

**Language Teacher Identity Negotiation: A Case Study of a Heritage Thai Language Class  
in a Thai Buddhist School in the United States**

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**Abstract**

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The purpose of this qualitative case study is to research power relations of Thai heritage language teaching (HLT) in a Thai community-based Buddhist school in the United States, called the Temple of Wisdom, or TOW. Participants were six Thai diaspora teachers—four secular teachers and two monks. Teacher identity negotiation was explored as a critical reflection of power relations in this school context. Foucault's power theory and Gee's discourse analysis were employed as a theoretical lens. This research demonstrated how power is visible through discourse and relational networks of interaction between teachers and other people. The four areas of discourse were: schooling, language, culture, and religion. This study found that TOW created a new mixture of Thai and American cultures for bilingual students to learn about culture, norms, and community values. Teachers combined Thai and American culture into their instruction. This harmonization was a strategy to anchor bilingual students in both cultures. However, English privilege and language hierarchies prevailed even within this context of Thai HLT. Teachers reinforced linguistic discrimination and legitimized native speakers over non-

native speakers. Teachers perceived different languages as commercialized products based on their economic benefits. This perception discouraged Thai language users by situating Thai as inferior and less prioritized among other powerful languages. One of the significant findings was that teachers developed strong senses of professionalism by negotiating their own cultural and spiritual identity, despite losing a sense of teacher authority through students' resistance in classroom. Teachers represented themselves as cultural experts who followed Buddhist principles. They applied Buddhist morality to guide them in their roles as good teachers. Additionally, teachers built up social capital as a way to help their community members bond together. There was no evidence that teachers employed Buddhism as a political tool; instead, they used it to teach morality and humanity. This study suggests including a socio-cultural-political perspective to HLT and raises critical awareness of that perspective within teacher training and instructional contexts. To empower teachers in HLT, language policy should include all voices and reflect the needs of communities. HLT should not be grounded only in linguistic development but also in the development of community cooperation, culture, humanity, and morality.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, who made me understand about the meaning of life. I still remember both of you said that you would wait for me in Thailand until the day of my graduation. Life is not certain. Even the promise from true hearts cannot defeat the nature of life which equalizes everyone in this world. When life comes to the end, no one can resist it. It is an unchangeable truth.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

The main reason we send our kids to study in the Temple of Wisdom (TOW—a pseudonym) is that we want them to speak Thai. Actually, we speak Thai at home, between our kids and Mom and Dad. They've been learning to speak Thai since they were born. Our children's first language is actually Thai. When my eldest daughter was about five or six years old, she started to go to school. Her friends and teachers speak only English. From then on, she spoke less and less Thai. Only two years after starting school, she rarely speaks Thai to us. We realized that speaking Thai language is important for them. We are Thai, their grandparents are Thai. If the children cannot communicate in Thai at all, they will feel lonely when they are in Thailand. Also, our kids will be taught about Thai culture and Thailand at TOW, and they will meet friends in the Thai community. Children will get more benefits from Thai class—not only Thai language.

*—Excerpt from a video clip that TOW presented in a parent meeting in September 2012*

At an orientation day parent meeting at the Temple of Wisdom (TOW—a pseudonym), family members paid close attention to a video presentation about the Thai language school of TOW and the needs for bilingual Thai-American children to study Thai language. In this video clip, a Thai family reflected on their experiences raising Thai children in an English-speaking setting. It showed their concern about the impact on their children of English-only policies in mainstream schools. These bilingual and bicultural children increasingly use English and decreasingly use Thai, until they rarely speak Thai even to their parents. Concerned about their

children's Thai language loss, these parents send their children to study Thai heritage language at the TOW. The parents expect the TOW to help their children develop Thai language skills, to teach their children about Thai culture, and to provide opportunities to make friends with other families who share their culture and language.

This experience reflects a situation typical of families with immigrant parents in the United States. Many studies reveal the tendency of immigrant families to experience language loss in the second or third generation due to the English-only policies (Heritage Language Research Priorities Conference Report, University of California, Los Angeles, September 21–23, 2000; Krashen, 2000). The Thai program at TOW is one of many examples of ways the Thai community works to retain Thai heritage and prevent Thai language loss in second-generation children.

Many Thai families see the TOW school as an opportunity to sustain bilingual Thai-American children with Thai language and culture. This Thai heritage school of TOW exhibits an attempt to help children retain Thai language, culture, and morality, and be both bilingual and bicultural. Therefore, the TOW school, as an informal institution providing Thai instruction in the Buddhist temple, is likely to be a richly detailed context where various powers, such as language, culture, and religious beliefs are inherent. This study highlights the power relations in the actual practice in this school context.

### **1.1 Rationale of the study**

Language is a good tool for studying power relations because language encompasses “power, hierarchy, and dominants as well as contestation, resistance and transformation” (Alim, 2010, p. 207). Previously, studies of language and power largely highlighted the power of

English in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), English as a Second Language (ESL), or bilingual education. The studies probed English's privileged status over other languages, or the language authenticity over language variations due to race, immigration, or other factors. Various studies introduced described examples of scenarios of struggle in ESL, EFL, or bilingual instruction. Austin (2009, p. 253) proposed the notion of "linguicism" in ESL/EFL as "a form of social discrimination" which distinguishes "dominants" from "inferiors," legitimizing English over other languages and native English speakers over non-native English speakers. Phillipson (1992 cited in Canagarajah, 2009, p. 77-81) introduced "native English fallacy," which is defined as the idea that ideal teachers of English are native and that the pedagogical approach of encouraging students to rely on native speakers is an ideal model. This teaching concept negatively affects non-native English users because we all know that "adults could never become native English speakers without being reborn" (Cook, 1999, p. 187). These studies of language, identity, and power relations were mostly grounded in the context where the power of English lies. Few studies have investigated power relations of heritage language instruction.

Heritage languages (HL) are still under-represented and neglected in the United States. There are often examples in the US media—especially in political situations—of hostility to minority languages in the United States (Krashen, 2000). Conversely, there are some attempts to preserve HL education. A research movement involving many scholars has addressed the important individual cognitive benefits of HL over English-only learning (Hakuta, 1986), such as better communication with heritage family members (Cho and Tse, 1997; Cho and Krashen, 1998, Wong-Fillmore, 1991 cited in Krashen, 2000), and social benefits such as minority communities and foreign languages as national resources and contributing factors to business and

diplomacy (Krashen, 1998). For example, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) designed the broad suggested topic of tangible research in HL with attainable questions grounded in politics, psychology, sociology and linguistics. Another example of academic concern to raise the importance of HL comes from an international collaboration between the United States and Australia. This collaboration highlighted the field of Heritage/Community Language Education (HCLE/HCL) in language teaching research. This reflected the needs of HL research and made research recommendations for further studies. Such efforts aim to enrich immigrant groups and nations as well as to shape the field of HL education. There have also been studies addressing the need to incorporate into heritage language education questions about how power is reinforced in everyday lives. Cho (2013) suggested including power of social, cultural, economic and historical dimensions into the actual context of the study. However, the study of power relations in HL is rare and needs to be more addressed.

Teachers have a key role in their profession as educational reformers. Teaching is not an individual act; teachers' personal involvement has an impact on society. With the responsibilities inherent in instruction, teachers have the power to impart social norms, values, attitudes, etc. As Pennycook (2001, p. 176 cited in Alim, 2010, p. 227) said, teachers are likely to influence students' life meaning-making, because teaching is not neutral but "always already political." At the same time, teachers work and develop a sense of their capacity to shape students' lives in a social context in which larger social forces and the exercise of power by others influence what teachers can do, how they view themselves, and who they understand themselves to be.

In such a situation—the setting for this dissertation study—questions of the teachers’ *identity* come into view, as do questions of how they *negotiate* their identity in the midst of competing forces. Put most simply, the teachers’ “identity” represents their conceptualization of who they are in relation to others and to a broader environment of ideas, norms, and values. The identity teachers assume for themselves will, first of all, shape what they teach and how. In other words, the concept of teacher identity directly reinforces the development of teaching and learning. Unsurprisingly, most studies mention the importance of teacher identity as a part of educational reform and teacher education development (Clarke, 2008; Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22). The understanding of teacher identity is therefore an important ongoing process for the development of teaching and learning.

But the development of a teacher’s identity reflects far more than the immediate dynamic of a classroom, and the teaching and learning that will take place in that setting. Moreover, teacher identity relates beyond classrooms to the broader social discourse which connects the way of living and perception of meaning through social interaction (Hall, 1996). According to Morita (2004, p. 574-575), teachers’ engagement in social communities involves not only the negotiation of related identities but also culture and power relations. In the same way, Fairclough (2003, p. 160) states that identity is “an effect of discourse, constructed in discourse.” Because of the interwoven relationship between identity and the broader discourse of culture and power, the study of teacher identity will highlight the relationship between the individual person (micro level) and the broader social structure (macro level), where the power of economics, politics and social domain is embedded. Even though many studies have addressed the relationship between teacher identity and power, very few of these studies have discussed the notion of identity and powers in mutually causal relationship.

Apart from language and identity and culture, religion is also perceived among language educators as a pathway of personal and spiritual life that may influence teachers' identity and their pedagogy. According to Canagarajah (2009, p. 12), culture and spirituality may influence a language teacher's pedagogy. However, previous works on language teacher identity and spirituality have emphasized the hegemonic platform of cultural imperialism and Christian faith, in which English is a means of expansion of Christianity. These works have not included a perspective about how genuine spiritual faith may relate to views of teaching (see Kubota, 2009, p. 225; Makoni & Makoni, 2009, p. 106; Varghese & Johnston, 2007). Study of language and religious faith from any stance besides examination of religious expansion is rare, and the topic of religious influences on language teacher identity still needs more empirical studies to address various stances.

This study focuses on an instructive case in which all of these forces and social processes—home culture, dominant host culture, the discourses of power relations, and competing spiritual influences—converge on the development and expression of a teacher's identity. Specifically, I investigated the “identity negotiation” in which Thai teachers participate when teaching in Buddhist temple school settings in the United States.

## **1.2 Focus of Inquiry**

My goal in this study is to expand the literature on the identity negotiation of Thai heritage language teachers in the United States, and the relationship between identity negotiations and power relations in the Thai language classroom in a Buddhist temple school in the United States. Thus, I am exploring the identity negotiation of Thai heritage language teachers at the intersection of language, culture, and religious faith. This will open the door to

seeing how teachers' linguistic, cultural, and spiritual identities play in two different worlds: as a Thai cultural and spiritual preserver and as a Thai immigrant in the context of a Buddhist temple school in the United States. I specifically focused on the conception of identity negotiation as a way to understand the power relations that enable and constrain possibilities of actions, not just as "negative but productive forces in the society." (Foucault, in Gaventa, 2003) I employed the lenses of Gee's "Discourse" which fit well with Foucault's concept of power analysis, which views discourse as a site of both power operation and resistance (Gaventa, 2003). Fairclough's "critical discourse analysis" (1995), was also used as a probing tool to understand the role power plays in this context. As a guideline for this study, I designed two research questions with sub-questions as follows:

- 1) How do Thai language teachers negotiate their linguistic, cultural and spiritual identities within Buddhist schools in the United States?
  - a) What discourses do teachers draw on to talk about their identities?
  - b) How do teachers from different religious statuses bring in their stories?
  - c) How do the social differences among teachers influence their teaching?
  - d) In what sense, if at all, do they act as cultural and spiritual preservers?
- 2) To what extent and in what ways do the identities these teachers negotiate reflect the dominant power dynamic?
  - a) How do teachers view and communicate the concept of "a successful person" and "desirable quality?"
  - b) How does teacher identity as a cultural and spiritual preserver relate to how they define a "successful person" or "desirable quality?"

- c) What role does power/knowledge play in the Thai language classroom and in what way?

This is a qualitative critical case research study. Unlike the aim of most critical research, which is to question and transform a social injustice (Cohen, Manion, & Morison, 2007, p. 28), this study's goal is only to critique and reflect on the operation of power. My intention is to restore awareness of both destructive and productive influences, not to change the social system.

My personal rationale for this research is to study power relations in the context of heritage language instruction. There is a need to understand power relations in aspects of language teaching education. Without understanding discourses and how power works, we will never realize the invisible elements of practice regulating all lives and being. To involve oneself in education without realization of our own prejudice and elements of power in practice is likely to lead to education that serves the dominant power laden by political, social, and economic creeds. Education without awareness of power relations can create or reinforce a system that hides danger and feeds societal prejudices. I wish to develop educators' awareness to explore the production of power/knowledge as a way to immunize them from being a carrier of prejudice in education.

I expect neither that this study will be generalizable to other studies, nor that it will impact the reform of language-teaching education. Instead, I wish to highlight the need to examine power relations in language teaching and other education by studying teacher identity as a reflection of power relations in this heritage Thai language context in a US-based Buddhist temple. This study may provide other minority groups with inspirational ideas about ethical and cultural development in education. The understanding in this study of heritage language

teachers' identity can also lead to the creation of safe spaces in minority communities as a part of ethical education in the United States. Such safe spaces align with ideals of social justice for creating change in language teacher education can also lead to conflict resolution for maintaining heritage/minority languages, nurture the inner heart of one's identity and cultural diversity, and contribute to bilingual academic achievement.

### **1.3 Organization of the dissertation**

This introductory chapter is followed by six chapters. Chapter 2 examines relevant theories and previous studies in the area to locate the focus of this study's inquiry and conceptual framework. The detail of theories and relevant studies are closely reviewed. This begins with a discussion about previous studies of language-teaching and power. Next, I discuss Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, and teacher identity as a critical reflection of power dynamics. This chapter closes with the conceptualizing ideas and framework that explain how theoretical concepts frame this research study.

