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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ESL TEACHERS AND SISC+ OFFICERS IN PROMOTING WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN MALAYSIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This preliminary investigation examines how ESL teachers and SISC+ officers perceive their roles in fostering students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Malaysian primary schools. The main objective was to assess the feasibility and clarity of qualitative instruments; namely, semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires, for use in a larger research project. Feedback was collected from a novice ESL teacher, an experienced teacher, and a SISC+ officer to evaluate the suitability of the data collection tools. While no generalizable findings were drawn, preliminary reflections indicated potential areas of interest such as psychological and cultural barriers to communication, learner-centered teaching strategies, and support-related challenges. The results informed adjustments to research instruments to ensure appropriateness and relevance for broader-scale data collection.

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate (WTC), ESL teachers, SISC+ officers, Malaysian primary schools, teacher support.

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing students' communicative competence in English has been a central focus of Malaysian educational reforms, particularly with the introduction of the CEFR-aligned curriculum and the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013–2025) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). These initiatives aim to promote English proficiency among students nationwide. However, despite these efforts, students, especially in rural schools, continue to exhibit low Willingness to Communicate (WTC) during English language lessons. WTC is defined as a learner's readiness to engage in communication

using a second language (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Research indicates that multiple factors influence WTC, including psychological, cultural, instructional, and contextual variables (MacIntyre & Wang, 2021; Peng et al., 2022).

The significance of WTC is underscored by its direct impact on students' language learning outcomes. Students with high WTC are more likely to engage in meaningful communication, enhancing their language proficiency (Zhou et al., 2021). However, for students in rural Malaysian schools, this willingness is often hindered by factors such as limited exposure to English, anxiety, and a preference for using their first language (L1) (Shah & Hamid, 2022). Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive understanding of how teachers and educational support personnel, such as School Improvement Specialist Coaches Plus (SISC+ officers), can influence students' WTC.

SISC+ officers play a pivotal role in providing instructional coaching, mentoring, and professional development to ESL teachers, particularly in underperforming schools (Tee et al., 2020). The term SISC+ stands for *School Improvement Specialist Coaches Plus*, a role introduced under Malaysia's national education transformation initiatives. These officers are experienced educators appointed by the Ministry of Education to support classroom teachers by observing lessons, providing feedback, sharing best practices, and helping align teaching with national standards and curricula. Their primary objective is to improve instructional quality and student outcomes, particularly in schools identified as low-performing. Despite their potential to support teachers in fostering WTC, the effectiveness of SISC+ officers may vary depending on the frequency, relevance, and context of the support provided (Shah & Hamid, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Willingness to Communicate in ESL Classrooms

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is widely recognized as a critical component in second language acquisition, reflecting a learner's readiness to initiate communication using the target language (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Recent research emphasizes that WTC is shaped by a dynamic interplay of psychological, linguistic, and environmental variables (MacIntyre & Wang, 2021). For instance, in Southeast Asian ESL contexts, factors such as linguistic self-confidence, peer support, and perceived communicative competence have been found to significantly influence students' WTC (Peng et al., 2022). In Malaysia, rural students often demonstrate lower WTC due to limited English exposure and heightened anxiety (Shah & Hamid, 2022; Sundararaj et al., 2023). These findings highlight the importance of classroom environments that reduce affective barriers and promote authentic language use.

Teachers' Roles and Instructional Strategies

Teachers play a central role in shaping students' communicative behaviours. Learner-centered approaches, such as cooperative learning, task-based activities, and contextualized speaking tasks, have been shown to enhance WTC in ESL learners (Zhou et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2023). In a recent Malaysian study, Rahmat and Ahmat (2022) found that when teachers used scaffolded group activities and encouraged risk-taking in speaking tasks, students displayed increased willingness to use English during lessons. However, novice teachers often struggle to adopt such strategies due to limited training or confidence in managing communicative classrooms (Sundararaj et al., 2023). These challenges underline the need for ongoing professional development and reflective pedagogical support.

