

## Unlocking Tourism Potential: Enhancing English through an E-book in Thailand's Remote Areas

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### ABSTRACT

*Thai EFL learners in remote areas often face challenges due to limited resources and opportunities, which possibly result in low English proficiency. However, there has not been extensive research in these contexts. Enhancing their English skills may be boosted by a simple supplement, such as an e-book. This study examines the effectiveness of an e-book that draws on Krashen's Input Hypothesis (i+1) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, incorporating meaning-focused tasks. Meanwhile, Gardner's socio-educational model provides a framework for learner motivation. Fifty participants were trained to use the e-book and divided into two groups: a regularly monitored group (Group A) and an independent study group (Group B). Pre-, Dur-, and Post-tests were statistically analysed at  $p < .05$ , complemented by post-stage interviews. Results revealed significant improvements in English proficiency and motivation. Group A outperformed Group B with mean scores of 78.32 versus 72.16 ( $p = .04$ ,  $\eta^2 = .11$ ). While instrumental motivation increased notably in Group A, Group B showed stronger integrative motivation. Interviews highlighted limitations of close monitoring in fostering autonomy. Moreover, the integration of tourism-related vocabulary expanded learners' career perspectives. The potential of e-books enhances English learning in underserved areas by highlighting the role of self-directed learning and digital tools in reducing educational inequality, which aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). These insights also offer implications for educators, policymakers, and the tourism sector, encouraging the development of English competencies and career opportunities in remote areas.*

*Keywords: e-book; English proficiency; motivation; remote areas; SDG4*

### INTRODUCTION

Thai EFL learners in remote areas have limited access to quality English education, which restricts language development. Learners frequently encounter difficulties with advanced vocabulary and communicative skills, as reflected in their poor performance on national assessments such as the O-NET (Maxwell & Kamnuansilpa, 2018). Systemic barriers, including inadequate teacher training, scarce resources, and low learner motivation, contribute to this problem and obstruct classroom progress (Than, 2025). Although Thailand has adopted CEFR-aligned goals, their implementation has been fragmented and unrealistic, resulting in minimal improvement (Wudthayagorn, 2025). Many learners perceive themselves as underperforming and graduate with only modest proficiency despite years of compulsory English instruction (Savski & Rukthong, 2025). Similar challenges are observed in other remote regions, including sub-Saharan Africa (Zickafoose et al., 2024), Uganda (Arinaitwe & Williamson, 2023), and Kazakhstan (Durrani et al., 2023). Strengthening English proficiency in these contexts is vital, as the language plays a key role in academic success and career opportunities (EF Education First, 2022).

With technological advances, learners can now enhance language learning anytime and anywhere. An e-book offers a simple yet effective means of providing flexible and engaging learning experiences (Ghafar, 2024; Medjahed & Yahiaoui, 2023). The e-book can deliver meaningful benefits even in remote areas when designed slightly above learners' current proficiency and aligned with their economic needs.

Aranyaprathet, in Sa Kaeo province, approximately 250 kilometres east of Bangkok, near the Cambodian border, has strong tourism potential with attractions such as Rong Kluea Market, Khao Noi Si Chom Phoo Castle, La Lu in Ta Phraya, and Sadok Kok Thom Castle in Khok Sung. These sites can appeal to both local and international visitors, positioning the region as an emerging hub for economic and cultural growth (Tourism Authority of Thailand, n.d.). Enhancing English proficiency can strengthen tourism growth and economic opportunities, making it essential for both individual empowerment and sustainable regional development. However, the area requires greater investment in human resources, particularly in education, to achieve inclusive and high-quality learning in support of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) (United Nations, 2023).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

English proficiency remains a challenge for Thai EFL learners, particularly underprivileged children. Needs analyses reveal difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, and writing due to insufficient resources in slum areas. Teachers often lack training and tools to address these needs (Tangkijmongkol & Wasanasomsithi, 2013). Such barriers highlight the importance of flexible and context-specific lessons. Rural areas face even greater challenges in deepening inequities (Sharma, 2024). These issues contribute to Thailand's low ranking of 101st out of 113 countries in the 2023 EF English Proficiency Index (Bangkok Post, 2023). Many learners acquire only basic communication skills, which limits their opportunities to study abroad or join international communities (Tantiwich & Sinwongsuwat, 2021). Similar challenges are also exhibited across Southeast Asia. In Malaysia, for example, rural schools continue to face infrastructural barriers and limited teacher training, widening the gap with urban counterparts (Donald & Hashim, 2025). In the Philippines, indigenous learners, such as the Ata-Manobo, demonstrate strong motivation but remain at beginner levels of vocabulary and reading, indicating that enthusiasm alone cannot guarantee proficiency without sufficient support (Malnegro & Pastolero, 2025). While ASEAN countries have adopted English as a key language for education and mobility, implementation remains uneven, and learners often graduate without the skills required in higher education or the global workforce (Emilia et al., 2025; Vietnam News, 2024). Despite these challenges, integrating culturally relevant content with simple tools, such as e-books, has supported learner engagement and language development.

