



How *i+1* Is Differently Provided: Teacher Identity and Input Comprehensibility in a Vietnamese English-as-a- Foreign-Language Classroom

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Abstract: This mixed-methods study explored how three distinct teacher profiles (*one Vietnamese English-as-Foreign-Language (EFL) teacher, one native English-speaking teacher, and one non-native English-as-Second-Language (ESL) teacher*) provided comprehensible input in a private-sector EFL classroom in Vietnam. Data were collected through classroom observations and learner reflection questionnaires. Observation notes were thematically analyzed to investigate their input-providing strategies, interactional patterns, and scaffolding techniques. Questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively to measure learners' perceived comprehension and engagement. The unique effectiveness of teacher input was evaluated by comparing learners' reported understanding across three classes and by examining classroom evidence of negotiation for meaning and uptake. The findings indicated that all three teachers succeeded in making input comprehensible but differed in pedagogical approaches: the Vietnamese teacher relied primarily on translanguaging practices, the native English-speaking teacher emphasized gestures and visual aids, and the non-native ESL teacher employed balanced linguistic simplification and interactive scaffolding. Notably, the ESL teacher's input yielded the highest levels of perceived comprehension and sustained engagement among learners. The study highlighted the significance of the comprehensible input across teacher identities and suggested implications for language teacher development in multilingual contexts.

Keywords: English-as-a-Foreign-Language, English-as-a-Second-Language, input hypothesis, input comprehensibility, teacher talk

1. Introduction

In the field of English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) education, particularly within Vietnam, the assumption that exposure to target language input is sufficient for language development warrants reconsideration (Nguyen & Franken, 2010; Shegar et al., 2013). While comprehensible input has long been conceptualized as a central mechanism for the second or foreign language acquisition (Krashen, 1985; Zhang, 2009), its practical delivery in real-life classrooms remains context-dependent (Namaziandost et al., 2019). As Perrone (2011) evaluated that the extent to which learners can actually make sense of teacher talk is affected by a multitude of contributors, possibly comprising teacher identities, linguistic repertoire, pedagogical experiences, and sociocultural alignment among them. Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis stated that second or foreign language acquisition is contingent on learners receiving comprehensible input which is slightly beyond their

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current interlanguage level, known as “i+1” (Krashen, 1992, p. 409). While this view foregrounds the importance of linguistic accessibility (White, 1987), it adopts a unidirectional and passive view of learners (Higgs, 1985). However, critics have pointed out the lack of specificity in determining what constitutes “i+1” or how learners actually extract linguistic features from input in the absence of interactional scaffolding. Critically, Long (1985) extended and partially critiqued Krashen’s (1985) hypothesis by coining the Interaction Hypothesis, which posits that language acquisition is greatly facilitated as input is interactionally modified. While Long’s perspective introduced the much-needed interactivity to the input model, it too has been challenged for underestimating how classroom constraints may inhibit such meaningful processes (Muranoi, 2000). Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis presented another epistemological shift by asserting that input becomes intake only as learners consciously register linguistic forms. Unlike Krashen’s model, Schmidt emphasizes the necessity of awareness (Robinson, 1995; Yi-Chun, & Yi-Ching, 2009). However, this hypothesis has faced a scrutiny for placing excessive emphasis on conscious processing. Critics argue that it undervalues the role of implicit learning and overlooks how learners might internalize certain language patterns through exposure without full awareness (Godfroid, 2010; Izumi, 2002; Sarkhosh et al., 2012). While these studies recognize the value of comprehensible input, little has explicitly examined how different teacher profiles deliver and mediate such input.

The notion of “comprehensible input” central to Krashen’s (1992) theory, has been refined to differentiate between pre-modified input and interactionally modified input. Parker and Chaudron (1987) further described pre-modified input as language that has been simplified prior to delivery, typically through lexical restriction, slower speech, syntactic adjustments, or redundancy. Meeten and Davey (2011) described such strategies as common in textbook design and scripted teacher talk, aiming to minimize processing difficulty and maximize form-function transparency. In contrast, interactionally modified input, in real-time, works as interlocutors adjust language based on feedback, confusion signals, and interactional cues (Liu, 2015). This form of input is dynamic and contingent, yielding richer language exposure that reflects authentic communicative purposes. However, its success depends heavily on the teacher’s pedagogical competence and the classroom ecology that permits negotiation rather than the monologic delivery itself (Fey et al., 2017; Fisak, 2025). The dichotomy between these two types of input modification is not simply procedural but epistemological. In fact, pre-modified input reflects a transmission model of education (Cabrelli & Iverson, 2024) whereas interactionally modified input supports a constructivist paradigm wherein learning is constructed through co-participation under “teacher talk” (Mendez et al., 2024).

