Research

INSIDE THE THAI CLASSROOM: A STAKEHOLDER INSIGHT

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Abstract

Learning English is a critical component of economic and social development in Thailand and recent years have seen a significant drive to recruit foreign TEFL teachers. In many instances, the insatiable demand for English-speakers has resulted in the recruitment of TEFL tourists, yet to date there is little known about their classroom experiences. This paper provides an overview of the duties undertaken by foreign TEFL teachers, providing new light on the role of TEFL teacher in Thailand to stakeholders, whose perceptions, it is argued, are likely to be based on their ethnocentric assumptions. Findings indicate stark differences between the role of a TEFL teacher in Thailand and teaching in many Western nations including the use of corporal punishment, a lack of classroom differentiation, curriculum and formal assessments and the typical duties of foreign TEFL teachers which may include public singing and dancing, teaching the local police and teaching colleagues and attending English camps. Through incorporation of a mixed method methodology employing the use of qualitative blog analysis and quantitative analysis of survey data this paper builds upon the concept of TEFL tourism by providing details of the tourist experience. This enables stakeholders to have a more comprehensive understanding of the TEFL experience in Thailand than current literature facilitates and for academics and industry professionals alike to more accurately manage the TEFL sector. Dominant stakeholders from whom this paper may be particularly useful include the TEFL teachers, TEFL recruitment agencies, future employers or education recruitment teams of the TEFL teacher and the Thai government.

Key words: Foreign EFL teachers, Thailand, stakeholders, TEFL tourism

Introduction

Learning English is a critical component of economic and social development in Thailand (Kirkpatrick, 2012; Punthumasen, 2007). Yet, despite recent government initiatives to improve the standard of English, Thailand remains significantly below most of its ASEAN counterparts in this regard (Bolton, 2008; Khamkhien, 2010; Wiriyachitra, 2001). Although there appear to be no official statistics, it is suggested that less than half of the Thai population speak English and there is little indication of improvement (Ajarn, 2014). It is thus of no surprise that there is a considerable need for TEFL teachers. To cope with this demand the Thai government have been recruiting native speakers to teach English in a variety of contexts, ranging from the formal state educational system to private tuition establishments. Employment generally consists of three types of TEFL work; state school placements, private school placements and private one to one and group tuition (Ajarn, 2014; Griffith, 2014). In many instances, the insatiable demand for English-speakers has resulted in the recruitment of TEFL tourists, defined as people 'who travel[s] outside of their usual environment to teach English as a foreign language, whose role shifts between tourist, educator and educatee at various points in their trip' to fill these positions (Stainton, 2017a).

The notion of TEFL tourism is a new concept within both the educational and tourism-based literature and to date little is known about the foreign TEFL teacher experience (Stainton, 2017a). The intention of this paper is to enable various TEFL stakeholders to have a more comprehensive understanding of the TEFL experience in Thailand than current literature facilitates and for academics and industry professionals alike to more accurately manage the TEFL sector. Dominant stakeholders include the TEFL teachers, TEFL recruitment agencies, future employers or education recruitment teams of the TEFL teacher and the Thai government.

Stakeholder Perceptions

Rooted in the foundations of this research is the concept of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is when individuals judge other groups or experiences relative to their own ethnic group or cultural practices (Omohundro, 2007). Nominalist ontology argues that by definition, all concepts are formed through subjective interpretations based upon the person's prior knowledge and experiences (Nueman, 2012). Gregory (1970)

explains this further through his theory of top down processing. He argues that perception is a constructive process where cognitive information from past experiences or stored knowledge is used to make inferences about what is perceived. Based therefore on this premise, it can be argued that a stakeholder's perceptions of the TEFL teaching experience in Thailand is effectively a hypothesis based upon their prior experiences and understanding. For many people therefore, their perceptions are likely to be rooted according to practices in their own countries or cultures and the educational institutions within which they have studied or worked in themselves.

