

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM FOR THAI INSTRUCTORS USING ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

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Abstract

The English for Integrated Studies (EIS) program has been accepted as an innovative practice to be utilized for non-English speaking teachers (NESTs) using English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in the Thai basic education curriculum to increase the accessibility of the English program (EP) to all students. The purpose of this research was three fold: 1) to explore the problems and issues of the schools using EMI, 2) to develop an alternative system of using EMI for NESTs, and 3) to determine the effectiveness of an alternative system. The Phenomenology theory approach of qualitative research was used as strategic research with the purpose of selecting informants from administrators and teachers in 266 schools who provide and teach EP and/or EIS in the secondary and vocational education levels throughout Thailand.

The results of the study show that the benefits and advantages from providing EIS program strongly supports solving the permanent problems in providing EP, such as; reliance on outsourcing and frequent changes of foreign teachers, and registration and tuition fees are unaffordable for most families and government policies are inadequate at financially supporting or subsidizing the hiring of foreign teachers preventing EP from being more effective and efficient. The innovative EIS approach is an alternative EMI system such that key success factors driving the process of the system are the EIS approach implementing the principals' policies through the EIS Six Tips pedagogy. It not only includes the development of Thai basic education curriculum in the regular program but also helps to promote the Education Ministry's policies of providing a quality education system. Moreover, EIS encourages competitive competency and reduces the gap in the quality of the public education system according to the national strategy which renders an answer to the main question **“What is a better system of using English as a medium of instruction (EMI) for Non-English Speaking Teachers (NESTs)?”**

Key words: English as a Medium of Instruction/English for Integrated Studies/ Non-English Speaking Teachers/On the Job Training/Thailand 4.0

1. Introduction:

Academic administration is the main role of school administrators and teachers, and the learning achievement of students depends largely on the competency and knowledge of the administrators and teachers (McKinsey & Company, 2007;The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

To manage and teach courses in English under the English Program (EP), which includes other core courses such as basic science, mathematics, English and computer technology (STEM), it is necessary to use English as a medium of instruction (EMI). This is mandated by the Ministry of Education since it is hoped that Thai youth with the knowledge of English can communicate within the Global Community of Nations. However, to give instructions in English often requires English native speakers. Such instructors need to possess a bachelor degree in any of those disciplines. They must also have a teaching credential and teaching experience. They normally receive higher salaries and fringe benefits so they can stay comfortably in Thailand. However, when other institutes offer higher salaries English native teachers will not hesitate to jump ship. The management of this program suffers due to the hiring problems of the English native instructors. Consequently, the goal of the program cannot be achieved, and project efficiency and effectiveness will not be sustainable. Expected international standard for the students will not be attainable.

As a result, an alternative to the EP programs was established and called an English for Integrated Studies (EIS) Program. It was initially developed and deployed at Sunthonphu Pittaya Secondary School (SPSS) in 2004. The purpose of this development was to improve the quality of education. The EIS approach was initiated in STEM syllabuses. Additionally, Non-English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) were trained how to plan, create, and conduct their subjects, using short, simple, and familiar (SSF) English as a medium of instruction. This kind of human resource development increases the sustainability of knowledge, motivates teachers, gives opportunity to learn and re-share skills and experiences. Those aspects were carefully aligned and planned to follow the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) (UNDP, 2007) and to ensure an independent Thai education system. For the above EIS approach, the researcher used the following theories and practices; 1) key-concepts of social interaction to develop learning by Vygotsky (1978), 2) the simplified learning steps of Bruner (1966), 3) bilingual education of Stephen Krashen (1987), and 4) adult learning of Malcolm Shepherd Knowles (1998) to refine the EIS approach and EIS training program (Ngamsom, 2006, 2011).

Having used the EIS approach for four years in SPSS the students' O-Net scores improved substantially. In the academic year of 2008, ranking improved from 2000 to nearly 200 out of 2409 schools (USEB, 2009). Furthermore, those NESTS can improve their fluency by using SSF English for teaching and communicating. In years of 2006-2010, the EIS approach has extended to both elementary and secondary high schools starting with schools in Rayong province. The financial assistance commissioned by Rayong Provincial Administrative Organization and Rayong Municipality provided fund for the training of the teachers throughout Rayong province. The core-mentor-program which was initiated at SPSS and implemented at all of its network schools as well, was set up as a part of EIS Program, conveying regional responsibility to very dedicated and skillful teachers of this approach, and to keep the trained teachers motivated and supervised. In 2010 more than 200 schools have since joined force with the EIS school network of Thailand and started the EIS association of Thailand (Ngamsom, 2011).