Teacher talk has long been recognized as a central feature of classroom discourse (Routman, 2002) in EFL contexts. As language teachers use it in instructional interactions (Chaudron, 1988), such talk functions as a medium of instruction and source of input. Its pedagogical value lies in the way it mediates learning, scaffolds understanding, and shapes classroom interaction (Healey, 2025; Thornbury, 1996). The body of academic literature consistently highlights five major dimensions of teacher talk including input modification, scaffolding, interactional control, error treatment, and language modeling (Gass & Mackey, 2014; Rassaei, 2014; Walqui, 2006). These five elements collectively reflect the functional versatility of teacher talk in managing both instructional content and learner engagement (Khoza & Magadla, 2025). Recently, a number of empirical studies have investigated the essential role of comprehensible input and teacher talk in supporting EFL learning outcomes. Namaziandost et al. (2019) examined effects of different levels of input challenges on Iranian learners’ reading comprehension. This study contrasted groups receiving input above and below their proficiency levels. The results indicated that learners exposed to input slightly beyond their level (i+1) performed better in comprehension and higher motivation. In the same line, Nasir

et al. (2019) explored the types of teacher talk in an Indonesian high school utilizing the Flanders' Interaction Analysis framework. Their findings revealed a dominance of directive talk, especially in the form of giving the instructions. Similarly, Vargas (2023) conducted a pre-experimental study using songs, videos, and games to ameliorate learners' listening comprehension. The intervention resulted in increased confidence and improved performance. While the findings supported the use of multi-modal strategies, the study focused primarily on materials rather than teacher interaction, leaving critical questions of the role of teacher talk in mediating input. Yu et al. (2025) examined how Chinese learners of English as a foreign language process collocations, with a particular focus on the effects of language proficiency and exposure frequency. Results demonstrated that learners respond more accurately to collocational phrases than to non-collocational ones, suggesting that such word combinations may be stored as the single units in the mental lexicon. In a Vietnamese setting, Thach (2022) concentrated on tertiary teachers' perceptions of comprehensible input in vocabulary teaching. Although participants demonstrated awareness of the concept, the study found that many lacked formal training in SLA theories. Teachers acknowledge the significance of comprehensible input but emphasized the need for more professional development to apply these insights effectively. Le et al. (2025) found that Vietnamese EFL learners significantly improved receptive and productive vocabulary after exposure to multimedia input. Learners reported higher self-efficacy in vocabulary learning, highlighting the effectiveness of using multimedia resources. Arguably, these studies foreground teacher talk as a critical site where core SLA hypotheses are enacted in practice. From the perspective of Krashen's Input Hypothesis, teachers' linguistic repertoires and pedagogical training shape how "i+1" input is calibrated and delivered. In relation to Long's Interaction Hypothesis, teachers' interactional repertoires and classroom management styles influence the emergence of negotiation of meaning and interactionally modified input. From Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, language teachers' instructional decisions direct learners' attention to salient linguistic forms. Teacher profiles (e.g., linguistic background, pedagogical orientation, and cultural familiarity with learners), therefore, is a mediating lens through which comprehensible input is constructed, negotiated, and internalized in classroom interaction. This conceptualization positions unique teacher identity as integral to shedding light on how theoretical principles of SLA materialize in EFL classrooms.

At the same time, classroom realities in multilingual EFL settings reveal layered dynamics of comprehensibility greatly affected by teachers' linguistic backgrounds, pedagogical orientations, and contextual experiences. In the classrooms where local and foreign teachers work alongside one another, comprehensibility does occur through socio-linguistically situated practices rather than uniform instructional strategies. This study addresses these complexities by examining how three teacher profiles (e.g., a Vietnamese EFL teacher, a native English-speaking teacher, and an ESL teacher from another Asian country) facilitate input comprehensibility for adult learners in a Vietnamese context. Teacher profiles are conceptualized as an integrated construct encompassing linguistic background, pedagogical training, teaching repertoire, and experience within Vietnamese EFL classrooms. By positioning teacher profiles as an analytical lens, the study explores how principles from Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis are operationalized through teacher talk in situated classroom interaction. Focusing on the lived realities of EFL classrooms in the Mekong Delta region, the study illuminates how teacher identities affect the delivery and reception of comprehensible input. The investigation is guided by the following research question: *What specific characteristics of teacher talk influence the comprehensibility of input provided by Vietnamese EFL, native English-speaking, and ESL teachers?* In addressing this question, the current study advances a nuanced understanding of teacher

