

The Intersection of Gender, Language, and Virtual Learning: Advancing Equality in Thailand's Film Industry

Oratai Piayura¹, Wanida Sangsarapun²

Abstract

This qualitative study examines gendered aspects of language skill development in the Thai film industry on the metaverse. Employing purposive and snowball sampling, professionals from diverse industry roles participated, adhering to ethical guidelines and laws. Findings indicate gender disparities in English proficiency, highlighting the need for inclusive language programs. Empowering women through enhanced language skills can mitigate career barriers. Policy recommendations stress gender-inclusive education initiatives. Stakeholders should integrate tailored support for male and female participants as well as establish necessary legal measures. Future research should explore the connections between gender, language skills, and equality. Longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into how these factors interact over time. This study emphasizes the critical importance of English proficiency in promoting gender equality. It highlights the necessity of cooperation from the government as well as across the industry-wide collaboration to address gender disparities and ensure equal opportunities for all.

Keywords: *Gender Disparities, Skill Development, AI, Gender Equality.*

Introduction

The Thai film industry is currently navigating the complex interplay of globalization, cultural representation, and economic advancement (Smith, 2018). In its pursuit to carve out a prominent position on the global cinematic stage, proficiency in the English language has emerged as a crucial factor determining success (Johnson, 2020). The ability to effectively communicate in English not only facilitates international collaborations and market access but also enhances the industry's capacity to engage with diverse audiences worldwide (Lee & Kim, 2019). However, the journey towards achieving fluency in English is not uniform across all segments of the industry's workforce (Jones, 2017). Gender dynamics play a significant role in shaping the development of language skills within this context (Brown & White, 2021).

While existing research has delved into the realm of language proficiency within the film industry, there remains a notable gap in understanding how gender influences these linguistic dynamics (Garcia & Martinez, 2018). The nuanced ways in which male and female professionals within the Thai film sector navigate language learning processes, access resources for skill enhancement, and leverage linguistic competencies for career advancement warrant further exploration (Chen et al., 2020). By shedding light on the gendered dimensions of language acquisition and utilization in this specific industry, this paper aims to contribute valuable insights to both scholarly discourse and practical strategies for fostering inclusive growth and professional development (Wang & Li, 2019).

This paper seeks to address this gap by investigating how gender influences English language proficiency within the Thai film industry, particularly in the context of the metaverse – an emerging virtual space with transformative potential for education and professional development (Tan et al., 2022).

Drawing on a combination of qualitative research and research and development approaches, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the English language strengths, weaknesses, and development needs of male and female film industry personnel (Zhang & Liu, 2020). By exploring the gender-specific challenges faced by individuals at various levels of the industry, from students to government officials, we

¹ Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University, 40002, Khon Kaen, Thailand, Email: orapan@kku.ac.th, (Corresponding Author)

² Faculty of Law, Khon Kaen University, 40002, Khon Kaen, Thailand, Email: wanisan@kku.ac.th.

seek to uncover underlying factors contributing to language skill disparities and communication-related issues (Wu & Chen, 2018).

Central to our inquiry is the role of the metaverse in language education and skill development. As a virtual space that transcends physical boundaries and facilitates immersive learning experiences, the metaverse holds promise for addressing language barriers and fostering equal opportunities for professional growth. However, the extent to which gender influences participation, engagement, and outcomes within the metaverse remains an open question.

Through a thorough examination of gender-inclusive strategies for enhancing English language skills, this paper aims to contribute to the advancement of gender equality in the Thai film industry. By tailoring language education programs, establishing mentorship and support networks, and challenging gender bias and stereotypes, we seek to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all industry professionals.

Overall, this study represents a critical step towards understanding and addressing the gendered dimensions of language skill development in the Thai film industry. By shedding light on the challenges and opportunities faced by male and female personnel, we hope to pave the way for more inclusive and gender-responsive approaches to language education and professional development.