Instructional Coaching and SISC+ Officers

Instructional coaching has gained global traction as a means of improving teacher practice and student outcomes. In Malaysia, the School Improvement Specialist Coaches Plus (SISC+) program was introduced to provide teachers—especially in low-performing schools—with structured, sustained coaching and mentoring. SISC+ officers are tasked with helping teachers enhance content delivery, integrate pedagogical innovations, and align lessons with national standards (Tee et al., 2020; Shah & Hamid, 2022). However, the effectiveness of these coaching efforts may depend on contextual factors such as school location, access to resources, and the regularity of feedback (Ismail & Yunus, 2021). Hybrid coaching models—combining face-to-face and digital mentoring—have been proposed to overcome logistical barriers, especially in rural areas (Nair et al., 2022).

Collectively, these studies underscore the interconnectedness of teacher efficacy, coaching support, and learner psychology in promoting WTC in ESL classrooms. They also suggest that successful interventions must be locally relevant, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the diverse needs of both teachers and students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in an interpretivist paradigm to explore how ESL teachers and SISC+ officers perceive their roles in promoting students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Malaysian primary school classrooms. An interpretivist approach was chosen for its capacity to uncover in-depth, context-specific meanings constructed by participants based on their lived experiences, beliefs, and professional practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach emphasizes the subjective nature of reality and the importance of understanding the complexities of communication and pedagogy within educational settings.

Participants

This study involved nine participants selected through purposive sampling to represent a range of perspectives relevant to the promotion of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Malaysian primary ESL classrooms. The participants were divided into three equal groups:

1. Novice ESL Teachers (n = 3): These were teachers with less than five years of teaching experience, currently teaching in rural and semi-urban national-type primary schools across Kedah. They were selected to explore challenges faced by early-career educators in encouraging student communication in English.
2. Experienced ESL Teachers (n = 3): These teachers had more than 20 years of experience in teaching English at public primary schools, including those involved in the Dual Language Programme (DLP). They were included to provide insights into how sustained teaching experience influences pedagogical decisions related to WTC.
3. SISC+ Officers (n = 3): These were certified School Improvement Specialist Coaches Plus (SISC+), each with several years of experience mentoring ESL teachers in different school clusters across urban and rural areas of Kedah. Their inclusion was essential to understand how institutional support and coaching interventions shape teaching practices linked to student communication.

Participants were selected based on specific inclusion criteria: (1) active involvement in teaching or coaching ESL in Malaysian primary schools; (2) willingness to participate in reflective interviews and questionnaires; and (3) diversity in geographical and institutional teaching contexts (rural vs. urban; national vs. national-type schools). This combination allowed for maximum variation sampling, which strengthens the depth and richness of the qualitative data (Patton, 2015). By incorporating both teaching and support perspectives, the study achieved a more comprehensive understanding of the contextual and institutional factors influencing WTC development.

Data Collection Methods

Two qualitative data collection methods were employed: semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. These instruments were designed to elicit detailed perspectives from ESL teachers and SISC+ officers on promoting students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English classrooms.

Semi-structured Interviews

The interviews were constructed using a combination of adapted, adopted, and newly developed questions. Several core items were adapted from Mustapha and Yahaya (2020), who explored WTC among Malaysian ESL learners, particularly with respect to classroom interaction and teacher-student dynamics. Additional prompts regarding institutional support and mentoring were adopted from Peng et al. (2022), whose framework examined the interplay between pedagogical strategies and affective variables in Asian ESL contexts. Questions were also newly developed by the researchers to address Malaysian-specific policy influences such as the CEFR-aligned curriculum and the SISC+ coaching model. The final interview guide was reviewed by two TESL experts and one SISC+ officer to ensure contextual appropriateness and clarity. The flexible format of the interviews enabled participants to elaborate on their practices, beliefs, and constraints while maintaining consistency across thematic areas (e.g., student anxiety, teaching strategies, and mentoring experiences).

Open-ended Questionnaires

The questionnaires mirrored the thematic structure of the interview guide and were designed to allow participants to reflect more deeply on their responses. Some questionnaire items were modified from Rahmat and Ahmat (2022), who examined Malaysian ESL learners' classroom communication patterns. Others were newly developed to align with the study's specific focus on institutional support and teacher mentoring. This written format provided participants the time and space to elaborate on experiences that might not emerge during interviews, especially for those who preferred reflective written expression.