Vocabulary is a fundamental element of language performance and forms the basis for progress across all four skills. Wilkins (1972, p.111) stated, "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." For Thai EFL learners, limited vocabulary constrains proficiency (Imamee, 2016; Koonpornpen, 2014), and many recognise words but struggle to apply them productively (Nontasee & Sukying, 2023). Research on academic vocabulary in open and distance English coursebooks reveals insufficient exposure to high-frequency and discipline-specific lexis, underscoring the need for targeted support (Haruna et al., 2024). This finding aligns with the present study's focus on tourism-related vocabulary in remote areas. Bridging such gaps requires acquiring new words and applying them in communicative

contexts, consistent with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1986), which emphasises progress through comprehensible input slightly beyond current ability ( $i+1$ ). Structured conversation has been shown to improve vocabulary and fluency among Thai learners (Sinwongsuwat, 2025). Guided practice with authentic materials, such as TED Talks, has also enriched vocabulary and boosted confidence (Sukrutrit, 2025). Learners, therefore, need opportunities to apply vocabulary through digital tools. In Malaysia, a three-week e-book intervention increased primary students' reading scores from 45.83 to 93.33 (Bee Choo & Zainuddin, 2018). E-books have also been shown to improve vocabulary and fluency in remote contexts (Myrberg & Wiberg, 2015), and schools in Kazakhstan reported a 10% performance increase with their use (Nurgaliyeva et al., 2019). This evidence suggests that digital natives adapt readily to such platforms even with limited access.

The use of e-books can also raise learners' motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation, which fosters engagement and autonomy, equips learners to form a profound connection with the language and culture (Gardner, 2010). Features such as audio, video, and animation create immersive experiences, enabling learners to study at their own pace. The learners enjoyed the process, which helps sustain their motivation and contributes to long-term success (Alamer, 2022). Extrinsically, e-books support instrumental goals, such as passing exams or obtaining jobs, by providing structured, goal-oriented materials, including task-based exercises and exam-focused content (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). According to research on the use of e-books between 2015 and 2019, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of e-books in maintaining teaching quality and promoting motivation through personalised experiences was emphasised, with a focus on facilitating autonomous learning (Almunawaroh, 2020). However, e-books presented challenges to teacher preparedness. While 26% of preservice teachers appreciated the multimedia features of e-books, over 25% lacked the skills to use them effectively (Yalman, 2015). It would be helpful to create e-books focusing on content and simple usage to enhance language learning and raise motivation for learners' academic and personal growth (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Educational inequality continues to limit the achievement of SDG 4, particularly in remote areas. Resource shortages and inadequate teacher training constrain progress in sub-Saharan Africa (Zickafoose et al., 2024), while Uganda faces high dropout rates, poor access to secondary education, and a lack of qualified teachers (Arinaitwe & Williamson, 2023). In Kazakhstan, rural teachers encounter digital access challenges compared to peers in elite schools (Durrani et al., 2023). In Thailand, meagre resources in remote areas restrict language development, with regions such as Aranyaprathet remaining under-researched. E-books can extend learning beyond the classroom, improve proficiency, and reduce inequality, thereby supporting SDG 4.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research aims to enhance English skills and motivation in Aranyaprathet through an e-book focused on tourism vocabulary. The objectives are to:

1. Determine whether the e-book improves English proficiency in a remote area.
2. Examine its impact on learners' instrumental and integrative motivation.
3. Assess the need for monitoring learners during self-study after preparation and guidance.

## METHODOLOGY

This research employed a mixed-methods design to investigate the use of e-books. The quantitative component analysed test results and measured levels of instrumental and integrative motivation, while the qualitative one explored the findings through semi-structured interviews.

### FRAMEWORK

The framework applies Krashen's Input Hypothesis (i+1), where input is slightly beyond the learner's current level (Krashen, 1985). This principle is effective in digital settings when combined with explicit strategy training and opportunities for output (Chen et al., 2024; Luo, 2024). Digital tools enhance attention, memory, and retention (Gu, 2024), while explicit vocabulary strategy instruction improves knowledge and motivation (Ayana et al., 2024). In English for Specific Purposes, learners prefer metacognitive strategies and regard technology as supportive for vocabulary growth (Le & Trinh, 2024). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) complements this approach by requiring the use of new vocabulary in meaningful interaction (Panpistharwee & Suwanarak, 2024). Contextual CLT tasks also increase engagement across skills (Hakami, 2025). The e-book's exercises were therefore designed to encourage interaction (Richards, 2006), promoting communicative competence and learner autonomy. This integration of graded input, explicit strategies, and communicative tasks is delivered through an accessible e-book.