In Chapter 3, I provide the account of the methodology and tools used to examine these issues. The research design is presented for the investigation of identity and power relations. The research methodology includes the research type, setting and participants, and research strategy and procedures. The research analysis provides the general design of this qualitative research and establishes a realistic plan to study teacher identity and power relations.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 discuss the thematic findings of the study. Chapter 4 addresses discourses of power. Schooling, language, culture, and spirituality are four main discourses influencing the school and teachers' identity construction—including how a teacher acquired a sense of his or her identity. Chapter 5 presents teachers' perceptions of success as a way to

explain the power motives and the substantial forces driving teachers to achieve success in their lives. Chapter 6 examines the role of power in the school context at TOW. I discuss the mechanism of power, as well as disciplines imposed to train students, teachers' own perceptions about what makes a good teacher, and the process of normalization. The findings are uncovered through a deeper analysis of the overarching theories of power. The goal is to display how power relations influence and move in this context from the negotiation of teacher identity in this particular setting.

Chapter 7 presents the summary, discussion, and implications of the study. The conclusion is drawn to spark more discussion of the current situation in heritage language education. The implications of this study may academically and practically benefit educational practices. The findings of the study will be useful for informing local education policymakers to support HL in the United States as a way to benefit bilingual students, communities, and the nation.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature review and conceptual framework

This literature review clarifies the basic concepts and three primary components of this study of cultural and spiritual teacher identity in the heritage Thai language program at TOW. First, I examine previous studies of heritage language education to understand its situation in the United States. Next, I explore the concept of teacher identity, which I use as a conceptual tool to study power relations. As a final theme, I present the conception of discourse and power by bringing in Gee's critical discourse analysis, together with Foucault's concept of power and knowledge, as an analysis plan.

#### 2.1 Previous studies of language instruction and power

Much critical research in language teaching has emphasized the idea that language teaching is a political act and that teachers are the political creatures of their favoritism (Alim, 2010). According to Pennycook (2001:176 cited in Alim, 2010, p. 227), classrooms are not neutral but "always already political." Teaching itself is an exertion of power. In this section, I review previous studies to show how language teaching has become a means of reinforcing domination and power. I review previous studies within the area of English language teaching (ELT) and teaching foreign language (TFL) and teaching heritage and/or community language (THCL). Additionally, I examine language teaching in relation to the culture, morality, and spiritual beliefs addressed in this research.

##### 2.1.1 Distinguishing of TEFL/ TESL/ H(C)L/ FL/ and dominant-minority languages.

Before examining previous studies of power and language teaching, it is necessary to define and discuss the following terms—teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL),

teaching English as a second language (TESL), Heritage/community language (HL), and minority languages. These terms will be used frequently in this study when explaining language teaching and power. The difference between teaching English as a second language (TESL) and teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) lies in the location of teaching. TEFL means teaching English in a context where most people use a language other than English. For example, teaching English in Thailand is regarded as TEFL. This is in contrast to TESL, which refers to teaching English in countries where English is the primary language used, such as the United States or Canada.

Three terms Foreign Language (FL), HL, and minority language overlap in meaning but have many differences, depending how they are used. FL means any language other than the dominant language. For example, any languages other than English or French are foreign languages in Canada. The term “dominant language” as used here refers to the language people in a given location typically regard as most important, in contrast with how they view minority languages. The term “minority language” refers not only to the numbers of the language’s users, but also to the language’s exclusion in favor of the dominant language. For example, in the United States minority languages are any languages other than English, which is regarded as the country’s dominant language.

However, such minority languages can also be heritage languages (HL). I use the broad definition of HL by Fishman (2001, p. 81). An HL is any language that connects an individual to his or her family and/or community. In other words, the HL is the language that one’s family or community uses. For example, Thai is the heritage language used by Thai immigrants and bilingual Thai-American children who learn or use it to communicate with their Thai families or

Thai communities. Currently, the situation of HL in different countries varies depending on the country's policies. I will discuss the situation of—and research about—ELT, FL, and HL in later sections.

### **2.1.2 English language teaching (ELT).**

Existing research about power and ELT has mostly emphasized how ELT has become a tool of power exploitation around the world. It has been said that ELT is undeniably “a tool of service of Empire” as well as “the product of colonialism” (Pennycook, 1998, p.19). Pennycook (1998) claimed that colonialism used ELT as a tool to further the global spread of English. Moreover, ELT ideology and practice contributed to colonial manipulation of people by shaping their ways of thinking. Colonialism has both constructed and deeply manipulated ELT through the colonial construction of the dichotomous concept of “self” and “other” (Ibrahim, 2009, p. 177; Pennycook, 1998, p. 22). This binary concept honors the “rational action” of linguistics and psychology, which establishes a clear-cut effort in ELT based on linguistic acquisition, but disregards the culture and identity of both learners and teachers.

In the discourse of ELT, the West is always better (Pennycook, 1994). The Structuralist approach—the traditional way of Western thinking—immensely influenced ELT in all related aspects such as philosophy, policy, method, or pedagogy. Teachers of ELT—as members of a worldwide community of professionals sharing goals, values, and practices—have steered ELT in the direction of colonialism. There were many examples evidencing use of ELT to reinforce the dominant status of English in the world. Such approaches can be categorized into three dimensions as follows:

#### ***2.1.2.1 English language policy: English only***

The policies and practices in ELT have been created to serve the global dominant powers of politics, academics, and economics. Internationally, the World Bank encourages policymakers in developing countries to encourage their students to use English for the benefit of furthering their higher education and as a tool for acquiring knowledge from online sources (Spring, 2009, p. 46). ELT has increased its prominence as the way to develop one's self in the academic world. According to Altbach et al. (2009, p. 32), English is the primary—or single—language of the world's research publications. This limits the opportunities for scholars using languages other than English. Simultaneously, it strengthens ELT and creates a vicious circle. ELT has also been used as a tool for political management. According to Kubota (2006, p. 124-126), the US movement for policy change called the “English-only movement” has been built on the idea that using English exclusively serves a national security purpose. This policy is implemented to “promote unity,” to “empower immigrants,” and to provide the security policy, or “common sense for government service” in the United States after 9/11 events. English-only policies and attitudes that encourage them can also support the market of ELT, from which native English speakers profit. Also, English-only policies and movements ignore the learning benefits of bilingual students over English-only students (Hakuta, 1986).

#### ***2.1.2.2 Attitudes of “self-other”: native English privilege.***

By reinforcing what a post-structuralist approach would describe as a dichotomy of “self” and “other,” ELT methods have—by orchestrating praise of the benefits of English—supported and reinforced various kinds of social discrimination. There have been many scenes of struggles stemming from prioritizing English as a dominant language, thus privileging native English speakers over non-native English speakers. Austin (2009, p. 253) discussed “linguicism” in ESL/

EFL as “a form of social discrimination that privileges one language variety over another,” labeling and distinguishing so-called “dominants” from “inferiors.” The linguisticism, grounded in the dichotomous concept of “self-other,” permeates English classrooms in forms of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1984 cited in Lin, 1999, p. 395). This influences people’s perceptions, thus legitimizing English over other languages and native English speakers over non-native English speakers. Many different terms are used to define the privileges of being native, such as “native English fallacy” (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 77-81), “native-speaker model” (Cummins & Davison, 2007, p. 8), and “native-speaker as expert syndrome” (Richard, 2008, p. 168). The concept of the ideal teachers of English as native, and the approach of encouraging students to use native speakers as the learning model, negatively affects non-native English teachers and learners (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 77-81). This conception is likely to disempower non-native speakers as “defective communicator(s).” Felix (1987, p. 140 cited in Cook 1999, p. 187) clearly reflected the discouraging view of learning failure for non-native adult learners: “Adults usually fail to become native speakers.” Moreover, the perception towards the image of “others” fosters multiple levels of social discrimination in ELT. Racism has been discussed as an enormous topic in the discourse of the social injustice of colonial legacy. The racism in ELT prevails in numerous social practices. According to Matsuda (2002 cited in Kubota & Lin, A., 2009, p. 7), there are two kinds of racism in ELT: institutional/structural racism—seen, for example, in the recruiting and hiring of English language teachers with white skin instead of teachers of color, and epistemological racism— visible in the use of whiteness or the cultures of white people as the models in ESL/ EFL text books. These common practices and reinforcements of white privilege make ELT jobs rely on teachers’ “birthright” over their pedagogical abilities (Canagarajah, 1999).

### ***2.1.2.3 Teaching approaches and pedagogy.***

Predominantly a US/ UK way of thinking has markedly influenced teaching of ESL and EFL. An example of this direct effect is seen in English proficiency testing such as TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS, etc. According to Canagarajah (1999), the world's English testing system has designed its tests by relying on US and UK cultures as an international norm. These tests become standard and are used both as requirements for people's future employment as well as in higher education around the world.

Moreover, ELT has been criticized for constructing a culture that promotes the dominant powers. Teaching materials in the market also show a bias toward dominant Western cultures from the US and UK. Matsuda (2009) stated that teaching materials of ESL/EFL in the market are mostly based on US and UK culture. Audio materials for English listening comprehension are mostly in particular accents from either the United States or United Kingdom (Canagarajah, 1999). Textbooks, which are the source of input of language and culture, are used as “a cultural carrier” to implement the standard Western norm for inter-communication (Kumaravadivelu, 2009). Taylor-Mendes (2009) studied the use of images in the mass-produced EFL textbooks and found that an image of US culture is romanticized—framing the country as “the land of the successful elite”—and marking Western culture with the image of powerful, wealthy, white elitism. In contrast, people from other races of the world are presented in stereotypical ways, as in Hollywood films. It is implied that the idealized Western culture is employed in textbooks to encourage learners to assimilate themselves to that particular image of Western culture. With the monopoly of commercial textbooks, it is a challenging task for English language teachers to find authentic materials available in the market to meet the learning demand of locals.

For the most part, scholars who are native speakers of English have designed most teaching methods and approaches in ELT. According to Pennycook (1989, p. 596), English teaching method is “a one-way follow of prescriptivist knowledge,” privileging Western knowledge with the powerful influences of global power structuring over other possible forms of knowledge. These prescriptive methods in ELT ignore aspects of diversity in education such as race, gender, class, etc. Pennycook (1989, p. 612) commented on ELT methods and approaches that the prescriptive method in ELT preserves “teachers as nothing but technicians trained to transmit a fixed canon of knowledge.”

### **2.1.3 Foreign language education: FL & HCL.**

I am combining the review of teaching FL and HL in the same section because they are languages other than English. However, the situations of FL and HL are not the same. Critical research has questioned FL education in the United States as FL addressed the dominant power and excluded the users of HL into an inferior status. English-only policies have impacted HL in terms of language loss in the second or third generation (Wiley, 2005). Most HL research addresses the need to retain HL by reforming language policy and teaching methods.

FL educators have perceived themselves as neutral because FLT rests on the policy of language as a resource, considering the importance of both majority and minority languages (Ruiz, 1984). However, establishing FLT on the idea of languages as resources develops the “myth of foreign language learning as an elite endeavor” (Ortega, 1999). In the United States, FL educators exclude minority language education and privilege FL learning for the elite. This also creates social injustice in ideology, pedagogy, and practices in FLT. There are many ways FLT marginalizes minority languages and immigrants.

One of the pieces of evidence showing the marginalization in FL of immigrants' HL was the mismatch of the proportion of speakers of other foreign languages and the language courses offered in K-12. Wiley (2005) presented that in 2000 the percentage of French speakers was 3.5% but the percentage of French courses in K-12 was 18.5%. Draper and Hicks (2002 cited in Wiley, 2005) also found that 68.7% of secondary students were studying Spanish as a foreign language, with only 2.1% studying Spanish for native speakers. This mismatch of demand and supply in FL showed that FL was not offered to serve the actual need of language use but rather was tailored to the elite users.

Ortega (1999) and Wiley (2005) claimed that FL educators struggled to legitimize the field of FL so that it would be recognized as a profession. Ortega (1999, p. 26) suggested that FL teacher training legitimizes disciplines in traditional research by focusing on linguistics and literature. There are also some policies in FLT attempting to increase the cultural and linguistic competence of FL teachers. Ortega discussed how the requirement in many US states to take a "standardized proficiency test" marginalizes immigrants out of the FLT profession. Also, some FL educators have suggested that FL teacher education should prepare pre-service teachers for experiences in the FL countries (Lafayette, 1993 cited in Ortega, 1999, p. 27). These kinds of requirements serve as a gatekeeper to exclude immigrants from a TFL career by privileging non-native elite teachers over native teachers from minority backgrounds (Wiley, 2005).

Some studies also attempted to understand the reason why FLT in the United States is not so successful at developing learners' language proficiency as FLT is in European countries. Davis (1999) and Reagan & Osborn (2002) discussed the reason for unsuccessful FLT. It is only intended to support learners by increasing academic opportunities to be accepted in higher

education. According to Davis (1999), FL has increased its importance in US education since 1915; candidates who attend FL courses for a few years are considered more qualified for acceptance to universities. However, FLT does not serve a real use for conversational communication for immigrants.

Additionally, FLT methods support only academic users, and are not helpful for a broader diversity of users. According to Wiley (2005), FLT focuses on developing “formal written standard form” instead of “informal varieties” of community languages. The policy of FLT also supports anti-immigration attitudes, reserves FL for the elite, and excludes minority cultures and communities. As a result, the regime of FLT in the United States causes FL to be unsuccessful at developing language proficiency because it freezes teacher development to a “paralyzing focus on methods” and excludes socio-political awareness in FLT.

