

## Educational Research Methodology Trends of Southeast Asia English Major Undergraduate Theses: A Content Analysis

Maulina<sup>1</sup>, Umil Dayana<sup>2</sup>, Rahmat Nasrullah<sup>3</sup>, David Geelan<sup>4</sup>, Angelica Ordanza Cortez<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari, Indonesia; [maulina@umkendari.ac.id](mailto:maulina@umkendari.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari, Indonesia; [umil.dayana@umkendari.ac.id](mailto:umil.dayana@umkendari.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari, Indonesia; [rahmat.nasrullah@umkendari.ac.id](mailto:rahmat.nasrullah@umkendari.ac.id)

<sup>4</sup> The University of Notre Dame, Australia; [david.geelan@nd.edu.au](mailto:david.geelan@nd.edu.au)

<sup>5</sup> Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Philippines; [cortezangelica@gmail.com](mailto:cortezangelica@gmail.com)

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

educational research;  
research methodology trends;  
undergraduate thesis;  
English language education;  
content analysis

#### Article history:

Received 2023-09-19

Revised 2024-05-06

Accepted 2024-09-13

### ABSTRACT

The present study thoroughly examines the predominant research methodology trends and topics applied in a specific time frame from 2019 to 2023 in educational research of the online searchable undergraduate theses in English major programs across Southeast Asia, utilizing a comprehensive content analysis approach. By employing keyword extraction, topic-specific modelling, and thematic evaluation, our objective is to ascertain the prevailing methodologies in English language teaching and the research interest themes from 347 undergraduate downloadable theses that have been investigated. The analysis explores the possible ramifications of these patterns on the caliber of undergraduate research, English language instruction, and the broader education domain within the given area. This study revealed a strong preference (54.5%) for quantitative approaches, highlighting the importance of empirical methodologies. Additionally, the use of qualitative approaches (24.8%) suggested an increasing recognition of the importance of examining human factors. While action research (8.4%), particularly Classroom Action Research (CAR), was less prevalent than mixed-method approaches (12.8%), this suggests that action research needs to be recognized. The different ratios of research methods demonstrated a dedication to investigating various questions and advancing knowledge in language, literature, and education. The interesting research themes identified the complex and diverse nature of English language raising focus in Southeast Asia, such as technological integration, teacher development, cultural studies, assessment, and language teaching methodologies. The study provides useful information for enhancing research mentorship and education, and it improves knowledge of research trends in this setting. Furthermore, the findings obtained from this study have the potential to contribute to the enhancement of curriculum design, instructional approaches, and distribution of resources in the English language education research area.

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### Corresponding Author:

Maulina

Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari, Indonesia; [maulina@umkendari.ac.id](mailto:maulina@umkendari.ac.id)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education has a pivotal role in advancing human growth which includes cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth which is closely related to the advancement of society. The education process enables individuals to gain knowledge, cultivate skills, and actively participate in critical analysis, facilitating personal development and making valuable contributions to the socio-economic progress of nations. In the field of education, the language of English holds significant importance as a worldwide means of communication fostering intercultural comprehension and providing individuals with opportunities to acquire extensive knowledge (Droubi et al., 2023; MacKenzie & Chiang, 2023). According to (Kam, 1998) English language education has emerged as a substantial focus in the Southeast Asian region, which comprises eleven countries: Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor (Timor-Leste), Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. This emphasis on English language education reflects the region's increasing importance in the global context, characterized by its diversity and dynamism (Fang & Xu, 2022).

Completing undergraduate theses holds considerable importance within the academic trajectory of students pursuing a degree in English in universities in Southeast Asia (Briceno & Bergey, 2022; Maulina et al., 2021; Winskel, 2013). These theses not only signify the pinnacle of students' scholarly endeavours but also serve as a significant research resource within English language instruction, for instance as a pedagogical innovation (Chigbu et al., 2023; Dafouz et al., 2023; Guo et al., 2021), evidence-based practices (Sahan et al., 2023; Yin et al., 2023), assessment and feedback (Cope et al., 2021; Laverty, 2016), resource development (Lee, 2022; Mukherjee, 2017; Stein et al., 2022), and enhancing broaden culture awareness (CohenMiller et al., 2017; Khan & Takkac, 2021; Maulina et al., 2023). The theses' content and methods can provide valuable insights into current research on educational trends at a regional and international level. Additionally, they can offer practical perspectives on education systems and priorities specific to Southeast Asia (Chigbu et al., 2023; CohenMiller et al., 2017).

