllister and Jacqueline Irvine (2000). However, the outcomes of these efforts have been uneven because these strategies frequently prioritised content over the process of cross-cultural learning. Their study produced important findings for multicultural teacher education in terms of determining students' readiness for learning, creating engaging lessons, and giving instructors the right kind of support.

Since face is socially constructed, it plays a critical role in intercultural interactions, where differing cultural norms influence communication styles, conflict resolution, and identity negotiation. The literature describes the attitudes of school educators, district, and system levels who view the presence of students from diverse cultural backgrounds as "an unwanted burden" in contrast to the qualities of culturally responsive school leaders (cited in Brown, et al., p. 584). For some educators, creating culturally responsive learning environments is hampered by bias, fear, a lack of cultural awareness, a lack of professional skills, and inadequate support systems. Teachers that belong to this type of education have a tendency to view children from diverse cultural backgrounds in a 'deficit' manner holding them responsible for deficiencies. In order to effectively teach culturally diverse children, Diana Roybal (2018) for instance, detailed a circumstance in which teachers lacked the necessary cultural awareness. As a result of disagreement, miscommunication, low instructor morale, high student indiscipline, and low student accomplishment, a depressing environment developed in this situation. In many cases, the influence of culture on education is either minimised, disregarded, or poorly understood.

As for educational leaders, Sabre Cherkowski and Karen Ragoonaden (2016) contended that as a first step toward identifying and collaborating with values, beliefs, and practices for forming inclusive education in our schools, they could be tasked with learning about how they relate to their colleagues and their students, for example, in terms of intercultural competence (p. 33). According to Muhammad Khalifa et al. (2016), school administrators should be given the professional development and toolkit necessary to create culturally responsive practices in addition to knowledge on how to spearhead changes in teacher preparation, the school environment, and the way the school engages with the parent and student community.

In an intercultural workplace, like Thai schools employing Filipino teachers, both parties engage in face-negotiation to maintain relationships, navigate authority, and adapt to cultural norms. Filipino EFL teachers in Thailand occupy a unique position within the educational system. They are often seen as cultural and linguistic bridges between Thai students and the English-speaking world. According to Singhanat Nomnian (2009), the idea of positioning helps us understand how individuals position themselves in a given environment as a result of their obligation, acceptance, resistance or negotiation. His study, for example, suggests that an EFL teacher's positioning is complex, shifting, and multiple as it interplays with various factors, such as ethnicity, linguistic barriers, and sociocultural differences (p.77). However, this role is also accompanied by challenges related to cultural adaptation, professional identity, and intercultural communication. As a result of the former's impact from the environments in which they live, act, and interact, foreign teachers' positioning is fluid, dynamic, and multifaceted, as noted by Brock et al. (2006). In linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms, this aids in the development of suitable pedagogies that enhance students' learning experiences (Nomnian, 2009).

To summarise this review, studies described in the literature centred on the various educational settings that cater for diverse learners from different backgrounds. This study, however, confronts the gap in the literature by exploring Thai school administrators and their interaction with the Filipino EFL teachers. By employing sociocultural approach and narrative inquiry, school administrators' leadership styles and practices in schools with English programmes unfolded a role in this interaction, leaving the EFL teachers' standards to produce and reproduce.

Narrative Inquiry
as the Methodological Approach

The current study employs a narrative inquiry approach to provide insight into the real-life experiences of Thai school administrators as they worked alongside Filipino EFL teachers in Thailand's educational setting. This qualitative inquiry facilitated an in-depth investigation of the meanings and beliefs ingrained in their stories, providing a nuanced understanding of the sociocultural processes involved. The sociocultural approach employed in this study aligns well with narrative inquiry methodology as it allows for an in-depth exploration of administrators' lived experiences and how their communication practices are defined by broader social and cultural interactions. The stories people tell about their experiences are the focus of narrative inquiry as a methodological approach.

