

AN APPRAISAL ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE OF FOREIGN ENGLISH TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY AT A PRIVATE SCHOOL IN RATCHABURI, THAILAND

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Abstract

In recent years, many Thai schools have started to hire foreign English speakers to teach Thai students the skill of speaking English. This study aims to investigate how the foreign English teachers express their attitudes about teaching English in Thailand, and further explore the teaching beliefs, culture and language ideology implicit in these teachers' attitudes. An 'Appraisal' system (Martin 2007& Rose) was applied to analyze the **attitudes**, such as **affect** (people's feelings), **judgment** (people's character and behavior) and **appreciation** (the value of things), being conveyed in the discourse of the foreign English teachers in Thailand.

The findings of this study indicated the similarities and differences in these foreign English teachers' attitudes about their motivation, challenges and future aspiration of teaching in Thailand. Furthermore, this study revealed that different culture background and language ideologies influenced the teachers' teaching beliefs and classroom teaching approaches.

Key Words: attitudes, affect, judgment, appreciation, foreign English teachers.

Introduction

With globalization of the world economy, English has become one of the most widely used languages. But also the status of English is being

transformed as well as at the same time, the business of teaching and learning English (Graddol, 2006). As a result, in many countries where English is not a first language, there has been making great effort to create international cooperation and networking through the medium of English.

In the case of Thailand, where Thai is taught as a foreign language, although English became a compulsory subject in schools for all students beyond Grade 4 in 1921, it was not until 1996 that the Ministry of Education set up the policy to start teaching English from Grade 1 onwards (Keyuravong, 2008). The school structure is divided into four levels: the first level, Prathom 1-3, the second level, Prathom 4-6, the third level, Mattayom 1-3, and the upper level of Mattayom 4-6. At the end of each level, the students need to pass the National Educational Test (NET) to graduate. The Ministry of Education describes the main aims of English Language Teaching as cultivating two linguistic abilities: an ability to access to the society and culture (Socio-Cultural Functions) and an ability to use English to communicate effectively, grammatically and appropriately (Cognitive Linguistic Functions).

However, a survey carried out in February 2006 in collaboration with the University of Cambridge to gauge the qualification of some 400 Thai teachers of English revealed that over 60% of the teachers had insufficient knowledge of English and teaching methodology (Kaewmala, 2012).

In recent years a number of foreign English teachers have been employed in public and private schools throughout the country. One reason for the use of expatriate teachers was that the teachers' fluency in English and teaching methods were expected to help the Thai students' English language learning. However, too often these expatriate teachers were unqualified in teaching English as a second or foreign language. More recently, according to Kaewmala (2012), English language teachers in Thailand must now have at least a bachelor's degree and a teaching license. To improve communication with Thai teachers and students, the foreign English teachers must also take a 20-hour Thai culture and language course, a one-year training course and pass four exams. The new rule has brought in more qualified teachers of English to Thailand, but there are still too many foreigners teaching English in Thailand who are without the required teaching qualifications.

However, the foreign English teachers still play a very important role in English language teaching in Thailand. There are both native and non-native English speaking teachers from different countries, such as USA, England,

Australia, Russia, and The Philippines. With such diverse background, knowledge of the pedagogy of teaching English, their motivation, will naturally influence the learning of the students.

In order to investigate what his might mean practice, this small case study set out to analyze the discourse of a sample of such teachers as one way to have some idea of their attitude and approaches to their teaching of English in Thailand.

The approach was to use the language of *Appraisal* developed by Martin (2007& Rose), which relates to the interpersonal meaning of language and its concern with how speakers express their attitudes and appreciation through their discourse. This includes expressing their attitudes towards the content of their messages, engaging with the messages of the text in various ways and graduation in terms of the force and focus in our grading of meaning (Foley, 2011). Consequently, this research focused on how foreign teachers express their attitudes to teaching in Thailand, how the tone or mood of their discourse reflected this, and explored the ideology and teaching beliefs implied in these attitudes.

English Language Ideology---Native Speakerism

Standard language ideology is a well-critiqued phenomenon. In terms of English, it is prominent in discussions of so-called 'standard English', its sociopolitical basis, its influence in inner and outer circle education systems, its role in promoting social and racial discrimination, and the like (Jenkins, 2007). Milroy defines the term 'standard language ideology' as follows:

a particular set of beliefs about language... [which] are typically held by populations of economically developed nations where processes of standardization have operated over a considerable time to produce an abstract set of norms... (Milroy, 1999).

