Research Article

EFL Learners in Thailand: Content Analysis of Research Articles

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ABSTRACT

Due to recent shifts in the laws regulating Thailand's educational system, more study has been done on teaching English to EFL Thai pupils. Finding the frequent distribution of these studies in terms of their topics, publication years, writers, groups, and research methods is the main objective of this study. 56 articles were selected as the sample because it was discovered that they were content-specific in the context of English Language Acquisition in Thailand. Data was collected using the Article Information Rubric, and it was processed using Microsoft Excel. The following are the study's major conclusions:

1. "Methods and Strategies" is the subject of most articles written by ELT scholars.
2. The frequent distribution of publication years has changed significantly.
3. The majority of college students were chosen as the group using the random selection technique.
4. Mixed study techniques were used in the majority of the investigations.
5. Questionnaires and conversations were used by researchers to gather data.
6. The most frequently used form of data analysis in these studies is frequency and proportion charts.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, Teaching English to Thai EFL Pupils, Text Analysis, Thailand

Introduction

English is a vital language franca around the globe due to the impacts of globalization and diversity on people's everyday lives. English has risen in importance as a worldwide language for science, technology, foreign communication, culture, business, and travel, claim Yangn Ekşi and Aşk (2015). Additionally, this affects how English is taught (ELT). As a result, a wide range of ideas, examples, themes, study meth-

ods, and techniques have been used in countless studies, papers, master's theses, and Ph.D. dissertations on a variety of issues within the framework of ELT.

The broad adoption of languages in primary schools has gained importance, and ELT experts consider it to be "probably the world's greatest policy advancement in education," according to Johnstone (2009; as quoted in Copland et al., 2014). (p. 738). Additionally, English is growing rapidly and is soon becoming a fundamental subject in the syllabus of elementary institutions globally, according to Bland (2015). In light of the world's rapid development as a multilingual, there is a lot of consensus about the advantages of learning English at an early age as possible as an early start for the development of positive thinking towards English or any other foreign language.

Thais communicate in English with individuals from different countries and ethnic origins. English is a language that Thai people should learn and practice starting from Kindergarten to the University level. For effective encounters in a variety of contexts, English is essential (Kongkerd, 2013). Thailand's entry into the ASEAN Economic Community made it extremely obvious how important English is (AEC). The proficiency of the Thai people in English is one of the most important problems, claims Pinyonatthagarn (2016) because English is used as the working language among ASEAN countries. As a consequence, Thailand has been significantly influenced by English.

Considering its significance, Thailand's Ministry of Education has made English a requirement for all academic levels. The English program in Thailand seeks to boost students' enthusiasm for language study, cultivate a favorable mindset toward English, and improve their proficiency in communicating in English (Ministry of Education, 2001). The goal of this subject is to determine on areas of "Thai EFL Learning" have been analyzed and what could future researchers can focus on in their next research. Due to innovation and technological innovation, more research has been done on "Teaching English to EFL students through artificial intelligence".

Objectives
1. What is the total number of writers, papers, and years of publishing across all journals?
2. How are the various article types and research subjects distributed?
3. What kinds and amounts of sampling are used, and how are they spread throughout the articles?
4. How are the study methods, research plans, data-gathering tools, and data analysis techniques distributed across the publications?

Methods
Research Design
Since the primary goal of this study is to showcase the different articles about English as Foreign Language through content analysis. According to Berelson (1952), content analysis is a strategy for objectively and methodically describing the overt substance of the communication. Its goal is to compile and extract meaning from the gathered data so that reasonable inferences can be made.

Data collection
There were a total of 56 articles in the field above, and one was selected to be assessed. Because it was difficult to analyze and assess the acquired papers, criteria were required to collect accurate and trustworthy data. Yaz et al. (2016) changed the "Article Information Rubric" as a data collection device in the ELT industry as a consequence. All of the selected pieces were assessed using this criterion and certain areas. The published works with the subject title "Teaching English to Thai EFL Pupils" were examined using the search function on the Google Scholar website. Given that the poll was performed in 2022, it is fitting that the search results revealed 85 papers about teaching English to Thai EFL pupils that were published between 2006 and 2020. Following the thorough review with two subject-matter specialists, only 56 of the findings were found to be content-specific in Thai English Language Acquisition. Before the recurrence research, a text analysis gave the same moniker to similar titles (Berg & Lune, 2017). In end, it was agreed to assess 56 articles using criteria.