The circumstances surrounding FL have prompted many educators to address social justice in FLT. For example, Ortega (1999) suggested that FLT should respond to the needs of all people including minority-language-speaking students in the United States. Some requests were made to reconsider the ideological limitation of FLT in the United States). In the pedagogical area, Reagan & Osborn (2002) suggested that FL education should address “critical language awareness” in the instruction. This awareness of power relations in FLT will restrain prejudicial attitudes towards minority languages and users.

In the research area of HL education, social injustice was fundamentally addressed. In the United States, English-only policy considerably impacted the loss of HL. Many negative attitudes against heritage language education have portrayed use of minority languages as a

threat to national security<sup>1</sup> or as a hindrance to an individual's academic and socioeconomic success. In schools, there have been some scenes of discrimination against minority languages. For example; MacGregor-Mendoza (2000) portrayed stories of repression against heritage Spanish in Southwest schools. Schools used physical punishment and other strategies against students speaking Spanish. Many instances of insensitive actions in school against heritage language impacted the loss of heritage language, culture, self-esteem, and academic drives for bilingual students (Krashen, 2000).

Critical research on language policy has showed the impact of English-only policy on people's attitudes. Wen-Hsien (2007) revealed that English-only policy was actually the product of anti-immigration attitudes. Some policy strategies were used to address English as the instrument of social control and to portray HLT as threatening. Wen-Hsien (2007) also suggested the need to foster a positive attitude towards bilingualism. Jasso-Aguilar (1999) also observed language planning and policy in the mainland United States in comparison with Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii in order to explain the reason for success or failure in developing learners' HL. She suggested the government view language as an issue of rights instead of as a source of problems.

Most researchers of languages other than English have focused on teaching strategies and program development for FLT in general. Such strategies were intended to support English

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<sup>1</sup> After the end of the Cold War, the meaning of "national security" has been expanded to include not only military security, but also non-military contributors to insecurity such as social, economic, and political factors (Franzblau, 1997). In the United States, heritage/minority languages are, in this light, viewed in relation to immigration and national security. Some perceive minority languages as threats to national security and demonstrate this fear by pursuing policies of anti-bilingualism, such as 'English-only' laws (Kubota, 2006), or attempt to make English the official language (Franzblau, 1997). However, many scholars view bilingualism as a way to strengthen national security, because bilingualism can socially and economically enrich the country and strengthen relationships with other nations. (Krashen, 1998; Franzblau, 1997).

language learners, not HL learners (Campbell & Christian, 2001). There are also movements to preserve HL, led by many scholars in the United States and in the international arena, such as an international HL conference and the suggested topics to study in HLE. Campbell & Christian (2001) presented an outline of HLE research needed in the United States. This proposal was designed during the Heritage Language Research Priorities Conference at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2001. It showed the need to include socio-political and socio-cultural perspectives in HLE research. Campbell and Christian (2001) summarized the needs in HLE into seven categories: HL population, HL communities, opportunities for HL speakers, HL learning, HLE systems and strategies, language, language policies, and resources. This outline implied the importance of creating HL community and programs to serve the needs of all minority people.

Research has also demonstrated the need to establish HL schools, based on the family context. Hashimoto and Lee (2011) conducted a case of study of three Japanese-American families which showed the context of family's attempts to preserve HL and the challenges they faced in maintaining their HL. Parents in the study needed more external supports outside home. The authors showed the demand for pedagogical training and HL schools to enable their children to communicate with HL-speaking peer groups.

To maintain HL schooling for all students, teachers need to explore the demand for learning HL language in order to create a desirable program for all learners. Doerr and Lee (2012) conducted an ethnographical study of two students in a weekend Japanese language school in Northeastern state in the United States. These two students were in the same program but different placements therein: One was in a low-track class for "native speakers" and the other

was in a heritage language class for bilingual speakers. The study suggested that all language programs should regard students' needs and reasons to learn the language.

Even though there is increasing research in HL, there is still a need for more in-depth study of nontraditional educational settings and language of small groups of users. According to Deussen-Scholl (2014), HL research should address heritage language learning in community-based settings of neglected languages such as Native American languages and languages of small immigrant groups. I incorporated this need into the present study. Specifically, I chose to study teachers' identity in the context of HLT in a Thai community in an English-dominant environment in the United States. This context is a community-based school teaching Thai heritage language, a language of a small immigrant group in the United States.

The intent of this study is to expand the literature about use of HL in a nontraditional education setting by a small minority group in the United States. That group—the Thai HL program of TOW—is likely to resist the dominant power of English. Teachers are all Thai immigrants who decided to immigrate to the United States for various reasons. All of these factors raise issues of social, political and cultural issues, which this study addresses. Specifically, I focus on exploring teacher identity, power relations, and minority culture in this small group using HL. I will explore how the dominant powers of English influence, dominate, and change people within HL education.

## **2.2 Power**

The concept of power is crucial and central to this study. I directly employed Foucault's notion of power together with Gee's discourse analysis to understand the role of power in the school context of HLT in the Buddhist temple. I divided this section into several parts.

### **2.2.1 Power, knowledge, and discourses.**

The term “power,”—which is based largely on traditional liberal and Marxist theories—often refers to an ability to exert control over others, or an authority to legitimate some values over other values. In this view, power is exerted in one direction from top to bottom. However, power as understood in this study in the context of heritage language teaching differs from such traditional views, falling instead under Foucault’s concept of power. Foucault connected power, knowledge, and discourse in the same operation. Power is a “strategy,” in this view, not a thing. The exercise of power is strategic and warlike; Foucault described a power network as “a perpetual battle” (Foucault, 1977, p. 26). Power in this form is a product of social relations. This view of power in the form of dynamic network is visible through the interaction of teachers with others and in how teachers have negotiated their identity. Additionally, power is not transmitted in one direction but from everywhere. As Foucault (1978 cited in Rouse, 2005) described, “Power is everywhere not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere.” This power circulates within the network of relations.

Power directly relates to the production of knowledge. Foucault (1977, p. 27) stated, “Power produces knowledge” and “Power and knowledge directly imply one another.” In other words, power and knowledge are created through the same process. They are interdependent and cannot be detached from each other. Power is exercised in the process of knowledge production; at the same time knowledge functions as a strategy in the exercise of power. Power viewed in relation to knowledge production is not only negative coercion but also a productive operation. It also “induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse.” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119 cited in Gordon, 1976)

Also, power directly relates to discourse. Foucault's discourse is more than a certain way of using language under substantial influences. Discourse is "a social construct" in the form of "conversations and meaning behind them" (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2013). Discourses are the way to construct knowledge in the society. Pitsoe and Letseka (2013, p. 24) also explained Foucault's understanding of discourse: "discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority." As Barker (2008, p. 20) analyzed, "discourse constructs, defines, and produces the object of knowledge in an intelligible way while excluding other forms of reasoning as unintelligible" In other words, discourses are controlled by society and at the same time they function as tools for everyone in the society to use power.

To study power in this sense, Foucault suggested deconstructing power relations. I, therefore, focused on answering the following questions based on the understanding of power in Foucault (1982). Foucault addressed the question of "how power is exerted" in the study of power in order to see what happened when individuals exert power over others (Foucault, 1982, p. 786). Here are the questions I used to guide the study of power in this study:

- 1) Who has power?
- 2) Who lacks power?
- 3) What does the power of mechanism consist of?
- 4) How do powerful agents use the power they have?
- 5) How did their actions affect powerless agents?

These questions led to a deeper understanding of the discourse of power (see chapter 4) and power strategies used in this Thai HL school context (see chapter 6). This included an understanding of the mechanism of power, discipline, and normalization.

Even though Foucault's concept of power/knowledge and discourse are eminently suitable for this study, his theory has faced criticism for some limitation in explaining substantial power. Foucault's theory of power disregarded "the influence of the material, economic, and structural factors in the operation of power/knowledge" (Hall, 1997). This does not mean Foucault reject the idea of substantial power; however, he focused his analysis of power on "how power is exerted" and neglected questions of "what one is" and "why power is exercised" (Clarke, 2008; Yarbrough, 1999, p. 36-37). I share these concerns about Foucault's limitations in his analysis of power. Therefore, I exclusively employ Gee's "Discourse" (big D) to understand how teachers perceive the meaning of success. Gee's discourse analysis included linguistic aspects as a chief way to understand the meaning representation, or interpretation of how the world is constructed and people are interacted in the process of power relations. Next, I discuss critical discourse analysis as the other tool necessary to understand the substantial power influencing teachers' construction of their identity.

### **2.2.2 Critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand substantial powers.**

In this section, I discuss how critical discourse analysis serves as a tool for this study. I specifically chose Gee's discourse analysis as a suitable tool to understand teachers' motives about power, and thus to understand the broader ways power is influencing their lives. This was used to implement Foucault's theory of discourse, power, and identity in explaining power relations.

Many studies have employed a set of approaches called critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a tool to analyze and interpret the representation of meaning and power relations in the related discourses (Rogers et al., 2005). In educational research, CDA is "a way to make sense of the

ways in which people make meaning in educational contexts” (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 366). In combination, the three words “critical,” “discourse,” and “analysis” reflect the characteristics of how CDA operates. “Critical” relates to “Critical Theory” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352), which includes all theories relating to power and justice, such as Critical race theory, post-structuralism, post-modernism, neo-colonial studies, queer theory, etc. (Rogers et al, 2005, p. 367).

Specifically, language excerpted from all data collections will be “central in the formation of subjectivities and subjugation” (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 368); at the same time it will reflect how power, privilege and hegemony are engaged in it.

However, there are many critiques of CDA because it is a hybrid form of analysis; it relates to both methodology and theory. Its greatest weakness is the issue of imbalance of linguistic resources and social practice in the analysis. Roger et al. (2005, p. 387) suggest three ways to resolve this problem. First, CDA needs to be employed in the connection between the micro aspect and the macro aspect. Secondly, the relationship between discrete linguistic resources—in terms of how they are used—needs to be clarified. Lastly, researchers need to ensure their analytic procedures and decisions are clear. Because I regard the imbalance between methodology and theory for my study framework, I employed Gee’s discourse analysis, which can connect the micro aspect of the individual to the macro aspect of social practice. In this case, the linguistic resource is designed from a teacher’s perceptions of what “success” means, both in terms of him- or herself and the world.

The concept of Gee’s “Discourse” fits with Foucault’s view of discourse and power. However, Gee viewed “Discourse” and “critical discourse analysis” in direct relationship to language, which serves as a primary function in people’s lives. According to Gee (2003, p. 22),

language offers us the spaces not only to “say things (or informing),” but also to “do things (or actions)” and “be things (identity).” People can fully understand an utterance when they know that certain thing(s)/ action(s), as well as who said it. Therefore, the concept of language in this view functions as the essential tool to understand social practice in the society.

Gee (2003) used the term “Discourse” (big D) and “discourse” (little d) as directly connected to language. He separates discourse (little d) or “language-in-use” from Discourse (big D), or “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (Gee, 2003). Due to the fact that I focus my study on Foucault’s discourse, which is similar to Gee’s Discourse (big D), I use the term “discourse” or “Discourse” interchangeably to represent either or both concepts—Foucault’s or Gee’s. I will also use the word “language-in-use” to imply the general meaning of the word “discourse.” (See example of analysis in 3.2.5.3)

## **2.3 Language teacher identity**

In this section, I discuss about the definition of identity from both a psychological and a socio-cultural perspective. The characteristic of teacher identity is also described to understand why teacher identity is great as a conceptual tool for this study. Then, previous studies in language teacher identity are presented.

### **2.3.1 Definition of identity.**

The definition of “identity” is not straightforward. It is challenging to define. Previous studies showed that the definition of “identity” was either kept absent from many studies or was defined in various different ways for specific purposes (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004).

The variation of its definition depended on theoretical influence. Originally, psychological theorists such as Erickson (1950), Freud (1930), and Marcia (1966) developed both the term “identity” and the study thereof. On the traditional psychoanalytical approach, identity was investigated as one’s self and as a “thing” (Manfield, 2000 cited in Clarke, 2008, p. 23). This identity was identified as an “individualized self-image” which one possesses (Olsen, 2008). According to Eriksonian or neo-Eriksonian identity and research, identities are “self-reflections in the mirror of human nature” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 218). The identity as a thing is therefore visualized as “stable, atomized and individual” self-possession (Clarke, 2008) and a “homogeneous, self-contained and self-sufficient subject” (Clarke, 2008, p. 23). The psychological view of identity as the internal self-being makes it necessary for a psychoanalytic model of identity to rely on the input-output result of the acquisition. There were some critiques of this limit. For example, Boreham (2000, p. 6) pointed out a constraint of psychoanalytic model: that the researchers rely for their interpretation on the single individual perception, which can cause false consciousness.

Subsequently, the identity theory evolved beyond a clinical description used in psychoanalysis. It grew into more social-cultural contexts and became applicable to other fields (Schwartz, 2001). In socio-cultural theories, the meaning of identity has been viewed as “a social construct” (Clarke, 2008). The word “construct” signifies that identity is neither a static set of patterns that are internally imprinted nor a fixed attribute of a person; rather, it involves the ongoing process of shifting or becoming (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 108; Johnson, 2003). MacLure (2003, p. 131 cited in Clarke, 2008) stated that identity is “never really absolutely there.” This concept of an ongoing process portrays the identity to be dynamic, complicate and indefinable. In the concept of identity a socially constructed process, identity implies the relationship of both

individual and society. MacLure (1993 cited in Clarke, 2008) explained that identity involves both ‘individual in society’ and ‘society in individual’ on the model of identity construction. Meaning-making in the identity construction in the specific context is therefore discursive and relational. Clarke (2008) described this meaning of identity construction as “relations of differences”.