Deveney (2005), in her research, attempted to address the perceptual accuracy of teachers in Thailand, although these were not limited to TEFL. She found that of the original nine perceptions held about teaching in Thailand, only five were proved to be accurate; misconceptions were largely linked to the negative aspects of teaching in Thailand. Accurate perceptions included students being well-behaved, hard-working, non-egocentric and having a positive working attitude. Unfounded pre-conceptions included gender equality, students being quieter than in the teacher's home country, pretending to understand instructions and being overly differential (Deveney, 2005). Although Deveney's data set was limited in size and depth, it does provide an indication that there may be elements, particularly those of a negative nature, that the TEFL teacher may be unaware of.

Accurate perception is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it could be deemed unethical, or in extreme circumstances it could potentially be classified as a form of false or inaccurate advertising, if there are significant elements of TEFL in Thailand that the prospective teacher is not made aware of by the agency or organisation that they booked their placement through. Secondly, retention may be affected if the experience is not as expected as the TEFL teacher may not be happy with their placement and choose to return home, resulting in potential financial, time and educational implications for the stakeholders involved. Thirdly, if the teacher is unhappy as a result of their experience not being as expected, they may not perform optimally, thus impacting on aspects such as their students' learning, their colleagues' workloads and their own psychological health.

With regard to student education, it is important to consider the inaccurate perceptual implications that may be caused by the way that the Thai school or educational system view TEFL in Thailand. In their study of the narratives of foreign teachers, Methanonpphakhun and Deocampo

(2016) briefly introduce the concept of 'travel and teach' in Thailand, which has seen a rise in foreigners, with no teaching qualifications, whose primary employment motive is to fund their travels, being recruited in educational institutions throughout the country. Similar studies have emphasised that a lack of teaching qualifications and skills is a cause for the low levels of English in Thailand compared with other ASEAN countries (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 2012; Punthumasen, 2007; Stainton, 2016).

If the Thai government are dedicated to improving the nation's English-speaking capabilities, it is important that appropriate teaching practice is undertaken by TEFL tourists to facilitate this. The volunteer tourism industry, for example, has been confronted with challenges from which the TEFL sector can learn. Research has found that volunteer tourists may not hold the necessary skills which has been known to undermine the positive impacts desired (Benson and Wearing, 2012; Guttentag, 2009). Not only is it important that those working within the Thai education system are aware that hiring unskilled TEFL teachers may not yield optimal educational outcomes, there are also broader implications worthy of consideration. In their study of orphanage tourism Richter and Norman (2010) highlight the psychologically negative impacts on the child when the adult-child bond is broken as a result of the adult leaving, a similar circumstance to the TEFL teacher who will leave their students at the end of their TEFL placement. There is also the concern in relation to the reinforcement of conceptualisations of 'the other' (Benson and Wearing, 2012; Guttentag, 2009; Persaud, 2014), which is in this instance the TEFL teacher, exploitation by commercial organisations such as 'TEFL agencies', undesirable power relations, for example due to differences in pay between foreign and local teachers (Palacios, 2010) or the instigation of cultural changes (Guttentag, 2009). Although these issues are beyond the scope of this paper, their existence supports the need for Thai educational establishments to have a better understanding of the foreign teachers that they recruit.

The same applies to the post-TEFL recruitment of TEFL teachers upon returning to or commencing a career within the Western educational system. Recent decades have represented a period of dramatic transformation across the education sector in the UK and internationally, with trends of increased control and 'new managerialism' giving rise to an increasingly regulated and efficiency-dominated education sector (Gewirtz *et al*, 2009). Currently, however, this trend does not appear to be reflected within the Thai educational system (Bolton, 2008; Kirkpatrick, 2012; Punthumasen,

2007; Wiriyachitra, 2001). Despite there being a general acknowledgement of the differences between educational systems and their associated teaching standards in different parts of the world, it is likely that Western-based recruiters' perceptions will be based on their ethnocentric assumptions. Therefore, it is suggested that, based on their perceptions of the applicant's TEFL experiences, the Western-based educational establishment may have unrealistic expectations of the teacher's skills and capabilities, thus requiring them to perform duties that they may not equipped to perform.

Similarly, this applies to universities who recruit the previous TEFL teacher on to a teacher training programme. Stainton (2017a) found that a number of TEFL teachers in Thailand undertake their placements as a means of gaining experience to enhance their prospects of securing a place on a teacher training programme in their home country. However, given the current situation, where an accurate perspective of the TEFL experience in Thailand may not be portrayed, the university recruitment team may perceive the teacher to have skills and capacity that they do not. As a result of this potential mis-perception, the TEFL teacher recruited may not be the best candidate for the position.