Data analysis

Microsoft Excel was used to evaluate the data after implementing the precise categorizations since it deals with massive quantities of data easily and effectively (Meyer & Avery, 2009). After all the article data had been transcribed, Microsoft Excel 2010 was used to evaluate and show the results. The criteria were used to evaluate each piece while taking into consideration its titles, and the data collected was recorded using the Microsoft Excel program. The scholar was able to combine similar ideas, concepts, and subjects by using content analysis to produce the summary data in the charts.

To ensure that the data analysis was correct, two extra authorities on teaching English as a second language double-checked the data. The researcher used peer feedback, which is described as "the review of the data and research procedure by someone acquainted with the research or the subject being examined," to get truth and reliability. The ideal approach to apply this method is throughout full research (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129). The scorers

discussed their results and agreed on the final codes and topics before sharing the study's findings.

Results and Discussion

RQ1 - Across all publications, how many writers, papers, and years of publishing are there?

Figure 1 displays the frequency distribution of the years that papers were written. According to Table 1, the most notable frequency variation is between 2017 and 2021. Likewise, in 2015 and 2017, respectively, six and eight works per year were released. Before 2006, only one or two papers on teaching English to Thai EFL students had been released.

Figure 1 displays the frequency distribution of the years that papers were written. According to Figure 1, the most notable frequency variation is between 2017 and 2021. Likewise, in 2015 and 2022, six and seven pieces a year, respectively, were released. Prior to 2006, only one paper on teaching English to Thai EFL students had been released.
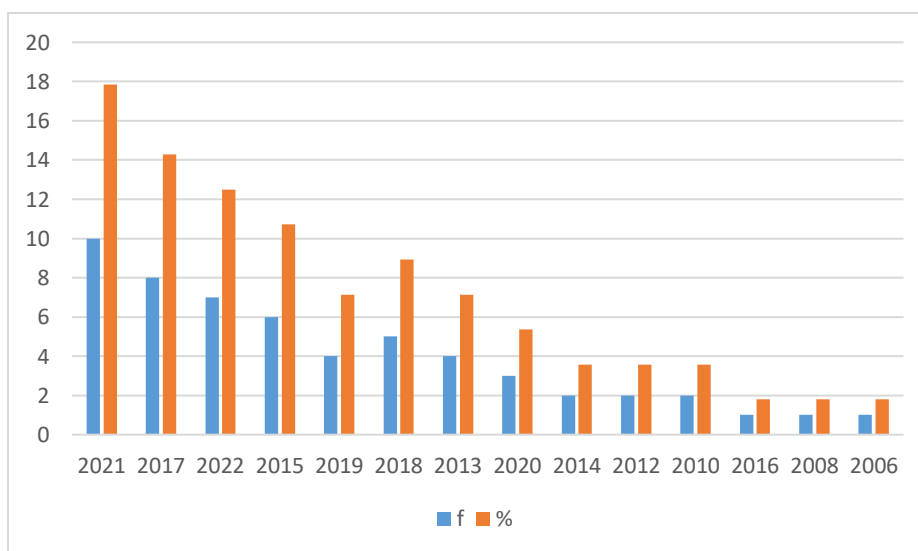

Figure 1. Frequency distribution of Years

According to Figure 2, the writers of the 56 articles mostly opt to work alone or with a

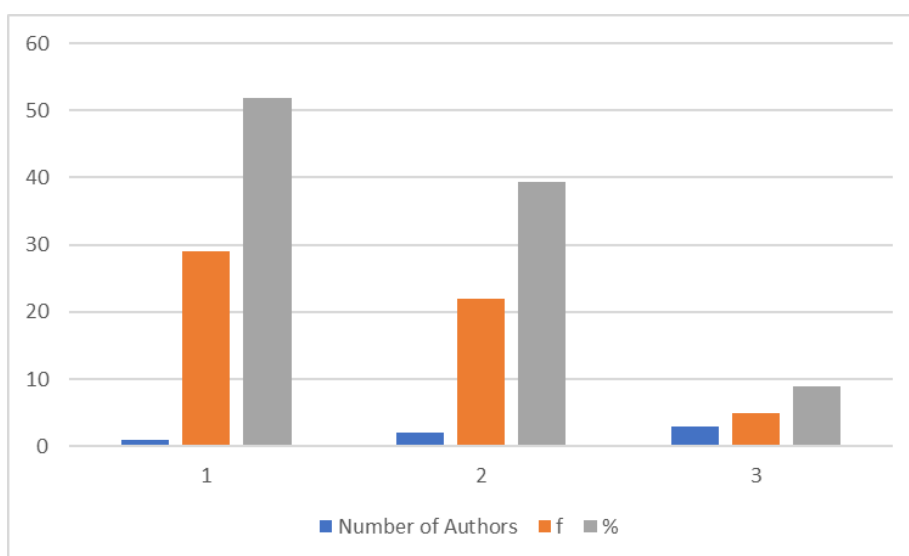colleague. There aren't as many study papers with more than two writers.