### PARTICIPANTS

The study involved 50 randomly selected participants aged 15–17 from Grades 10 and 11 in Aranyaprathet. All participants were at a pre-intermediate level of English, possessing a basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Ethical approval was secured through guardian consent, ensuring compliance with research standards and safeguarding the rights and well-being of participants.

### MATERIALS

According to the research objectives, the study utilised three components to evaluate the impact of the e-book on learners' English proficiency and motivation, and to support their autonomous learning.

### AN E-BOOK

The e-book, designed to develop tourism-specific language skills, was created with both linguistic appropriateness and local relevance. Its layout emphasises simplicity and clarity, making it suitable for both guided classroom practice and independent study (FIGURE 1). The content focused on vocabulary directly tied to Aranyaprathet's economy, where attractions such as Rong Kluea Market and Sadok Kok Thom Castle attract visitors, ensuring learners gain practical language for hospitality functions and guiding. The criteria for development followed six systematic stages: (1) collecting word lists from Grade 12 O-NET exams and tourism/hospitality corpora (Laosrirattanachai & Ruangjaroon, 2021; Sunthornklam, 2018), (2) identifying overlapping words

to balance academic needs with practical use, (3) expanding with additional tourism-related terms such as travel, accommodation, and attractions, (4) filtering with the Oxford 3000 Wordlist (Oxford University Press, n.d.) to ensure alignment with A2–B1 proficiency levels for Grades 9–12, (5) selecting 100 vocabulary items specific to Aranyaprathet’s tourism context, and (6) embedding these into communicative tasks including role-plays, presentations, and trip planning in accordance with Krashen’s Input Hypothesis and CLT.



FIGURE 1. Some pages from the e-book with tourism-related vocabulary and exercises

#### MOTIVATION QUESTIONS

Selected items from the motivation questionnaire, adapted from Gardner’s socio-educational model, assessed learners’ motivation toward English learning. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) and contained 20 items evenly divided between instrumental and integrative dimensions. The instrumental items reflected pragmatic goals such as examinations, higher education, employment, and financial security (e.g., “I need English to get a good job in the future.”, and “English is important for my success.”). The integrative items captured socio-cultural interests, including intercultural connection, appreciation of media, and global engagement (e.g., “Learning English helps me enjoy music in English.”, and “English makes me feel more open-minded towards other cultures.”) (Appendix).

#### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A semi-structured interview was employed to collect qualitative data, allowing for detailed yet consistent responses. The instrument included ten open-ended questions: five on e-book usage (support for vocabulary learning, ease of use, preferred features, frequency, and comparisons with other tools) and five on English learning (importance of English, cultural and global connections, everyday use, and long-term goals).



#### PROCEDURE

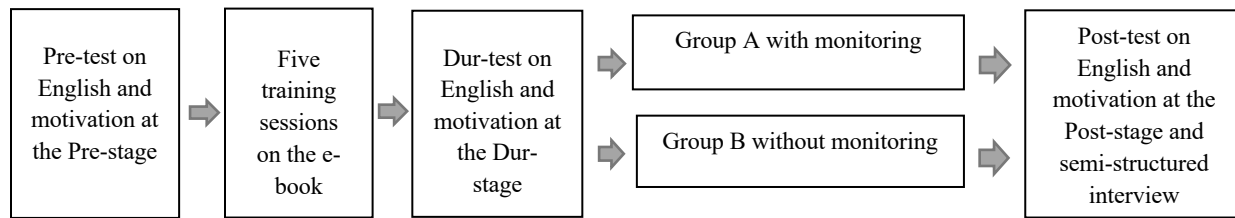


FIGURE 2. The procedure of the study

As shown in Figure 2, the procedure consisted of three stages:

1. Pre-stage: Participants completed pre-tests on English and motivation before the five training sessions.
2. Dur-stage: Participants attended five training sessions covering the e-book's functions, vocabulary, content, and exercises, and then completed mid-tests on English and motivation. Afterwards, they engaged in 20 hours of self-study in two groups:
  - a) Group A. Reported progress online every five hours.
  - b) Group B. Studied independently without monitoring.
3. Post-stage: After self-study, participants completed post-tests on English and motivation. Five participants from each group were then randomly selected for semi-structured interviews.

#### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

English test results and a motivation assessment were collected at three stages: the Pre-stage, the Dur-stage and the Post-stage, along with the responses to the semi-structured interview from five participants in each group. The analysis was conducted as follows:

1. The three stages of the English test results were statistically analysed using ANOVA at a p-value of  $< .05$ . The test was piloted with a group of students at a similar proficiency level, and internal consistency was confirmed to ensure reliability. Validity was confirmed in two ways. First, the content was aligned with Grade 12 O-NET standards to reflect the national benchmarks for vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. Second, two experienced English language instructors reviewed the test items to verify content appropriateness and confirm that they accurately measured the intended constructs.
2. Integrative and instrumental motivation were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (SD) were calculated at each stage to track changes. ANOVA was conducted at a p-value of  $< .05$ .