The majority of extant literature on trends in educational research methods within the field of English language education tends to focus predominantly on countries in the Western hemisphere. The existing body of literature needs more comprehensive coverage of the distinct patterns and methodologies observed in Southeast Asia, i.e., a region characterized by its own cultural, linguistic, and educational milieu (Bai & Pan, 2008; Hill et al., 2022; Vonkova et al., 2021). Identifying these research gaps holds significant importance for researchers in this field. It serves the purpose of delineating the study's boundaries (McBride & Abramovich, 2022), drawing attention to areas where novel insights can be generated (Parmaxi & Zaphiris, 2020), and ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive comprehension of the prevailing trends in educational research methodology within the context of English language education in Southeast Asia (Hall & Malmberg, 2020; Maulina et al., 2022). To address this deficiency, this study aims to examine the prevailing patterns and themes in educational research methods as seen in the undergraduate theses submitted by English majors in Southeast Asia. Through implementing a systematic content analysis, our objective is to ascertain the prevailing research methodology and themes of fascination among English undergraduates in the specified region. This investigation facilitates comprehension of the dynamic nature of the English language education field, the prevailing concerns and obstacles being tackled, and how students actively participate in research within this academic domain.

The research holds considerable importance due to its ability to provide valuable insights to educators, policymakers, and academics regarding the present condition of English language education in Southeast Asia. Through a comprehensive analysis of the research environment (Beringer & Adomßent, 2008; Jacobson, 2020; Tight, 2016), it is possible to discern the strengths and areas requiring enhancement within the educational system. This discernment can serve as a valuable guide for informing future endeavours in curriculum creation, instructional strategies, and research goals (Droubi et al., 2023; Jaekel et al., 2022; Zhao & Cheah, 2023). Moreover, this research has the potential to provide valuable perspectives on the alignment between English language education in Southeast Asia and global educational trends (Droubi et al., 2023; Rapanta & Felton, 2019; Turnbull et al., 2021;

Warf, 2017). This, in turn, can contribute to a more thorough comprehension of the region's position within the international educational community as Southeast Asia's diverse range of cultures, customs, and educational ideologies set it apart from the West in terms of educational practices.

The research is organized into distinct areas: method, data analysis, findings, and conclusions. Through the implementation of meticulous content analysis, our objective is to offer a thorough and all-encompassing examination of the prevailing trends in educational research methodologies (Saeed & Al Qunayeer, 2021) within the realm of undergraduate theses pursued by English majors in Southeast Asia. The primary objective of this study is to provide a valuable contribution to the continuing academic conversation surrounding English language teaching (Bonyadi, 2023; Courtright & Mackey, 2020; Maulina et al., 2022; Wyatt, 2014). Additionally, it aims to provide relevant information to educational stakeholders and encourage subsequent research endeavours to improve the overall quality of educational institutions in the region. Stakeholders in education can improve their institutions by providing relevant information and supporting research projects. This leads to evidence-based solutions, improved teaching, learning, and institutional performance. Research-driven projects encourage creativity, inclusion, and equity. Understanding undergraduate theses contributes to Southeast Asia's undergraduate research field. Curriculum designers, instructors, and resource managers can ensure responsive education and enhance scholarly debate.

## 2. METHODS

The present study utilizes a content analysis methodology to thoroughly investigate the content of online published undergraduate theses in English language instruction from Southeast Asian universities, covering the period from 2019 to 2023. Doing a content analysis of textual material provides both qualitative and quantitative insights. It is perfect for determining the existing trends and subtleties in research procedures in the area because of its impartiality, efficiency, and adaptability. Using content analysis (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010) as a methodological approach is suitable for discerning and classifying prevalent patterns in research procedures, subjects, and other pertinent attributes within an extensive data collection.