John Creswell (2014), in his own words, pointed out that "you use narrative research when you have individuals willing to tell their stories and you want to report their stories" (p. 530). Amia Lieblich et al. (1998) also described it as a kind of qualitative

technique that makes use of or analyses narrative resources, such as reports, diaries, biographies, oral histories, and interviews. In other words, this approach is effective for gaining insights and understanding of personal and social experiences, as it allows participants to communicate their stories, thus establishing a deeper understanding of their perspectives and historical background in which these experiences take place.

According to Creswell and Cheryl Poth (2016), "narrative stories tell of individual experiences and may shed light on individuals' identities and self-perceptions" (p. 68). In order to understand the social constructs that underlie their relationships with Filipino EFL teachers, this study used narrative inquiry to explore the stories and experiences of Thai school administrators. This approach focuses on personal stories, which makes it suitable for revealing the complicated dynamics of intercultural interactions.

Analysing these stories, this study delved further into the subject of intercultural communication in education by offering practical insights to schools that employ foreign EFL teachers. Gaining insight into how administrators' communication methods both influence and are influenced by their perceptions can help develop more effective strategies for creating welcoming and encouraging learning environments where cultural diversity is not just accepted but actively embraced.

Research Context and the Participants

The participants to the current study were two Thai school administrators: one was a director of a kindergarten and elementary school in the southern part of the country, while the other one was a deputy director of a high school in Bangkok. The profile of the participants is shown in the table below.

Table 1

The Profile of the Participants

Participants	Position	Gender	Lenth of service as school administrator	Type of school	Location / region
Participant-1	School director	Female	8 years	Elementary	South
Participant-2	Deputy director	Male	more than 5 years	High school	Central

Source. Sipe et al. (2025).

A purposive sampling technique was implemented in this study to select participants who have firsthand knowledge and real-life experiences with Filipino EFL teachers. Jennifer Mason (2002), Oliver Robinson (2014), and Jan Trost (1986) all agreed that purposive strategies are aimed at including people who could provide rich data in the investigation. Lawrence Palinkas et al. (2015) also noted that, unlike generalising a population, a qualitative study is more concerned with understanding

a phenomenon – an idea that Matthew Miles & Michael Huberman (1994) acknowl-edged as supporting a comparatively small sample. The selection criteria included: (a) a participant must be a local school administrator; (b) a participants must have served as a school administrator for at least 5 years; (c) a participant must have had the opportunity to have worked with Filipino EFL teachers at their school; (d) he/she must be willing to be interviewed. Being a local school administrator would allow the participant to discuss in depth what it is like to be a school leader in a local school. Also, having served his/her school as a school administrator for at least 5 years would allow the participants to share their close association with the world they are in. The participants' experience working with Filipino EFL teachers allowed them to share an in-depth knowledge on their daily interaction with the latter. Lastly, their willing-ness to be interviewed allowed them to give a rich sharing of their lived experience as school administrators. By ensuring that a wide range of perspectives and compelling stories are included, this approach enhances the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the findings (Palinkas et al., 2015). According to Steve Campbell, et al. (2020), purposive sampling strategies can be used to select participants who may provide rich data about a phenomenon to be explored.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with participants at their most convenient times and locations. Semi-structured interviews were selected because they enabled the participants to shed light on their experiences while simultaneously addressing the research question. These interviews were intended to promote a thorough understanding of their real-life experiences and perceptions of working with their Filipino EFL teachers and to establish an insightful conversa-tion between the researchers and the participants.

The researchers utilised notes during the interview process to capture the key points as well as the interview guide to ensure consistency. The participants were able to un-derstand and speak the English language fluently, therefore, the conversation was con-ducted in English from start to finish, and that included all of the interview questions. To ensure the participants' anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research procedure, the researchers assigned each participant's pseudonym. All of the interviews were recorded to guarantee accuracy and safeguard an impartial record.