Both instruments were aligned with the study's objectives and went through iterative refinement. A preliminary field test involving two non-participating ESL teachers was conducted to assess question clarity and relevance. Feedback from this process led to the rewording of ambiguous items and the restructuring of prompts for better flow and coherence. This triangulated approach to instrument development helped enhance the validity, cultural appropriateness, and depth of the data collected (Hennink et al., 2021; Nowell et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

This study employed thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) to examine the qualitative data collected through interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Thematic analysis was chosen for its theoretical flexibility and its ability to provide a rich, detailed, yet complex account of patterns across a dataset. It was particularly suitable for this study as it allowed the exploration of nuanced experiences related to Willingness to Communicate (WTC) among Malaysian primary school ESL teachers and SISC+ officers. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, comprising familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

The first phase, familiarization with the data, involved immersion in the dataset through repeated reading of the transcribed interview recordings and open-ended questionnaire responses. This process enabled the researcher to engage deeply with participants' voices and uncover latent meanings within their narratives. All interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and authenticity. During this phase, the researcher documented preliminary thoughts and highlighted recurring ideas, which later informed the coding process.

In the second phase, initial coding was conducted manually using an inductive approach. Rather than applying pre-existing categories, the researcher allowed codes to emerge naturally from the participants' accounts. This approach promoted closeness to the data and supported the identification of concepts specific to the Malaysian ESL context. Examples of codes included "student anxiety," "peer reluctance," "teacher modelling," and "limited SISC+ presence." These codes were continuously refined and organized to ensure clarity and coherence across data segments.

The third phase involved searching for broader themes by clustering related codes into coherent categories. This iterative process resulted in three overarching themes: (1) Psychological and Cultural Barriers, (2) Effective Teaching Strategies, and (3) Challenges in Instructional Coaching. Sub-themes were also identified to represent more specific aspects of participants' experiences—for instance, "student fear of judgment" under Psychological and Cultural Barriers. A thematic map was developed to visualize the relationships between codes, sub-themes, and overarching categories, ensuring alignment with the study's research objectives.

In the fourth phase, reviewing themes, the researcher assessed each theme for internal consistency and external distinctiveness. This stage involved cross-checking themes against the original data to verify their accuracy and completeness. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, two independent peer reviewers with expertise in qualitative research and ESL pedagogy were invited to examine the coding structure and thematic categories. Both reviewers held doctoral qualifications and had published in the field of language education. They were provided with anonymized transcripts and preliminary theme summaries. Feedback from this peer debriefing process led to minor revisions in theme labels and the reorganization of a few overlapping sub-themes. Additionally, member checking was conducted with six of the nine original participants—two from each subgroup (novice teachers, experienced teachers, and SISC+ officers). Participants reviewed thematic summaries and confirmed that their views were accurately reflected. None requested revisions, affirming the interpretive integrity of the analysis. These validation measures—peer debriefing and member checking—align with best practices for enhancing trustworthiness in qualitative research (Nowell et al., 2017; Birt et al., 2016).

The fifth phase, defining and naming themes, focused on refining each theme's scope and clearly articulating its significance. The first theme, Psychological and Cultural Barriers, described students' fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and preference for using their first language, particularly in rural contexts. The second theme, Effective Teaching Strategies, encompassed teachers' use of learner-centered methods such as group tasks, modelling, and peer collaboration to increase student participation. The third theme, Challenges in Instructional Coaching, reflected systemic issues faced by SISC+ officers, including limited school access, infrequent visits, and gaps in feedback mechanisms. Each theme was carefully defined to ensure conceptual clarity and practical relevance.

The final phase involved producing the report, in which the themes were synthesized into a coherent narrative aligned with the research objectives. Direct quotations from participants were included to provide transparency and enhance the credibility of interpretations. Beyond descriptive reporting, the findings were interpreted in relation to existing literature on WTC, ESL pedagogy, and instructional coaching. This interpretive depth supported a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers and SISC+ officers navigate the challenges of promoting WTC in Malaysian ESL classrooms. Thematic analysis thus provided a rigorous and transparent framework for examining complex experiences in a way that was both data-grounded and theoretically informed.