Moreover, in 2010, the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE) endorsed and decided to implement the strategic policy, using the EIS approach as a new driving force to the *World Class Standard Schools* (WCSS) project, conducted by Office of the Basic Education

Commission (OBEC). However, the EIS approach did not get implemented as initially planned and was discontinued. In 2013, the EIS approach succeeded in the EIS training of more than 10,000 NEST's in approximately 500 schools throughout Thailand. Many teachers were fascinated and inspired by the training and committed to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and English more than before in their classes. As their confidence improved, their ideas widened and their digital literacy skills increased massively, all having a great effect on their intrinsic motivation (Peansara and et.al, 2013).

From 2011-2015, the EIS approach was adopted at Matthayomwatnairong High School (MRS) to match the additional tasks to collaborate and combine efforts already practiced by EP teachers and NEST's. Especially, the carefully planned and cautiously deployed workflow-digitalisation, using Gmail, a specialized electronic gradebook and in the final stages the use of the full Google Apps for Education. EIS mentors have two ingenious benefits. First, it motivates and inspires the trainers. Second, it encourages self-development, as in each region both the core-course teachers and EIS mentors are willing to organize regular training. All of these implementations make it possible for NEST and EP teachers to improve their communication skills and teaching techniques, which students and their parents genuinely appreciate, eventually resulting in higher O-Net scores in English but in Math and Science as well. MRS achieved the 3rd rank in the nationwide O-Net M6 English test (MRS, 2016b, p. 5). Also, MRS became one of the top schools in Thailand and was even well-known in other countries (MRS, 2016b, 2017b).

General Prayut Chan-o-cha, the current Thai Prime Minister, has proclaimed that Thailand's 4.0 policy will focusing on human resource development. He said that *"Thais in the 21st century, or Thais 4.0, must be knowledgeable and be able to think analytically..."* (PRD-Thailand, 2017). Looking at the 2012 Pisa report, we can clearly see the excellence and progression in the quality of education in Finland, Singapore, and Poland. These countries focus on the policy to develop teachers, using ICT and creating an educational network. Individual collaboration and the educational network go hand in hand to ensure instructional innovation so all students get an equal share of higher quality education (Schleicher, 2015).

The EIS approach will become a new hope and an alternative approach for teaching and learning core subjects using EMI by Thai instructors. However, there is still no academic and systematic evidence on the how well the EIS works, therefore, the researcher took on the study of the development of an alternative system for Thai instructors using EMI.

2. The purposes of the study

They are to: 1) Explore the problems and issues of the schools using EMI. 2) Develop an alternative system of using EMI for NESTs. 3) Determine the effectiveness of an alternative system. The main research question for this study is: **"What is an alternative system of using EMI for NESTs?"** The sub research questions are: 1) What are the problems and issues of the schools using EMI? 2) What is an innovative and alternative system to develop the quality of NESTs? 3) How effective is the new innovative and alternative system in developing NESTs? 4) What should be the system for Thai instructors using EMI so as to comply with Thailand 4.0?

The Significant of the Study are: 1)The study may be a suitable system to develop the EIS school network, train NESTs effectively and extend this system not only throughout Thailand but

also to other countries in general. 2) The system may develop the English competency levels of the Thai NESTs, who can then act as foreign teacher replacements for effective management of EP and other English programs to insure sustainable development of these programs. 3) The development of the system may be sustainable for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) planning to support Thailand 4.0 policies.

3. Research methodology:

The research methodology was designed through research paradigm and the qualitative research strategy on a phenomenology theory (Moustakas, 1994). The semi-structured interview was used as the basis for data collection of this study. The key informants of in-depth research were from school administrators and core teachers from schools that implemented the EIS and/or EP, both nine high schools and a vocational colleges in the school years of 2011-2016 which have implemented EIS for at least four years. Those schools were in Rayong, Samutprakan, Bangkok, Kalasin, Songkla, Nakornpanom and Chiangrai provinces to find the key components influencing the development of an alternative EMI system.