expertise beyond binary categorizations and contributes to ongoing discussions on effective pedagogy in multilingual EFL contexts. For the purposes of this study, comprehensibility is referred to as the degree to which learners understand teachers' spoken input during pedagogical instruction, as evidenced through the successful task completion.

2. Methods/Materials

This study used an explanatory mixed-methods case-based design, comparing three specific cases of teacher input delivery under identical instructional conditions. It was conducted in the context of a private EFL language center based in the Mekong Delta region, which has been in operation for approximately five years. The center offers two core courses including English for Communication and VTEP (Vietnamese Test of English Proficiency) program. Whereas the VTEP course is well-tailored for university students preparing for the national standardized English test issued by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET, 2008), the English for Communication program is designed to enhance the everyday speaking skills of adult EFL learners. This program is structured into five progressive levels, ultimately aiming to enhance learners' communicative competence with topic-based instruction and task-based practices. Each level comprises 24 sessions, with each session lasting 90 minutes. Its courses are delivered in face-to-face and virtual modes, depending on learner needs and logistical arrangements. All learners are placed into appropriate levels based on the results of a placement test administered by experienced teachers.

This study focused specifically on Level 1 of the English for Communication program, which serves as the foundation level for beginners. The course introduces learners to essential vocabulary and sentence structures required for interpersonal communication. The curriculum comprises ten core topics relevant to everyday life, each of which is delivered over two sessions, allowing for both the receptive (listening and understanding) and productive (speaking and interaction) skill development. To support the learning process, the curriculum is supplemented by printed handouts and web-based materials. Learners also have access to digital platforms where teachers upload extended listening and speaking activities for self-directed practice outside the classroom. On providing a standardized curriculum, consistent structure, and topic-based progression (see Table 1), Level 1 establishes a foundation for learners to develop their spoken English in a scaffolded environment. This shared curricular framework across various classrooms offers an ideal setting for examining the comprehensibility of teacher input in different instructional perspectives.

Table 1. Eight topic-based progression in Level 1

Number	Topic-based lesson	Communicative objectives
1	Self-introduction	Introducing oneself; sharing basic personal information
2	Feelings and emotions	Talking about emotions and mood
3	Family	Describing family members
4	Appearance	Describing people's looks
5	Hobbies	Discussing likes, interests, and free-time habits
6	Daily routines	Describing daily activities
7	Weather	Talking about weather and seasons
8	Means of transport	Describing how one travels

The focal classroom included a single cohort of adult learners who were instructed the same lesson on "feelings and emotions" (Lesson 2) by three different teachers on separate occasions. This rotation allowed for a direct comparison of how input was made comprehensible by each teacher in

an identical instructional context. The class consisted of 18 learners (10 female, 8 male), aged between 19 and 25. These learners represented a diverse demographic, comprising 12 university students and 6 office workers from fields of hospitality and tourism, office support, and freelance services. All learner participants shared a common goal of improving their English speaking skills for academic progression, workplace interaction, and personal development. Based on a placement test of the center, their proficiency ranged from beginner to pre-intermediate.

Three teacher participants (Anh, Peter, and Luna) partaking in this research were selected to represent diverse linguistic identities and teaching backgrounds, offering valuable contrast in pedagogical approaches. Firstly, Anh is a Vietnamese with eight years of teaching English as a foreign language. She holds a Bachelor's degree in English Studies (translated into Vietnamese as "Ngôn ngữ Anh") (Phan et al., 2025) and a TESOL certificate. Her understanding of the learners' linguistic background enables her to integrate EFL support strategically and anticipate her learners' language barriers. Secondly, Peter is a native English speaker from North America with over ten years of EFL teaching experience across Asian countries. He holds a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and CELTA qualification. His teaching philosophies prioritizes his implementation of gestures, and visual aids to support learner comprehension. Finally, Luna is a non-native English-speaking teacher from another Asian country, with seven years of teaching experience, five of which have been in Vietnam. She holds a Master's degree in TESOL and adopts a learner-centered, empathetic teaching style informed by her own second language learning experience. In this study, the three taught the same 90-minute lesson using standardized lesson materials adapted from Top-Notch Fundamental A (Cambridge University Press), following the center's curriculum for Level 1. The lesson design and learning objectives remained consistent across sessions, allowing for a comparison on how each teacher's approaches to input delivery influenced learner comprehension.