Figure 2 Frequency of Number of Authors

According to the data in Figure 3 (f=12), the Canada Institute of Science and Education published papers on teaching English to Thai EFL pupils the most frequently between 2006 and 2022.
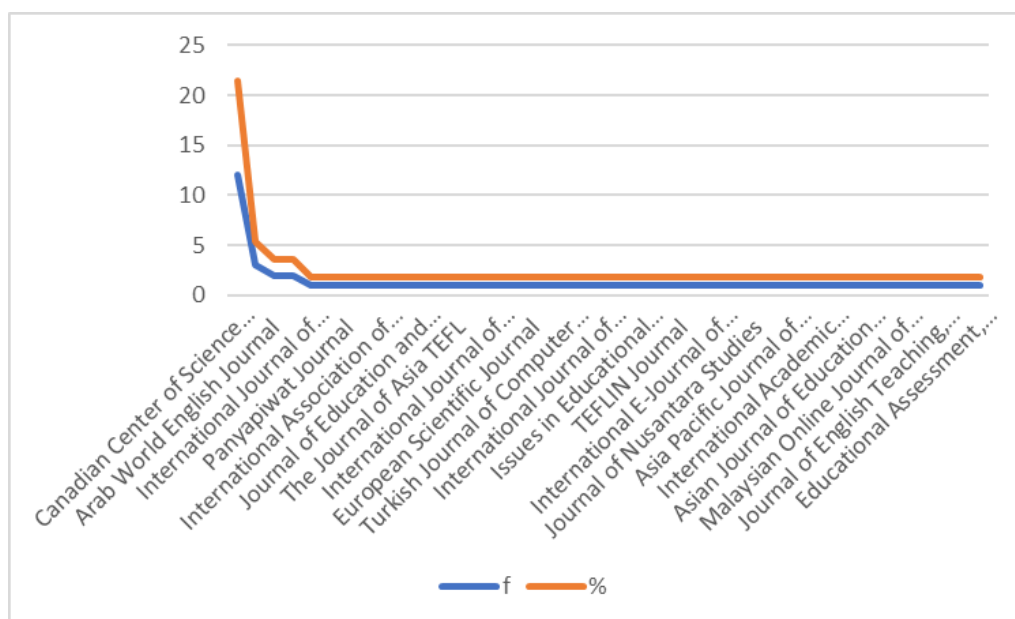

Figure 3 Frequency distribution of journals

RQ2: How are the various article types and research subjects distributed?

Figure 4 shows that, of the 56 articles, 16 are evaluations and 40 are original research works.
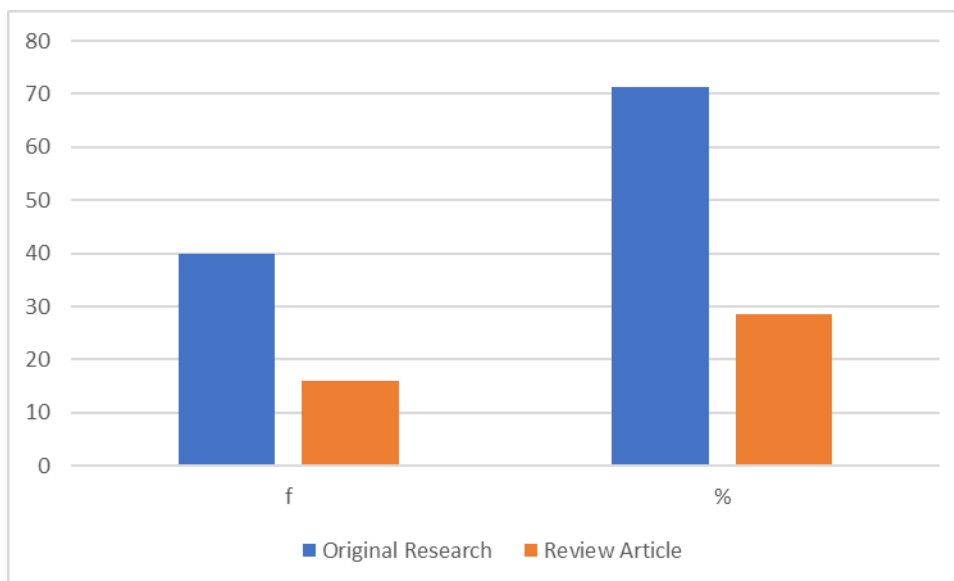
Figure 4 Frequency distribution of article types