There were four research instruments used in the study: the guidelines in-depth interview with 10 guidelines for asking to the research questions , site observation, document analysis and focus group. The guidelines in-depth interview instrument of this study was advised and examined by academic experts and was used in conjunction with site observations and operation document analysis.

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews of seven school administrators, 14 core teachers from each school for 45- 90 minutes per person depending on the contents, site observation and the documentary study of all key-informants and participants. After that, data was gathered for both classification codifying and rechecking from the participants, whose prior collection was not complete, and analyzed using Creswell's qualitative research on the phenomenology theory approach for data collection and analysis (Kvals, 2007), and collaborated with digital google software. In finalizing the research. The researcher employed focus groups composed of nine key informants from two high schools and a vocational school and three experts to verify and clarify the findings from the gathered data in analyzing to synthesize processing.

4. The results from key finding :

4.1 The answers to the 1st research purpose: From the answer to the 1st purpose research, the key information of the findings to answer, follow up the four (4) guidelines for asking to the sub research question 1 as mentioned, are as follows:

(1) The important problems and issues in providing EP are as follows: 1) Lack of opportunities for the majority of students in receiving quality education. 2) Reliance on outsourcing and frequent changes of foreign teachers. 3) Registration and tuition fees are unaffordable for most families and government policies are inadequate at financially supporting or subsidizing the hiring of foreign teachers or visiting lecturers preventing EP from being more effective and efficient. 4) Inefficiency coupled with ineffective management of both human and non-human resources. 5) The absence of teaching technique development programs for EP teachers.

(2) The important issues in providing EIS are as follows: 1) Proper way to render opportunities and spread quality education in comparison with EP. 2) Development and improvement of Thai teachers in specific fields, i.e., STEM in EIS. 3) Digital ICT skill development for promoting and adjusting the paradigm process in providing class together with teacher development during working hours. 4) EP development especially efficient management and human resource development.

(3) The overriding factors provided for EIS are as follows: 1) Upgrading of the quality of the school's education to that of the World-Class Standard School. 2) Using the EIS innovation as an alternative to the EP. Now ordinary schools and rural communities can afford EIS trained teachers to better themselves and improve the students' dexterity. 3) Improving learner's communicative English skills from integrated classes since teachers were using EMI. 4) Giving equal opportunities for all students consequently reducing the gap of quality education. 5) Developing EIS innovation further by engaging other teachers to use EIS in teaching different fields. 6) Using the EIS innovation method to develop EP teachers at the same time.

(4) Benefits and challenges from providing EIS are as follows: 1) Both students and teachers are confident to communicate with foreigners in English. Students are able to present their projects in English at a high standard. 2) Teachers who have never used EMI before have developed themselves to become eager learners and continue to explore for more knowledge and information. 3) Enhance EP instructors teaching techniques resulting in their development leading to effective and efficient EP management. 4) Effective digital ICT developed in order to provide classes, learning skills, management and language skills for oneself, the project, the organization and the network. 5) EIS was developed to enable EP to be more complete.

(5) Benchmarks used to measure the projects (both EP and EIS): 1) O-NET achievement is higher in every school both EP and EIS. 2) More and more students passed the AFS Scholarship tests and continued their studies abroad. 3) International project competition results in some schools, i.e., Damrongratsongkroh High School receiving first prize on the international level. 4) EIS teachers are accepted in the school network both inside and outside the country.

4.2 The answers to the 2nd and 3rd purposes of the research: From the answers of the 2nd research purpose, the researcher analysed the key information of the finding to answer, follow up the six (6) guidelines for asking to the 2nd - 4th sub research questions as mentioned, and synthesized with the results of the determining from the focus group to answer the 3rd purpose then summarized the alternative EMI system for NESTs such as the diagram in Figure 1 with the details of all components of this system are as follows:

(1) The important reasons to provide EMI: 1) **Adapt to World-Class Standard quality:** i) Upgrading of the quality of school education to that of the World-Class Standard school, (according to the OBEC-MOE project). ii) Proper way to spread the opportunities and the quality of education compared with EP. 2) **Utilize innovative EIS** to develop instructors, especially the **NESTs:** i) Using EIS innovation as an alternative to the EP. ii) Development and upgrades of Thai teachers in the specific fields in EIS, especially STEM. iii) Improving learner communicative English skills from integrated classes since teachers were using EMI. iv) Digital

ICT skill development for promoting and adjusting the paradigm process in providing class together with teacher development during on the job. 3) **Develop EIS** to give opportunities for **all and reduce the gap** of learners. 4) **Uplift the quality of educational management:** i) Using EIS innovation method to develop EP teachers at the same time. ii) EP development especially efficient management and human resource development.