Prior to the main data collection, the three observers participated in a calibration session to ensure inter-rater reliability. They jointly reviewed two pilot lesson recordings and discussed how to apply the observation checklist consistently. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cohen's kappa ($\kappa = 0.78$), indicating a substantial level of agreement before formal classroom observations. Subsequently, to collect data, the research used classroom observation and a learners' reflection questionnaire. First and foremost, observation was used to systematically document how each teacher adapted their language input while teaching the same lesson to the same group of learners. Each teacher taught this lesson in three separate sessions, spaced across a week, to ensure learners had time to engage meaningfully with each teaching style. The researcher used a structured teacher talk observation checklist adapted from Chaudron (1988), featuring twelve core features related to input delivery. To maintain observational consistency, all three lessons were videoed and observed by three invited experienced EFL teachers. After each session, observers met to triangulate field notes and cross-verify the occurrence of key teacher talk strategies. After three teacher participants finish their lesson, learners completed a reflection questionnaire designed to elicit learners' perceptions of how well they understood each teacher and what strategies they believed supported their input comprehension. The questionnaire was well written in English and Vietnamese with multiple-choice and open-ended questions to ensure accessibility for all learner participants. They submitted their responses anonymously. The researcher collected and organized data according to teacher identities and coded responses thematically to identify the trends in learner perceptions. Data were analyzed in two interconnected stages to capture teacher talk strategies and learners' experiences. For classroom observations, the researcher compiled the checklist data to identify which teacher talk features were most and least frequently used by each teacher. Qualitative notes were coded inductively. Cross-case comparisons were made to detect contrasts and overlaps in how each

teacher scaffolded understanding. For learner reflections, multiple-choice responses were analyzed with descriptive statistics. Open-ended responses were coded thematically, concentrating on recurring learner-identified elements that enhanced or obstructed comprehension. Additionally, a special attention was paid to how learner participants responded to individual teacher participant and whether their feedback aligned with observed teaching practices.

To ensure ethical considerations of the research, some measures were implemented throughout the research process in accordance with established ethical guidelines in educational research involving human subjects. First and foremost, written informed consent was obtained from all teacher and learner participants prior to data collection. Learners and teachers were fully briefed on the research’s objectives, procedures, and data usage. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without penalty or consequence. Secondly, anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained. All participants were assigned pseudonyms, and learners’ identities were anonymized in field notes, transcripts, and reporting materials. Any identifying details associated with the language center, participants’ personal backgrounds were omitted or modified to prevent potential identification. Thirdly, data security protocols were observed during the current research. Audio recordings from classroom observations and learner reflections were stored in password-protected folders, accessible only to the research team. All digital data will be retained for a period of one year after the research’s completion and subsequently deleted. Lastly, the researcher ensured that classroom environments remained unaffected by the observation process. Three teachers were encouraged to conduct their lessons as naturally as possible, and no intervention was introduced in their instructional delivery. Observations were discreetly conducted to minimize disruption to the flow of teaching-learning.

3. Results

This section analyzes how teacher participants differed in their usage of teacher talk strategies to enhance input comprehensibility in the instruction conducted in an adult EFL learners. Drawing from Chaudron’s (1988) perspectives, this study categorized strategies based on their pedagogical functions and aligns them with major SLA hypotheses.

Table 2. Frequency of teacher talk characteristics across teacher participants

Teacher talk characteristic	Anh	Peter	Luna
1. Repetition with variation	Usually	Sometimes	Usually
2. Clarification requests	Sometimes	Sometimes	Usually
3. Recasting	Sometimes	Always	Usually
4. Expanding on learners’ ideas	Usually	Sometimes	Usually
5. Metalinguistic cues	Usually	Sometimes	Sometimes
6. Self-repetition	Usually	Always	Usually
7. Simplified language	Usually	Always	Usually
8. Gestures and visual aids	Sometimes	Always	Usually
9. Wait time	Usually	Sometimes	Usually
10. Negotiation of meaning	Usually	Usually	Usually
11. Noticing inducement	Usually	Usually	Usually
12. Translanguaging	Usually	Never	Never