ELT scholars are most concerned about producing articles about "Methods and Techniques" (f=13) and "Methods and Techniques" (f=5), as shown in Figure 5. The 56 articles commonly address assessment, teacher education, and a few other subjects less than others.
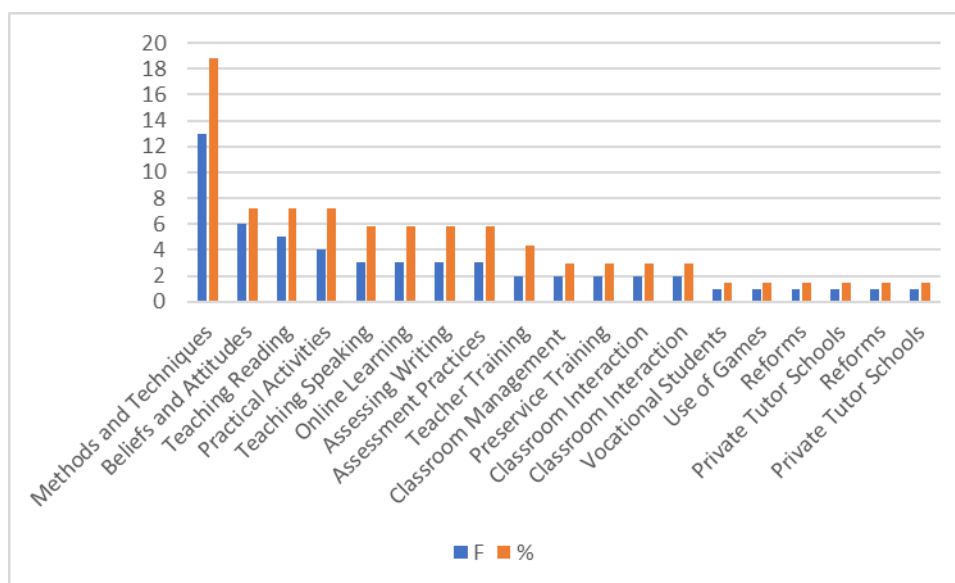

Figure 5. Frequency distribution of Themes

Some of the papers focus on teacher attitudes and benefits.

As an illustration, some of the studies examined teacher attitudes and beliefs, such as what teachers believed about teaching English at their respective K–12 institutions, colleges, and universities, what they believed about speaking skills instruction, what they believed about the right age to start teaching English, what they believed about primary school curricula, and what they knew about various age groups and their difficulties.

RQ3: What kinds and amounts of sampling are used, and how are samples spread throughout the articles?