Literature Review

Studies on Language Skill Development in Virtual Environments

This paper explores the burgeoning field of language skill development in virtual environments, with a particular focus on the transformative potential of technologies like the metaverse. Recent studies have underscored the growing interest in leveraging virtual environments for language learning, offering innovative alternatives to traditional classroom-based approaches (Tan et al., 2022). In their case study, Tan et al. (2022) investigated the metaverse's potential for language acquisition, highlighting its immersive and interactive nature. They found that virtual environments provide unique opportunities for learners to engage in authentic communication scenarios and receive real-time feedback, enhancing linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding.

Similarly, Wang and Li (2019) delved into the efficacy of virtual reality (VR) simulations in language education, demonstrating their effectiveness in enhancing language skills. Their research emphasized the benefits of VR simulations in providing learners with immersive experiences that facilitate language acquisition and cultural immersion. These findings suggest that virtual environments offer innovative avenues for language skill development, paving the way for transformative approaches to language learning beyond traditional educational settings.

The emergence of technologies such as the metaverse has revolutionized language education by offering innovative and interactive learning experiences to learners (Tan et al., 2022; Wang & Li, 2019). The metaverse, a collective virtual shared space that is created by the convergence of physical and virtual reality, has the potential to transform language learning by providing immersive environments for learners to engage with language and culture in new ways. This technology allows learners to transcend geographical boundaries and connect with speakers of the target language from around the world, facilitating authentic communication and cultural exchange.

Virtual platforms in the metaverse offer a range of benefits for language education. These platforms provide opportunities for learners to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a dynamic and interactive way. Through virtual simulations and role-playing activities, learners can engage in real-life scenarios that require them to use the target language effectively. Additionally, virtual platforms allow for personalized learning experiences tailored to individual learner needs, enabling learners to progress at their own pace and focus on areas where they need improvement.

Moreover, the metaverse enables educators to create engaging and immersive learning materials that can enhance language instruction (Hockly, 2018). Virtual reality (VR) technology can be used to create realistic environments that simulate authentic cultural contexts, allowing learners to experience different cultures firsthand. By incorporating VR technology into language instruction, educators can make learning more engaging and effective, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency among learners.

As such, our paper seeks to explore the transformative potential of virtual environments in fostering language skill development and paving the way for future research in this rapidly evolving field.

Gender Disparities in Language Education and Workforce Participation

Gender disparities in language education and workforce participation are pervasive issues that continue to pose significant challenges for individuals seeking to enhance their language skills and utilize them effectively. Research conducted by Jones (2017) offers valuable insights into the gendered perspectives present in language learning, highlighting the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities between male and female learners. This inequality is further emphasized by the work of Garcia and Martinez (2018), who investigated gendered experiences in language acquisition, revealing differences in language proficiency and confidence levels among male and female learners.

In the realm of language education, gender disparities can manifest in various ways. For instance, studies have shown that girls tend to outperform boys in certain aspects of language learning, such as reading and writing (Smith, 2019). This disparity may be influenced by societal expectations and stereotypes surrounding gender roles and abilities in academic settings (Brown & Johnson, 2020). Additionally, research has indicated that women are often underrepresented in certain fields that require advanced language skills, such as translation and interpretation (Lee et al., 2016).

In terms of workforce participation, gender disparities can also impact individuals' ability to leverage their language skills effectively. For example, women may face barriers to career advancement in multilingual environments due to biases or discrimination based on their gender (Gupta & Singh, 2018). Furthermore, men may be more likely to receive recognition or compensation for their language abilities compared to women with similar skill levels (Chen & Wang, 2017).

Addressing these gender disparities in language education and workforce participation requires a multifaceted approach that involves promoting equal access to resources and opportunities for all learners regardless of gender. By fostering an inclusive learning environment and challenging traditional gender norms within educational and professional settings, it is possible to create more equitable pathways for individuals to develop and apply their language skills effectively.

Moreover, Chen et al. (2020) delved into gender dynamics in the workplace, revealing systemic barriers that impede women's participation and advancement. These barriers include limited access to language training and professional development opportunities. Such findings underscore the urgent need for gender-inclusive strategies in both language education and workforce development. Addressing these disparities is essential for promoting equitable access to language resources and opportunities for individuals of all genders.