These strategies reflected Krashen’s Input Hypothesis as it asserts that comprehensible input slightly above the learner’s current level ($i+1$) is essential for language acquisition. Anh notably incorporated translanguaging, allowing learner participants to map their language structures onto familiar Vietnamese concepts. While Krashen did not explicitly theorize translanguaging, this

practice extends his principle of comprehensibility through culturally responsive pedagogy. Peter relied less on linguistic simplification and more on gestures and visual support to aid comprehension. This multimodal scaffolding aligns with Long's (1985) Interaction Hypothesis, particularly his emphasis on modifying input during real-time communication. However, Peter used clarification requests and negotiation of meaning less frequently than Anh and Luna, possibly due to assumptions about learner uptake or classroom control.

All three teachers demonstrated moderate to high usage of noticing inducement, consistent with Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis. Nonetheless, in this pedagogical decision-making, only Anh regularly employed metalinguistic cues, drawing learners' attention to specific forms, perhaps reflecting her training in local, form-focused pedagogy. These findings resonate with Nasir et al. (2019), who found that teachers often favor directive talk, especially in contexts with limited student participation. Yet, unlike Nasir's study, which highlighted a scarcity of meaning negotiation, the present study found that Anh and Luna engaged their learners through negotiated interaction, suggesting stronger interactional awareness. Consistent with Namaziandost et al. (2019) and Le et al. (2025), this study supports the value of *i+1* input for improving learner comprehension. It extends these findings by showing that teacher identity and background significantly mediate how *i+1* is operationalized. In line with Vargas (2023) and Yu et al. (2025), multimodal strategies such as gestures and visuals were also found to boost learner engagement.

In addition to the observations, a post-lesson reflection questionnaire was administered to 18 participants after attending three identical lessons delivered by the three teachers.

Table 3. Learners' perception of gestures and visual aids

Response option	Anh	Peter	Luna
I understand the lesson better	13 (72%)	14 (78%)	16 (89%)
I sometimes understand the lesson	4 (22%)	3 (17%)	2 (11%)
It is confusing	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)

Table 4. Learners' perceptions of teacher repetition

Response option	Anh	Peter	Luna
Yes, it helps a lot	10 (56%)	14 (78%)	15 (83%)
Yes, it helps a little	8 (44%)	4 (22%)	3 (17%)
It does not really help	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 5. Learners' perception of participants' speaking speed

Response option	Anh	Peter	Luna
Too fast	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	0 (0%)
Too slow	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
At a proper speed	18 (100%)	16 (89%)	18 (100%)

Table 6. Learners' perception of examples and analogies

Response option	Anh	Peter	Luna
Examples helped understand well	13 (72%)	11 (61%)	16 (89%)
Examples were somewhat useful	5 (28%)	5 (28%)	2 (11%)
The examples were confusing	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	0 (0%)

Table 7. Learners' rating of teachers' vocabulary explanation clarity

Response option	Anh	Peter	Luna
5 – Very clear	10 (56%)	8 (44%)	14 (78%)
4 – Clear	6 (33%)	5 (28%)	3 (17%)

3 – Neutral	2 (11%)	3 (17%)	1 (5%)
2 – Unclear	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	0 (0%)
1 – Very unclear	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 8. Learners’ perceived comprehension level

Response option	Anh	Peter	Luna
5 – Very much	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	0 (0%)
4 – Much	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3 – Adequate	18 (100%)	16 (89%)	18 (100%)
2 – Little	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1 – Very little	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

In addition to the quantitative results, post-lesson reflections provided deeper insight into how learners perceived the impact of teacher talk on their input comprehension. Learners across three classes reported benefiting from different approaches depending on each teacher’s instructional style and communicative choices. In Anh’s class, one learner remarked, *“When Ms. Anh used Vietnamese to explain, I understood the grammar point immediately. I felt more confident to answer”*. This suggested that translanguaging supported both cognitive processing and affective engagement. In contrast, Peter refrained from using Vietnamese, instead relying on non-verbal cues. As one learner commented, *“Mr. Peter did not speak Vietnamese to make us understand his lesson, but his hand gestures and pictures helped me guess the meaning. I did not feel lost, even when he speaks a bit quickly”*. This self-reflection highlighted the effectiveness of multimodal scaffolding in place of L1 support. Meanwhile, a learner in Luna’s class observed, *“She repeated the sentence but used easier words. I know those words. That helped me understand without translation into Vietnamese”*. This pointed to repetition with variation as a key facilitator of comprehension, particularly when combined with simplified language. Learners expressed varied views regarding teachers’ clarification strategies. In Anh’s class, a participant noted, *“She often stopped to explain why the answer was correct or wrong. She guided me to recognize my mistake by myself”*. This emphasis contrasted with Peter’s more implicit approach: *“He didn’t explain much. He just showed more examples or pointed to a picture”*. Luna, by comparison, appeared to blend both techniques. One learner commented, *“She explained grammar sometimes, but mostly gave examples so we could guess the rule”*. This balance between explanation and exemplification explained why learners in Luna’s class consistently rated her input as clear and engaging.

