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An Exploration of Culturally-based Assumptions Guiding ELT Practice in Thailand, a Non- colonized Nation

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AN EXPLORATION OF CULTURALLY-BASED ASSUMPTIONS GUIDING ELT
PRACTICE IN THAILAND, A NON-COLONIZED NATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Phongsakorn Methitham

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ABSTRACT

Title: An Exploration of Culturally-based Assumptions Guiding ELT Practice in Thailand, a Non-colonized Nation

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This dissertation explores the perceptions prevalent in the discourse community of English teachers in Thailand regarding the role of English and English Language Teaching (ELT). In particular, this study seeks to determine to what extent these perceptions show characteristics of *de facto* colonialism in the local ELT context, which is identified by critical applied linguists.

The participants were Thai teachers of English from the lower northern region of the country. Data were derived from two sources: a questionnaire and e-mail interviews. In response to the main question posed in this research—What signs, if any, are there of *de facto* colonialism embedded in the ELT context of a non-colonized nation, Thailand?

Characteristics of colonialism can be explained in four interrelated dimensions, namely, scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic. In the first dimension, Thai scholarship and wisdom are perceived as inferior to those of English native speakers, at least in the view of the Thai TESOL professionals. Secondly, the teacher participants agree that Thai students will be better English users if they conform to the language patterns and norms of native speakers. Moreover, it is perceived that Thai students will learn English better if they know Western native-speakers' culture. Finally, the

participants state that it is preferable to offer more and better job opportunities for English teachers in the country if they are native speakers from the West. Given the results of the study, it can safely be assumed that to certain extent colonial values can be observed through the local teachers' perceptions.

The dissertation concludes with suggestions and recommendations for not only Thai teachers of English, but also others involved in the local ELT. We, Thais, have to be aware that ELT in the country has been influenced by views favoring 'nativeness,' or 'native-speakerism.' This ideology cannot equip us to fully participate in richly multicultural English-using communities that are emerging in the 21st century global environment. Further, evaluation schemes should not be designed to assess Thai students' performance against the British or American norms or to measure to what extent they conform to such dominant 'native' patterns and models.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I always cling to the belief that education is a place for Thai youths to develop to become engaged and critical citizens. For this reason, the schooling has to liberate them, empower their voices and identities, and foster their political, personal and critical growth. However, to transform such abstract belief ingrained in my mind to the concrete articulation through written expression, I need to be assisted and guided. The completion of this dissertation involved many people.

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life (and, also, my life) with great knowledge, wisdom, and experience. Without their great contribution, this study would never have taken place.

I would like to thank the Composition and TESOL program for providing me an opportunity to work on this dissertation, through which I have grown and changed not only as a graduate student, but also as a person.

Working as an English teacher at Naresuan University has been rewarding to me. I have gained experience and learned to be proud that my role as a teacher is one of the most important factors in society. I am very grateful that the university has given me a grant to pursue my higher education here at IUP. I am also indebted to my colleagues who have taken over my teaching loads while I have been on educational leave.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

During the years 1893-1931 [in Thailand]... the need for learning more modern knowledge had greater influence. All kings during this period wanted to modernize the country. More officers and students were sent to Europe and America for higher education in various fields. This caused English to have an even more significant role in Thai education. (Sukamolson, 1998, p. 72)

King Rama V (1868-1910) proclaimed that “educational modernization could be achieved without adversely affecting [Thai] identity and eventually could serve to strengthen national identity and solidarity in ways responsive to both local traditions and to the challenges presented by the West” (Fry, 2002, p. 8).

Background of the Study

Although English has long been adopted as if it were a neutral code, this claim has been controversial for at least a quarter century. Common people all across the globe learn English as an additional language because they see it as nothing more than a language of communicational necessity or a global *lingua franca*. Although the British Empire, and later the American economic presence, has always been linked to issues of power, the recognition of these seemed never to carry over to the language. A more complex but clear phenomenon is that English has gained pre-eminence as a gatekeeper in education, employment, immigration, business opportunities, social status, social mobility, and popular culture while the indigenous languages have increasingly lost their traditional roles and are being marginalized (Pennycook, 1995). Even though such a phenomenon shows a strong connection to “linguistic imperialism” (Phillipson, 1992, p.

50), English is still considered as a vehicle for modernization, social mobility, and access code which are far from a notion of a vehicle for Westernization and colonialism.

The stronger claims for political discourse hidden in the spread of English were made in public in 1908 by Mohandas (“Mahatma”) Gandhi, a world-renown leader of the nonviolent resistance movement against British colonial rule in India. Gandhi (as cited in Bragg, 2004), working as a lawyer at that time, wrote a pamphlet to criticize not the law, the military or commercial control, but to attack upon the English language.

To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us. I do not suggest that he has any such intention, but that has been the result. Is it not a sad commentary that we should have to speak of Home Rule in a foreign tongue?

Is it not a painful thing that, if I want to go to a court of justice, I must employ the English language as a medium, that when I become a barrister, I may not speak my mother tongue and that someone else should have to translate to me from my own language? Is not this absolutely absurd? Is it not a sign of slavery?
(p. 248)

Despite the protesting voices of leaders like Gandhi in India, English seems to have been viewed in that country as an unproblematic way to avoid disputes among competing native languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Telegu, and others. However, recently, this view of English has been changing quite dramatically. Writers like Anna Wierzbicka (2006) has forcefully made the point that English, far from being neutral, is linked to what she calls “Anglo English, with the Anglo cultural heritage embedded in it” (p. 13), and thus to a whole set of political and social ideas. Qiang and Wolff (2005),

together with Canagarajah (1999b) and Kumaravadivelu (2006a), have raised a question whether English opens doors for non-western countries or serves as “a modern-day Trojan horse, filled with EFL teachers cum soldiers cum missionaries, and armed with English words rather than bullets, but intent nonetheless on re-colonizing the world and re-making it in the image of Western democracy” (Qiang & Wolff, 2005, pp. 59-60).

A better known trend in research has dealt with the issue of unequal power relationships and inequities hidden in the phenomenal spread of the English language and the constructs of the native speakers (henceforth NSs) and the nonnative speakers (henceforth NNSs)¹ of English in relation to race and ethnicity. Many studies document “social or structural inequity (e.g. unequal payment, access to jobs and education) and the cultural or ideological frameworks that support such inequity (e.g., discrimination; prejudice; beliefs about what is normal, right, or proper)” (Pennycook, 1999, p. 331). To cite just a few illustrations of this trend, Phillipson (1992) postulates that there is cultural and linguistic imperialism (conscious or not) in the ELT community. Later, Pennycook (1994, 1998) emphasizes the notion of the hegemonic—that is how, the intent of ELT theories and practices are often subtle products and promotion of colonialism. Bridging a gap in the macroscopic theoretical perspective by Phillipson (1992), Canagarajah (1999b) uses a micro-social approach to capture the reality of *periphery* classrooms and how they represent acts of resistance to English cultural and linguistic dominance.

Particularly in English language education, Kumaravadivelu (2003b) claims that “British colonialism used its colonial territories, especially India, to devise appropriate

¹ The concepts ‘native’ and ‘nonnative’ speakers of English create a hegemonic division among speakers of English, and “a political construction of who is “in” and “out” within TESOL professionals” (Holliday, 2005, p. 7). There are other pairs of terms that have been used, such as L1 and L2, or expert and novice. However, I prefer to use the terms native-non-native in this study as the terms are at the very heart of the problems that this study attempts to discuss. To get rid of or avoid using these two terms does not solve the problems but only obscures them.

teaching methods ..., testing techniques ..., and literary canon ... all with the view to serving its colonial agenda” (p. 540). The strength of such statements suggests that the concept of colonialism is still very much in the minds of some scholars as they review language policies and practices. However, most literature on this topic so far has been based on the situation in the former colonized territories such as India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, etc. Given the work of such researchers as Kumaravadivelu (2003b), one would have to conclude that ELT in those countries, as in the colonial past, still adheres to the colonial orientation. Certain characteristics of the discourse of colonialism can be easily observed and noticed in those former colonies (Canagarajah, 1999b; Holliday, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2003b, 2006b; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Phillipson, 1992):

- The notion that the existing local knowledge and use of the local language are irrelevant to the English language and can interfere with the acquisition of the target language;
- The concept that the understanding of the NSs’ culture and perspectives is essential to help the second language (henceforth L2) learners learn English;
- The belief that the NSs are superior to NNSs and that the NSs are the only persons capable of teaching English well;
- The fact that the local practicing teachers are expected to follow the prototypical methods designed by western theorists;
- The fact that textbooks, reference works, supplementary materials, examinations, and qualifications are still authoritative references to notions of the NS culture as the source providing the language to be taught; and

- The fact that the NSs have an advantage over local nonnative colleagues in terms of salary, job promotion, professional status, and welfare offering.

However, Canagarajah (1999b), Holliday (2005), Kumaravadivelu (2003b), Pennycook (1994, 1995), and Phillipson (1992) are talking primarily about the above-mentioned former colonial areas or Kachruvian's *Outer Circle*. In this context, little has been said specifically addressing these issues in the so-called *Expanding Circle* countries, that they have no colonial history. However, some of the characteristics associated with "linguistic imperialism" seem to prevail in language teaching in countries that have never been colonized, such as Russia, Japan, and Thailand (Bamgbose, 2001; Foley, 2005; Jenkins, 2006; Kubota, 1998; A. Matsuda, 2003a, 2003b). What is left unexplored is to what extent these attitudes and positions are taken in these non-colonized nations, and how they affect education and society in these contexts.

Significance of the Study

There has been an attempt to create a paradigm shift to resist "colonizing" western capitalist hegemony in English language education. Influenced by Jenkin's *The Phonology of English as an International Language*, Holliday (2005) states, "we should be teaching English *as* an international language, rather than as a language attached to a specific culture from the English speaking West" (p. 8). In this regard, one way to resist the linguistic imperialism attached to English language is that "the teaching and learning of an international language must be based on an entirely different set of assumptions than the teaching and learning of any other second language and foreign language" (McKay, 2002, p. 1).

A number of studies on the institutionalized varieties of English and English across cultures (B. B. Kachru, 1983, 1985, 1982, 1992; B. B. Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006; Y. Kachru & Nelson, 2006), English as an international language (McKay, 2002; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Widdowson, 1994, 2003), linguistic imperialism in English teaching (Phillipson, 1992), and the post-method macrostrategies for language teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2003a, 2003b, 2006b) have had considerable impact on the discourse of English language teaching. As observed by Seidlhofer (1999), studies such as these suggest that “monoculturalism needs to be replaced by multiculturalism, monolingualism with multilingualism, and targets seem to be criterion-referenced rather than (native speaker) norm-referenced” (p. 234).

To elaborate on this issue, the criterion of English competence should be based on “reasonable competence” rather than “native-like fluency.” That is, the approach of English teaching and learning should not only be conformed to its *norm-providing Inner Circle* such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; it should also consider the autonomous local varieties of English in its former *norm-developing Outer Circle* and *norm-dependent Expanding Circle*. To illustrate, Crystal (2003) reports, English, particularly in South Asia has developed to a more distinctive level than in other countries where English is used as a second language. English in India has evolved characteristic features at the phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and even at pragmatic levels (Annamalai, 2004; B. B. Kachru, 1983, 1982, 1992). The assumption suggests that such varieties of English are being appropriated or nativized by acquiring new identities in new socio-cultural contexts. English spoken in

South Asia is thus what Seidlhofer (1999) refers to as a ‘criterion-referenced’ variety of English that should not be treated simply as mistakes of deficient English.

However, a number of questions arise. Are these wider visions shared by the majority of local practitioners themselves or just among the theorists or researchers? What are the local practicing teachers concerned with in their daily practice? Are they aware of the danger of cultural and linguistic imperialism and English as a discourses of colonialism? As Pennycook (1999) points out, practicing English professionals, like human beings generally, tend to think in terms of the generalization expressed in the folk expression “if it’s ain’t broke, don’t fix it” (p. 366), or as I would say in Thai “อย่าตื่นไปก่อน ใจ” (*yah ti ton pai kon khai*), meaning “to be apprehensive before the cause arrives” (Thiengburanathum, 1977, p. 383). That is, nothing will change unless the local practicing teachers know things need to change; however, this desire to change can only happen once awareness of the problem is well-established (Pennycook, 1999). He expresses concern that developing critical awareness has to go beyond “a rational, intellectual explanation of what is wrong with racism and homophobia” (p. 340). Rather, these teachers need to have “a deeper level of engagement with beliefs, experiences, identities, and desires” (Okazaki, 2005, p. 181). Added to this, most studies about ELT as a means of colonialism have solely emerged from the contexts of the former British colonies. There is no extensive research explaining how the concept of colonialism becomes inherited in ELT in a country that has never been a part of British, or any other, territories.

Against this background, this study would shed light on the given and the *de facto* means of colonialism in local English language teaching. It focuses on investigating and

analyzing the beliefs, statements, and practices prevalent in the discourse community of English teachers in Thailand regarding the role of English and English teaching in the country. The belief system of local practicing teachers that has long been ignored will be examined. I hope this study may answer the central question, “To what extent do these perceptions show characteristics of *de facto* colonialism in the local ELT context?”

Additionally, I hope that my study will encourage EFL teachers to always question their beliefs and teaching practices. As Pennycook (1999) puts it:

All of us involved in TESOL might do well to consider our work not merely according to the reductive meanings often attached to labels such as *Teaching* and *English* but rather as located at the very heart of some of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time. (p. 346)

Hopefully, this study will raise awareness concerning ELT policy and planning, curriculum, and materials that will later influence the ELT theories and practices in the local context.

Research Questions

The major purpose of the study is to investigate and analyze the perceptions prevalent in the discourse community of English teachers in Thailand regarding the role of English and English teaching in the country. In particular, it will be important to determine to what extent these perceptions show characteristics of *de facto* colonialism, identified by critical applied linguists, such as Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (1998), Canagarajah (1999b), and Kumaravadivelu (2003b) in the local ELT context. The characteristics comprise four inter-related dimensions: scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and

economic. Hence, this investigation attempts to answer four fundamental questions developed from these four interwoven aspects:

1. Scholastic dimension: How do Thai EFL teachers perceive the relative value of Thai scholarship and wisdom as compared with scholarship by English native-speakers?
2. Linguistic dimension: What varieties of English are highly valued by Thai teachers? Do these teachers perceive that Thai students will be better English users if they conform to the norms of native speakers, or do they favor local or global varieties? What reasons do they give for their responses?
3. Cultural dimension: What are Thai EFL teachers' assumptions on cultural teaching and input in English classrooms judging from teachers own statements? What cultures do they claim are given priority in their instruction? Do they seem to assume that Thai students will learn English better if they know Western native-speakers' culture?
4. Economic dimensions: How do Thai EFL teachers perceive hiring practices at their institution? Do these perceptions indicate that native speakers are preferably given better job opportunities and prestigious status in Thailand?

Overview of Research Design

Data was collected from two sources using different collection methods over a period of six months. Questionnaires and in-depth e-mail interviews were used to investigate the attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies toward English and English teaching in Thailand.

After being completely collected, the data were analyzed and interpreted in three stages. First, I analyzed the data from the questionnaires, independently by identifying responses as they compared against the guiding research questions of the study. In analyzing e-mail interviews, I took Fairclough's (1995) perspective as a framework. I then engaged in a careful reading of the transcripts, reviewing the data to code and categorize individual statements and passages according to themes. Finally, in examining the interview transcripts, I also relied on Fairclough's three dimensional critical methodology theory, including linguistic *description* of the language text, *interpretation* of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and *explanation* of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes.

Overview of Coming Chapters

This study consists of six chapters, each of which addresses a specific point. The first chapter serves as an introduction to provide the background of the study and the direction of the study. It is intended as a bird's eye view of the goals of the study and to present problems and major questions to be explored. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature on critical pedagogies and critical approaches to TESOL, the current status of English globally and the historical spread of English, the historical background of English in Thailand, Thai cultural values and norms in English education, the negative effects of the spread of English; and colonial values in the TESOL field. Chapter Three explains the methodology that will be employed in conducting this study. It presents the research site, the subjects of the study, research design, methods of data collection, and methods of analysis. Chapter Four illustrates and analyzes the data collected in an

attempt to provide answers to the research questions. Chapter Five summarizes the findings, and specifies how these answer the research questions. Chapter six points out limitations of the study for further studies and provides suggestions for pedagogical policies and practices including exposing local teachers and students to speakers of different varieties, and assessing students against communicative effectiveness not 'nativeness'.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of the study is to investigate local teachers' beliefs regarding the role of English in their own lives, professions, and societies to determine to what extent these show characteristics that could be identified as signs of *de facto* colonialism in the local ELT context in Thailand.

To investigate this area adequately, it is necessary to understand a range of issues embedded in the historical spread of English, the status of English, and the attitudes of TESOL professionals globally. I have also chosen to investigate aspects of critical pedagogy as they address my topic directly. This review describes the relevant literature which provides essential background for the study.

Accordingly, in this chapter, the presentation is organized into six major sections covering the following topics: (1) critical pedagogy and critical approaches to TESOL, (2) the current status of English globally and the historical spread of English, (3) the historical background of English and English language teaching in Thailand, (4) Thai cultural values and norms in education, (5) the negative effects of the spread of English, and (6) colonial values in the TESOL field.

Critical Pedagogy and Critical Approaches to TESOL

Critical pedagogy and critical approaches to TESOL are frameworks that shed light on the topic being explored in this study; in fact, they provide the framework that inspires and motivates this work. Given this, it seems appropriate to cover them first and in the most detail in this literature review.

Critical Pedagogy

Looking back at the emergence of critical pedagogy, Freire (1970) makes a clear-cut distinction between two types of education: banking and transformative. The former, which I term “conventional or traditional pedagogy,” takes place when teachers attempt to pour the contents in their minds into the minds of their students. Freire describes present-day schooling as follow

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the “banking” concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling, and storing the deposits. (p. 72)

The notion of transformative education, in contrast, represents the birth of a more dynamic approach that liberates both teachers and students. Freire calls this a “liberating education [or] a humanist and libertarian pedagogy” (p. 36). In the framework of critical pedagogy, this approach to teaching grows from the inside-out and outside-in interconnection between the classroom and the world outside and depends on the dialogic interaction between teachers and students concerning real-world issues such as politics, economics, and education. The students are encouraged to explore their viewpoints about the issues and reflect on their thoughts. By sharing opinions with others, the students are expected to engage in critical thinking and provide reasons for a particular stance. The intent of such interaction is not just to improve the world but also, at the same time, to support the students’ political, personal, and critical development. In the classroom,

liberating education occurs when teachers and students get together to help each other build not just classroom skills, but also broad social literacy. Educators involved in such in-depth work need to both see and challenge the ideologies that form the dominant cultural environment (Heller, 1997). In an open environment, students and teachers can work together to develop an awareness of the issues that are critical for social change to take place. Freire (1970) called this process as “*conscientização*” (p. 90) or conscientization—the gathering of people around an issue—which focuses upon perceiving and exposing social and political contradictions. Conscientization includes taking action against oppressive elements and allowing students and teachers to revolutionize the social order. Hence, the poor, the oppressed, the disadvantaged, and those on the social periphery will no longer be disenfranchised, as they often are in existing educational systems.

Critical pedagogy believes that education, unconsciously or consciously, goes hand-in-hand with dominant social institutions to promote the dominant *Discourse*². Okasaki (2005) synthesizes Canagarajah’s *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching*, which “explains a vicious cyclical process where the dominant social arrangement passes on its values to the school; the school, through its curriculum and pedagogy, passes on those values to the students; and the students subsequently uphold the status quo” (p. 179). She proposes two steps in implementing the concepts of critical pedagogy. First, both teachers and students come together to become aware of such reproduction processes which fuel an inequitable status quo in schooling and other

² *Discourse* (with a capital D; *discourse* with a little d just stands for language in use) can be used to refer to “recognizable coordinations of people, places, objects, tools, technologies, and ways of speaking, listening, writing, reading, feeling, valuing, believing, etc” (Gee, 2002, p. 128).

societal institutions. Then, teachers and students work together to find strategies that will allow them “to resist and even to subvert such reproduction” (p. 180).

Giroux (1988) further interprets liberation in education when he points out that “to be liberated is *not* to be free, it is to be present and active in the struggle for reclaiming one’s voice, history, and future ... literacy neither automatically reveals nor guarantees social, political, and economic freedom” (p. 155). Again, *critical pedagogy* or *liberating education* encourages teachers and students to come together around literacy in ways that will allow them to better understand by questioning and challenging the social norms, assumptions, and forces that prevent people in society from growing and developing in their lives. Giroux elaborates more on the role of teachers in liberation education in a later book published in 1992, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. He highlights the idea that teachers at all levels of schooling need to be seen as “intellectuals ... who, as mediators, legitimators, and producers of ideas and social practices, perform a pedagogical function that is eminently political in nature” (p. 31). In other words, viewing and constructing teachers as “intellectuals,” for Giroux, suggests that each individual should have the courage of his or her convictions to question authority, to refuse to act, and to follow any force that goes against his or her experiences and judgments. In this climate, teachers can liberate themselves and their students by allowing a breach of traditional, restrictive schooling protocols, and questioning the conventional teaching practices they have been expected to follow. Shor and Freire (1987) refer to this process as “parallel pedagogies” (p. 44).

Parallels between Critical Pedagogy and Thai Tradition

If I situate the notion of critical pedagogy, as suggested by Freire (1970) and Giroux (1988, 1992) in the Thai context, interestingly enough, I think that the idea does not sound new. Kindred ideas arose long ago in Buddhism, and are thus familiar in a country such as Thailand. Ancient Buddhist sayings urge people to always practice intellectual challenges and animated debates, to go beyond what they have been told or taught, and to be eager to understand and challenge the given or the taken-for-granted in their lives. The pursuit of this transformation is a core teaching of Buddhism. For example, in Buddha's last sermon (literally, Buddha translated to *the Enlightened One*), *Kalama Sutta* (Charter of Free Inquiry), the following appears

Yes, you may well doubt, you may well be uncertain. Do not accept anything because it is the authoritative tradition, because it is often said, because of rumor or hearsay, because it is found in the scriptures, because it is based on speculative metaphysical theories, because it is a defense of an existing viewpoint, because it is a rationalization, because it agrees with a theory of which one is already convinced, because of the reputation of an individual, or because a teacher said it is thus and thus. But experience it for yourself.

Matila and Chakrabarti (1994) echo the same sentiment expressed by Buddha in a more precise and concise form when they say: "Do not trust my words, rely only upon your own light" (p. 2). Kinnes (2002) further interprets this teaching in the following

Buddha says that it is not wise and good enough merely to hold fast to one's own opinions without evidence while failing to investigate things further. What he is into is that it is wise to make a proper examination before accepting teachings as

true and good. Hence, it should pay to examine things rationally and carefully. In conclusion, the [S]utta [The Charter of Inquiry] says that the one with this kind of rational and sympathetic equanimity may enjoy bliss and the favored self-assurance.

The term *self-assurance* mentioned by Kinnes (2002) here refers to the ability to handle ideas, issues, or problems easily and properly through a rational, careful and critical examination. These concepts, which are deeply embedded in Thai culture, may differ in subtle ways from those expressed by the above-mentioned theorists discussing critical pedagogy, but they nonetheless represent a path toward empowerment for learners. Therefore, more traditional ideas influenced by Buddha's teaching will be put into the broader context of Thai cultural values and norms as embedded in Thai education in a later section of this chapter.

Critical Approaches to TESOL

Critical pedagogy emerges from critical social theory, which “seeks to understand and critique the historical and sociopolitical context of schooling and to develop pedagogical practices that aim not only to change the nature of schooling but also the wider society” (Pennycook, 1990b, p. 24). Influenced by Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Pennycook (1990a) claims that critical pedagogy promotes an unconventional form of literacy which should not simply be viewed “as acquisition of a fixed body of cultural knowledge [or] as some technical skill but as a means for learners to decode and demythologize their own cultural traditions and the inequitable structures of their society” (p. 309). He further claims that critical pedagogy develops a notion of critical literacy “by helping students to decode the ideological dimensions of texts, institutions,

social practices and cultural forms, critical literacy aims to develop a critical citizenry capable of analyzing and challenging the oppressive characteristics of the society” (p. 309).

This movement offers an alternative perspective that inspires a fresh look into English and English language teaching. Pennycook (1999) has this to say on the subject

It is not simply making an attempt to connect the ‘microrelations’ of TESOL—classrooms, teaching approaches, interactions—with broader social and political relations. It is not sufficient to simply draw connections between the micro and the macro, and try to connect TESOL to the world in which it occurs. (p. 331)

In fact, this connection must be made, but it must focus on questions of power, inequality, discrimination, resistance, and struggle. Following Freire (1970) and Giroux (1992), Pennycook (1999) encourages practicing TESOL professionals to always challenge the norms or expectations they have to follow. They should no longer see themselves as practitioners or followers, but rather as “intellectuals” (Giroux, 1992, p. 31) who need to have a questioning attitude toward their everyday teaching practices. As he puts it

All of us involved in TESOL might do well to consider our work not merely according to the reductive meanings often attached to labels such as *teaching* and *English* but rather as located at the very heart of some of the most crucial education, cultural, and political issues of our time. (p. 346)

English language teaching and learning is bonded with critical issues challenging all in-service teachers across the globe to explore their practice in a deeper way.

Pennycook (1999) further argues that it is not sufficient to have students sit in a circle and

start to discuss social issues. In fact, the teachers have to go beyond describing in a pessimistic way what is wrong in society. They, instead, need to find a way to suggest to students what the possibilities for change are and how change might take place. Adding to this, Watson-Gegeo (2004) explains, “there is no context-free language learning, and all communicative contexts involve social, cultural, and political dimensions that affect which linguistic forms are available or taught and how they are represented” (p. 342). From her stance, teachers of TESOL should seek to understand and critique the historical practices, the givens, and the rigid conditions that may prevent teachers and students from growing and developing in their lives. Watson-Gegeo (2004) further elaborates that, to reach these goals, teachers would have to reexamine their instruction and revisit their assumptions which they make about classroom organization, lesson structure, and effective materials. She encourages teachers to always have a questioning attitude towards their everyday teaching practices by asking themselves (or their students) questions like these:

Why are we teaching/learning English (or another language)? What does this teaching/learning imply in our highly diverse but rampantly politically structured world? What are the political implications of our teaching, learning, and researching language learning and pedagogy? Whom does this work empower and whom does it disempower? (p. 342)

These socio-political perspectives raise a very challenging question: Have ESL/EFL circles been working in the way outlined here to empower students to participate fully in the modern world? Or at the other extreme, are they simply, as Pennycook (1994) claims, content to play their role in promoting the means of continued

colonialism by their passive acceptance of stereotypical values in the classroom? What lies beneath these questions, according to those who wish to apply critical pedagogy to the TESOL field, is that local practicing teachers of English all around the world should go beyond what they used to be and do. They should break the mold and no longer see themselves as “contribut[ors] to the general welfare simply by helping people to communicate with each other [or] as discharging their responsibilities if they attempt to teach as well as possible, meaning as efficiently and professionally as possible” (Crookes, 1998, p. 320).

In a nutshell, critical approaches to TESOL adopt a critical stance influenced by Freire’s seminal work, which emphasizes on making a connection between the language learning and broader political concerns. Language education must focus on questioning the dominant language and culture which create inequality, hegemony, and oppression to the broader society. One way to adopt such critical approaches is to revisit and reevaluate the current status of the English language, the geo-political spread of English, and the effects of its spread through the lens of critical literacy.

The Current Status of English and the Historical Spread of English

English as an International Language

English is undoubtedly accepted as an international language or a world language (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997; Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2002). This status is not merely based on the number of NSs. If such status were based solely on the native speaking population, languages like Mandarin, Spanish, and Arabic should also serve as international languages with their larger numbers of NSs. According to Crystal (2003), English has seemingly achieved global status because it has a “special role that is

recognized in every country” (p. 3). This special role can emerge in two ways. First and foremost, English serves as the official language of public administration, media, education, and business communication in former British territories such as Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and India. Although other local languages may also be recognized as official languages or symbolic languages of identity, English is the dominant language, more or less, in political, academic, and community meetings in these linguistically diverse countries (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006). However, there is a second route to prominence for English, based on more diffuse factors. In addition to serving as an official language in many countries, English is also given special priority as a required foreign language in the school system. The various roles that English serves in different countries can be best viewed through Braj Kachru’s well-known image of three concentric circles which can capture “the historical, sociolinguistic, acquisitional, and literacy contexts of the spread and diffusion of English” (Bhatt, 2001, p. 529).

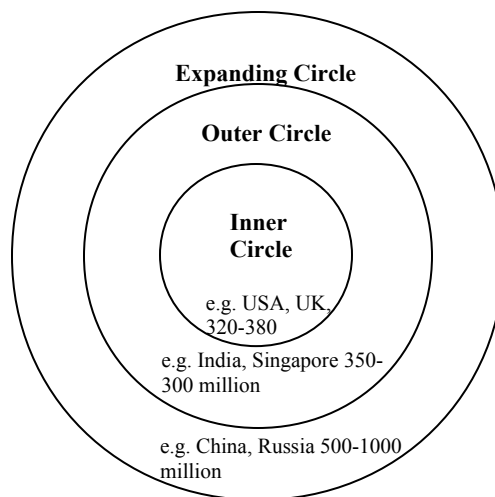


Figure 1: Kachru’s three concentric circles (Crystal, 2003, p. 60).

The conceptual framework behind these three concentric circles is based not only on the historical context of English, but also on the status of the language and its functions in various socio-cultural domains in different regions (Y. Kachru, 2005). Beginning from the center, the *Inner Circle* represents the traditional bases of English. It is where English is the primary language of the country and, interestingly, the majority of speakers has historically been Caucasians. This is because the language was not only originated by this group of people but also was taken to the other countries of the *Inner Circle* by population migration. These *Inner Circle* countries include Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Progressing outward is the *Outer Circle*, where English is not the native tongue but correlates with political reasons and plays a part in the nation's institutions, either as an official language or a second language in multilingual countries such as in India, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Singapore. It is this group that tends to share a history of colonization by English-speaking countries, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States. In contrast to the *Inner Circle*, these people tend to represent particular ethnic groups whose culture is quite distinct from those of Caucasian people.

The last one is the *Expanding Circle*, where English plays no crucial role in a countries' history and government. Although, according to Yamuna Kachru (2005), the countries in this circle were not explicitly or directly colonized, but they did "gradually came under Western influence and where English is fast becoming a dominant second [or additional] language in academia, business and commerce, higher education, media, and science and technology" (p. 155). Some of the countries in this *Expanding Circle* are

those such as the Arab world, China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand. Similar to the *Outer Circle*, people in these countries are prototypically non-white.

According to Graddol (1997) and McKay (2002), there are two main drawbacks in Braj Kachru's categorization. First, the model puts the NSs and native-speaking countries at the center of the global use of English. Therefore, it seems to suggest that the speakers of the *Inner Circle* are "the source of models of correctness, the best teachers as well as the source of goods and services for those in the outer and expanding circle" (Graddol, 1997, p. 10). Second, as observed by McKay (2002), there are many more English-speaking bilinguals in the *Expanding Circle* (e.g. Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands) than in the *Outer Circle* where English serves as an official language, such as Gambia and Rwanda.

Graddol (1997) attempts to fill the gaps in Kachru's model by proposing a different way of categorizing the users of English around the globe. Similar to Kachru, he puts English speakers into three broad groups. The first category is *first language speakers* (L1) whose mother tongue is English and for whom English may be not only their first language but also their only language. This group of speakers commonly lives where Western culture (Anglo or Anglo-American culture) is dominant. The second category is *L2 speakers*. The speakers of this group use English as their second or additional language and the local varieties of English are commonly used among them. The third group is *foreign language speakers* who learn English as their foreign language (EFL). The main difference from Kachru's model is in the graphical representation of Graddol's (1997) model.

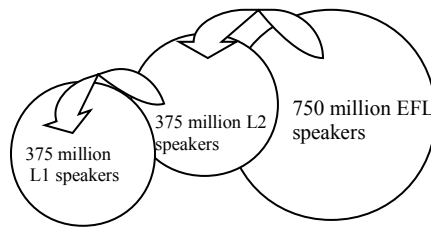


Figure 2: The overlapping three circles representing the present distribution of English speakers in the world.

Despite the different approach in categorizing the users of English, it is widely accepted that English serves to be the one and only international language. However, English as an international language seems to be taken for granted. What does *an international language* really mean? Widdowson (1994, 2003) defines the term as follows:

How English develops in the world is no business whatever of native-speakers in England, the United States or anywhere else The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it But the point is that it is only international to the extent that it is not their language. It is not a possession which they lease out to others, while still retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it. (p. 385, p. 43)

Yet, is Widdowson’s observation of the current status of English really the case in today’s world or not? The central question in essence, remains “to which extent does English belong to White NSs of standard English or to all people who speak it, irrespective of linguistic and socio-cultural history?” (Norton, 1997, p. 409). This critical question requires a further study on the language itself, its role and status, and its effects

on the world. I believe one way to start with this issue is to examine the historical spread and reasons for the spread of English.

The Global Spread and Reasons for the Spread of English

Platt et al. (as cited in Bhatt, 2001) claims that the alteration of an European indigenous language to Standard English is arguably “the most striking example of ‘language expansion’ of this century if not in all recorded history [and] it has far exceeded that other famous case, the spread of Latin during the Roman Empire” (p. 529). This phenomenal spread of English across the globe can be traced to two main causes: the expansion of the British Empire starting from the 17th century to the 19th century, and the rise of the United States since the end of the 19th century in its dramatically growing socioeconomics that has a great influence in every part of the world (Graddol, 1997).

The British Empire began in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and the English language had made a voyage throughout the globe as a result. As Phillipson (1992) puts it, “whenever British have settled, they have taken their language with them” (p. 109). The most notable settlement is the founding of the American colonies. At that time, many European military powers including France, Holland (the Netherlands), Portugal, and Spain were similarly expanding in the western hemisphere and beyond. In the 19th century the British Empire, with its distinctive mix of trade and cultural politics consolidated the world position of English, creating “a language on which the sun never sets”(Graddol, 1997, p. 6).

Although British imperialism sent English around the globe, the global status of English is not solely a result of a successful expedition of the British military force. In

the same period, many European languages such French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish were successfully established as colonial languages; however, they did not maintain their status as international languages as English does today. It is economics that replaces politics as the chief driving force at this point. As Crystal (2003) claims, “it may take a militarily powerful nation to establish a language, but it takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it” (p. 10). To put it bluntly, Crystal (2003) arrives at the conclusion that one of the primary reasons for the spread of English is that it has been “in the right place at the right time” (p. 120). As the economic force of the British Empire weakened during the transition from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the United States came into play as its economic power rose throughout the world, and “the language behind the US dollar was English” (p. 10). Adding to this, he explains that the new technologies that rapidly emerged in the U.S. brought new linguistic opportunities; American English gained preeminence as a first-rank language in industries which had a great impact on all aspects of society, including the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures, sound recording, transportation, and communications.

Crystal (2003) offers geo-political and economic-political perspectives on the spread of English. However, Bhatt (2001) takes a more socio-lingo-cultural stance than originally proposed by Knowles and Kachu. He argues an alternative view that the global spread can be put into two different phenomena: English transplantation and non-English contact. In the first phase, English was transplanted through the immigration of NSs to new nations including North America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. English quickly became a national language of these countries, “which resulted in

English becoming one of the major languages of the world, along with Arabic, French, German, Hindi, Russian, and Spanish” (p. 529).

In the second phase, related to colonialism, English was introduced as an official language alongside other national languages. Bhatt (2001) argues that this latter spread brought English to have a contact with

... “un-English” sociocultural contexts—to South Asia, Africa, and Latin America—which resulted in a significant alteration of the earlier sociolinguistic profile of the English language English came into contact with genetically and culturally unrelated languages: in Asia with Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages, in Africa with languages of the Niger-Congo family, and in Southeast Asia with Altaic languages. (p. 529)

After making contact with such diverse non-European languages, English lent itself to the medium of communication in “un-English” sociocultural contexts. This result in the development of varieties of English usage in different regions such as Indian English, Malaysian English, Singaporean English, Philippine English, Nigerian English, and Ghanaian English. In addition, Bhatt (2001) claims when English came into contact with these non-western sociocultural contexts, it created a new ecology for the teaching of English, including “(nonnative) linguistic input, local (Indian, Nigerian, etc.) norms, multiple identities, communicative competencies and methodologies that respect language variation” (p. 533).