Effect sizes were calculated using eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ), interpreted as very small (0–0.01), small (0.01–0.06), medium (0.06–0.14), or large ( $\geq 0.14$ ) (Cohen, 1988). The questionnaire demonstrated strong reliability, evidenced by consistent performance across the instrumental and integrative subscales. Content validity was confirmed through expert evaluation and adaptation of

items from Gardner's socio-educational model, ensuring suitability for secondary-level EFL learners in a tourism context.

### 3. Semi-Structured Interviews

Responses from the semi-structured interviews were thematically analysed to confirm participants' experiences with the e-book and their perceptions of English learning. The qualitative findings helped explain the trends observed in the test scores and motivation scales.

## RESULTS

The findings are presented in terms of English proficiency, motivation, and the results of semi-structured interviews. They are displayed as overall results and categorised into Group A and Group B to confirm their performance.

### ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

The results show an upward trend reflecting the positive impact of using an e-book, with significant differences across the three stages. The mean scores rise from the Pre- to Dur- and Post-stages, increasing from 67.52 to 72.08 and then to 75.24, as shown in Table 1. The F value of 24.63 and an  $\eta^2$  value of .08 indicate a moderate overall effect of the groups. The SD indicates a decrease in variety after using the e-book, demonstrating a decline from 13.08, 10.70, and 9.48 in the Pre-, Dur-, and Post-stages, respectively.

TABLE 1. Results of English proficiency in the Pre-, Dur- and Post-stages

Stage	$\bar{x}$	SD	F	p	$\eta^2$
Pre-	67.52	13.08	24.63	0.00*	0.08
Dur-	72.08	10.70			
Post-	75.24	9.48			

\* $p < .05$

After the five training sessions, the participants were divided into groups: Group A and Group B, to confirm that the e-book is practical with and without monitoring. The results are presented starting from the Pre-stage in each group to offer a more comprehensive understanding (TABLE 2).

TABLE 2. Results of English proficiency in the Pre-, Dur- and Post-stages divided by group

Stage	Group A		Group B		F	p	$\eta^2$
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD			
Between							
Pre-	68.24	11.52	66.80	14.68	0.13	0.72	0.00
Dur-	74.32	6.47	69.84	13.47	1.99	0.17	0.05
Post-	78.32	5.91	72.16	11.35	4.72	0.04*	0.11
Within Groups							
Group A					20.47	0.00*	0.20
Group B					6.46	0.00*	0.03

\* $p < .05$

According to Table 2, the scores are significant across the stages in Group A and Group B. The Post-stage scores differ between Group A ( $\bar{x} = 78.32$ ) and Group B ( $\bar{x} = 72.16$ ) ( $p = .04$ ,  $\eta^2 = .11$ ), while the Pre- and Dur-stage scores remain similar. This result justifies the differences observed between the two groups after the training period. The F-statistic of 4.72 confirms the effect, and the  $\eta^2$  of .11 highlights its substantial effect of the training.

In Group A, the variations among the three stages are statistically significant, with an F of 20.47. The mean scores are 68.24 in the Pre-stage, 74.32 in the Dur-stage, and 78.32 at the end. The SD at the Post-stage, at 5.91, shows less variability compared to the Pre-stage, at 11.52. Overall, the performance is consistent throughout the stages.

Analysing the mean scores in Group B, the changes across stages are not as great as those in Group A. The mean increased from 66.80 in the Pre-stage to 69.84 in the Dur-stage and 72.16 in the Post-stage, with an F-value of 6.46 indicating statistical significance. The SDs in Group B were relatively large compared to Group A, with values of 14.68 in the Pre-stage, 13.47 in the Dur-stage, and 11.35 in the Post-stage. The F-value indicates that the effect is more potent in Group A, while the  $\eta^2$  of .03 in Group B suggests a smaller effect size among its participants.

## MOTIVATION

Motivation was statistically tested at every stage. The items were divided into instrumental and integrative motivation.

### INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION

The average mean of instrumental motivation for all participants improves from the Pre- to the Post-stage, as shown in Table 3. The mean is 4.10 in the Pre-stage, 4.29 in the Dur-stage, and 4.45 in the Post-stage ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ ). Each group exhibits a general upward trend, reflecting the overall improvement across stages at slightly different growth rates. Group A's total mean at 4.23 in the Pre-stage increases to 4.55 in the Post-stage, with a steady level throughout the stages. Meanwhile, Group B starts with a lower mean of 3.98 at the Pre-stage, rising to 4.20 at the Dur-stage and 4.35 at the Post-stage ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .09$ ).