The first participant was interviewed remotely via Google Meet in April 2024. The in-terview lasted for 40 minutes and was conducted with the participant's written consent. In this session, both a digital video and audio recorder were used to ensure a complete capture of the conversation. Online interviews, as noted by Hannah Deakin and Kelly Wakefield (2014), offer flexibility and accessibility, allowing participants to engage from the comfort of their preferred locations while maintaining the integrity of the in-

terview process. This approach was particularly helpful in overcoming geographical barriers, and facilitating effective communication despite the physical distance.

The second participant was interviewed face-to-face in May 2024, with the participant's permission. The session lasted between 40 to 60 minutes and a voice recorder was used to capture the conversation. As Raymond Opdenakker (2006) highlights, face-to-face interviews offer significant advantages, such as enabling direct interactions and allowing the interviewer to observe non-verbal communication, which enhances rapport and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the participant's experiences. The face-to-face interaction in this case allowed for a deeper exploration of the intercultural dynamics between Thai administrators and Filipino teachers, as the physical presence fostered a natural conversational flow and enabled the interviewer to adapt questions based on real-time responses.

This study guaranteed the collection of different kinds of narratives, providing a variety of perspectives on intercultural interactions between Thai administrators and Filipino EFL teachers within Thailand's educational settings by utilising both online and face-to-face interview approaches. The data was not only strengthened, but the combination of both approaches also provided the flexibility to accommodate the preferences and scheduling limitations of participants.

Thematic Analysis

After the interview process, the researchers transcribed the participants' narration of their stories dealing with the Filipino EFL teachers under their supervision, then, the transcribed interviews were provided to the participants for checking and verification to ensure its accuracy. Thematic analysis was employed in this study to extract patterns, and themes from the narratives of Thai school administrators. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach for conducting a theme analysis was used in this particular inquiry. This approach is shown in the table below.

Table 2
Braun & Clarke's Six-Phase Framework for Doing a Thematic Analysis

	Part of the analysis
Step 1	Become familiar with the data
Step 2	Generate initial codes
Step 3	Search for themes
Step 4	Review themes
Step 5	Define themes
Step 6	Write-up

Source. Braun & Clarke (2006).

According to Moira Maguire and Brid Delahunt (2017), this six-phase framework is undoubtedly the most dominant technique, at least in the social sciences, likely because it provides such an understandable and practical framework for doing thematic analysis. Thematic analysis (TA), according to Victoria Clarke and Virginia Braun (2016), is a technique for locating, examining, and deciphering meaning patterns (or "themes") in qualitative data (p. 297). According to them, TA can be used to find patterns in data on participants' life experiences, opinions, viewpoints, behaviour, and practices; this is known as "experiential" research, which aims to comprehend the thoughts, feelings, and actions of participants.

This 6-step process allowed for a systematic examination of the data while remaining grounded in the participants' real-life experiences and close association with Filipino EFL teachers. Through this analysis, significant themes related to the cultural context of the participants' stories and their intercultural communicative practices were uncovered.

The View of the Participants on Filipino EFL Teachers

The analysis discovers the participants' view as "Embracing of the Filipino EFL teachers' skills and teaching standards." This view of the school administrators on their Filipino EFL teachers, as Craig (1999) would put it, explains "how social order is created, realised, sustained, and transformed in microlevel interaction processes" (p.144). Such a view responds to the first research question to this study "What is the view of the school administrators on Filipino EFL teachers?" This question directly addresses the perceptions and attitudes of the school administrators, which are a crucial aspect of understanding the sociocultural dynamics in the current study. The view of the participants on Filipino EFL teachers is further described in the table below.

Table 3

The View of the Participants on Filipino EFL Teachers

The View of the Participants on Filipinos as EFL Teachers in Thai classrooms	Filipino EFL teachers as Described by the Participants
Embracing of the Filipino EFL teachers' skills and teaching standards	Filipino teachers are professional and experienced teachers
	Filipino teachers are creative and resourceful teachers
	Filipino teachers are adaptive to Thai culture
	Filipino teachers are highly skilled and dedicated teachers

Source. Sipe et al. (2025).