The most typical group is university pupils, as shown in Figure 6 (f=20). The categories below are enumerated in ascending number order: In-Service Teachers (f=6), Pre-Service Teachers (f=3), Secondary School Students (f=13), Others (Mixed Voters from Early Primary to Adult) (f=11), and Primary School Students (f=3). Other study projects involving parents, educators, etc. were carried out.
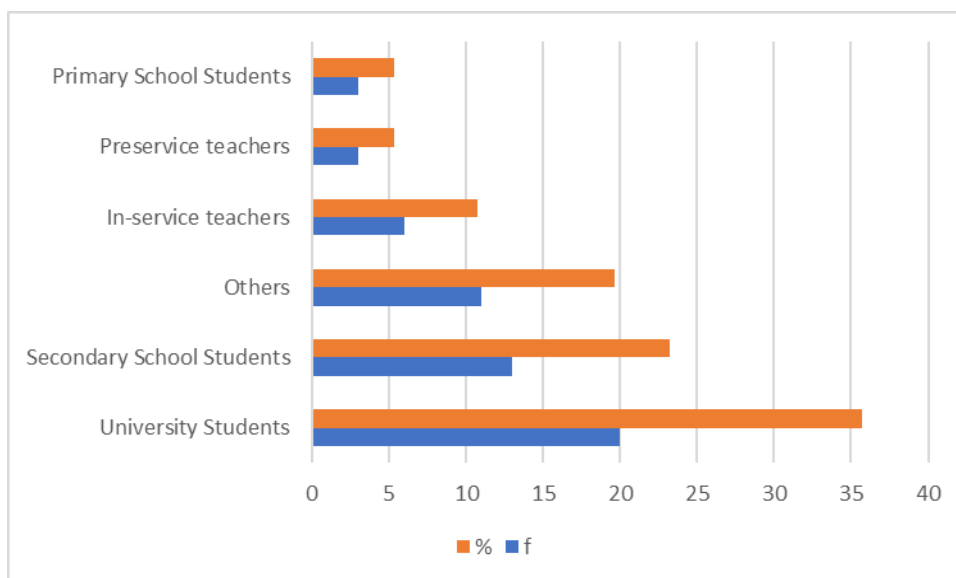

Figure 6. Frequency distribution of sample

The researchers did their study among individuals who were easier to approach and from whom they could more easily collect data because purposeful sampling is the most popular type of sampling (see Figure 7 below for more information).
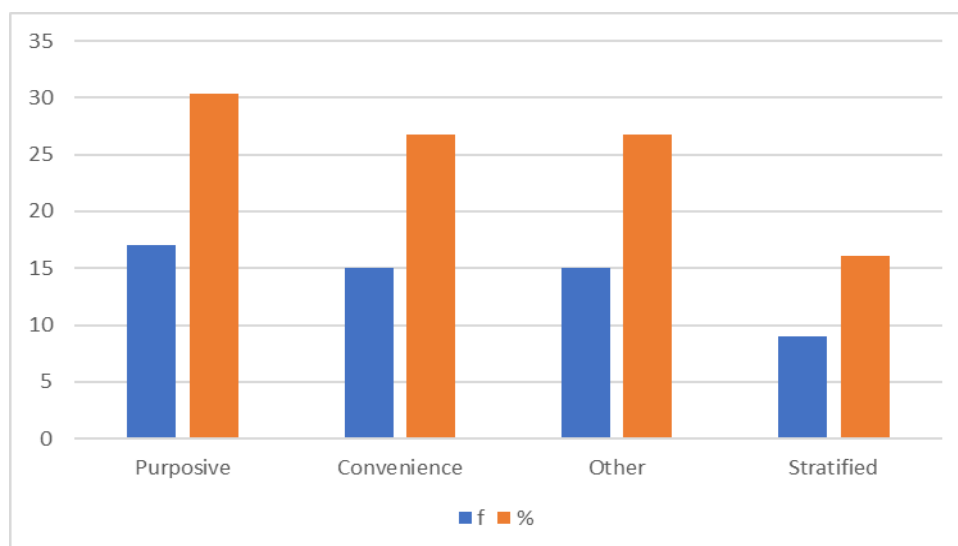