Subsequently, the whole texts of the chosen studies and publications from the preceding phase were acquired to conduct content analysis. It screened for eligibility, resulting in 347 searchable online undergraduate theses in English language education in Southeast Asia using the purposive sampling approach. Since purposeful sampling offers flexibility in selecting sources with specific qualities relevant to the study objectives, it is a suitable method for qualitative studies on undergraduate publicly published theses. It enables academics to focus on a wide variety of theses from different Southeast Asian universities, guaranteeing representation of distinct geographic, cultural, and educational circumstances. This sampling strategy was selected over others because it aims for regional representativeness while capturing rich and pertinent data for content analysis. Therefore, this method was utilized to ensure the selection of a representative sample. The objective of the sample was to encompass theses from multiple nations within the region to represent a wide range of variation. The data were obtained from repositories affiliated with online resource centers and academic databases. The inclusion criteria were centered on theses generated by individuals majoring in English, with a preference for those completed in the past ten years to encompass contemporary developments. The collected theses were subsequently subjected to coding for many variables, encompassing research themes, research procedures, data-gathering methodologies, sample characteristics, and indications of academic excellence. The coding process was carried out by researchers who had received appropriate training to maintain a high level of consistency.

Furthermore, the ethical considerations of this study were upheld by implementing measures to safeguard the privacy and anonymity of the writers of the theses, with no disclosure of personally identifiable information. In addition, the validity of content analysis was strengthened by implementing measures to develop inter-coder reliability. This was achieved through rigorous instruction sessions and regular assessments to guarantee consistency in data coding of the extracted

relevant focus research keywords, topic-specific modelling, and themes determined. Additionally, the data are triangulated using a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluations, bolstering the study's overall trustworthiness.

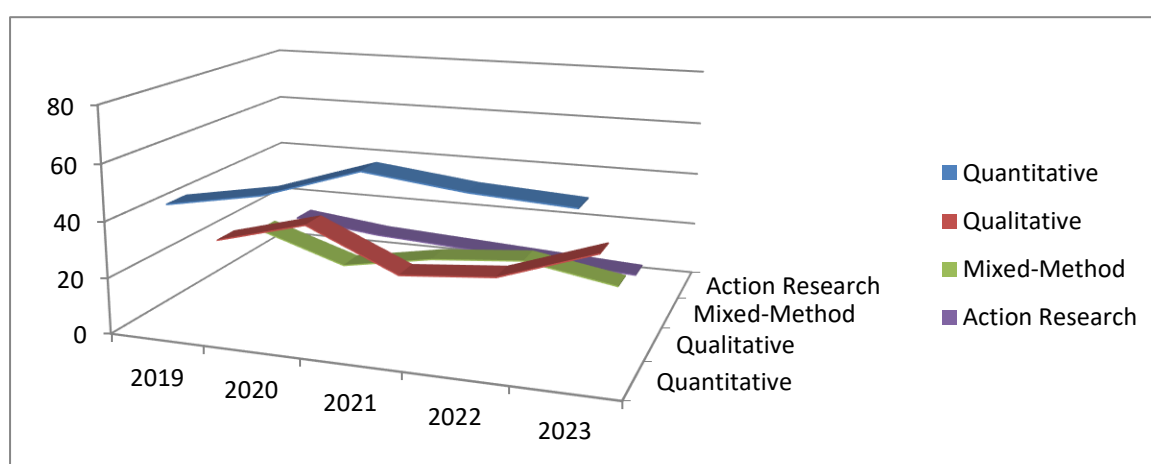
Two methods were employed for the analysis of the data. Thematic areas were found by the utilization of both deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approach involved the utilization of major topics outlined as part of the Terms of Reference, while the inductive approach involved the identification of additional themes that emerged during the study. Initially, descriptive statistics were employed to quantify patterns in research methodology, study topics, and other pertinent factors. The process encompassed the computation of frequencies, percentages, and percentage averages to present a thorough portrayal. Furthermore, qualitative content analysis approaches were implemented to discern and ascertain prevalent themes and patterns within the research topics and procedures. The process entailed classifying and analyzing written information to get a more profound comprehension of its substance. This study employed cross-tabulations and correlation analyses to investigate the associations between various factors, including the connection between research methodology and specific research themes. The study employed visual and textual methods, such as charts and descriptive narratives, to effectively communicate the observed trends and patterns in the research methods of undergraduate theses in the field of English studies in Southeast Asia. The discussion revolved around the findings within the current body of literature framework, examining their relevance to the stated research deficiencies and the distinctive attributes of English language teaching in Southeast Asia. The study was finished by providing a concise overview of the primary discoveries and their ramifications for English language instruction in Southeast Asia. Additionally, recommendations were made for prospective avenues of future investigation within this domain.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section reveals the tapestry of inquiry methods woven by aspiring undergraduate students in the region through a meticulous content analysis. We delve into the widespread adoption of different methods of research, cast light on newly emerging patterns, and assess these findings' implications for the quality and importance of research on education in Southeast Asia.