With this 'Standard English ideology', it was traditionally considered that native speakers were the only reliable source of linguistic data (Chomsky, 1965). It is estimated that approximately three quarters of the English as a second or foreign language teaching workforce worldwide are non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) (Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru, 1996). However, the ideology that native speakers are ideal teachers has resulted in non-native English speaking teachers suffering from being second-class

“citizens” in the field of TESOL (Ellis, 2002; Rajagopalan, 2005).

In 1992, Phillipson introduced the concept of ‘linguistic imperialism’ and denounced this ‘native speaker fallacy’ (Phillipson, 1992). Canagarajah (1999) also explained how the notion of ‘native speaker’ had become obsolete in a modern world, where people are often native speakers of more than one language or more than one variety of a language, and where linguistic boundaries are no longer clear (Canagarajah, 1999).

New varieties of English appear as a product of the creativity of non-native users when they need to communicate in a language in addition to their own. As English has spread, its users have had to adapt it to the communicative demands of their different contexts of culture and situation, leading to greater differences between users in these different places, in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. However, the fact is that native ‘speakerism’ still exists in many countries and influences the people’s view and behaviors.

The Data and Analysis

The school where this case study was undertaken was a private boys’ school located in the Ratchaburi province of Thailand. It has English courses from kindergarten, primary school to Matayom 6 (M6). All the students in the school learn English grammar, reading and writing with Thai English teachers. At the same time, they have to practice their English speaking skills with foreign English teachers twice a week, and the students in the Science, Maths and English Program (SME) have four sessions every week. In these programs, the students learn subjects, such as science, mathematics, which are taught in English by the foreign English teachers in order to improve the Thai students’ English.

The researcher in this study who was a teacher herself in the school, carried out face-to-face interviews with five foreign English teachers who come from USA, Australia, the Philippines, and the Netherlands in the first semester (June~ September, 2012). Each interview lasts for about 45 minutes.

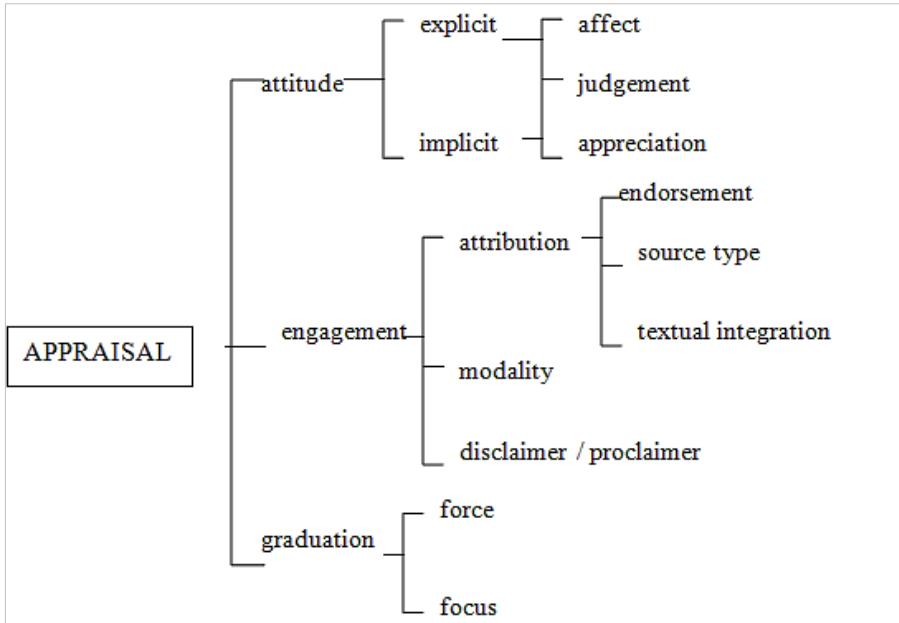
The profiles of these foreign English teachers are shown as follows:

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	How long have been teaching in Thailand?	Former Position before coming to Thailand	Levels of Students
Teacher A	Male	62	USA	10 years	Journalist	K3,M1, M2,M3
Teacher B	Female	40	Australia	5 years	English Teacher	P4,P5,P 6, SME students
Teacher C	Male	35	USA	6 years	Restaurant Trainee	P4, P5, P6,SME students
Teacher D	Female	25	Philippines	3years	Nursing Major	K1,M4, M5,M6 students
Teacher E	Male	58	Netherlands	12 years	Director	M4,M5, M6

The interviews were based around the following questions:

<p>1. <i>Motivation and challenges of teaching English in Thailand</i></p> <p>(1) What made you choose to teach English in Thailand?</p> <p>(2) What are the challenges of teaching English in Thailand?</p> <p>(3) What are your future aspirations and where do you see yourself in five years?</p>
<p>2. <i>Foreign English Teachers' approach to classroom teaching</i></p> <p>(1) What languages do you use in your teaching?</p> <p>(2) What kinds of materials do you use to help your teaching?</p> <p>(3) How do your students behave in the classroom?</p>
<p>3. <i>English Teachers' Teaching in Thai schools</i></p> <p>(1) What do you think of Thai English teachers' teaching?</p> <p>(2) How are other foreign English teachers' teaching in your school?</p> <p>(3) Do you think you are a professional teacher?</p>

A simplified version of Martin & Rose's Appraisal system was used to analyze the discourse of the teachers.