McKay (2002) comes to the conclusion that the initial spread of colonialism was from speaker immigration, and new technology development in English-speaking countries. However, she raises critical questions: “What are the factors that are fueling

its current spread? Which factors give rise to the macro acquisition of English within existing speech communities?” (p. 16). Taking David Crystal’s work as a basis, she discusses some of these answers by considering the current uses of English in various intellectual, economic, and cultural arenas as follows:

- International organizations: of 12,500 international organizations listed in the 1995-1996 Union of International Associations’ Yearbook, approximately 85 per cent make official use of English.
- Motion pictures: in the mid-1990s, the United States controlled about 85 per cent of the world film market.
- Popular music: of the pop groups listed in *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 99 per cent of the groups work entirely or predominantly in English.
- International travel: the United States is the leader in tourism for both earning and spending.
- Publications: more books are published in English than in any other language.
- Communications: about 80 per cent of the world’s electronically stored information is in English.
- Education: in many countries English plays a significant role in higher education. (pp. 16-17)

The Spread of English in Southeastern Asia

This section describes the historical spread of English in Southeastern Asia, consisting of two geographical regions: the Asian mainland, and island arcs and archipelagoes. The mainland section, or the so-called Indochina, includes Cambodia,

Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The maritime section consists of Brunei, East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. Interestingly, there is a mixture of British and American English influence; British with Penang (Malaysia), Malacca (Malaysia), and Singapore; and American with the Philippines (Crystal, 2003).

Looking through the lens of World Englishes, Bautista and Gonzalez (2006) divide the region into two categories based on Kachru's circles: *Outer Circle* (English as a second language) and *Expanding Circle* (English as a foreign language). The countries where English is used as a second language are Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines; the countries where English is a foreign language are Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Because of its colonial history, Crystal (2003) categorizes Brunei as the *Outer Circle*. The current state of English in East Timor, the newest nation in the 21st century, is not explicitly documented in any literature at the time this research was being conducted.

English was introduced to Southeast Asia in conjunction with the growth of the British colonial Empire in the region. The Straits Settlements including Penang, Singapore, and Malacca were in use as trading centers of the British East India Company in 1786, 1819, and 1824 respectively (Crystal, 2003). Since then, "English inevitably and rapidly became the language of power in the British territories of South-east Asia" (Crystal, 2003, p. 56). After the British had gained the political and economic power over the region, a standard British English model, along with a British education system was introduced to the locals. In 1816, the British government opened the first school using English as a medium of instruction in Penang, which is now Malaysia's leading port. Teachers were all recruited and brought in from Britain. Adding to Crystal, this

English-medium school not only served the local people and immigrants in the region of the Strait of Malacca, but also a nearby country, Thailand. At that time, wealthy and prestigious families in Thailand sent their children to be educated at these British institutions. English rapidly became the language of professional advancement and the chief literacy language. The language thus became a prestigious *lingua franca* among those who had received an English education and who had thereby entered professional society.

After gaining their independence, English still remains very dominant in these former British colonies. Despite a great diversity of ethnic languages, many Singaporeans acquire English as their first language, and tend to marginalize their native linguistic heritages. As Bautista and Gonzalez (2006) put it

The Chinese, Tamils, and Malays were state-supported in Singapore and Malaysia, where primary education was taught in the ethnic language and English taught as a second language. In secondary school and university, English-taught education became the prevailing mode; Malay, Tamil, and Chinese at the secondary level became marginal, while higher education was totally in English. (p. 131)

Not only in the former colonies but also throughout the Southeast Asian region, English has gained in predominance in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Thailand. After having worked on local teacher-training and language proficiency programs, Toh (2003) depicts the dominant status of English in the region. In Cambodia, he claims that English is competing with her former colonial language, French. Although the government of France attempts to maintain the dominance role of French in the

country (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006), it is quite apparent that Cambodia also needs English to communicate with other countries and “to be a contributing participant in regional affairs” (Toh, 2003, p. 551). In Laos, he states that English served as the first foreign language in 1990 and gained its preeminence after the country became an official member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in July 1997. As in its neighboring countries, English has gained prestigious status in Vietnam as it is viewed as “the major international language for access to research and development in all areas of scientific, technological and commercial endeavour” (Denham, 1992, p. 62). The case in Myanmar is different. According to Bautista and Gonzalez (2006), “the educational system in this country is ... in a process of restoration” (p. 138). In this slow revival, it is difficult to really make a realistic plan for foreign-language teaching. Indonesia, a former Dutch colony, used to emphasize the teaching of Dutch (Alisjahbana as cited in Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006). However, after gaining its independence, English gradually becomes the main foreign language learned in Indonesia. Similar to its neighbors, the main objective of learning English is to gain access to the scientific and technological knowledge written in English (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006).

Sukamolson (1998) discusses how English came to public attention in Thailand and emphasizes that the language gained a significant place in education much earlier in Thailand than in non-British colonies in the region. The historical background of English language usage and English language teaching will be further elaborated in the following section.

The Historical and Cultural Background of English and ELT in Thailand

The History of English Language in Thailand

The English language has enjoyed high prestige in the country as a medium of international communication for more than a century. English, together with French, Spanish, and Portuguese, was introduced to the country during the colonization era of the Southeast Asian region in the 18th century. English at the time was recognized among Thai (elite) people as the language for safety and prosperity, which is discussed by Sukamolson (1998) as follows

Due to the influence of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, some foreign countries such as England, France, Spain, and Portugal turned to a colonial policy. Many countries in Asia ... were colonized ... and had to live under the wings of more powerful countries for many years ... To counterbalance the influences of England and France ... Thailand decided to sign trade treaties with both England in 1825 and America in 1832 during King Rama IV's reign. This ... helped Thailand begin to realize the importance of ... English for the safety and prosperity of the country. The fear [of being colonized] was very great when China was defeated by England in "The Opium War" in 1842. (p. 69)

In addition, the Thai government noticed the influence of English through the Protestant missionaries from the U.S. who had arrived during the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851) in the 1830's. They "had virtually no success in converting the Thai to Christianity[; however, they] quickly turned to education, medical work, and the introduction of modern technology ... [including] the first printing press ... the first medical dispensary ... and ... the first newspaper" (Darling, 1962, p. 93). King Rama III

found that the technological advances that were introduced by the missionaries were “essential and appropriate for modernizing the country” (Sukamolson, 1998, p. 69) and this caused His Majesty to believe in the importance of English as the key to success in both global and regional competition. Influenced by his father, King Rama IV, who reigned from 1851 to 1868, was a great scholar, interested in language, astronomy, religion, and history (Debyasuvarn, 1981). The King himself spoke and wrote in English, and also other Western languages including French, Latin, as well as South Asian languages – Pali and Sanskrit. He also hired a number of English western tutors to teach his wives and children in the court. One of them was the well-known Anna Leonowens, who turned to work as a teacher of English to support her children after her husband died. After the death of King Rama IV, King Rama V (1853-1910), his successor, did not invite Mrs. Leonowens to continue her teaching in the Siamese court. She went back to England and started her new life as a writer, becoming the celebrated author of *Anna and the King of Siam*. Although she was highly acclaimed in the Western hemisphere, she has been less respected among Thai people due to the historical and cultural distortions in her fictionalized story. Recently, the producers of the remake of *Anna and the King* was denied permission to film the movie in Thailand; it was also banned from being released in the country in 1999.

When King Rama IV passed, King Rama V came to the throne. He “is regarded as one of the most resourceful monarchs, who changed Siam³ [later renamed Thailand] into a modern state” (Debyasuvarn, 1981, p. 83). He opened the country to extensive contact with the West. Darling (1962) claims that King Rama V was greatly influenced in modernizing the country by his tutor the Reverend Jesse Caswell, an American

³ The name Siam was changed to Thailand on June 5, 1939 (C. Baker & Phongpaichit, 2005).

Congregationalist, in his younger days. Also another American influence came from Dr. Edward H. Strobel of Harvard University whom the king appointed to work as a foreign affairs adviser to his government.

Despite such evidence of Western influence, King Rama V had always been acutely aware that the Kingdom of Siam needed to adopt the western advances and technology with rational, careful, and critical examination. He proclaimed “modernization could be achieved without adversely affecting Siamese identity and eventually could serve to strengthen national identity and solidarity in ways responsive to both local traditions and to the challenges presented by the West” (Fry, 2002, p. 8). This seems to reflect the prevailing evidence that the King adopted Buddhist teaching’s *Charter of Inquiry* in his governance. Hence, the Siamese kings embraced English and warmly welcomed English tutors into the country was simply to let the Thai people get acquainted with “[the] language ... [that allowed them] to interact with the wider world community’ [and to] take advantage of what the present-day world has to offer” (Savage, 1997, p. 314).

During the years 1893-1931, many Thai officers and Thai students were sent abroad to receive a higher education, particularly in Europe and America (Sukamolson, 1998). This caused English to become more and more important in Thai education. In 1921, English became as a mandatory subject in all government schools beyond grade 4 (Durongphan et al., as cited in Wongsothorn, 2000). However, in recent decades, English has gained a new prominence in the country. In the 1980s, there was a fast growth in tourism and foreign investment in Thailand augmented by the Year of Tourism in 1987 and a laissez-faire policy of development in 1988 which led to the widespread influence of English language in the country’s tourist-related enterprises and joint-venture factories

and companies. Foreign language skills have become crucial for job recruitment, professional training, and work performance. English, then, became the preferred first foreign language.

The History of English Language Teaching in Thailand

The history of formal English Language Teaching (ELT) has its origins in the reign of the King Rama III (1824-1851) by American missionaries (Durongphan et al., as cited in Wongsothorn, 2000). The increasing number of westerners with trading, religious, and colonial agendas created a demand for English among higher court officials and administrators. King Rama IV (1851-1868) was the first Thai who was able to communicate both in oral and written English (Debyasuvarn, 1981). He also wanted his wives and children in his court to be educated about the world beyond Siam. He, thus, arranged for them to receive English lessons from Christian missionaries and other British and American tutors. After compulsory education was introduced during the reign of King Rama V (1853-1910), the English language was made a required subject in all government secondary schools during the reign of King Rama VI (1910-1925) (Debyasuvarn, 1981). Soon after King Rama VI issued the Compulsory Education Act of 1921, English became a mandatory subject for students beyond Grade 4 in the national curriculum (Durongphan et al. as cited in Wongsothorn, 2000).

As seen by educational policy in Thailand at that time, ELT served two major purposes: to produce modern thinkers for the country and to provide children with a sufficient knowledge of English to be able to function in English-speaking classrooms (Aksornkul, 1980). English language teaching was based on rote-memorization and grammar translation during the reigns of King Rama VI and King Rama VII (1910-1932)

(Debyasuwan as cited in Wongsothorn, 2000). The situation remained unchanged until 1960 when a greater emphasis on English for international communication came into play in the English curriculum. Foley (2005) adds that this shift was greatly influenced by the fast-growing involvement of the United States in the Indochina War. At that time, the audio-lingual method was introduced to replace traditional rote-learning and grammar translation. However, he comments that this approach did not succeed very well because it ran counter to the rote memorization that was long ingrained in the educational traditions of Thai culture.

As part of the new national curricula introduced in 1977 and 1980, students in higher education were required to take six foreign language credits as part of a general education program. Other languages taught, apart from English, were French, German and Japanese; however, English was still the preferred first foreign language among Thai students (Wongsothorn, 2000). At the same time, a new teaching method approach called “the communicative approach” which had come into focus in the ELT circle of professionals worldwide, was introduced in Thailand (Foley, 2005). Around this period, the British Council, an ELT agency from the British government (Phillipson, 1992) or, as Bhatt (2001) terms it, “an agency of linguistic coercion” (p. 532) was (and still is) involved in running a series of in-service training courses to assist English language teaching in the country (Foley, 2005). With increased exposure to Western learning culture, urban area students found considerable success in learning English or another foreign language using the communicative approach. The creative use of such an approach showed the potential to develop students’ language abilities in the urban areas and major cities where foreign language teachers could be easily recruited. However, the

situation was different in less developed areas where educational traditions of Thai culture went unchanged and were not extensively influenced by the Western learning culture. Here, the communicative approach is still overshadowed by rote-learning and grammar-translation methods because Thai teaching methodology has become fossilized, so that in most areas these traditional methods still prevail.

The most recent shift in ELT took place in 1996 when English became mandatory for all primary children from Grade 1. The English language curriculum was developed on the basis of a new functional-communicative approach (Wongsothorn as cited in Foley, 2005) in order to lay a sound learning foundation. The focus was on the development of language proficiency so that students could achieve a number of goals: international communication, acquisition of knowledge, use of English in higher education, and career prospects.

Critically examining the historical background, one finds evidence that these shifts in policy and curriculum are entirely initiated from above (the growing power of global players such as the U.K. and the U.S.), with local teachers playing, at best, a passive role, having been disempowered from taking charge of their own teaching. The impression of this phenomenon is that these teachers have always been expected to follow a particular set of theoretical principles and classroom techniques. These methods are conceptualized only by Western theorists, not the local teachers; however, they are considered to be *appropriate* teaching methods (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b). Hence, these English teaching methods that the local teachers are required to follow disempower their instructional judgments and devalue their teaching experience. Their voices and identities are consistently overshadowed by Western prototypical methods.

Thai Cultural Values and Norms in Language Education

Hofstede (1997) defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (p. 5). In this connection, to understand English language teaching and learning in Thailand, one should understand certain Thai cultural values and norms which are ingrained in education.

Buddhism is the foundation of the Thai world view; Thai Buddhism can best be described as a mixture of Indian Buddhism, Brahman ritual and animism (Klausner & Mulder as cited in Foley, 2005). Buddhism not only is embedded in education but also gives birth to education. The history of education in Thailand can be traced back for centuries, having its roots in the *Sangha* (the Buddhist order). It used to be a norm that Thai young men were ordained and spent time at Buddhist monasteries as monks. In that process (called บวชเรียน (*Buad Rien*) or become ordained and literate), these monks had to study both Thai and Pali, the language of Theravada Buddhism. As a result, “the widespread presence of monasteries and learned monks created an important tradition system of education in ancient Siam” (Fry, 2002, p. 4). Watson (1980) provides an apt description of this traditional Thai education

The Buddhist monks were expected to be adept at Pali grammar, fine arts, law, medicine, astronomy and arithmetic. They regarded reading and writing and the provision of knowledge to others as a religious act, a form of merit making.

Whereas parents gave life, monks imparted a way of life and knowledge which made that life worth living. Both teaching and learning were therefore social and religious assets. Accordingly wherever the monks settled and establish

monasteries, they also established schools. As in Ceylon [now Sri Lanka], the Buddhist monasteries in Siam ‘became centers of learning and culture, and *bikkus* [monks] had to master all subjects that had to be taught to everyone from prince down to peasant. (pp. 69-70)

Thus, Thai literacy education has been embedded in merit-making and virtue-inspiring values. At schools, teachers not only deliver the knowledge of the subjects, but also instill morality and the key concepts of Buddhism in students, especially the concepts of *Karma*, *Bunghun*, and *Krengjai*. Foley (2005) claims that these three key concepts “influence the way teachers and learners approach any subject, whether it be English, Science or even Thai itself” (p. 229).

Karma can be roughly defined by an old saying, “what goes around, comes around”. Foley (2005) gives a very apt definition of karma as “a profile of one’s meritorious and sinful acts and thoughts” (p. 227). He further provides a very common widely-recognized example of *karma* among the Thai people when he says “the fact that a person is born into a rich family and has a happy life can be explained by the fact that one has accumulated considerable ‘good’ karma in one’s past life” (p. 227). To accumulate considerable ‘good’ *karma* in one’s life, Nguyen (2005) summarizes the *karma* basic tenets, that are commonly taught at temples, homes, and schools at all levels as follows:

- As a sign of ‘good’ *karma*, one should show kindness and tolerance toward others;
- Everything a person does has an effect; hence, what a person is and what happens to him/her is the result of his/her own *karma*;

- Buddhists believe in reincarnation, i.e., a person has other lives before and after this one; the next life one has depends on one's deeds in this life; and
- Life is suffering, which comes from one's craving. Therefore, one should give up ambition or greed and do good deeds to improve one's *karma*.

In this connection, education is highly valued in Thailand and teachers are rewarded with a very prestigious and respected status. Thais believe that a person takes a teaching position because he/she "accumulates" his or her *karma* by educating people as a contribution toward society. The Thai people are always grateful to teachers for the great sacrifices they make to provide students with knowledge and wisdom so that they can become moral persons and productive members of their families and societies. To be grateful or thankful to teachers leads to another important concept in education, called *Bunghun*.

The concept of *Bunghun* in Thai society and education is larger than "gratitude" in English term. Foley (2005) offers its broad definition as "the benefit and benevolence rendered to someone. The one who benefits is obligated to do something in return" (p. 228). To give one practical and concrete example of this notion, *Bunghun* towards parents are very important because they give life and care in infancy and throughout the early years. The Thai people always say that we were never meant to be in this world without them. Hence, *Bunghun* should be expressed by being obedient and showing respect to parents, and taking care of them, especially when they become old.

In Thailand, the role of the teacher is more like that of the parents. Teachers are obliged to make decisions and take care of their students with love, care, and good intentions without taking advantage of them or asking for anything in return.

Considering the great sacrifice that teachers make for the good of the students, students owe a debt of *Bunghun* to them (Mulder as cited in Foley, 2005). Thus, *Bunghun* for the teacher is second to the parents. That is, students always show a great respect to their teachers who are, more or less, equivalent to their parents. Teachers are always put in a superior position, and being teacher is not just a job, but a high position in Thai society. Teachers are always addressed by the term *Khruu* (commonly used in K-12 level) or *Ajarn* (commonly used at the tertiary level), which means those who shed light on the dark path of one's life with great knowledge and wisdom. They are called *Khruu* or *Ajarn* not only at school, but also at social functions, by neighbors, or even by the local street vendors. A more concrete example of expressing *Bunghun* toward teachers is the celebration the honors of teachers called วันไหว้ครู (*Wan wai khruu*) or Teacher Honor Day (January 16th), which is annually held at schools at all levels across the nation.

With this great respect and honor, teachers are given in a superior status; therefore, the students, for example, would hesitate to refuse, argue over, or question subject matter, methods, materials, or instructions that the teachers use. Thus, this leads to the last concept, *Krengjai*, which is practiced by Thai people from all walks of life, not only at school, but also in all aspects of their lives. *Krengjai* is one of the most difficult Thai cultural concepts for Westerners to understand. Komin (1991) defines this concept as: "...to be considerate, to feel reluctant to impose upon another person, to take another person's feelings (and ego) into account, or to take every measure not to cause discomfort or inconvenience for another person" (p. 164). For instance, a *Krengjai* feeling often seems to inhibit Thai students when asking their teacher to repeat an explanation.

Interestingly enough, through the Western point of view, Foley (2005) comments on the

possible negative aspects from unhealthy degree of *Krengjai*, which can result in an apparent lack of initiative, weakness, and subservience.

In sum, one would conclude from these three concepts—*Karma*, *Bunghun*, and *Krengjai* that Thai teachers and students strive to avoid confrontation, competition, and conflict in their everyday lives. Polite speech (accompanied with smiles) facilitates the interaction in the classroom while teachers and students try to minimize hindrances or a potential obstacles to interpersonal harmony.

Negative Effects of the Spread of English

With its phenomenal spread, English apparently serves as a gatekeeper in the international economy, politics, and education. For this reason, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and Phillipson (1992) assert that English has already threatened linguistic diversity, cultural identity, and linguistic human rights. McKay (2002) argues that “the spread of English reduces the role of existing languages, in some cases leading to their eventual extinction” (p. 20). To support her claim, she cites Swerdlow’s study which suggests that a number of languages could drop by half—from 6,000 existing languages to 3,000—by the year 2100. Additionally, McKay (2002) rephrases Krauss’s prediction

The coming century may see the death of 90 per cent of the world’s languages, many from Asian Pacific countries. Although not all of these languages are being replaced by English, there are many instances where it is replacing the mother tongue of a speech community. (p. 20)

As English is one of the crucial instances of one language threatening other world existing languages, this situation is called “linguistic imperialism.” This term describes a situation in which “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the

establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47). Such inequalities are maintained by a small group of English-speaking local elites who have selfishly perpetuated the same policy of the former colonizers by “using access to English language education as a crucial distributor of social prestige and wealth” (Pennycook, 1995, p. 40). Thus, in such a country, as Ngũgĩ (1985) passionately puts it in the case of Kenya

[N]obody could go on to wear the undergraduate red gown, no matter how brilliantly they had performed in all the papers in all other subjects, unless they had a *credit* (not even a simple pass!) in English. Thus the most coveted English-language credit card. English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom. (p. 115)

McKay (2002) raises a similar observation that people from all walks of life lose their linguistic heritage not because they want to become bilingual or “have a love [of the English language but because] they want access to such things as scientific and technological information, global economic trade, and higher education” (p. 21).

Adding to this, she further argues that a negative view of non-western cultures has been established in relation to the spread of English and cultural identity. It is in this relationship that the spread of English as an instrument in promoting colonialism and devaluing non-western cultures has become apparent. Ngũgĩ (1986) asserts a crucial assumption in his book *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* that English has spread through colonialism because it “was...the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and the world” (p. 16). In the past,

this cultural control had been fueled by colonial powers in striving to devalue the local culture and replace the local language with that of the colonizer. Sharing the same orientation, Kubota (1998) points out this cultural control in Japan by suggesting that a negative view of non-westerners is promoted not by colonialism but by English teaching itself, especially English textbooks. Language, culture, race, and the ethnicity of the NSs of English are always represented as being superior to that of NNSs. In contrast, Lummis (as cited in Kubota, 1998) argues that the negative aspects of a native-speaking society, (e.g., poverty, crime, illiteracy, and racism in the United States) are rarely brought up in English classes. Hence, Nakamura (as cited in Kubota, 1998) argues that “by learning English, Japanese have internalized such Anglo-Saxon views of the world ... English has thus become eyeglasses through which the Japanese have viewed other ethnic groups, particularly minorities” (p. 298).

Finally, the spread of English creates a strong relationship between economic wealth and proficiency in the language. Once again, McKay (2002) pinpoints that “in many countries around the world English is being learned only by those who can afford instruction in it. Not being able to afford such instruction can close many doors, particularly with regard to accessing higher education” (p. 24). Pennycook (1995) raises a similar issue, that English acts “as a gatekeeper to positions of wealth and prestige both within and between nations, and is the language through which much of the unequal distribution of wealth, resources, and knowledge operates” (p. 54).

Taking a closer examination, English and English language teaching maintain their roles as gatekeepers and maintainers of unequal power relationships (Canagarajah, 1999b, 2002a, 2002b; Holliday, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2003b, 2006a; Pennycook, 1995,

1998, 1999; Phillipson, 1992; Qiang & Wolff, 2005) “between a well-resourced, politically, and economically aggressive colonizing, Western ‘Centre’ and an under-resourced colonized ‘Periphery’” (Holliday, 2005, p. 2). This critical issue will be further elaborated on in the following sections in four interwoven dimensions—scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic.

Colonial Values in the TESOL Field

English language, English language teaching (ELT), empire, and colonialism seem to melt into one and become inseparable. Kumaravadivelu (2006a) argues that “a language takes on colonial coloration when it is used as a tool to serve the cause of empire” (p. 12). Pennycook (1998) asserts that English language teaching theories and practices are derived from European cultures and ideologies, the former colonial powers. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to claim that the colonizing nature of the English language can be clearly evidenced through ELT. Kumaravadivelu (2003b) suggests that, in particular, ELT methods maintain “everything associated with colonial Self and marginalized everything associated with the subaltern Other. In the neocolonial present, as in the colonial past, methods are used to establish the native Self as superior and the non-native Other as inferior” (p. 541). A stronger claim is made by Savage (1997); methods from the *Inner Circle* countries, especially from the U.K., the U.S. and, Australasia, are uncritically transferred and the locals become “unwitting or unaware victims of English linguistic imperialism” (p. 314).

English language and English language teaching apparently promote and maintain a linguistic imperialism as is shown in a multidimensional phenomenon consisting of four inter-related dimensions—scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic. These

dimensions are taken as frameworks to offer watertight, well-researched arguments made by other scholars on how four such dimensions come into play in former colonies. Surprisingly, through a preliminary survey, these aspects to a certain extent exist in some countries that have never been colonized—such as Thailand.

The Scholastic Dimension

From a scholastic dimension, Kumaravadivelu (2003b) explains that a means of marginality in ELT relates to the way in which Western scholars have treated local knowledge(s). Taking the former British colonies, India and China, as examples, Alvares (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2003b) points out that British scholars have not only ignored but also discredited the scientific and technological advances made in these two ancient civilizations. Kumaravadivelu (2003b) further provides Thomas Macaulay's oft-quoted statement cited in Alvares's book to support his argument

... a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia ... It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language [an ancient language of India] is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgment used at preparatory schools in English. (p. 541)

In addition to India, Pennycook (2002) quotes an entry on Chinese education from *An Encyclopedia of Education*, published in New York in 1911, which shares the same notion of discrediting local intellects

There is nothing in the Chinese course of study in the way of mathematics or science, or indeed any line of thought, which will tend to develop the thinking faculties, They have never invented anything. They have stumbled upon

most of the useful, practical appliances of life, and among these are the compass, gunpowder, and printing, and though noted for their commercial astuteness, have lacked all power to develop into a commercial success. (p. 100)

Worse than that, not only is there prejudice against local knowledge, but also racial discrimination is clearly documented in Western publishing. The way Western scholars used to perceive China is “extremely condescending, regarding China as an exotic, backward, only semi-civilized and in some ways rather barbaric country” (Encyclopaedia Britannica as cited in Pennycook, 2002, p. 99). Pennycook (2002) further argues the inhumane description about Chinese people, made by Western scholars, as appeared in *The Popular Encyclopedia*

In thickness of lips, flattened nose, and expanded nostril, they bear a considerable resemblance to the negro. In bodily strength they are far inferior to Europeans ... The Chinese are very deficient in courage. In their moral qualities there is much that is amiable. ... (p. 99)

In such a climate, it is not exaggerated to assume that, like other scholars, English scholars who came to the British territories brought with them similar attitudes toward the local knowledge and people (Pennycook, 1998). Despite the fact that India and China have long been multilingual countries with a rich tradition of learning and teaching L2, colonial scholars show very little interest in gaining more insights into existing local knowledge or experience in language teaching or learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b).

More recently, the marginalization of local knowledge and scholarship are still perpetuated and prevail at the dawn of the 21st century. Canagarajah (2002a) points out the Western hegemony of knowledge, as he notices that local persons and events

involved in a new discovery in the Third World “are eclipsed” (p. 2) by the Western academics and their activities. He notes that hegemony operates through the way in which Western academic institutions appropriate Third World Knowledge in the name of international enterprises; they theorize and interpret any raw data found in the Third World to be granted and published as the accepted stock of Western knowledge. In other words, the consequence of this phenomenon is that the knowledge of the Third World communities is marginalized or appropriated by the West, while the Western knowledge is legitimated and reproduced.

As presented above, much of the discrediting of local knowledge and people is solely based on the perspective from the former colonies; however, this scholastic dimension also exists in non-colonized countries such as Japan, Korea, and Thailand. A preliminary survey of the situation in Thailand suggests that a similar situation may exist there, with local traditions being ignored in an era when English is gaining its importance. It is true that English is the preferred Western language as a L2 and a mandatory school subject in Thailand today. However, English was not the first foreign or additional language in the country; in fact, English is a relative newcomer to the society.

The Portuguese were the very first Europeans to set foot in the Kingdom of Siam (now present day Thailand) in 1511, followed by the French in 1662; Portuguese and French were popular among royalty at that time as languages of trade, religion, and politics. More importantly, Pali, the language of Theravada Buddhism, which originated in India, was for centuries the most important additional language in Thailand. As the language of religious scripts and rituals, “Pali has been highly regarded and is still being

taught in Buddhist educational institutions and universities” (Wongsothorn, 2000, p. 307). However, the way Thai people acquire Pali has never been acknowledged as an appropriate mode of foreign language teaching and learning. Instead, it has been assumed that the grammar translation and rote-memorization methods commonly used in teaching Pali have nothing to do with English language teaching. In grammar-translation classrooms, it is believed that a native language is equivalent for all target languages, and L1 and L2 can facilitate one another (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). This is likely to be a major reason why a majority of applied linguistics from the West has always decried grammar translation in English education. These scholars, instead, support the notion that *appropriate* teaching techniques should not rely on L1, or students’ mother tongues should not be allowed in learning English (Cook, 1999). English is assumed to have its own unique ways of being taught, and only methods from English-speaking Western theorists are to be adopted and used in classrooms. This has a great impact on English education in Thailand as Thais have tended to reject the traditional grammar translation but embrace the audio-lingual and the communicative approach as the most appropriate methods (extensively promoted by the Western theorists). This pattern of ignoring and discrediting the existing linguistic knowledge is further discussed below, and it is one of the goals of this dissertation to explore this situation and document claims for Thailand.

The Linguistic Dimension

The prejudices do not apply only to local races and knowledge but also to the language produced by the local people. Tong (as cited in Pennycook, 2002) argues that the Chinese language was viewed in a negative comparison to the European languages: declaring that “the Chinese language, monosyllabic, isolated, non-inflectional, incapable

of generating prefixes and suffixes, and divided between speech and writing, was very much a primitive form of a linguistic system” (p. 100). Such discrimination seems to prevail not only regarding the language itself but also the literature, as evidenced by this entry in the *New Standard Encyclopedia*, quoted in Brown’s work (as cited in Pennycook, 2002):

With a language so incapable of variation, a literature cannot be produced which possesses the qualities we look for and admire in literary works. Elegance, variety, beauty of imagery—these must all be lacking. A monotonous and wearisome language must give rise to a forced and formal literature lacking in originality and interesting in its subject matter only. (p. 101)

In this connection, when local knowledge, language, and literature were marginalized and devalued, the next logical step was to make such local heritages irrelevant for teaching and learning English. Influenced by Phillipson’s *Linguistic Imperialism*, Kumaravadivelu (2003b) employs his term “monolingual tenet” (p. 542) to refer to this phenomenon. The monolingual tenet “holds that the teaching of English as a foreign or second language should be entirely through the medium of English” (p. 542). In an atmosphere where such a tenet holds, ESL/EFL teachers and learners are discouraged from using their prior linguistic competence to facilitate their L2 teaching and learning. In addition, this mentality tends to empower and privilege NSs of English who do not share the language of their learners. Stated in stark terms, Holliday (2005) argues that “every measure should be taken to ensure that other languages are not allowed to interfere with the learning of English, and that the ‘native-speaker’ is the best person to teach English worldwide” (p. 10).

In a critical examination of the way English native-speaking countries teach foreign languages to their own citizens, such imbalances and inequalities created by the monolingual tenet in ELT become even more obvious. To illustrate, Kumaravadivelu (2003b) rephrases Howatt's arguments that "foreign language teaching in Britain was for a long time based on the grammar-translation method involving bilingual translation of literacy texts"(p. 542). As such, on the other extreme, "the promotion and maintenance of a monolingual approach to language teaching ... become the hallmark which set ELT apart from foreign language teaching in Britain" (p. 542). Closely related to the imbalance and inequality of teaching approaches for foreign language taught in Britain is the ignorance of linguistic heterogeneity in the English language in the United States. Paul Matsuda (2006) discusses "the perpetuation of the myth of linguistic homogeneity" (p. 638) which is the long-term application in teaching English in the United States. This notion, as a result, ignores the presence of English language users of other varieties but solely privileges those who fit the dominant variety of English. In addition, as observed by Kubota (2001), the phenomenal spread of English has offered greater opportunities for native English speakers to interact with other speakers who use different varieties of English. In contrast, on campuses and at workplaces, they are "rarely encouraged to develop the knowledge and skill necessary for intercultural communities, often resulting in a one-way communicative burden imposed on the WE [World Englishes, or other varieties of English] speakers" (p. 47). Thus, it is not too far-fetched to assume that if there is any miscommunication taking place, the speakers of non-mainstream US English often receive the blame or the shame. This can be seen through the following

discriminatory interaction between an Asian convenience store clerk and a middle-class white male worker from the 1993 film, *Falling Down*:

The proprietor, a middle-aged Asian, reads a Korean newspaper ... the Asian has a heavy accent ...

Asian: eighdy fie sen.

D-Fens: What?

Asian: eithdy fie sen.

D-Fens: I can't understand you ... I'm not paying eighty-five cents for a stinking soda. I'll give a quarter. You give me seventy "fie" cents back for the phone ... What is a fie? There's a "V" in the word. Fie-vuh. Don't they have "v's" in China?

Asian: Not Chinese, I am Korean.

D-Fens: Whatever. What difference does that make? You come over here and take my money and you don't even have the grace to learn to speak my language ... (Lippi-Green, 1997, pp. 101-102)

In close relation, the force that perpetuates the monolingual tenet/linguistic homogeneity and its proliferation is Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which has a great impact on how to teach ELT is taught elsewhere around the globe. However, "... most SLA research to date has suffered from [such] a monolingual bias" (Y. Kachru, 1994, p. 798). Many recent publications point out, most of the Western Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies fail to extensively explore what it is like to learn a second language in a bi/multilingual environment (Atkinson, 2002; Block, 2003; Canagarajah, 1999a, 1999b; Cook, 1999; A. Firth & Wagner, 1998; Kramsch, 2000;

Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Pennycook, 1999; Yates & Muchisky, 2003). Mainstream works in SLA are limited because they “locate the process of learning solely in the psychological domain, without taking into account the social, economic, cultural, political, or physical domains in which language learning takes place ...” (Pennycook, 1999, p. 331). Such studies clearly point out the incapability of capturing the complexity of language, the language learners, and the processes of language learning. Without considering learners’ prior linguistic knowledge and resources, SLA theories coming from the West have tended to fail to offer a complete understanding of the psychosociolinguistic and cultural factors that play their roles in acquiring a target language. Additionally, one of the major problems is that many SLA studies, particularly as conducted in language classrooms, are characterized by cultural stereotypes (Kumaravadivelu, 2003c). Similarly, following Canagarajah’s *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*, Okasaki (2005) adds comments on the cultural limitations of mainstream SLA research

SLA researchers view classrooms as detached from larger historical and social conditions, and the targets and stages of learning are also made narrower and clearer to provide a convenient means of measuring pedagogical progress. Yet these process results are likely to be over-simplified and possibly distorted. (p. 175)

To illustrate, it is typical in mainstream SLA research to set English as a foreign language in Germany and Japan in the same categories (Block, 2003). Block (2003) further elaborates that these two EFL contexts are significantly different in terms of their socio-historical, geographical, mythological, and linguistic backgrounds. Each context

needs to be separately defined. He says, “Germany is portrayed as a context where the rationale for studying English is to use it as a *lingua franca* to communicate with fellow Europeans who do not speak German” (p. 48). In contrast to this, in Japan, “learning English is seen as part of *kokusaika* (internationalization), as a way of communicating with the ‘West’, and its existence in the national curriculum therefore is tied up with more abstract questions of national identity and Japan’s place in the world” (p. 49). This clearly suggests that teaching English in these two countries needs a different set of goals and approaches.

Without giving enough attention to socio-cultural and socio-political forces, Kumaravadivelu (2003b) concludes that “[ELT] methods [developed from such mainstream SLA theories] that are manufactured and marketed as usable in *all* learning/teaching contexts cannot be useful to *any* language/teaching context” (p. 544). This argument may identify the reason why the application of well-researched methods from the West has always tended to fail in Thailand (Foley, 2005), and why these methods do not fit into local ELT contexts around the world. For instance, one example involves how Thailand has been switching from one method to another from grammar-translation to audio-lingual, from audio-lingual to communicative, and from communicative to functional-communicative. This progress indicates that an old method has been replaced by a new one because of its seeming failure in promoting language competence among local learners (Canagarajah, 2002b; Cook, 1999; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 2003b; Leung, 2005).

A crucial point made by these scholars is that, for some people, the Thai experience in adopting systems developed in the West has been a matter of uncritical

acceptance, rather than implementing policies or methods based on sound research and critical reflection. Likewise, Thailand is not a special case but elsewhere, such as in Vietnam; “Vietnam’s teachers of English attach great status to materials and methods developed by Inner Circle applied linguists, even though these may not be appropriate for Vietnamese conditions” (Denham, 1992, p. 61). As mentioned earlier in the scholastic dimension, Canagarajah (2002) points out that local knowledge and scholars are always eclipsed by Western knowledge and scholars with their extensive publishing and academic networks. This climate creates the Western hegemony of knowledge in which all the knowledge—no matter who originally discovers it or where it is originally discovered—has to be *appropriated* by Western scholars. Hence, Canagarajah (2002b) and Okasaki (2005) argue that the local researchers, educators, and teachers seem to unwittingly and uncritically adopt Western policies or methods because they are trapped into the marketing strategies heavily invested by Western dominated scholarship. As Okasaki (2005) puts it:

These language teaching methods have generally been developed through cognitive research using statistical analyses and popularized globally by publishing networks such as academic journals and textbooks as well as academic institutions, which include teaching training programs and professional organizations. It is not surprising that many teachers believe that SLA-promoted methods are the most effective, efficient, and authoritative for their classrooms. (p. 176)

Furthermore, a worse scenario can be foreseen apart from hegemony of knowledge. English has long been privileged in many former colonies. It has already

replaced the local community languages and destroyed the linguistic diversity in some multilingual colonized countries, such as India, which has approximately 3,000 mother tongues (Joseph & Ramani, 1998). Because the English language gives power to its speakers. If those colonized people want their *voice* to be heard, they have to speak English. To be accepted into a place, they have to *sound* like the British. They gradually embrace English as a tool for survival and, later on, as a medium for communal and domestic communication.