Embracing of the Filipino EFL Teachers' Skills and Teaching Standards

This section sets the stage for exploring how this view of the participants is constructed and how it influences interactions with Filipino EFL teachers.

Filipino Teachers are Professional and Experienced Teachers

The participants sound to be all-praises for their Filipino teachers calling them 'professional and experienced' teachers. Such a commendation towards these teachers conceives a social order at a macro level – a positive view on Filipino teachers. Participant-2, for example, admired his Filipino EFL teachers for their punctuality.

> What I admire about Filipino teachers is their punctuality, not only Filipino teachers but also other nationalities. But if I compare them to Thai teachers and if I will give them a percentage, I will give Filipino teachers 10 out of 10 for punctuality. And about Thai teachers, I have to admit that Thai teachers cannot do the same thing as Filipino does. So, these are the things I admire about how they work, they work with analysis, in a way like the international way. (Participant-2)

In agreement, Participant-1 also shared this positive perception towards Filipino teachers. To him, the latter are smart and experienced teachers. "I worked with many Filipino teachers who are very smart and they have experience in teaching. They teach our students well especially in English language" (Participant-1).

Participant-2 adds that the local students greatly benefit from their Filipino teachers who he claimed to be good assets to their teaching staff.

> In my opinion, most Filipino teachers understand the concept of international education and how they can adapt to Thai education. Filipino teachers have proven to be an addition to our education system, especially when it comes to dealing with enhancing English language skills. Our students benefit greatly from their fluency and English accent, which gives them an effective basis for their learning. (Participant-2)

The professionalism and teaching experience among EFL teachers in Thai classrooms are important factors that contribute to the success of the students and the school in general. This is because the former directly impact the effectiveness of their teaching, the learning environment, and the overall success of students. These qualities ensure that teachers can meet the diverse needs of their students and contribute positively to the educational system.

Filipino Teachers are Creative and Resourceful Teachers

Filipino teachers are often recognised for being resourceful and creative. These qualities are highly valued in educational settings and are considered strengths of these

educators. Participant-1, for example, claims that the former are creative in creating engaging teaching materials.

> Another thing is their creativity and resourcefulness. Filipino teachers are very creative about creating engaging teaching materials. And they are dedicated to their work. They care a lot about their students and they always want them to do well. So, we can build strong and successful relationships with Filipino teachers if we focus on these qualities and make the workplace supportive and positive. Everyone wins, but our students especially. (Participant-1)

Participant-2 for his part echoes this observation and believes that Filipino teachers are hardworking school employees.

> I would say Filipino teachers are tough and hardworking; they know how to adapt to Thai culture and how to teach, since most of our teachers here in my school have teaching experience. Filipinos know how to prepare their teaching materials even if some are not education graduates, but they still manage to do so. Even if the salary is not very high, Filipinos are willing to accept it. So, these observations are based on my experience with Filipinos in my school. (Participant-2)

Based on the analysis, Filipino EFL teachers are indeed seen to possess resourceful and creative qualities that significantly contribute to their effectiveness as educators. These traits allow them to overcome challenges, engage students, and create a dynamic and supportive learning environment.

Filipino Teachers are Adaptive to Thai Culture

The participants appear to appreciate the Filipino EFL teachers' adaptive nature to their host country. As a matter of fact, Participant-1 calls the latter as the nicest people.

> I admire Filipinos because they can contribute to our school because they are nice people who have respect and understanding for us and our students. So, to me, Filipino teachers are the nicest people, and my relationship with them professionally is established on a foundation of respect for one another and unity. (Participant-1)

Participant-2, for his part, claims that his Filipino EFL teachers at his school are easy to work and get along with.