In this study, I examine teacher identity from a socio-cultural perspective. Even though the definition of “teacher identity” is elusive, all definitions share some common features. Understanding these characteristics can suggest the suitable approach to study teacher identity as a reflection of power relations. Here are four distinctive characteristics of language teacher identity in the socio-cultural views:

#### ***2.3.1.1 Teacher identity is contextual.***

Teacher identity is contextual (Varghese et al., 2005). It is constructed in the socially interacting context from an individual with others in diverse environments (Litosseliti & Sunderland, 2002 cited in Simon-Maeda, 2004, p. 408; Namaghi, 2009). Boreham and Gray (2005) stated that teacher identity was developed and legitimated by communicative actions. Therefore, the studies of teacher identity should be conducted where teachers are teaching, talking, thinking, acting, deciding, and interacting with others.

#### ***2.3.1.2 Teacher identity is relational and its construction is a complex process.***

Based on Foucault’s concept of identity, teacher identity coexists with discourse and power. Power and knowledge are created by the role of expertise in discourse where identity is constructed. Foucault did not view that people have a real fixed identity; contrarily, identity is constructed and re-constructed in interactions in society. The negotiation of teacher identity

involves the complex multi-layers of identities. According to Varghese et al. (2005, p. 22), teacher identity is not “a fixed, stable, unitary and internally coherent phenomenon” but “multiple, shifting and in conflict.” With the complexity of teacher identity, it is impractical or even impossible to separate that identity from other forms or other aspects of identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Boreham & Gray, 2005; Troman & Raggl, 2008). Additionally, identity cannot be studied as a single product but instead must be examined as a network of interrelated identities. Therefore, teachers’ experiences and stories—happening throughout various times times—from interviews, narratives, and observation are suitable sources to understand the multi-faceted nature of teacher identity (Simon-Maeda, 2004, p. 407-408; Tsui, 2007, p. 658).

### ***2.3.1.3 Teacher identity is dynamic and shifting in nature.***

Teacher identities integrate time—that is, the dynamic of the past and the future affects the negotiating of the present. As Wenger (1998 cited in Hockings et al., 2009, p. 484) stated, “We are always simultaneously dealing with specific situations, participating in the histories of certain practices, and involved in becoming certain persons.” Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons, (2006) who studied the stable and unstable nature of identity, argued that the nature of identity is subject to different degrees of change depending on factors relating to time, contexts, and situations, among others. Further, Boreham and Gray (2005) explained the dynamism of spatiality in teacher identity as “heterotopic”—and that there are complex aspects that relate to possession and mobility. For example, the loss of privacy in one’s location means the loss of one’s self (Boreham & Gray, P., 2005, p. 15-17). Moreover, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p. 178) observed the variety of words and terms related to dynamism that are used to describe

teacher identity. These include, for example, “development of identity” (see Gu, 2011; Menard-Warwick, 2011), the construction of identity (see Simon-Maeda, 2004), identity formation (see Tsui, 2007), and others.

Olsen (2008) created one of the examples of time dynamism in teacher identity construction. Olsen focused on the idea that the reasons a teacher had chosen to become a teacher influenced teacher identity construction in the process of becoming a teacher. This showed the process of how teacher identity changed from the past to present and possible future in their profession.

### **2.3.2 The model of teacher identity in the lens of Foucault and Post-Structuralism.**

As mentioned in 2.3.1, teacher identity has been explored through two broad approaches: psychology and socio-cultural concepts. While cognitive psychology does not address power and inequality in its studies (Pennycook, 1999, p. 12-13), the socio-cultural approach—influenced by heterogeneous movements such as post-structuralists, post-modernists, critical theorists, feminists and others—has enabled language teacher identity to become a useful conceptual model to promote social justice in education. For this study on language teacher identity and power relations, I specifically choose to view teacher identity through the lenses of Foucault and post-structuralism. These two approaches enable exploration of different aspects of power and teacher identity.

Foucault’s concepts of identity within discourse and of the construction of power-knowledge are useful for the study of identity as a critical reflection of power dynamics. Foucault viewed identities as constructed in connection with normalization, a social process or strategies to manipulate members of society. The “expert discourses” develop systems of

knowledge and power by defining social norms as well as directing people toward the norms. In other words, one defines oneself by others under social norms. Identity, which is constructed under normalization within discourse and knowledge production, will lead to creating one's sense of who one is or who one doesn't want to be. Foucault's concept of identity in discourse under power-knowledge production is therefore useful to understand the power relations from teachers' identity construction in this context. (See chapter 6.)

Under post-structural principles, teacher identity relates to power, which is tightly attached to language. From this basis, language teaching and learning are directly related to social power. In the view of post-structuralism, language is “a vehicle through which differences between and within identity categories are created and realized” (Morgan, 2008). According to Gee (1999, p. 38), language is a medium to understand how one's identity is constructed. Language teacher identity has become a useful model to reflect power relations in language teaching and learning development. With grounding in post-structural conceptualization, studies of language teacher identity explore a teacher as a whole person in connection with society. Through the different stages in the teachers' profession, language teacher identity can play the role of an “organizing element in teachers' professional lives” (Clarke, 2008; Duff & Uchida 1997; Johnson, 2003; Morgan, 2004; Pavlenko, 2003). Apart from reflecting the whole picture of the teacher in society, teacher identity can also provide “a meaning-making lens on some features of the immediate context” (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2011).

For this study, identity is defined as the intersection of the individual and the world. I use the term “cultural and spiritual identity,” to relate the shared culture or sacred beliefs of a group, and understand the power relations of language, culture, and religions in the lives of language

teachers in the educational context of this specific Thai temple in the United States. I refer to “teacher identity as a critical reflection of social power dynamics” to explore the linguistic, cultural and spiritual identities of teachers of Thai language in this US-based Buddhist school and how those identities reflect power relations. This term also emphasizes the relationship between teacher identity and power in the micro-macro aspect, a critical view to connect individual discourse with power, dominance, and inequality. This term also suggests an individual, malleable self-construct. That self-construct reflects the broader social powers under which teachers’ lives are influenced and conveys teachers’ social status and the agency involved in teaching. This social status and agency develop over time and space through social relations.

Using Foucault’s theory of power, knowledge, and discourse as well as post-structuralism, I assert that teacher identity can be used as a conceptual tool to understand power. Teacher identity—dynamically constructed through social interaction—is a site of struggle. Through the individual lives of teachers, we can understand broader embedded power. This is how teacher identity works as a critical reflection of social power dynamics:

#### ***2.3.2.1 Teacher identity is a site of struggles.***

Teacher identity is a site of struggles. Power relations can be ideally observed from teacher identity construction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; McKinney & Norton, 2008; Namaghi, 2009). Tensions or conflicts come from teachers trying to balance all their identities from their various socio-economical/socio-political contexts. As Trent (2011) stated, power relations are highlighted when teachers are in conflict or frustrated during mediation or when identities clash. Given the interwoven relationships between identity and the broader social discourse of culture and power, studying teacher identity provides an opportunity to examine the relationship

between the individual at the micro level to the broader social structure or macro level, where power-related aspects of economics, politics, and social dynamics are embedded. Investigating the relationship between identity and the broader social discourse yields a portrait of an individual person and the broader social structure. This can also shed light on how power circulates in economic, political, and social domains.

### ***2.3.2.2 Identity is shaped by society through interaction.***

Post-structuralism viewed identity as a shifting process developed through interaction with others. Gourdazi & Ramin (2014) summarized the nature of identity construction that it is “processual,” “relational,” and “contextual.” It is necessary to study identity from the view of the teacher as a whole person; this relates to the self-constructing process of “being,” “becoming,” “having,” and “belonging” (Ha, 2008) throughout the lifespan. This perspective of teachers’ identity can therefore be used as a flexible conceptual tool to understand how power is exerted and how knowledge is created in this context. To study teacher identity, Ha (2008) suggested that it is necessary to explore teachers’ lives, histories, perception, decisions, and experiences in connection to the world around them.

### **2.3.3 Significance of teacher identity in LT.**

Teaching is not neutral but an act of power exertion. Therefore, it is likely to influence students’ life meaning-making. The concept of teacher identity as a social construct—connecting the self to society—also directly reinforces language teaching and learning development. Unsurprisingly, most studies mention the importance of teacher identity as a part of educational reform and teacher education development (Clarke, 2008; Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22). The study of teacher identity is part of the ongoing process of the development of language teaching

and learning. Teacher identity relates to the whole process of language education in various contexts. The topic of teacher identity is therefore linked not only to teachers but also to learners, teacher educators, and researchers. Therefore, teacher identity must be addressed first through an understanding of the teaching and learning process, even before the acquirement of skills and knowledge (Clarke, 2007).

Additionally, teacher identity is an effective research frame for language teaching. As mentioned in 2.2.1, teacher identity by nature involves how teachers make sense of themselves in relation to others and to the world at large (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). In this respect, teacher identity provides the “traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships” (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) from all aspects through time dynamic, from the past, in the present, even to the future impact. Also, since—as mentioned—teacher identity is a site of struggle or contestation, studying teacher identity can ideally yield “a frame or analytic lens” through contexts, where tension and contradiction in career are grounded (Gao, 2012, p. 89).

Teacher identity can be viewed through various theories and approaches. In this study, I view teacher identity through progressive Foucauldian and post-structuralist lenses. Given its practical nature, language teacher identity provides an enlightening example of a whole person in contact with a complex society, as a model for developing teacher education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Clark, 2007; Gao, 2012, p. 89; Olsen, 2008, p. 5).

Language teacher identity can maximize the potential for teachers’ professional development. A strong, imaginative mindset about established attitudes can help teachers make a change in education. The idea of the mind’s power fits with the concept of “figurative worlds”

by Clarke, (2008: 24-26) who argued that imagination plays a powerful role in bringing one's potential into "a particular way of being." The figurative worlds provide "spaces for authoring" where teachers can regain control over themselves by reinventing themselves from their "sociocultural resources." The mind's figurative world can, therefore, empower teachers to maximize their potential and to construct their professional identity as an active agent. Teachers' understanding of their own place and identity will help them define who they are and determine who they shall become—using the imagination of their own minds. They can also make good use of multiple aspects of socio-economics and politics to benefit their teaching as well as their students' learning. Clarke (2008) emphasized the importance of identity as a "crucial component determining how teaching and learning are played out."

#### **2.3.4 Past research on language teacher identity.**

In this section, I investigate previous work of language teacher identity to find patterns among these works. The exploration will help me locate the research gap for my study. From the works in language teacher identity, there are two broad categories of studies grouped by goals: developing teacher education and supporting social justice in education.

##### ***2.3.4.1 Developing language teacher education.***

Teacher identity has become the foundation of teacher education development. As Varghese suggested, identity-based training focuses on "what teachers may become" rather than on "what teachers should know" or need to know. The purpose of research for teacher education development is mainly to develop efficient instruction methods. This approach focuses on a stage-based model of development. Looking at how language teachers' professional identity develops during their early stages of learning to teach, or investigating the process of learning to

be a teacher have become popular topics in this research arena (see Kanno, 2011; Morita, 2004; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Tsui, 2007; Varghese, 2006).

Teacher identity is believed to act as pedagogy. This kind of study connects identities of teachers and students in the classroom setting as a resource for classroom instruction. Morgan (2004) examined two situations of adult students from Chinese culture in Toronto, looking also at gender and family roles in the community. He provided realistic examples of how teacher identity and student identity work as a classroom resource and how to make good use of these identities to create inspired lessons. Norton (2013) also addressed the importance of pedagogical practice to draw all relationships between “text and reader, student and teacher, [and] classroom and community.” Through the multiple-case study in Canada, Pakistan, and Uganda, Norton claimed that teachers have a challenging task as active agents to be creative and supportive in the process of identity creation, e.g. a sense of ownership for their meaning-making process in different contexts.

In addition, some educational practice techniques have been suggested to help teachers negotiate their identities. Using a reflective approach or cross-cultural knowledge are common negotiation strategies recommended for facing tensions from identity crisis. Urzúa & Vásquez (2008) examined ESL novice teacher identity and the future-oriented discourse in mentoring. They suggested promoting both “retrospective reflection” as well as prospective reflection. Urzúa & Vásquez (2008) highlighted mentoring as an essential technique in shaping teachers’ identity and to help a novice teacher envision his or her future. Sun (2012) offered another example of a strategy for teacher education. He studied the identity-making of an immigrant Chinese language teacher and argued that prior personal knowledge from past experiences

influence teacher practices. With this indication, cross-cultural studies should be directed in order to help teachers understand their identity.

#### ***2.3.4.2 To support social justice in education.***

Researchers conducting the studies in this group sought to increase critical awareness in education by responding to diversity in various socio-cultural/economical/political and related aspects, such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, etc. The goal of the studies was to build a larger focus on social justice in education. Two regular points of discussion about language teacher identity were as follows:

##### *2.3.4.2.1 The dichotomy of nativeness: native and non-native.*

The studies of language teacher identity indicated the problems with using the dichotomy of native/non-nativeness in second language teaching and learning. These studies challenge SLA, which grounds the developing of learning and teaching on the standardization of native English users. The authors gave a variety of examples of relevant contexts relating to NNES in TEFL/TESL and English for bilingual students. Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999) pointed out that the negotiation of non-native English speaking teachers' (NNESTs) identity appeared to be the site of struggles over linguistic discrimination. They raised awareness of the covert power of colonialism over life of NNESTs in their English language learning and teaching. The authors also proposed that a sense of agency can emancipate one from this inequality in English language teaching.