It is evident that English has a privileged status. Thus, it is not surprising that “Nigerians in many parts of that country, contested the use of indigenous languages in the schools because it was perceived as denying them the linguistic capital necessary for the accumulation of both economic and political powers” (Bhatt, 2001, p. 533). In Singapore, Gopinathan (1998) claims that English has increasingly served as the principle language in domestic fields. Also, taking Chew’s observation as a base, McKay (2002) further elaborates the point that “some Singaporeans are concerned that widespread adoption of English [at home] will lead to a loss of ethnic identity and Asian values ...” (p. 21). Being aware of this issue, however, Singaporean parents are more concerned that their children may not be able to fully participate or will be marginalized in the world if they are perceived to have deficient language performance. Further, parents fear that children might become disadvantaged in gaining access to the resources which are now, extensively, available in English. Additionally, though Singaporeans have appropriated or nativized English, it is much more preferable for them to employ the dominant variety of English, not Singlish, their variety of local English. The public speech on radio broadcasts made by the former Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew (as cited in Davies,

Hamp-Lyons, & Kemp, 2003) clearly represents Singaporeans' attitudes toward English: "Singlish is a handicap we must not wish on Singaporeans" (p. 575).

With its communicational dominance, English has long been privileged not only in Nigeria and Singapore, but also in Thailand. As in those former British colonies, English has already been related to the issue of language loss in the country. Seliger (1996) defines this issue as

The loss of aspects of a previously fully acquired primary language resulting from the acquisition of another language ... as reflected in a speaker's performance or in his or her inability to make grammatically judgments that would be constant with native speaker (NS) monolinguals at the same age and stage of language development. (pp. 605-606)

In recent decades, Thai parents have worked very hard to send their children to bilingual or international schools where English is preferred and privileged over their mother tongue so that their Thai (both spoken and written) performance has gradually eroded. A great number of Thai students who have been educated in English-speaking countries have also shown considerable evidence in the loss of their native tongue. However, this is not only the case for those who have been extensively exposed to Anglo-American language and culture. Students' Thai competence across the nation seems to have dramatically declined in recent years. The music industry, pop culture, cable television, and Hollywood movies from the United States in particular have played a major role in accelerating the language loss issue. Sharing this concern, Bamgbose (2001), a celebrated Nigerian professor, has observed how American English and American culture have a great impact on the local broadcasting and media

I happened to tune in to a FM radio station in Lagos [the most populous conurbation in Nigeria], and the way the D-J was carrying on with his American accent and Americanisms, I could not believe that it was an African station. Even names in Nigerian languages were not spared as they were pronounced as if by a foreigner. (p. 359)

What is happening in the other parts of the globe demonstrates no differences from Bamgbose's observation, but in fact many have similarities with what is taking place in Thailand. The subtle form of language loss issue has become one of the major items on the national news and agenda in Thailand (Bangkok Biz news, 2007; Kom Chad Luek, 2007b) issues such as code-mixing between Thai and English and speaking Thai with English accents have become areas of concern. The government recently set up a new agency to be in charge of the issue and to make sure that the Thai linguistic/cultural heritage will survive against the threat of English (Kom Chad Luek, 2007a). However, this has not yet come to be the major focus of the ELT circle in the country.

The Cultural Dimension

The cultural dimension is closely linked to the preceding linguistic discussion. When the local language and literature are marginalized, the native-speaking cultures have always been the major focus on learning and teaching English. This is represented through the story of Yan Guo, a graduate student from China, who attended English literature classes in Canada. In one of her essays, she quoted a famous Chinese writer, Mao Dun, to underline the "preconditions of creative writing" (Guo, 2006, p. 216). Guo writes: "Only when you are as humble as bamboo, as perseverant as cattlehide, as passionate as fire, then you will be able to create a true art" (Guo, 2006, p. 216). Her

professor, Dr. Smith, questioned the connection between humbleness and bamboo. No matter how hard she tried to explain the concept of her Chinese cultural heritage as it appeared in her writing, Smith dismissed her explanations and asked her to write a metaphor that *English readers* would understand. Even though Smith did not state directly what comprised the particular group of English readers to which he referred, it could be said that Guo had been required to adopt new Western cultural heritage in her writing and to put aside her cultural identity.

Another example is discussed by Hayward (2004); she points out that Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, and Thai students “approach a topic from a variety of viewpoints in order to examine it indirectly, a process, that indicates, to them, careful thinking” (p. 7). However, “To a U.S.—trained [writing] tutor, [the rhetoric of their cultures] might indicate lack of focus or indecisiveness” (p. 7). Therefore, it is not uncommon that these Asian students are trained to give up their cultural heritage in writing and adopt the dominant English rhetoric commonly acceptable in US and British schooling systems.

These examples can clearly be explained through the notion of marginalization in ELT by Kumaravadivelu (2003b). Influenced by Stern’s work in 1992, Kumaravadivelu claims that the core of culture teaching aims at helping L2 learners to gain an understanding of the NS’s perspective. He claims that ELT pays attention to making L2 learners “becom[e] sensitive to the state of mind of individuals and groups within the target language community ...” (p. 543). In other words, what teachers are trying to do is to help the learner “create a network of mental associations similar to those which the items evoke in the native speaker” (p. 543). Holliday (2005) points out a similar idea in his discussion of “the residues of audiolingualism” (p. 45) which serves as a means of

pressuring the native-speaking teachers into a kind of behaviorist training mindset: the idea that *we* have to make *them* think like *us*. Taking Japanese learners of English as a case study, Nakamura (as cited in Kubota, 1998, p. 298) claims that “by learning English, the Japanese have internalized ... Anglo-Saxon views of the world ...” (p. 298). Hence, it is not an exaggeration to claim that the core of culture teaching is just to promote a communicative ability appropriate for “the specific purpose of culturally empathizing if not culturally assimilating, with NSs of English” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b, p. 543). In that case, the voices of both non-native learners and teachers and their cultural identities are completely ignored in the learning process. Clearly, both the linguistic dimension—which focuses on monolingualism—and the cultural dimension—which focuses on monoculturalism—aim at maintaining the benefits of the NSs of English.

One of the teaching methods that have been very popular for decades in Thailand is the communicative approach. From my experience as a language learner and teacher, this approach values the native-English speaking culture as an important aspect in communication. To acquire communicative competence, the everyday lifestyles of English-speaking people have to be integrated with language forms, meanings, and functions. Teachers insist on “conformity to native-speaker norms” (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004, p. 361) and evaluate students against “the idealized native-speaker model” (Leung, 2005, p. 139). The students struggle to reach goals “which are both unrealistic and unnecessary [and the teachers make them] subservient and prevent them from appropriating the language” (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004, p. 361). In this approach, Thai teachers of English centralize their instruction to favor NSs; however, they marginalize students’ voices and identities.

The Economic Dimension

From a historical perspective, Young (2001) states that the primary focus of colonization is not on transposing cultural values. This cultural effect of colonization is just a by-product. He further claims that the real objective is to promote the advantage of trade, economic exploitation and settlement. Hence, the three dimensions (scholastic, linguistic, and cultural dimensions) as discussed above “are linked to a vitally important economic dimension that adds jobs and wealth to the economy of English-speaking countries through a worldwide ELT industry” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a, p. 12).

Denham (1992) observes that ELT is an export commodity making great earnings for the “the big players ... Britain and the USA [while] Canadian, Australian and New Zealand variants are not in the big league” (p. 67). On the surface, it seems that these two players “offer considerable English language teaching assistance [however, it is critical to note that] the export of English language teaching materials is a major income earner” (p. 67). Toh (2003) adds a critical point that “the words ‘assistance’ and ‘export’ are at once uttered in the same breath” (p. 554). Bhatt (2001) asserts that such *assistance* has long been exercised through ELT agencies of “linguistic coercion” (p. 532) such as the British Council and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) organizations which perpetuate linguistic imperialism in nonnative countries around the globe.

In order to keep the *assistance* and *export* cycle going, Canagarajah (2002b) argues that new ELT methods or sometimes the same methods, have always been initiated and marketed under different brand labels in order to perpetuate the demand for these products. Business goes hand in hand with language teaching experts from

technologically and economically developed countries of the West (or center) who “hail the new methods in various media as the most advanced, revolutionary, or successful yet constructed” (Canagarajah, 2002b, p. 135). He adds that these methods are promoted as being conducted under “sophisticated research with hi-tech facilities and then popularizing the knowledge globally through their publishing networks and academic intuitions” (p. 135). Therefore, many teachers and institutions in less developed nations (or peripheries) have to spend more of their limited resources to purchase the *export* of new teaching materials from the West. However, like Bhatt’s (2001) comment, to learn to use these, those on the periphery have to spend more resources to acquire *assistance* from agencies or center experts to set up a training program for their local teachers. In this climate, the worldwide ELT industry, dominated as it is by the interests of the West, works hard to guarantee that “the fountainhead of global employment opportunities [and wealth] for native speakers of English does not dry up any time soon” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b, p. 543).

In terms of language teaching positions, Bamgbose (2001) also argues that such job opportunities are not open to all speakers, but solely suited to the NSs of English from the center *Inner Circle*. Surprisingly, the case he uses to support the argument is not from the former British colonies, but from Thailand itself, which takes pride in being recognized as *a non-colonized nation*. As Bambose (2001) highlights it:

... a so-called “Global English School” in Thailand boasts on its Internet home page that “All of our English teachers *are native speakers, teaching natural English as it is spoken in real conversation*” If care is not taken old dogmas

may be revived and “linguistic imperialism” ... will be resurrected with the commercialization of English. (p. 360)

Compared to non-native teachers of English, not only do the NSs from the center, or *Inner Circle*, have a greater number of job opportunities open to them, but they also have a greater advantage in teaching positions. Thus, the monolingual and native speaker tenets create strong stereotypes. This can be seen through the employment section in the press in Thailand. Local employers of language schools are likely to view any NS of English as more qualified than local NNSs in terms of academic competence and professional performance. Hence, a job applicant who is thought of as a *native speaker* from the Inner Circle is very likely to be more successful in getting a better-paying teaching position and fringe benefits in the country, even if this speaker has little or no pedagogical training (Jenkins, 2006), and may not even speak a dominant standard variety or a so-called “variety of English preferably spoken by well-educated Anglo speakers.”

Kumaravadivelu (2003b) claims that English language has played a crucial role in maintaining the imbalances and inequalities in employments and wealth opportunities in the United Kingdom and the United States. These two nations promote job opportunities for their own citizens but limit the opportunities for others by educating them with “enough English” to perform adequately in minimum job-wage. This can be observed through the English language education for NNSs provided by these two nations. In the colonial period, Pennycook (as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2003b) claims that textbooks were designed to give the Indians just adequate English language skills “to produce clerks to run the colonial system” (p. 541). Hence, with such limited language skills, it

was almost inconceivable that the Indians would be able to be promoted to a higher position and the chances of having a job in Britain were dramatically slim. This phenomenon seems to prevail in the beginning of the globalization era. Tollefson (1986) reports theoretical and practical problems of English language programs for immigrants provided at US refugee camps in Phanat Nikhom, Thailand; Galang, Indonesia; and Batann, the Philippines before they emigrate to the United States. He makes a very shocking argument that English competencies taught at those camps only “encourage refugees to consider themselves fortunate to find minimum-wage employment, regardless of their previous education” (p. 656). It appears the US government wants to ensure that these immigrants will only have enough English to be eligible for “minimum-wage jobs while avoiding any welfare dependency, yet not enough [language skills] to move beyond these levels of employment” (Pennycook, 1989, p. 593).

In summary, English and ELT worldwide have long been colorized by colonial values which can be clearly observed through scholastic, linguistic, cultural and economic lenses. The scholastic dimension comes into play in the way that Western scholars have invested their own vested interests by distributing Western but degrading local scholarship and wisdom. The relevance of the linguistic dimension become apparent through the established notion that the local knowledge of L2 learning and the use of local language are irrelevant to the English language and can therefore interfere with the acquisition of English. The cultural dimension integrates the ideology that the understanding of the NS’s culture and perspective is essential to help the L2 learners learn and use English properly. These three dimensions have a strong connection to the

economic dimension which provides an advantage in employment and wealth for Inner-Circle nations but maintains a disadvantage in other English-using countries.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the procedures used in conducting this research. The emphasis is on qualitative methodology. Descriptive statistics is also collected as data through a questionnaire on background experience and attitudes. This mixed design is chosen as the best means of addressing the research questions outlined in Chapter One. Precedent for the use of this type of design comes from studies such as that of Holliday (2005), A. Matsuda (2003b), Kubota (2001), and Kubota (1998).

Research Questions

The major purpose of the study is to investigate and analyze the perceptions prevalent in the discourse community of English teachers in Thailand regarding the role of English and English teaching in the country. In particular, it is important to determine to what extent these perceptions show characteristics of *de facto* colonialism in the local ELT context, which consist of four inter-related dimension – scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic. These interwoven aspects lend themselves to four research questions. As stated earlier in Chapter One, they are repeated here:

1. Scholastic dimension: How do Thai EFL teachers perceive the relative value of Thai scholarship and wisdom as compared with scholarship by English native-speakers?
2. Linguistic dimension: What varieties of English are highly valued by Thai teachers? Do these teachers perceive that Thai students will be better English users if they conform to the norms of native speakers, or do they favor local or global varieties? What reasons do they give for their responses?

3. Cultural dimension: What are Thai EFL teachers' assumptions on cultural teaching and input in English classrooms judging from the teachers' own statements? What cultures do they claim are given priority in their instruction? Do they seem to assume that Thai students will learn English better if they know Western native-speakers' culture?
4. Economic dimension: How do Thai EFL teachers perceive hiring practices at their institution? Do these perceptions indicate that native speakers are preferably given better job opportunities and prestigious status in Thailand?

Overview of the Methodology

The data collection instruments will be:

- A questionnaire;
- E-mail interviews;
- Identification and analysis of job announcements

The Qualitative Paradigm

With its rich and deep description in data gathering, qualitative research is regarded as a suitable approach to answer research questions of the type that guide the present study. This research approach has helped the researcher gain insight into the belief system of locally practicing teachers. Further, it has increased the researcher's understanding of attitudes toward the role of English in their lives and societies and the discourse of ELT and ELT-related documents representing the landscape of English and English education in Thailand. In the following sections, it is important to define the qualitative method used, discuss its characteristics, and to provide the rationale for choosing this approach.

Definitions and Characteristics of Qualitative Method

Qualitative research employs a range of different methods, perspectives and approaches to social interaction, which aims at describing, making sense of, interpreting, or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that are subject to it. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) further elaborate it as follows

Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case study, personal experience, introspective, life story interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives. (p. 44)

Cresswell (1994) echoes the nature of qualitative research:

[Qualitative research] is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducts in a natural setting. (pp. 1-2)

In sum, a qualitative approach emphasizes negotiated construction of meaning rather than determination of causation or the investigation of any single influence on a given situation. Mackey and Gass (2005), offer the following guiding key assumptions shared by most qualitative methods.

- *Rich description*: The aim of qualitative researchers often involves the provision of careful and detailed descriptions as opposed to the quantification of data through measurements, frequencies, scores, and ratings.
- *Natural and holistic representation*: Rather than attempting to control contextual factors through the use of laboratories, or artificial environments, qualitative researchers aim to study individuals and events in their natural settings.
- *Emic perspective*: Unlike etic perspective commonly used in quantitative studies, qualitative researchers adopt an emic perspective which aim at interpreting phenomena in terms of the meaning people attach to them.
- *Cyclical and open-ended processes*: While quantitative research usually begins with a carefully defined research question that guides the process of data collection and analysis, qualitative research is often process-oriented, or open ended, with categories that emerge.
- *Possible ideological orientations*: Whereas most quantitative researchers consider impartiality to be a goal of their research, some qualitative researchers may consciously take ideological positions.

The nature and characteristics of the qualitative approach as presented above are well suited to the present study, where the goal is to explore beliefs, statements, and practices prevalent in Thailand regarding the role of English and English teaching in the country. Such beliefs, statements, and practices take place in one particular complex context, and the claim being explored here involves the interpretation of the data gathered in the light of broader ideological considerations. Given the subtlety of the questions

being asked and the interpretation needed, the qualitative approach is best suited to this study, as it seeks to understand phenomena in terms of its whole context (Hoepfl, 1997; Maxwell, 1996) because it “has an interpretative character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them, and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 49). More elaborated rationale for choosing the qualitative paradigm is presented in the following section.

Rationale for the Choice of the Qualitative Method

Qualitative and ethnographic approaches seem to have lost favor in higher policy circles. Policy makers have shown more trust in the scientific approach since it could provide them with “‘systematic reviews’, ‘rigor’, and ‘evidence-based policies’” (Street, 2003, p. 86). As Street (2003) observes:

Despite the willingness of DFID [Department for International Development] to fund such imaginative approaches to literacy work overseas, in the UK itself as in the U.S.A., the qualitative and ethnographic–style work that characterizes NLS [New Literacy Studies] and underpins such as an approach is currently out of fashion in higher policy circles. ... In both the U.K. and U.S.A., governments and their agencies are insisting that funding will only be permitted on the basis that programs and the research on which they are based can be proven to be “scientific” (pp. 85-86).

However, when dealing with people’s perception, attitudes or beliefs, it is unmanageable and needs to go beyond the numbers which only capture the superficial, generalizing, surface of the truth hidden inside (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). As they illustrate: “people may have different conceptions of fairness, happiness, or religious

belief. ... Two respondents may answer 'yes' to a question, but mean different things" (p. 24). Dilts (1999) defines beliefs as judgments and evaluations that people make about themselves, about others and about the world around them. However, despite this seemingly simple definition, and despite the fact that beliefs are considered to be the most valuable psychological construct in teacher education (Pintrich, 1990), studies aiming at understanding beliefs have been scarce. This is because beliefs are in fact difficult to conceptualize. They are not uniformed and precise. They cannot be predicted or explained in a series of statistical equations. Pajares (1992) views belief as a "messy construct" (p. 307) consisting of different notions in a complex cluster. Murphy (2000) provides a succinct definition for such messy construct

[Teachers' beliefs serve as the representation of] a complex and inter-related system of personal and professional knowledge that serves as implicit theories and cognitive maps for experiencing and responding to reality. Beliefs rely on cognitive and affective components and are often tacitly held. (p. 4)

Additionally, Richards (1998) defines teachers' beliefs as "the information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers build up over time and bring with them to the classroom" (p. 66). As teachers' beliefs are interwoven with multi-dimensions (Murphy, 2000) and are constantly changing (Richards, 1998), it can be very problematic to measure beliefs with statistical precision. This is because researchers seem unable to seek general rules about beliefs among people, and further cannot to discover subtleties or unusual cases.

Closely related to teachers' beliefs, one major part of the context being explored involves expectations from the school, parents, the government and the local society

(Kindsvatter, Willen, & Ishler, 1988; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). It is important to remember that expectations from parents, the government, and the general society also play a role in determining the phenomena that are at the base of the present study. That is, the teachers' attitudes being measured here are only one part of a complex picture in the society as a whole. Within a school, an institution or a community, ELT theories and practices (certain varieties of English, ELT teaching styles or methods, and ELT teaching materials) may be preferred than others.

In keeping with the ideas of critical theory, Dean (1994) proposes the notion which he calls a *problematizing* practice. He defines the term as a critical practice because “it is unwilling to accept the taken-for-granted components of our reality and the ‘official’ accounts of how they came to be the way they are” (p. 4). As observed by Holliday (2005), such ELT theories and practices are likely to maintain the unequal power relationships and inequities “between a well-resourced, politically and economically aggressive colonizing, Western ‘Centre’ and an under-resourced, colonized ‘Periphery’” (p. 2). Hence, it is not exaggerated to claim that English language teaching is essentially political. He further argues that the political bias that comes with ELT is about influence and the influential. However, political bias itself does not have the power to influence people or construct the society, only its discourse. The discourse acts as the pursuit and maintenance of the power and inequities. Atkins (2002) depicts the essence of the discourse as

Overt/extreme political bias is relatively easy to identify, perhaps because of its sound and fury, but there is however a much more sinister and intangible form of politically tainted language which is potentially more dangerous to the fabric of

society. It is sinister because it is generally undetected and comes from those in power. It has the effect of conditioning recipients' attitudes and expectations, furthering social inequity and keeping *us* in our proper stations. The strategy of 'keeping *us* in our proper stations' is the discourse. Stubbs ... comments on this phenomenon: 'if people and things are repeatedly talked about in certain ways, then there is a good chance that this will affect how they are thought of'.(p. 2)

The strategy of 'keeping *us* in our proper stations' is to *naturalize* discourses, "that is, to make discourses appear to be commonsense, apolitical statements" (Riggins, 1997, p. 2). In order to make the underlined relationships between discourse and social power issue become clear to people, the discourse of ELT documents needs to be investigated equally along with teachers' beliefs. Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach aims at going beyond or deeper than the surface of the discourse which seems to be taken for granted. It can provide a description, explanation, and critique of such textual strategies that the one in power use to naturalize discourse. The approach allows me as an investigator to *denaturalize* such ideas by showing the processes through which the discourse has been (re)shaped and how it affects and is affected by ELT structures in the local context.

With the constraints of quantitative orientation, the qualitative method serves the purpose of this study, and is the best approach to answer the research questions. Based on the purpose of the study, research questions, and promises of qualitative approach, a more specific methodology is designed and described in the sections that follow.

Design of the Study

Setting

The study was conducted in the spring and summer of 2008 at three public universities and 11 secondary schools located in the lower part of the northern region of the country, commonly known among Thais as the lower-northern region. The names of the chosen sites are as follows:

- In Pitsanulok province
 - Naresuan University
 - Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University
 - Pitsanulokpittayakom Secondary School
 - Chalermkwansatree Secondary School
- In Uttaradit province
 - Uttaradit Rajabhat University
 - Uttaradit Secondary School
- In Sukhothai province
 - Sawanananwitaya Secondary School
 - Muangchaliang Secondary School
 - Sukhothaiwitayakom Secondary School
 - Udomdarunee Secondary School
 - Kongkailaswitaya Secondary School
 - Srisomrongchanupathum Secondary School
 - Muangdongwitaya Secondary School
 - Sport Science Education Special School, Sukhothai Campus

At the time this study was conducted, the total population of the northern region was approximately 12.36 million (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2009). The socioeconomic status of the population in this district ranges from the poor to the upper-middle class. The region is comprised mostly with agricultural-based villages and towns, and business-based large cities that host major universities, namely Phitsanulok and Uttaradit. Most of the teachers and students are originally from this region. Although, the vast majority of the population living in this region is ethnically Thai and Buddhist, the region has a significant number of minority groups including Chinese, Muslims, Laos, and assorted hill tribes (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2004).

I chose these secondary schools and universities because their English faculty represented typical Thai English teachers, and worked under similar mandates and guidelines, while representing a range both geographically and in terms of levels of instruction. Thus, no particular area needs to be singled out as different in a study such as this one, despite the fact that some areas, such as the capital, may offer greater access to English instruction. Further, my four years of experience teaching at Naresuan University in Phitsanulok province and cooperating with the local K-12 teachers have given me a partial ‘insider’s perspective,’ which assisted me in establishing a relationship with this group of participants.

Naresuan University where I have been working as a tenured instructor of English was established to serve as a foundation of higher education and as a force promoting literacy in the lower northern region of Thailand (Naresuan University, 2008). Approximately 70 percent of the undergraduate students have graduated from public high

schools in this region. In addition, one of the important missions of the university is to provide academic services to the regional K-12 teachers. The English Department in the Faculty of Humanities has long provided the teachers of English with academic degrees, training, conferences, and resources. As we have shared interests, goals, ideas, and events together in the discipline in promoting language competence, social literacy, and traditional morality among students, we have tried to build up a network and connection to strengthen our “Thought Collectives” (Fleck, 1981, p. 44; Ramanathan, 2002, p. 187) in the region. This was one of the reasons why I chose the site and why my study will contribute new knowledge and awareness in the TESOL community in the region.

Participants

There were 108 local teachers who participated in this study by returning questionnaires with signed consent forms. All of these teacher participants were L2 in-service teachers of English. Eighty-five percent of the participants were female and 15 percent were male. Almost half of the participants held a MA (48.59%) as their highest degree, while the remaining 44.85% and 6.54% held a MA and PhD degree, respectively. The teachers varied greatly in terms of age and the length of their teaching experience. However, there was one participant who did not provide her personal background. Figure 3 and Figure 4 present the breakdown of the participants by age and the length of their teaching experience.

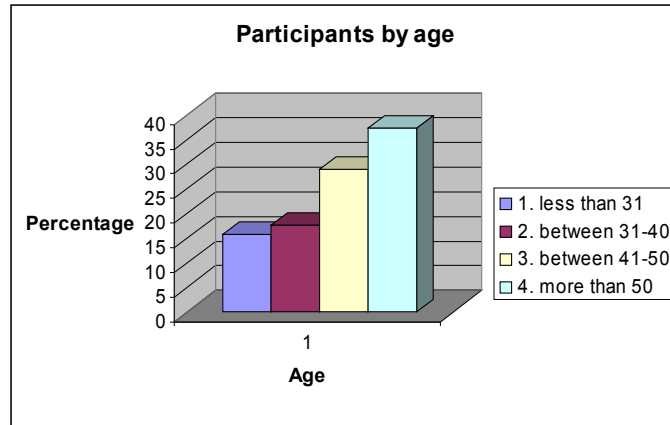


Figure 3. Participants by age.

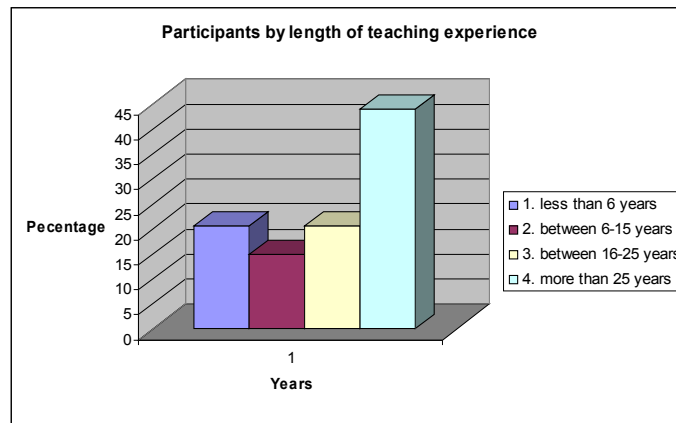


Figure 4. Participants by the length of teaching experience.

Selection of Participants

Nineteen participants actually took part in the in-depth e-mail interview from the total number of proposed subjects of the study. Among the total of 202 questionnaires distributed, I received 120 returned questionnaires. One-hundred-and-eight participants returned the questionnaires with signed consent forms (while the 12 did not sign the form). Forty-six teachers showed their interest in participating in-depth e-mail interview by providing their consent and e-mail address. However, two e-mail accounts were not activated, and the interview questions could not be delivered. The rest were active;

however, three informed the researcher of their internet inaccessibility and later withdrew from the study. The majority did not reply to the interview questions.

Instruments of Data Collection

Data were collected from two sources using different collection methods over the period of six months. The instruments were a questionnaire and electronic (e-mail) interviews.

Questionnaire

In this study, the questionnaire was designed to provide basic background, and descriptive data to identify the teachers' beliefs regarding the role of English in their own lives and in their societies, and to determine to what extent their beliefs showed any relation to colonial values in the local ELT context in Thailand. I used the participants' data and the consent provided in their returned questionnaire to continue conducting e-mail interviews; I also used the received data as a basis for the content of the interview questions.

As I work as a government officer in a public university, administered and financially supported by the government, there is much bureaucracy to submit the research proposal for approval. After the Naresuan University committee approved the research topic, my institution granted me permission, together with assistance, to conduct the study. Hence, two-hundred and two copies of the questionnaire were distributed under the name of the public institution where I work. The questionnaire consisted of a series of questions and other prompts including demographic data, attitudes of English language and English-speaking countries, and the perceptions of English language teaching and learning. There were fifteen questions in total: ten were open-ended, and

five were in a Likert-scale format. The questionnaire was in both English and teachers' mother tongue, Thai. I allowed the participants to answer the questions in either English or Thai according to their own preference. (See Appendix 1 for a complete questionnaire.)

Electronic (e-mail) Interviews

Interviews were chosen as a tool for gathering data because it could open doors for the researcher to “understand experiences and reconstruction events in which [the researcher] did not participate” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 3). Rubin and Rubin (2005) argue that, through the purposeful interaction “in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion” (p. 4), interviews reach across age, occupation, class, race, sex and geographical boundaries and bring different persons and personalities together. This could be achieved through interview questions which could be designed to find out more about the interviewee's background, reported behavior, attitudes, and beliefs (McKay, 2006b). Adding to this, as mentioned earlier, beliefs are difficult in the way that they are unlikely to be observed directly. Interviews serve as the best approach “to allow researchers to investigate phenomena that are not directly observable” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173). The interview not only reveals “an empathic way, the lived experience of the person or group being studied” (McLeod, 1994, p. 89), but is also “invaluable in helping to determine the precise direction of future phases of the research” (Jenkins, 2005, p. 535).

The type of interview that was employed in this study was the *standardized open-ended interview*. This type of interview is highly structured and researchers usually asked an identical set of questions of all respondents with the exact wording and ordering

the questions (Mackey & Gass, 2005; McKay, 2006b). Despite the inflexibility, the data gathered from the interview are comparable, and the process in analyzing the data is relatively convenient and generalized (McKay, 2006b).

I interviewed all of the participants via electronic (e-mail) interview as this gave participants a chance to provide well-thought-out answers rather than top-of-the-head responses (Hunt & McHale, 2007). Meho (2006) shares the view that the quality of response gained through e-mail interviews is richer and higher than telephone and face-to-face interviews. Hunt and McHale (2007), together with Meho (2006), further claim that, compared to the traditional methods, the cost is far cheaper, the range and number of participants is wider and larger, and the environment is more relaxed and friendlier in the e-mail interviews. Adding to their argument, email interviewing does not require the laborious process of transcription; the email texts can provide data directly.

The participants in the e-mail interview research were asked to take part in the study only after they provided their consent, which was given to the researcher by returning a signed form along with their response in the questionnaire. Prior to their interviews, participants received background and detailed information about the research in which they were asked to participate to ensure their understanding of what participation would entail including any possible risk. The informed consent provided each participant with following statements on a written consent form.

- Confidentiality of teacher identity

Neither their school directors, their university presidents, their faculty deans, nor their colleagues knew which teachers participated in this research study unless they chose to reveal their own participation.

- Anonymity within dissertation text

Teachers could indicate at any time that they preferred their comments not be used in the dissertation text. Teacher participants would be identified only by a pseudonym if quoted.

- Clear explanation of goals of this research

All participants were clearly informed that the goal of this study was to explore the belief systems of local practicing teachers regard to the role of English in their lives and society and their teaching experiences.

- Member checking

After writing a first draft of the manuscript, I contacted teacher participants quoted, paraphrased, or translated in the dissertation text, circulated it to the participants, and offered them the opportunity to verify the data and the interpretations derived from them.

- Withdrawal of consent

Teacher participants could withdraw from the study or withdraw consent of use of their interview comments at any time by contacting me (contact information was provided at the time the consent form was signed).

There were three interviews with each participant over three months; each interview consisted of eight to ten questions. As the e-mail interview aims at well-thought-out responses, I allowed the participant plenty of time (from two to four weeks) to think carefully about the questions before sending back their answers via e-mail attachment. The interview questions were in both English and teachers' mother tongue, Thai, and participants could chose to answer the questions in either English or Thai

according to their own preference. Also, at the end of the interview, I asked for permission from the participants to follow up on answers given by the interviewee (via e-mail) to elaborate and clarify participants responses or to help elicit additional information and depth about the focused research topics. (For a full list of the interview questions, see Appendix C.)

Identification and Analysis of Job Announcements

Job announcements were selected as reflections of the concept of English as a colonial force in Thailand—the unequal power relationship and inequalities of English. One of the hearts fundamental to understand how dominant social groups use language for establishing and maintaining social hierarchies, and also investigating ways to alter those hierarchies is to see the links between education and employments (Tollefson, 2002). I looked at the descriptions of English teaching position in Thailand that announced in Thai TESOL Newsletter, local school and colleague bulletin board, teacher recruitment at www.ajarn.com, and a *Classified* section of *Bangkok Post*, a local English newspaper, for over a 6-month period (March 2008 – August 2008) in order to examine the qualifications and duties expected by employers in Thailand.

Data Analysis

Questionnaires

First, I analyzed the data from the questionnaire, independently by identifying responses against the guiding research questions of the study. Additionally, points of agreement were derived from recurring topics, ambiguous (ambivalent) answers, and unexpected responses. This agreement helped me to revise the interview guides and questions and refine my focus in subsequent data collection.

E-mail Interviews

The e-mail interview data were analyzed in stages. I first engaged in data organizing and a careful reading of the e-mail transcripts. I then reviewed the data to code and categorize individual statements and passages according to themes. These themes were, in turn, related back to the research questions. These were themes used to break up and segment data into simpler, general categories in order to formulate different level of interpretations and analysis.

1. The scholastic dimension: attitudes toward native-speaker theorists and local practitioners, perceived inferiority and marginalization, perceptions on ELT methodology, and attitudes toward local languages

2. The linguistic dimension: perceptions on contexts of language use, perceptions on the ownership of English, perceived concepts of English speakers, accent attitudes in English language teaching and learning, attitude toward teaching accents in class, and attitudes toward classroom materials.

3. The cultural approach: perceptions of English-speaking countries, perceptions of English-speaking cultures, assumptions on cultural input in English language learning, and perceptions on cultural teaching in English classroom.

4. The economic approach: perceptions on employability and job opportunities in ELT professions, perceptions on discourses used in job advertisements, and assumptions on employability of NNS teachers in NS countries.

In analyzing both interviews and documents, I took Fairclough's (1995) perspective as a framework. He argues that in analyzing discourse "the adoption of critical goals means, first and foremost, investigating verbal interactions with an eye to

their determination by, and their effects on social structures” (p. 36). That is, CDA is not concerned purely with discourse, but also with the interaction between language use (discourse) and its context (social relations) (Fairclough & Wodak, 1996). This attention to social structures makes Fairclough’s approach particularly useful in treating the topics to be investigated here. Much of what will be said in the next section on the stages of analysis is relevant to the analysis of the e-mail interview data.

In analyzing the textual data, I also relied on Fairclough (1995) for insight. Fairclough proposes a “three dimensional” methodology of CDA (p. 98) that “includes linguistic *description* of the language text, *interpretation* of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and *explanation* of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes” (p. 97).

First Stage of Analysis: Describing the Language Text

Caldas-Coulthard (1993) argues that in describing a text the investigator should consider analyzing some or all of the following: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, text structure (micro or macro structures), illocutionary force, coherence, and intertextual properties. These dimensions of the text formed the basic framework for the description.

In this study, I analyzed aspects of vocabulary (e.g. nominalization and overlexicalization), grammar (verbal structures), illocutionary force (e.g., modalization) and intertextual properties.

Second Stage of Analysis: Interpreting Interdiscursive Processes

The interpretive function of this methodology is focused on the interaction between the discourse in question and other discourses and discourse practices in the society. Fairclough (1995) raises a number of questions to be considered: What do the

dimensions of the text as they are analyzed above “mean” when viewed against the background of other contemporary discourses and discursive practices?, What do we learn about the relationship between this discourse and other discourses when we view them together?, What relationships or dependencies between discourses could the investigator illuminate by such an analysis?, What social or cultural process of change could the investigator see in these relationships?

In this study, I analyzed the interaction among local language policies, planning statements, teacher memos, job announcements, and media reports.

Third Stage of Analysis: Explaining Relationship between Discourse and Society

Finally, this methodology is aimed at explaining the relationships between sociocultural context and discourse. Fairclough (1989) argues that sociocultural context can be seen as a three-level construct. The most immediate level comprises the unique practices that are in place in the situation at hand. These situational practices help define individual textual (written) situations. A second level comprises the practices that occur in a textual event and are expected either by the mainstream culture or the culture of the writer (i.e., social rules or customs). The third level was seen as the institutional practices that may be unique to the event if it is taking place in a specific institution. Fairclough (1989) raises questions for analysis in order to explain these relationships: What relationships or dependencies exist between situational practices, social practices, institutional practices and the discourse in question? How do the sociocultural context and the discourse shape each other?

Member Checking

Member checking was an ongoing process along with data collection and data analysis stages in the study. I sent transcripts of any relevant English translations to participants who had chosen to provide their responses in Thai. Later, I circulated to each participant versions of my manuscript in which their statements were cited. They were invited to view the report and give me the feedback about the way their comments and views were represented in the study. Additionally, each participant was identified by pseudonym in the study; therefore, the agreement on confidentiality was not breached.

Trustworthiness

It was my primary concern to establish trustworthiness for in this qualitative study, since the researcher's bias could potentially affect the analyses of text-based data in different ways, compared to a statistical approach. During the data collection and analysis, especially of e-mail interview transcripts, I preserved data in participants' own words and ensured the equivalent between the translation and original version through member checking and inter-rater agreement. Whenever possible, I also consulted the original sources often, in order to avoid inappropriately conflating responses or unconsciously assuming data into categories of my own interpretation. Finally, I upheld the analytical procedures as recommended and agreed upon by foundational theorists in the field of qualitative research.