#### 3.1. Findings

##### 3.1.1 Prevalence Research Methodologies



**Figure 1.** Prevalent Research Methodologies Implemented by Undergraduate Theses of English Major in Southeast Asia

The predominant research methodologies employed in undergraduate theses within the English major field in Southeast Asia from 2019 through 2023 were quantitative as shown at Figure 1. These methodologies, encompassing surveys, experiments, descriptive research, ex-post facto studies, and correlational research, were utilized in approximately 54.5% of the theses on average for five years. Moreover, the research conducted in this study primarily adopted qualitative methodologies, with around 24.8% of the theses utilizing qualitative approaches such as case research, content analysis, interviews, and internet-based virtual ethnography. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a considerable proportion (12.8%) of the theses incorporated a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in their study design, suggesting a discernible inclination towards utilizing mixed-method methods. A lower proportion (8.4%) of the theses was employed in action research, specifically focusing on Classroom Action Research (CAR).

### 3.1.2 Research Themes

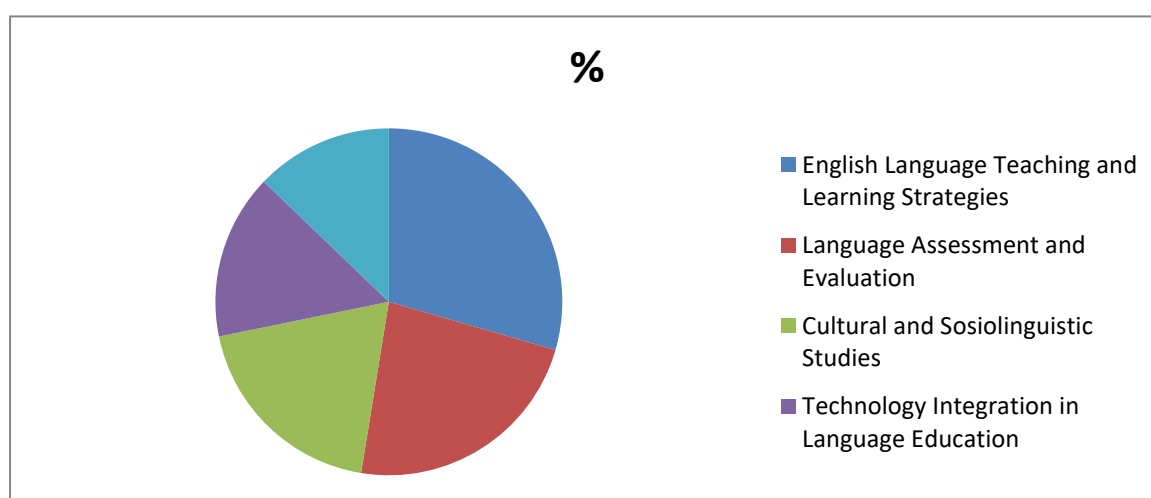


Figure 2. Research Themes

The research themes within the domain of English language instruction exhibited considerable diversity, although several common themes were identified. The prevailing research themes encompassed:

- "Strategies for Teaching and Learning English" (23%)
- "Language Assessment and Evaluation" (18%)
- "Cultural and Sociolinguistic Issues" (15%)
- "The Integration of Technology in Language Education" (12%)
- "Teacher Professional Development" (10%)

The findings of this study attempt to contribute to the understanding of the research approaches commonly utilized in undergraduate theses within the field of English studies across Southeast Asian countries. These observations provide valuable information on the current state of research in English language education in the context and present possibilities for critical analysis and enhancement.

## 3.2 Discussion

### 3.2.1 Prevalent Research Methodologies

#### a. Quantitative Research

The prevalence of quantitative research methodologies in Southeast Asia, and the utilization of English major undergraduate theses, is a noteworthy aspect, observed in 54.5% of the theses, as mentioned earlier. Utilizing various methodologies such as surveys, experiments, and statistical

methods presents a notable benefit in producing empirical data that can be subjected to rigorous analysis. Surveys are systematically gathering data from a subset of persons, typically through organized questionnaires or interviews. Researchers employ surveys as a means to assess the attitudes, opinions, habits, and features of a certain group. Experimental research entails modifying one or more independent variables to observe and analyze their impact on a dependent variable. The primary objective of this study is to establish causal linkages, frequently employing control groups. In addition, descriptive research provides a comprehensive depiction and summary of facts, refraining from drawing causal assumptions. This document comprehensively examines a certain phenomenon, population, or sample.