Similarly, Pavlenko (2003) studied pre-service and in-service teachers' identity negotiation. He criticized the traditional discourse of linguistic competency in English language teaching and suggested all English teachers change their attitude toward language legitimacy. He

recommended reimagining second English language users as multi-competent users in order to break down the inequitable hierarchy, a source of disempowerment of all non-native English speakers and the factor of marginalization in English language learning and teaching.

Clearly connecting language teachers' identity to broader power, Tsui (2007) depicted the ongoing process of identity construction of an EFL teacher in China. Using Wenger's framework, the study reflected teachers' identity conflicts from the struggle of negotiation of meaning during professional identity construction. This revealed the broader power relations to a teacher's life and the surrounding community.

In another interesting study of the concept of English nativeness, Samimy (2008) studied the identity formation of a single white, American female teacher apprentice in the context of a dominant non-native English community. This study showed the identity-formation struggle of this native English teacher student. Eventually this teacher created her professional identity with more understanding of non-native users; at the same time she made good use of her English nativeness in this non-native English community to overcome her identity conflict.

#### *2.3.4.2.2 Multiple dimensions of identities from socio-economical and socio-political aspects in identity negotiation.*

Aspects of identity tensions were the crucial point in studies in this arena. As Clarke (2007, p. 187) stated, many works claimed that the purpose of the study of identities is to explore "some complexities surrounding identity" from "a series of paradoxes or tensions." The aspect of personal conflict was traced from personal identities, which distinctively vary in meaning in different cultures. Various socio-cultural/political aspects such as race, ethnicity, gender,

religion, age, etc. were addressed. These studies highlighted the importance of multi-personal factors in regards to identity negotiation.

Race was mainly addressed in terms of its connection to linguistic discrimination in English language teaching. Motha (2006) addressed the issue of the racial identity of English language teachers in US K–12 public schools. She illustrated how race played a role in the issue of the misconception of English legitimacy, which privileges the Standard English of whites over English of other racial users. Although the focus was on the relationship of racism and linguistic discrimination, the way a teacher is inadvertently influencing the classroom was implied.

Like race, ethnicity relates to the complexity of identity formation among language teachers. (Rodriguez & Cho, 2011) studied the identity of bilingual teachers in a case of Latino teachers in the US Midwest, and a case of bilingual pre-service teachers in Hawaii. The authors showed that aspects of ethnicity are associated with teachers' professional identity. Rodriguez and Cho (2011) recommended that teacher education training include the voices of linguistic minorities and that it to employ critical literacy narratives to avoid tacit assumptions in interacting with teachers. Wu (2012) studied a case of teacher identity formation of a Mongolian English teacher in a university in China. This case showed that various social and cultural factors relating to the teacher's life and work in the past and present created tensions in this teacher, which implicated and shaped the teacher's construction of professional identity.

The aspect of gender was studied as a part of the whole complex of identities. Simon-Maeda (2004) studied the intersection of gender and English language teaching and learning in a context of higher education in Japan. This study showed the conflicts between aspects of women's professional aspects and their personal lives, reflecting gendered inequalities in the profession. This

study suggested TESOL reconceptualize language teaching and learning structure by including gender and other socio-economic aspects.

Faith and spirituality of the language teacher have also been addressed as influences on language teaching pedagogy (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 12); however, the studies of the intersection between language teacher identity and spirituality are still limited. Most works about language teacher identity and spirituality emphasized ELT as a platform of cultural imperialism and Christian faith (Kubota, 2009, p. 225; Makoni & Makoni, 2009, p. 106; Varghese & Johnston, 2007, p. 6). The topic of other faiths in language teaching needs more studies.

In brief, previous studies of language teacher identity have explored socio-cultural and socio-political aspects. The new approach based on social, cultural, and political aspects has challenged traditional SLA in many ways. Also, the perception of teachers' role has been re-conceptualized as a transformative agent in the education.

### **2.3.5 Some research related to this study.**

I specifically selected some related research relevant to this study. In particular, I reviewed research studies on language teaching that addressed power relations in the school context of heritage language. The study of language teacher identity was also emphasized. As this school context is in the Buddhist temple, I also explored the study of language teaching and religion. Here are some works I explored as study models.

In the area of HL teaching and power relations, I reviewed the work of Francis et al. (2010) which was about power relations in preserving ethnic and cultural identity and the reproduction of culture in a community-based complementary school of Chinese in the United Kingdom. This work showed the benefits of complementary schooling for areas such as culture

transmission, development of a social network, creating space for social and ethnic identity negotiation for Diaspora, and ensuring parents' agency in controlling their children. Parents and teachers perceived more benefits of the complementary school than students did. This study clearly showed the power relations in maintenance of Chinese language and culture in a context of Westernization, from how these Diaspora parents and teachers employed this complementary school as a space to resist Westernization. The study of Francis et al. (2010) shared many similar aspects to my research; it focused on Diaspora teachers in a community-based school and on power relations. It will be interesting to examine whether HLT of UK-based Chinese communities was the same as or different from Thai HLT in the United States, and in what way.

Another similar study was by Wu, Palmer, and Field (2011). They studied the professional identity of teachers and beliefs about curriculum and instruction practice in a community-based school in the United States. The study showed that teachers in the school had low professionalism and faced the challenges of teaching Chinese HL in the United States because of their volunteer work. Teachers' identity in this case revealed the influences of English-only policy in the United States on their decisions about curriculum and instruction. The study implied that it is challenging for teachers to gain professionalism in a context where minority languages are perceived as less valuable than English. Wu et al. (2011) also suggested that community-based schools should be the place not only for teaching HL language but also for encouraging teachers to develop their teaching professionalism. This study can provide the idea of investigating teachers' identity in a community-based school in the United States where the policy of English-only is in action.

Cho (2014) conducted pedagogical-based research with pre-service HL teachers in a program preparing bilingual speakers to be teachers in Hawaii. This work reflected the co-

construction of the meaning of HL. The topic of power relations emerged in the discussion and showed the raising of awareness in HL education. This study directly illustrated practical implications for teaching preparation and development. First, critical cultural awareness is needed in the process of teaching preparation. It is also necessary to bring personal life into professional life in order to help teachers understand the multiplicity of HL teacher identity. Teachers should be encouraged to be the producer of knowledge; cultural sources of knowledge should be included in teaching preparation instead of sticking to the traditional concept of identity as static and fixed qualities.

In addition to HL and teacher identity, my study touches on moral and spiritual beliefs in teaching and power relations in the context of a Buddhist temple. For this reason, I reviewed some research on language teaching and morality-spirituality. Currently, the study of language teaching and religion is still small. Moreover, many studies on language have expressed concern about ELT as a tool to serve Christianity and Christian beliefs. The ethical practice of TESOL and ELT were examined. For example, Edge addressed the need for transparency in ELT. There are also many claims about missionaries and ELT as an “arm of US imperialism and Western hegemony” (Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003 cited in Canagarajah, 2009, p.7). According to Canagarajah (2009, p. 9), Evangelicals have had impact in all “domains of life through all forms of representation” and “social interaction.” The long history of imperial Christianity showed the authorization of Christianity in the United States as well as in other countries during the colonialism period. With the concern of danger of Christianity to lives, most scholars avoid addressing the possibility of dangerous Christianity. This prevention has limited the number of the studies about Christianity in the relation to language teacher identity.

In an interesting work on ELT and Christianity, Varghese and Johnston (2007) tried to verify the disputes about ELT as a tool of Christianity expansion by conducting an empirical study titled “Evangelical Christians and English Language Teaching.” The goal of this study was to carry out research by sustaining “transparency” or “clarity” and avoiding “stereotyping Evangelicals based on “simple knowledge.” Varghese and Johnston particularly explored how Christian teachers’ religious beliefs and practices related to teachers’ teaching. The participants were ten undergraduate teachers-in-training in two Christian colleges. It displayed how religious beliefs impacted their professional identity and reflected the complex construction of identity. The moral dilemma of Evangelical Christianity in ELT was discussed. The study suggested opening dialogues to listen to other sides to avoid labeling or stereotyping other beliefs or faiths.

In fact, the morality and value itself without religious beliefs were perceived as harmless. There are some works addressing morality in language teaching. Johnston (2003) viewed teaching as moral action, not political action. He discussed values and morality in English language teaching from real situations and stories from published works, journals, e-mail, and conversations. Johnson claimed that teaching is purely based on morality grounded in personal beliefs about “what is good or bad, right or wrong” in terms of social relations. Johnston displayed how morality worked in all aspects of language teaching: in classroom, in curriculum in pedagogy, and in the student-teacher relationship. He claimed that teaching is a nurturing activity; teachers generally have no political interests to influence students. They are working to help students improve.

Ha (2008) emphasized morality in teacher identity construction of Western-trained Vietnamese teachers of English in the context of English as an international language. She drew

the concept of personal identity and professional identity into focus. In this case, the identity was that of Vietnamese teachers of English who met a range of needs of Vietnamese society. Ha probed to see how Vietnamese EL teachers applied morality, culture, and national values into their teacher identity construction. She showed that being Vietnamese influenced the identity formation of these teachers even though they were trained in the TESOL professional training and exposed in the English-speaking West. Teachers' personal morality influenced all aspects of constructing their professional identity. Ha also criticized post-colonialism's dichotomous view of self-other, which treated others as "empty vessels" in their own construction of identity. She suggested the need to view teachers as a whole person, not just within the perspective of self and other.

The last work I selected was a study not of teacher identity but of the life of exile that is similar to the Thai-American context in some ways. Macpherson (2005) conducted an ethnographic study of five exiled nun students in a Tibetan-English educational program. This study explored the cross-cultural identity negotiation of cultures and gender. The identity struggles were displayed with examples of threats, marginalization, acculturation, and other challenging factors. The study showed two influences of liberation on the nun students' identity construction: Western views of independence and Buddhist training about identity as emptiness constructed in the mind's imagination. Macpherson suggested that bilingual schools provide resources to serve as a "safe house" for students to gain agency in making their own choices in their process of identity transformation.

## **2.4 Conceptualizing ideas and framework**

The goal of this study is to uncover the relationship between teacher identity and the power relations influencing teachers' lives. I explored how teachers' cultural and spiritual identity presents in their roles in two different worlds—as a Thai cultural and spiritual preserver, and as a Thai immigrant in the context of Buddhist temple schools in the United States. To achieve this goal, the framework was constructed as shown in diagram 2.2. Three main constructs were designed. The first construct is that of teachers' linguistic, cultural and spiritual identities and their negotiation as cultural and spiritual preservers of the Thai language in the classroom, in the context of Buddhist schools in the United States. Critically, this is associated with the second construct: the concept of how power operates on a larger scale— circulating through a “net-like organization” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98 cited in Hall, 2007, p. 77). The third construct draws from teachers' perception of “success.” This construct was created to help understand the substantial way power is shaped by teachers' motives. This concept of success could frame a teacher's life in the present, past achievement, and future attainment. The details of these three major conceptualizations—with their supporting theories—are as follows:

#### **2.4.1 Teacher identity as a critical reflection of power dynamics.**

When addressing the relationship between discourse and teacher identity, I selected Alsup's view of “identity in discourse” (Alsup, 2006) from her study of teacher identity to conceptualize my study framework because this model provides what Alsup (2006) refers to as “borderland discourse,” integrating the concept of Gee's discourse into her framework. She prudently applied the concept of discourse together with identity formation. She described teacher identity in discourse as “space between multiple worlds” and also one's situated positioning of one's self and others.

To understand language teacher identity in discourse, I developed a plan to observe individual teachers as whole people, in contrast to viewing all teachers as a single unit. The negotiation of teacher identity was closely investigated in relation to Gee's (big D) Discourse, which represents all aspects of the world. The perception of teachers' sense of "self" from different worlds—as a Thai language teacher and as a Thai immigrant in the United States—was explored. Teachers' self-perception of different worlds was investigated through different stages of their lives: their historical background, the present moment, and future determination. The social interaction of teachers with students, parents, Thai people, and people from different ethnicities was observed to scrutinize how teachers negotiate themselves in this context.

#### **2.4.2 Discourse-power-knowledge.**

As mentioned before, my main goal in this study is to understand power relations by exploring the negotiation of teacher identity within the discourse of power. This was done to see how identity negotiation created new knowledge, an output from exercises of power. I employed Foucault's concept of power, which relates to knowledge and discourse, for a few reasons.

First, Foucault perceives that power is about not only coercion but also all fundamental forms of knowledge production. Power within discourse produces the reality or the "true consciousness" in everyday social phenomena. Power prevails in all human relationships. Power does not really exist; however, it drives all lives into existence and spurs them to perform their social actions. By connecting discourse and reality, Foucault's version of power has a direct relationship with knowledge. As Foucault stated, "power produces knowledge" (1977, p. 27)—it lies beneath knowledge. To understand power relations from within a context, it is necessary to investigate "power-knowledge" in the discourse, or system, where certain knowledge is possible.

This grounded concept of power-knowledge and discourse enables the term “power” in this study not to serve as an authority to legitimate some people over others, or some values over other values, as in the disciplinary concept of power. Contrarily, power is everywhere; it comes in the form of knowledge production. This model of power is not one of the central projection of power, but the dispersion of power in the form of self-discipline. People conduct themselves to meet the norms formed by knowledge production in a particular social context.