(Basic System for Appraisal) (Foley, 2011)

Examples of Data Analysis

Affect, Judgment, Appreciation and Graduation are identified using the following format:

affect; *judgment*; appreciation; Graduation

Interview Question: What do you think of Thai English teachers' teaching?

Teacher A (USA):

There is something that their teachers are teaching them **wrong**, their pronunciations are wrong, you know. But it is the way that it is **very** hard to teach an old person something different, you know. Like the pronunciation of 'juice', [dʒu:s], orange juice, but they say [dʒu:is]. And all my students

say [dʒu:is]. And even I say [dʒu:s] a hundred times, they still say that...There is something that the *Thai teachers just don't realize* they are pronouncing *wrong*...So, so, anyway, haha, that is the job of foreign teachers to speak *very correctly* with proper pronunciation and pace of speech, everything, to *model* language as it should be spoken. I will model the language, and I will show the language in the *best* way that I can.

Data Analysis:

Attitude	What Teacher A say
Affect	wrong; very hard; Thai teachers <i>just don't realize</i> ... <i>wrong</i> (Negative; Explicit)
Judgment	speak <i>very correctly</i> , <i>model</i> language(Positive; Explicit)
Appreciation	<i>the best way</i> (Positive)
Graduation	<i>very</i> ; 2; <i>a hundred times</i> ; <i>best</i>

Comment: Teacher A thinks that Thai teachers' pronunciation is wrong, so the native speakers have to model the pronunciation.

Affect: Teacher A expresses his negative feeling towards Thai English teachers' wrong English pronunciation. It is not easy to change the adults' ways of speaking.

Judgment: As an English native speaker, Teacher A believes that his job is to speak English '*very correctly*' to Thai teachers and students. It indicates that in his opinion native speakers are the '*model*' of English.

Appreciation: In Teacher A's talk, it includes his evaluation of people's English pronunciation. The way English native speakers pronounce is '*the best*', while the Thai English teachers are pronouncing words wrongly.

Graduation: The word '*best*' is implicitly compared with the '*wrong*' which is the way some Thai teachers teach'. '*a hundred times*' emphasizes the wrong pronunciation's negative impact on the students.

Teacher B (Australia):

...Some teachers are *very dedicated* to their teaching who made a *really* big effort to learn English themselves and they are *very very professional* There are some *really don't have creativity at all* and they just

teach grammar excises, and I **don't think they are practically helpful** to the students...I **don't agree** with their methods of teaching. They teach English with **lots and lots of** grammar examples and grammar excises. And there is **very little** pronunciation, fluency...Well here, they use textbooks and their children sit in their seats and don't move from their seats...The class setting **really** force the teachers here to teach a **very old fashion way** in my opinion...

Data Analysis:

Attitude	What Teacher B says
Affect	I don't think they are practically helpful ; don't agree (Negative; Explicit)
Judgment	very dedicated; very very professional ; (Positive; Explicit) Really don't have creativity at all (Negative; Explicit)
Appreciation	very little ; a very old fashion way (Negative)
Graduation	very : 2; very very ; really :3; not at all ; lots and lots of ; very little

Comment: In Teacher B's opinion, there are some Thai English teachers are very professional; however, some don't have creativity in their teaching.

Affect: Teacher B expresses her strong negative feeling about some Thai English teachers very directly. '**not practically helpful**' and '**not agree**' are very negative terms to show her disappointment with these teachers' English teaching methods.

Judgment: Firstly, Teacher B admires some Thai English teachers as 'very dedicated' and 'very very professional', which is a quite positive attitude. When she is talking about some other Thai English teachers, the attitude becomes quite negative. She criticizes these teachers as '**really don't have creativity at all**'. It seems that 'creativity' is one of Teacher B's teaching beliefs.

Appreciation: It includes her evaluation of Thai English teachers' teaching methods which are kind of 'old fashion' in her view. As a person whose profession is English language teaching and having many years' experience of teaching native speakers' students. Teacher B believes that doing lots of grammar exercises and just sitting and listening to the teachers doesn't help the students' learning.