TABLE 3. Results of instrumental motivation in the Pre-, Dur- and Post- stages

Item	Group A									Group B								
	Pre-Stage			Dur-Stage			F	p	$\eta^2$	Pre-Stage			Dur-Stage			F	p	$\eta^2$
	$\bar{x}$	SD		$\bar{x}$	SD					$\bar{x}$	SD		$\bar{x}$	SD				
1	4.2	0.43		4.40	0.4	4.5	5.08	0.01	0.07	3.9	0.2		4.00	0.0	4.20	6.25	0.00	0.1
2	4.2	0.8		4.40	0.8	4.6	7.13	0.00	0.0	4.1	0.7		4.16	0.3	4.20	0.19	0.83	0.0
3	4.1	0.86		4.20	0.8	4.5	12.1	0.00	0.0	4.0	0.6		4.40	0.4	4.28	3.61	0.34	0.0
4	4.1	0.78		4.52	0.5	4.6	11.1	0.00	0.0	3.6	0.6		4.28	0.5	4.48	23.8	0.00	0.3
5	4.2	0.83		4.32	0.7	4.5	7.82	0.00	0.0	3.8	0.5		4.20	0.4	4.36	8.59	0.00	0.1
6	4.2	0.75		4.28	0.7	4.3	3.28	0.05	0.0	4.0	0.6		4.24	0.4	4.40	3.27	0.05	0.0
7	4.0	0.82		4.32	0.5	4.4	9.67	0.00	0.0	4.0	0.4		4.12	0.5	4.44	6.60	0.00	0.1
8	4.3	0.73		4.40	0.6	4.6	8.43	0.00	0.0	4.0	0.6		4.12	0.3	4.32	2.79	0.07	0.0
9	4.3	0.69		4.40	0.6	4.4	1.53	0.23	0.0	3.9	0.5		4.24	0.4	4.32	9.33	0.00	0.1
10	4.3	0.68		4.48	0.8	4.7	8.14	0.00	0.0	4.0	0.4		4.28	0.4	4.52	6.54	0.00	0.1
Total	4.2	0.76		4.37	0.7	4.5	66.7	0.00	0.0	3.9	0.5		4.20	0.4	4.35	49.2	0.00	0.0
Over	4.1	0.47		4.29	0.3	4.4	108.	0.00	0.0									

\* $p < .05$



For Group A, most items differ significantly. The item “10. I study English because it will give me more opportunities.” has the highest motivation rate at 4.72 ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ ) in the Post-stage. An item such as “1. I need English to get a good job in the future.” reveals a mean of 4.24 in the Pre-stage to 4.40 in the Dur-stage and 4.56 in the Post-stage with a significant difference ( $p = .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$ ). However, one item with no statistical difference ( $p = .23$ ,  $\eta^2 = .00$ ) is “9. Learning English will help me in starting my own business.”. It remains relatively steady at all stages in Group A but demonstrates a statistically significant difference in Group B ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .11$ ).

Even though instrumental motivation rises across all items in Group B, some items are not significantly different, as shown in item “2. English is important for me to earn more money in my future career.” ( $p = .83$ ,  $\eta^2 = .00$ ). The item “3. I study English to pass my exams.” starts from 4.08 in the Pre-stage to the Dur-stage with 4.40, then drops to 4.28 in the Post-stage ( $p = .34$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ ), and for the item “8. English will help me in my future financial goals.” with the mean of 4.04, 4.12 and 4.32 ( $p = .07$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ ) in the Pre-, Dur- and Post-stage respectively.

In addition, the item “6. I learn English because it is necessary for the internet.” reveals relatively non-significant results in both groups with p-values of .05, suggesting almost unchanged. This consequence may reflect that English is commonly used for surfing the internet in today’s era, thereby maintaining its values relatively steady across each stage.

#### INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION

The participants’ integrative motivation towards learning English increased, as shown in Table 4. They exhibit a rising trend from the Pre-stage to the Post-stage ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .06$ ). The average means are 4.12 in the Pre-stage, 4.31 in the Dur-stage, and 4.54 in the Post-stage. Group B shows a more distinctive growth in integrative motivation than Group A; all items differ significantly ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .13$ ), whereas two items are insignificant in Group A.