Quantitative methodologies in English language instruction are crucial for understanding patterns and relationships. They help in policy-making and teaching by providing insights into student attitudes, resource allocation, and curriculum changes. Experimental studies provide evidence-based approaches, while descriptive data helps identify trends in student performance. Correlational studies reveal correlations between variables like academic achievement and attendance. By understanding these methodologies, teachers and policymakers can make informed decisions to improve educational practices. In addition, quantitative methodologies, such as surveys, experiments, descriptive research, ex-post facto, and correlational research, are used to examine precise elements of literature, language, and related subjects. These methods provide various tools for conducting inquiries in English studies, ensuring thoroughness and impartiality in scholarly investigations. The prevalence of quantitative research methodologies implies that English majors in Southeast Asia may emphasize using empirical evidence and implementing systematic frameworks to investigate different facets of language and literature. This methodology could enhance the comprehension of the subject matter by incorporating evidence-based and analytical perspectives. It is imperative to acknowledge that the selection of research methodology ought to be congruent with the study inquiries and objectives (Turnbull et al., 2021). Although quantitative methods are appropriate for a wide range of inquiries, certain research problems can be better explored using qualitative approaches. Qualitative methods provide a further understanding of the complex and nuanced nature of human experiences and viewpoints.

In educational research, oversimplified interpretations can lead to ignoring context and subjective experiences. Integrating qualitative methodologies can offer a more comprehensive view of education by examining real-life experiences and contextual elements that quantitative measurements cannot measure. This approach helps to understand the complexity of the subject matter. Nevertheless, upholding an equitable perspective toward research methodologies is imperative, recognizing that selecting a method should be influenced by research inquiries and goals (McBride & Abramovich, 2022; Wyatt, 2014). It is also important to acknowledge that quantitative and qualitative approaches possess distinct merits in enhancing our comprehension of English studies within the region.

## **b. Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research approaches were widely utilized in undergraduate theses within the English major discipline in Southeast Asia. Approximately 24.8% of the studied theses utilized qualitative methodologies, including case studies, content analysis, interviews, and internet-based virtual ethnography. The high occurrence of this phenomenon indicates a significant inclination towards investigating the intricate elements of English language instruction in the Southeast Asian region. Qualitative research is a comprehensive discipline comprising a diverse range of methodologies to collect and evaluate non-quantitative data to investigate social phenomena, behavioral patterns, and lived experiences. To begin with, the in-depth interviews encompass open-ended, individualized dialogues with participants, aiming to get a comprehensive understanding of their viewpoints, encounters, and viewpoints. The interviews can be categorized into two types: structured interviews, which involve preset questions, and unstructured interviews, which are more conversational. The case study entails a comprehensive examination of either a singular instance or a limited group of cases. This approach is frequently employed to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of a specific

phenomenon, organization, or individual. In addition, the theses of undergraduate students majoring in English include content analysis, which is the methodical examination of textual, visual, or auditory elements, such as documents, texts, photos, or videos, intending to discern recurring patterns, themes, and significations. Furthermore, as the internet and online communities continue to expand, undergraduate researchers specializing in English studies engage in ethnographic investigations inside virtual environments, such as online forums and social media platforms, employing the methodology of online and virtual ethnography. Qualitative research methods are relevant for examining the socio-cultural and contextual elements that impact language acquisition and instruction, a matter of special significance in this region characterized by its diversity and cultural abundance.

One of the prominent advantages of employing qualitative research methods lies in their capacity to explore the intricate details and complexities inherent in human experiences, standpoints, and cultural contexts. This holds significant importance within English studies as it enables scholars to delve into literary works, the process of acquiring language, cultural occurrences, and the many facets of interpersonal relationships from a comprehensive and contextual perspective. Case studies, for example, provide a comprehensive analysis of particular occurrences or phenomena, thoroughly comprehending practical circumstances and their consequences. However, researchers face challenges such as biases in data interpretation and data saturation, which can affect the reliability and validity of their findings. To ensure data completeness and representativeness, researchers must be cautious when addressing these issues.