Researcher Bias

Maxwell (1996) states that qualitative research "is not primarily concerned with eliminating variance between researchers in the values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular researchers' values influence the conduct

and conclusions of the study” (p. 91). Having spoken and taught English for many years in a *peripheral* non-native speaking country, I am passionately attracted by the topics of this research. This value reflects a strong bias toward the design of questionnaire and the guided questions of the e-mail interviews. However, I believe that honest subjectivity, rather than pretended objectivity will lend itself to fruitful and meaningful research. Additionally, I relied on the wisdom of my research supervisor, external readers, and colleagues, who read my manuscript with a critical eye and assisted me greatly with their comments and suggestions.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study was carefully carried out to provide as solid a result as possible, it is necessary to emphasize that the results should not be generalized over time or to other populations. There are certain limitations of validity and reliability of the instruments for measuring the teachers’ perception and attitudes. In addition, the phenomena being studied tend to be constantly changing; thus, the present study can only hope to provide a snapshot of a continually moving landscape.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter presents and describes the data on the Thai EFL teachers' perceptions gathered in an attempt to determine to what extent these show characteristics that could be identified as signs of *de facto* colonialism in the local ELT context in Thailand. As the four fundamental research questions were developed according to the four inter-related dimensions of colonialism, the results of the study are presented in four corresponding sections, covering scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic aspects. However, Thai teachers' perceptions of the global status of English will be discussed in relation to these four aspects in order to provide an introduction leading to the full picture of the data.

All the findings are based on the data derived from questionnaire responses (henceforth QR) and semi-structured interview responses (See Appendix B for a questionnaire and Appendix C for a complete interview questions). As the participants were allowed to respond to the questionnaire and interview questions in either English or Thai upon their own preference, more than half of the returned questionnaire and e-mail interview responses were written in their mother tongue, Thai. In order to report the data effectively, participants' written responses will be presented with different tags as follows:

- T1-E signifies that the original quote is in English, taken from a teacher labeled number 1.

- T1-Tr signifies that the original quote is translated into English by the researcher, taken from a teacher labeled number 1.

Thai Teachers' Perceptions of the Global Status of English

English has journeyed far away from its birthplace in England, especially in the past half century. English has transcended its status as a communal, national, intra-national language spoken in London, England, and Great Britain to become the preferred global medium of cross-cultural communication. It has gained pre-eminence as a gatekeeper in education, employment, immigration, business opportunities, social status, social mobility, and popular culture on a global level. This section aims at presenting how Thai teachers perceive this phenomenal spread of English, its status as an international language, and its critical role as a key to opportunities and possibilities.

Figure 5 provides an overview of the results through the frequencies of the returned QR from 108 Thai teachers from 14 schools in the lower-northern region. This chart shows the three motivations most often identified in connection with the global status of English: a need for a medium of cross-cultural communication (47.2%), political/military force (25%), and economic/technology force (20.4%).

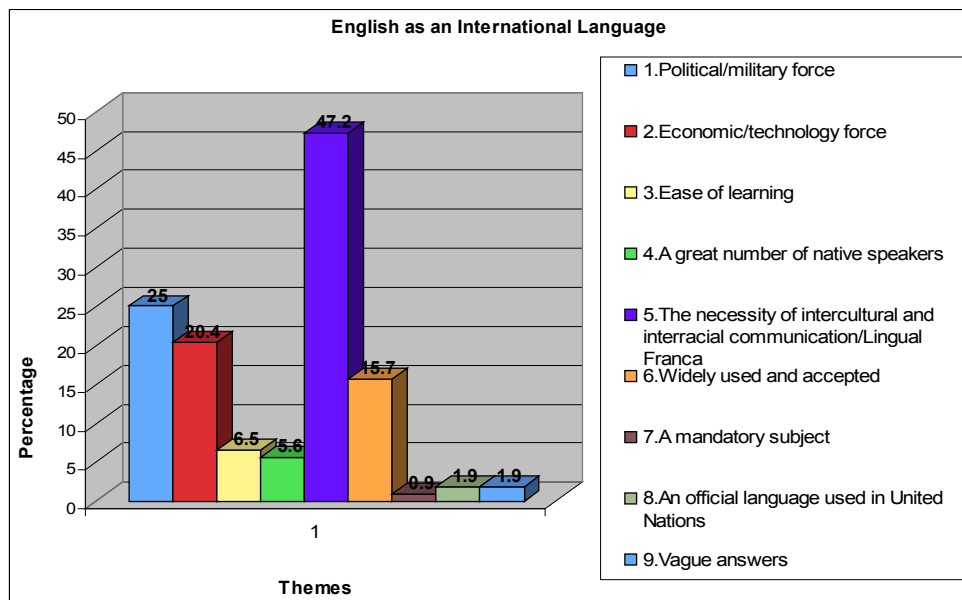


Figure 5. Perceptions on English as an international language.

The majority of the participants perceived English as the most convenient mode of communication, as a multifunctional language used in all situations, and as unquestionably the most used and “the only one” (T37-Tr) language for people across the globe to understand one another (in both intra- and inter- national communication). The two quotes given here are typical of statements made by almost half of the respondents

It is the language that people all over the world use to communicate with each other; therefore, it is *the only one language* [italics added] that can help people in the world understand each other, and maintain their relationship forever. (T55-Tr)

English is used as a medium of communication among people across the continents including Europe, America, Australia, Africa, and particularly Asia. Although we Asians are not native speakers, we can use English as a medium to communicate with one another across the region. (T89-Tr)

Thus, the status of English as a global *lingua franca* received the most acknowledgements. Moreover, in connection to this, many participants also considered English as a vehicle for modernization, internationalization, civilization, and key to access to advanced knowledge and resources. Among these benefits, many felt that the less developed countries needed English in order to “receive the advancements” (T98-Tr) from developed countries, especially those with English as their first language. This feeling came through clearly in the following translated quotes

English ... gains more popularity because it is the national language of the United States of America with its supremacy in all aspects. Thus, those less-developed countries out there *need to receive advancements* [italic added] from the USA. Hence, they need to know English. (T98-Tr)

English is the language of supreme countries and it serves as an international language. When one wants to become *internationalized* [italic added], he or she has a desire to learn and use English as a medium of communication, and to gain more access to new knowledge. (T22-Tr)

Political and military power received the second most common acknowledgements as the major force that resulted in the phenomenal spread of English. In other words, the answer to why language becomes an international language “lies in the swords and spears wielded by the armies” (Crystal, 2003, p. 9). Many of the teachers reported that English has journeyed so far away from England and successfully settled down outside its own homeland because of its imperial force. This perception can be clearly observed through some of the participants’ responses

The warlike English people are favored in invading and colonizing other countries. Those who became the English colonies must learn and use English for communication. Hence, English has spread throughout the world. (T45-Tr)

England expanded its empire through colonizing other countries, especially in Asia, by first introducing the religion. Then, the British army had invaded other countries and enjoyed its absolute power by controlling their natural resources and manipulating local arts and culture. They seized the freedom of local people in all aspects of life. Though the colonization era has faded away, the consequences of imperialism is still strongly prevailed in those countries. (T107-Tr)

Interestingly enough, by using words like “seized” (T107-Tr), and phrases like “favored in invading and colonizing other countries” (T45-Tr), these participants

acknowledged that English armies introduced English to their territories by force, presumably against the will of the local people.

Thai teachers claimed that this military power opened doors for English to set foot in and enjoy its prestige on overseas territories. In addition, they emphasized that economic power reinforced the inevitable communicational dominance across the globe. This perception goes along with what Crystal (2003) observes: “It may take a militarily powerful nation to establish a language; but it takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it” (p. 9). More than a quarter of participants specifically or implicitly pointed at economics as a factor in the global rise of English. As one of the participants wrote

Its status follows the political and economic status of the superpowers which use English as their native language. (T1-E)

Additionally, the economic factor was identified on a cultural level; some respondents indicated cultural elements as the source of Anglo prestige as portrayed in the response below

In the old days, England established the language through its imperialism, but in the present time, USA maintains and promotes the language through its academics, sciences, technology, and pop culture. (T8-Tr)

Interestingly, some respondents suggested that, a non-colonized nation such as Thailand could also be subject to imperialist pressures in spite of its not having an overtly colonial history. One respondent explicitly mentioned

English, the language of the colonizer, has spread throughout its colonies since the old days. Even some non-colonized nations like Thailand have also been influenced by such significant role of English since then. (T3-Tr)

This section has reported that Thai teachers viewed English as an international language because of its function as a *lingua franca*, its political/military power, and its economic/technology force.

The Scholastic Dimension

In this section, I will cover themes that relate to the scholastic or scholarly dimension. These involve responses that reveal how Thai scholarship and wisdom are perceived as inferiors to those of English native speakers, especially in the view of local ELT professionals.

Attitudes toward Native-speaker Theorists and Local Practitioners

The dichotomy between theory and practice in the field of English language has resulted in a clear boundary of responsibility between the native-speaking theorists and local practitioners. It is interesting to explore how Thai teachers of English perceive their role and status as ELT professionals.

I asked the participants if they agreed with this statement: Western native-speaking theorists are the main source of knowledge in ELT for ESL and EFL practitioners; local non-native teachers consume such knowledge. Fourteen of the total 19 participants responded to this question.

Tellingly, nine out of 14 participants agreed with the statement, as one of them claims that “the body of knowledge in foreign language teaching and learning originated in the west ... also second language acquisition ... we must accept that local practitioners

consume knowledge mainly from the west” (T8-E). Not only did they adopt the knowledge conceived by Western theorists, but they also took it on trust and hesitated to question or problematize such knowledge as being possibly unsuitable to the local context. As one participant stated:

Local practitioners trust judgments made by เจ้าของภาษา [henceforth *chao khong pasa*] or the-owner-of-the-language native⁴... they are expert in the language ... though we do not agree at particular aspects ... but we usually overlook such problems ... We hold the belief that those [native-speaking] theorists have a more accurate body of knowledge [than us]. (T5-Tr)

The reference to not agreeing with “particular aspects” seems to have involved the culturally loaded content of available materials; this will be discussed further in the cultural dimension section.

The rest (five out of 14 participants) did not agree with the statement. They did not think that “what [theorists] gave us is compatible with our culture and context” (10-E). They further argued that they had gone beyond total passive adoption, as one said:

Do you know of the terms “trickster monkeys?” The non-native teachers nod when they are facing the western theorists, but they might not follow exactly what the theorist proposes. Non-native teachers are not passive receivers of the western theories on EFL, they also invent their own approaches in the classroom, although fewer of them voice about the issues. They are adaptive practitioners of the teaching of EFL. (T6-E)

⁴ The Thai term เจ้าของภาษา (*Chao khong pasa*) or “the-owner-of-the-language native” refers to native-speakers of any language being discussed in a particular context. In practice, it has been applied to western native speakers of English, such as British and American speakers. The term has been used in the field of TESOL and Thai society for a long time without awareness of the ideology associated within the controversial concept of “the ownership of English.” That is, the term has become “bleached” or has been weakened, and it is presumably perceived as neutral among the majority of Thai teachers of English and Thai people. However, as noted in the text, a few teachers in this study felt that the term is not neutral, but contains ideological overtones that are inappropriate, as language should not be subject to ‘ownership.’

She clearly stated that local teachers realize the limitations of any learning theory and teaching methods. In this connection, another participant emphasized strongly that local practitioners were able to develop their own knowledge of teaching and learning. However, with limited access to publishing networks and heavy teaching loads, they can not publish to claim ownership and rise to fame. This participant also stressed that some methods labeled as “Western” were also developed locally; “local nonnative teachers have been practicing and realized the so-called theories for such a long time ... the westerners got there first [to write and get published] because the western culture puts more emphasis on words” (T7-E).

Perceived Inferiority and Marginalization

The way Thai teachers of English perceive native-speaking theorists and themselves as ELT professionals becomes more transparent when they reflected about throughout their teaching and learning experience. In an e-mail interview, I asked them to share any negative experiences in their English teaching career that they felt were due to their not being NSs.

There were 18 responses from the total 19 participants responding to this question. Fourteen out of 18 respondents stated that they had had such unpleasant experiences. The rest (four respondents) did not report any bad experience. From 14 respondents, 10 wrote that they felt bad about themselves as English teachers. They were not satisfied and had no confidence about their language abilities as they evaluated their skills against NSs. To illustrate, some of them said that “we are not using English as a primary language and we are not native” (T4-Tr), “I could never be sure if [my language] was awkward or was the kind of language actually used by native-speakers” (T8-E), and

one respondent said that only when he came to the U.S., did he “[learn] how native speakers used the language in reality” (T10-E). One of them particularly spoke of her “linguistic incompetence” in the way that she could not use “trendy slang words, idioms, or jokes” (T4-Tr) when writing an e-mail or chatting online with her friends. This same participant sometimes felt that her language discourse sounded dull and dry, as she assumed that “I might have talked or written like a book, or used old-fashioned expressions” (T4-Tr). This same respondent expressed uncertainty about non-standard forms, which she showed with the following narrative story

Once I taught a writing class to undergraduate students and a grammar class to graduate students. As I am not *chao khong pasa* [the-owner-of-the-language native], many times I could not explain or elaborate clearly why certain ungrammatical sentences were acceptable among native speakers of English. One example is from an informal usage in an English song, *My Humps* by Black Eyed Peas. One line [from the lyrics] says, “All that ass inside them jeans?” The use of ‘them’ instead of ‘their’ was ungrammatical according to the grammar textbook explaining the use of possessive pronouns. Whenever I came across such sentences with strange grammatical structures, all I could do was to tell students that “rules always have exceptions.” These exceptions also depended on the particular groups, society, and situation to which the language user belongs. Many times I have an awful feeling that I could only give them such a very broad and general explanation. I thought that native speakers would be able to give more depth and detailed explanation, or provide students with more varieties of sentence examples. (T4-Tr)

This participant obviously had no confidence in considering herself a successful language user. It is likely that she was also reluctant to present herself as a successful language learning model for her students. In fact, the problem she stated had to do with a limited kind of competence, namely familiarity with the nonstandard speech forms used in popular songs.

Effects of Experiences

The feeling of being inferior to NSs may not originally come from the participants themselves. Throughout their lives as L2 learners and teachers, they have been dealing with discrimination and marginalization in their experiences with native English speakers ‘from’ and ‘in’ the West.

They reported experiences leading them to feel that they were inferior to native English speakers in all stages of their lives and in many circumstances—in with different roles and relationships—for instance, as students, pre-service teachers in graduate programs, and in-service teachers. The following are some of the negative experiences narrated in the interviews. These experiences may have had a major effect on the formation of their perceived inferiority in native-speakerism and the development of their professional identity as English teachers.

The first story took place in the participant’s home country, Thailand. While studying in a university, she worked as a waitress in a restaurant to earn some extra money and practice her English skills. However, the experience with native-speaking customers turned out to be not as rewarding as she had expected.

... Once I used to work as a waitress and I had to take care of a group of native Westerners, they deliberately spoke English very fast to make it sound

incomprehensible to a non-native speaker like me. Then they laughed out loud. Or one night, when they got drunk, they gossiped about Thai women labeling us as prostitutes. They must have thought that I would not be able to understand their language. I feel so awful about that. (T3-Tr)

The second story dated back to when one of the participants was a foreign student in the United States. This particular case was not overtly about language, but this kind of experience made her feel rejected by the local people.

Racial prejudice and discrimination are still pretty much prevail and are evident in American society. Americans usually see foreigners living in the States as inferior to them. To illustrate ... my own experience was that while I walked along the street with other international friends, American students, complete strangers, opened the car window and yelled at us using swear words” (T4-Tr).

Closely related, another participant told of feeling that she was not included in a group or classroom activity by native-speaking classmates. This reinforced her feeling of being marginalized in the native-speaking community.

Native English-speaking classmates kept looking down upon my intellect just because I could not speak English fluently like them. Worse than that, I felt so terrible when I was the only nonnative in one class, and we had to work in a group. My native-speaking classmates did not welcome me in their group at all. I had tried so hard to be accepted among them. (T12-Tr)

This first-hand experience showed how English ability could become a crucial factor in feeling that one is being judged as unintelligent by others, especially by NSs. Sadly, schools seemed to be a place where many interviewees had experienced prejudice.

In connection to this story, as a graduate student in a TESOL program in the United States, one interviewee experienced linguistic discrimination at the hands of by a native-speaker professor.

I can recall one incident while I was in class during my doctoral study in an American university. During a class discussion, I expressed my opinion or answered some questions, I'm not quite sure. The professor asked me for clarifications a few times as if he didn't get what I said. This made me diffident, wondering if my pronunciation was not right. (T8-E)

From this experience, he not only felt embarrassed among graduate international classmates, but also lost confidence in his speaking skill. As a way not to lose face again, he was reluctant to participate in further discussion and avoided speaking out in the following class. Another story came from a secondary school teacher who had been teaching for more than twenty-five years. While having a casual conversation with a native-speaking colleague, her language use was treated as a serious error by that colleague, despite the fact that the form used was in fact both clear and grammatical

I had a bad experience in my teaching career when I talked to a colleague from England. When I said things ungrammatically, he or she⁵ would criticize my incorrect use of English right on the spot, in front of my face. For example, once I talked about a student studying in Grade 8. I said "grade eight", he or she would correct it as "eighth grade". He or she is also [a language] teacher! (T60-Tr)

The concept of 'saving face' is embedded in the Thai way of life, as meaning to keep one's reputation and the respect of other people. It refers to a way to solve conflicts

⁵ "เขา" (Khao), he or she, pronoun in Thai is ambiguous. In this response, it is difficult to figure what the gender of her colleague is.

and avoid embarrassing or discomforting yourself and the other people involved. The concept becomes more strict and serious among Thais when we have to deal with someone who is older or has an important status in society. To revisit the above situation on the basis of face-saving, this Thai teacher took a great risk in making mistakes when practicing her English with the NS. It is not uncommon that many might give up practicing English just because they want to ‘save their face.’ It is clear in this story that this native English speaker was not sensitive enough to this local cultural norm. However, the case seemed to be worse here, since the phrase “eighth grade” and “grade eight” could be used interchangeably among speakers of English and caused no communication breakdown. Interestingly, this Thai teacher indirectly expressed her discomfort by emphasizing the status of this NS as, “He or she is also [an English] teacher!” This seemed to suggest that, as a teacher outside his or her home country, he or she needed to be more aware of what was the right approach and time to “correct” language discourse produced by L2 learners. Or according to another participant, this NS was not aware that the spread of English had led to different varieties.

Some English people are very narrow-minded in the way that they think, others are inferior to them in all aspects. To illustrate, their minds are so ‘square’ and not welcome other varieties of English usage. They cling to the idea that their English is the most accurate and there is no need to change. In fact, as an international language, the language itself has already been changing. (T73-Tr)

In contrast to those who felt embarrassed and lost confidence when they made language mistakes judged by NSs, some Thai teachers viewed mistake-making as a part of their language development. One of the participants shared this story

I believe that mistakes are a part of our learning process. When I first came to the States, I had a chance to work with my American colleagues. One day he asked me what I did last weekend. I said I had two cans of beers last night. He started giggling. Then, I asked him what I said wrong. He told me that the way I said was so funny. Then he told me that I could have just said “I had two beers last night”. His suggestion surprised me since I had learned that the word ‘beer’ was an uncountable noun. So, we could not use it in a plural form. My point is that even though I was embarrassed when people made fun of me, I learned how native speakers used the language in reality. (T10-E)

Despite the fact he viewed this as a part of the learning process, the feedback from that native-English speaking colleague caused him to question his own language competence and prior learning experiences. This resulted in the way that he had to become more sensitive to “how native speakers used the language in reality.”

NSs are not the only offenders in this area. Thai people themselves also made some participants in this study feel less confident about their English ability. Four participants shared expressions of distrust or challenge from Thai students and people.

I have a bad experience with English pronunciation. My students expect me to pronounce English words with an American or a British accent as they are often heard from the media. I sometimes feel frustrated or reluctant to answer the students’ questions about pronunciation. (T14-Tr)

Thai teachers of English have struggled to deal with distrust or challenge from not only their own students but also other Thai people in the wider society. The beliefs

associated with native-speakerism, and the practice of favoring NSs prevail in Thai society. This can be seen through an observation from a respondent.

A sizable number of Thai people cling to the belief that one can be a competent English user if his or her accent sounds like native speakers from the West. That group of people has a respect and admires those who can speak English like the *Farangs*. (T13-Tr)

The word “*Farangs*” in the quote literally refers to “anything associated with Caucasian” (Watkhaolarm, 2005, p. 155) or any foreigners coming from or living in any Western countries. In this particular context “*Farangs*” is taken to mean native English-speaking Caucasian Westerners.

Attitudes toward ELT Methodology

Thai teachers and students have long experienced ELT methodologies generated by English native-speaking theorists: audio-lingual in 1960, communicative language teaching in 1977, and functional-communicative approach in 1996 (Foley, 2005). Recently, critical linguists have criticized that those teaching methods contain political ideologies aiming at prioritizing the Western culture and centralizing the Western interests. Against this background, this section aims at exploring Thai teachers’ attitudes towards the Western pedagogical practices that they have been experienced.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the results of the frequencies from the returned QR from 108 Thai teachers in the lower northern region. This chart reveals three degrees of agreement most often identified in connection to the statement inquiring whether or not there is a relationship between political factors and the choices made by British or American scholars who develop teaching methods.

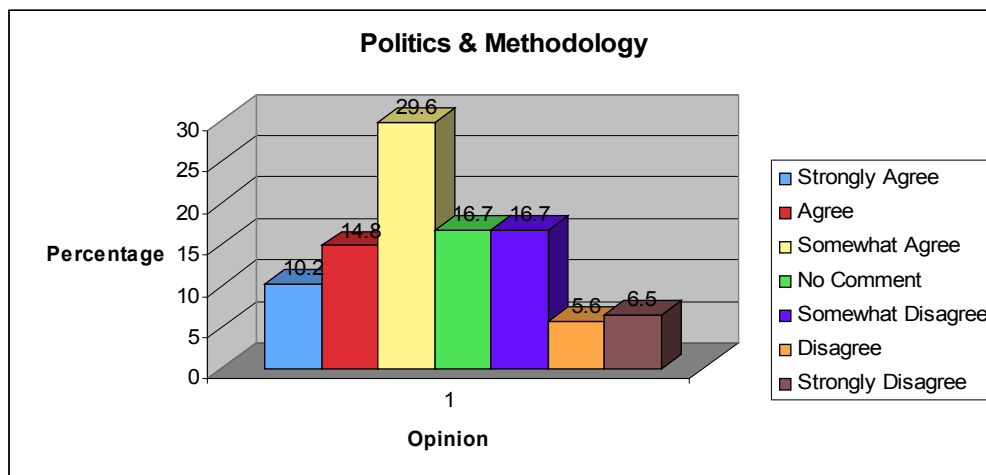


Figure 6. Attitudes toward ELT methodology.

The figure reveals that 29.6% of the participants “somewhat agree”, 14.8 % “agree”, and 10.2% “strongly agree” with the statement. Thus, one can safely assume that more than half of the participants (54.6%) perceived the Anglo-American-generated methodological concepts to be neutral and apolitical tools in teaching English in Thailand, and do not contained any hidden ideologies. To gain more depth and details concerning the ELT methodologies and theories developed by Anglo-American experts, I asked the participants in e-mail interviews how they felt about the teaching methods that they had learned, trained, and/or practiced. There were 15 participant response to this question; the responses fell into three categories: a preference for particular method, no strong preference for any methodology and objections to teaching methodologies.

The majority of the participants (nine out of 15) had a preference for teaching methods from the West that they had exposed. The three methods commonly identified by the participants were communicative approach, audio-lingual, and grammar translation.

I personally like to be taught by audio-lingual first (to get the input), then next step is grammar-translation (to have things I don’t understand in the input

explained to me) and last communicative approach (which I consider output focus approach. (T6-E)

Of these, the preferred approach is the Communicative Approach. Teachers justify their choice in the following examples: “we learn [English] language to communicate with others” (T9-E) and “[this approach] promotes all skills needed: speaking, listening, reading, and writing” (T47-Tr).

Secondly, five participants had no particular preference for any methodologies, as one claimed:

I don't have any particular preference because each method has its advantages and limitations. I employ all kinds of methods in my class ... It depends on many factors ... such as students' nature and ability ... and nature of courses and learning objectives. (T2-Tr)

There was only one participant who expressed a strong objection to any methodologies from the West; however, her argument was solely based on other limitations, not the methods themselves.

None of the methods can be applied to my teaching situation. ... at my institution ... those methods do not help my students at all ... because of ... mixed-ability classroom and big gaps of language competence among them. ... and overwhelming numbers of students in one class. (T12-Tr)

To conclude, it is interesting that all of them viewed the teaching methodologies proposed by the Western theorists as neutral tools which contained no hidden political ideology.

Attitudes toward Local Language

A conventional wisdom in the field is the concept of the monolingual tenet which promotes the teaching of English as a foreign or second language entirely through the medium of English. This section aims at presenting how local Thai teachers perceive the role of the student's mother tongue in English language classrooms.

Figure 7 provides an overview of the results through the frequencies from Section 1: Question 3 of the returned QR from 108 in-service teachers of English in the lower-northern region. This chart shows three attitudes toward the use of Thai language in the classroom: positive (65.5%), ambivalent (17.7%), and negative (12%) attitudes.

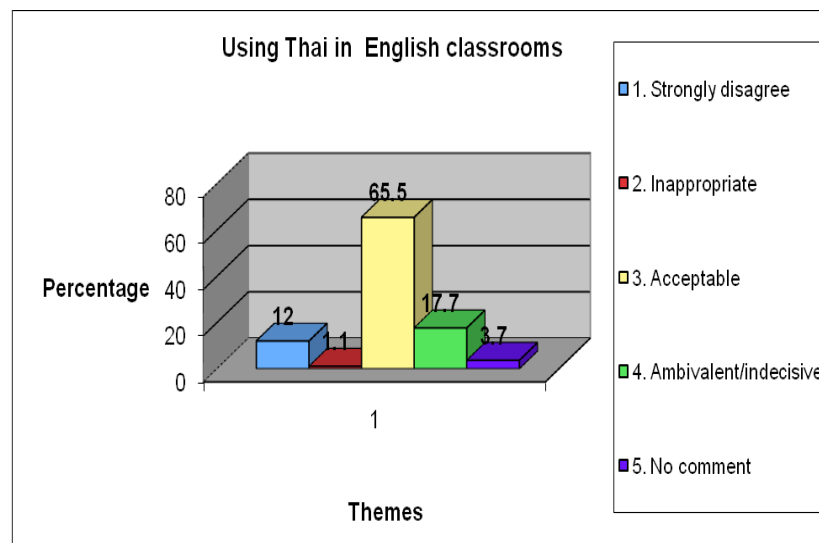


Figure 7. Attitudes toward local language.

The majority of the participants had no objection to the use of the student's mother tongue in class since they perceived it as an “assisting” (T83-Tr), “time-saving” (T91-Tr), or “troubleshooting” (T51-Tr) mode of communication beside the “obligatory” (T34-Tr) English. This depended on the nature of the course (skills-based or content-based) and students' language ability (high- or low-formed). The three quotes given here were typical of statements made by most of the participants in this category:

A language used in class usually depends on what subject matter it is and how far students can go with 'English'. Sometimes it is hard for 'English' to survive in the classroom. (T12-E)

Most of Thai learners lack good English background knowledge. Especially ... when ... [dealing with] difficult or complicated features of ... grammar ... I accept both Thai and English versions. (T53-E)

It's common for Thai teachers to use Thai in English class. I also use both Thai and English in my class! It makes my students ... understand easier. (T102-E)

The second group could not make a definite decision whether Thai should be used as an alternative mode of communication in order to enhance the degree of interaction between the teacher and the student. As some of the participants argued:

I do not feel quite right about using Thai in class. I think I should use only English; however, Thai is the core medium for communication here, and the chances of using English in the country are quite slim. (T50-Tr)

I think [using Thai] helps low-proficiency students to understand things better; however, they will not develop their English skills [if Thai is used]. (T61-Tr)

In the third group, a sizable minority of participants showed strong negative attitudes toward using Thai in English classroom as believing Thai would interfere with and hinder students' language acquisition. Most of the participants in this group shared the following views:

I feel a little bit depressed and sometimes [using Thai] doesn't help them to understand. (T5-E)

I feel “hopeless” [the participant's original word]. Thai teachers have been studying English for so many years so they are supposed to be able to use English in class. ... as a result, students are not familiar with the [target] language use. (T51-Tr)

Regarding attitudes toward the local language and its relationship with English, I investigated some deeper and more detailed information from the participants in one of the e-mail interviews. I asked them whether or not they were aware that English discourse had any impact on their use of Thai whether in pronunciation, discourse practice, or even the common use of code switching. Fifteen participants responded to this question. Thirteen reported that their discourse had changed and their competence in Thai had declined. The rest (two participants) were not aware of any change in their use of Thai.

These changes and the perceived decline of their mother tongue were of concern, as they might signal a subtle partial form of “language loss,” in their loss of aspects of a previously fully acquired primary language as a result of the acquisition of another language. To give some cases of spoken discourse, after many years of studying in the USA, one participant struggled “thinking the Thai words to convey my thought” and he cannot “figure out what people called “English Vowels” in Thai” (T10-E). In his speaking, especially when coming across borrowed terms from English such as “tennis” in Thai sentences, he pronounces the English sibilant [s] sound at the end of the word, which is usually dropped by most Thai-native speakers. In another example, one said

that his Thai spoken expression had become more awkward or redundant with the influence of English structure. When saying “‘ฉันรู้สึกมีความสุข’(I feel happy or I am happy) in Thai, Thai native speakers normally do not use the verb ‘feel’ or ‘am’, but ‘have’ to describe feeling like ‘happy’” (T14-Tr). However, this speaker still used ‘feel’ instead of ‘have,’ presumably under the influence of English. Participants who noted this kind of change also said they had been criticized by Thai teacher colleagues who sometimes reacted to their speech with statements like “This is not a Thai structure but English.”

In terms of written discourse, one participant said, “My handwriting and writing in Thai were much better in the past. ... once I started to write in Thai ... much to my surprise, my Thai had already gone downhill” (T12-Tr). To this respondent, the handwriting was associated with the sense of language competence and identity as a Thai native speaker. Within Thai culture, beautiful writing and calligraphy are highly valued, and thus one can understand this participant’s comment best in the light of this culturally based viewpoint. She further elaborated that she struggled in spelling some Thai words and creating written discourse considering “เพราะ” (pleasing-to-read)⁶.” One participant seemed to feel especially distressed at her lost confidence in her first language: “My writing in Thai language is greatly influenced by the English language, to the point that I often feel insecure when reading and writing academic Thai” (T7-E).

Other, potentially more critical issues arose in the testimony of one participant, who struggled to find equivalent terms in Thai to the Western-generated terminologies or ideologies, and then quickly jumped to the conclusion that there were no such terms or concepts in her mother language.

⁶ This Thai phrase refers to an eloquent style of writing, especially valued in terms of writers’ word choice, rhythm and rhyme, and structure.

Sure, it [English discourse] does affect my Thai language, especially the concept words. I explain or describe something *not existing in Thai context* [italics added] by using words I hope the [Thai] listeners can understand, but I am not sure if they can understand, such as “rite of passage,” “transitional period,” “discourse,” “hegemony”, etc. ... and man I struggled hard to get these through *Thai student’s head* [italics added], and I assume some of them think I talk crazy. (T6-E)

This participant had struggled in overcoming the dichotomy between Western theory and local practice. Having been ‘consuming’ “professional theories generated by the [Western] experts and ... generally transmitted from centers of higher learning” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 540), this participant seemed to ‘get stuck’ in the original production of text by Western theorists. As a result, she was unable to repackage the theoretical concepts into Thai local contexts, at least in her classroom. In other words, as I perceive it, she seemed to unconsciously centralize her instruction in Western-generated professional knowledge, and unintentionally let this overshadow her views of the possibilities of the local context. Hence, she made a firm assumption that there was no “existing” local linguistic, socio-cultural, or political advantage that could be able to unpack or explain such Western-generated terms or ideologies.

Closely related to the issue of prioritizing Western influence, one participant echoed the feelings of several others when she claimed that “my writing in Thai is better” (T5-E) because she had been trained to write in English. On the surface, this seems like a neutral statement, and is reasonable to claim based on studies of bilingual populations, where progress in one language seems to benefit others as well. However, there are subtle overtones coming along with this view from some participants when they openly

compared Thai against English rhetoric. Learning to write in Thai language classrooms was not sufficient to make her become an effective writer. She seemed to imply that her Thai writing competence was improved only by adopting the English writing style.

Having an extensive experience in English writing as a trainee and a teacher for many years, one participant said, “I may have absorbed the method of thought development based on the English or western convention including the concepts of topic sentence and supporting sentences for a paragraph or an essay,” (T8-E) which usually comes far later in Thai text. Apart from that, he seemed to favor the more rigid structural rules in English writing, especially “having a clear boundary of noun and verb phrases” which make it easier for readers to know exactly when the sentence ended. At the same time, his positive views on English led him to devalue traditional Thai discourse practices. For instance, compared to his written language in Thai, he commented on other native Thais’ writing commenting that their sentences seem to always be run-ons where “the clause or sentence boundary is not quite clear and it’s hard to separate one clause from another.” It is clear that English rhetoric has become his ‘professional measuring stick’ to evaluate or approach Thai written text. A stronger claim came from another participant:

Thai people seem to omit a lot of subjects in the sentence structure and their sentences are often incomplete. It can be very difficult to try to understand and translate the writing into English because you keep telling yourself ‘*this is bad writing*’ [italics added] when actually you’re not even sure if it’s acceptable by other Thai natives. (T7-E)

This response suggested that she had internalized Anglo-American views of writing. It is clear that she used these norms as an evaluation scheme when coming across Thai written discourse. To give an example, it is not common and completely acceptable in Thai written or oral discourse for a speaker or writer to drop subject and/or object pronouns in their writing. This norm is well established in Thai written rhetorical practice. In contrast, in English such patterns are ungrammatical, and are thus seen as ‘inaccurate,’ ‘unintelligible,’ or ‘incomplete.’ When compared to English sentence structure, Thai “incomplete” structure, in this participant’s view, was “difficult to try to understand,” and was considered to be “bad writing.”

The Linguistic Dimension

In this section, I will cover themes that relate to the linguistic dimension. These mainly involve teachers’ perceptions associated with the established ideology of native ownership of English and the nativespeakerism. These two concepts are responsible for fallacies among local Thai teachers about their language teaching and learning, namely, misconceptions of native and non-native speakers of English, misconceptions of theorists and practitioners, misconceptions of in-house and commercial materials, and misconceptions of language models.

Perceptions on Contexts of Language Use

Teachers’ Present Contexts of Use

Much research has documented that English is no longer used exclusively, for example, among NSs of English in its home country, England, or between native and non-native speakers of English in a so-called melting pot, America. It is commonly and increasingly used among NNSs of English to communicate with one another in cyber

contacts, multinational gatherings, and the tourism industry. In this section, the researcher aims at presenting how Thai teachers of English perceive the worldwide use and ownership of English.

In order to explore how the participants viewed the current implication of the worldwide spread of English, I asked them to share their experience of using English inside and outside classrooms. There were 16 teachers responding to this question. Fourteen out of 16 respondents stated that they had a limited chance to use English. The responses to this question fell into three types: limited use only at school with non-natives (six respondents), extended use beyond school contexts with non-natives (six respondents), and ample use beyond school contexts with either native or non-natives (two respondents).

Six respondents said that the only chance of using English was at their schools, mostly with non-native students and colleagues. Two of them reported that “I don’t really have much of a chance to use English outside the classroom” (T5-Tr) and “most of the English used here is used in class with non-native speakers” (T4-Tr). They rarely had a chance to use English with NSs of English; for example, “I exchange a few greeting to the foreign lecturers but don’t really have a chance to engage in longer conversation” (T7-E).

About three-quarters of the respondents sometimes have a chance to use English beyond classroom and school contexts with foreign friends through phones, e-mails or MSN messengers; however, most of their friends are NNSs of English.

Of the total 16 respondents, only two said that they have ample opportunities to use English in their daily lives. One of them seemed to have more chances to use English

with NNSs, as one part of her responses reveals: “Working in the university context, my chance of communicating in English through speaking is with the non-Thai staff, such as the Americans and the Filipinos. I write e-mail message in English to my Thai friends and colleagues everyday though” (T6-E). The other respondent had an equal opportunity of using English with both native and NNSs of English.

In addition it is very interesting to report that there are certain factors that have an impact on their context of use: teaching loads and comfort levels. A quarter of the respondents claimed that their teaching loads were extremely heavy, preventing them from having a social gathering or exchanging a conversation with English-speaking colleagues. However, the tight schedule might not to be the only reason that made them reluctant to communicating with other English-speaking colleagues, especially the NSs from the West. There was another factor that one of them raised, the relative comfort levels involved; this participant felt that NNSs were more patient and more willing to make the effort to ease communication: “I feel more at ease speaking with those called non-native speakers of English such as those coming from [the] Philippines. They seem to make more effort to understand me and they are very understanding” (T9-E).