Graduation: The term ‘very little pronunciation’ is compared with lots and lots of grammar excises; the use of very and really is to emphasize Teacher B’s negative feeling about old ways of teaching.

Teacher C (USA):

I believe that one of the biggest problems in Thai education system is *the lack of creativity*. Many teachers will use the same lesson plans for ten to twenty years without changing. And I believe that this is a very serious problem in the system. Many teachers use the same technique that they learnt when they were young. I believe that there should be a standard that teachers should try to develop themselves every year or every a few years. But **unfortunately**, I believe that it is **very difficult** to change people. Actually in my case, the more you change, the more fun teaching can get, the more you improve yourself as a teacher, the more confident you will become. So the benefit is more positive than negative.

Data Analysis:

Attitude	What Teacher C says
Affect	unfortunately; very difficult (Negative; Explicit)
<i>Judgment</i>	<i>the lack of creativity</i> (Negative; Explicit)
Appreciation	<u>a very serious problem</u> (Negative)
Graduation	very: 2; the more: ..the more:2

Comment: Teacher C believes that there is lack of creativity in the Thai English teachers’ teaching.

Affect: The term ‘unfortunately’ and ‘very difficult’ explicitly show Teacher C’s disappointment with the way Thai English teachers teach.

Judgment: Some teachers don’t develop their teaching techniques and lesson plans. Teacher C condemns those teachers’ teaching as ‘*the lack of creativity*’.

Appreciation: He evaluates Thai English teachers’ ‘*the lack of creativity*’ as ‘a very serious problem’.

Graduation: The intensifier ‘very’ is used twice in this sample of the interview, which emphasizes his negative attitude towards some Thai teachers’

teaching. He uses 'the more...the more' to show the benefit of developing teaching methods.

Teacher D (Philippines):

There are good and bad. Well, the **bad** thing there is the way they pronounce. Some words are **too bad**, I guess...They *can't pronounce* 's' in the beginning and the end of the words. They tend to *mispronounce* words with 's'. Another **bad** thing is when they teach the students, sometimes they forgot that they were *speaking everything in Thai*. If you are a Thai English teacher, you must set yourself as an example, you should speak English too. You have to be good to speak English, so your students will follow you. What's the sense of teaching English, if you are not speaking English? It is *not a good example* for the students. The only good thing, I think, it is a good advantage for them, Because the text in the book is in English, right? So when they teach English, they can translate it to the students. So, much better for the students, they can understand more. Well us, if you are a foreigner teaching Thai students, you can not translate the texts in the way that they can understand.

Data Analysis:

Attitude	What Teacher D says
Affect	bad; too bad; bad (Negative; Explicit) only good (Positive; Explicit)
Judgment	<i>can't pronounce; mispronounce; not a good example</i> (Negative; Explicit)
Appreciation	<u>a good advantage; much better</u> (Positive)
Graduation	<u>only; much better; more</u>

Comment: In Teacher D's opinion, the disadvantage of Thai English teachers' teaching is mispronunciation and not using enough oral English in the classroom, while an advantage is that they can explain a problem to the students in Thai.

Affect: Towards Thai English teachers' mispronunciation and speaking Thai most of the time in an English classroom, she uses '**bad**' '**too bad**' which are quite negative terms. Then, her attitude turns to be positive by saying 'the **only good** thing'.

Judgment: Teacher D condemns these teachers' mispronunciation of

English words and not little speaking English. In her opinion, Thai English teachers should be good examples for Thai students.

Appreciation: She evaluates Thai English teachers' being able to translate English to Thai as 'a good advantage'. It helps Thai students understand more, which foreign English teachers couldn't do.

Graduation: The intensifier used here are to emphasize the advantage of being a Thai English teacher to teach Thai students.

Teacher E (Netherlands):

The Thai teachers teach the students grammar and reading and writing...We all pronounce English in different ways. And that is a beautiful thing of English. So there is no right or wrong in speaking English. The Thai English teachers in this school are **very** good. I don't know all of them, but the teachers who worked with me are **very** good at English. We can *communicate without any problem*...

Data Analysis:

Attitude	What Teacher E says
Affect	very good; very good at English (Positive; Explicit)
Judgment	<i>communicate without any problem</i> (Positive; Explicit)
Appreciation	<u>a beautiful thing of English</u> ; <u>no right or wrong in speaking English</u> (Positive); <u>The only problem</u> (Negative)
graduation	very ; 2; only

Comment: Teacher E appreciates most of the Thai English teachers' teaching.