The observed frequency of qualitative research methods in this particular context indicates that a substantial proportion of students and academics involved in English major programs in Southeast Asia acknowledge the significance of qualitative investigation. This statement demonstrates a dedication to investigating language and literature's subjective, contextually influenced, and culturally ingrained elements (CohenMiller et al., 2017; McBride & Abramovich, 2022). Furthermore, it is worth noting that qualitative research methodologies frequently demonstrate a strong affinity with the humanistic and interpretive paradigms prevalent within English studies. These paradigms are concerned with comprehending the intricate nuances of human expression and communication.

A significant proportion of students and academics in Southeast Asia acknowledge the importance of qualitative investigation, demonstrating a commitment to understanding language and literature's subjective, contextually influenced, and culturally ingrained elements. The selection of research methodologies should be guided by study questions and objectives, with qualitative methods providing in-depth insights and contextual understanding. This indicates a dynamic and ever-changing academic environment in Southeast Asia's English major undergraduate degrees.

### c. Mixed-Method

Another significant observation is the rise of mixed-method approaches, as evidenced by 12.8% of the theses incorporating a blend of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This emerging pattern indicates a growing acknowledgment of the advantages associated with triangulating data from several sources to attain a more holistic comprehension of intricate educational issues. Furthermore, this observation acknowledges the necessity of employing a comprehensive methodology in educational research to effectively tackle the complex and ever-changing landscape of English language instruction in Southeast Asia. The field of teaching the English language can benefit specifically from mixed-method research, which emphasizes the field's expanding significance. Through the triangulation of data, mixed-method research improves validity by fusing quantitative and qualitative techniques. This makes it possible for academics to validate results from many data sources, leading to a more thorough comprehension of intricate educational phenomena. For instance, qualitative information about teaching methods and student experiences can be added to statistical data on student performance to provide a more nuanced understanding of educational outcomes. Mixed-method research addresses method shortcomings, utilizing unique advantages, fostering deeper insights, informing evidence-

based methods, and gaining knowledge in English language teaching through comprehensive approach.

Mixed-method research provides a distinct advantage by leveraging the respective strengths of mixed-method methodologies. Researchers can comprehensively grasp the subjects being studied by integrating the depth and context offered by qualitative methods with the statistical rigor and generalizability of quantitative approaches. This approach holds significant advantages in delving into the intricate dimensions of language, literature, and associated phenomena within English studies (Maulina et al., 2023; Rapanta & Felton, 2019). Mixed-method research is a flexible approach in Southeast Asian English major studies, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies for comprehensive conclusions. This approach aligns with the multidisciplinary nature of English studies, which often includes elements from linguistics, psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. This approach enhances research understanding and results in more extensive observations.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the execution of mixed-method research can present difficulties. The successful execution of this task necessitates meticulous strategic preparation and proficiency in qualitative and quantitative methodologies and frequently involves a greater allocation of time and money. In addition to the referred points, it is imperative for researchers to give due consideration to the amalgamation of data, hence to guarantee the qualitative and quantitative aspects harmonize with one another and collectively contribute to a cohesive study. Also, since combining multiple data types and analyses can be complex, designing and applying mixed-method research in English language teaching can be difficult. Methodological rigor and meticulous preparation are necessary for coordinating data collection efforts, guaranteeing compatibility between two types of data, and synthesizing the findings. In addition, researchers need to handle logistical challenges, efficiently allocate their time and resources, and guarantee the accuracy and consistency of their results. Notwithstanding these difficulties, mixed-method techniques provide insightful information and further the field's understanding. The integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies is crucial for comprehensive research and deep understanding of language, literature, and other disciplines, fostering a dynamic and evolving research culture.

#### **d. Action Research**

The discovery that a comparatively lower proportion, namely 8.4%, of the thesis examined in the study centered on action research, primarily Classroom Action Research (CAR), presents various significant aspects for deliberation. This insight illuminates the research landscape within the academic topic under inquiry and prompts contemplation regarding the preferences and trends in research approaches among students or scholars in this area. The lower incidence of action research in theses may be due to a lack of knowledge and instruction among students and instructors. Educational institutions should promote its integration into academic programs and provide instructional support.