Students’ Potential Future Contexts of Use

Adding to their own contexts of use, they were also asked how they foresaw their students’ English usage: If they would have more opportunities to expose themselves to native English-speaking or non-native English-speaking environment. The 14 responses to this question fell into three types: many felt that students would largely interact either with non-natives or natives, only two felt that their students would encounter both groups equally and two did not address this question.

Nine out of 14 respondents assumed that students who sought employment after completing a college degree would have more chance to use English with NNSs after graduation from the university. One of them claimed that “I see more opportunities for our students to use English to communicate in the Pan-Asian and European context in the career setting ... rather than the American-British context ...” (T6-E). Only one respondent foresaw that his or her students would have far more opportunities to use English with NSs in a professional setting.

However, if their students pursued advanced degrees, the case would be different. Two from those eight respondents argued that these students would be exposed to mainstream native-speaking norms and environment. To illustrate the point, one wrote: “... in the academic setting, the British and American Englishes still maintain dominance though. A recent trend in Thailand is Australian and New Zealand Englishes since the education there is cheaper than that the US or UK counterpart” (T6-E).

Additionally, two out of 14 respondents felt that their students would have an equal opportunity to use English both with native and NNSs in “their cyber contacts, and in daily life activities i.e. going the cinema, listening to English songs ... (T7-E)”.

In the last group, two respondents only mentioned that their students would use English in their careers and advanced studies, without pinpointing the varieties of English involved.

Teachers’ own experiences and students’ future use of English have shed light on the implication of the worldwide use of English to a certain extent. English is not only limited to native-to-native or native-to-nonnative communication anymore, but also expanding greatly to communication among those nonnatives using English as their L2.

Perceptions on the Ownership of English

In the previous discussions, all the respondents unquestionably agreed that English was being used internationally beyond borders, languages, culture, and races. However, as Figure 8 reveals, Thai teachers of English did not believe that English was owned internationally (certainly not to them), but rather that a particular group of people owned the language.

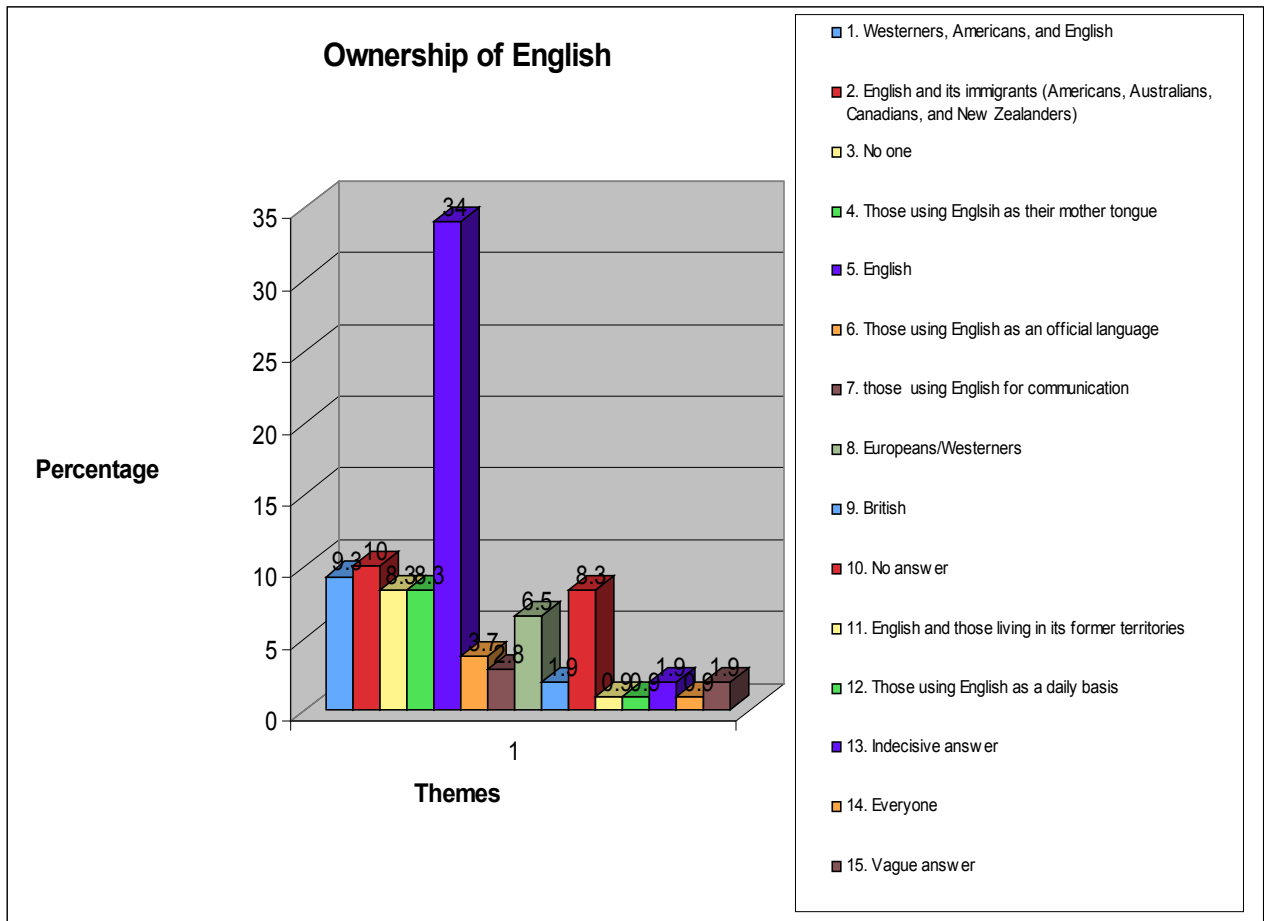


Figure 8. Perceptions on the ownership of English.

The groups of people that first came into their mind when they had to decide who owned English were the English people living in England or the UK, and also those emigrating from England to other parts of the world such as America, Australia, Canada,

and New Zealand. As clearly shown in Figure 6, the majority of the respondents identified English people (34%); English and its immigrants (10%); and Westerners, Americans, and English (9.3%) as owners of language. In this connection, a similar perception on the ownership of English was transparent in their interviews as more than half of the participant claimed, “I have to admit that native speakers whose English is their first language have more ownership of English” (T9-E).

Only a few (8.3%) of the 108 respondents acknowledged that “English is an international language now and it no longer belongs to anyone” (T46-Tr) or that “everyone in the world owns English” (T102-Tr).

It is clear that the majority of the participants in this study did not share a pluralistic view of English as an international language which has challenged conventional wisdom in the TESOL field. For them, the language users living outside the *Inner Circle* could not determine the world future of English usage as the NSs in the West still have an absolute control over this *international* language.

Perceived Concepts of English Speakers: Native and Non-native Speakers

It has been documented that the concepts of “native English speakers” and “non-native English speakers” is very problematic. This is not only their unclear-cut definitions but also its hegemonic ideology hidden in the terms themselves. I asked the participants to define and compare the terms ‘native English speakers’ and ‘non-native English speakers.’

From the total of 19 responses, nearly all participants shared the same view that there were certain criteria for judging a ‘native speaker of English.’ Surprisingly, most of them used similar words or phrases in their responses. To them, “native speakers”

involved strict criteria: a ‘native speaker’ must have used the language: “since his or her birth” (T5-Tr) or “since they were born” (T73-Tr). The NSs also had to use the language “on daily basis” (T6-E), or as their “primary medium of communication” (T7-E). Some of them defined the term:

Chao khong pasa can be defined as those who use the language to communicate with others, and others use the language to communicate with them *since they were born* [italics added]. (T73-Tr)

Native speakers of English as those whose English is their mother tongue and who live in an environment where English is required as *the primary medium of communication* [italics added]. (T7-E)

Four participants explicitly considered native-speakers to be those who lived and were raised in the countries recognizing English as an official language, especially the the so-called “BANA” (T9-E) countries: referring to Britain, Australasia, and North America. Only three interviewees mentioned that native-speakers of English could be diverse in terms of nationality, ethnicity, or race; but they, too, insisted that the NSs must have used the language since his or her birth.

At the other extreme of the continuum of English speakers, when respondents defined the term ‘non-native speakers of English’, most of them referred to people who “learned after the first language” (T3-Tr) or “acquired later in life”(T7-E). Moreover, this group of people “uses L2 less frequently than L1” (T40-Tr), and “do not use English on a daily basis” (T14-Tr), or “[do] not use or speak [English] as their primary means of communication” (T7-E). Their opportunities to use English are seen as limited to “school or workplace” (T3-E). Many of them also acknowledged that the NNSs learned English

because they saw it as a medium for cross-cultural communication or they use English as a *lingua franca*. One of the participants said that “L2 users of English use English to communicate with other people who do not share their culture and language ...” (T73-Tr).

Furthermore, three participants divided ‘non-native speakers’ into two categories: one with English as their L2 and another with English as their foreign language. Both types of speakers learned English after they acquired their first language. However L2 speakers had more exposure to English speaking environment, while foreign language speakers had been limited to using English mainly in their English classrooms. One of the respondents illustrated the point:

ESL (English as a Second Language) users are those who acquire English after their first language; and they live in the English-speaking community and have a plenty of chances to use English on daily basis. EFL (English as a foreign language) users are those who live in a non-English-speaking community so that they have a slim chance of using English outside their classroom. (T3-Tr)

To conclude, teacher participants in the study seemed to have no problem in defining the term ‘natives’ and ‘nonnatives’. In other words, they seemed quite unaware that questions have been raised by scholars who now consider these terms problematic.

Accent Attitudes in English Language Teaching and Learning

Attitudes toward Mainstream Accents

It is not exaggerated to claim that certain English accents carry more prestige in a society than other accents. Such dominant accents have served as gatekeepers in education, media, employment, professional accreditation, business opportunities, social status, and social mobility. This phenomenon results in an intense debate over the current trend of teaching English as an international language or a *lingua franca*: what particular accent model should teachers pay special attention to and/or what students should attempt to achieve? This section aims at exploring teachers' attitudes toward varieties of English accents, and how these attitudes influence their perceptions about classroom practice.

Figure 9 provides an overview of the results through the frequencies from Section 1: Question 2 of the returned QR from 108 Thai teachers of English in the lower northern region. This chart illustrates three accent models most often identified among the participants: American accent (39.8%), British accent (16.7%), and native accents (14.8%).

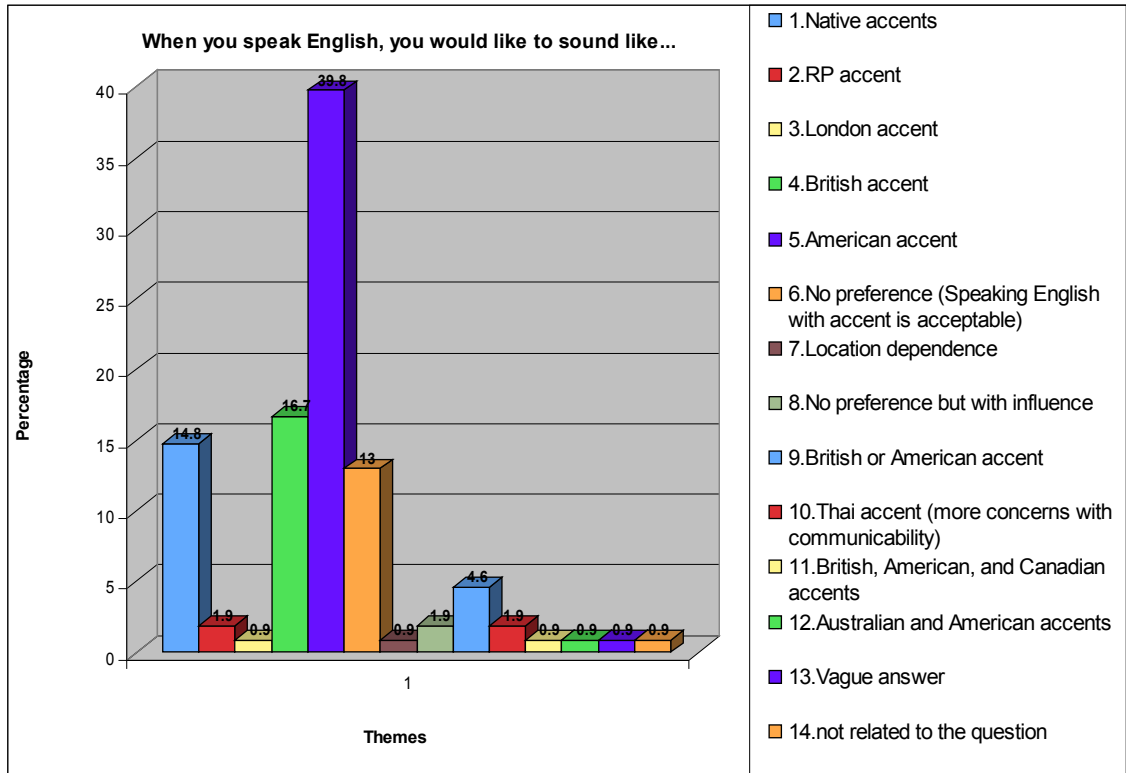


Figure 9. Attitudes toward mainstream accents.

The largest group of participants identified an American accent as the most preferred accent that they desire to have, or to put it in another way, to be recognized by listeners when they spoke English. The three most typical reasons shared by many participants are presented in the following quotes from the questionnaire.

First they preferred to have an American accent because it sounded familiar to them. They said that they had been exposed to the accent through American media and movies, local K-12 or college education, and undergraduate and/or graduate education in America. As one participant said:

I have two answers for this question: (1) I want to sound like a native speaker, [and] (2) Since I have been exposed to American English, it is easier and more convenient for me to sound like an American. (T1-E)

Secondly, they perceived that an American accent was easy to listen to and understand. In order to satisfy their personal goals in achieving native-speaking accents, an American accent, to them, was more *doable* or *feasible* to “imitate” (T17-Tr), practice, or obtain, especially when compared to other mainstream accents. As two respondents stated:

I like to *imitate* [italics added] an American accent because it is easy to catch and practice (T17-Tr)

I would like to sound like Americans since [their accent] is easy to pronounce ... correctly and grammatically. British English is sometimes difficult to articulate and understand. (T5-E)

Lastly, they viewed that it was more practical for them to sound like Americans. This is because American English is “widely accepted and used” (T25-Tr) as a dominant variety of English.

I would like to sound like Americans because the American accent is widely accepted and used. (T25-Tr)

Thai teachers identified a British accent as the second most preferred accent which they would like to have and be recognized by other hearers. The most typical reason was that they had a sense of history and tradition when speaking English with a British accent. They perceived that British people were the *real owners* of the language, and that their speech implied cultural superiority. As one claimed, “[A British accent] is the Standard English accent, and it sounds privileged” (T22-Tr). However, one interesting finding is that of those who wanted to speak like British people, some reported that their accent sounded more American or mixed, as reflected in these quotes:

I wanted to sound like British English because it was more pleasant to listen to than American English. However, I had been influenced by American accent because I had been educated with American teachers since I was young. (T21-Tr)

I want to sound like British. It is the original. However, having been educated by both British and American teachers, I have been influenced by both accents. (T51-Tr)

Lastly, a sizable number of participants identified native-speaking accents in general terms, without identifying a particular accent from any region. The following are the typical quotes representing this group of participants, who tended to cite the need to be understood among the reasons for their preference:

I would like to sound like a native speaker. Speaking other languages, we need to sound like the natives of that particular language. (T65-Tr)

I want to sound like native speakers because *native speakers can understand us better* [italics added]. Just like foreigners using Thai, if they can pronounce like native Thai speakers, Thai people can understand them clearly, precisely, and correctly. (T48-Tr)

The participants assumed that learning English was like studying other second languages such as Thai. That is, there was *only one* pronunciation model to ‘imitate’ or follow; there were no other varieties beside its original model. Hence, they viewed that the non-natives must take full responsibility in making their pronunciation familiar enough to NSs when exchanging conversation.

Accents toward Non-Mainstream Accents

In connection to the preceding section, Thai attitudes toward other non-mainstream accents as represented by the local teachers confirmed, for me, my opinion that particular accents carried more prestige in Thai society than others. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked whether they agreed with this statement: Black and Indian speakers use forms of English that are enjoyable to listen to.

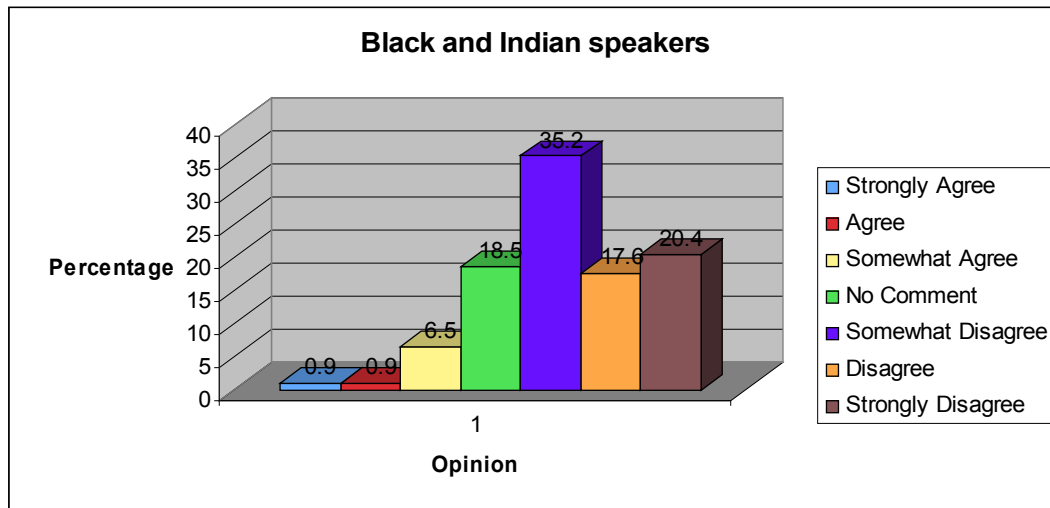


Figure 10. Attitudes toward non-mainstream accents.

Figure 10 showed that 35.2 % of the participants somewhat disagreed, 17.6 % disagreed, and 20.4% strongly disagreed. By combining these groups of participants, it suggested that a very solid majority of the participants (73.2%) did not feel having a conversational exchange with speakers with such accents was pleasant.

In a nutshell, this section has revealed that the majority of Thai teachers of English prefer to be recognized by others as having certain native-speaking accents, most often a mainstream American accent, followed by British accent, while other native-speaking accents (Black and Indian) are not acceptable among the local teachers.

Attitudes toward Teaching Accents in Class

As a follow-up question to some participants in connection with their accent attitudes, I further investigated what pronunciation model they would teach their students. In particular, I asked whether they would allow their students to use the local Thai accent or push them to develop more mainstream native-speaker accents.

Ten participants provided their views on their orientation toward accents in classrooms. The responses were equally split in half. Five of them agreed that they would allow a Thai accent to be used in class while the other five would encourage students to speak English with native-speaking accents.

The former group argued that “accent is not a whole [big] thing here” (T6-E) so that “I allow my students to speak English with a Thai accent” (T8-E). All of them agreed that speaking English with a variety of accents was acceptable; however, the rationale for allowing Thai local accent to be used in class was significantly different. This could be categorized into four reasons: (1) students had passed the critical period, (2) teachers themselves could not sound like a native, (3) accents had only a slight effect on effective communication, and (4) building up confidence was the first priority.

To elaborate, three participants allowed their students to speak English with a Thai accent because they accepted the fact that it was very difficult for L2 learners like them to sound like NSs. One reason was that they had already passed the critical period when they started learning English. Another was that they had limited chances to use English outside the classroom. The followings are excerpts from the interviews.

It’s extremely difficult for L2 learners to acquire native speakers’ accent ... I believe accent is the language aspect that fossilizes earlier than other aspects of

language. ... I think it's absolutely fine if English learners can't acquire a native accent because nowadays we have more chances to use English with non-native speakers than with native speakers ... (T8-E)

It is unlikely that Thai students will be able to have native accents ... [as] we did not grow up in the native-English speaking environment ... we have to accept the truth ... (T14-Tr)

Moreover, two of them mentioned that it was unrealistic to push the students to sound like NSs because even they, as English teachers, could not speak English like NSs. One of them argued that "we teachers ... still speak English with accents despite the fact that we have lived and studied in native English-speaking countries for many years" (T14-Tr).

Adding to this, two others claimed that getting the message across to people was the goal, not the accent. They paid more attention to the clarity of articulation, as one claimed

I ALWAYS tell my students to speak clearly and don't think too much of the accent. That will come later with various social influences. Thai accent is beautiful in itself. As long as we say things clear enough, people will try to understand us. (T7-E)

A second group, about equal in number to the first, preferred native accents and argued that they would encourage students to sound like NSs. Most cited advantages in getting a job or being promoted as the reason for their preference. Three of them showed an especially strong determination to push their students to pronounce like NSs. As one claimed

I try to encourage my student to *imitate* [italics added] an accent of *chao khong pasa* ... although they keep complaining that it is very difficult ... If they sound like native speakers, they will be accepted by their employers and other people as having “the special skill and intelligence” [or in the participant’s own word “ดูดี ดูเก่ง”] (T4-Tr)

“The special skill and intelligence” or in the original phrase “ดูดี ดูเก่ง” (*doo dee doo keng*) was normally associated with image and prestige. If Thai people could sound like NSs, they would gain more image and prestige in the society. Two other participants from this group said they would tolerate a Thai accent only if they felt that native-like pronunciation was beyond the students’ limit. As one of them said, “I try my best to push them to sound like the owner of the language unless it is beyond their abilities” (T60-Tr).

To draw a conclusion, the attitudes are equally split into two extremes when the participants were asked whether they would teach their students a pronunciation model based on students’ local Thai or native-like accent. The first group pays less attention to native-accent but puts more emphasis on students’ limitations, ability, and communicability. Being concerned with job opportunities, and social image and prestige, the other group has a strong desire to encourage their students to adopt and follow a native-like pronunciation model.

Attitudes toward Classroom Materials

Language learners can internalize what is represented in the classroom materials which can shape learners’ views in both macro and micro levels: politics, languages, cultures, races, ethnicities, and their identities. Through the preliminary survey, it can be observed that textbooks, reference works, supplementary materials, and examinations

used in class are still exclusively produced by the U.K. and the U.S. publishing industries.

In an e-mail interview, I explored the issue further in detail, in an e-mail asking whether the teacher participants use in-house/locally-published or commercial classroom materials from English-speaking countries, and how they felt about those materials or textbooks they had delete. The responses of 19 participants could be categorized into four themes in terms of what kind of teaching materials they favored: commercial textbooks from foreign (UK and USA) publishers, in-house or locally-published materials, mix-and-match materials from both local and international publishers, and indecision (trial and error).

Ten participants favored commercial materials from foreign publishers. They “feel that overseas commercial textbooks are better than locally published ones” (T72-Tr), and that “they are professionally developed and proved worldwide” (T9-E). I further asked them to name some of their favorite publishers, and the most often identified were McGraw-Hill, Cambridge, Oxford, and Longman. Generally, when referring to commercial textbooks from such publishers, they found them “more helpful” (T7-E) since they can save “a lot of time for teaching preparation” (T4-Tr). To be more specific, in terms of the layout inside the textbooks, they were “professionally designed by experts ... [and] appealing to read” (T8-E). The content was also “full of interesting texts” (T7-E) and “well-organized” (T73-Tr) because each unit “employs the same pattern ... so the students get use to the rhythm” (T7-E). More important than that, the language used in the textbook was “generally accurate, appropriate, and acceptable because it is edited and proofread by native speakers” (T8-E).

It is interesting that three out of ten in this category seemed to have experience in using only commercial books. Seven other participants had used both locally-produced and commercial textbooks from the aforementioned publishers. However, they reported that they had a preference for commercial textbooks produced by the native-English-owned companies. One participant argued that he “kind of disagree with the ideas of producing in-house materials” (T8-E). Such an attitude was likely to be influenced by negative impressions of the existing in-house textbooks. “Our in-house textbooks ... are very disappointing when compared to overseas commercial textbooks” (T14-Tr). The textbooks were also perceived to be not “up to the standard” (T12-Tr); they were “poorly organized, and inconsistent” (T14-Tr). The layouts were also “not appealing ... [and] not professional” (T8-E). A few stated that the faculty members who were involved in the textbook’s production had “some constraints because they are generally occupied by teaching loads and other responsibilities and, therefore, can’t allocate enough time to write a good material. There’s no expert to help design the format of the book, making it not unappealing to read” (T8-E).

Interestingly, several participants in this category acknowledged that to a certain extent the foreign commercial materials were not compatible with local students’ interests, cultures, and learning environment. They also acknowledged that the language in the texts was geared for students who studied and lived abroad, especially in the U.S. or the UK. In addition, these textbooks were relatively expensive when compared to other costs of living in the country. However, stated concerns for professionalism, *authentic* language use, and attractive layouts seemed to overshadow the flaws of commercial materials.

In the second category, only three participants had positive attitudes toward in-house and locally-published textbooks written by Thai teachers. One of them said, “I like to use in-house materials because they are suitable for my students” (T13-Tr).

There were four participants in the third group, who preferred to compile teaching materials from different sources. These could be either locally published or commercial materials from foreign publishers. They “mix and match” (T60-Tr) them together as there was no single textbook that would fit the curriculum.

The Cultural Dimension

In this section, I will cover themes that relate to the cultural dimension. These involve responses reporting that the understanding of NSs’ culture and perspectives is essential to help the L2 learners learn English. These perceptions justify the pedagogical practice that the native-speaking cultures have always been the major focus on learning and teaching English in Thailand.

Perceptions of English-speaking Countries

The worldwide spread of English implies increased opportunities for English speakers across national and cultural boundaries to interact with one another. At school, compared to teachers of other disciplines, Thai teachers of English are granted a prestige of ‘having English’ to enjoy more personal contact with English users coming from various social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. They are constantly exposed to different varieties of English-speaking cultures through overseas exchange programs, seminars, conferences, or education. It is interesting to explore how these experiences have shaped their own views toward English-speaking countries and cultures.

This section aims at presenting Thai teachers' impressions of English-speaking countries. The interviewees were asked if they were to receive a scholarship to study English abroad, to which country might they like to go and what would the reason for choosing that particular area. Figure 11 provides an overview of the results through the frequencies from the returned QR from 108 Thai teachers working in the lower-northern region. This chart reveals the four areas most often identified as highly desirable places to further their English education overseas: America (45.4%), Britain (27.8%), New Zealand (7.5), and Australia (6.5).

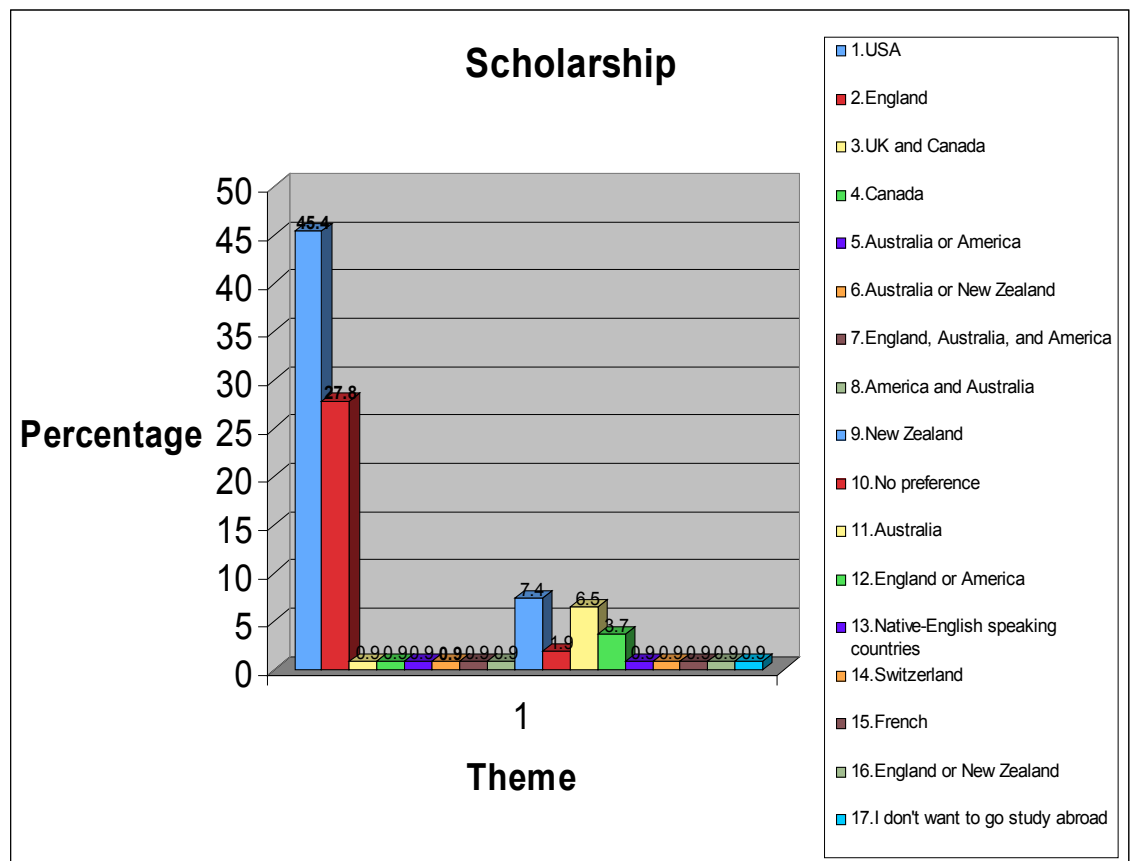


Figure 11. Perceptions of English speaking countries.

The majority of the participants shared the view that they would chose to further their education in the United States of America for three reasons: its superiority in all

aspects, its worldwide linguistic and cultural influence, and its heterogeneous society. As regards the country's superiority, many participants claimed that "the States is amalgamation of all kind of knowledge and academia (T1-E)"; "therefore, I would be exposed and experience in [such] an advanced body of knowledge and bring it back in order to help develop my home country" (T77-Tr). Additionally, many respondents mentioned that American English language and culture had already gained the phenomenal spread, recognition, and influence on the use of language and the way of life among people across the globe. By attending schools in the U.S., they would, then, be exposed to the mainstream language and culture which had already been adopted as worldwide norms. One participant claimed that, "I want to study English in the native English-speaking country [USA] so that I would be exposed to the *accurate* [italics added] native language and culture" (T79-Tr). Moreover, being renowned for its "melting pot" or "salad bowl" community, America had attracted a sizable number of Thai teachers to view it as the perfect place to study English. As one stated that she would like to go to school in the U.S. "because of its culturally and racially heterogeneous society; I would have a plenty of chances to experience different varieties of English" (T98-Tr).

For those who would chose to study English in England, they were favorably impressed by the sense of language origin, originality, and ownership. To give some typical statements, many participants desired to further their education in England because "British English is the Standard English" (T60-Tr), "England originated the language" (T41-Tr), and "English there is the *most accurate* [italics added] model" (T89-Tr). One person was all in favor of England as the best place to study *the English*.

I would like to go to England because English people must be the best person, I believe, who can teach his or her *own* [italics added] language and accent. Unlike other English-speaking countries, people there may speak English but with accents. (T104-Tr)

Australia and New Zealand received significant recognition; however, there was no particular reason that the respondents shared in common. To draw a conclusion from the returned responses, the countries mostly identified by Thai teachers of English can be categorized as the so-call Western ‘Center’⁷. They also have very positive impressions of these Western English-speaking countries as their ideal places to pursue their education.

Perceptions of English-speaking Cultures

The impressions of English-speaking countries are closely interrelated with cultural perceptions. Hence, this section aims at presenting Thai teachers’ cultural perceptions of English-speaking countries. In e-mail interviews, teachers were asked to describe their impression of beliefs, values, and practices of any one particular English-speaking country with which they were most familiar. There were 19 participants in total who responded to the interview questions. Thirteen participants identified the U.S., four identified the UK, and only one identified Australia as countries with which they were familiar. There was one interviewee who did not feel familiar with any particular country. The question itself was intended to generally explore their attitudes (either positive, neutral, or negative) toward any English-speaking cultural aspects.

However, it was very interesting that nearly all of them (17 of 19 participants) solely discussed their positive impressions of native English-speaking cultures. The common beliefs, values, and practices from those countries that they shared were liberal

⁷ Center refers to “the technologically advanced communities of the West which, at least in part sustain their material dominance by keeping less developed communities in periphery status” (Canagarajah, 1999b, p. 4).

education, freedom of thought, democratic society, a sense of responsibility, self discipline, self reliance, and social equality. Several participants also assumed that these served as intercultural norms which people all across the globe agreed to follow and took them as the standard model. As one participant stated

An English-speaking country that I am most familiar with is England. My impression is that the English usage pattern is originated in this country, and their culture can track back for centuries. I would say that English values and practices are the standard model which has been accepted and followed by people from all over the world. (T73-Tr)

In this connection, one participant shared a very interesting assumption that the way of life in a *single* English-speaking country could be taken as a world role model. This was because it reflected and represented the ultimate goal which people from all walks of life across the globe were trying to reach and achieve, as she claimed

America is the land of newness and its culture reflects what is in vogue in the fields of business, entertainment, education sciences, and technology. The culture in that country is that of middle class, which represents pretty much what the world tries to strive for (yes, middleclassness seems to be the balance between the snobbish upper class and the vulgar lower class). (T6-E)

Not only did they obviously identify positive impressions, but more than one third also showed more appreciation toward the Western English-speaking cultures when being compared to Thai culture. To take one example, they were favorably impressed by the way Western children were raised, but they strongly criticized Thai parents for not letting their children become mature and independent.

Compared to Thais, Americans have different beliefs, values, and practices in their lives. Americans have been raised in the way that they could become self-disciplined and self-reliant since they were very young. Unlike the way Thai parents usually do, children are extremely overprotected not only in their childhood, but also throughout their marital stage of life. (T47-Tr)

To explore the typical characteristics of Thai people that they perceived in the questionnaire, I asked if there were any differences or similarities among Thai and Western students. More than half of the respondents said that these two groups were very different. The Thai teachers held a very positive impression of Western students in the way that they had already met all the needs to become successful in life. On the contrary, Thai students were negatively viewed as someone who only has “lacking” “missing,” or “insufficient” qualities. According to them, the typical qualities commonly associated with Thai students were obedience to authority (teacher as an embodiment of knowledge), passivity in class, ignorance, lack of learning eagerness, lack of critical thinking, and lack of survival skills.

With such overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward Western people and cultures, I further investigated in e-mail interviews whether the participants had adopted any Western English-speaking culture from the identified countries. Eleven out of the 19 participants agreed that they had adopted certain beliefs, values, and cultural practices. Four did not explicitly state whether they had done so or not. Three argued that they did not adopt anything in particular. Only one participant was not quite sure if she had adopted any cultural concepts from the West.

In the follow-up e-mail interview, I further asked those 11 participants who adopted Western culture whether they had taught any of cultural information and concepts to their students. All of them reported that they intentionally taught Western beliefs, values, and practices to the students. With good intentions, two of them said that they trained and reinforced students to accept certain Western-oriented norms and perspectives—e.g. punctuality, self-discipline, gender equality, and human rights—by considering these cultural concepts as part of their evaluation scheme. They stated that these elements of Western culture would benefit their students in the near future when they sought for a job, got married, and raised a family.

Interestingly enough, this group of teachers not only wanted their students to adopt some Western values or practices, they also wished that Thai people as a whole would accept some Western beliefs, values, and practices. However, a few stated that it was unlikely to happen because Thai and Western cultures were mutually exclusive. They further elaborated that many local norms embedded and preserved might not welcome or could not coexist with such “admirable” (T14-Tr) Western cultural aspects. These preserved norms are, for example, “hierarchical onion skin relationship, seniority system, and *Kreng jai* concepts⁸” (T14-Tr); as well as, “rigid regulations or formality, the status sign or the showcase, and the ritual of the signifiers” (T6-E). They, more or less, viewed these Thai norms as preventing cultural adoption from the West to take place.

At this point, it is crucial to explore further whether the participants have any negative impressions of the particular English-speaking countries which they mentioned in the previous interview. In one of follow-up interviews, the research pinpointed if there

⁸ *Kreng jai* is one of the most difficult Thai cultural concepts for Westerners to understand. Komin (1991) defines this concept as: “... to be considerate, to feel reluctant to impose upon another person, to take another person’s feelings (and ego) into account, or to take every measure not to cause discomfort or inconvenience for another person” (p. 164).

were any particular cultural beliefs, values, or practices in such Western center countries that they did not like or they resisted. Fewer answered that in the previous interview, there were 15 participants responding to this question. Five out of them stated that “To be honest, I can’t find any practices or values I don’t like or resist regarding teaching and learning English bad point” (T10-E). One participant was not able to make a clear decision if she had anything against the native-speaking country with which she was most familiar. Another one said that his bad experience was just a very special case and might be considered to be of an individual or personal nature rather than resulting from national or cultural values. The rest (eight participants) illustrated some values and practices that they did not like or resist adopting into their life. Britons (the British) were perceived as being too reserved and very demanding and unfriendly to other races to settle in their community. Americans were viewed as being egocentric, individualistic, materialistic, and consumeristic. To elaborate more, one participant claims

American values that do not suit me are ... (1) Sometimes the Americans can be very self-centered and too individualistic. I think they are difficult to live within the long run; (2) They are culturally naïve; they assume American way is the way of the world; (3) They have a clever way to make people believe that they are the most honest people in the world, ha, ha, ha, come on, they are really successful in hypnotizing themselves and hypnotizing their citizens into believing this. (T6-E)

Interestingly, it can be noticeable that the discourse used among these eight respondents was significantly different from that of the prior question. While arguing positive impressions of Western culture on the basis of the inferior Thai versus the superior West, they solely discussed the unfavorable Western values and practices, but as

being completely detached from their local culture. In other words, impressive aspects of Western culture that Thai people should adopt were suggested explicitly; however, they did not mention any Thai beliefs, values, or practices which could be, at least, accepted by Westerners. To conclude, as regards transcultural flows within the age of globalization, there seem to be only one-way, instead of, two-way transfer in which local and Western cultures are supposed to influence one another.