Then, the researcher compressed and classified the four (4) reasons above into the input that was a component of an alternative EMI system for NESTs as below.

(2) Input: 1) NESTs: 2) EMI with EIS approach in the normal basic curriculum system: 3) Education for all: 4) World-Class Standard School:

(3) Process: 1) School policy with principal implementation. 2) Adopt EIS Approach through curriculum development: classroom implementation with EIS concept: SSF, OK, MM through EIS 6 Tips model. **3) Teachers development through EIS 6 Tips Model with OJL on PDCA cycle**

supervision: Teachers development with EIS concept and 6 Tips teaching Model through OJL on PDCA cycle supervision. **4) Enhancing digital ICT classroom development. 5)**

Educational Network collaboration.

(4) Context and Environment: 1) Guardians and people involved: Guardians and people involved supported further financial affair. **2) Collaborative learning with learners. 3) Network participation:** Network from people involved for developing the education of the school and for promoting, supporting and inspiring the teachers and administrator of the project and the school.

(5) Output: 1) Smart students and teachers in English proficiency with 6 Tips active teaching

through the EIS approach: Both teachers and students are confident to communicate in English which is accepted by the guardians, community, network and EIS Thailand. All teachers are proud of the learners and colleagues about the process of teaching EIS 6-Tips Active Learning from the schools using EIS. **2) Improve Digital ICT inquiry skills with the EIS approach enhanced self-study through STEM:** EIS is a process of learning which is very efficient. This method makes learners and teachers have English competency, ICT inquiry skills for researching and getting knowledge with the integration between work and self-study. **3) More support:** The school gets support from the community such as resources and the participation for their kids' learning development. **4) EIS system solved EP problems in management:** EIS system makes the school management in terms of EP efficient and adaptable to the united harmonious international community. It gives pride to learners, guardians and the community so that the community accepts that EP is one of the efficient ways for all learners. **5) Educational sustainable development: i)** The teacher development process according to the EIS development plan is a system that gives learners who live in poverty access to EP classes. Moreover, it leads to the quality of education development overcoming the medium academic achievement to a high level and also reduces the gap between EP classes and normal classes. That brings the collaborative learning between the community and the school sustainably based on reasons, immunity and sufficiency. ii) EIS learning is a way to develop people in the country sustainably especially in the terms of self-development of the administrators and the teachers which affects learner development which is essential for further

country development.

(5) Feedback of the EIS system development: 1) **Gaining opportunity from the organization:** The organization gives chances to all equally and brings pride from development which leads to courage and support. 2) **Continuing and supporting policy:** The support and continuing policy. 3) **Encouraging further self-study:** Further self-study of EIS teachers to develop English skills and competency continuously. 4) **Creating collaborated community:** Give chances to the community to be part of the development. 5) **Supporting sustainable development goal.**

5. Conclusions & Discussion

5.1 Conclusion:

(1) The problems and issues in providing EP as mentioned in 4.1 (1) are strongly support solving from the benefits and advantages with the overriding factors of the issues in providing EIS as mentioned in 4.1 (2) - (5).

(2) The Alternative system of using EMI for NESTs as in the following figure 1:

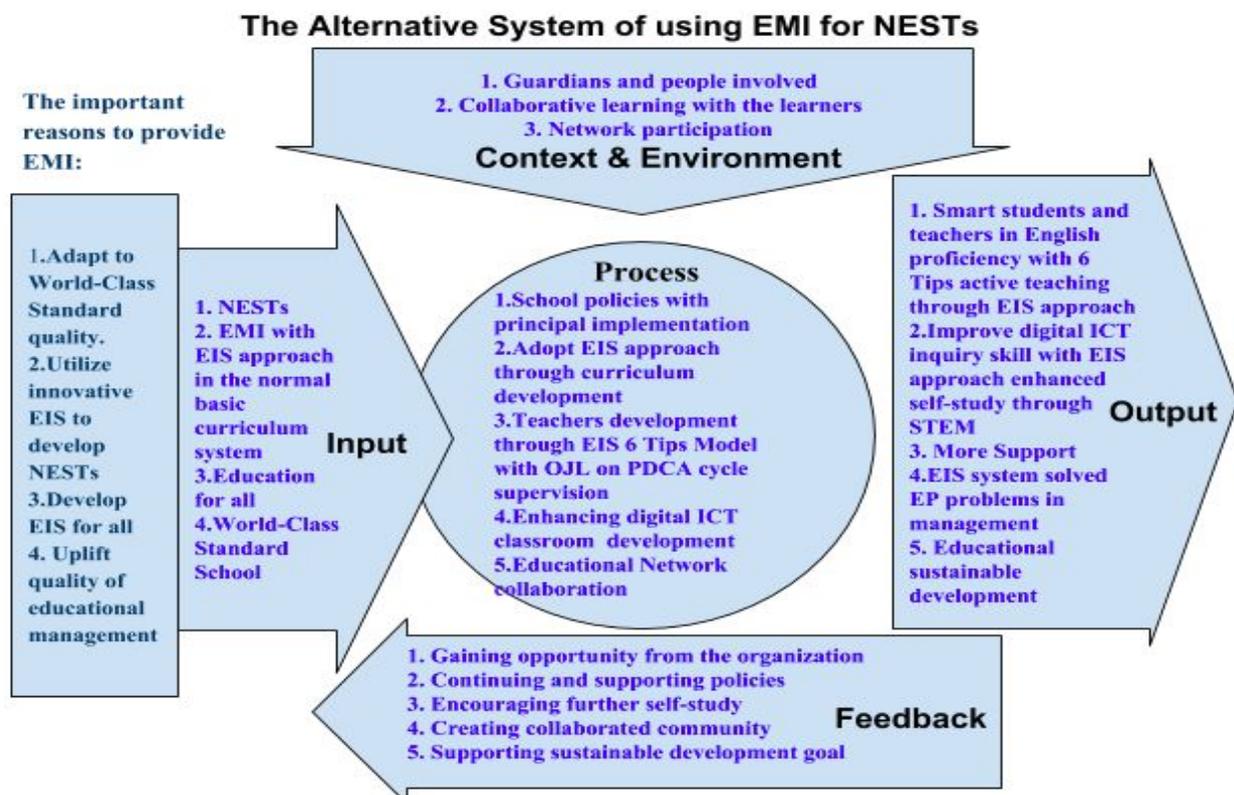


Figure 1: The Alternative System of using EMI for NESTs

5.2. Discussion

(1) EP Problems versus EIS Issues

For the issues about the opportunity in learning quality education and relying on the outsourced instructors, EIS innovation comes to take roles helping and also developing

teachers and the curriculum. Those lead the learners to learn and develop their EMI to communicate English. Opening chances, language development and various learning skills cause teachers and students to upgrade their competency according to Kittiporn Inthasida and Sombat Khumkrong were asserted from ONEC (2015, p. 61-76). Moreover, the issues to support EIS innovation to be an alternative to EP and solve EP problems in terms of management and harmonious classes (MNR, 2016(b), 2017(b)). Researcher noticed that some schools that had both EP and EIS approaches didn't mention this issue. Notice that, the teachers who were key informants of this study mentioned that school policies with the principal's implementation of the EIS program were the key success factors to develop the program. This statement was supported by McKinsey (2007). Then, the previous statement notion will be an issue for the future investigating.

When considering the results about the benefits from EP and EIS after implementation as in the above issues of section 4.1 (3), (4), (5) it strongly supports solving the problems from EP by implementing EIS. Hence, the problems of EP which affect EIS innovation development are very important, the environment and context factor, to lead to an alternative EMI system from the EIS system development. Besides solving EP issues about the instructor resource as Senachit & Trakulmututa (2017, p.78) mentioned, EIS was an efficient alternative program to help the government upgrade the quality of education and reduce the gap among people in the society and the country, or further as global citizens in terms of the quality of education.

(2) An Alternative EMI system for NEST's development.

Although the alternative EMI mentioned was the facts from experience of the informants which are administrators and teachers in schools who are developing EIS. Researcher discriminated the discussion to assert the effectiveness of the alternative EMI system of this section into two issues as below.