Moreover, the limited utilization of Classroom Action Research (CAR) in academic dissertations may indicate a more widespread inclination toward other research approaches within the discipline. In educational research, conventional approaches have long favored the implementation of mixed-method research methodologies, including surveys, experiments, and content analysis. Although there are merits to these methodologies, action research provides a unique advantage by actively engaging both teachers and students in the research process. Therefore, according to (Bonyadi, 2023; Parmaxi & Zaphiris, 2020) it is imperative for institutions to cultivate a research culture that recognizes the significance of many research methodologies and promotes the exploration of other approaches, such as action research, when deemed suitable by both students and faculty. An alternative hypothesis to account for the reported proportion could be the pragmatic difficulties inherent in carrying out action research. Action research requires continuous engagement with educators and students, observation of educational environments, and introspection. Limited resources or time may discourage researchers. Institutions should offer assistance and rewards for interested scholars. In general, it encourages



ongoing development in both teaching and learning. This trend is poised to augment the existing corpus of study on the subject, resulting in a more comprehensive and influential body of knowledge.

### 3.2.2 Research Themes

The multitude of research topics and themes highlighted in this study reflects the complex and diverse character of English language teaching. While the research covered diverse subjects, certain reoccurring themes emerged as prominent. The key study subjects that have evolved are "Strategies in English Language Teaching and Learning (23%)," "Language Assessment and Evaluation (18%)," "Cultural and Sociolinguistic Studies (15%)," "The Integration of Technology in Language Education (12%)," and "Teacher Professional Development (10%)."

The study reveals a wide range of research subjects and themes that accurately reflect the complex and ever-evolving character of English language teaching. Scholars and educators in this discipline actively explore diverse topics that exemplify the intricate relationship between language, culture, education, and technology. A wide range of study topics is evidence of the robustness of English language education as an academic field and its ability to respond to changing educational environments and societal demands (Bai & Pan, 2008).

#### a. Strategies in English Language Teaching and Learning

This theme embodies an essential element of English language instruction. The significance of studies in this domain highlights the continuous pursuit to develop pedagogical approaches and boost language acquisition encounters (Saeed & Al Qunayeer, 2021). The wide range of methods and approaches observed within this thematic area demonstrates a strong dedication to identifying efficient and contextually suitable methods for promoting language acquisition.

Some specific strategies are regularly addressed under the heading of "Strategies in Language Teaching and Learning." For instance, content-based instruction (CBI) combines language learning with subject matter, and communicative language teaching (CLT) emphasizes communication and engagement in real-world situations. Besides, task-based language teaching (TBLT) emphasizes learning through meaningful activities. Additionally examined are methods for teaching vocabulary, such as context-based learning and explicit training. Furthermore, studies look into different approaches to teaching grammar, like inductive and deductive approaches. Additionally, one of the main areas of research is technology-enhanced language learning, which includes educational apps and digital platforms. All things considered, these tactics are part of continuous attempts to improve language training and encourage successful language acquisition in instructional and learning environments.

#### b. Language Assessment and Evaluation

Language proficiency evaluation plays a crucial role in language education (Jaekel et al., 2022), as it provides valuable insights for instructional purposes and establishes a system of responsibility. The prominence of research in this field underscores the ongoing endeavors to create evaluation instruments that are both accurate and reliable, tackle concerns regarding equality and cultural awareness, and analyze the efficacy of language programs. This subject exemplifies the commitment to upholding the integrity and excellence of language instruction.

A number of particular assessment and evaluation techniques are regularly looked at under the heading of "Language Evaluation and Evaluation." Summative assessments are given at the conclusion of a unit or course and measure student accomplishment, whereas formative assessments are given continuously during the learning process and offer continuing feedback. Rubrics and criteria-based assessments provide clear rules for assessing student work, whereas performance-based assessments gauge students' capacity to use language skills in practical tasks. Additionally, students evaluate their individual performance or the accomplishments of other students as part of the peer and self-assessment processes. Innovative approaches to evaluating language proficiency are offered by

alternative assessment techniques like project-based and portfolio assessments. All things considered, these techniques illustrate important research fields and the variety of methods utilized to evaluate English language learning outcomes and ability.

### c. Cultural and Sociolinguistic Studies

The interconnection between language culture and society is essential, and scholarly investigations in this field acknowledge the significance of comprehending language within its wider framework. The themes encompassed within this category pertain to sociolinguistic phenomena, variations in language, policy concerning languages, and intercultural communication. Recognizing cultural and sociolinguistic research highlights the understanding that language education comprises more than only linguistic proficiency but also the cultural aspects of communication.