Also, Foucault’s version of power is not a thing to be possessed but a relation between people to be exercised (Foucault, 1977, p. 26); it works through strategies or regulated techniques to influence or affect others’ actions (Foucault, 1977, p. 26-27). Power as relation between people makes individuals become active agents who provide their own “self-inscription” under dominant norms. This fits well with this study of teacher identity as a reflection of power. According to Foucault, identity of the subject is by nature subjected to discourse. The identity of the subject is a source of meaning in discourse (Hall, 2001, p. 79). The concept of identity via Foucault’s lens is therefore linked with the power of one’s self in connection with others under power-knowledge production.

To understand the complex power relations via a Foucauldian lens, the discourse of power needs to be deconstructed or analyzed. I focused my analysis on the observation of teachers’ resistance and encouragement as an effective point for my observation. Power is a complicated process that affects individuals. To investigate power, Foucault suggested finding out “the limits imposed on the exercise of power” (Foucault cited in Smart, 1985, p. 73). To uncover this limitation of power exertion, I connected it with the concept of resistance, which has shared ground with power. As Foucault stated, “Where there is power, there is resistance”

(Foucault, 1977). In addition to this, Foucault's power is not only repressive and prohibitive but also positive and productive. With this concern, I focus my analysis in particular on the understanding of teachers' resistance—such as challenges, identity crash, or culture shock—as well as encouragement—such as expressions of pride as a Thai or praise. Throughout their challenges and empowerment, I am interested in teachers' experiences and their decisions for their resistance and encouragement. Teachers' resistance and encouragement, experiences and decisions—all of which are tightly tied to their identity—will help reveal how power in this context was exercised and how “knowledge-power” was produced.

#### **2.4.3 Teachers' perceptions of “success” as a tool to examine motives related to power and substantial power.**

Foucault's concept of power is suitable for observing both power relations among teachers and students as well as strategies of power use and resistance to power. However, Foucault's theory disregarded the motives that lie behind. With this limitation, the theory is unable to explain the substantial powers influencing the social practices. With concern about this restriction, I explore teachers' perceptions of success by using a post-structural lens to understand individual teachers' motivations with regards to power and substantial power which influences social practice.

I employed Gee's discourse analysis to explore teachers' perceptions of “success” and “desirability.” This can help reveal the normative strategies that influence teachers' self-regulation and their conduct in society. I examined the idea of teachers' notions about the perception of “desirability” to reflect the power dynamics in all inquiry steps: designing research questions, structuring data collection tools, and selecting data analysis methods. Concurrently, an

idealized image of “success” was supplemented to explore the negotiation of teachers’ identity and power relations. The reason I chose the concept of “success” as a source of meaning was that success connects teachers’ lives across the dynamic aspects of time and space. Starting with an idealized image of success sets up a model in which we can observe how teachers negotiate how they position themselves in comparison with this ideal concept. The concept of “success” is strongly associated with the concept of referent power—the reward one gains from one’s capabilities and possibilities. Success can also represent one’s goals and achievements. The way teachers perceive and apply the concept of success can reveal how they view their level of attainment based on dominant norms and discourses. This could reflect how teachers’ lives connected with others’ in the past, how they connect in the present, and how we might assume they will connect in the future. This symbolic representation could enhance further understanding of teacher identity negotiation and power relations in this research.

Teachers’ perception of success and desirability was used as a strategic probing tool in critical discourse analysis (CDA). Deconstructing two concepts of “success” and “desirability” from teachers’ perspectives through their identity negotiation will help reveal the power relations in this social practice. The deconstruction of teachers’ perception of these concepts could illustrate how teachers have negotiated their cultural and spiritual identity, as well as reflect the role power-knowledge plays in this context.

## **2.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter discussed relevant literature in more depth in order to provide the theoretical basis for this study. I presented three conceptual themes: language and power, teacher identity, and discourses and power. In the study of language and power relations, previous studies have

been explored the “legitimacy” of language and have mostly been grounded in EFL/ESL. They showed the power of English and the influences of SLA in language teaching, which regarded the status of English as above than the status of other languages.

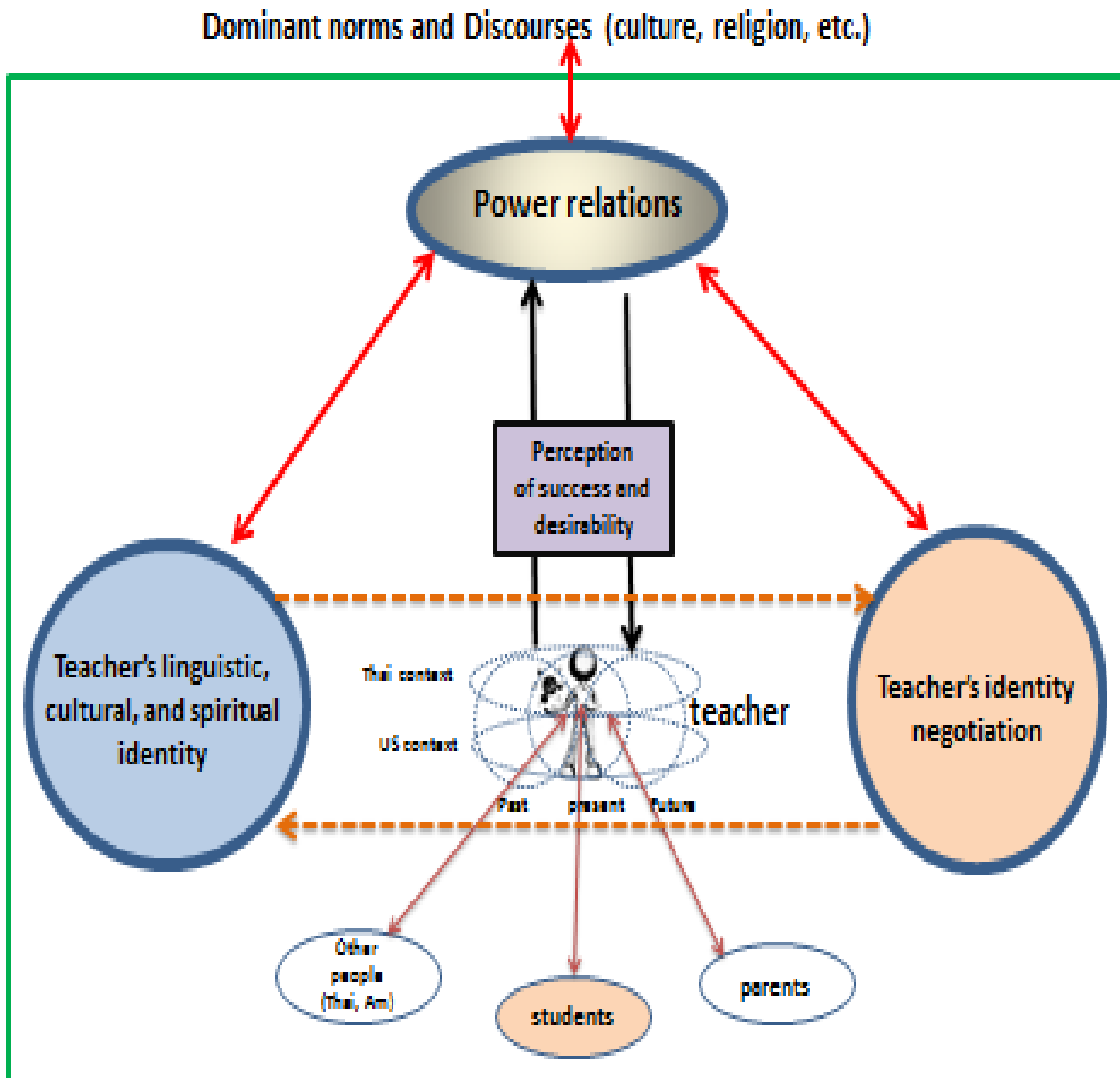
The status of HL in the United States has been perceived as problematic. Even though there have been some attempts to raise HL to a more positive position and frame HL as national resources, these attempts support language legitimacy under the model of economic competition and still frame HL as inferior languages or even a threat to political security.

The second theme of this literature review is the concept of discourse and power, using Foucault’s framing of power and knowledge as a lens for the study of power drawn from identity in discourse. I also selected Gee’s concept of discourses and his discourse analysis tool to understand substantial powers.

The third theme has to do with teacher identity. I discussed why the concept of teacher identity has been used in various examinations of language teaching and learning as a conceptual tool. This study applies the concept of teacher identity as a reflection of power relations.

Finally, drawing on these three themes from the related literature, I created a proposed framework for this study to enable understanding of power relations from cultural and spiritual aspects of teacher identity.

Diagram 2.1 Conceptual framework



## CHAPTER 3

### Research methodology

#### 3.1 Chapter summary

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study, including research strategy and rationale, researcher's position, and data validity considerations. The research strategy section presents the research type, site and time frame, sampling, and data collection methods. For the type of study, I chose an in-depth, critical qualitative case study. In order to understand the "content richness" of the study, I developed a research methodology plan that unified theoretical concepts (see chapter 2), data collection, and data analysis under the same considerations. To meet the research goals, it is important to select the sites and participants suitably. Therefore, I used "purposeful sampling" or "criterion-based selection" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77) to select participants for this study. I used interviews, observation, and document analysis for the data collection. In total, I interviewed four volunteer secular teachers and two monk teachers who taught in a Thai language program in a Thai Buddhist temple in the United States. The observational plan was designed in order to see the interactions of teachers with students, with other parents, with other Thai people, or with people of languages other than Thai. The school documents relating to this Thai language program—which were incorporated into the data analysis—consisted of curriculum and related school notices. These included textbooks, lesson plans, and brochures or booklets about the school. The document analysis was conducted concurrently with the interviews and observation. In the data analysis, content analysis was used to search for and identify themes and patterns. Critical Discourse Analysis was also used to interpret the meaning of social practice in this study. Additionally, the position of the researcher

was highlighted for the discussion in order consciously to control the influences of my biases on the study. To maintain the validity of the qualitative approach, the techniques of member checking and thick description were used in all procedures.

### **3.2 Research strategy and rationale**

As mentioned in Chapter One, the fundamental inquiry of the study is to understand the negotiation of teachers' identity in discourses, where what Foucault calls the "hidden network of power" prevails. With this study focus, the research methodology was designed to answer the following research questions

- 1) How do Thai language teachers negotiate their linguistic, cultural and spiritual identities within Buddhist schools in the United States?
  - a) What discourses do teachers draw on to talk about their identities?
  - b) How do teachers from different religious statuses bring in their stories?
  - c) How do the social differences among teachers influence their teaching?
  - d) In what sense, if at all, do they act as cultural and spiritual preservers?
- 2) To what extent and in what ways do the identities these teachers negotiate reflect the network of power relations?
  - a) How do teachers view and communicate the concepts of "a successful person" and "a desirable quality"?
  - b) How does teacher identity as a cultural and spiritual preserver relate to how they view "a successful person" and "desirable quality"?
  - c) How does power/knowledge play out in the Thai language classroom, and in what way?

To figure out the negotiation of teacher identity and the underlying power within the discourses, I organized a research design grounded in theoretical concepts, a logical research instrument and schemes, and a data analysis plan. The overall research strategy is to acquire an understanding of the network of power that drives and controls teachers' lives. With this concern, teachers' identity was discerned from teachers' interactions with other people, from their experiences, and from decisions they make in their roles as teachers in this school setting. To answer the research questions, I developed the following research design:

### **3.2.1 Type of research: Qualitative case research in critical theory.**

In order to investigate teacher identity in relation to language, culture, spirituality, and power, a qualitative approach based on a critical theory was preliminarily employed. The qualitative method was selected as a suitable approach for this study because the research target was to acquire an understanding of the actual social reality, which included interactions between teachers and others. Qualitative research, with the premise that "reality is socially constructed" (Merriam, 2009, p. 17), therefore enables the researcher to probe deeply into an understanding of the way things are. This complex construction of reality in society requires consideration of more than just the "single observable reality" (Gay et al., 2009, p. 8-9) of a quantitative approach, based on numerical data under a specific and narrow procedure of "researcher-controlled environments and conditions" (Gay et al., 2009, p. 7). Because I did not seek to understand the cause and effect of the phenomena I observed, or to determine a trend from a large number of individuals—with little attention to the interactions of people—a qualitative approach is, therefore, more appropriate than a quantitative approach for this study (Gay et al., 2009, p. 15).

It is vital to understand the characteristics of qualitative research in order to develop research strategies for a successful study. According to Merriam (2009, p. 15-17), qualitative research requires an “emergent and flexible” design to explore subjective reality (Merriam, 2009, p. 17). A researcher plays a major interactive and observational role as the primary instrument for understanding actuality. The researcher is involved in all aspects of the research—such as asking research questions, being a skillful observer, thinking inductively, and tolerating ambiguity in the research process. The roles of researchers in qualitative research are responsive to the complex and changing conditions of the surroundings. Even though human beings can be flexible, responsive, and adaptive, the researcher in this role can be shaped by bias. Researcher bias cannot be erased. On the contrary, it must be recognized; qualitative research requires a clear and detailed description of the research process, the researchers’ role, and the researchers’ biases and preferences. A detailed description or presentation (Merriam, 2009, p. 227) can be used to help monitor all research processes. Moreover, informed consent from participants—part of ethically conducted research—is needed to ensure the ethical treatment of participants.