> Most of the Filipinos are hard-working, and we can get along well together because maybe we are in the same Southeast Asian countries and we have something in common. And we are not totally different in terms of beliefs and culture. So, to me, it is not that difficult to get along together as we work well together. So, I have no problems working with them. So, as a team leader, it is easy to talk with them and work with them. Just understand them where they are from based on their ideas. (Participant-2)

When pressed to explain further on what he meant by his previous statement 'easy to work with,' he had this to say.

Some of our Filipino teachers easily adapted to our school environment, connecting with our students and staff on a personal level. So, my expectations and perceptions have changed to a lot of respect for the efforts made by Filipino teachers. And I came to appreciate their contributions, as they have improved our educational environment and achieved our student's English-speaking skills. (Participant-2)

Cultural adaptation is essential for EFL teachers in Thailand because it enhances communication, builds trust, and creates a more relevant and engaging learning environment. It also supports effective classroom management, fosters positive relationships, and contributes to the overall success of the teaching experience.

Filipino Teachers are Highly Skilled and Dedicated Teachers

As observed by the participants, Filipino teachers are known for using creative teaching methods to cater to different learning styles. They often incorporate interactive activities, visual aids, group work, and technology to make lessons more engaging and effective. Participant-1, for instance, calls them 'highly-skilled.'

Another thing they thought about was teaching styles. They figured Filipino teachers might have ways of teaching that I wasn't used to. But this turned out to be a good thing! We learned from each other and found new ways to teach our students. So, my expectations about working with Filipino teachers have changed for the better! I've found them to be highly skilled, they are dedicated teachers, they care a lot about their students. They bring a lot of positive energy and different perspectives to our school. (Participant-1)

When asked to elaborate further on his observation, he had this to share.

We have had an English camp before and these Filipino teachers help us create activities and lecture materials for the activity. We also have participated in a competition in English speaking in our school and the coaches are the Filipinos. We even competed nationally and achieved significant awards back then with the help of our Filipino teachers as they coached our students, and of course with the help of our Thai teachers too. So, the Filipino teachers' dedication to quality and determination to teach have greatly helped our school, their co-teachers, and their students. (Participant-1)

Participant-2, on the other hand, shared how his Filipino EFL teachers try their best to help their students improve their English language skills.

I have to focus on intellectuality, so, that I can see that they tried their best in helping our students to develop their cognition. They really develop students' critical thinking skills through their teaching materials and on how they ask questions our students inside their classroom. I know this because I always evaluate these Filipino teachers while they are teaching. (Participant-2)

Being skilled at engaging students through creative activities that stimulate interest and participation is a very essential feature an EFL teacher should possess. In Thai classrooms with primary students, they appreciate EFL teachers' use of games, role-playing, and project-based learning to make lessons more interactive and fun. Craig (1999) argued that "Our everyday interactions with others depend heavily on pre-existing, shared cultural patterns and social structures" (p.144). This creativity helps in building a positive rapport with students, making the learning environment more dynamic and supportive.

The Intercultural Communicative Practices as Defined by the Participants' View on Filipino EFL Teachers

This section delves into how the participants' views shape the way they interact with Filipino teachers. Further analysis of the data yielded the following intercultural communicative practices as shown in Table 4 below: (a) Filipino teachers are tapped to coach local students for English competitions; (b) Filipino teachers' collaboration with local teachers is strengthened; (c) Filipino teachers are tapped to create engaging materials. In his own words, Craig (1999) pointed out that "social interaction is also a creative process that permits and even requires a good deal of improvisation that, albeit collectively and in the long run, 'produces' the very social order that makes interaction possible in the first place" (pp.144-145).

Table 4

The Intercultural Communicative Practices as Defined by the Participants' View on Filipino EFL Teachers

Communicative Practices
1. Filipino teachers are tapped to coach local students for English competitions
2. Filipino teachers' collaboration with local teachers is strengthened
3. Filipino teachers are tapped to create engaging materials

Source. Sipe, et al. (2025).