Methods

This paper presents an analytical narrative of the typical classroom experiences undertaken by foreign TEFL teachers in Thailand. Data was inductively interpreted in order to obtain a holistic view of the TEFL experience through a two-staged mixed methods research approach. The exploratory research phase was undertaken through the use of blog analysis (n=36) which provided data-rich and valuable information regarding TEFL experiences as documented by past/present TEFL teachers (Stainton, 2017b). Data were obtained through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques throughout May 2015 and blogs were located through the search engine Google and Wordpress blogging platform. Only blogs written by past or present TEFL teachers based in Thailand were considered for analysis. Using inductive content analysis, text was analysed and coding categories emerged empirically, allowing for key themes, trends and concepts to be identified.

These key themes and trends were then verified through the use of a survey (n=567). Surveys were administered online using convenience and snowball approaches, where existing contacts forwarded the survey to their

acquaintances. Internet connectively allowed for the surveys to reach a large sample both demographically and geographically, with almost immediacy. The majority of the survey consisted of closed-questions, most of which were multiple choice or Likert-style, based on research findings from phase one, thus allowing for easier quantification and analysis. Data were analysed using SPSS software and the majority of statistical tests undertaken were nonparametric due to the nature of the categorical data collected.

Results and Discussion

Classroom Activities

Whilst a range of teaching techniques were employed, playing games was the most common activity undertaken by respondents in the classroom, with almost all respondents in research phase two (98.8%) utilising this teaching method. Respondents were most likely to play games with younger students, and the frequency of playing games reduced with the age of the TEFL teacher.

Figure 1: Classroom Activities

Method of Teaching (multiple response)	Number	Percent
Playing games	560	98.8
Worksheet/text-books	544	95.9
Writing tasks	542	95.6
Group work	531	93.7
Competitions	519	91.5
Acting/drama	514	90.7
Flashcards	514	90.7
Singing songs	484	85.4
Story Telling	468	82.5
Arts and crafts	460	81.1
Making posters	448	79.0
Watching videos	410	72.3
Spelling tests	383	67.6
Religious/cultural education from home country	318	56.1
PowerPoint presentations	303	53.4

Whilst playing games may be aligned with the sanuk element of Thai culture, where psychological philosophy is grounded in the concepts of fun and merriment (Komin, 1990), the overuse of such teaching practices may

not yield the best educational results. Blogger W, a qualified teacher from the USA stated:

'Christ, this aint teaching, it's just playing games! Any person can stand up in front of a bunch a 5 year olds and play what's the time mr wolf or duck duck goose, where are the skills in that? I genuinely feel for these kids as they're not being taught proper. At the same time though, I do also feel for the teachers, they genuinely think they're teachers but all they really are is glorified entertainers!'[sic]

Blogger W raises an important ethical issue, suggesting that TEFL teachers may believe that they are gaining the correct skills and experience they need for a teaching career in their home country, when in reality they are not. This premise lays the foundation for the comparison of teaching expectations in Thailand compared with other Western nations which can be used to inform stakeholders whose expectations may be rooted in their ethnocentric perceptions.

Teaching Adaptations

With reference to the concept of ethnocentrism, it can be argued that blogger W's perception of 'proper teaching' is reflective of culture in the USA rather than Thailand, thus failing to take into account interculturality (Liddicoat, 2003). In line with Western doctrines, Thailand has attempted to introduce communicative language teaching (CLT) into their approaches to learning. Whilst there was evidence of bloggers and respondents incorporating this in their teaching practice through the use of games and other activities, Thai culture dictated that students were shy and reluctant to speak aloud, thus inhibiting respondent's ability to teach as intended. Blogger CI explained that:

'The hardest part about teaching English is getting the students to actually speak English. Thai students are just so darn shy. They have no problem talking to each other during class, but when you ask one of them a question in English, their eyes widen and they freeze up. I think it's a cultural thing.'