TABLE 4. Results of integrative motivation in the Pre-, Dur- and Post- stages

Item	Group A									Group B								
	Pre-Stage		Dur-Stage		Post-Stage		F	p	$\eta^2$	Pre-Stage		Dur-		Post-		F	p	$\eta^2$
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD				$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD			
1	3.9	0.9	4.04	0.8	4.4	0.6	11.14	0.00*	0.0	4.0	0.6	4.2	0.4	4.5	0.5	7.21	0.00	0.1
2	4.1	0.8	4.24	0.8	4.3	0.9	3.48	0.04*	0.0	4.0	0.6	4.3	0.6	4.5	0.5	10.7	0.00	0.0
3	4.0	0.7	4.40	0.6	4.4	0.4	5.89	0.01*	0.0	4.0	0.8	4.3	0.5	4.4	0.5	4.10	0.02	0.0
4	4.5	0.5	4.52	0.5	4.5	0.5	0.08	0.92	0.0	4.1	0.6	4.3	0.5	4.8	0.3	17.1	0.00	0.2
5	4.2	0.8	4.36	0.7	4.5	0.7	5.51	0.01*	0.0	4.1	0.7	4.4	0.5	4.5	0.5	6.38	0.00	0.0
6	4.3	0.8	4.32	0.8	4.4	0.7	2.09	0.14	0.0	4.3	0.6	4.4	0.5	4.7	0.4	11.4	0.00	0.1
7	4.1	0.9	4.48	0.7	4.5	0.5	4.74	0.01*	0.0	4.2	0.6	4.2	0.4	4.6	0.4	9.33	0.00	0.1
8	4.0	0.8	4.20	0.8	4.4	0.8	9.33	0.00*	0.0	3.8	0.7	4.4	0.5	4.6	0.4	22.7	0.00	0.2
9	4.1	0.8	4.24	0.8	4.4	0.8	5.81	0.01*	0.0	4.0	0.4	4.1	0.6	4.6	0.4	9.99	0.00	0.1
10	3.8	1.2	4.32	0.6	4.3	0.9	8.70	0.00*	0.0	3.8	0.6	4.1	0.6	4.6	0.4	15.1	0.00	0.2
Total	4.1	0.9	4.31	0.7	4.4	0.7	38.30	0.00*	0.0	4.0	0.6	4.3	0.5	4.6	0.4	95.2	0.00	0.1
Over	4.1	0.6	4.31	0.4	4.5	0.4	127.83	0.00*	0.0									

\* $p < .05$

The item “4. Learning English helps me enjoy music in English.” demonstrates the highest level of motivation in the Post-stage in Group B, rising significantly rises 4.16 in the Pre-stage to 4.36 in the Dur-stage and 4.84 in the Post-stage ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .23$ ). This item does not show a statistical difference across the stages in Group A ( $p = .92$ ,  $\eta^2 = .00$ ). According to both groups, the item “10. I feel proud when I understand or speak English.” indicates a noticeable growth from

the Pre-stage to the Post-stage. The mean in both groups starts at a low level, climbing from 3.88 in the Pre-stage to 4.32 in the Dur-stage and 4.36 in the Post-stage in Group A ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ ). In Group B, the scores increase from 3.88 in the Pre-stage to 4.16 in the Dur-stage and 4.68 in the Post-stage ( $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .23$ ).

#### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The semi-structured interview was conducted after the Post-stage. Five random participants in each group responded to ten items, including five questions about e-book usage (TABLE 5) and another five about English (TABLE 6).

TABLE 5. Brief responses from a semi-structured interview on items 1-5

Questions	Group A Responses	Group B Responses
1. How does the e-book help you learn new vocabulary or improve your English?	The e-book introduced me to new words in tourism. It makes learning English easier. The reading sections give me new vocabulary.	I learn many new words. The examples are really helpful. I like the exercises. It improves my vocabulary.
2. Is the e-book easy to use and understand?	It is easy to follow. The instructions are clear. I understand most of it because I use it after the training. It is user-friendly.	It is very easy to understand. The e-book is easy to navigate. I have no trouble using it. It is clear and simple. I like how it is organised.
3. Which parts of the e-book do you enjoy the most?	I like the exercises more. The grammar sections are interesting. The vocabulary is the best. The vocabulary is interesting.	The games are fun, but there aren't enough. I like the exercises. The quizzes are good.
4. How often do you use the e-book outside of class, and what motivates you to keep using it?	I use it once a day. I study it outside of class sometimes. I don't use it much outside of class. It is part of my daily study.	I study outside of class twice a week. The games are fun. I enjoy using it during my free time.
5. How does the e-book compare to other learning tools you've tried?	It's more interactive than other materials. It is easier than other tools. The exercises are more helpful. I can do it on my own.	It's more fun than other tools. I like it more than textbooks. It is easy. It is clear with the instructions.

According to the responses in Table 5, both groups appreciate the practical usage of the e-book for learning English. However, they focus on different perspectives. Group A emphasises the e-book's ease and clarity with responses like "It is easy to follow.", and "It is user-friendly.", which can reflect appreciation for the e-book. Conversely, Group B demonstrates a higher level of media-related engagement in games, exercises, and audio sections, as noted that "the games are fun.", and "The vocabulary sections with the audio are good.". These elements contribute to their interest in learning. Additionally, Group B also stated, "It's more fun than other tools.", and "I like it more than textbooks.".