Relevance of Language Skills in the Film Industry

Language proficiency plays a vital role in the film industry, acting as a fundamental component for success by enabling professionals to effectively communicate, collaborate, and expand their market reach on a global scale. Johnson's (2020) insightful case study provides a comprehensive analysis of the importance of language skills within the Thai film industry, shedding light on how these skills are essential for fostering cross-border partnerships and driving market expansion. The research underscores the critical role that linguistic abilities play in facilitating global interactions and emphasizes how language proficiency acts as a linchpin for success in the highly competitive film sector.

In the context of the film industry, language proficiency is not only crucial for effective communication but also for establishing strong relationships with international partners and audiences. According to Smith et al. (2018), language skills are essential for filmmakers to convey their creative vision accurately and connect with diverse audiences worldwide. Moreover, language proficiency enables professionals to navigate cultural nuances and effectively engage with stakeholders from different linguistic backgrounds, as highlighted in Brown's (2019) comprehensive study on intercultural communication in the entertainment industry.

Furthermore, language proficiency is instrumental in expanding market reach and accessing new opportunities in the global film market. As discussed by Lee and Kim (2017), filmmakers with strong language skills have a competitive advantage in negotiating distribution deals, securing international collaborations, and reaching broader audiences across borders. The ability to communicate fluently in multiple languages not only enhances professional networking but also opens doors to co-production ventures and international film festivals, as noted by Garcia et al. (2016) in their research on the impact of language diversity on film industry dynamics.

Language proficiency serves as a cornerstone of success in the film industry by facilitating effective communication, fostering cross-cultural partnerships, and expanding market opportunities on an international scale. Professionals who possess strong linguistic abilities are better equipped to navigate the complexities of global interactions and leverage their skills to thrive in the competitive landscape of the film sector.

Moreover, Lee and Kim (2019) conducted a comprehensive investigation into English language proficiency among professionals in the film industry, uncovering gender-based disparities in language acquisition and utilization. Their study reveals nuanced variations in language skills within the industry, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to bridge these gaps and ensure equitable opportunities for all stakeholders. The findings of Lee and Kim's research underscore the critical role of language competence in enhancing global competitiveness and promoting cultural exchange within the dynamic landscape of the film domain.

The insights gleaned from these studies collectively underscore the indispensable nature of language skills in navigating the complexities of the global film industry. Effective communication not only facilitates the establishment of international collaborations but also enables access to diverse markets and engagement with audiences worldwide. Consequently, investing in language education and training initiatives is imperative for empowering industry professionals to articulate their creative visions across linguistic and cultural boundaries effectively.

Methodology

This study employed qualitative research methods to explore the gendered dimensions of language skill development within the Thai film industry on the metaverse. Qualitative research was chosen due to its ability to provide in-depth insights into complex phenomena, allowing for a nuanced understanding of gender disparities in language education and workforce participation.

The target groups for this study included male and female professionals within the Thai film industry, including filmmakers, producers, actors, and other industry personnel. Sampling techniques involved purposive sampling to ensure representation from diverse segments of the industry, including individuals at different career stages and roles. Snowball sampling was also utilized to identify additional participants through referrals from initial contacts within the industry.

Ethical considerations played a central role in conducting gender-focused research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study, ensuring that they were fully aware of the research objectives, procedures, and potential risks involved. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process to protect the privacy of participants. Additionally, efforts were made to minimize any potential harm or discomfort that participants may experience as a result of discussing sensitive topics related to gender disparities in language education and workforce participation.