FINDINGS

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data from nine participants—three novice ESL teachers, three experienced ESL teachers, and three SISC+ officers—revealed three key themes related to promoting students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Malaysian primary ESL classrooms. These themes are: (1) Psychological and Cultural Barriers; (2) Effective Teaching Strategies; and (3) Challenges in Instructional Coaching. Each theme is described below and illustrated with direct quotations from participants to maintain authenticity and support interpretation.

Psychological and Cultural Barriers

Psychological and cultural barriers emerged as a dominant theme influencing students' WTC, particularly in rural and under-resourced school settings. Novice ESL teachers reported that many students were hesitant to speak in English due to fear of making mistakes and a strong preference for their first language. One novice teacher from a rural Tamil National Type School observed, "Most of my students feel nervous when speaking in English. They worry about making mistakes, so they prefer using their mother tongue." This lack of confidence was often compounded by limited exposure to English outside the classroom, leading students to view English as an academic requirement rather than a functional language for everyday communication.

In contrast, experienced teachers teaching in Dual Language Programme (DLP) schools described their students as generally more confident and expressive in English. One teacher explained, "My students are used to using English for science and math. They hear English more often, so they are not afraid to speak." These contrasting experiences suggest that regular exposure to English, both within and beyond the classroom, plays a significant role in shaping learners' confidence and willingness to engage in communication.

SISC+ officers supported this observation, noting that in many rural schools, English was seen solely as a subject to be memorized rather than a tool for interaction. One officer explained that students in such contexts often lacked real opportunities to use English meaningfully, further reinforcing their reluctance to communicate in the language.

Effective Teaching Strategies

The second theme focused on the teaching strategies employed by ESL teachers to encourage WTC among students. Experienced teachers described using a variety of learner-centered and communicative techniques, including group discussions, pair work, role-playing, and class projects. One experienced teacher shared, “I always try to make my lessons interactive. When students work in groups, they are less anxious, and they speak more.” These strategies were seen as helpful in creating low-anxiety environments where students could engage in English communication without fear of judgment.

The teacher further shared that over time, consistent use of such methods led to noticeable improvements in students’ speaking confidence, even beyond formal classroom settings. However, novice teachers expressed uncertainty and hesitation in applying similar techniques. One explained, “I know about group activities, but I am not sure how to manage them. I worry that students won’t understand or that they will just use their mother tongue.” This response points to a lack of confidence and experience in implementing communicative approaches among early-career teachers.

SISC+ officers acknowledged that novice teachers often lacked the training and classroom management skills needed to successfully implement interactive methods. One officer observed that many new teachers defaulted to teacher-centered practices because they were unsure of how to facilitate active student participation. This underscores the need for targeted support and professional development to equip novice teachers with practical strategies for fostering WTC.

Challenges in Instructional Coaching

The third theme addressed the challenges faced by SISC+ officers in supporting ESL teachers, especially those working in geographically isolated schools. A key issue raised was the logistical difficulty of visiting remote schools regularly. One officer explained, “Sometimes I want to visit teachers more often, but the distance and my other responsibilities make it difficult.” This limited presence affected the ability to provide sustained, hands-on coaching—particularly for novice teachers who may benefit most from frequent guidance.

Another challenge was the lack of opportunity for classroom observation. Without observing lessons, officers found it difficult to offer tailored feedback. As one officer put it, “I try to give advice based on what the teachers tell me, but without observing their classes, it is hard to give specific feedback.” This issue was also raised by teachers themselves. A novice teacher commented, “Sometimes I feel like I am just guessing what works. I wish someone could observe my lesson and guide me, especially for speaking activities.”

Both the teacher and the officer emphasized that consistent and context-specific coaching is critical for promoting effective teaching strategies, particularly in the area of speaking and communication. However, systemic limitations—such as time constraints, travel distances, and overlapping responsibilities—often made it difficult to maintain regular and impactful coaching engagements.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer nuanced insights into the multifaceted factors influencing students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Malaysian primary ESL classrooms, particularly within diverse school contexts. Through the voices of teachers and instructional coaches, the study reveals that psychological barriers, pedagogical practices, and systemic coaching challenges are interwoven and collectively shape students' communicative engagement. These findings contribute to the expanding discourse on WTC by presenting context-specific evidence from under-researched rural and semi-urban Malaysian schools, highlighting several areas of novelty and practical significance.