This qualitative research meets Merriam’s definition of a case study: “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40) that can be described as “particularistic,” “descriptive,” and “heuristic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). For the particularistic aspect, this study focuses on a particular exploration of power dynamics in this Thai language program in a Thai Buddhist temple by probing into the negotiation of teacher identity in this context. The research study was conducted with deep attention to detail—what qualitative research terms “thick description”—to ensure complete description throughout. Moreover, this case study was heuristic in that it can “illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomena” (Merriam, 2009, p. 43-44, 426) from the study. The study can be used indirectly to compare and

contrast with other community-based heritage language programs or with cases to which readers' own life experiences match or relate. This heuristic feature matches what Stake called "naturalistic generalization" (Stake, 200, p. 3 cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 44), meeting the description that it can "feed into the naturalistic generalizations of readers and writers." Therefore, this case study can be used as a means to transfer knowledge in order to understand power relations and teacher identity in another community-based school.

The other main research goal is to understand the connection between power relations and teachers' identity. Critical theory paradigm is therefore a suitable framework for this study. As stated by Usher (1996, p. 22 in Glesne, 2011, p. 9) and Prasad (2005 cited in Glesne, 2011, p. 12-13), the purpose of research in critical theory is to develop a critique of the position of the oppressed and to reveal the limitation of their "freedom, justice and democracy." However, the purpose of this research study is not exactly the same as most critical research—questioning and transforming injustice in society (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 28). Rather, this study intends to critique and to provide reflection on how power operates. The hope is to stir the consciousness of policymakers and national authorities toward favoring heritage language education in the United States, by increasing understanding of how power operates in this context as well as understanding of teacher identity. The goal is not to change the social system through the involvement of research, as with typical critical theory research. Optimistically, the transformative outcome will arise from understanding the role of power relations in teachers' lives. This understanding will empower teachers to negotiate their identity without being threatened by hidden power, while also enhancing their awareness of their own values.

To fit the critical theory paradigm, qualitative research methods and critical discourse analysis were considered strategically during all stages of the research design. Using thick descriptions and other characteristics of qualitative research to understand teachers' lived experiences and perspectives through analysis yielded the kind of findings Merriam described should result from qualitative research: findings that are "comprehensive, holistic, expansive, richly-descriptive" (Merriam, 2009, p. 18). Concurrently, critical discourse analysis (CDA), an ideal analytical research approach for critical theory, was applied to deconstruct the concept of power in this context, as well as the concepts of "success" and "desirability," leading to an understanding of power relations from the discourse in use. The expectation was that the relationship between teacher identity and power relations would be clarified through this critical analysis.

### **3.2.2. Site and time frame.**

#### ***3.2.2.1 Site selection.***

The data for this study were collected in a Thai Buddhist temple called for the purpose of this study the "Temple of Wisdom (TOW)"—a pseudonym. TOW is a temple in the Theravada Buddhist tradition located on the West Coast of the United States. TOW has served as a center for most Thai people in the nearby areas since 1998. The temple's Thai language class has been offered since 2003. Originally, the Thai class was provided to support children who followed their parents to the temple. This was to benefit both parents and children by enabling the children to learn Thai language and culture. In the very beginning of this program, there were only four to six students, and monks taught the class. Later on, there were volunteer teachers who came to participate in the temple by taking care of the class together with the monks. At the end of 2012,

the temple dedicated the basement of the building for the Thai class. The classes have also been taught on the third floor of the building as well as in other areas in the temple such as the temple grounds and the common room of monks' residence, when there were no temple events.

I specifically selected this Thai language program in TOW out of 102 existing Thai temples in the United States (Dharamathai, 2012) for several reasons. First, this program is an example of a diaspora community-based Thai language classroom available in a Thai temple in the United States. Even though there are many Thai language programs in Buddhist temples in the United States, many of them rely for instruction on an annual project of cooperation between Thai temples in foreign countries and universities in Thailand. These projects send many Thai volunteer teachers with degrees in Education or related fields from Thailand to teach Thai language and culture in foreign countries. In these cases, the hosting universities in Thailand control all of the curriculum and arrangements. These annual programs rotate teachers who will teach in the temple for about six months to one year. I decided to exclude the schools which join in this kind of cooperative teaching projects in Thailand. In comparison, teachers in the Thai program in TOW are volunteers, and are Thai people and monks who locally live in the United States. The TOW program is an example of a community-based school, similar to other heritage language programs in churches, mosques, and other religious community sites in the United States. Therefore, this school in TOW was selected as a good representation of Thai community-based heritage language instruction.

The lives of teachers in the TOW community-based program are useful for studying power relations because the teachers are Thai immigrants in the United States who were born and raised in Thai culture but decided to live in the United States for various reasons. They are

likely to bring Thai culture into the classroom, and they also have to adjust to the culture of the United States where they currently live. It is fitting to see how these teachers choose to incorporate Thai and/or American cultural influences into their pedagogy to teach their bilingual Thai-American students in this program. Therefore, Thai volunteer teachers and monk teachers, who commit to teach without a direct personal benefit for their career development, are suitable subjects for this study.

The other reason I selected TOW as the study site is because I am a participant in the TOW community. I usually attend and participate in TOW events and have volunteered in many non-teaching activities since 2011. My current membership in the TOW community can easily create a sense of trust among monks and volunteer teachers. This connection helps me get the support and cooperation necessary to carry out a study the temple insightfully. The immersions of a researcher in this context can also provide a better understanding of teachers' cultural and spiritual identity through interactions with and observations of the teachers, and through accessing the school's artifacts and teaching materials.

### ***3.2.2.2 Site information***

The program in TOW is currently one of the biggest Thai language schools in any Northwest US state, based on the number of students and teachers. Most volunteer teachers are students' parents, and typically teach in a class separated from their children in the program. The school collects no admission fee. However, there are occasionally school fundraising events among the parents or sponsors from outside the temple, to supply for teaching materials, costs of arranging activities, teacher training, text books, and other resources. Parents and community

members also collect funds for the purchase of papers, stationary, and similar supplies as requested.

During my data collection in this school program between 2012 and 2014, I noticed remarkable changes in the TOW school. The changes were due in part to the school's expansion as well as to the adoption of new curriculum materials. These changes need to be addressed to understand more about the school context. The changes and the program development started right after the completion of a temple hall construction. This hall can be used as additional space for Thai language classrooms. The location of the school was moved to the basement of the new big hall, which has room for 100 students. Currently, the basement of the Hall is divided into four or five classrooms each with a maximum capacity of 30 students. There is a small library with a variety of Thai books for children, and a big space for school gatherings or the manners class. The big chamber on the third floor of the big hall, capable of holding 70–100 people, is also used for all students to practice in the meditation session, or as an occasional special classroom. The number of students increased from 29 students in academic year 2012–2013 to 63 students in academic year 2013–2014. The students are at the elementary and middle school level, ages 6–15. There is one more class in academic year 2013–2014 than there was in 2012–2013—from three classes of Beginner, Pre-Intermediate I and II, up to four classes of Beginners, Pre-intermediate I, Pre-intermediate II, and Pre-intermediate III. These classes are grouped by students' Thai proficiency of listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as by their equivalent age group.

The number of teachers has been expanded to meet the increasing numbers of students. In academic year 2012–2013, there were nine teachers in charge of three small classes. At that time,

there were three Thai female volunteer teachers, three Thai female volunteer co-teaching assistants, two Thai monks, and one American monk. They taught a class of nine to ten students or a class of all 29 students in the school. In contrast, in academic 2013–2014, there were a total of 12 teachers in the program, in charge of four classes. The teachers were: four Thai female volunteer teachers, four Thai female volunteer co-teaching assistants, one female volunteer teacher of manners, two Thai monks, and one American monk. Teachers teach a class of ten to thirteen students or a whole class of all 63 students. In the academic year 2013–2014, there were also special positions in the school for those serving on the school board: school principal, school director, and finance and accounting officer. These positions dealt with all related management of the school.

The schedule of studying was rearranged to include an extra 15-minute manners session in academic year 2013–2014 while still keeping the total amount of study time about the same. In academic year 2012–2013, the school instruction took place on Sundays, with the first session of Thai language class from 11:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m.; lunchtime from 12:00–12:45; a mediation session from 12:45–1:15 p.m.; and a second session of Thai language class from 1:15–2:00 p.m. Whereas in academic year 2013–2014, the classes were taught on Sundays starting with Thai language class between 10:00-11:45 a.m.; the manners session between 11:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.; lunchtime between 12:00–12:45 p.m.; and mediation session between 12:45–1:15 p.m. The meditation session is still led by a monk teacher but the manners session is new in academic year 2013–2014. That session is reserved for teaching students about Thai manners or for broadcasting school news or policy information.

Apart from the expansion of the school and changes in schedule, there was also a change in curriculum. The school director decided to reform the school curriculum after attending workshop for teaching bilingual Thai-American students in Washington, DC. This reform has significantly changed many aspects of teaching in every Thai classroom in TOW. All materials and lesson plans as well as teachers and students in charge of each classroom have been changed. Even though the change may affect their teaching, the change provided me the opportunity to understand how teachers negotiate themselves in different situations in the old and new curriculum. Even though the school curriculum reform might affect teachers' identity in some ways, such as their pedagogy, this change did not primarily alter how power relations affect teachers' lives. On contrary, it provided an opportunity to supplement the understanding of how teachers negotiate their cultural and spiritual identity in the face of the changes at the school. However, this aspect of the change can be investigated from only two participants who taught in both academic year 2012–13 and 2013–14.

### ***3.2.2.3 Site entry and human ethical protection.***

I have volunteered to work in non-teaching jobs in the temple. The monks and volunteer teachers are familiar with me and this can help me contact them easily. I first entered the school site as a research observer while carrying out a project for my course work in my Qualitative Methodology course in February 2012. I received approval from the course director, Dr. Michael Knapp, in December 2012, in a process similar to the real IRB approval process. On April 17, 2014, I received IRB approval from University of Washington (UW) Human Subject Division. After this approval, I recruited the participants by asking all teachers in the program who met the sampling criteria (see 3.2.3.1 for more information) to participate in the study. The letters of

request for cooperation were sent out to the temple abbot. Concurrently the letter notifying of the study was sent to all teachers. Additionally, the teachers signed the IRB consent form submission for subject ethical protection before the study started. The study notification was also provided to all consenting teachers to notify the students' parents because a part of the observations about the teachers was made in the classroom, even though students were not directly observed. The research purpose and procedure were presented to the teachers in the letter of request and consent form before the commencement of the research in this temple.

I conducted this research with confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used for all names—participants, school, and the temple—to prevent disclosure of identifying information about the participants. A coding system with confidential links was used for all recording and transcription of the data. No identifiable information about participants and the school has been used in this paper.

#### ***3.2.2.4 Events and time frame.***

The data collection for this study can be divided into two periods. In period I, from February to April 2013, as a part of a requirement for the Qualitative Methods course (EDPSY 586-587), there were three interviews for three participants (two of whom also participated in the data collection of period II), weekly observation of 30 minutes of instruction in each classroom for twelve weeks, and document analysis. In period II, April–June 2014, there were four interviews of six teachers (two of whom had been participants in period I), weekly observation of 30-minute instruction sessions for each teacher for ten weeks, and document analysis. I requested permission from the UW Human Subject Division to use the previous data of two participants' interview transcripts from period I, in combination with data collected in

period II. The use of previous data from my program coursework in this study was intended to increase the validity of the overall research for greater understanding of teacher identity construction.

Document collection relating to classroom instruction, including goals, purpose, teaching lesson plans, and teaching materials, were gathered in September 2012, June 2013 and May 2014 with the permission of the teachers. As casual observation from my participation in TOW events, I also observed teachers' interactions outside class and with other teachers and parents during lunchtime, as well as their participation in special events in the temple.

### **3.2.3 Study participants, and sampling frame.**

#### ***3.2.3.1 Sampling method: Participant selection.***

The participants in this study were selected using “stratified purposeful sampling” together with predetermined “criterion sampling” (Patton, 2002, p. 243-244). The stratified purposeful sampling in this case, based on the socio-cultural status of spirituality, could roughly classify participants into either monk or secular. This status was crucial for this study because of the central part of the research interest about how spirituality directly relates to social belief, norms, and values. The spiritual status of teachers would be essential for understanding teacher identity from different orientations to spirituality. Also, their duration of stay in the United States and their commitment to the program were carefully considered. Therefore, the criteria I used to select were as follows:

- 1) Thai teachers who have lived in the United States for over five years and plan to stay in the United States during the time of data collection. The year of settlement in the United States is important for investigating how teachers negotiate their identity in two worlds, the prior world in

the Thai culture where they are from, and the new world in the United States where they become an immigrant. Even though different migrants need different periods of time to acculturate in the United States, I chose five years of stay as a criterion for this study because many countries including United States require immigrants to stay for at least five years to apply for citizenship naturalization. Within five years of stay, most immigrants are expected to be settled and familiar with living in the United States.

2) Teachers have at least one year of teaching experience in TOW. With this, it can be assumed that they are familiar with the school system, and one year as a volunteer teacher is a long period that shows their commitment to teach in TOW's Thai language program.

Selected from the two sampling criteria, the participants are six Thai teachers in Thai language courses in TOW, consisting of two monks and four female volunteer teachers.

### ***3.2.3.2 Details of participants.***

With the stratified purposeful sampling, the six aforementioned participants joined the study. Among six of the participants, two of them (Wachiratham and Imjai) had participated in previous studies between February–April 2013. Following is a brief summary of these individual teachers. This is general information relating to the status of each teacher and the teacher's identity in a Thai Buddhist temple in the United States. This would be used as the historic background of individual participants. (See Table 3.1 for a summary of general participant information.)