*Cultural and Sociolinguistic Studies* is a theme that often covers a number of particular subjects. Understanding the distinctions between cultures and gaining intercultural competency are the main goals of intercultural communication study. Studies on language change and variation look at social, cultural, and regional differences in language use as well as variables affecting language change across time. Research on language policies and planning looks at how they affect the diversity of languages and language instruction. Language contact phenomena and the dynamics of multilingual groups are examined in multilingualism and language interaction studies. Studies of language and identity examine how language influences both individual and collective identities. Research on the social aspects of language instruction and learning looks at the sociocultural elements that affect pedagogy and language acquisition. All things considered, these subjects constitute important research fields that illustrate the complex interplay among cultural and social factors in the English language.

### d. The Integration of Technology in English Instructions

Technology has emerged as a formidable instrument for facilitating language instruction and acquisition in the ever-expanding digital landscape. The inclusion of this particular issue within scholarly investigations demonstrates a dedication to using technology, such as internet-based materials, virtual settings, and digital platforms, to augment the field of language instruction. It aligns with Sari et al. (2024), explaining that technology integration is crucial in education. The investigation into technology integration highlights the aspiration to enhance language education by increasing engagement, accessibility, and adaptability to meet modern learning requirements.

Particular technologies are often also investigated under the heading of technology integration in educational research. A prevalent area of concentration is Learning administration Systems (LMS), which offer online learning environments platforms for content administration, evaluation, and course delivery. Furthermore, research is conducted on the possibilities of multimedia tools, including interactive whiteboards, multimedia presentations, and video and audio recordings, to improve engagement and material delivery. Research on the utilization of mobile devices, such as tablets and smartphones—is also common; studies have looked at how mobile learning applications affect students' learning outcomes. According to Fitrianiingsih et al. (2023), the role that online collaboration technologies, such as discussion boards and virtual meeting platforms, play in promoting peer engagement and collaborative learning is investigated. In addition, a growing body of research is investigating the potential of gamification strategies and instructional games to improve student engagement and motivation. All things considered, these technologies are important study topics for technology integration, and they are a reflection of the continuous efforts to use digital tools to improve teaching and learning in classrooms.

### e. Teacher Professional Development

Research conducted in this field emphasizes the importance of continuous teacher professional development to uphold the instruction standard. The subjects within this area encompass teacher training, professional growth's influence on the way teachers teach, and the significance of reflective instruction in enhancing language learning. The prioritization of teacher development underscores a

commitment to provide educators with the necessary knowledge and competencies to support the growth and development of language learners successfully.

A number of specialized fields related to instructor professional development are frequently scrutinized at. Studies look into how well-designed and successful pedagogical training courses and workshops are at improving instructors' use of teaching tools, classroom management techniques, and instructional methods. Studies on the subject of reflective practice and research-based practice in professional development for educators also show how these approaches can improve teaching strategies and student learning results through the use of self-reflection, peer cooperation, and action research projects. The effects of mentoring and coaching programs, professional learning communities, and continuing education initiatives on teacher enthusiasm, job fulfilment, and effectiveness in teaching is also the subject of investigations (MacKenzie & Chiang, 2023). Research also looks at cultural competency and diversity training, technology integration, and technological literacy training, demonstrating how teachers learn and use technology skills and gain awareness, knowledge, and abilities to support a variety of student populations. In general, these particular areas of professional development for teachers are important research fields that show continuous efforts to assist teachers' professional development, better their methods of instruction, and raise the achievement of students in English language learning environments.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed research methods in undergraduate English studies at Southeast Asian universities between 2019 and 2023. The findings show a variety of research approaches, with 54.5% of theses using quantitative methods and 24.8% using qualitative methods, which emphasize cultural, language, and communication aspects. Mixed-methods, accounting for 12.8%, are becoming more common, reflecting a trend towards combining different data sources to better understand language and literature. The research methods vary across institutions due to factors such as academic culture, faculty expertise, and teaching approaches. Common themes in the research include English teaching strategies, language assessment, cultural studies, technology integration, and teacher development.

The study highlights the need for ongoing research training and skill development, especially in qualitative research, as well as the importance of aligning educational practices with current research. Policy changes and funding support could encourage educators to engage in research and incorporate findings into curriculum development. Future research should explore why students and teachers prefer certain methods and how teaching strategies impact learning outcomes. Additionally, further studies could examine the factors influencing research choices and how these affect educational environments.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors have disclosed no conflicts of interest

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