Assumptions on Culture Input in ELT

In this climate, I further investigate how teachers’ positive impressions of Western culture would shape their pedagogical implications, especially in term of cultural information and orientation in English language classrooms. Hence, this section aims at presenting teachers’ assumptions about cultural teaching and input in English language learning.

Figure 12 provides an overview of the results through the frequencies from the returned QR from the total of 108 teachers from 14 schools in the lower-northern region. The chart reveals whether they believe that their students will learn English better if they understand the NSs’ culture and perspective.

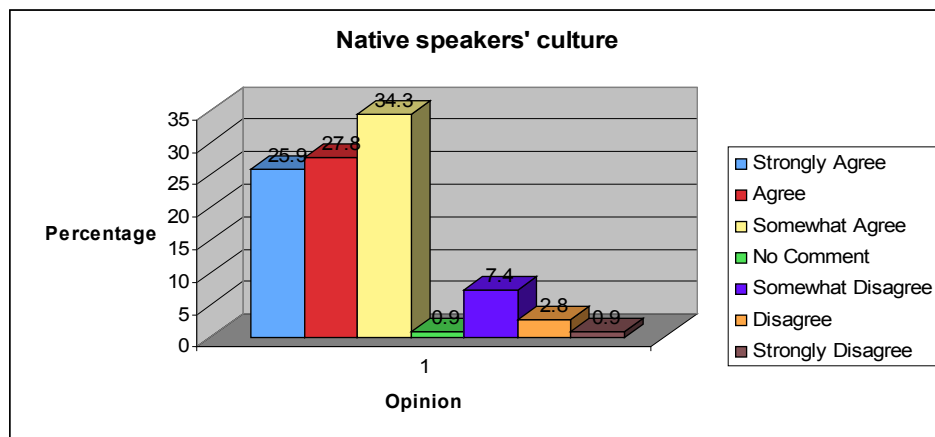


Figure 12. Assumptions on cultural input in ELT.

The figure showed that the Thai teachers of English “somewhat agree”(34.3%), “agree” (27.8%), and “strongly agree”(25.9%) with the notion that understanding NSs’ culture and perspective could help their students to acquire the language better. This suggested that a striking number of the total participants (88%) had no objection to such a notion. At this point, it was very important to investigate for more depth and details of their perception of native-English speaking culture in ELT classroom.

In one of the e-mail interviews, teachers were asked whether they agreed with this statement: “A learner can only be used English properly if he or she is familiar with (West) native English-speaking culture.” From the total of 14 returned responses, ten participants shared an agreement that “language and culture is closely related. Not only does a learner know language, he also should be aware of culture of English-speaking people to be fully competent in English” (T9-E). One interviewee strongly claimed that language and culture were inseparable by illustrating his own experience

I agree with this statement 100% since language is a part of culture. It is impossible to learn language without understanding the culture of a particular language. For example, American people are likely to give compliments. If we take them seriously, we might feel that American people are insincere. But, the compliments have their own functions. One of them is to establish solidarity or good feeling between a speaker and a hearer. So, compliments are a part of American culture. (T10-E)

Two other participants did not agree that being familiar with only native English-speaking culture would be sufficiently practical and applicable to the global status of English as an international language. One of them claimed:

English has become an international heritage. ... Therefore, teaching English by relating it to cultural issues is rather challenging due to a wide variety of English use around the world. ... Concerning the concepts of culture in communication and the appropriateness of language use in particular contexts, I think the interlocutors should be aware of and sensitive to inter- or cross-cultural communication instead of adhering to a specific culture. (T8-E)

Moreover, one particular English-speaking culture might not be appropriate or applicable to another English-speaking community. Another one argued that “we cannot assume that American culture would be welcome and accepted among local people living in Singapore. One single native-English speaking culture just cannot apply to all” (T14-Tr).

The rest (two participants) were unable to make clear decisions. From their own experiences as L2 learners, they acknowledged that “being familiar with native English-speaking culture certainly helps” (T7-E); however, they were reluctant to totally agree with the statement as they had observed some special cases. To illustrate, a member in the participants’ families spent almost all of his life in Thailand, but he could use perfect English by keeping up with English from books and magazines. His English was absolutely better than the participant’s in all skills, despite the fact that the participant had been educated in native English-speaking countries for many years.

Cultural Teaching in the English Classroom

In connection to the preceding section, the perception that the English language and Western English-speaking culture are inseparable is obviously evident in the decision-making for cultural topics in English teaching curricula. In the questionnaires, I

asked the participants to name one or two cultural topics from any countries that they felt should be included in English teaching curricula. Figure 13 provides an overview of the results through the frequencies of the returned QR.

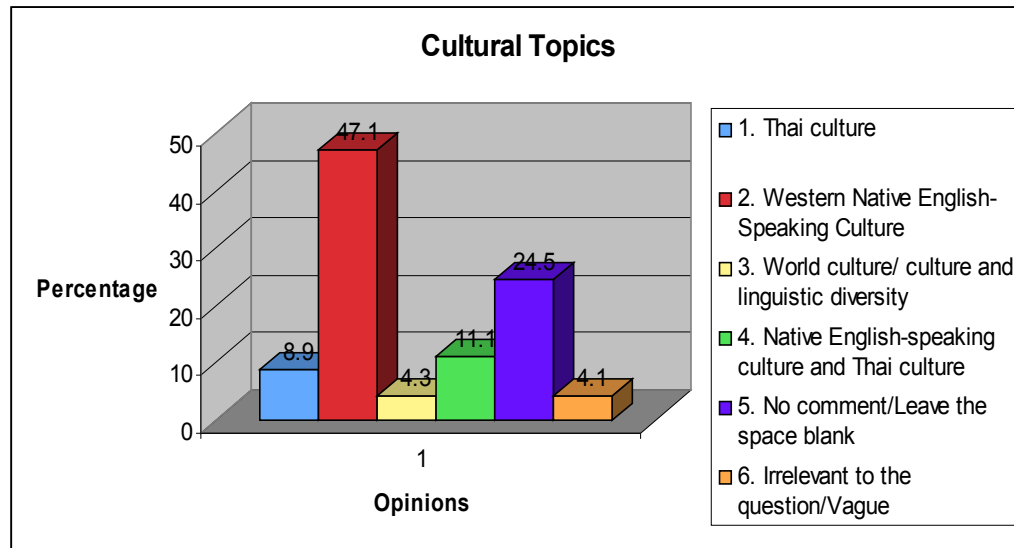


Figure 13. Assumptions on cultural teaching.

Through the majority of the responses (47%), this chart revealed that cultural orientation in English classrooms should be extensively based on Western native English-speaking culture. Only a small number of teachers (11.1%) felt that they should give equal attention to both the Western and local cultures, and even fewer, only a few (8.9%) said that Thai culture should be a major focus in classrooms.

The Western cultural information that the majority of participants would teach in their English classrooms was the holidays and festivals, norms and customs, and lifestyle. They provided the rationale for placing emphasis on Western culture in class stating that “learning native-speaking culture would help students to learn English better”(T58-Tr), and “this will help them to study English better if they understand the native culture and native perspective”(T62-Tr). Additionally, there was a strong claim from many

participants that native English speakers were essentially different from Thai people. Such claims reflected the belief when ‘we’ learned ‘their’ language, it was very difficult to understand the language use unless ‘we’ understood what was inside the NSs’ head. One participant assumed, “We need to *understand* [italics added] them. We have to learn the way Westerners think, say, or speak their mind in different situations so that we can *understand* [italics added] them better” (T6-Tr). The quote also suggested that the teachers seemed to impose a heavy burden for their students in trying to “understand” NSs. In this climate, Western English-speaking culture was not only promoted or familiarized in formal classroom-orientation only.

In the e-mail interview, nearly all of the respondents—both from higher and secondary education—revealed that an English department had been providing extracurricular activities such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas based on native-English speaking culture. Many of them argued that such celebrations were held in order to “help students learn the culture of *chao khong pasa*” (T70-Tr), “get the students a bit nearer to the culture of the west ... as we call ourselves Department of Western Languages” (T7-E), and also “let students experience the culture of *chao khong pasa* from activities outside classroom ... not only from textbooks or class materials” (T4-Tr).

However, many of them did not explicitly argue that holding the above-mentioned celebrations was to promote “Western native-speaking culture” or “Western-influenced culture”. Several respondents chose to use more neutral or broader terms or expressions which seemed to have no explicit or specific association with “native English-speaking West.” To illustrate, they used the term “foreign” instead of “Western” culture in a

phrase like “to get students acquainted with *foreign* [italics added] tradition and customs” (T47-Tr). Other examples were that their English department provided such activities from native English-speaking culture “to broaden students’ linguistic and cultural horizons” (T60-Tr), or “At the institutional level, there is just a general policy to promote the learning and understanding of international art and culture” (T8-E). On the other hand, there was only one participant who showed an objection to the extracurricular activities held by the English department at her university, as she commented:

Personally I believe university students are too grown up to focus their attention on such trivial cultural elements. They should aim for the ideological levels of the culture, not the rites. (T6-E)

To conclude, the majority of the participants feel that cultural information taught in class should be based on native English-speaking culture from the West. They cling to a belief that the understanding of the NSs’ culture and perspective is essential helping their students learn English.

The Economic Dimension

In this section, I will cover themes that relate to the economic dimension. These involve responses confirming on the fact that NSs from the West have an advantage over local NNSs in terms of job opportunities, entry salary, and professional status in ELT professionals.

Perceptions of Employability, Job Opportunities, and Benefits for English Language

Teachers

The ELT industry seems to promote and maintain imbalances and inequalities in employment and wealth opportunities worldwide. In Thailand, such professional

hegemony is evident in most institutions across the nation, especially in the lower-northern region where this study takes place. At one institution, the entry-level salaries for temporary teaching positions (a starting position before they would later be granted tenure) offered to English-speaking foreigners and Thais are not equal. Several participants were informed that Thai teachers would receive 9,000 Baht (roughly 257 dollars) while foreigners would receive 25,000 Baht (roughly 714 dollars) a month.

Hence, this section aims at presenting local teachers' perception of such hegemony in hiring for English language teaching positions in Thailand. The interviewees were asked to share their views: Was it always the policy at their institution to offer a higher salary and better welfare to temporary native-speaking teachers than to temporary Thai teachers of English.

There were 16 participants responding to this interview question. Two respondents said that their institutions had never hired any foreign English teachers. However, the vast majority, 14 respondents stated that their institutions hired foreign English teachers, who were then commonly granted a prestigious title and were also recognized among most of the interviewees as "experts" or "specialists." These experts or specialists mostly came from the Western English-speaking countries (e.g. England, Ireland, America, and Australia); however, some schools also hired "foreign teachers of English," as they were called, from English-speaking countries in Asia, especially, the Philippines. Most participants who had English-speaking colleagues from both regions of the world recognized teachers from the West as NSs. On the other hand, they considered those from the Philippines as NNSs of English.

All participants shared the view that it was the policy and practice at their institutions to offer a higher salary to temporary foreign teachers than to temporary Thai teachers of English. However, 13 out of 14 participants strongly agreed that it was a fair policy and practice to offer a higher salary to those foreign teachers, especially the Western NSs. Some of them said it was “a must” (T8-E) to offer a high salary in order “to attract” (T4-Tr) or “to motivate” (T6-E) them to come and work at their institutions. One participant noted that “otherwise we could not find any NSs of English to work at our school” (T8-E) which was not located in a major city like Bangkok [the capital of Thailand] or Chiang Mai [the largest city in the North]. Another stressed the disruptive effect of the competition for high salaries among NSs, which resulted in the rural schools having trouble recruiting: “[The major cities] ... [offer] a higher salary and better benefits so that many native-speaking teachers [are] likely to quit their job [to accept] a teaching position in such cities” (T4-Tr). One of them gave a very straightforward reason for offering a higher salary for native-speakers of English: “I think the school offers a higher salary because they think that they want [native speakers’] language which Thai teachers can't [offer]” (T23-E). This interviewee felt that Thai teachers of English lacked certain language abilities, and that the schools needed to hire NSs of English in order to ‘compensate’ for this deficiency. This point of view had a connection to many comments from other interviewees that, as teachers themselves, they needed to have native-speaking colleagues around to “depend on or rely on” (T5-Tr). In other words, they could “always turn to [native speakers] when [they] have problems” (T9-E), “consult with them for the correct use of English” (T47-Tr), or “do the proofreading of my translation work”

(T10-E). Citing a specific example, one participant spoke of a time when he “asked [an] American colleague the meaning of “loan shark” (T10-E).

In addition to the benefits to local teachers of having NSs of English at their institutions, three participants strongly claimed that it was a very worthwhile investment to hire NSs with such a high salary. This was because their students could benefit greatly from the native-speaking teachers. One respondent’s answer implicitly ceded ‘ownership’ of English to the NSs, while also supporting the presence of L1 English speakers in Thai English programs: “Chances of using English in reality are so slim. This is such a great opportunity for the students to use English with *chao khong pasa*” (T2-Tr).

One respondent gave a more nuanced idea in support of having native-speakers working in his school, as the availability of teachers from diverse backgrounds could help the students to expand their linguistic awareness. As this participant phrased it, “I think it is very beneficial for Thai students to have chances to learn from both Thai and English speakers” (T10-E). The same respondent elaborated more in the follow-up interview, stating that “I think it is good to have foreign teachers since our students can get a chance to learn different English dialects.”

One participant expressed her point of view in a very uncritical way, apparently accepting that, to be realistic, “being a native speaker is a merit” and that these speakers deserved the higher salary. In defense of this policy, this respondent wrote:

I don’t think it’s unfair to give more money and benefits to the “specialists” as we call them here. If they prove to be in the right place at the right time (i.e. in a place where their being native speakers is a merit), then who can blame them if they get more money. I mean there’s no such thing as justice in the system

anyway It's just that in the department of English, being a Thai native speaker doesn't count for much, that's all. (T7-E)

However, it is important to interpret this acceptance of fairness in terms of higher salary and better welfare in the context of Thai social and cultural values. This welcoming of the NSs does not occur solely because the local teachers and students can gain a great deal of benefit from them, or because the world is currently in need of NSs of English. The act of being hospitable to guests or strangers, which is embedded in Thai culture, obviously comes in to play in this issue. In fact, quite aside from the linguistic issue, five interviewees felt sympathy for their English-speaking colleagues on a personal or social level, which clearly affected their view of whether it was such a fair or unfair policy or practice to offer these Western teachers a better salary. As one of them explained

Those people are considered overseas *experts* [italics added] and will be treated as *guests* [italics added] rather than citizens. In Asian context, we treat guests better than our own people. And also because they are, in most cases with a few exceptions of course, from countries with higher living cost, so a lower salary might not motivate them to come and a lower salary will not pay for their annual visiting trip home. I can understand that without any resentment. (T6-E)

Most of them shared the same view that these “expert guests” had traveled alone a long way from home to a foreign country completely alien to them. One participant had great sympathy for her foreign colleagues: “They are totally strangers and have no family here in Thailand, unlike Thai teachers of English who always have their relatives and

friends to turn to or rely on” (T60-Tr). More importantly, they raised an economic issue justifying the salary and benefits granted to native speaking teachers:

... They need to have enough salary so that they can save some money to visit their family from time to time or to pay for the cost of living [for their family] ... [and] to have some savings after they finish the teaching contract ... and decide to go back to their home country. (T8-E)

Interestingly, only one (out of 14 respondents) was opposed to the inequitable hiring policy and practice regarding salary and benefits. She rejected the idea that *chao khong pasa* naturally implied vastly superior teaching performance over Thai teachers of English. This participant further elaborated that temporary Thai teachers of English generally had “a more relevant degree in ELT, a better educational background, and a more potential teaching approach” (T4-Tr).

To close the section, nearly all interviewees reject the idea that the preference given to native speaking English teachers gives them an unfairly privileged position and better salary. Although it is clear that such hiring practice is inequitable, the data shows how naturalized the practice are among Thai teachers in this study. They view this as a practical policy, citing the benefits to themselves and their students in terms of language acquisition and expansion of their linguistic horizons. In fact, it is clear that such hiring practice is inequitable. Added to this, the friendly behaviors and attitudes towards foreigners that are embedded in Thai culture have a great influence on the way one-third of the respondents perceive such policies. This group of Thai teachers emphasize that they see native English teachers as special guests deserving special attention and

treatment. This leads them to be less concerned about the inequality in salary and job welfare prevalent in their institutions.

Perceptions on Discourses Used in Job Advertisements

To gain some further insight into the local view on occupational imbalances and inequality, in the course of the interviews, I asked the participants to comment on some requirements that I drew from job advertisements on a well-known website for job openings for teaching positions, www.ajarn.com. Those requirements are, for example:

- Applicants must be from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and/or Europe Only. Non-native speakers of English (Indian, Filipinos, etc.) please do not apply.
- Native English speakers from the U.S., the U.K., New Zealand, Canada, and Australia only. (Please note that all other nationalities will not be considered)

It is clear from the discourse used in these advertisements that employers in Thailand show favor to a particular group of candidates' regarding their birthplace, physical appearance, and language orientation. This discriminatory attitude extremely overshadowed applicants' educational background, teaching ability, and language competence.

The responses from 15 participants in total were split equally into three categories: denial, acknowledging without resistance, acknowledging with strong resistance. Five interviewees failed to acknowledge the presence of discrimination in these job advertisements. To illustrate, some of them argued that “this is what [language schools] should do (T2-Tr) because “the schools want to keep their school reputation as standardized” (T43-Tr.), and “the advertisers have no intention of discriminating against

other races” (T4-TR). One of the interviewees cited her own experience as a language learner as support for her approval of these hiring practices

For private language schools ... Personally, I think that this is what they should do ... They have to serve learners’ needs. That is, most of the second language learners who attend their schools want to study English with *real* [italics added] native-speakers of English, not Thai teachers or other speakers from other countries. You can take me as an example. When I pay to attend a language class in such language schools, I badly want to study in classes instructed by *chao khong pasa*. (T2-Tr)

Six out of the 15 participants acknowledged the imbalanced opportunities; however, they seemed to feel that those schools or employers must serve the needs of their customers. One contributor proposed that “The people who posted these messages are catering to a group of customers who already have a preconceived idea that NSs mean those who are from the afore-mentioned countries. This is a prejudice difficult to eliminate” (T6-E). This interviewee discussed this issue on the basis of the fact that particular varieties of English use are more widely accepted and preferable to other varieties. One voice is taken as a representative of the group on this point:

I can understand why. Commercial academic institutes cannot battle with rooted prejudice against races and colors (that lead to some peoples being called natives and nonnatives). They don’t think of it in terms of human rights and equality, etc. What they want is money and in order to get that they need to project a respectable image of the mainstream English speakers. It’s wrong in the age of Nelson Mandela like this, but it’s the way it is and I can understand why. (T7-E)

Four out of 15 offered strong resistance toward what they saw as racial discrimination in the job advertisement. They claimed that “this is such a sign of serious discrimination” (T8-Tr), “those school directors’ perspectives are so narrow” (T14-Tr), and “I saw a big red flag in these advertisements. I would not recommend anybody to apply for a job there” (T10-E).

Most of the respondents acknowledged that the title “English language teachers” was closely associated with a particular group of English speakers from particular regions of the world in terms of the model and ideal teachers. However, one participant argued that there was something very superficial about the way this pattern showed up. From this participant’s response, it could be interpreted that Thai people not only associated “nativeness” (T8-Tr) with birth location or their language performance or accent, but also with physical appearance. This participant claimed that he was still doubtful whether British- or American-born Indians or Filipinos who had been educated with dominant/mainstream English would have any advantage in the job market in Thailand. He further argued that employers might still question or prejudge their qualifications on the basis of their physical appearance. In other words, employability in Thailand seemed to be determined by a stereotypical notion that a ‘particular look’ fitted in with a ‘particular job,’ at least in English teaching.

The same participant showed his understanding that many schools felt that they had to meet their customers’ expectations of an “ideal English teacher,” and that this image went beyond teachers’ birthplace, linguistic orientation, and teaching performance. An ideal English teacher needed to have a ‘Caucasian look’, in Thai “ดูเป็นฝรั่ง” (T8-Tr) or a *farang* look: blonde hair, white complexion, green or blue eyes, and a prominent nose.

Having many teachers with this appearance could help to create a positive reputation for a school.

Perceptions on Employability of Nonnative Teachers in Native-speaking Countries

To explore further on a related topic, I asked the participants what advice they would offer to NNSs of English who wished to be employed as instructors of English in English-speaking countries. Nine out of 15 participants suggested that language competence came as their first concern. Those who wished to be employed as English instructors in an English-speaking country needed to “have high confidence in their language ability” (T12) and to be up to a “native-like” (T4-Tr) or “near-native like” (T5-E) ability. The language performance that received the most attention among nine participants was the accent. Four of them claimed that accents were very important and played a critical role in the employability in English-speaking countries. Some of them wrote that the non-native applicant must be able to speak English “with the standard accent widely used and accepted in that English speaking country” (T13-Tr). In terms of employability, one noted that “the native speakers of English may have an advantage in getting a position for teaching speaking class ...” (T14-Tr). One interviewee offered a stronger pronouncement on how crucial the accents were: “if their accents are not native-like, they are not qualified enough to teach English, and they need to seek other subjects to teach” (T60-Tr). In addition to the accents, cultural knowledge was also important for these NNSs. Three out of 15 claimed that they needed to know and understand the culture in that English-speaking country well enough so that they could “effectively adapt themselves in the society, be accepted among colleagues and students, and then settle down in the community without any problem” (T4-Tr).

Four out of 15 respondents suggested that nonnatives should seek a subject or specialty to teach, typically a subject other than English. One teacher argued that, “[they should] aim for teaching courses in Asian-American literature, in writing and other content courses, or in EFL theory-orientated courses” (T6-E). Another teacher said very bluntly that these NNSs should choose a field that is “unwanted” or “disliked” by native-speaking instructors:

You've got to find your own “specialty”, so to speak. Find an area in the language that you can assert yourself as an authority, or apply for a position no native wants, i.e. a writing teacher! (They—natives—hate that, don't they?) (T7-E)

Interestingly enough, only one interviewee would strongly encourage prospective non-native speaking teachers, as he felt that there were no significant inequalities or imbalances in job markets in the English-speaking countries:

What they have to do is to make sure that their qualifications fit the requirements. I don't think native speakers have a greater advantage than non-native speakers in the USA or the UK. Most of my non-native friends got a job after they finished their degree. (T10-E)

Having a native-like performance, especially the accents, and knowing the native culture are the best advice that this group of teachers would give the NNSs seeking for a teaching position in native English-speaking countries. Additionally, finding a specialty that native-speakers are reluctant or unconfident to teach would open more opportunities for non-native applicants to gain their place to fit in the position and their space to grow in academics.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The study has investigated and analyzed local teachers' beliefs regarding the role of English and ELT in their own lives, professions, and societies. In response to the main question posed in this research—Is there any sign of *de facto* colonialism as identified by Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (1998), Canagarajah (1999b), and Kumaravadivelu (2003b) embedded in the ELT context of a non-colonized nation such as Thailand?—I can safely assume that such signs can be identified through the local teachers' perceptions. The colonial characteristics are very complex; however, these can be clearly explained in four interrelated dimensions. Each will be discussed through the following original research questions, covering scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic aspects.

1. Scholastic dimension: How do Thai EFL teachers perceive the relative value of Thai scholarship and wisdom as compared with scholarship by English native-speaker?
2. Linguistic dimension: What varieties of English are highly valued by Thai teachers? Do these teachers perceive that Thai students will be better English users if they conform to the norms of native speakers, or do they favor local or global varieties? What reasons do they give for their responses?
3. Cultural dimension: What are Thai EFL teachers' assumptions on cultural teaching and input in the English classroom judging from the teachers' own statements? What cultures do they claim are given priority in their instruction?

Do they seem to assume that Thai students will learn English better if they know Western native-speakers' culture?

4. Economic dimensions: How do Thai EFL teacher perceive hiring practices at their institution? Do these perceptions indicate that native speakers are preferably given better job opportunities and prestigious status in Thailand?

Question 1: The Scholastic Dimension

English is an international language in the Commonwealth, the Colonies and in America. International in the sense that English serves the American way of life and might be called American, it serves the Indian way of life and has recently been declared an Indian language within the framework of the federal constitution. In another sense, it is international not only in Europe but in Asia and Africa, and serves various African ways of life and is increasingly the all-Asian language of politics. Secondly, and I say 'secondly' advisedly, English is the key to what is described in a common cliché as "the British way of life". (J. R. Firth, 1956, p. 97)

Kumaravadivelu (2006b) claims that "the scholastic dimension of English relates to the ways in which Western scholars have furthered their own vested interests by disseminating Western knowledge and by denigrating local knowledge" (p. 12). Even though some L2 teaching wisdoms have already been discovered or exist in the local context, Western scholars either ignore them or appropriate them and then claim authority over them.

Given the results of this study, it is safe to conclude that Thai scholarship and wisdom are in fact perceived as inferior to those of English native speakers, at least in the

view of Thai ESL professionals. This can be observed through the way they perceive their interactions with Western educators and classmates in their graduate training programs. Although this study has not measured the attitudes of these Western professors and peers, the Thai participants have clearly felt marginalized in their interactions with these Western ESL professionals. This seems also to have affected the ways in which Thai teachers perceive their own local knowledge in comparison with their views of Western scholarship and expertise. Some of the attitudes reflected in the data also imply a general preference in Thai society for Western ways. This can be seen in the participants' reports about their students' expressed preferences. It can also be read in position announcements and the participants' reactions to them since hiring practices are strongly driven by public opinion.

One teacher-participant claims that local practitioners do conceive of their own ideas knowledge of teaching and learning. However, with limited access to publishing networks and heavy teaching loads, they may not record their own ELT ideas and in order to have them published and be able to claim their ownership and rise to fame. In the words of this teacher, "local nonnative teachers have been practicing and [applying] their [own]... theories for such a long time ... the Westerners got there first [to write and get published] because the western culture puts more emphasis on words" (T7-E).

Canagarajah (2002a) reflects the same perspective on this Western hegemony of knowledge, but observes from a more macro perspective and puts it bluntly that local people involved in discovery in the non-western countries "are eclipsed" (p. 2) by Western academics and their activities. He further contends that scholastic hegemony operates through the way in which Western academic institutions and scholars theorize

and interpret any raw data found in non-western countries to be published as the accepted stock of Western knowledge. As a consequence, the knowledge of the non-western communities is marginalized or appropriated by the West, while the knowledge of the West is legitimated and reproduced.

Another way to devalue, discredit, and denigrate non-Western wisdom is to maltreat or make anything associated with the local wisdom as “exotic, backward, only semi-civilized and in some ways rather barbaric,” to use Pennycook’s (2002) phrasing regarding the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*’s treatment of Chinese scholarship. Much research has documented the marginalization of non-Western scholars in the former colonial territories; however, the practice can also be observed in the so-called neocolonial present, not only in the former British territories but in Thailand, which has no colonial history as well.

One impression the Thai teachers expressed is that English people “are very narrow-minded in the way that they think, others are inferior to them in all aspects” (T73-Tr). Studying and living in America, many teachers report their experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination which “[are] still pretty much [prevalent] and evident in American society. Americans usually see foreigners living in the States as inferior to them” (T4-Tr)

Thus, it is fair to conclude from the results of the study that Thai teachers seem to have been discriminated against and marginalized by native English speakers ‘from’ and ‘in’ the west. It is clear that, as seen through the eyes of these Thai speakers, native speakers still hold absolute power over the language, cling to the culturist perception of

the ‘us’-‘them’ divide (Holliday, 2005), and perpetuate the interwoven concepts of ‘native-advantage-specialist’ and ‘nonnative-disadvantage-deficit’.

In making such a claim, I acknowledge that the Thai teachers’ personal perceptions of native-English speakers can be very subjective and loaded with bias. However, given these perceptions, it is clear that the Thai professionals feel they are viewed as inferior. It is unclear to what extent this is borne out in the minds of Western people. Clearly, much has happened since the appearance in 1891 of the *Popular Encyclopedia* entry (as cited in Pennycook, 2002), which characterized Chinese people in overtly racist terms

In thickness of lips, flattened nose, and expanded nostril, they bear a considerable resemblance to the Negro. In bodily strength they are far inferior to Europeans ... The Chinese are very deficient in courage. In their moral qualities there is much that is amiable ... (p. 99)

However, traces of this past, potentially nurtured by a long colonialist history, surely remain in the minds of at least some modern Westerners.

In this climate, the experiences of Thai teachers seems to be such that they are led to feel that they are inferior to native English speakers in all stages of life—with different roles and relationships, namely, as students, pre-service teachers in graduate programs, and in-service teachers. It is very depressing to realize that these experiences seem to have had a major effect on the formation of their perception about themselves; that is, to observe their perceived inferiority to native speakers in the development of their professional identities as English teachers. The majority of the study participants have a low level of confidence in using and appropriating the language to make it their own—as

they often make statements like these: “we are not using English as a primary language and we are not native” (T4-Tr), and “I could never be sure if it was awkward or was the kind of language actually used by native-speakers” (T8-E). Ultimately, they seem reluctant to view themselves as successful language learners and role models for the students. Jenkins (2000) uses an apt term “the perpetuation of the native/non-native dichotomy” which results in:

... negative perceptions and self-perceptions of ‘non-native’ teachers and a lack of confidence in and of ‘non-native’ theory builders. [This] leads to ‘non-natives’ being refused places on EFL teacher training courses, [and] limited publication of their articles in prestigious international journals ... (p. 9)

This recalls the concept of colonizing the mind, as proposed by Ngũgĩ (1986) in his book *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature*, which has a great influence on how people perceive themselves, their society, and the world around them. In this connection, the affect of the experience is likely to lead them to devalue the local knowledge (language and culture); the resulting set of attitudes might in turn hinder their language acquisition, preventing them from becoming competent users of English.

A potentially even more critical issue involves the changes and decline that the participants report in their mother tongue proficiency as a result of the acquisition of English. This subtle form of “language loss” not only affects their Thai competencies, but also their perceptions toward their local wisdom. Thai teacher participants struggle to find terms or concepts in Thai equivalent to the western-generated terminologies or ideologies. This struggle reflects the dichotomy between Western theory and local practice. Kumarivadivelu (2002) suggests, local practitioners seem to ‘get stuck’ in the

original production of text written by western theorists. As a result, they are unable to repack the theoretical concepts into Thai local contexts, at least in their classrooms. In other words, it is fair to suggest that they unconsciously centralize their instructional practice in Western-generated professional knowledge, and unintentionally let it overshadow the possibilities of the local knowledge or wisdom. Hence, Thai participants made a firm assumption that there is no “existing” local linguistic, sociocultural, or political advantage that could be able to unpack or explain such Western-generated terms or ideologies.

Closely related to this issue of centralizing, Thai teachers also prioritize English over Thai rhetorical wisdom. It is odd to hear them claim that “my writing in Thai is better” (T5-Tr) after being extensively trained to write in English. In fact, they have adopted English rhetoric into their Thai writing, especially topic sentence placement, which usually comes far later in Thai texts. This implies a similar attitude to Tong’s (as cited in Pennycook, 2002) argument that Asian languages, especially Chinese, are viewed negatively as “very much a primitive form of a linguistic system” (p. 100), compared to European languages. In the teachers’ responses, there are signs that English rhetorical knowledge has become their ‘rhetorical measuring stick’ to evaluate Thai writing discourse. In other words, they view Thai rhetoric from an Anglocentric point of view. After being trained in English, they favor the rigid structural rules of English writing in which all the arguments of a verb can be easily identified. Hence, compared to English writing, Thai writing discourse in which sentences subjects are commonly omitted, is assumed to be “bad writing.” These structures have come to look incomplete,

ungrammatical, and unintelligible to some of the participants, and their writers come to be seen as uneducated.

As a consequence, when anything associated with the local heritage is marginalized, English language teaching in the classroom has to be emphasized and conform to the norms of Inner Circle Englishes, namely either British or American English. This will be further discussed in the following section.

Question 2: The Linguistic Dimension

A speaker who is made ashamed of his own language habits suffers a basic injury as a human being: to make anyone, especially a child, feel so ashamed is as indefensible as to make him feel ashamed of the color of his skin. (Halliday, 1968, p. 165)

The phenomenal spread of English implies that English is not only limited to native-to-native or native-to-nonnative communication, but also expanding greatly to communication among those nonnatives using English as their L2, for examples as part of their cyber contacts, multinational gatherings, and within the tourism industry. With this worldwide spread of English, Suzuki (as cited in A. Matsuda, 2003b) observes that people have been using English with their own cultural frame of reference and creating new varieties of English detaching from the frame of reference and cultural values of native speakers. Closely related to this, English is now said to no longer belong to a particular group of people; actually, anyone who uses English can claim authority over the language or ownership of it. Widdowson (1994, 2003) claims that “the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it. ... It is not a possession which they lease out for other, while still remain the freehold. Other

people actually own it.” (p. 385, p. 43). However, are these wider visions shared by local Thai practitioners, or are they restricted to the writings of theorists or researchers?

Given the results of the study, it is safe to assume that Thai teachers perceive that Thai students will be better English users if they conform to the norms of native speakers. One way to open the discussion is to start with how Thai teachers of English perceive the worldwide use and the ownership of English.

From their interview responses, teachers’ views on their own experiences and their students’ future use of English have shed light on the implications of the worldwide use of English as an international language or a *lingua franca*. Correlating with other scholars’ assumptions in the field of TESOL (e.g. Jenkins (2006), A. Matsuda (2003b), Seidlhofer (2001), and Widdowson (2003)), Thai teachers of English acknowledge that the use of English is no longer limited to native-to-native or native-to-native communication, but is also expanding greatly to communication among those nonnative speakers using English as their L2. Its status as an international language or a *lingua franca*, suggests that “it also belongs to people of various nations who use varieties of the language for their own purposes and that they, including nonnative speakers, play crucial roles in defining English today” (A. Matsuda, 2003b, p. 484).

However, when further investigating how the Thai teachers of English perceive their ownership of English, they do not share such pluralistic views of English as an international language suggested by Aya Matsuda (2003b) and other aforementioned scholars. Although acknowledging that English has spread and is used internationally beyond borders, languages, cultures and races, the participants do not view English as an international possession; in particular they certainly not feel it belongs to them. To them,

the groups of people who own English are the English people living in England, and also those cultures derived from England, including America, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

According to Widdowson (1997), this shared perception implies the hegemonic ideology of unwittingly embracing one (or two) dominant norms of language. In this view, which is held by the participants, English does not actually ‘spread’ but is ‘distributed’ because the act of the spread of language should imply “adaptation and nonconformity ... [but not] ... adoption and conformity” (p. 197). However, this misconception about the spread of English (as an international language) is a phenomenon not only among the local Thai teachers, but elsewhere, especially in TESOL circles.

Jenkins (2006) comments on Trugill’s view, which she characterizes as implying that the varieties of English “stem from [native speakers], especially historically, and *reside in them*” (p. 171). She then concludes that if the *de facto* native speaker ownership of English still permeates the field of sociolinguistics, it comes as no surprise that “[a] similar position is still held by the majority of English teachers, teacher educators, and SLA researchers, not to mention the ELT examination boards, and publishing industry” (p. 172).

Much earlier, Braine (1999) argues that the native speaker fallacy originated in the Makerere Conference tenet that the ideal English teacher is a native speaker, and was supported by the Noam Chomsky’s notion of the native speaker as an ideal informant on a language. Canagarajah (1999a) further asserts that the Chomskyn notion lies at the heart of the native speaker fallacy which promotes an ideal native speaker and the

superiority of the native speaker teacher. This fallacy has also permeated the TESOL field through Second Language Acquisition (henceforth SLA) researchers who have extended Chomskyn framework on Universal Grammar (Bhatt, 2002).

I believe that this established ideology of native ownership of English and the native speaker fallacy have greatly influenced the local ELT context in Thailand. These concepts are responsible for four fallacies among local Thai teachers about their English language teaching and learning.