Affect: Teacher E **explicitly** expresses his appreciation of Thai English teachers' ways of teaching and pronouncing English.

Judgment: Teacher E admires most of the Thai English teachers in his current school as '*communicate without any problem*', which are very positive.

Appreciation: He evaluates the different ways of pronunciation as 'a beautiful thing of English'. As a non-native English speaker, Teacher E

focuses on the actual communication but not the pronunciation.

Graduation: The intensifiers 'very' is used twice in this text which emphasizes Teacher E's admiration of Thai teachers' English and teaching.

Summary

From the complete interview data collected, we can see different attitudes between the teachers in answering the following questions:

What linguistic indicators are apparent in these foreign teachers' discourse regarding their motivation, challenges and future aspiration of teaching English in Thailand?

The foreign teachers' attitude on their motivation of teaching English in Thailand is generally positive. The various linguistic indicators that seem to influence these teachers' attitudes are as follows:

- Teaching English in Thailand makes some foreigners' life easier. Firstly, the country's living conditions are attractive; secondly, the requirements for being a foreign English teacher are not very complicated.
- Staying in Thailand allows foreigners to learn a new language and culture.
- Some teachers have Thai links so they choose to live and work in Thailand.
- It gives the young foreigners the opportunity of working abroad.

The foreign teachers' attitude on their challenges of teaching English in Thailand is in general negative. The indicators that influence these teachers' attitudes are:

- There is a social gap between Thai people and foreigners. They don't share the same culture, the same language which actually can create a big gap between local people and the foreign teachers
- Thai people prefer to study English with western looking teachers.
- There are many difficulties in teaching English as a foreign language to Thai students. The foreign English teachers cannot easily explain to the students as clearly as they should.

Regarding to the future aspiration, the foreign teachers seem to express a negative attitude.

- Some teachers seem to have a limited choice in what job they take.
- Some teachers believe Thai schools don't care about the quality of their teaching.
- The teachers don't believe teaching English in Thailand could be a permanent job for them.

What kinds of teaching beliefs are shown in their attitudes by looking into their classroom teaching approaches?

There are both positive and negative attitudes about using Thai in an English teaching classroom. It seems that those teachers who are in their fifties or sixties prefer to use Thai in the classroom, while the younger teachers seem to avoid using Thai in their teaching. It is probably based on their personal background and knowledge of teaching.

All of the foreign teachers express a positive attitude towards the use of electronic devices in the English teaching which make it easier to attract the students' attention.

There are two kinds of attitudes from the native and non-native English teachers. The three native English teachers have very negative attitudes towards the Thai students' behaviors in the classroom. However, the other two non-native speakers who have experience in learning English as a foreign or second language seem to have a positive attitude. They seem to be able to find the effective methods to make the students behave well.

What kinds of language ideologies are implicit in these teachers' perception of being a professional English teacher?

The indications are that Thai teachers are highly respected even when they pronounce words wrongly and teach the students in a traditional way. This is based on their culture.

Towards the teaching of foreign English teachers in Thailand, most of them have a negative attitude. The different salaries between Asian and Western English teachers show that the Thai people regard western people as

ideal English model. However, they also seem to prefer to choose to study with westerners even though they may not really be good English teachers.

Conclusion

The main findings of this study are that firstly, there are many challenges and difficulties when one is teaching abroad. Thai schools could assist in overcoming some of these difficulties by providing more adequate life and health insurance for the foreign teachers, which might help to build their social identity in Thailand.

Secondly, the Thai teachers should have intensive English pronunciation training which might help correct their pronunciation in their English teaching. The Thai teachers should also learn and develop their classroom teaching approaches. More use of electronic device and more creativity in the English teaching would benefit the students.

Thirdly, the focus of English language teaching should be more on the quality of students' learning. Some foreigners with western 'looks' might not really be good at English teaching, therefore, the Thai schools should set up higher teaching qualifications when they are employing foreigners to teach English. The standard language ideology in Thai society seems to reflect more the outward appearance of foreign teachers rather than the qualifications of the teacher regardless of their nationality.

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Appendix I

Transcript of Interview with Teacher C

Time: 10th, September, 2012

Place: classroom

(I: Interviewer; C: Teacher C)

I: Good morning, Mr. James. Happy to see you here and thank you for accepting my interview for my study. So could I ask you some questions?

C: Sure.

I: The first question is 'what made you want to come to Thailand'?

C: Well, first, I have family here. And I didn't want to come to Thailand but my mother is Thai. And she told me that it would be a good experience coming to Thailand, so I travelled here about fifteen years ago with my mother and my sister for the first time. And then I fell in love with the country.