Filipino Teachers are Tapped to Coach Students for English Competitions

Filipino EFL teachers are often tapped to coach students for English competitions. This is due to the former's training and creative styles in coaching. Participant-1, for instance, shared how their Filipino EFL teachers helped their students excel in inter-school English contests.

They coached our students in speech and essay competitions and we are recognised from different schools. And Filipino teachers bring new ways of teaching strategies as I men-

tioned earlier. So, we use these methods in our lessons by telling them how to teach classes and show their coworkers the best ways to do their tasks. This not only makes our teaching methods better, but it motivates our staff to always be learning and getting better. (Participant-1)

When pressed to respond what other talents their Filipino EFL teachers possess, he had this to say: "And lastly, many Filipino teachers have different talents like singing and dancing. So, we used them to teach our students during school competitions to show their talents as well".

For Participant-2, he still believes that the English language skills of their EFL teachers are very important in their jobs as educators as they coach their students to compete other learners from other schools.

> [In terms of] my expectations with Filipino teachers, I believe that having good English skills and an effective teaching strategy can benefit our students. Some Filipino teachers went above what I expected. Their commitment, skills, and good command of English improved our students' language abilities. (Participant-2)

As it appears, schools often rely on Filipino teachers to prepare their students for English competitions due to their experience and training, creative teaching methods, and cultural adaptability. These qualities contribute to the overall development of students' language skills and boosting the schools' performance in such events.

Filipino Teachers' Collaboration with Local Teachers is Strengthened

Collaboration between EFL and local teachers is crucial as it enhances the overall effectiveness of language education and contributes to a more cohesive and supportive learning environment. Participant-1 had this in mind when asked why collaboration is important. "We can talk and learn about each other, and this helps us work together to create a good learning environment for all the Thai students" (Participant-1).

When pressed to respond on how collaboration works at his school, Participant-1 specifically highlighted Filipino EFL teachers' role in the teaching-learning process.

> Filipino teachers bring a lot of different skills and experiences to our school. First, their English skills are very useful. They help their Thai co-teachers improve their language skills as they teach our English language classes, which is how we use this. This has made a big difference in how well our school teaches English. (Participant-1)

Despite coming from different cultures, Participant-2 for his part finds it easy to work with their Filipino EFL teachers. "And we are not totally different in terms of beliefs and culture. So, to me, it is not that difficult to get along together as we work well together. So, I have no problems working with them" (Participant-2).

It appears that collaboration between EFL and local teachers is essential for creating a supportive, effective, and culturally responsive learning environment. This is because

EFL teachers' enhanced collaboration with the local educators improves student outcomes, and ensures that language learning is integrated seamlessly into the broader educational framework.

Filipino Teachers are Tapped to Create Engaging Materials

Filipino teachers are known for their creativity, which they apply in designing innovative and engaging learning materials. For instance, Participant-1 took note how their EFL Filipino teachers often create interactive activities, visual aids, and multimedia resources that make learning English more enjoyable and effective. "Filipino teachers are very creative about creating engaging teaching materials. And they are dedicated to their work. They care a lot about their students and they always want them to do well" (Participant-1).

Most schools employ EFL teachers to teach conversation subjects that emphasise practical language use, and one that focuses on real-life situations and conversational English. For this purpose, Participant-2 admits that they encourage their EFL teachers to create engaging materials—the ones that help students apply what they learn in the classroom to everyday situations, making the language more relevant and useful.

> In our school, we only hire foreign teachers to teach English language focusing on conversation. So, I utilise them in creating engaging teaching materials which Filipinos are good at. So, with that their students are engaged in their classroom and that's what I observed during my visit to their classrooms. (Participant-2)

Most schools normally look for EFL teachers who are adaptable and can create materials that suit different teaching environments, whether they have access to advanced technology or more limited resources. Filipino EFL teachers' ability to tailor materials to different contexts, for instance, is highly valued by schools.