Figure 7. Frequency distribution of Type of Sampling

According to Figure 8, the study groups usually used samples ranging from 31 to 100 (f=15). There are two investigations, with corresponding group numbers of 1 to 10 and 1000 and higher.
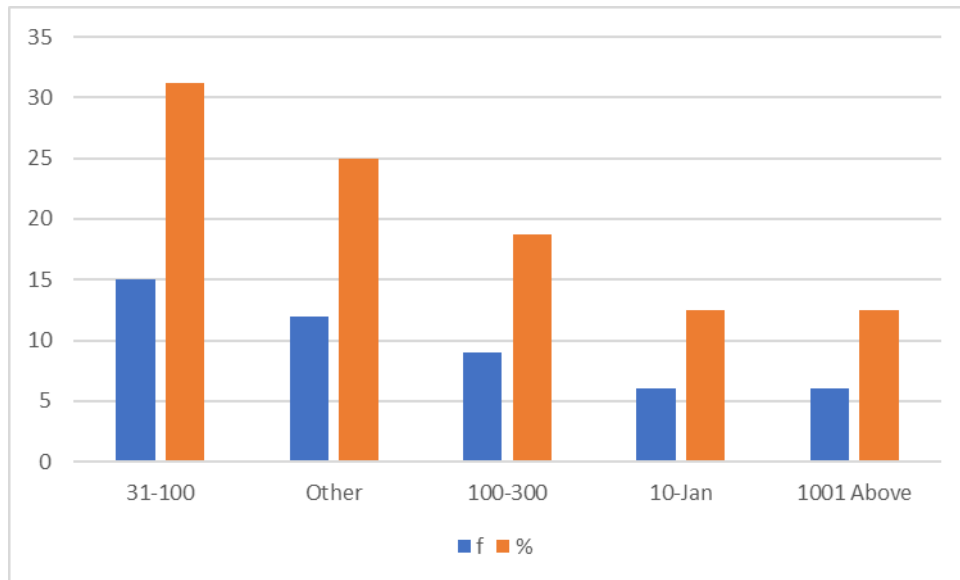
Figure 8. Frequency distribution of Sample Size

RQ4 - How are the research methods, study strategies, data gathering tools, and data analysis techniques distributed across the publications?

According to Figure 9, the combined research technique (f=24) is the most common research approach. The utilization of the mixed study technique (f=16), which included both qualitative and quantitative methods, was the lowest.

According to Figure 10 (f=11), descriptive and quasi-experimental studies were the most frequently used study methods.
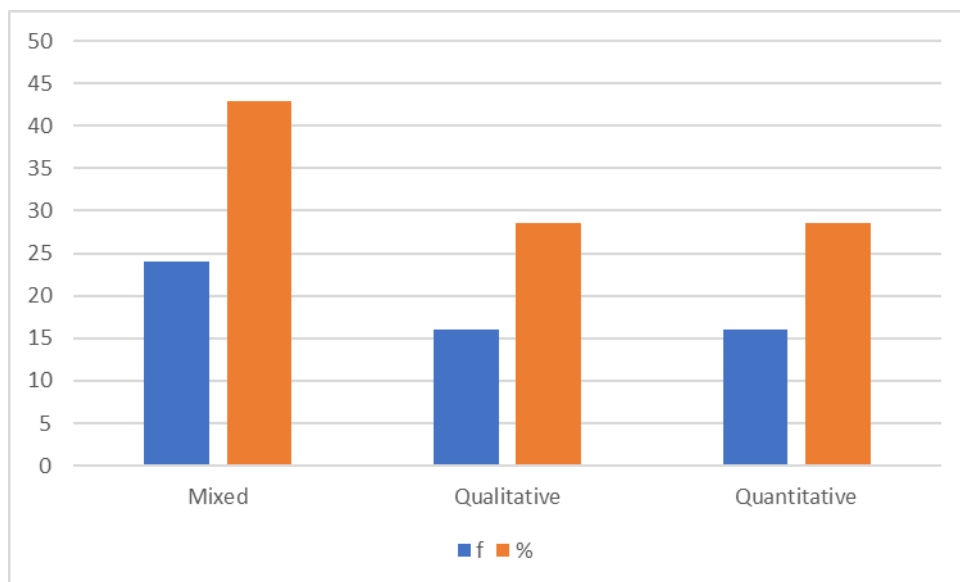