A triangulated examination of observation and perception data revealed both alignment and divergence across teacher profiles. For instance, observation data indicated that Peter always employed recasting (Table 1), yet his learners provided the lowest ratings for explanation clarity (Table 6). This discrepancy suggests that while recasting was frequent, it may not have been sufficiently explicit to facilitate comprehension for lower-proficiency learners. The mismatch between Peter’s frequent use of recasting and his learners’ comparatively lower ratings of explanation clarity merits further theoretical consideration. While recasting is widely recognized as a form of implicit corrective feedback, its effectiveness is contingent upon learners’ ability to notice the corrective intent embedded within its reformulations. For lower-proficiency adult EFL learners, such implicit feedback may remain perceptually opaque, particularly in the absence of metalinguistic cues or negotiation moves. Viewed through Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, Peter’s recasts, though abundant, may not have consistently triggered conscious attention to form, thereby limiting their contribution to intake. In contrast, Anh’s metalinguistic cues and Luna’s repetition with variation likely enhanced salience by making form-meaning relationships more explicit. These

findings do suggest that the pedagogical value of recasting is mediated by learner proficiency and instructional explicitness, and that implicit feedback alone may be insufficient for facilitating noticing in adult EFL contexts. Conversely, Luna's frequent use of repetition with variation and simplified language (Table 1) corresponded with the highest learner ratings of vocabulary explanation clarity and comprehension (Tables 6 and 7), highlighting the pedagogical effectiveness of adaptive paraphrasing. Anh's consistent use of translanguaging also aligned with learners' reflections emphasizing confidence and immediate understanding. In terms of classroom behavior, "*repetition with variation*" in Anh's and Luna's lessons typically involved rephrasing learners' responses using simpler synonyms or reordered sentence structures to maintain meaning while enhancing clarity. Peter's "always" use of recasting, by contrast, took the form of naturally embedded reformulations, often without metalinguistic signaling. For example, when a student said "*He go to market yesterday*", Peter responded "*Oh, he went to the market yesterday*" and continued the interaction without explicit correction. This implicit feedback might have gone unnoticed by learners, explaining the gaps between observation and perceived clarity.

The reflection questionnaires revealed that learners perceived all three teachers as making input generally comprehensible, yet with notable differences in the effectiveness of individual strategies. Luna consistently received the highest ratings across categories, likely due to her dual experience as a language learner and a long-term EFL teacher in Vietnam, which enabled her to anticipate learner difficulties and scaffold more effectively. Notably, Luna's profile as an ESL-trained teacher with extensive lived experiences teaching EFL learners in Vietnam positions her at the intersection of insider and outsider pedagogical knowledge. This dual identity may have enabled her to anticipate learner difficulties more accurately and to calibrate input in ways that balanced explicit explanation with inductive exemplification. Rather than relying on a single dominant strategy, Luna appeared to orchestrate repetition with variation, simplified language, and selective explanation in a manner responsive to learners' moment-by-moment comprehension needs. From this perspective, the term of "expertise" in multilingual classrooms may not reside exclusively in native-speaker competence or formal training, but in the ability to flexibly mediate between learner needs and target language norms. Additionally, Luna's instructional success thus suggests that pedagogical sensitivity, shaped by her engagement with local learning cultures, holds a critical role in operationalizing comprehensible input.

