

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

SECTION 1: Background and Program Overview

1. Can you briefly describe the exchange program you participated in? Where did you go, and what activities did you engage in?

I participated in World's Classess Program at **SM Sains Pasir Putih School**, a boarding school in Pasir Puteh, Kelantan, Malaysia. During the program, we observed several English classes at different grade levels. The lessons included topics such as *Tales and Legends*, *Unity in Diversity (Perpaduan)*, and *The World of Sports*.

We observed interactive teaching methods such as Think–Pair–Square, Think–Share–Present, and Jigsaw. Besides classroom observation, we also joined school activities like an Innovation Presentation where students presented products supporting the Malay language, and a goat slaughtering ceremony following Islamic practices.

Outside the classroom, we managed our daily life independently, taking local taxis, finding food, and interacting with local people.

2. What were your initial expectations before departing for the exchange program?

Before the program, I expected to see some differences in teaching style, but I did not expect the level of student-centered learning and structured interaction that I observed. I thought the classes might be more traditional and teacher-led.

I also expected to mainly learn about teaching techniques, but I did not expect that the experience would also shape my personal growth, independence, and intercultural communication skills.

SECTION 2: ELT Professional Development

Part A: Pedagogical Belief Transformation

1. Before your classroom observations, how did you think English should be taught? What did you believe made a good English teacher?

Before the observation, I believed that English should be taught clearly with well-prepared explanations and structured activities. I thought a good English teacher was someone who could explain grammar well and manage the classroom effectively.

Although I valued interaction, I still saw the teacher as the main source of knowledge.

2. Can you describe a specific lesson or teaching practice you observed that surprised you or challenged your previous beliefs about English teaching?

I was surprised by how the teacher used the Think–Pair–Square method in the *Tales and Legends* lesson. Students first worked individually, then in pairs, and finally in groups to create and share their own story versions.

What challenged my belief was how the teacher gave students space to think and construct knowledge together instead of directly explaining everything.

I was also impressed in the *Unity in Diversity* lesson when the teacher asked students what activity they wanted to do and then connected it to the lesson. This showed flexibility and strong student-centered practice.

3. How have your beliefs about effective English language teaching changed as a result of your observations?

My beliefs have shifted from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered engagement. Now I believe that effective English teaching involves structured interaction, collaborative learning, and meaningful speaking tasks.

I realized that when students are given roles, time limits, and discussion tasks, like in the debate about athletes' salaries, they become more confident and expressive. Effective teaching is not only about explanation but about creating learning experiences.

Part B: Professional Identity Reconstruction

1. Before the exchange, how did you see yourself as a future English teacher? What kind of teacher did you want to become?

Before the exchange, I saw myself as a responsible and organized teacher who explains clearly and prepares good materials. I wanted to be supportive and kind, but I still imagined myself leading most of the learning process.

2. Can you describe a moment during the observations when you thought, "This is the kind of teacher I want to be" or "This is not the kind of teacher I want to be"? What made you feel this way?

During the *Unity in Diversity* lesson, when the teacher connected students' preferred activities to her lesson objectives, I thought, "This is the kind of teacher I want to be."

She respected students' voices while still maintaining academic goals. That balance between flexibility and structure inspired me.

3. Do you feel any tensions or conflicts between the kind of teacher you aspire to be and the kind of teacher you think the Thai education system expects you to be?

Yes, I feel some tension. I aspire to be a student-centered teacher who encourages discussion and collaboration. However, the Thai education system often emphasizes grammar-focused exams, large class sizes, and traditional expectations of teacher authority.

Balancing innovation with exam preparation may be challenging.

Part C: Critical Comparative Analysis

1. What were the most significant differences you noticed in how English was taught across the different countries or schools you observed?

The most significant difference was the level of structured interaction. In the Malaysian classrooms I observed, group work was not random; it followed clear methods like Think–Pair–Square and Jigsaw.

Students were given specific roles and time limits, and speaking tasks were embedded naturally in the lesson.

2. Which teaching practices or approaches did you find most effective? What made them effective?

I found the Jigsaw method and debate activities most effective. They required students to read, discuss, switch groups, and defend ideas.

These practices were effective because they combined reading, speaking, and critical thinking. Students were not passive, they actively constructed meaning.

3. Were there practices you observed that you think would NOT work well in Thai classrooms? Why not?

Some debate-based activities might not work immediately in Thai classrooms because Thai students may feel shy or afraid of making mistakes in English.

Without proper scaffolding, students might hesitate to speak. Therefore, these methods would need gradual introduction.

Part D: Contextual Adaptation and Transfer

1. Which specific teaching practices or approaches from your observations do you want to try in your future Thai classroom? Why did you choose these?

I would like to implement Think–Pair–Square, Think–Share–Present, and structured debates.

I chose these practices because they promote student voice, collaboration, and confidence. They also align with communicative language teaching principles.

2. How would you need to adapt or modify these practices to make them work in a Thai context?

First, I would provide sentence starters and vocabulary support. Second, I would start with small-group discussions before whole-class sharing. Next, I would create a supportive atmosphere where mistakes are seen as part of learning. Finally, I would connect activities to exam-related content to maintain balance.

3. How do you plan to navigate constraints such as large class sizes, grammar-focused exams, or traditional expectations when trying to implement innovative practices?

I plan to use structured group roles to manage large classes efficiently. For exam-focused systems, I will integrate communicative tasks with grammar practice, for example, using debates to practice specific grammar structures.

I will also design activities that are interactive but still aligned with curriculum standards.

SECTION 9: Final Reflection

- Overall, how has this classroom observation experience shaped your development as a future English teacher?

Overall, this classroom observation experience transformed both my pedagogical beliefs and my professional identity.

I learned that effective English teaching is not about delivering knowledge but about designing meaningful learning experiences. The program helped me see real examples of student-centered teaching in action.

Beyond teaching skills, the experience also developed my independence, intercultural awareness, and confidence. It allowed me to grow not only as a future English teacher but also as a global citizen.

Nasreen Benman 6620117141