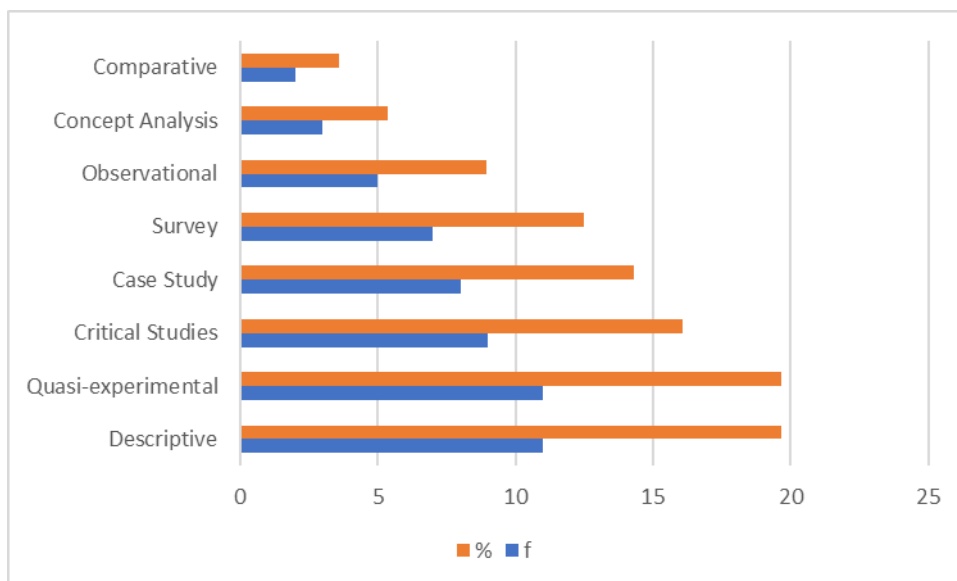*Figure 9. Frequency distribution of Research Method*

Figure 10. Frequency distribution of Research Design

The most common way of gathering data was through questionnaires (f=20). Observation, conversations, and document collection were also used to collect data. Figure 11 lists the least preferred ways for collecting data as exploratory, different instruments, and accomplishment assessments.
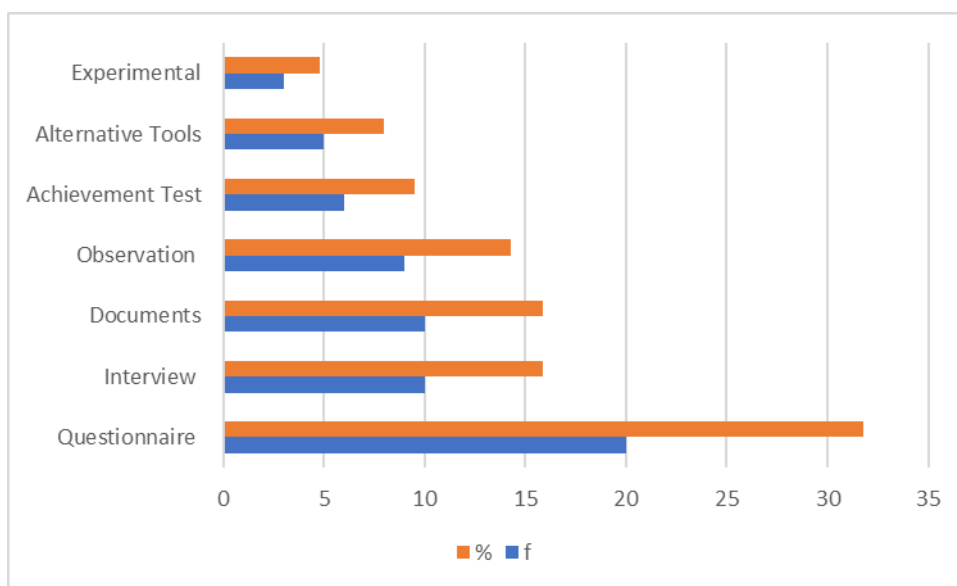

Figure 11. Frequency Distribution of Data Collection Tools

Frequency, fraction charts (f=17) were the most frequently used form of data analysis, as can be seen in Figure 12 below. On the other side, ELT experts used graphic displays for data processing the least (f=1).
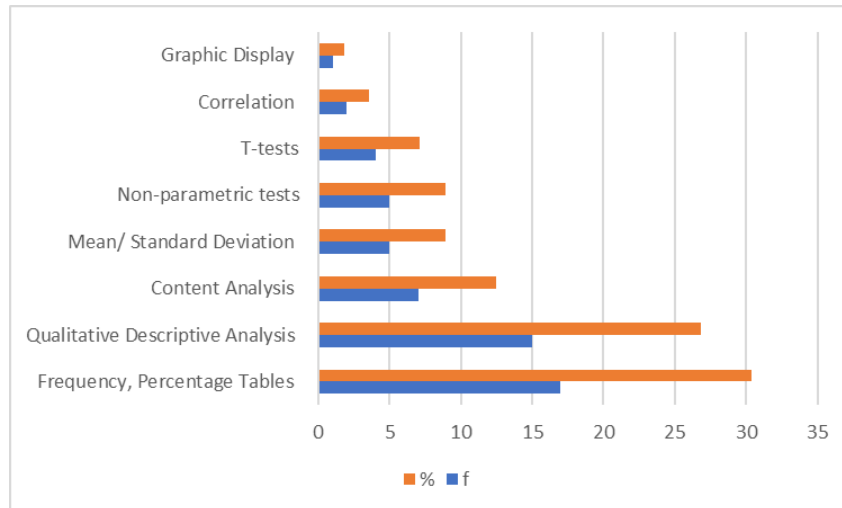
Figure 12. Frequency Distribution of Data Analysis