I: So how do you think of the country?

C: Well, actually, it is much better than my home country, for example, the food, the weather is okay, and the people are okay, and it seems pretty nice, I really enjoy living here.

I: Are there any other Thai in your family?

C: Yes, I have a Thai wife, and my daughter is Thai, and my mother is Thai.

I: Oh, really! Is it a big reason for you to stay and teach here?

C: Yeah, yeah. I think for me, it is a special case. Because I felt that growing up in America, I felt different and I found that something was missing in my life. And when I became an adult, I felt that coming to Thailand was an important part and an important step in learning myself and my life.

I: So what made me choose to teach English here?

C: Er, well, actually it was an accident that I started teaching English. I didn't want to teach English, but people asked to learn English with me. So I didn't want to teach English. So people started to ask me to help them with their English and I like it very very much. And then, actually it was an accident. Someone...a school called me because they knew I was a

foreigner and they asked me if I wanted to teach English. So I tried it and then I fell in love with teaching. I started from there.

I: You mean the people here prefer to learn English with the foreigners?

C: Well, yes, yeah... But the way I got my job is someone heard that I was helping their daughter, because I was helping some students. And one of my students, her family had a school and they called me to ask me to teach in their school.

I: Sounds fantastic. So you started your teaching career.

C: Thank you.

I: What do you think of the advantages and challenges of teaching English here?

C: Ok, well, first, I will talk about the advantages. For me I feel different from other people. Because I feel that I am a born teacher. I believe that, what I mean is, I feel that when I started to teaching, I felt that I was a natural...I was naturally good at teaching. Those are the advantages that I enjoy very much. Teaching gives me a chance to be creative, it gives a chance to meet people, it gives me a chance to learn about other people's feelings, actions and not only that. It teaches me more about Thailand also. The challenge is er...er...it is not really a teaching challenge, it's more a social challenge. Because I believe Thai people don't really value education. Yes, they study in high school and university, and sometimes master degree. But I believe Thai people do not value education and learning. They do it because they need to do it for society, which means if they don't value learning, then the standard of education would be, I think lower than other countries. So the challenge that I have is mostly social challenge not career challenge.

I: So how do the Thai people treat you, as a Thai or a foreigner?

C: oh, ok, yes, there is another challenge that I have. Some people believe I look Asian, so this is another problem that I have. Because Thai people they are very serious about physical appearance or physical looks. They believe that because I am Asian looking and I may not be a good teacher for their children only because the way I look. And this has been a challenge for me for thirteen years since I started teaching. When I started teaching, I was also surprised on how Thai people view image on people. I have met very very bad teachers that are white with brown hair and blue eyes. But the parents would rather prefer their children to study with the

teacher with more western appearances even though they might not be good in the classroom.

I: But in fact you were born in America, you are one hundred percent. . .

C: Right, right, but the first impression that Thai people have is looks. That is the first thing. That is a big challenge, but then again, it is not a challenge from the students, it is a challenge from the parents and the society. It is not a career challenge for me, it is just the people actually.

I: So do you think it is going to be changed in future?

C: No, I don't. Because I believe that Thai people they have their ways, they always believe that maybe western people, western looking people would be better teachers. It will not change because I have been here for a long time and they still hold to their beliefs. So I don't think it will change.

I: What is your future aspiration? Where do you see yourself in five years?

C: Ok, five years, that is a very good question. I have been teaching for more than thirteen years now and actually I think coming soon I am going to open my own school with my family. And I think it is time for me to become independent. Because I think I have a lot of experience of teaching and I know how to teach, and if I have good students, I would like to open my own school maybe around Nakhonpathom area.

I: You mean language school?

C: Yes, a language school, a private language center.

I: So you will quit from your current school and pay attention to your own language school?

C: Yes, yes. Because I think the social problems in the normal schools...I have seen now, even I am a good teacher and I do the best that I can, if the society cannot keep up or doesn't care about what their education, I believe it is better for me to have a private business where I have some students who do care about their learning.

I: Anyway, you plan to stay here for long?

C: Yeah, I am going to live in Thailand probably all my life.

I: That's a great idea. So now, I would like to ask you something about teaching in the classroom. What languages do you use in your teaching?

C: Well, normally, I try to use English only (even though) I can speak Thai. In most classes, I can speak English. But if I do teach younger students, I

do need to speak Thai sometimes with them. For example, for display, for giving instructions, or for concept checking, which means to see whether they understand what I am saying. But that is usually with young students. But I don't like to speak Thai in the classroom.

I: What language do you think should be used in the classroom, in a English teaching classroom?