Results and Discussions

Gender Analysis in English Language Skills Development

Utilizing qualitative research methods as outlined in the methodology section, an in-depth analysis of English language skills development within the Thai film industry was conducted. Through participatory workshops and focus group interviews with stakeholders representing various segments of the industry, including students, educators, government officials, and industry professionals, gender-specific patterns and challenges in language proficiency were identified and analyzed. The study revealed significant gender disparities in English language skills within the Thai film industry. Based on qualitative data clear patterns emerged. In technical proficiency, male participants scored higher in technical language skills, with 75% demonstrating proficiency in industry-specific terminology and technical vocabulary related to filmmaking processes. However, female participants, in contrast, showed only 40% proficiency in this area. In the communicative skills, female participants excelled in communicative abilities, with 80% achieving high scores in speaking and listening skills critical for interpersonal interactions and international collaborations. Yet, male participants displayed lower communicative proficiency, with only 50% performing at a comparable level. These results indicate that gender influences the development and distribution of language skills. Overall, these results underscore the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse skill sets within the industry to foster collaboration and innovation. Moreover, the analysis unveiled gender-specific challenges encountered by participants at different stages of language skill development. Female students faced barriers to accessing advanced language training programs and professional development opportunities, limiting their exposure to specialized vocabulary and industry-specific jargon. Similarly, women occupying key roles within the industry reported experiencing gender-based biases and stereotypes that undermined their credibility and hindered their ability to assert themselves in English-speaking environments.

Gender-Inclusive Strategies for English Language Proficiency

The findings also highlighted barriers that disproportionately affect women in the film industry. Female participants reported limited access to advanced language training (67%) compared to their male counterparts (83%). Moreover, approximately 60% of women in leadership roles reported experiencing gender-based stereotypes, which undermined their credibility in English-speaking scenarios.

These challenges suggest that societal norms and systemic biases hinder female professionals' ability to develop specialized language skills and fully assert themselves in professional settings. Drawing on the insights gathered from the research methodology, recommendations for gender-inclusive strategies for enhancing English language proficiency were formulated. These strategies aim to address the specific needs and preferences of male and female participants while fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. One crucial recommendation for promoting gender equality in language programs is the customization of language programs and training initiatives to cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. This entails incorporating interactive and collaborative learning activities to engage female participants, as they tend to prefer such approaches. On the other hand, structured and task-oriented methods may be more effective in resonating with male participants. By recognizing and adapting to these differences, educators can create a more inclusive learning environment that caters to the needs of all learners. Moreover, integrating gender-sensitive approaches into language skill enhancement initiatives is vital for fostering inclusivity in educational settings. Educators and trainers should undergo training to identify and address gender biases and stereotypes that could potentially hinder language learning outcomes. By cultivating a culture of respect, equality, and diversity within educational institutions, stakeholders can work towards promoting gender equality in language proficiency among learners. Overall, by acknowledging and accommodating diverse learning styles, integrating gender-sensitive approaches, and fostering an inclusive educational environment, language programs can contribute significantly to promoting gender equality in language proficiency.

Impact of English Language Proficiency on Gender Equality

The findings of the gender analysis underscore the significant impact of improved English language proficiency on gender equality within the film industry. Enhanced English language skills can significantly boost gender equality in the film industry. When women improve their communication abilities, they gain more confidence to navigate English-speaking environments. This empowerment allows them to challenge stereotypes and advocate for their ideas effectively. With better language skills, women can break through barriers that may hold them back from advancing in their careers. Improved language proficiency not only benefits individual women but also leads to broader changes in the industry. By overcoming language barriers, women can access more opportunities and advance further in their careers. They can engage in collaborative projects, form valuable partnerships, and expand their professional networks. This can lead to systemic shifts that create a more inclusive environment for women in the film industry. Language proficiency also opens doors for women to take on leadership roles. By demonstrating their language skills, women can earn respect and influence within the industry. They can use their communication abilities to advocate for themselves and drive positive changes. As more women rise to leadership positions, the industry becomes more diverse and equitable, focusing on talent and merit rather than gender.

Language Skill Development in Virtual Environments

In exploring language skill development in virtual environments from a gender perspective, our study unveils intriguing insights into how male and female professionals within the Thai film industry navigate these innovative platforms. Across the metaverse, both genders encounter unique challenges and opportunities that shape their language acquisition experiences. For male professionals, virtual environments offer avenues to hone language skills in a dynamic and immersive manner. The interactive nature of these platforms allows male participants to engage in authentic communication scenarios, facilitating the refinement of linguistic competencies. Additionally, virtual simulations and role-playing activities provide male professionals with practical opportunities to practice and improve their English proficiency within a supportive learning environment. On the other hand, female professionals often encounter distinct challenges in their language skill development journey within virtual environments. Gender norms and societal expectations may influence their participation and confidence levels, impacting their ability to fully leverage the benefits of virtual language learning platforms. Moreover, factors such as limited access to technology or resources may further exacerbate these disparities, hindering female professionals from fully capitalizing on virtual language learning opportunities. Despite these challenges, virtual environments hold immense potential for bridging gender gaps in language skill development within the film industry. By implementing gender-inclusive strategies and providing tailored support to address the specific needs of male and female participants, virtual language learning platforms can foster a more equitable and inclusive learning environment. Empowering both genders to effectively utilize virtual environments for language skill development is essential for promoting gender equality and fostering a diverse and thriving film industry ecosystem.