Wiriyachitra (2001) suggests that this is a common problem in the Thai educational system, where learning is frequently hindered as a result of

a reluctance on the part of the students both to speak English in class and to take responsibility for their own learning. The frequency of this problem was demonstrated by 94.2% of respondents who experienced overly shy students. Blogger T reflects on the cultural aspects of TEFL teaching;

'You simply have to accept that things are different, often in a negative or frustrating way from what you might experience teaching at home… for example Thai culture is inherently shy so students are reluctant to take part in speaking excercises (which is obviously important when learning a language!). Students, and teachers are frequently late, and they don't see an issue with last minute changes or not letting you know about an event or something. This is simply part of their culture, it's the way it is and as a teacher you just have to get on with it an accept it.'[sic]

Despite the need for differentiation when students are late or absent as a result of them missing the intended classroom input, Thai culture is collectivist in nature (Kiddle, 2014), thus implying that the individualisation needed to facilitate differentiated tasks is not prevalent in the Thai educational system. This research found that 18.7% of respondents did not differentiate at any point during their teaching practice. Although the remaining 81.3% of respondents claimed to differentiate within their teaching practice, the data provided no evidence of frequency or effectiveness. It can be argued that due to a lack of pedagogic knowledge as a result of limited qualifications and experience, some respondents may not understand what it means to differentiate tasks in the classroom. Blogger G reflects on her experiences:

'I don't feel I challenge the bright kids enough and I know I don't do enough to support the kids who struggle. It's just so hard with such mixed ability in one class and having 40 kids all wanting your attention, plus I haven't been trained how to please everybody. I feel that I am doing the kids an injustice, I feel like I'm not good enough as a teacher.'

In contrast to claims by the ONEC (2002) and Traiwisha (2016) who suggest that the Thai educational system has improved in terms of their ability to differentiate through the integration of disabled students into mainstream educational institutions, it is suggested that this has a negative impact on students by putting additional pressure on the teacher to organise his/her lessons in a way that they may not have been trained to do.

Whilst blogger G's comments demonstrate self-recognition that the teacher does not have the required skills to facilitate differentiation in the classroom, it is important to note that many TEFL teachers may not be aware of this concept, indicating a level of ignorance, perhaps as a result of a lack of pedagogic knowledge. Blogger G suggests that the problem is not down to lack of skills possessed by the teacher, but attributes it to the way that the educational system is designed:

'*There is another potential problem with the Thai system, it's very much set in stone- The system is too generic and doesn't meet the diverse needs of the students. Teaching methods, student responses etc … There is no initiative or room for individual thought and I find that very sad.*'

The notion that a generic system limits opportunities for differentiation was demonstrated by 23.8% of respondents who stated that it was either not required, or in some instances not allowed, by the educational institution in which they worked. One respondent explained that:

'*The native teacher told me that "some students will fail because they are not smart enough", and we were not to give extra help. We must stick to the text-book.*'

Planning and Curriculum

Research phase two indicated that 43.3% of respondents were required to design their own curriculum. Blogger R commented that this was not an anticipated part of his TEFL experience;

'*The next shock was that there was no course syllabus for me to follow. The teachers had been using a textbook (what sort of a curriculum is that!?... I decided to leave the textbook to the Thai teachers... I would need to create my own syllabus, but this was going to be a challenge.*'

The lack of curriculum provision demonstrates an inconsistency in standards for TEFL teachers to work towards in Thailand, which is in contrast to other countries where teachers are required to work with set frameworks. It can be argued that this is not reflective of, nor preparatory for, a career in teaching in countries that utilise such frameworks.

It would be expected that respondents who were required to design their own curriculum would spend a greater amount of time planning lessons than those who were not. There was however no evidence of this. Instead the data suggested that average preparation time differed according to age, with older respondents committing more of their time to classroom preparation than younger respondents. Blogger W indicated that her ability to plan lessons was impacted by the lack of organisation in the school;

'That's another difference between Thai and American education. Teacher's only plan a week ahead instead of planning a whole semester. Things change so often that it wouldn't be productive for a teacher to spend all of his/her time planning a semester because it probably wouldn't happen!'