One of the most striking findings of this study is the contrast in students' communicative behaviour across rural and urban school environments. Students in rural schools appeared to lack confidence in using English, often viewing it as a subject rather than a tool for interaction. This reluctance was reinforced by limited exposure to English outside the classroom, leading to greater reliance on the first language and heightened anxiety. This supports previous findings by Shah and Hamid (2022), who argue that rural learners in Malaysia tend to experience greater linguistic insecurity due to lower exposure to English in their environment. Although such patterns have been well documented, the current study illustrates how these psychological barriers are perceived and experienced directly by practitioners, adding a layer of grounded, practice-based understanding. The experienced teacher's observation that urban students were more willing to communicate due to their exposure to English through content subjects like science and mathematics highlights how subject integration, such as the Dual Language Programme (DLP), can foster positive language attitudes—a trend also supported by findings in Liu et al. (2023), who observed improved speaking confidence among EFL learners in cross-curricular instruction environments.

Another key contribution of this study lies in its exploration of how teachers' pedagogical choices impact WTC. The experienced teacher's use of interactive strategies—such as role-playing and group work—created low-anxiety environments that encouraged students to speak. This echoes findings by Peng and Zhang (2022), who reported that learner-centered practices significantly enhanced WTC in Chinese EFL contexts. The novelty in this study lies in its contrast between novice and experienced teachers. Novice teachers expressed uncertainty in implementing similar approaches due to lack of training and classroom control, reflecting the direct influence of teacher self-efficacy on instructional decisions. This pattern reinforces Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, and is echoed in recent studies like Che Aziz et al. (2021), who found that Malaysian ESL teachers with higher self-efficacy were more likely to adopt innovative and communicative teaching strategies. The data suggest that without confidence in managing student interaction, novice teachers may default to teacher-centered approaches, limiting learners' opportunities for meaningful communication.

The study also uncovers systemic barriers within the instructional coaching model that limit the support SISC+ officers can offer. Although SISC+ officers are tasked with guiding ESL teachers, constraints such as long travel distances, scheduling challenges, and limited classroom observation reduce the efficacy of coaching. This is consistent with the findings of Tee et al. (2020), who argue that coaching in Malaysian schools is often too infrequent and generalised to meet teachers' real classroom needs. The officer's reliance on verbal teacher reports rather than direct observation, combined with novice teachers' requests for more hands-on mentorship, highlights a gap between coaching policy and practice. Similar issues have been raised by Ahmad et al. (2021), who stressed that for instructional coaching to be effective, it must be embedded, sustained, and contextually responsive.

Taken together, these findings reinforce the need for a coordinated, context-sensitive approach to promoting WTC. While psychological and cultural factors play a central role, they are deeply linked to teachers' confidence and professional competence, both of which are influenced by the quality and frequency of institutional support. The current findings expand on earlier models of WTC by showing how these elements operate in tandem in real classrooms—particularly those in underserved regions.

In response to these insights, several implications emerge. First, professional development initiatives should be tailored to build novice teachers' classroom management and interactive teaching competencies, especially in linguistically diverse or resource-poor settings. As observed in the study, confidence in managing student communication is a prerequisite for implementing learner-centered approaches. Second, the SISC+ coaching framework would benefit from incorporating blended models of support, including asynchronous video feedback and peer coaching networks, as suggested by Idris and Rajab (2023). These adjustments could help mitigate logistical barriers while maintaining continuity in support. Finally, the integration of authentic English use across subjects—as seen in DLP settings—should be expanded where feasible to provide students with more exposure and natural opportunities for language use, which can in turn boost their confidence and WTC.