Misconceptions of Native and Non-native Speakers of English

Thai teachers clearly state that English belongs neither to them nor to any broader group of people who used English internationally, but to a particular group of people who originally used English nationally within one community, the so-called *Inner Circle* native English speakers. This perception lends itself to be used as a basis for defining the boundary between the two terms: natives and non-natives. Thai teachers have the clear-cut definition and perception of who is “เจ้าของภาษา” (*chao khong pasa*) or *the-owner-of-the-language native*, and have authority over the language; and who is “ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษา” (*mai chai chao khong pasa*) or *not-the-owner-of-the-language nonnative*, and has no authority over the language. Most do not share concerns that have been raised by critical applied linguists, who now consider these terms problematic, both because of the unclear definition for the two terms, and also because of the hegemonic ideology hidden in the terms themselves. Clark and Paran (2007) claim that “the concepts of ‘native English speakers’ (NES) and ‘non-native English speaker’ (NNES) are not easily definable, partly because the language itself has so many varieties” (p. 409). Referring to an email interview with Kubota, Holliday (2005) comments that “the definition of who is and who

is not a ‘native speaker’ is a political construction of who is “in” and “out” within TESOL professionalism, and of how we see ourselves and each other in the light of this divisive fact” (p. 7). In this connection, Thai teachers often excuse or, sometimes, *accuse* themselves with phrasings such as “... because I am *not-the-owner-of-English nonnative* ...” (T4-Tr), when coming across language problems and uncertainty, or interpreting some negative teaching and learning experience. Also, they accuse other speakers of English (their colleagues) from the *Outer Circle* (“they are also non-native speakers”) if their language performance does not conform to the dominant Inner Circle varieties of English. In contrast, they always address the English speakers from the Inner Circle as *the-owners-of-the-language natives*.

The idea of “the owner of language” creates the “native speaker fallacy” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 185) or “native-speakerism fallacy” (Holliday, 2005, p. 6). This results in a negative self-perception on the part of those labeled as ‘non-native.’ Thai teachers feel that they are not competent enough users of the language to be able to teach students with *authentic* English, *real* English, or “how native speakers use the language in reality” (T10-E). They also feel that they are not competent to provide students with “depth and details explanation” about the language use or rules. With such insecurity, they are reluctant to or ambivalent about considering themselves as successful language learners, or, at least, role models for their students, when in fact, for example, the language problems that they come across have to do with an extreme degree of “adoption and conformity” (Widdowson, 1997, p. 197) to particular varieties of English. They do not perceive themselves positively, since they feel that their first language and culture is a hindrance, rather than a resource to be appreciated, as suggested by Seidlhofer (1999)

[T]he non-native teachers [and their students] have been through the process of learning the same language, ... through the same L1 'filter' ... This shared language experience should thus constitute the basis for non-native teachers' confidence, not for their insecurity." (p. 238)

However, some teachers feel that it is enough to perceive that their English is not *perfect* when comparing to the Inner-Circle native speakers. This provides a kind of motivation to keep improving their language ability. However, this needs to be carefully monitored. If this learning process strategy is to be sensitive to "how native speakers used the language in reality" (T10-E), they may end up subject to 'native-speakerism,' allowing the native speakers to be *the only* standard and to have absolute control over English discourse practices, or by adopting "(unquestioning) submission to native-speaker norms" (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 170).

In the nutshell, this so-called native-speakerism dichotomy (Holliday, 2005) causes local teachers to look down upon themselves, creating negative self-perceptions of themselves as 'non-native' teachers who are seen as inferior to 'native speakers'; this in turn can lead to a lack of confidence in their language competence and appropriation, and eventually to their marginalizing themselves in the profession.

Misconceptions of Theorists and Practitioners

In Chapter 4, data presented suggests a split of responsibilities between theory and practice. Western scholars are thought to be the originators of theory while Thai professionals are simply consumers of the ideas underlying their practice. This is closely related to the ideology of the native/nonnative divide. Once Thai teachers perceive themselves to be inferior and peripheral in their profession, they are likely to submit

unquestioningly to this unfair division of responsibility between a privileged class of Western theorists and an unprivileged class of non-native local practitioners. The local practitioners trust judgments made by the native speakers, as they state that native speakers are *experts* in the target language and have a more *accurate* body of knowledge. Hence, they abdicate their own power and ability to contribute in the field in favor of those outsiders. They acknowledge that SLA, which has permeated ELT through its teaching methods, has been developed in the West by native-speaking theorists, and, as one Thai participant phrased it, “we *must accept* [italics added] that local practitioners consume knowledge from the west” (T8-E).

To consider this relationship by analogy with the marketplace, it has been viewed that the theorists take roles as producers of knowledge while the practitioners serve as consumers of the knowledge products (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b). This unfortunate hierarchical relationship is obviously acceptable among Thai teachers. This hegemonic relationship might reflect, or be affected by, to certain extent, the ‘hierarchical onion skin relationship’ which is embedded in Thai society. Thai teachers live in a society where social harmony is highly regarded (Knutson, Komolsevin, Chatiket, & Smith, 2003), and at the same time, where no one is equal. In this context, Thai people tend to approach inequality without any resentment, or to accept it with only mild resistance. Still, it must be admitted that this kind of relationship “result[s] in a creation of a privileged class ... and an underprivileged class” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b, p. 166) in both Thai society and in TESOL community. In this climate, not only do Thai teachers adopt the theory conceived by the theorists, but they also take it on trust and hesitate to

question or problematize such knowledge, as it might not be suitable in all respects to the local context.

However, it would be a superficial and unjustified assumption to simply blame Thai cultural values for the uncritical acceptance or adaptation of Western-developed theories and teaching methods. Canagarajah (2002b) and Okasaki (2005) argue that the local researchers, educators, and teachers are trapped by marketing strategies heavily invested in global scholarship dominated by the West. Canagarajah (2002b) claims that these highly promoted methods are often “hail[ed] ... in various media as the most advanced, revolutionary or successful yet constructed ...[under] sophisticated research with hi-tech facilities” (p. 135). These theories and methods are then “popularize[ed] ... locally through their publishing networks and academic intuitions,” (p. 135) and also made familiar to the Thai teachers through ELT teacher training organized by Western-led organizations such as Thai TESOL, the British Council, and the AUA (American University Alumni) Language Center in the country (For more comments on teaching training and ELT-related agencies see Bhatt, 2001; Leung, 2005; Phillipson, 1992).

While arguing that the majority of teachers uncritically adopt Western-developed theory and practice, however, it is interesting to note that a few teachers call themselves, “trickster monkeys,” referring to their quietly subversive way of applying Western theories. These few Thai educators refuse to see themselves as passive receivers of Western theories. That is, “the non-native teachers nod when they are facing the western theorists but they might not follow exactly what the theorist proposes” (T6-E). They argue that local teachers have gone beyond total passive adoption by inventing their own approaches in the classroom. This claim goes along with Kumaravadivelu’s (2006b)

discussion on “the artificial dichotomy between theory and practice” (p. 166). In contrast to the results from this study, Kumaravadivelu optimistically claims that local teachers rarely follow the principles and practices of established methods from the West. He further argues that they know better, and they are aware that such methods are not compatible with their culture and context. I will return to this inconsistency in Chapter 6, when I discuss issues that still need to be investigated.

What goes beyond whether or not Thai teachers have conformed to the Western-oriented methods is their perceived neutrality in regard to their principles and practices. A striking majority of Thai teachers share the view that the teaching methodologies proposed by Western theorists constitute a neutral mode of teaching and contain no hidden political ideology. They report that there is no connection between political factors and the choices made by British or American scholars who develop teaching methods. They state that the methods are only aimed at developing students’ language competencies.

This view among Thai teachers seems to run counter to critical linguists who extensively criticize political ideologies that they see as hidden in the teaching methods. If truth be told, Western-developed methods are seen as prioritizing Western cultures and centralizing Western interests while intentionally marginalizing local language teachers and the needs of students (Cook, 1999; Hadley, 2004; Holliday, 2005; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 2003b; Leung, 2005). Kumaravadivelu (2003b) makes a convincing argument that teaching methods from the West are meant to construct colonialism. Without the awareness of such imbalanced and unequal power dynamics, the local teachers are at risk of internalizing and unintentionally familiarizing their

students with a colonialistic view of the world (Pennycook, 1998). This claim can be seen through the way Thai teachers perceive themselves as inferiors, and in their reluctance to act as successful language models for their students. They also lack the confidence to have authority over English, appropriate the language, and make it their own in various contexts of use. Aya Matsuda (2003a) provides an apt statement that they “feel that their peripheral position ... in international communication in English is irreversible” (p. 722). This resembles Ngũgĩ’s (1986) assumption that English spread through colonialism due to “the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and the world” (p. 16). Ngũgĩ also claims that, in the neocolonial present, this cultural control is maintained and perpetuated by English language teaching. More discussion on cultural dimension will be presented in a later section focusing on cultural factors.

Misconceptions of In-house and Commercial Materials

One can think of the perceptions I am looking at as a kind of chain reaction. Once Thai teachers perceive themselves as peripheral, they seem to trust anything associated with native speakers from the West. Based on the investigation of pedagogy in the local context, it is seen most visibly in that the textbooks, reference works, and supplementary materials preferred among the local teachers which are exclusively produced by U.K. and U.S. publishing companies, namely, McGraw-Hill, Cambridge, Oxford, and Longman. This is not a far cry from what McKay (2000) has observed in the case of classrooms particularly in Thailand that the local teachers and students use culturally loaded materials written in the United States or the United Kingdom.

When referring to these commercial materials, recall that Thai teachers find them “more helpful,” “time-saving for teaching preparation,” “appealing to read,” “professionally designed by experts,” and “well-organized and consistent”. However, much more importantly, native-speakerism comes into play in this issue, as they wrote that the language use in the textbook is “generally accurate, appropriate, and acceptable because it is edited and proofread by native speakers” (T8-E). Many Thai teachers promote the idea of using commercial textbooks, but “kind of disagree with the ideas of producing in-house materials” (T8-E). Compared to the Anglo-American-published materials, they view their own in-house textbooks as “disappointing,” “not up to the standard,” “poorly organized and inconsistent,” and “not appealing and not professional.”

While the vast majority of the teachers have a positive view of the commercial texts, a very few show concerns that the textbooks written in the U.K. or the U.S. are so culturally-oriented that they are only appropriate to those international students living and studying there. This concern is also shared by Prodromou (1992) that textbooks written in those two countries are culturally inappropriate materials to use in classrooms where learners learn English as a foreign language. This is because the language forms and discourse patterns in these materials are based almost exclusively on American or British English, and textbooks are filled with characters and cultural topics from these Inner Circle countries.

Kumaravadivelu (2003a, 2008) further argues that such textbooks are not a neutral medium: they represent a bias of cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes; however, this hidden ideology is rarely recognized and addressed. To elaborate, culture, race, and the ethnicity of the native speakers of English are always represented in textbooks as

being superior to that of non-native speakers (Kubota, 1998). In contrast, the negative side of native-speaking culture and society is rarely brought up in the textbooks and teaching materials developed in the West (Lummis as cited in Kubota, 1998). In such textbooks, students are only presented with a one-sided representation of native-speaking characters, typically young people enjoying a “well-organized, goal-directed life” (Canagarajah, 1999b, p. 12) in a harmonious society. This means if the cultural discourses represented in the textbooks are not carefully handled in classroom, or if the teachers themselves are using such a text as a near-absolute norm rather than as one of many choices (Seidlhofer, 1999), the teachers will uncritically enforce Anglo-American “mental structures” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 166) on the minds of the students through the social and cultural bias embodied in these materials. The students then are not solely “required ... to conform to Anglo-American styles of communication” (Hadley, 2004, p. 11), but also to internalize the Anglo-American view of a culture, ultimately causing them to adopt Western cultural “eyeglasses” (Kubota, 1998, p. 298) to view themselves, Thai society, and the world.

Despite the fact that commercial materials are not compatible with students’ interests, cultures, and learning environment (and are relatively expensive when compared to other costs of living in the country), they still get the lion’s share in the local market, and have been competing with, marginalizing, and replacing the production of in-house/locally published materials. The attractive layouts, professionalism, and especially *authentic* language use approved by Inner-Circle native-speaking editors seem to overshadow these flaws in commercial materials.

Misconceptions of Language Models

When Thai teachers think that native speakers are the owners, experts, and specialists of the language, and perceive themselves as peripheral, they are likely to feel they need to conform to linguistic norms and functions of the native speakers.

Language models provided in the classroom are complicated issues. I would like to focus only on the accent aspect because it is one of the very critical elements of language that has long been a gatekeeper in job opportunities, education, and business (Holliday, 2005; Jenkins, 2005; Mahboob, 2004; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, & Hartford, 2004).

The results of this study show that the majority of the participants identified American and British accents as the two most preferred accents, and that they want to be recognized as speakers of these varieties when they speak English. However, in order to satisfy their personal goals in achieving native-speaking accents, they gravitate toward the American accent, which to them, is more doable or feasible to “*imitate* [italic added] ... because it is easy to catch and practice ...” (T17-Tr). In contrast, they feel that, British English articulation is far more difficult to imitate.

From the majority of responses on these two accent models, it is natural that these two dominant Inner Circle pronunciations are perceived as being worthwhile to learn or, to many participants, to “imitate”. However, the concept of accent imitation runs counter to Canagarajah (2006a)’s suggestion to L2 learners. He states that “everything from language socialization approaches and Bakhtinian theories of discourses to poststructuralist linguistics teaches us that to use language meaningfully is to appropriate it and make it one’s own” (p. 597). Canagarajah (2006a) further puts the accent issue

bluntly, “to use a language without any personal engagement, even for temporary utilitarian and pragmatic reasons, is to *mimic* [italics added] not speak” (p. 597). In my view this kind of slavish imitation of the accents also reflects colonial practice; it seems to represent the view that, if colonized people want their *voices* to be heard, they have to speak English, and to be accepted into a place, they have to *sound* like the British. It is complex but clear that to imitate or mimic NSs’ pronunciation can be only treated as “acting white” or “putting a show” (Canagarajah, 2006a, p. 597) and this is deeply rooted with the colonial past.

Moreover, by uncritically adopting one or two pronunciation norms in classroom instruction, Thai teachers are teaching English as an *Inner-Circle* language, not as an international language. To conform to such limited accent norms is also not practical in view of students’ future needs in multilingual/multicultural communication. It is also contradictory to their own prediction of students’ future context of use. That is, Thai students are likely to use the language with speakers of varieties of English other than American and British English forms and functions. This is in line with Crystal’s (2003) and Graddol’s (1997) assumptions that growing numbers of non-native or L2 speakers in the *Expanding Circle* will outnumber the NSs in the 21st century. English speakers will potentially be exposed to Outer- and Expanding-Circle Englishes even more than to speakers from Inner Circle Englishes.

Such a scenario is not a far cry from what is happening. Hence, the limited exposure to English varieties in the classroom may not sufficiently prepare Thai students to interact with the other L2 speakers who they will frequently encounter in the future. Without sensitivity and awareness of linguistic varieties, Aya Matsuda (2003a) points out

that learners may become confused or resistant when they encounter different varieties of English speakers or discourse patterns outside classrooms. Matsuda's assumption is in line with the Thai teachers' perception of Black and Indian Englishes. A very solid majority of teachers show a significant resistance to Black and Indian Englishes, as they do not feel comfortable in a exchange a conversation with those speaking such accents.

A stronger critique against teaching English as an Inner Circle English comes from Canagarajah (2005), who claims that "there are new competencies required for communication and literacy in today's world"; hence, to have only a couple of dominant dialects considered worth teaching "fails to equip our students for real-world needs" (p. xxv). Similarly, a few participants claim that multidialectism is very crucial for all English speakers, especially for Thai students. These teachers recall the claim of Warschauer (2000), who points out that the use of American and British colloquialisms may be inappropriate for communicating effectively in international settings.

I am also aware of that a few Thai teachers express a concern over having many varieties of English, as they state, "we don't want another Tower of Babel (T6-E)". This means that the pluralization of English may result in great difficulties in mutual understanding among English speakers of different varieties. The fear of perpetuating the ancient curse of Babel is also shared in David Crystal's *Language Revolution*, published in 2004 and, long before that, by a celebrated Thai scholar, M.L. Boonlua Debyasuvarn (1981)

My concern is that the English language will break up into as many varieties as there are foreign users. I do not agree that language teachers in various parts of the world should allow this to take place. Until we have something really better,

we should try to keep English a language by which a West African can communicate with a Southeast Asian ... (p. 92)

Bamgbose (1998) suggests that the fear of such an ancient curse, or in other words, the question of *international intelligibility* against the communicational uses of non-native Englishes, simply springs from the native-speakerism fallacy. According to him, international intelligibility is always “a one-way process in which NNSs are striving to make themselves understood by NSs whose prerogative it was to decide what is intelligible and what is not” (p. 10). However, in reality where multicultural communication takes place, Canagarajah (2006a) claims that, according to speech accommodation theory, “multilingual people always make adjustments to each other as they modify their accent and syntax to facilitate communication with those who are not proficient in their language” (p. 593).

These views expressed by scholars represent a dramatic turn toward a more inclusive attitude toward multiple varieties of English. However, the majority of the local teachers are not aware of this change on the linguistic landscape and of the realistic implications of the spread of English. Hence, if one observes English classrooms in Thailand, he or she will find the local teachers and students striving to conform to the Anglo-American varieties of English, at least in speaking and listening class.

To draw a conclusion about the linguistic dimension, the teachers’ perceptions found in this study seem inconsistent with the claims made by critical linguistics in the TESOL field (e.g. Canagarajah, 2006a; Jenkins, 2006; Kubota & Ward, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2006b; A. Matsuda, 2003a; McKay, 2002; Widdowson, 2003). For Thai teachers, second (or foreign) language users cannot determine the world future of

English. For them, a particular group of people can have absolute control over an international language. Inner Circle English (and its culture) and English language teaching (ELT) practices are inseparable, even as the language itself has grown to be an *international* language which needs to have a different set of pedagogical assumptions than the teaching and the learning of any other second languages. In the following section, the inseparability of Inner Circle culture and ELT will be extensively discussed.

Question 3: The Cultural Dimension

[The English] language needs to be decolonized, to be made in other images, of those of us who use it from positions outside Anglo-Saxon cultures are to be more than artistic “Uncle Toms.” And it is this endeavor that gives the new literature of Africa, the Caribbean, and India much of their present vitality and excitement. (Rushdie as cited in B. B. Kachru, 2005)

The worldwide spread of English implies increased opportunities for English speakers across national and cultural boundaries to interact with one another. At school, compared to teachers of other disciplines, Thai teachers of English are granted a prestige of ‘having English’ enabling them to enjoy more personal contact with English users from other cultures, especially from English-speaking communities. They are constantly exposed to different varieties of English-speaking cultures through overseas exchange programs, seminars, conferences, or education. It is interesting to explore how these experiences have shaped their own views toward English-speaking countries.

Given the results of the study, I can confidently say that it is perceived that Thai students will learn English better if they know Western native-speakers’ culture. Nearly all participants reach the same conclusion; namely, Thai students will only learn English

better and use English *properly* if they understand and are familiar with the NSs' culture and perspectives. British and American cultures are most often identified as the most worthwhile cultures to study in the classroom while the local culture (and other world cultures) rarely receives significant attention. Thai teachers perceive these Inner Circle cultures as the most "accurate" and "original" cultural (and linguistic) models which have already been adapted as norms or standards in ELT practices worldwide. To many teachers, the British culture particularly creates the sense of history and tradition of "the real owner" of the language and the culture, and this implies cultural superiority.

Taking the essentialist view of culture (the "us" native and "them" non-native divide (Holliday, 2005)) into account, it comes as no surprise why Inner Circle language varieties and cultures are closely related among Thai teachers. To them, not only does a learner have to know the target language, he or she also should be aware of the culture of English-speaking people to be fully competent in English. Holding to this perception, Thai teachers jump to the conclusion that "it is impossible to learn language without understanding the [native] culture of a particular language" (T10-E). In other words, even though English has spread to be an *international* language, English and its *Inner Circle* cultures are inseparable.

One crucial finding from Thai teachers suggests that when 'we' (Thais) learn 'their' (native speakers') language, it is very difficult to acquire the target language unless 'we' understand what is inside 'their' head. This goes in line with Stern's (1992) discussion that one core of culture teaching aims at helping non-native students to develop an understanding of the perspective underlying the NSs' thinking. In this climate, Thai teachers attempt to make their students "becom[e] sensitive to the state of

mind of individuals and groups within the target language community” (p. 117). What the teachers are trying to do is to help their students “create a network of mental associations similar to those which the items evoke in the native speaker” (p. 224). By applying Kumaravadivelu’s (2008) assumption in the local context, I would claim that the ultimate goal of teaching native-speaking cultures is to help Thai students to develop “the ability to use the target language in culturally appropriate ways for the specific purpose of empathizing and interacting with native speakers of the target language” (p. 114).

In the light of the culture of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Holliday, 2005), Thai teachers are likely to be trapped into the marketing strategies of the Anglo-American publishers. To take one example at a time, they will find the appealing statements on book jackets fascinating and irresistible. Seidlhofer (1999) cites an example of language drawn from an advertisement for the *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*, in which learners are offered the chance to “get into the Head of the Native Speaker” (p. 234). Despite the fact that the reference is explicitly intended to transform students’ mental structures into those of NSs, it is not exaggerated to claim that Thai teachers would use it “as the (uncontaminated?) source providing the language to be taught” (Seidlhofer, 1999, p. 234) in classrooms.

However, such language sources are actually “contaminated,” as viewed from perspectives such as the Thai culture, as they are based on theories (and practices) derived from Western cultures and ideologies (Pennycook, 1998). In this connection, McKay (2002) argues that a positive view of western cultures is perpetuated; in contrast, a negative view of non-western cultures has been established in relation to the spread of

English and cultural identity. It is in this relationship that the spread of English as an instrument in promoting colonialism and devaluing the non-Western cultures has become apparent. In the colonial past, this cultural control had been fueled by colonial powers that strive to devalue the local culture and replace the local language with that of the colonizer. The native-speaking teachers came to the territories with the mission that they had to make L2 learners think like ‘them’ (Holliday, 2005). However, in the neo-colonial present, the colonialism may be maintained and perpetuated through the spread of English and English language teaching (ELT) through public or commercializing schooling. The local teachers knowingly or unknowingly become cultural agents of the English-speaking Western empire, using a kind of behaviorist training mindset in order to force ‘us,’ our Thai students, to think like ‘them,’ native English-speaking Westerners. This assumption is similarly viewed by Kumaravadivelu (2006). He presents a view in which the English language, English language teaching, empire, and colonialism seem to melt into one and become inseparable.

I am aware that Thai teachers reinforce cultural values and norms from the West with good intentions. I agree with them that *some* cultural elements of Western culture would benefit their students in the near future when they seek a job, get married, and raise a family. I am also aware that Thais value flexibility and adjustment as important elements in maintaining social harmony, which come into play in this cultural transference in classrooms. These values help Thais balance their inner ego and outer power imposing within certain situations (Pfahl, Chomngam, & Hale, 2007). In spite of this my study reflects the danger inherent in these reasonable and positive traits, since as a result of these, Thai teachers rarely resist Western culture impositions in their teaching

and learning experience. The Thai values of flexibility and adaptability need to be carefully handled when engaging in cultural teaching in class. If there is only a one-way transfer of culture from the West, instead of a two-way transfer in which local and Western cultures are supposed to influence or shape one another, the students may perceive their local culture (and other world cultures) as inferior to Western culture and not worth holding or practicing. They may ignore and discredit their own cultural heritage. They may give up exploring its advantages and possibilities further because they perceive that the local culture is far from bringing them the prospect of a better life.

A crucial finding from the study is that Thai teachers are favorably impressed by the way Western children are raised. In contrast, they strongly criticize Thai parents for not letting their children become mature and independent. It is interesting that their perceptions about raising a family are shared with the Western colonialist view toward Chinese people: “they are strongly attached to their homes, hold age in respect, toil hard for the support of their families ...” (*Popular Encyclopedia* as cited in Pennycook, 2002, p. 99). Though this quote looks positive at first glance, it tends to pigeonhole the Oriental as irrelevant to broader commercial or educational domains. By holding this biased attitude, Thai teachers have a very positive impression toward Western students as people who have the potential to become successful in their studies and lives. At the other extreme, Thai students are negatively viewed as “lacking”, “missing”, or “having insufficient” qualities to succeed in their studies, at least in English, and become engaged, productive citizens. The teachers justify their assumption based on their observation of students’ classroom characteristics. To them, the typical characteristics commonly associated with Thai students are: obedience to authority (teacher as an embodiment of

knowledge), passivity in class, ignorance, lack of learning eagerness, lack of critical thinking, and lack of survival skills.

However, these teachers' perceptions may at least in part represent and resemble some kinds of "[cultural] stereotypes [that seem] to exist more in the imagination of Western academia than in the actual classrooms ..." (Kumaravadivelu, 2003c, p. 710). Sharing the same stance, Kubota (2001) claims that much of applied linguistics literature provides dichotomous images of U.S. and Asian classrooms. Asian students are repeatedly described as obedient to authority, passive in class, and lacking in critical thinking skills, and these characteristics are greatly influenced by Eastern culture. Consequently, when they come to the U.S., Asian students face a challenge in 'ideal' American classrooms.

We, Thai teachers, need to be aware that applied linguistics and TESOL are not free from cultural hegemony and fallacy. It is undeniable that there is a connection between the classroom behavior of Thai students and their cultural norms. However, a critical approach to this issue is needed. Our cultural values and practices have to be observed *firstly* in their own right without viewing them through the 'Other' lens (of the West).

To point out one example at a time, Thai students are not inclined to challenge teachers' authority in classrooms. Upon further examination, this practice is highly valued in Thai society. Thai youngsters are expected to behave themselves not only in front of their parents at home but also around older people at schools, workplaces, and social gatherings. Hence, it is easily observable that "young people are quiet in the presence of older people, younger people seldom disagree with older people, students

rarely express their opinions in class, and quietness is considered a *virtue* [italics added] in Thai culture” (Knutson, et al., 2003, p. 67). Quietness or silence is considered a virtue in Thai society. There is a proverb that teaches us Thais to place great value on silence. It says พูดไป สองไฟเบี้ย นิ่งเสีย ตำลึงทอง (*phud pai song phai bea ning sia tam lung thong*) which can be referred to English old saying as “Speech is silver; silence is golden,” or “Children should seen, but not heard.” Moreover, Knutson et al. (2003) claim that “doubts are seldom verbalized in Thai culture” (pp. 67-68) especially in class. Hence, it is even not common for Thai students, as I view it, to ‘doubt’ teachers who render *Bhunkun* (benefits, benevolence, assistance, goodness, etc.) to them. To verbalize ‘doubt’ right in the face of the teachers is often considered as ‘to be challenging’ or ‘offensive to’ them. This practice, hence, goes against the important Thai concept of “*ru bhunkun*, which means to acknowledge or be conscious of any kindness [the teachers have] done” (Pfahl, et al., 2007, p. 84). This is also interwoven with the concept of *Krengjai* (taking other people’s feelings into consideration) and the emphasis on interpersonal harmony.

If these cultural norms are ingrained among Thai people, why do Thai teachers who are familiar with such norms still hold a very negative attitude toward Thai students when compared to Western students? A study on ELT in Japan by Nakamura (as cited in Kubota, 1998) sheds light on this phenomenon. The study reveals that “by learning English, the Japanese have internalized ... Anglo-Saxon view of the world” (p. 198). Kubota (1998) further claims that English has, then, become “eyeglasses” through which Japanese view other NNSs. ELT in Japan has promoted “the superiority of English, native speakers of English as well as their cultural and society” (p. 198). Hence, it is not surprising that Japanese people perceive other NNSs poorly. By taking this cultural

internalization as a springboard, it would be fair enough to claim that Thai teachers of English have unknowingly adopted these Anglo-Saxon “eyeglasses” to view their students against the *proper* classroom characteristics as required or promoted in Western-oriented ELT theory and practice. By learning English, these teachers view not only themselves poorly as peripherals in the profession, but also their students as extremely inferior to those English-speaking Westerners.

It is not my intention to blame the Thai teachers of English for holding such negative cultural stereotypes toward Thai students (and themselves). Actually, they have long been subjected to the hidden cultural ideologies which are heavily invested but rarely addressed by theorists, educators, trainers, and publishers from the West. An emerging consciousness sees these groups of people as working together to further their vested interests in popularizing Western textbooks (Denham, 1992), teaching methods (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b), language policy and curriculum (Tollefson, 2002), ELT-related journals (Canagarajah, 2002a), ELT agencies (Bhatt, 2001), and TESOL conferences and training (Leung, 2005).

Influenced by Said’s *Orientalism*, Kumaravadivelu (2003c) states that it is interesting that a striking number of stereotypical observations are made repeatedly about colonized countries and cultures (and I would also include some neighboring countries that have never been *officially* colonized such as Thailand)

[Said] used the term *Orientalism* to refer to the discursive field constituted by Western representations of the Other. Orientalism is a systematically constructed discourse by which the West “was able to manage – and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and

imaginatively” ... It forms an interrelated web of ideas, images, and texts from the scholarly to the popular that shape and structure Western understanding and management of colonized cultures and peoples. (p. 716)

With this statement, it is not exaggerated to claim that cultural stereotypes persist, lending themselves to hidden colonial values in ELT theories and practices developed in the West. To embody the power issue attached to ELT, I would like to consider the preferred teaching approach among teacher participants, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

CLT has been extensively praised by many celebrated scholars and promoted through ELT popular conferences, training programs, and teaching materials (Leung, 2005, p. 127). Bhatt (2002) also links the popularity of this method to Noam Chomsky’s notion of “an ideal native speaker”—a NS as an ideal informant on a language—permeating the TESOL field.

Hence, it is not surprising why CLT, “the principal methodology of Western-led TESOL for the past 30 years” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 173), receives the most preference as “the most effective, and authoritative for their classrooms” (Okazaki, 2005, p. 176) among the local practitioners. In justifying their choice of CLT as their most preferred method, the participants of the study seem to echo the *voice and choice* of those celebrated Western scholars who attempt to neutralize the monolingual and monocultural bias with the promise of communicative competence. One participant argued, “we learn [English] language to communicate with others” (T9-E) and “[this approach] promotes all skills needed: speaking, listening, reading, and writing” (T47-Tr).

If the truth be known, CLT has received a very serious critique as it is heavily biased toward Western communicative styles and cultures (Leung, 2005). It is not exaggerated to claim that CLT has as its goal the promotion of a communicative ability appropriate for “the specific purpose culturally empathizing if not culturally assimilating, with native speakers of English” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b, p. 543). In such classrooms, both Thai teachers’ and students’ voices and identities are completely ignored in the learning process.

In addition, Western native-speaking culture is not only promoted through teacher-led processes in, for example, CLT-oriented classrooms, but also reinforced through extra-curricular activities held by English language departments, such as celebrations to mark Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The participants claim that cultural activities are promoted to enforce in students the ideology of ‘nativeness’ by having them become acquainted with Western cultures or, at least, “get a little bit nearer to the culture of the west ... as we call ourselves Department of Western Languages” (T7-E). Celebrating Western events at schools is tricky. If this cultural promotion is not taken into account critically, the student will run a risk of being subject to linguistic and cultural imperialism. They are likely to prioritize nativeness as the only way to become competent in English, and devalue their local non-nativeness as it can be seen to hinder their language acquisition.

Thai students are imposed (at least by their teachers) a heavy burden in the demand that they try to make themselves intelligible among those particular speakers from the Inner Circle. To apply Canagarajah’s (2005) objection to monoculturalism in a multilingual context, it is impractical and unrealistic to pay attention to only one or two

of dominant English-speaking cultures. Communicative competence in British and American cultures cannot effectively allow students to fully participate in multicultural communication.

Question 4: The Economic Dimension

Considering the role of English in the world today as an international lingua franca, it is natural to wish to ensure that no English-using nation is put at a disadvantage by not being able to profit from its use internationally. (Bamgbose, 1998, p. 11)

English has gained its global status because it has a “special role that is recognized in every country” (Crystal, 2003, p. 3). In Thailand, the majority of English teachers from the study acknowledge the phenomenal spread of English as an international language because of its function as a *lingua franca*. However, there is an assumption which goes beyond the cliché or taken-for-granted term ‘*international language*.’ If English is truly international, all countries across the globe should have an equal advantage with the language. This is similarly viewed by Bamgbose (1998), as presented in the opening quote: “no English-using nation is put at a disadvantage by not being able to profit from its use internationally” (p. 11). If this view is situated in economic dimensions, English should not provide an advantage for some nations but maintain a disadvantage in other countries. English should not add job opportunities and wealth to the economy of any particular English-speaking country.

The results of this study clearly show that it is preferable to offer more and better job opportunities for English teachers if they are NSs in Thailand. All participants report that it has always been the policy and practice at their institutions to offer a higher entry-

level salary to temporary foreign teachers than to temporary Thai teachers of English. As “being a native speaker is a merit (T7-E),” nearly all Thai participants accept such an inequality without resentment. They do not question that the preference given to native-speaking English teachers gives them an unfairly privileged position and better salary.

Moreover, the presence of discrimination in job advertisements is not acknowledged by the majority of the participants or perceived as a factor in the commercialization of English. I am aware that some teacher participants in this study may not have been involved in shaping hiring policies. However, they are actually part of the hiring process. Moreover, their responses can be taken as an indicator of their acceptance of their institutions’ stand on the prevalent hiring practices which strongly favor Inner-Circle candidates.

The result of this study is therefore in line with Kumaravadivelu’s (2006a) conclusion that the three dimensions (scholastic, linguistic, and culture) as discussed earlier “are linked to a vitally important economic dimension that adds jobs and wealth to the economy of English-speaking countries through a worldwide ELT industry” (p. 12). In other words, the English language teaching industry promotes and maintains imbalances and inequality in employment and wealth opportunities worldwide, and Thailand is no exception.

In terms of language teaching positions, job opportunities in the country are not open to all speakers of English, but are largely tailored for the particular group of NSs from the center Western countries. From the interviews, nearly all of the participants reject the idea that the preference granted to native English speakers gives them an unfair privileged position and better salary. Instead, they positively state that they themselves

and their students will benefit more in terms of language acquisition and expansion of their linguistic horizons with native-speaking “experts/specialist” teachers.

The native English-speaking teachers in Thailand have a prestigious status, as they are usually referred to among the participants as “specialists” or “experts” in the field. Once they are hired, they are immediately granted this title without going through the normal professorship process which is required among the local teachers—for example, having articles published, conducting research projects, and writing textbooks. This short-cut to prestige status for native English speaking teachers is similarly viewed by Clark and Paran (2007). They argue that “the native speaker still has a privileged position in English language teaching, representing both the model speaker and the ideal teacher (p. 407). Unfortunately, the non-native teachers, on the contrary, “are often perceived as having a lower status than their native-speaking counterparts, and have been shown to face discriminatory attitudes when applying for teaching jobs” (p. 407). Tracing back to its origin, Braine (1999) claims that such employment hegemony has been fueled by the Magarere Conference tenet that the ideal English teacher is a NS; he again cites Noam Chomsky’s notion of the NSs as an ideal informant on a language. By taking this claim as a basis, it is not far-fetched to assert that prejudice and discrimination can be easily observed in the professionally unequal climate of the local TESOL context.

If one is seeking a teaching position, especially in language schools in Thailand, it is not uncommon to come across discriminatory attitudes obviously observed in job advertisements. These job openings prioritize native/near-native English-speaking Caucasians from Europe, while they marginalize those applicants from elsewhere, particularly Asia. However, it is critical that the majority of the participants either fail to

acknowledge the presence of discrimination in such job advertisements, or they acknowledge the imbalanced opportunities but tolerate this phenomenon without resistance. They either claim that “the advertisers have no intention of discriminating against other races (T4-Tr),” or they give school directors credit for such hiring policies and practices. One participant states that “this is what [the language schools] should do (T2-Tr)” because even she herself wants to study with native-English speakers coming from the West.

The participants’ perception goes along with Jenkins’s (2006) observation that a job applicant who is thought of as ‘a native speaker’ from the Inner Circle is very likely to be more successful in getting a better-paying teaching position in Thailand. Additionally, this applicant is likely to receive a job offer even if he or she has little or no pedagogical training and may not even speak one of the dominant standard native varieties or, to a more apt and telling term, “Metropolitan Englishes (ME)”⁹ (Canagarajah, 2006a, p. 588).

Adding to this, racial discrimination comes in to play in job recruitment in the country. It can be further observed that Thai people not only associated ‘nativeness’ with applicants’ birth location and linguistic orientation but also with their physical appearance. Local employability is determined by a stereotypical notion that a ‘particular look’ fits in with a ‘particular job,’ especially in an English teaching position. This notion influences the majority of the participants to understand that employers have to hire a particular group of English speakers who meet their customers’ expectations of a

⁹Canagarajah (2006a) coins the term “Metropolitan Englishes (ME),” as referring to English dialects which are “spoken by the communities that traditionally claimed ownership over the language in England, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand” (p. 588).

model English speaker and an ideal English teacher. As mentioned by several participants, an ideal English teacher among Thai people needs to have a ‘Caucasian look’ (a *farang* look) or in Thai “ดูเป็นฝรั่ง” (*doo pen farang*). Having many English teachers with blonde hair, white complexions, green or blue eyes, and prominent noses could help to create some kinds of ‘accreditation’ and positive reputation for a school. This phenomenon is reminiscent of what Holliday (2005) has found from one of his British interviewees working as an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) educator in Thailand.