Assessment

Not only did many bloggers and respondents indicate that they had to design their own curricula, there also appeared to be inconsistencies across methods of examination. Blogger W, together with 49.4% of respondents in research phase two wrote her own assessments;

'I've just spent my entire weekend making up exams. Note the term MAKING UP. Who the hell am I to write my own assessments? This is really quite a joke, the educational system here is a complete mockery.' *(Blogger W)*

One of the dominant markers of Thai culture is that of flexibility and adjustment orientation. This relates to notions of uncritical compliance, preservation of harmony, non-confrontation and the avoidance of giving displeasure (Komin, 1990). In the context of the classroom, this has resulted in a culture in which cheating is rife, where teachers do not fail students to avoid the risk of them 'losing face' (Young, 2013). The issue of cheating was ill-received by respondents, with 85.7% of respondents experiencing this. Of these respondents 78.8% felt frustrated by this issue. This was exemplified in research phase one by blogger R:

'Cheating is rampant and not just confined to the students. Some of the teachers are studying for higher qualifications and just last week one of them just cut and pasted a whole English article from a web-site and submitted it as his own work without any qualms. He didn't even bother to

hide this blatant plagiarism because it is obviously something he has been doing all his life. This is not an isolated incident but a frequent occurrence.'

One respondent in research phase two indicated that this frustration subsequently effected his motivation:

'I've found it incredibly difficult to care about whether or not class happens. I also don't see the point in really giving out/stressing about grades since it won't matter in the end anyway. It's difficult for a teacher to teach when the students know that they can goof off, not listen to you, and still pass'

Demotivation in this way indicates that TEFL teachers may not work to the best of their ability, subsequently undermining the positive outcomes intended by the Thai Government in their desire to improve their position in the global economic and social marketplace (Kirkpatrick, 2012; Punthumasen, 2007). Such experiences also indicate that TEFL teachers may acquire skills and practices that are not acceptable in other countries, where academic rigour is more highly valued (Nicholls and Apiwattanakorn, 2015). It can be argued that condoning cheating and teaching practices such as these sacrifices the professional integrity and ethics of the teacher and their associated educational institution, an aspect afforded particular importance in many educational systems throughout the world.

Behaviour Management

The theme of culture is also relevant in the context of behaviour management. According to Komin's (1990) grateful orientation marker, Thai people have a genuine kindness, generosity, consideration and concern for others without expecting anything in return. On this premise, the teacher is believed to be representative of moral goodness, making a self-sacrifice to bestow the gift of knowledge for the good of the students, thus creating a moral debt which is repaid by students being respectful and behaving appropriately (Mulder, 2000). Whilst there is some evidence in the data to support Mulder's assertion, there is substantial variance in the way student behaviour is perceived amongst respondents.

'The strict hierarchical style throughout work and family in Thailand does of course have its advantages in education. Discipline is not a major

issue in the ways that is has become in a western society where such hierarchy has been reduced over recent decades. Of course children misbehave, but this only ever goes as far as horseplay and is easily stamped out.' (Blogger Q)

38.6% of respondents described their student behaviour as satisfactory or below. It can however, be suggested that this may lack accuracy as a result of the subjective interpretations of appropriate behaviour. Based on the premise of ethnocentrism, it is likely that TEFL teachers form their perceptions of behaviour based on their previous experiences. For example, those from different cultural backgrounds, geographical locations, those who attended different school types and those with prior teaching experience may define behaviour differently. Blogger E's description of her experiences in Thailand, in contrast to her teaching experience in the UK, supports this argument:

'Very rarely in Thailand during a lesson has my heart rate sped up as if I'm running a marathon and blood pressure shot up as if I'm having a coronary, (which was a daily, nay hourly, occurrence when teaching in England). I have not heard words like "peng", "gash", "innit", "laters", "nang", "piff" and "sick" in Thailand and the general behavior is 1000 times better.' [sic]

Most respondents (86.4%) experienced behavioural issues at some point during their TEFL experience in Thailand, with the most common problem being students misbehaving in class (69.7%). Blogger DI provided an example of frustrations resulting from student behaviour;

'You explain the activity, act it out, go through every little detail and say to the class "understand?" with a thumbs up and they all, with big smiles on their faces, nod and reply "yes", then the activity takes place and not one single student knows what the frig is going on. This is the single most frustrating thing a teacher experiences in the classroom.'[sic]