REFLECTION

This study offers significant insights into how ESL teachers and SISC+ officers can collaboratively promote students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Malaysian primary classrooms. From a practitioner's standpoint, the study underscores how students' communication readiness is not only a matter of linguistic competence but also shaped by psychological comfort, teacher confidence, and institutional support. The rural-urban divide, for instance, emerged not merely as a demographic difference but as a lived pedagogical challenge. Students in rural settings showed greater language anxiety and hesitation, largely due to limited exposure to English and few authentic opportunities to use the language. For teachers working in these contexts, it became clear that addressing WTC involves more than classroom instruction—it demands strategic intervention, empathetic understanding, and cultural sensitivity.

As a teacher-researcher, one of the most powerful reflections drawn from this study is the role of experience in shaping pedagogical decision-making. Experienced teachers tended to use learner-centered strategies confidently, helping students engage in English meaningfully. Novice teachers, on the other hand, expressed concern about managing group activities and motivating learners to speak. This highlighted a personal and professional realisation: building teachers' confidence in implementing communicative practices is just as important as supplying strategies. Without adequate support, even the best instructional approaches may remain theoretical. This reinforces the need for schools and support systems to move beyond one-off training and instead invest in mentorship, classroom modelling, and peer support.

The study also brought to light the constraints faced by SISC+ officers, whose role is critical yet often constrained by logistical and institutional limitations. Distance, scheduling, and limited opportunities to observe actual teaching made it difficult for them to provide tailored feedback. Reflecting on this, it became evident that coaching cannot be effective unless it is both consistent and contextually grounded. For practitioners and education leaders, this suggests the importance of reimagining coaching structures—perhaps through hybrid models that blend face-to-face visits with digital mentoring, allowing sustained and flexible professional development.

Methodologically, the process of revising and refining the research instruments was itself a meaningful reflective experience. The act of piloting and adjusting interview questions and open-ended questionnaires based on real participant feedback provided a clearer understanding of what matters to teachers and coaches on the ground. As a practitioner, this reinforced the value of listening carefully—not just during interviews, but during the design and planning stages of research. Every question posed must resonate with the realities of classroom life to yield meaningful insights.

Ultimately, this study reaffirmed that promoting WTC is not a task confined to language classrooms alone. It is a shared responsibility that involves responsive teaching, supportive leadership, and systemic alignment. For practitioners, the key takeaway is this: when teachers feel supported and students feel safe, communication flourishes. This realisation not only informs future research directions but also enriches everyday classroom practice—reminding us that effective language education is as much about relationships and reflection as it is about technique.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided meaningful insights into the psychological, instructional, and systemic factors that influence students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Malaysian ESL classrooms. One of the clearest findings was the disparity between rural and urban contexts. Students in rural schools were more likely to experience communication anxiety and rely on their first language due to limited exposure to English, while students in urban Dual Language Programme (DLP) schools benefited from more immersive and supportive language environments. These differences highlight the need for targeted, locally informed strategies to support WTC development, particularly in under-resourced settings.

The findings also reaffirm the importance of learner-centered teaching approaches in building student confidence and creating meaningful opportunities to use English in authentic ways. However, the successful implementation of such strategies is closely tied to teachers' professional readiness. While experienced teachers demonstrated confidence in using communicative methods, novice teachers reported feeling unprepared and uncertain—indicating a clear need for structured mentorship, guided practice, and continuous feedback.

Additionally, the study shed light on the realities and limitations of instructional coaching in the Malaysian context. SISC+ officers face logistical constraints and scheduling challenges that restrict the depth and consistency of their support, particularly in rural areas. These systemic issues must be addressed to ensure equitable access to professional development and coaching. Exploring blended coaching models and community-based teacher support systems may offer scalable solutions to bridge this gap.

From a methodological perspective, this study also served to refine the qualitative instruments—specifically, the semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. These improvements enhanced the clarity, contextual fit, and depth of the data collection tools, ensuring that future research will be better equipped to capture the voices and lived realities of educators across varied contexts.

In conclusion, this research highlights the need for a comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to promoting WTC in Malaysian primary schools. Supporting teachers through sustained coaching,

empowering novice educators with practical strategies, and recognising the diversity of school environments are key to fostering confident, communicative learners. These findings not only lay a foundation for broader research but also offer practical guidance for policymakers, instructional leaders, and classroom practitioners committed to improving English language teaching and learning in Malaysia.

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