... there were other Thai teachers that spoke excellent English that could have done what we were doing and the only reason that they were not employed in the same capacity as us was that the parents of the children ... expected to see a native speaker teaching their children. It was a question of *prestige and image* [italic added], something that seems quite important in Thai (or at least in Bangkok) society. (p. 114)

Even though this perception is a serious fallacy in the field, Thailand is not the only case. Holliday (2005) further argues that “prestige and image” are embedded in all people’s minds no matter what society they belong to. In the same light, Jenkins (2006) claims this inequality in job opportunities is happening worldwide and that “employers continue to argue that they are obliged to provide the (native speaker) teacher that learners (and in many cases, *their parents* [italics added]) prefer” (p. 172).

Furthermore, non-native teachers of English are facing prejudiced and discriminatory attitudes not only when applying for teaching jobs, but also at work places among their local non-native colleagues. While NSs from the Inner Circle hold the lion’s

share of teaching positions, some institutions where the participants in this study work also hire English speakers from the Outer Circle. They are offered equal entry-level salary with Inner Circle speakers, and are granted a position title such as “experts” or “specialists”; however, the teachers coming from the Outer Circle are not addressed by Thai colleagues as respectfully as teachers from the Inner Circle. Many teacher participants speak somewhat disparagingly of Outer Circle teachers, as “they are *not* [italic added] considered as *the-owner-of-English natives* (T2-Tr)”. It can be safely assumed that those Thai teachers perceived these teachers as not “experts or specialists” like teachers from the West—though they have been through the same recruitment procedures.

Up to this point, one might ask why the Western NSs are given preferably given better job opportunities and prestigious status in Thailand. As discussed earlier in the section on the linguistic dimension, fallacy is fueled by a complex pattern of interwoven perceptions regarding the ownership of English and native/non-native dichotomy.

With such native speaker fallacies being held, it is not surprising that nearly all participants view the hiring stance at their institution and elsewhere as a reasonable practice. The fallacy causes the local teachers to perceive themselves as lacking certain language abilities when compared to NSs of English, and they need the NSs to ‘compensate’ for their deficiency. The participants state that they feel the need to have native-speaking colleagues around to “depend on” or “rely on” when they come across any linguistic or cultural uncertainties or problems. This gives the whole justification for the unfair hiring practice at their schools.

I do not reject the idea of having NSs working in schools. It is, in fact, a worthwhile practice because the availability of teachers from *diverse backgrounds* can help the students to broaden their linguistic and cultural horizons, and thus can help meet the real needs of students in intercultural settings. I also acknowledge that the acceptance of fairness in terms of higher salary and privileges are influenced by Thai friendly behavior and hospitable attitudes toward guests and strangers. This attitude has been long ingrained in Thai cultural values and is a positive trait.

Buddhism is the foundation of Thai cultural values and norms, which “form the basis for the Thai genuine care and concern for others ... an idea know as *nam jai* (“water of the heart”), which seldom allows Thais to see strangers as threatening or suspicious” (Knutson, et al., 2003, p. 67). With this value being held, Thai teachers tend to have a great sympathy for the “expert guests” who have traveled alone a long way from home and family to work in a foreign country completely alien to them. However, if this generosity and hospitality inculcated in Thais are practiced in an uncritical or unhealthy degree, we may end up investing too much of our limited budget in Western teachers with limited TESOL training and experience, or, even worse, a completely unrelated educational background. I am very worried that our generosity and hospitality offered to NSs may in the end lead to our being victims of opportunism.

In this connection, it is important to realize that the employment inequality discourages a significant number of local graduates with lengthy ELT-related university degrees who know the target language, the cultures, and teaching skills. Even though only a few teacher participants raise this issue, it undermines one of the major items on the national agenda in the country. It has been a critical recent goal in the country to

persuade Thai graduates with honors to work as K-12 or college-level teachers of English. As the entry-level salary being offered is relatively low, many potential graduates are reluctant to apply for a teaching position. It is sad that they usually end up in positions as routine-production service workers including factory workers, flight attendants, tour guides, and hotel receptionists, where they can earn more income.

To discuss further on a related topic, while the native English speakers from the West have better opportunities in getting a job in Thailand, the converse is not true. NNSs are also at a hiring disadvantage in native-speaking countries. The participants perceive that NNS candidates must have a native-like performance, defined by the mainstream accents spoken among well-educated Anglo-American scholars, so that they can effectively adapt themselves in native speaking society and be accepted among colleagues and students. Thai teachers' perceptions about accents are in line with Mahboob's (2004) study on employability of non-native teachers in the United States. He observes that "the emphasis on pronunciation by the students may be a factor that influence administrators' perception that students do not want nonnative teachers, and it may be one cause of program administrators' ranking of the criterion "accent" as important in making a hiring decision" (p. 141).

It is clear that the chances for non-native teachers to get a job in native-speaking countries are very limited. However, several participants state that if they have the chance, they would only be hired when employers cannot find NSs to teach a particular subject, especially a writing course. It is very depressing that not only do NNSs have a low level of employability, but also their limited chances represent something 'unwanted' or 'leftover' from the NSs.

As revealed in this study, the perceptions among participants show that the employability of NNSs who wish to have a teaching position in English-speaking countries is not very promising. Being recognized as native English speakers is an important criterion in making a hiring decision among administrators of English teachers at the college level, and, in contrast, NNSs of English are treated as “children of a lesser English” (Mahboob, et al., 2004, p. 116) in the profession of English language teaching all over the world. It is obvious that the worldwide ELT industry, dominated as it is by the interests of the West and the ideology of nativespeakerism, works hard to guarantee that “the fountainhead of global employment opportunities [and wealth] for native speakers of English does not dry up any time soon” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003b, p. 543). At the same time, the non-native speakers are left helplessly in a kind of professional ELT *desert* struggling to survive the drought of job opportunities.

To draw a conclusion from the four dimensions—scholastic, linguistic, cultural, and economic—it is not an exaggeration to claim that the signs of *de facto* colonial values operating through the ideology of nativespeakerism, are subtly but powerfully active in this non-colonized nation, Thailand. The results of this study are thus in line with Canagarajah’s (1999b) claim that “many communities [in the *Expanding Circle*] ... now come under the neo-imperialist thrusts of English-speaking center communities ” (p. 4). In the case of Thailand, Bamgbose (2001) examines school recruitment posters with slogans such as “All of our English teachers *are native speakers, teaching natural English as it is spoken in real conversation* [original italics]” (p. 360). In analyzing practices like this, he states that, in his opinion, “old dogmas may be revived and “linguistic imperialism” will be resurrected” (p. 360) in this non-colonized country. That

is, the imbalances and inequality in professional status and job opportunities are perpetuated by globalization and commercialization of English, even in regions with no colonialist legacy.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

*Theravada Buddhism ... serves a psychological function for Thais in many ways. For example, Buddhism explains how and why things happen. Thais generally believe in unequal, predestined **bun wassana** (good karma) and/or **kam** (bad karma) resulting from deeds done in the past. The concept of **karma** serves psychologically as a defense mechanism for a whole range of negative experiences. (Pfahl, et al., 2007, p. 84)*

In this chapter, I will first comment on cultural interpretations for some of the study's findings; in particular, I will speculate that Buddhist thinking may affect the attitudes and perceptions expressed by the participants, as well as being a source for potential growth and empowerment for these Thai TESOL professionals.

It has been more than two years since I started drafting my first proposal for this study. Along the long and winding road, the most cherished and rewarding part was data collection. I interacted with my participants in the study for almost three months. They have expanded my horizons in the local context of TESOL, and invited me to simultaneously revisit our own Thai cultural values and norms.

Buddhism is the foundation of the Thai world view and has shaped the culture as a whole. I have finally come to realize that Thai Buddhism influences Thai teachers to understand 'inequality' in their ELT professions without any resentment, or to accept it with only mild resistance. The Thai scholar Komin (1990) explains the way in which these beliefs function to foster acceptance of even adverse life conditions:

... Thai Buddhism primarily serves as a psychological function for the people, whether in its function of explaining the ‘how and why’ things happened like in the ‘actual’ usage of *karma* often as an after-event justification of negative experiences, or in its function of providing a ‘road map’ to cope with one’s social environment for one’s social and psychological survival, or in its function of providing salvation by entering monkhood as a ‘way out’ of trouble (in times of crisis)—be it in the notion of heavenly reward (*nirvana*) or a means to escape an unpleasant or dangerous situation. (Komin, 1990, p. 693)

Thai people in general believe in unequal, predestined *bun wassana* (good *karma*) and/or *kam* (bad *karma*) as a result of acts and thoughts which one has accumulated in the past life. This helps Thais to view any unpleasant, threatening, or dangerous situation with understanding. We learn to accept and attempt to live with it. This value system is clearly reflected in this study; instead of ‘resisting’ or ‘attacking,’ the present inequalities in their situation, Thai teachers tend to tolerantly accept signs of linguistic/cultural inequality in the ELT sphere. Ultimately, the imposed dominant language and culture are not seriously considered threatening to our local Thai heritage.

Yet, there is one thing that I am concerned about. If we Thais take a closer look into the concept of our own philosophical and spiritual legacy, we can also find a deeper and quite different way to apply Buddhist thinking to the present situation. The Buddha’s *Kalama Sutta* (Charter of Free Inquiry) does in fact encourage acceptance; however, it does not condone uncritical acceptance. Rather, people are urged to investigate the ‘how and why’ things happen. We are instructed to accept and understand things, but only once we have already examined the experience and situation rationally, carefully, and

critically. This sermon guides us to explore and investigate the imposed and dominant power without uncritically or unwittingly falling victim to linguistic imperialism or neo-colonialism.

Implications

This study has been conducted to contribute advanced knowledge in the field. Most importantly, I would like to call the attention of language policy makers, curriculum developers, course designers, material writers, and practicing teachers, especially in Thailand to *de facto* colonial values which may be permeating the ELT contexts without our awareness.

In the nutshell, my study will not directly serve those who are looking for the best methods to teach English, or help students pass college entrance examinations and standardized tests. Yet, this study reveals some taken-for-granted teachers' values and ideologies in their pedagogical practices, and attempts to raise awareness in teaching English as an *international* language. I hope this study will inspire a new fresh look into pedagogical policies and practices in both macro-level English classroom and society at large. The followings are some implications sprang from the study.

Being Aware of Shifting and Moving Landscape of ELT

The current change in the status of English as an *international* language implies that we are teaching, learning, and using English within richly multilingual and multicultural communities. In such a climate, McKay (2006a) claims that two widely accepted notions in ELT need to be changed. First the goal of English learning is not supposed to overtly adhere to 'nativeness' or 'native-speakerism.' Secondly, native-speaker cultures should also not inform instructional material and teaching methods,

since English is no longer tied only to specific cultures. To put it bluntly, it is necessary that we, as practicing Thai teachers, need to perceive that non-native teachers (like ‘us’), local languages and cultures (like ‘ours’), and Thai-English language patterns and pronunciation (again, like ‘ours’) have the potential to advance rather than ruin every prospect of students’ success in future social and economical domains (Similarly viewed by, e.g., W. Baker, 2008; Canagarajah, 1999b, 2002c, 2006b; Cook, 1999; Foley, 2005; Gupta, 2001; Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2002; Norton, 2000; Okazaki, 2005).

By making such a strong claim, I realize that some students and their parents may find my argument unpractical, radical, or even outrageous, when the dominant US and UK Englishes still hold the power as gatekeepers in education and employment (and carry social prestige as well). Also, I acknowledge that educational boards, school administrators, and employers will find it difficult to take any action against the *de facto* colonialism but are likely to hold fast to practices that subtly or overtly reflect native-speakerism (see Jenkins, 2006).

Nevertheless, it is time to become aware of the colonial values rooted in English classrooms, especially in this non-colonized country. Based on his teacher’s training experiences in Southeast Asian countries, Toh (2003) claims that there are a sizeable number of learners who are ready and waiting for teachers to “draw out” (p. 555) this sensitive issue beyond the routine teaching of four skills.

On the surface, problematizing colonial values among Thais might ‘offend’ our pride as a non-colonized nation. There is a pervasive belief among Thai people, partly because the country lacks a colonial past, that Thai values and identity are impervious to Western influence and cannot be undermined. However, the implications of the present

study suggest otherwise. In this context, we have a decision to make: whether to be aware of these issues, or to unwittingly fall victim to unrealistic illusions based on positive feelings of cultural pride.

Forging the Quality of English Education

One can argue that my study does not respond to the current problem in Thai language education. Sharing Bambose's (2001) concern, some might say that I do not pay enough attention to the falling language proficiency rate in the Standard of English in Thailand.

Actually, I acknowledge this failure in English education, which has been a concern among scholars and teachers for decades. Debyasuvarn (1981) gives a strong critique in 1981, pointing out that only "10 per cent of students [from the Thai school system] will become proficient to the extent that they can communicate satisfactorily ..." (p. 85). Twenty years later, research conducted during June 1999-February 2000 reveals that the proficiency level of Thai students before entering universities is below average (Wiriyachitra, 2001). Recently, *The Nation*, the local English newspaper, reported that the TOEFL scores for the country are among the lowest in the region (W. Baker, 2008). (For more observations on Thai student language proficiency, please see Broughton (1996), Meteetham (2001), Wongsothorn (2000, 2003), and Wongsothorn et al. (2003)).

Frankly, I do not have a direct response to the disappointing language outcome among Thais. However, in justification of my study, I turn to scholars such as Braj Kachru (1990) who claims that "I do not see applied linguistics divorced from the social concerns of our times, nor from the concerns of relevance to the society in which we live. This view, of course, entails *responsibility* [original italics]" (p. 17). I strongly believe

that social responsibility is part of my profession as an English teacher. I believe that social responsibility ultimately improves the quality of language education in Thailand. I feel the need to raise this “linguistic and cultural imperialism” issue that seems to be embedded in the local ELT context. Being aware of this critical issue, we Thai teachers can shift from the unpleasant periphery to a position of authority (in our own right) to provide improved materials and suitable classroom instruction for Thai students.

Beyond even the improvement in English teaching, the implications of studies such as this one extend even into broader educational concerns. Pennycook (1999) gives a very powerful statement which originally encouraged me to focus my study on this critical issue:

All of us involved in TESOL might do well to consider our work not merely according to the reductive meanings often attached to labels such as *Teaching* and *English* but rather as located at the very heart of some of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time. (p. 346)

The statement implies that Thai teachers should not solely help their student to master in linguistic forms but also create an awareness of social and political realities in classroom.

Suggestions

This study implies specific suggestions for English language education in Thailand as follows.

Exposing Local Teachers/Students to Speakers of Different Varieties

Thai teachers and students need to have more interaction with English speakers of multiple varieties in order to build up their linguistic and cultural awareness, sensitivity,

and familiarity. This can be achieved by recruiting fluent speakers of English from different parts of the world without concern for applicants' birthplace, accents, or physical appearance. In major cities (e.g. Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and even Phitsanulok) or tourist-attraction areas (e.g. Sukhothai, Phuket, and Koh Samui), the teachers could invite their English-speaking colleagues from other foreign language departments to class, or even have international visitors and residents interact with their students. However, in rural and remote areas where such people are not available, teachers can introduce students to different varieties of English through classroom textbooks, supplemental materials, video or online resources (For more suggestions and resources, see e.g., Jenkins (2000, 2003) , Kubota (2001), A. Matsuda (2003a), and Seidlhofer (2004)). If such materials and resources are scarce or not available in schools, the practicing teachers themselves need to remember that they are great examples of English speakers of multiple varieties. At the same time, as successful language learners, they can be role models for their students, and a living proof that speaking English effectively has nothing to do with being native speakers from the West.

Assessing Students against Communicative Effectiveness not 'Nativeness'

One way to eliminate, or at least to resist, dangerous colonial values is to reconceptualize and reconstruct the Thai system for English language assessment. Evaluation schemes should not be designed to assess Thai students' performance against the British or American norm or to measure to what extent they conform to such dominant 'native' patterns and models. Learning and using English as an international language, the local students should be evaluated on how much they can effectively communicate with their classmates, teachers, and others speakers (if possible). Strictly

holding British or American ‘nativeness’ as a criterion is not practical, especially in view of their future contexts of use where they are likely to come across English in multilingual and multicultural communications.

The university entrance examination in Thailand has traditionally aimed (and continues to aim) at assessing students’ reading skills and grammar competence (Wongsothorn, et al., 2003). The test evaluates students against “distant” and “unfamiliar” varieties of English commonly used among American and/or British people (Davies, et al., 2003; Hamp-Lyons & Davies, 2008). Such conventional examinations do not encourage the local students to gain confidence in their combinative language ability as effective speakers of English. As Aya Matsuda (2003a) points out, effective language use is not the same as near-native proficiency; the two “may overlap but [are] not the same” (see A. Matsuda, 2003a, p. 724). This is likely to be one of the many reasons why less than ten percent of Thai students in the educational system are judged to be competent enough to be able to communicate “satisfactorily” (Broughton, 1996, p. 71). In other words, the tests used to assess students today are actually measuring near-nativeness, not effective language use.

Thai policy makers, educators, teachers, and even students may argue that we have to conform to the norm of American or British English since international and local standardized tests (e.g. TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, TU-GET¹⁰, and CU-TEP¹¹) are based on such educated American or British English. These tests are designed according to the Standard English variety which “is socially highly valued across the English speaking world” (Gupta, 2001, p. 367). Hence, these English proficiency tests have served as

¹⁰ The TU-GET (Thammasat University Graduate English Test) “is an advanced test of English language proficiency required for entry into any of Thammasat University’s graduate degree programs” (Thammasat University Language Institute, 2007).

¹¹ The CU-TEP (Chulalongkorn University Test of English Proficiency) “measures your ability to use English for academic purposes in reading, writing, listening and speaking”(Chulalongkorn University Academic Testing Center, 2007).

gatekeepers for teachers and students in terms of higher education, employability, job promotion, and other social and economic prospects.

As a response to this phenomenon, I am aware that change will not take place overnight or any time soon. However, it has to be made public that ‘Standard English’ itself is problematic. Gupta (2001) strongly claims that “Standard English is a learned skill, and a skill in which there is not always an absolute agreement” (p. 367). Davies, Hamp-Lyons, and Kemp (2003); and Hamp-Lyons and Davies (2008) raise a challenging issue that those standardized tests are biased, evaluating test takers’ language proficiency against a variety of English to which they have never been exposed. For this reason, the result “systematically misrepresent[s] the ‘true score’ of the candidates” (Davies, et al., 2003, p. 571). Moreover, Aya Matsuda (2003a) makes a firm argument that the standardized tests are not suitable to measure the language proficiency required for multilingual/multicultural contexts

Having Rhetorical/Stylistic Awareness

Finally, teachers and learners should be made more consciously aware of the culturally moderated differences that show up in written organization and linguistic features. As one way to do this, local teachers could introduce students with classroom materials written by second language (particularly Thai) authors—for instance news items, novels, and narrative stories. Paul Matsuda (1999), a celebrated scholar in second language composition, makes some suggestions that, to gain more knowledge and resources on second language composition, local teachers should read second-language journals such as *English for Specific Purposes*, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *Language Learning*, *World Englishes*, and *TESOL Quarterly*. Moreover, the teachers

should attend presentations, workshops, and special interest group meetings on ESL-related topics at professional conferences. In addition to building the teacher/scholar's theoretical knowledge, these experiences also give him or her access to and familiarity with the range of discourse practices across different varieties of English.

Limitations and Future Studies

In general, it is necessary to emphasize that the results of this study should not be generalized over time or to other populations. However, there are some specific limitations with respect to the specific area of participants, the complex means of English education, and the complicated context of use which lend themselves to further studies.

This study is solely based on exploring the participants' experiences related to the inferiority and marginalization perceived among second language speakers. Further studies are needed to explore the views of English first-language speakers and address more evidence on this other side of the global picture from English speakers to give a more balanced point of view.

For a fuller picture of how Thai teachers perceive the role of English and English teaching in the country, further studies conducted in different parts of the country are needed. Even though Thai teachers across the nation work under similar mandates and guidelines designed by the national education board, the participants in this study cannot be viewed as representatives of the entire country. Each region deserves its own study.

In the same vein, it was not the aim of the present study to provide a full account of the Thai teachers' experiences, including the kinds of positive experience that helps them to feel empowered. Ultimately, studies of this fuller context could provide important ideas on how to remedy the imbalance highlighted in this study.

Moreover, how the teacher participants respond to the e-mail interviews may not correspond with what they actually do inside and outside classroom. For example, in the study, they show a strong determination to push their students to imitate the native-speaker pronunciation. However, in the classroom they might be more sensitive to other linguistic factors, flexible to certain communication situations, and understanding of students' limitations. Other modes of data collection such as classroom observation need to be employed in any future study to give a complete picture of actual classroom practice and its relation to teacher perceptions.

Another limitation is that This learn and use English through a combination of means; namely, mandatory subjects at schools and colleges, ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses offered at private schools, local and international English media, and interactions with English users in the workplace. This study does not specify the contexts of use, but generally explores the participants' perceptions (and experiences) of the combination of these means. However, with more specific contexts of learning and using English (e.g. course objectives and goals, communication settings, spoken or written language, and student's future careers), the results may deviate from what has been found in this present study.

A few local teachers have gone beyond total passive adoption by inventing their own approaches in the classroom. They are aware that teaching methods developed in the West are not compatible with their culture and context. This "artificial dichotomy between theory and practice," as claimed by Kumaravadivelu's (2006b) needs to be further explored.

Last but not least, another study is needed to test how much of these colonial values and attitudes (e.g. favoring mainstream pronunciation model) are based on prejudice, and not a simple 'real' desire to be understood and to understand. These concepts are overlapping but not the same and require further investigation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form for the Participants

Informed Consent Form for the Participants

Project: An Exploration of Culturally-based Assumptions Guiding ELT Practice in Thailand, a Non-colonized Nation

Principal Investigator: Phongsakorn Methitham

Dissertation Director: Dr. Jeannine Fontaine

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

English Department

Ph.D. Program in composition and TESOL

You are invited to participate in this research study. You are eligible to participate in this study because you are a teacher/instructor of English at your institution. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the beliefs, statements, and practices prevalent in Thailand regarding the role of English and English teaching. Participation in this study will require to respond in a questionnaire and/or e-mail interviews.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or your institution. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at anytime by notifying the Project Director. Upon your request to withdraw,

all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidential and will not bearing on your professional standing at your institution. Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in TESOL-related professional journals or presented at academic conferences and meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you would like to have further information on this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me via this e-mail address: cdm@iup.edu

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement attached.

Project Director:

Phongsakorn Methitham

PhD Candidate in Composition & TESOL

1524 Oakland Ave. Apt.#51

Indiana, PA 15701

USA

Dissertation Project Director: Dr. Jeannine Fontaine

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional

Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 1-724-357-7730)

Informed Consent Form (continued)

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

E-mail address which you can be reached _____

Investigator's use only

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study; have answered any questions that have been raised; and have witnessed the above signature.

Date

Investigator's Signature

Appendix B: Questionnaire for the Participants

Questionnaire

แบบสอบถาม

Concerning your own background, please mark in an appropriate box:

กรุณาให้ข้อมูลส่วนตัวของท่านตามหัวข้อด้านล่างนี้

Sex: Male Female

เพศ ชาย หญิง

Age:

อายุ

30 years old and under ๓๐ ปี หรือ น้อยกว่า	31-40 years old ๓๑ ถึง ๔๐ ปี	41-50 years old ๔๑ ถึง ๕๐ ปี	51 years old and over อายุมากกว่า ๕๑ ปีขึ้นไป
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Highest academic background

ระดับการศึกษาสูงสุด

Bachelor Degree ระดับปริญญาตรี	Master Degree ระดับปริญญาโท	Doctorate Degree ระดับปริญญาเอก
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Number of years of teaching experience:

ท่านมีประสบการณ์การสอนภาษาอังกฤษมาทั้งหมดกี่ปี

1-6 years ๑ ถึง ๖ ปี	7-15 years ๗ ถึง ๑๕ ปี	16-25 years ๑๖ ถึง ๒๕ ปี	26 years and above มากกว่า ๒๕ ปีขึ้นไป
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 1: Please answer the following questions in the space provided. Please feel free to answer the questions in either Thai or English.

กรุณาตอบคำถามดังต่อไปนี้ ท่านสามารถเลือกตอบเป็นภาษาไทยหรือภาษาอังกฤษก็ได้

1	English serves as an international language because... ภาษาอังกฤษมีสถานะเป็นภาษาสื่อกลางของคนทั่วโลกเพราะเหตุใด
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

2	When you speak English, you would like to sound like..., and why? เวลาท่านพูดภาษาอังกฤษ ท่านอยากมีสำเนียงภาษาแบบใด และเพราะเหตุใด
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

3	When Thai teachers of English use Thai in the classroom, you feel that... เวลาที่อาจารย์ชาวไทยใช้ภาษาไทยในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ ท่านรู้สึกอย่างไร
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

4	You chose to major in English because... ท่านเลือกศึกษาภาษาอังกฤษเป็นวิชาเอกเพราะเหตุใด
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

5	<p>If you were to receive a scholarship to study English abroad, you think you might like to go to You have chosen that area because...</p> <p>ถ้าท่านได้รับทุนสนับสนุนให้ไปศึกษาต่อยังต่างประเทศ ท่านจะเลือกไปศึกษาต่อที่ประเทศใด และท่านเลือกไปศึกษายังประเทศนั้นเพราะเหตุใด</p>
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	

6	<p>Are there any differences or similarities among Thai and Western students? If there are, in what way?</p> <p>ท่านเชื่อว่า นักเรียนไทย กับนักเรียนชาติตะวันตกมีความเหมือน หรือแตกต่างหรือไม่ ถ้าท่านเชื่อว่ามี กรุณาอธิบายว่าเหมือนหรือแตกต่างกันอย่างไร</p>
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	

7	<p>A group of people who own English is... because...</p> <p>กลุ่มคนที่เป็น “เจ้าของ” ภาษาอังกฤษคือกลุ่มชนใด และเพราะเหตุใด</p>
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	

Section 2: Please respond to the following statements on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is ‘strongly agree,’ 7 is ‘strongly disagree’. Please make a circle around the number that you choose.

กรุณาทำเครื่องหมายวงกลมในหมายเลขที่ท่านมีความเห็นใกล้เคียงกับคำกล่าวด้านล่างมากที่สุด

1 หมายถึง “เห็นด้วยมากที่สุด”

5 หมายถึง “ไม่เห็นด้วย”

2 หมายถึง “เห็นด้วยมาก”

6 หมายถึง “ไม่เห็นด้วยมาก”

3 หมายถึง “เห็นด้วย”

7 หมายถึง “ไม่เห็นด้วยมากที่สุด”

4 หมายถึง “ไม่มีความคิดเห็นในเรื่องดังกล่าว”

Statements คำกล่าวที่ว่า ...	
<p>Black and Indian speakers use forms of English that are enjoyable to listen to.</p> <p>ภาษาอังกฤษตามแบบที่ชาวผิวดำ และชาวอินเดียใช้สื่อสารนั้นสามารถเข้าใจได้ง่าย และน่าฟัง</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p>
<p>We should evaluate students’ performance against (native-speaking) British or American English norms.</p> <p>เราควรประเมินความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนตามรูปแบบการใช้ภาษา ของชาวอังกฤษ หรือชาวอเมริกัน</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p>
<p>I believe Thailand should develop its own variety of English as American-, Indian-, Singaporean-, Black-, Australian-, and Philippines English.</p> <p>ผม/ดิฉันเชื่อว่า ประเทศไทยควรมีรูปแบบการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นของตนเอง อาทิเช่น ชาวผิวขาวในสหรัฐอเมริกา ชาวอินเดีย ชาวสิงคโปร์ ชาวผิวดำในสหรัฐอเมริกา ชาวออสเตรเลีย ชาวฟิลิปปินส์ ที่ได้พัฒนารูปแบบการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นของตนเองซึ่งแตกต่างจาก ภาษาอังกฤษในแบบดั้งเดิมของชาวอังกฤษ</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p>
<p>I believe there is no connection between political factors and the choices made by British or American scholars who develop teaching methods.</p> <p>ผม/ดิฉันเชื่อว่าวิธีการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่พัฒนาโดยนักวิชาการชาวอังกฤษหรืออเมริกันนั้นมีความเป็นกลาง โดยที่ไม่มีการแทรกหรือแฝงนัยอื่น ๆ หรือปลูกฝังแนวความคิดด้านอื่น ๆ นอกเหนือไปจากการพัฒนาทักษะภาษาอังกฤษเท่านั้น</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p>
<p>My students will learn English better if they understand the native speaker’s culture and perspective.</p> <p>นักเรียนจะเรียนภาษาอังกฤษได้ดีขึ้นก็ต่อเมื่อมีความเข้าใจในวัฒนธรรมและวิธีการคิดของเจ้าของภาษา</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p>

Section 3: Open-ended questions (Optional)

คำถามปลายเปิดดังต่อไปนี้ ท่านสามารถเลือกตอบหรือไม่ก็ได้

1	<p>Please name one or two cultural topics that you feel should be included in the English teaching curriculum. Why?</p> <p>กรุณาเลือกหนึ่งหรือสองหัวข้อการเรียนวัฒนธรรมที่ท่านคิดว่าควรบรรจุอยู่ในหลักสูตรการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ และเพราะเหตุใด</p>
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	

2	<p>Please name one or two films that you have used in class, or that you would like to use in class. Why?</p> <p>กรุณายกตัวอย่างภาพยนตร์หนึ่งหรือสองเรื่องที่ท่านได้ใช้ หรือจะเลือกใช้เป็นสื่อการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ และเพราะเหตุใด</p>
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	

3	<p>Imagine that you are responsible for writing a job announcement for your institution. Write a short draft of some phrases you think you might include in the advertisement</p> <p>ถ้าท่านต้องรับผิดชอบในการเขียนใบประกาศรับสมัครงานอาจารย์สอนภาษาอังกฤษ คุณสมบัติได้บ้างที่ท่านจะระบุลงในใบประกาศรับสมัคร</p>
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	

Would you be willing to participate in an e-mail interview? If so, please write down your e-mail address. The responses you provided will be used in this study and may be published in TESOL-related professional journals or presented at academic conferences and meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

ถ้าหากท่านมีความประสงค์ที่จะร่วมการสัมภาษณ์ผ่านทางจดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ (E-mail Interviews) กรุณาระบุที่อยู่จดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ (E-mail address) ของท่านลงในช่องว่างด้านล่าง โดยที่ ข้อมูลที่ท่านให้จะใช้ในการวิจัยนี้ และอาจจะนำไปใช้เป็นข้อมูล ประกอบบทความวิจัย ในวารสารที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการสอนภาษาอังกฤษให้กับผู้ที่พูดและใช้ภาษาอื่นๆ (TESOL) หรืออาจนำไป ใช้เป็นข้อมูลประกอบในการนำเสนอตามวาระการประชุมทางวิชาการ โดยที่ ผู้วิจัยจะไม่เปิดเผยข้อมูล ส่วนตัวของท่าน

E-mail address

ที่อยู่จดหมายอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ที่สามารถติดต่อได้

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Thank you very much for your co-operation in filling in this questionnaire. If you wish to add any other comments, please feel free to write on the last page of this questionnaire.

ขอขอบพระคุณเป็นอย่างสูงที่ได้ให้ความร่วมมือในการตอบแบบสอบถามฉบับนี้ ถ้าท่านประสงค์ที่จะแสดงความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติม กรุณาเขียนลงในกระดาษหน้าสุดท้ายของแบบสอบถามฉบับนี้

Note: Please return the questionnaire and the informed consent form (Investigator copy) to the assigned official who distributed this questionnaire to you.

หมายเหตุ กรุณาส่งแบบสอบถาม พร้อมสำเนาหนังสือแสดงความยินยอมสำหรับผู้วิจัย ทั้งฉบับภาษาไทยและ ภาษาอังกฤษ คืนให้กับผู้แจกแบบสอบถามฉบับนี้

Appendix C: Guided Interview Questions for the Participants

Interview Questions

1. What is your view of the culture in that country? What values come to mind when you think of that culture? Do you think that you have adopted any practices or values from that English-speaking culture?
2. How would you define and compare the terms '*native and non-native speakers of English*'?
3. Have you ever had any bad experience in your English teaching career that you felt as because you are not a native speaker? If you have, please give a brief sample about such experience.
4. Apart from your English teaching career, have you ever had any bad experience in using English that you felt as because you are not a native speaker?
5. How do you feel about the way you are expected to teach English? Do you feel that the policies of your institution or country are helpful and sound? Do you see any problems in the way English is taught at your institution or country?
6. How do you feel about the textbooks used? Do you use locally-published materials or books from English-speaking countries? Please name the publisher and series.
7. Do you think that there should be Standard English? If yes, which country should provide the norms for others to follow? And why?
8. You said that you were familiar with ... and you showed a positive impression on.... Apart from that, is there any particular practice or value that you don't like or you resist?

9. Do you think it is always the policy at your institution to offer a higher salary and better welfare to temporary native-speaking teachers than to temporary Thai teachers of English? If it is, why does this happen? Do you think it is a fair policy?
10. Do you have native-speaking colleagues teaching English in your program? From which country? How do you feel about their presence?
11. Do you use the internet in your teaching? If you do, how do you use it? Can you name specific websites or online materials that you have used? Why do you think these are helpful?
12. How do you feel about the teaching methods that you have been learned, trained, and practiced (for example, Grammar-translation, Audio-lingual, Communicative Approach)? Which one do you prefer the most? Why?
13. You shared your view that ... should provide the norms for others to follow. How do you feel about TOEFL, a standardized test, which has been used globally? Do you have any particular comment on your local standardized tests, e.g. CU-TEP and TU-GET? If you do, please share your thought.
14. Having been speaking and writing in English for many years, do you aware of the change of your Thai discourse, or does English discourse have any impact on your use of Thai?
15. Tell me a little about your teaching experience and using English in Thailand. For example: Do you have a fat or slim chance of using English outside the classroom? Between native speakers and non-native speakers of English, which group of people you have more chance to communicate with in English?

16. How do the acts of asking native speakers of English to clarify slang, suggest for correct pronunciation, edit and proofread translated works or textbooks reflect the “ownership” of English?
17. How do you foresee your students’ English usage? Will they have more chance to use English with native speakers or non-native speakers? In what circumstances?
18. Are literature courses offered at your institution organized by dominant English-speaking themes such as British/American fiction, poetry, and drama? If so, please share your view on the rationale of such organization.
19. Have you ever chosen any English reading materials written by L2 authors/scholars in your classroom? If you have, please name some of them and justify your choice of reading materials.
20. Do you agree with this statement, “A learner can only use English properly if he or she is familiar with native English-speaking culture”? Please justify your answer.
21. Do you agree with this statement, “Western native-speaking theorists conceive source of knowledge in ELT for ESL and EFL, and local non-native teachers consume such knowledge”? Please give reasons for your answer.
22. What would be your best advice for non-native speakers of English who wish to be employed as an instructor of English in an English spoken country?
23. Please skim some of these requirements posted in job advertisements in www.ajarn.com for positions of English teachers.

-Applicants must be from the United State, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and/ or Europe ONLY. Non-native speakers of English (Indians, Filipinos, etc.) please do not apply.

-Native English speakers from the U.S., U.K., N.Z, Canada and Australia only.
(Please note that all other nationalities will not be considered.)

-We are currently seeking Native English teachers to teach English. Native English speakers without strong accents.

How do you feel about these advertisements? Personally, what do you think of the purpose of such advertisement?

24. Do you know any one of these ELT-related organizations: TESOL, ThaiTESOL, British Council, Peace Corps, and AUA? Please name one or two that you are familiar with, and what is your impression on these organizations? Have you involved or participated in any activity provided by these organizations?
25. There is a corpus study reported by Barbara Seidlhofer about English as an International Language on its grammar items which are used systematically and frequently. Although these items are used differently from native speakers, they cause no communication problems by expert speakers of English from a wide range of L1s.

These items are, for example, non-use of third person present tense –s (“She look very sad”), pluralisation of nouns which are considered uncountable in native speaker English (“informations,” “staffs,” “advices”), increasing of redundancy by adding prepositions (“We have to study about . . .” and “can we discuss about . . . ?”).

How do you view the study by Barbara Seidlhofer? Will you introduce these alternative features to your students along side with the conventional grammatical features? Would you allow the student to use these ELF grammar items in class? Please provide your rationale.

26. You said you had adopted certain values and beliefs from English-speaking countries? Have you transferred such values or beliefs toward your students?
27. Do you think that it is a tradition or policy that an English department has to provide extracurricular activities from native English speaking culture such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas celebration? What is the reason of such practice?
28. Would you allow the students to use the local Thai accent or push them to be like native-speaker accent? Why?
29. Have you evaluated students' written performance against British or American English norms in term of rhetorical structure, choice of words, and metaphorical expression?
30. What do you think about the questions I've been asking you? Is there anything you would like to add to what you have said? Also, are there any questions you would like to ask me?