Conclusion

Since English was selected as the default language of the globe, ELT has gained more recognition on a worldwide scale. Thanks to developments in information and communication tools, English has become the global tongue of the twenty-first century. The growing use of English as a language for worldwide contact by many countries and people in their cultural, political, and commercial connections has highlighted the significance of teaching English in classrooms. Research on TEFL has attracted a lot of attention. The most common topics, survey methods, research procedures, data gathering tools, data analysis tools, and other aspects of studies on English language instruction for Thai EFL pupils are examined in this study.

The increase in papers released after 2019 suggests that academics in Thailand are paying more attention to teaching English to young pupils. Journals with just one or two authors have much more material than journals with three or four authors, regardless of the number of writers. To promote greater academic involvement and create research papers of higher quality on a worldwide scale, more joint and team research projects might be conducted.

Additionally, the Canadian Center of Science and Education published articles on teaching English to Thai EFL learners the most frequently (f=12) between the years 2006 and 2022, which is to be expected given that the journal mentioned above is one of the reputable and experienced international journals in the ELT field.

In terms of article types, the number of original research papers (f=40) is significantly greater than the number of review pieces (f=16). Book evaluations are excellent sources of information for teachers, teacher educators, and scholars, so they should benefit more from them, claims a 2018 research by Cesur et al. Particularly, fewer articles concentrate on beliefs, attitudes, methodologies, and processes than they do on problems like minority issues, game use, portfolio building, and pre-service training. The opinions of students and teachers on this subject, however, are of the uttermost importance given the necessity to integrate various cultures into ELT practice, which serves as a stage for students to become international speakers (Chinh, 2013). Diversity needs to be explored much more in TEFL study as a consequence.

The topic of portfolio growth is another that requires more consideration. Portfolios allow for continuous evaluation of students' progress and help instructors create class plans. By using this assessment strategy, instructors can accurately plan students' academic development by knowing exactly who they are and where they fall short. Additionally, as an instrument for evaluation, portfolios offer more reliable and active information about the students (Birgin & Baki, 2007). Although pre-service teaching is more common in teacher education programs to improve language skills and

provide real experiences, study papers on pre-service training suggest that focus should be paid to instructing ELT pre-service instructors (Anderson, 1998).

These topics might be suggested to be included as a consequence of the study studies on Thai English learning. The majority of university students are chosen as the research sample even though studies on English as a Second Language (ELT) among learners are the main focus. This is because the purposive sampling approach, which is the deliberate selection of participants based on their characteristics, is used to select the research sample (Etikan et al., 2016). This can be explained by the challenges in ensuring the validity of the responses to the questions among the different kinds of learners, given that surveys are one of the most widely used research methods in studies (De Leeuw & Otter, 1995).

At this point, researchers should focus on other types of learners who use different study methods. Few investigations have also been conducted with a bigger group population. Other content analysis studies have found that combined research papers (42.86%) prevail over quantitative or qualitative studies (28.57%), which may affect sample numbers (Yaz et al., 2016; Cesur et al., 2018). Because of this, the majority of studies have small sample sizes, which is probably because it is difficult for researchers to contact many participants.

Given the number of studies conducted in Thailand, larger sample sizes are required to generate more dependable findings because scholars typically only contact a small number of subjects. Additionally, it was found that research papers rarely employ the mixed research technique, which blends quantitative and qualitative research and facilitates both explanation and investigation. However, mixed research should be given more consideration as it allows the researcher to obtain more trustworthy findings by eliminating analytical shortcomings in one study model and utilizing the advantages of the other (Ponce & Pagán-Maldonado, 2015).

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