C: Actually it should be only English. That is my opinion, should only be English.

I: Why?

C: Well, I believe that it is a part of language learning. If the students pay attention and listen, they will learn more language.

I: Even they cannot understand?

C: Er, however only young children, it should be bilingual in the classroom. But when students become in the high school level, English is English, they should learn to listen to English only. Ok, I guess it depends on the age level.

I: Ok. And what kinds of teaching materials do you use?

C: Ok. I will talk about all the different kind of materials that I do use for teaching. Er, I prepare materials depending on what is available in the school and in the classroom. For example, if I am teaching in a class with no TV and no computer, I have to use printed materials or flash cards or songs, because that is the resources that are available to me. So I would either play a song or show color pictures to try to teach the lesson. If there is a TV in the classroom, I usually use my own computer and it gets more high tech. For example, I can get videos, I can get video songs, I can get animations and I love to use powerpoint. So it all depends on what materials are available in the classroom that I am teaching in.

I: Do you have the textbook from the school? Or you make your own lesson plans?

C: Well, some jobs that I have, usually there will be a book involved. If there is a book, I can teach from the book using internet or pictures from maybe google. And some classes, there is no book, so I have to prepare my own materials.

I: What is your focus in your teaching? As I know Thai teachers they teach English grammar, reading...

C: Ok, usually for my job, the main focus is mainly speaking. Because that is one of the aspects or areas that students really really want to practice. And I enjoy teaching speaking, because er, I do teach books sometimes, and er, my main point, even though I am teaching a book, it is speaking. And also I would like to become a part of students' life. So that's why I love my job so much, I try to communicate with them not only as a teacher but I like to communicate with them as a friend, as a person to try to share ideas and opinions with them. So I think the main point in all of my jobs is speaking and having the students to listen to me and speak with me in English.

I: So how do your students behave in your classroom? Could they understand you very well?

C: Ok, right now, at my normal job, I am teaching Prathom 4, Prathom 6 and Mathayom I. We have a program here called science, math in English. Mathayom I would be equal to 7th grade in America. Prathom 4 would be equivalent to about 4th grade, and Prathom 6 would be equivalent to about 6th grade in America. So I am teaching a mix between children and teenagers. Ok, well, I usually do is... the students are okay in the classroom. And I do have some problem with discipline but usually they are okay with me in the classroom.

I: Are they naughty?

C: Yes, a lot of the students are very very naughty and I believe there is another social problem that is happening in Thailand about the control in the classroom.

I: What do you think?

C: Well, I believe that in many places all around Thailand, even in Bangkok, public and private schools, I believe the students feel learning is play time. Er, I... I... I have seen this across the country, coming to school is more play time than learning time. And I believe that this is one of the biggest issues for the education.

I: I have heard that the students behave very well with Thai teachers.

C: That is true, that is true. I believe that Thai students have more respect towards Thai teachers, however they still do have problems in the classroom. They are more disciplined with Thai teachers and they are ... They learn at the early age that they do not have to be disciplined with foreign teachers. I don't know why, but they learn that at the very young age across the country. This is one thing I think... it is very strange.

Because in a country where they say they have respect for education and respect for teachers, for some reason, it doesn't apply to foreign teachers and I believe that it is true across the nation, across the mainstream education.

I: Personally, because I am teaching Chinese here as well, some feeling of mine is the same with you, for example, why they don't show respect to foreigners?...

C: I believe that because they learn with a foreign teacher, their mind turns off and they believe they can play. But that is the truth about Thailand. :And this is what the children in the early age and I believe there is really nothing we can do about it. Because this is psychology of the people, this is a social issue among the people and the students.

I: So how is the students' English?

C: Er, well here, I guess for this job here teaching children, yeah, I believe most of the students are actually very interested in learning English, not all, but there are many many students who are very serious about communicating with me and they are very serious about talking with me. And that makes me happy to see some students. I would say about maybe 20% to 30% of the students are very good to me and very excited to learn which make me happy. And the rest maybe 50% to 70% are just normal students who want to play, something like that, they don't really intend to learn English, they don't think it is important for them.

I: Could they communicate with you?

C: Er, yes, actually some students can, at the very basic level. I am very impressed that there are some students who do try to communicate with me.

I: What difference do you think between the normal classes and SME classes?

C: Right now, well, in this school, the SME or the science, math in English program is only just beginning. If this program continues, there will be difference in the students in the future. But it would be very slow. Er I believe that one of the classroom of the SME program, they are very good and I believe that in future they will continue learning English and I believe this program is a good start for the students to enjoy English. Er, there are no too many differences but I do believe one class is really good and in the future, I think this program will inspire them in the future for

more English learning.