Again, this behaviour can be related to Thai culture. Komin's (1990) smooth interpersonal relationship orientation dictates that Thai people avoid confrontation, whilst the ego orientation cultural marker causes reluctance from the student to 'lose face'. In this context it can be argued that Thai students are reluctant to ask for help (Ekachai, 1990) for fear of confrontation and making themselves look bad. This is emphasised through the response to an open-ended question in research phase two indicating that

such frustrations derive not only from student behaviour, but also from parental involvement;

'[the biggest frustration is] Parents making ridiculous excuses for their children's behavior or poor performance like "Maybe he punched the other boy because the sun was in his eyes" etc' [Sic]

It is argued that the methods used to manage behaviour in Thai educational institutions are of particular concern due to the associated ethical and moral connotations. Despite the intention to follow Western nations and assign punitive activities, suspensions or probations as a means of punishing poor behaviour (Walker *et al*, 2004), physical punishment remains socially, if not legally, accepted in many educational institutions (Jampian, 2012). Physical punishment was witnessed by the majority (53.3%) of respondents. This is contradictory to the professional and ethical values prescribed by Western educational systems. Bloggers CI and V explain their experiences;

'Many of my Thai co-teachers will actually smack a student as a punishment for smacking another student. A teacher would get canned in a heartbeat if they tried that in an American high school!'

'Mr Sirichild picked up his long wooden cane. The sound of wood slapping on the back of Nung's legs was enough for me to never take a student to Mr Sirichild again. Nung was quiet (and couldn't sit down), for a week, but in my eyes it was too much.'

In many parts of the world, practices such as this are viewed as a violation of human rights and respect for dignity and physical integrity (Global Initiative to End all Corporate Punishment of Children, 2016; UNICEF, 2016). As a result, the majority (94%) of respondents admitted to feeling uncomfortable at some point in their position as a TEFL teacher when witnessing such methods of behaviour management. Blogger V elaborated;

'I just hate it [physical punishment]. Why is this necessary? We don't do it at home and our kids don't behave too badly? It really upsets me and I was genuinely shocked when I saw the kids being hurt like that. I wish I could stop it, but its out of my control.' [sic]

Although examination of the ethical and moral implications of Thai classroom management is beyond the scope of this research, it is clear that the use of corporal punishment in the classroom is ill-received by most respondents. This further emphasises that it is important that stakeholders, including prospective TEFL teachers or future recruiters have an accurate perception of the TEFL experience. It is suggested that as a result of the lack of evidence of this type of behaviour management on the websites and promotional materials of the TEFL agencies that stakeholders are largely unaware of such practices.

Based on the evidence collated in this research, it can be concluded that there is a high likelihood that TEFL teachers will feel uncomfortable as a result of the methods of discipline witnessed whilst working as a TEFL teacher in Thailand. This may have detrimental effects on teacher motivation and retention whilst potentially affecting them psychologically, although no literature to confirm this was available at the time of research. It also provides the teacher with an experience that is not only not reflective of practices in most Western nations, but is the antithesis of the ethical and professional practices prescribed in these systems. This is an area warranting further research in order to ensure that teaching practices in Thailand invoke optimum learning, with punishment-based methods widely known to stop bad behaviour only temporarily and have negative impacts on student-teacher relationships and the students' emotional stability (Martin and Pear, 2003; Sailor, 2010).

Wider Professional Responsibilities

There were a number of teaching duties identified by respondents that are not evident in other teaching systems. Based on the concept of ethnocentrism, it can again be argued that the actual TEFL experience may not be as anticipated due to differences between the TEFL teacher's home country and Thailand in the duties required of a teacher. Typical duties are outlined in table two.