2.1) Input: From the findings, it was found that the main reason for implementing EIS innovation and the benefit of the implementation of the EIS project in schools could meet the objectives of the EIS project and also solve the EP problems as well. It caused to researcher to set the key issues into the input component of an alternative EMI system to summarize in the component of a good system. All of the informants very strongly answered the objectives of an alternative system. This action is confirmed by the Council of Education (ONEC, 2015).

2.2) Process component:

1) Policy and its implementation

As a result of the findings, school administrators are critical to drive EIS implementation to all components of the system. In particular, the process and the reflection effects of EIS development affected the system's components. Contextual and environmental issues have been identified that lead to the development of an EIS approach that results in systematic development. The results of the system are successful for both the instructors and the learners, which affects the policy of quality educational management to Thailand 4.0. This research agrees with the studies of McKinsey (2007), Pearnara and et.al (2013) and Celestin and et.al (2017)

2) Curriculum development

Both administrators and teachers insisted that EIS innovation can make all learning

accessible and effective. English is not a barrier to learn, although initially, some teachers and learners have some problems. But with the development of the EIS learning process model through the 4 assumptions and the 6 Tips instructional model, in turn, have helped both learners and teachers to improve their learning skills. The use of EMI preparation and implemented in the classroom impacted the learners through the learning process and learning how to apply the EIS approach in daily life. According to the findings in this research. This is a great way to increase the quality both of the skills and competencies in English and teaching techniques using EMI. This result is consistent with Bruner's Theory, Kolb's learning Theory, and confirms with the research study of the ONEC (2015), Peansara and et.al, (2013).

3) Instructors development through EIS & GFE-OJL Training with supervision: As the EIS

course training with on the job learning (OJL) through the instruction collaborate with digital ICT of GFE was the key functions implied to the development of EIS & GFE-OJL training. And the learning networks contributed the course training. This was confirmed from the findings and also impacted the development of English language skills through continuous teaching and learning. The monitoring with supervision of the school administrator through mentoring and coaching are very important issue in the process altogether with the feedback of the alternative EMI system wherein the supportive feedback of these findings such as the continuing supervision was the result in the teacher having both teaching technique skills and English proficiency with the interpersonal learning processes. And it will impact the result in the alternative system development. The above conclusion confirms with McKinsey (2007), Vygotsky (1978), Kolb's learning (2014) and Celestin and et.al (2017).

4) Digital ICT development: From the findings, it was found that the big issue is digital ICT for learning, communication, and accumulation of the information. It has helped both learners and instructors to develop a consistent of self-study. And it has challenged EIS innovations and promoted a continuous learning process within the internal drive system itself, to comply with cause to the results. As a result, both the instructor and learner acquire the skills needed to live in the 21st century. The development of the EIS approach has made the quality of learners higher than that of the World-Class Standard school of Thailand MOE project and also in the international competition (ONEC, 2015)

5) Educational Network: The development of EIS and GAFE training is a finding. The development of OJT teacher training with EIS & GFE using EIS core teachers has resulted in both the creation and sharing of learning in the learning network. Challenges Stimulate development during the operation. This results in the improvement of English language skills through the work and language skills of the teacher, creating a learning society in the organization. When teachers develop better, they affect the learners better. In line with McKinsey (2007), Vygotsky (1978), and Kolb's learning (2014).

5.3. Suggestions:

1) Suggestions about the policy: The government must have policies to promote and support an alternative EP to: i) integrate with the Basic Education levels for all Thais to get a quality education equally and enhance the competitive competences, ii) be part of the teacher and administrator development in providing classes to solve the issues from both EP and

normal classes. This leads the quality of the education to Thailand 4.0.

2) The suggestions about the management: i) The educational institutes that provide EP should apply EIS or an alternative EMI to develop the original EP by developing the normal classes and using the same resources. That brings the quality of the education, English for learning, communicative English for 21st century for both teachers and students. ii) The administrators should take EIS to apply in the institutes for developing the curriculum that uses EMI and give chances to teachers to develop their skills, which is the heart of curriculum development and promoting the quality of education.

3) Suggestion for further study: This is qualitative research of the EIS program and the development of the Thai NESTs in providing EIS classes as an alternative program. Although there is the check for the development of the teachers in providing EIS classes as an alternative, it still doesn't cover the whole population in other fields. For further study, it should be quantitative research or experimental research especially in the vocational education field. Moreover, in the present, the era of digital age, there are quick changes that need to be researched to follow up the alternative EMI for NESTs in different contexts for future study.

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