I: That's good! What do you think of Thai school's teaching arrangements, like time table setting for English?

C: Once a week. Well most of the classes they only study once a week with me, myself, which actually is very... is kind of easy. But the students only listen and learn with me once a week. That is normal classes. I do believe that it is a very very short time for the students to only learn one period per week. But with this schedule that I am working at here, there is no other way, because we don't have time to teach the students every day.

I: And they don't have enough teachers.

C: Right, they don't have enough teachers. In this situation, once a week for the students. Other schools that have more teachers, the students might learn 3 to 4 days a week with the foreigners. So it all depends on the schools.

I: So what do you think Thai teachers' English language teaching, their ways of teaching?

C: Er, ok, well actually, a lot of teachers have experience of going abroad and actually I am very surprised, in this school that I am working at, many of the Thai teachers speak very very well. That is because they have experience with the travelling abroad which is a very good experience. However...their communication is very very good. However I believe that one of the biggest problems in the Thai education system is the lack of creativity. Many teachers will use the same lesson plans for ten to twenty years without changing. And I believe that this is a very serious problem in the system Because many teachers use the same techniques that they learnt when they were young. I have seen textbooks that are thirty years old, I have seen books that are twenty years old and I believe that there should be a standard. The teachers should try to develop themselves every year or every few years to try to improve themselves. But unfortunately, I believe that it is very difficult to change people. It is very difficult.

I: It means more job, more work.

C: But actually, in my case, the more you change, the more fun teaching can get; the more you improve yourself as a teacher, the more confident you will become; the more you improve yourself and change yourself, the better methods you create and make the classroom more fun. So actually the benefit is more positive than negative.

- I: Absolutely. One more question, how are other non-Thai English teachers, I mean other foreign English teachers' teaching in your school?
- C: Oh well, I have met... teaching in Thailand, I have met many many non-Thai English speakers from many countries, from around the world, from Russia, from Germany... In my opinion, I believe that my case is very special because I am connected to this country by blood, I am connected to this country with my family, with my heart and my mind. So I feel that teaching is my personal responsibility in life. I believe that because of the system here, for example, Thai people believe that white or western teachers are good teachers only because of their skin color. This makes problems for the western teachers. Because they know this feeling of Thai people, they are actually worse in the classroom and lazy in the classroom, because they are treated very well because of their appearance. And I have seen this many many times. And I have seen teachers with brown hair and blue eyes, for example, and I have observed their teaching and I felt that it was terrible, er, not professional. But they believe they are good teachers because everyone tells them that they are good teachers, because they look handsome or white or whatever the case may be. And I do believe this is a problem, because they know people enjoy learning with Them because of their skin color. So this means that they would not try hard in the classroom. I am saying this because I observed many non-Thai speakers who come from western countries such as America, Canada, England. And I see this as an Asian person also, er, I believe if I told them that they would get angry with me. But this is the truth, this is the truth that I see in Thailand. Ok, I also believe this is a problem for teachers.
- I: Because they will never improve themselves.
- C: Right. Because I come from a country... well actually, in America, people don't really look at skin color very much. If you do good at work, people will know you are good, actually no matter who color your skin is.
- I: Do they look at your education background, like how many certificates you got...
- C: Right, yes, this is another thing. In Thailand, the certificates are very important for Thai people. Er, also, skin color is important and certificates are very important. But sometimes in the classroom, I have seen teachers, er, if they are very handsome or good looking, I have seen schools fake the certificates because the teacher is very handsome looking.
- I: Foreigners?

C: Yes, I have seen that in some schools in Thailand.

I: They accept the fake certificates?

C: Yes, and also I have seen some schools make fake certificates themselves because they would like the images of handsome native speakers, you know, the image of having native speakers in the school. Er, so, I do believe the image is very very important in the society.

I: Now I got it. So what kinds of teachers are professional in your mind? Do you think you are a professional teacher?

C: Of course, of course. Er, a professional teacher is...or a professional anyone, any job, is someone who does what they do, the best they can, and is always learning and changing with the times. And it doesn't matter what occupation you are, whether you are a teacher or a doctor or a chef, or any kind of profession. A professional is someone who does the best they can, who learns from the surrounding and tries to improve themselves step by step. That is what a professional is, who adapts, I think someone who loves what they do. I think to be a professional, you really have to enjoy what you are doing. Because if you don't enjoy what you are doing, you cannot be a professional. That is my opinion.

I: Thank you. What a nice great talk with you.

C: Oh, thank you, you are welcome.