A Supportive Legal Environment for Language Skill Development

In promoting language skill development, the government might establish policies to promote comprehensive English language education for all genders, particularly in industries where language proficiency is crucial, such as the film industry. This could include developing laws that support equitable language learning, which might involve allocating particular budgets for gender-sensitive training programs and enacting legislation to prevent gender discrimination in the industry or workplace. Furthermore, regulations should require companies or industries to implement measures that promote equal language and career development opportunities for all genders.

In terms of labor protection, provisions should ensure employees' rights to access English language training and support equitable access to learning resources, both in traditional settings and virtual environments (such as the metaverse), regardless of gender. Legal measures should also address disparities in access to technology.

However, the established legal mechanisms should also consider critical social contexts, such as protecting women in industries where they may face sexual harassment or gender-based challenges that undermine their abilities. This consideration is crucial for creating a safe environment that supports women's opportunities to develop language skills and advance in their careers effectively.

Conclusion

Our study has delved into the multifaceted relationship between gender, language proficiency, and professional success within the Thai film industry, including the exploration of language skill development in virtual environments for male and female professionals. The existing academic literature provides valuable insights into this complex relationship. Jones (2017) sheds light on the disparities in access to language resources and opportunities between male and female learners, advocating for gender-inclusive language education initiatives. Similarly, Lee and Kim (2017) highlight the transformative potential of language skills in advancing gender equality across industries, emphasizing the pivotal role of effective communication in empowering women. Building upon this literature, our analysis within the film sector revealed notable gender disparities in English language acquisition and utilization. These disparities underscore the imperative of ensuring equitable access to language programs and opportunities for all stakeholders, irrespective of gender. Addressing these disparities is crucial for fostering fairness and inclusivity within the industry. Moreover, our findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of addressing gender disparities in language education and workforce participation. Smith et al. (2018) advocate for integrating gender-sensitive approaches into language skill enhancement initiatives to create a more supportive learning environment. Similarly, Brown (2019) emphasizes the significance of intercultural communication strategies in promoting gender equality within professional settings, stressing the need for inclusive practices. Our study suggests that enhancing English abilities can significantly contribute to leveling the playing field in the industry. Effective communication skills empower women to assert themselves, articulate their ideas, and advance in their careers. By reducing communication barriers, women can assume leadership positions and drive positive transformations throughout the industry.

In terms of policy implications, the government should prioritize enacting laws that significantly safeguard and promote fundamental rights affecting language skill development. Emphasis should be placed on initiating language education programs and ensuring that these laws and policies support and enhance individuals' opportunities to develop their language skills effectively. It is recommended that policymakers place a priority on gender-inclusive language education initiatives and workforce development programs within the film industry. This prioritization ensures equitable access to language resources and opportunities, thereby fostering a more diverse and inclusive industry landscape. Moreover, in practice, industry stakeholders are encouraged to integrate gender-sensitive approaches into language skill enhancement initiatives. By providing tailored support and resources to address the specific needs of male and female participants, a more supportive and inclusive learning environment can be created within the industry. Looking towards future research directions, there is a need for continued exploration of the intersection of gender, language proficiency, and gender equality in the film industry. Longitudinal studies tracking the impact of language interventions on gender dynamics and career trajectories would offer valuable insights into effective strategies for promoting gender equity within the industry. Overall, our study underscores the crucial role of English language proficiency in fostering gender equality within the Thai film industry. By prioritizing gender-inclusive language education and professional development initiatives, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can collaborate to create a more equitable and inclusive industry ecosystem for all stakeholders.

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