Table Two: Teacher Duties

Duty (multiple response)	Percent of Respondents
Attend parties and school functions	64.02
English camps	56.08
Paperwork	53.44
Assembly	51.67
Gate duty	43.03
English competitions	40.04
Public singing/dancing/speaking	33.69
Organise/attend parent meetings	22.40
School plays	22.05

Both research phases indicated that attending parties and/or school functions was the most common duty undertaken. The types of functions varied and included events such as sports days, Buddhist ceremonies, children's day, Thai language day, school shows and parties. An explanation for the frequency of such events is the importance placed on ceremonies and rituals practiced by the Thai community, where a deep appreciation for their land and life opportunities is an important part of their culture (Forman, 2005). This does however not necessarily justify the TEFL teacher's involvement. Rather, blogger R suggests that this is the result of the inherent positive racial discrimination present in Thai culture (Methanonppkakhun and Deocampo, 2016; Persaud, 2014), where the white-skinned foreigner is treated in a celebrity-like fashion (Mostafaneshad, 2013; Wright, 2014) in order to enhance the ego orientation of the institution and its staff (Komin, 1990).

'As crazy as it sounds, I can remember one semester where I had at least one class canceled every week for an entire semester. Much importance is placed on other activities (to the detriment of their general education sometimes) and the foreign teachers are expected as their presence adds a certain amount of "face" to the schools reputation.' [sic]

This is similarly the suggested reason for the frequency with which respondents were required to take part in public speaking, singing or dancing (33.7%). Blogger L voices her frustrations:

'Seriously, its sooo embarrassing, just because Im the white face around here means that I always get dragged up on stage at every event so they can 'show me off'. I cant even understand what there saying most of the time, I just stand there with a fake grin on my face secretely wishing I could get the hell out of there!!' [sic]

There is no evidence that public performances are a part of a teacher's job description in the educational systems examined therefore it is thus likely that stakeholders such as prospective TEFL teachers and future recruiters may not be aware of such requirements. Depending on personality type, this factor could potentially have detrimental effects on the TEFL teaching experience, teacher self-esteem and their motivations to continue teaching. This re-enforced the need for stakeholders to be provided with the details of what the TEFL experience comprises of.

The second most common duty identified was undertaking English camps, discussed by 36% of bloggers in research phase one and noted by 56.1% of respondents in research phase two. There is little evidence of this in the promotional material of the agencies, indicating that TEFL teachers would not necessarily be aware of English camps or what they entail. Blogger O described that;

'English camps are short, intensive courses where kids get sent to fully immerse themselves in English for a period of time, usually around 1 week-1 month. The idea is that they are only allowed to speak English for the duration of the camp...'

There was also no evidence in promotional material indicating that TEFL teachers may be required to teach people other than their students. Seventeen percent of bloggers discussed having to teach people other than their students, namely Thai teachers and the police. This was echoed by 35.8% of respondents in research phase two, where the majority of respondents (76.3%) who taught those other than their students taught English to their teaching colleagues. Blogger U implies that this is the result of the hierarchical positive discrimination of the white-skinned foreign teacher in Thailand;

'Being an English teacher in Thailand (and because you are the famous village/town farang!) means you get asked to do all sorts of things from getting students ready for speech competitions, fixing documents for the

Thai teachers, teaching the Police English to being a judge at Regional and National English Competitions.'

Based on research findings, there appear to be many wider professional responsibilities of the TEFL teacher that are not in line with practices in Western destinations and information in this regard is not necessarily presented on agencies' promotional material. There are thus a number of duties required of the TEFL teachers that they will be largely unaware of.

Conclusion

This paper has provided an overview of the duties undertaken by foreign TEFL teachers, providing new light on the role of TEFL teacher in Thailand to stakeholders, whose perceptions, it is argued, are likely to be based on their ethnocentric assumptions. This research has demonstrated that there may be stark differences between the role of a TEFL teacher in Thailand and teaching in many Western nations including the use of corporal punishment, a lack of classroom differentiation, curriculum and formal assessments and the duties of foreign TEFL teachers which may include public singing and dancing, teaching the local police and teaching colleagues and attending English camps. This paper builds upon the newly introduced concept of TEFL tourism (Stainton, 2017) by providing details of the tourist experience enabling TEFL stakeholders to have a more comprehensive understanding of the TEFL experience in Thailand than current literature facilitates and for academics and industry professionals alike to more accurately manage the TEFL sector. It is recommended that further research is undertaken to enable deeper understanding of the areas noted within this paper including classroom activities, teaching adaptations, planning and curriculum, assessment, behaviour management and wider professional responsibilities.

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