Peter's lessons were also positively evaluated, particularly for his frequent gestures, repetition, and simplified speech; however, two learners reported difficulty with his speaking speed, suggesting that even when native speaker input is simplified, it can still exceed the "i+1" level for lower-proficiency learners indicating a partial limitation of Krashen's (1985) assumption that exposure to slightly challenging input alone ensures comprehension. Anh was rated well for pacing and repetition, though her visual support strategies were perceived as slightly less impactful. Her occasional use of Vietnamese for clarification demonstrates a translanguaging approach that challenges Krashen's monolingual input hypothesis, suggesting that strategic use of L1 can, in fact, enhance comprehensibility in EFL contexts. While Peter's gestures supported understanding, his relatively low use of negotiation moves (see Table 1) contradicts Long's (1985) Interaction Hypothesis, which posits that conversational adjustments through negotiation are key for comprehension. This contrast indicates that physical cues alone may not compensate for limited interactional modification. Finally, although learners' comprehension was rated "adequate" (Table 7), Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis reminds that comprehension does not automatically guarantee acquisition unless learners consciously attend to the linguistic forms. This nuance suggests that while all three teachers made input accessible, the depth of noticing and subsequent intake may

have varied according to how meaning was negotiated and scaffolded. Furthermore, these findings extend prior research (e.g., Vargas, 2023; Yu et al., 2025; Namaziandost et al., 2019) by illustrating that comprehensible input is a function of teacher profile, interactional style, and contextual mediation.

4. Conclusion

This study reaffirmed the role of teacher talk in shaping comprehensibility of language input in EFL classrooms for adult learners. Through a comparative analysis of three distinct teacher profiles, the study identified how specific characteristics of teacher talk contribute to learners' understanding. Situated within established theories of second language acquisition, these findings offered strong empirical support for Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Long's Interaction Hypothesis, and Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis. However, the study extended theoretical conversations by showing how comprehensible input was socially constructed and intrinsically influenced by the interaction between teacher practices and learner reflection.

Pedagogically, the research offered valuable implications for teacher training programs and continuing professional development. First, the results imply that comprehensible input is a pedagogical accomplishment, co-constructed through teachers' moment-by-moment instructional decisions. While all three teachers aimed to simplify input, the effectiveness of their strategies varied depending on how linguistic, multimodal, and interactional resources were orchestrated. This suggests that teachers should move beyond abstract discussions of "simplified input" and instead provide explicit training in adaptive teacher talk strategies (e.g., repetition with variation, calibrated speech rate, selective metalinguistic explanation, and the strategic use of exemplification). Secondly, the current study highlights the pedagogical value of flexibility in mediating input, particularly in multilingual EFL contexts. Rather than undermining exposure to the target language, such practices appear to enhance confidence and immediate comprehension, especially for lower-proficiency adult learners. This finding challenges monolingual assumptions implicit in early formulations of Krashen's Input Hypothesis and supports more recent calls for linguistically responsive pedagogy. Teacher training programs, therefore, should legitimize translanguaging as a principled instructional strategy rather than treating it as a pedagogical fallback or deficiency. Thirdly, the differential learner responses to recasting across teacher profiles point to the need for greater pedagogical sensitivity to learner proficiency and noticing capacity. Although recasting is widely recognized as an effective form of implicit feedback, the present findings suggest that its instructional value is contingent upon learners' ability to perceive its corrective intent. For adult beginner learners, recasts that lack metalinguistic signaling or follow-up negotiation may remain unnoticed, limiting their contribution to intake. Teachers may therefore need to complement implicit feedback with explicit cues, guided reflection, or interactional checks to enhance the salience of form-meaning relationships. Fourthly, the consistently positive learner evaluations of Luna's instruction highlight the pedagogical importance of responsive scaffolding grounded in experiential understanding of second language learning. This finding carries significant implications for how teaching expertise is conceptualized in EFL contexts. Pedagogical effectiveness should not be equated solely with native-speaker status or formal qualifications but recognized as an interactional competence shaped by teachers' biographical experiences, intercultural awareness, and reflective engagement with learners. Finally, at an institutional level, the study suggests that professional development initiatives should foreground teacher talk as a central component of instructional quality. Observation-based reflection,

peer discussion of classroom discourse, and video-assisted analysis of teacher talk could help teachers develop greater awareness of how their linguistic and interactional choices.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The small sample size and focus on three teachers from a single institutional context limit the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, comprehension was measured through self-reports and classroom observations rather than long-term language gains, which constrains claims about acquisition. Future research should therefore expand the participant pool, include longitudinal tracking of learners' development, and explore additional teacher variables that may shape the delivery of comprehensible input in diverse EFL settings.

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