TABLE 6. Brief responses from a semi-structured interview on items 6-10

Questions	Group A Responses	Group B Responses
6. How important do you think English will be for your future?	It's important for my career. I need it for work. It's a key to my future. English will help me to be a tour leader.	I need it for university. It's a must for my future. I'll need it for travelling. It's key for work.
7. Do you think learning English helps you connect with other cultures?	Yes, it connects me to other people. I can learn more about the world. It's useful for understanding others. Certainly.	Yes, it helps me learn about other cultures. I can understand other people better. I like learning about new cultures.
8. Does learning English make you feel more connected to global opportunities?	It opens up new opportunities. It helps me for reading websites. I feel more connected to the world. Yes, I can work abroad.	It helps with travel. It connects me to the world. Yes, I feel more confident. It helps me meet new people.
9. How do you feel when you use English in everyday situations?	I feel more confident using new vocabulary. I'm getting better at using it. It's not too difficult anymore. I feel proud.	I feel comfortable using English. I'm still learning, but it's getting easier. I feel more confident now.
10. How do you see yourself using English 10 years from now?	I'll be using it in my job. I'll need it for work. I see myself speaking fluently. I'll use it in my career.	I'll be a tour guide here. I'll be travelling a lot. I'll speak English better. I'll be in an English-speaking country.

As shown in Table 6, participants reported positive attitudes toward learning English with distinct emphases. Group A focused on career goals, linking English to professional opportunities, as in “It’s important for my career.”, and “English will help me to be a tour leader.” Group B expressed integrative motivations, highlighting its role in travel and cultural connection, with comments such as “I’ll need it for travelling.”, and “It helps me connect with others.” These responses highlight the effectiveness of the e-book’s tourism-related vocabulary, which introduced learners to industry-specific terms and contexts. For example, a phrase as “I’ll be a tour guide here.” shows how participants anticipated applying English in real-world tourism scenarios. The e-book demonstrates its potential to build competence, empower learners in remote areas, and support local economic growth by connecting language learning to both professional advancement and cultural integration.

## DISCUSSION

The findings positively respond to the first and second objectives, which examined the practical use of an e-book to improve English proficiency and motivation. It can increase English proficiency and raise learners’ instrumental and integrative motivation in a remote area. The test results and motivation levels yielded an upward trend from the Pre-, Dur-, and Post-stages, as shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Overall results of English proficiency and motivation from e-book usage in the remote area

Results	Group A			Group B			Overall		
	Pre	Dur	Post	Pre	Dur	Post	Pre	Dur	Post
English	68.24	74.32	78.32	66.8	69.84	72.16	67.52	72.08	75.24
Instrumental	4.23	4.37	4.55	3.98	4.20	4.35	4.10	4.29	4.45
Integrative	4.16	4.31	4.45	4.08	4.30	4.62	4.12	4.31	4.54

The overall results reflect the effectiveness of the e-book for both groups, despite Group A demonstrating greater English proficiency than Group B. Participants in Group A, who exhibited stronger instrumental motivation, showed better language development. On the other hand, participants in Group B, with less instrumental but more integrative motivation, exhibited lower English proficiency. They may have prioritised the enjoyment of blending into the language community over pursuing higher education or a profession. Nevertheless, they still demonstrated consistent improvement in English. These findings suggest that learners with pronounced integrative motivation may take more time for their language learning, which aligns with a commitment to lifelong learning (Alamer, 2022).

The combination of instrumental and integrative motivation has a positive impact on language learning outcomes. While the two groups showed different levels, neither lacked either type, and the interplay between the two enriched their engagement. For Group A, “4. English is important for my success.” grew significantly (4.16 to 4.60,  $p < .05$ ), reflecting career-driven goals. At the same time, “1. I want to learn English to understand different cultures.” also improved (3.96 to 4.40,  $p < .05$ ), pointing to cultural curiosity beyond instrumental aims. For Group B, “4. Learning English helps me enjoy music in English.” recorded the highest increase (4.16 to 4.84,  $p < .05$ ), influenced by global media and pop culture (Al-Hoorie & Szabó, 2022), and “4. English is important for my success.” likewise rose (3.60 to 4.48,  $p < .05$ ), showing the presence of instrumental orientation. These findings confirm that both motivational dimensions contributed positively, though at different levels across the two groups on a continuum of motivation (Dörnyei, 2001).

The third objective examines whether it is necessary to monitor learners during their self-study using an e-book, following proper preparation and guidance. The findings from both groups support the alternative of independent study without monitoring. The freedom aligns positively with the importance of autonomy in enhancing learners’ motivation, particularly in its intrinsic and integrative aspects (Alamer, 2022). Group A, with the monitoring process, appears to benefit the short-term goal, such as tutoring for an exam and training for a presentation. However, the weekly follow-up during the self-study may decrease their eagerness to enjoy the language and negatively affect long-term language learning. Group B, without a monitoring process during the self-study, showed consistent improvement in their learning engagement and appreciation of the English language. This aligns with learners’ preference for autonomy, yet individual contexts and motivation may influence their success. The semi-structured interviews revealed their irritation and frustration with the monitoring process. Comments such as “I don’t want to inform the teacher how much I learned.”, and “I know what I have to do.” conveyed boredom or a desire for more autonomy.