Discussion

Viewed through the lens of the sociocultural tradition of the communication theory, this narrative inquiry explored how school administrators in an Asian country view their association with the Filipino EFL teachers. The latter's professional standards and skills prompted the former to view them positively as "Embracing of the Filipino EFL teachers' skills and teaching standards." This view is described by the participants as (a) Filipino teachers are professional and experienced teachers; (b) Filipino teachers are creative and resourceful teachers; (c) Filipino teachers are adaptive to Thai culture; and (d) Filipino teachers are highly skilled and dedicated teachers. This view by the participants confirms Ting-Toomey and Kurogi's (1998) claims on Face-Negotiation Theory, saying, the theory posits that individuals across all cultures endeavour

to preserve and negotiate face in every communicative context. . Lieberman and Miller (2004) assert that school leaders possess a distinctive role in transforming the school culture from individualism to a professional community, where participants actively engage in their professional development to support learning and the development of leadership skills in numerous students. They must be referring to the local school administrators who opted to adapt to the professional standards of their EFL teachers, whose teaching standards fit comfortably with what communicative language teaching pursues. These school administrators managed schools with English programmes, employing EFL teachers from other English-speaking countries.

It is interesting to note how the view of the participants has defined their intercultural communicative practices in schools. According to Craig (1999), communication in sociocultural tradition is commonly seen as a symbolic process that establishes and maintains shared sociocultural patterns. In microlevel interaction processes, he noted that communication explains the creation, realisation, maintenance, and transformation of social order, a macrolevel phenomenon. In this study, the local school administrators' practices have undoubtedly reproduced the social order which is the 'alienation' of the local teachers' teaching standards at English programme schools, where English competitions form part of the institutions' regular routines. These practices include (a) Filipino teachers are tapped to coach local students for English competitions; (b) Filipino teachers' collaboration with local teachers is strengthened; and (c) Filipino teachers are tapped to create engaging materials. These practices align well with Ting-Toomey's (1988) Face-Negotiation Theory (FNT) which explains how people from different cultural backgrounds manage face (self-image), handle conflicts, and negotiate meaning in communication.

This sociocultural study contributes to the current body of knowledge is unique as it takes note of the communicative practices of the school administrators. These practices cause the reproduction of the social order 'the alienation of the local teachers' teaching standards' in the host country. The reason for this phenomenon, is that, English language teaching and learning among schools play a role in the recruitment of the EFL teachers – mostly Filipino teachers – in order for the local school administrators to run their English-programme schools more effectively.

Conclusion

As schools around the world embrace diverse teaching staff, understanding the dynamics of communication between administrators and teachers from different cultural backgrounds is essential for fostering effective educational environments. This study explored the narratives of two Thai school administrators who managed English-Programme Schools. Viewed through the lens of the sociocultural tradition of Communication Theory, which emphasises that communication is a process that creates, sustains,

and transforms the social reality, this investigation sought to answer the following research questions: (a) What is the view of the school administrators on Filipino EFL teachers? (b) How does this view define their intercultural communicative practices? Using narrative inquiry as the methodological approach, this research interviewed two local school administrators. The analysis brought out the view of the participants as "Embracing of the Filipino EFL Teachers' Skills and Teaching Standards." Interestingly, this view has defined the communicative practices among the participants, namely: (a) Filipino teachers are tapped to coach local students for English competitions; (b) Filipino teachers' collaboration with local teachers is strengthened; (c) Filipino teachers are tapped to create engaging materials.

IMPLICATIONS

This narrative inquiry implies that local schools in the host country can employ non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), such as Filipino EFL teachers, to teach English to the local learners. While these educators get paid less than what NESTs do, the former's professional standards and skills make them an ideal choice to teach EFL to the students of English-Programme Schools. Implications of the study suggest that embracing intercultural communication fosters better collaboration and resource utilisation in multicultural school environments. The administrators' support of Filipino teachers contributes to a more inclusive and effective educational environment, highlighting the need for school leaders to develop culturally responsive communication strategies.

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