The almost non-significant p-value of .05 for the item “I learn English because it is necessary for the internet.” in both groups confirms that learners are becoming “digital natives” who prefer studying at their own pace. This reflects the growing importance of digital literacy in language learning (Almunawaroh, 2020), as the internet has become deeply embedded in daily life across the global context. Such a digital lifestyle fosters autonomous settings, encouraging learners to take greater responsibility for their outcomes (Al-Hoorie & Szabó, 2022). Nevertheless, learners must be well-prepared with the e-book before transitioning to self-study, which corresponds with Medjahed and Yahiaoui (2023), who emphasise the benefits of equipping learners to use e-books effectively prior to independent learning. This autonomous approach can provide a practical solution to teacher and resource shortages in remote areas.

Adapting e-book content to learners' needs is essential (Yalman, 2015). Tourism-related vocabulary slightly above learners' level facilitated progress consistent with the i+1 concept (Krashen, 1985), while Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with practical tasks (Richards, 2006) enabled authentic use linked to tourism careers. Interviews confirmed English as vital for tour guiding, hospitality, and international engagement, especially in promoting local natural and cultural attractions. Integrating language proficiency with tourism development supports regional growth through hospitality and cultural distinctiveness. For remote areas, e-books should remain functional yet straightforward, reducing the need for teacher training while providing sufficient resources. This approach addresses teacher shortages, limited IT training, and poor materials documented in Malaysia, the Philippines, and across Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda, and Kazakhstan (Arinaitwe & Williamson, 2023; Donald & Hashim, 2025; Durrani et al., 2023; Emilia et al., 2025; Malnegro & Pastolero, 2025; Vietnam News, 2024; Zickafoose et al., 2024). With high-quality resources, teachers can deliver online lessons effectively, and combined with guidance and feedback, these tools can enhance learning in remote contexts.

Autonomous learning can enhance EFL learners' ability to achieve both short- and long-term goals, driven by both integrative and instrumental motivation along the learning continuum. High linguistic competence not only affects learners' individual achievement but also contributes to regional development, such as unlocking tourism opportunities in remote areas, which can boost community income. As learners build English proficiency through targeted and independent study, they enhance their personal prospects while positioning their communities within the global tourism market, creating a pathway toward sustainable growth that connects language learning to broader societal benefits in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

## LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Even though the immediate gains indicate potential for longitudinal research, the short intervention period may not allow for the assessment of long-term retention or sustained motivation. The focus on tourism-related content was practical locally but may not reflect language needs in other contexts.

The findings suggest that e-books can provide accessible resources for teachers, address training gaps, and support learners through meaningful content and opportunities for autonomy. At the policy level, practical digital tools have the potential to reduce educational inequality and advance SDG 4 by improving access to quality education in remote areas.

## CONCLUSION

The e-book designed with tourism-related content improved English performance and motivation in Aranyaprathet. Accessible materials, simple technology, and career-focused themes supported learners and teachers, enabling them to make progress toward higher education and better career opportunities. It also addressed teacher shortages, limited training, and inadequate resources, demonstrating the value of practical digital tools in remote contexts.

The findings indicate that instructor guidance and learner self-determination are essential. Monitoring may yield short-term results, but it can also obstruct long-term achievement by diminishing enjoyment. Learners therefore need adequate preparation, including explicit



instruction and awareness of benefits, before using the e-book independently. Properly timed autonomy enhances self-determination and supports lifelong learning.

Globalisation shapes learners to seek belonging in the international community, with English as the primary medium of communication. Embracing diversity and multiple perspectives strengthens inclusive learning and self-respect, contributing to personal growth, global citizenship, educational equity, and sustainable development in alignment with SDG 4.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported by the Faculty of Humanities, Srinakharinwirot University, through Research Grant No. 587/2566. The authors gratefully acknowledge the Faculty and the University for their commitment to SDG 4 and thank the participants whose contributions made this study possible.

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## APPENDIX

### MOTIVATION QUESTIONS

There are 20 questions for motivation. Ten items for instrumental motivation are as follows:

#### *Instrumental Motivation*

1. I need English to get a good job in the future.
2. English is important for me to earn more money in my future career.
3. I study English to pass my exams.
4. English is important for my success.
5. Knowing English will help me get into a good university.
6. I learn English because it is necessary for the internet.
7. English will increase my social status in the workplace.
8. English will help me in my future financial goals.
9. Learning English will help me in starting my own business.
10. I study English because it will give me more opportunities.

#### *Integrative Motivation*

1. I want to learn English to understand different cultures.
2. I like how the language sounds.
3. I want to understand the movies.
4. Learning English helps me enjoy music in English.
5. English will help me build meaningful relationships with English speakers.
6. I want to learn English because I'm interested in people who speak it.
7. English helps me appreciate different societies.
8. I want to speak English fluently like native speakers.
9. English makes me feel more open-minded towards other cultures.
10. I feel proud when I understand or speak English.