Wachiratham

Wachiratham, a 40-year-old monk native to southern Thailand, entered the monkhood at 10 years old. He received a BA and MA in Philosophy and Religion in Thailand. As a monk in Thailand, Wachiratham taught Buddhist philosophy in many middle schools and led Dharma talks in many events for the general public in Thailand. He was selected to be a Dharma ambassador in the United States and was sent to his station in TOW in 2008. He led Buddhist ceremonies and Dharma talks for all people interested in Buddhist principles in the United States. His role in Thai language courses at TOW is as a consultant. He also sometimes leads the meditation session for bilingual students, alternating with two Thai monks and one American Buddhist monk. He has been well respected as a great monk teacher in this Thai community.

Wachiratham was really proud to be a monk. He said, “I never feel shy to wear yellow robes. It is who I am, a Thai monk.” However, Wachiratham experienced the pressure of competition in the economic world. He shared his story of being at a crossroads in decision-making: choosing either disrobing from his monkhood or persisting in being a monk after his graduation. Eventually Wachiratham decided to remain monastic with the reason that he could be a more valuable person in his monkhood, a person who can work for society at large, not only for his own life. Here is his story:

I thought about quitting being a monk. At that time I was not sure if I should be a monk for good or a layman. When I received the Bachelor degree, I got a job offer for a non-ordained person—to use my knowledge for the job. I thought if I did not leave this monkhood and accept the job, the offered job would be taken. I would lose the opportunity to work. If I did not disrobe then, it would be difficult for me to get a job again. In the future when I am 50 or 60 years old, it will be harder, even impossible, to

get a job if I have to disrobe from the monkhood then. I thought a lot about losing an opportunity to work a good job in secular life; however, deep into my heart I love to be a monk and I chose this. Still, I could not stop thinking that I would not have a job any more if I did not leave the monkhood then.

(Interview, March 20, 2014)

For Wachiratham, a monk has a similar role to a teacher, relating moral instruction to life. He suggested that both monks and teachers need to cooperate in the process of moral instruction and training in school. Secular teachers should address morality in the lessons, whereas monks should expand their world knowledge in order to apply dharma to the real world.

In the United States, Wachiratham uses English for everyday life but he is not confident enough to use English for Dharma talk. In the Thai program, Wachiratham used Thai for the instruction of bilingual Thai-American students. Still, he tried to use simple Thai in his teaching. He also took an English class taught by a volunteer American teacher and tried to practice English with the American monk in the temple. About his plan in the future, Wachiratham has no preference about where to live, either Thailand or the United States. The important factors for this decision were more about his family and his spiritual master, as he mentioned that:

Things changed because of related factors. For me, to leave or to stay in the United States depends on these factors. I have teachers in charge of the temple in Thailand. I have parents who are still healthy. If they are old and cannot take care of themselves, I will go to Thailand. It is an essential role of a good child/a good student to take care of them.

(Interview, February 12, 2013)

Table 3.1 Summary of participant's general information

Participants(pseudonym)	Data Collected in Period I and II		Data Collected in Period II			
	Wachiratham	Imjai	Yonpak	Anothai	Thammarak	Panward
<b>Gender-age</b>	Male, 41	Female-secular, 44	Female -43	Female-secular, 37	Male, 55	Female-secular, 44
<b>Marital-parental status</b>	Monk -	Married one 10 year daughter son	Married One six year daughter	Married Six year old son	Monk -	Married 6 year old son 10 year old daughter
<b>Spouse</b>	-	American	American	Thai	-	Thai
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor in Teaching Morality, Thailand Master in Buddhism studies, Thailand	Bachelor in Finance in Thailand	-Bachelor in Management in Thailand -Master in Management, Australia	- Bachelor in Business Administration (Thailand) - Master and PhD in IT Science, United States	- Bachelor in Politics, Thailand - Master in Linguistics , India	- Bachelor in Pharmacy in Thailand - Master in Education, United States
<b>Current job in United States</b>	Volunteer Monk	A financial officer	Home: Taking care of her kid	Business Analyst User researcher	Volunteer Monk	Home: Taking care of her kid
<b>Year of stay in US</b>	6	17	10	14	20	16
<b>Year of teaching in TOW</b>	8	3	1	1.5	11	2
<b>Teaching experiences before TOW</b>	✓ (Teaching on morality in school/ regarded as a spiritual teacher )	✓ ( company training in training adults)	✓ (adult students)	✓(adult students)	✓ (regarded as a spiritual teacher )	✓ (Pre-elementary students)
<b>Been trained to use the new curriculum</b>	-	✓	-	-	-	✓
<b>Class in charge</b>	Meditation for all students	Pre-intermediate II	Intermediate III	Intermediate III	Meditation for all students	Beginner
<b>Reason in US</b>	Dharma embassy	Marriage	Marriage	Study+Work+marriage	Dharma embassy	Study+Marriage
<b>Reason of teaching in the temple</b>	Teaching and supporting morality is main duty of monks	-Sending son to study -Lack of teachers -seeing the importance of having Thai community	- Sending her daughter to study - TOW lacks teachers	Sending son to study Lack of teachers	Teaching and supporting morality is main duty of monks	Sending son to study Lack of teachers
<b>Proud to be a Buddhist</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Imjai

Imjai, a 44-year-old female teacher, is native to a southern province in Thailand. She got a Bachelor degree in Financing in Thailand. As a part of her career, she came to the United States. There she met her American future husband, and decided to get married. Now they have a 10-year-old son. Imjai has sent her son to study Thai language in TOW since he was five years old. Her husband also supported this as he realized the value of being bilingual. The reason Imjai sent her son to study in TOW was because she wanted him to have a strong connection with a community of bilingual Thai-Americans and to absorb some typical Thai character traits such as humility and respect.

In TOW, Imjai worked very hard in tasks such as fundraising for the school and organizing the new TOW curriculum. She was involved in the major school reform in 2012–2013. Consequently, Imjai was selected to be the director of the Thai language program in TOW in 2013. Imjai dedicated herself by volunteering in the Thai program in TOW because she wanted to set up a Thai community for bilingual students. She stated that,

It is because I am a Thai that I used to volunteer in many places for the blind and the disabled, for homeless, etc. Later on I thought, why did I not volunteer for our Thai community? I am a Thai and I wanted to support my community and most Thai people go to the temple, more than go to church.

(Interview, February 21, 2013)

She also stated that supporting TOW can entail more than training kids with Thai language, but also instilling culture. The Thai Buddhist temple was a place to interact with Thai community and to develop her kid's morality by Thai societal standards.

Imjai felt proud to be a Buddhist but regarded herself as a permissive believer. She shared her view that it was fictional belief that all monks are virtuous. Sometimes she felt opposite to monks' teaching—even disliked it. Still, she showed her respect to them. As she stated,

I have questions on my mind. [laughs] Anyway, I always show respect to all monks. I cannot say that I don't have any questions towards them. For yellow robes symbolizes monks and monks wear yellow robes; I then think that I respect the yellow robes, the symbol of Buddhism. I never showed or acted to make anyone see that I do not like a person underneath the yellow robes. Even though I do not respect that person under robes at all, I still respect the yellow robes.

(Interview, October 25, 2014)

She also mentioned that she did not strictly follow the Five Precepts of Buddhism, as she still enjoys an occasional glass of wine and will dispatch a spider or bug when needed. However, she did her best to be a good person who helps other people. Volunteering in TOW is a part of her dedication to do good things for society.

#### Panward

Panward, a 44-year-old female teacher in the TOW, earned her bachelor's degree in Pharmaceutical Science in Thailand. However, she expected her life to fit her stronger connection with spiritual side of society. Being a pharmacist did not meet her moral expectation. Panward then decided to change to study for a Master of Education degree in the United States, with a plan to open her own school in Thailand after her graduation. She shared the story of her decision to change her career from being a pharmacist to a teacher as follows:

It is hard to maintain my moral foundation to work in the pharmacy business. I once work as an internship in Osot Sala. I could not sell any medicine, not at all. One customer wanted to buy synthetic hormones to control menstruation. I therefore explained the bad effect of the pills. Then that customer did not buy the pills. I felt okay that she did not buy the pills; it means I could not sell. I feel like it is a conflict to my feeling to work on the business risking on someone else's health. But working in a school, I can maintain my morals and virtues. Even though I might collect lots of money for the tuition fee, I can do my best to help my students for their learning. It is not a conflict of interest for me.

(Interview, April 27, 2014)

Panward married a Thai man and she decided to continue her life in the United States instead of setting up a school in Thailand. Her decision to get married happened at the same time she was offered a job at a Christian school. She worked there for two years and resigned from her work when she had a baby. Now Panward has two children: a nine-year-old daughter and a six-year-old son. She has volunteered for over a year to teach in this school program. With her experience in teaching, she was asked by the school in the TOW to be a school principal. Her task is to encourage and attain the educational goals at the same standard, to communicate with teachers and parents to ensure they are properly informed, to keep track of the school, and to develop specific, particular objectives to meet the goals of the school program.

Panward loves to live in the United States because the environment has met her preference for independent life and disciplines. Both her husband and she have volunteered to help this Thai community. Her husband was a president of the temple in 2010–2013. At home, Panward speaks Thai to her children. She sees the value of instructing Thai language for Thai-

American students in the United States. She realized that her children used more English and less Thai after they started going to mainstream school in the United States. This made her insist on speaking Thai to their children at home even though her children reply in English. She believes that Thai language can connect her children to their grandparents in Thailand. Panward is a proud Buddhist. It is more than a status she received since she was born. She feels connected to Buddhism and lives closely to the teaching of Lord Buddha.

#### Anotai

Anotai, 37-year-old female teacher, lived in the United States for 14 years. Anotai studied for her bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Thailand and continued her MA and PhD in Information Technology Science in the United States. She now works as a business analyst and program user researcher in the university from which she graduated. She married a Thai man, who has a permanent job in the United States. She had one six-year-old son and was expecting a new baby in July 2014. Even though Anotai missed Thailand a lot, she likes living in the United States more than Thailand because America is an informal society that encourages independent lives with highly disciplined regulations.

Anotai has experience as a teaching assistant in her PhD program for one year. She felt that teaching university students was much different from teaching students in the TOW's program—which, she feels, is more difficult. She decided to volunteer teaching in the TOW program because she wanted bilingual American-Thai students to know Thai as a connection with their Thai heritage. At home, she uses Thai language with her husband and her son. She sent her son to study at the Thai program of the TOW to increase his opportunity to be exposed to

Thai community, to make friends with other bilingual Thai-American students, and to learn and absorb Thai culture and Buddhist principles.

Anotai has a strong connection with Buddhism. She has committed herself to daily practice. She carries a book of Buddhist chanting and chants the practice at any time on her own. She chants before doing activities, such as before leaving home or before driving her car. Her son asked her why Anotai chanted before driving; she informed her son that it helped her to concentrate on doing the activity and to increase conscious awareness. Chanting before driving could make her more cautious of driving; consequently, it created more safety. She shared that she goes to the TOW more often than she went to the temple in Thailand because the TOW is more than a center for her spiritual development; it is the place where she could meet other Thai people and maintain a strong Thai community in the United States.

Yonpak:

Yonpak, a 43-year-old female teacher, has lived in the United States for 10 years. She earned her bachelor's degree in Computer Science in Thailand and a Master of Information Technology and Operational Research in Australia. She stated that living in the United States is her fulfilled dream. Yonpak showed her affection about United States as follows:

America is a land of Freedom and provides opportunities for anyone who seeks for their own fortune. I watched a movie called Far and Away. This made me really, really, want to come here. I dreamt a lot to challenge in this land of freedom. That was a reason why I tried badly to come to the United States when I was young. Now I am not like that anymore but still I like many things more than Thailand.

(Interview, April 20, 2014)

After Yonpak graduated from Australia, she returned to work in Thailand as a teacher in Asian University for one year. When her American friend suggested an opportunity to work in the United States, she decided without hesitation to come to work in the United States. She worked as a business analyst in a company and later on got married to an American. She worked for six years and decided to leave her job when she had a baby. When her daughter turned six, Yonpak sent her to study Thai language in the TOW class. She wanted her daughter to familiarize herself with Thai community and to get experiences of exposure to different cultures other than American ones. At home, she used English with her daughter most of the time. She started using more Thai when she and her daughter had an opportunity to go to Bangkok for a four-month trip in 2011.

Her experiences of teaching in an international university in Thailand did not make her feel confident in teaching children in the TOW. She stated that she was not trained in child psychology nor teaching language. Even though she is a native Thai, she is not confident in Thai language as a subject. She compensated for her lack of confidence in teaching Thai language by studying many successful projects about teaching in Thailand, such as Vanessa School arranged to help students achieve academically as well as in life. She adapted the techniques she learnt from watching YouTube and examples of popular school in Thailand to her teaching in the TOW. She believes that the best way to help these bilingual students learn is to teach the topics students can instantly use in their daily life. She applied this teaching principle to accommodate with the school textbooks. She confessed that she did not strictly stick to the book; contrarily, she created various kinds of activities on her own under the general topics of the books. For example, when the topic in textbook was about family relationships, she would let her students interview

their parents and make a family tree to present in class. The students would learn not only to use Thai language but also to connect the related stories in the lessons to their lives and their ancestors.

Yonpak has a good connection with Buddhism as a part of her family. When she was in Thailand, she went to the temple to accompany her grandmother, who was bicultural Chinese-Thai. Her belief was grounded in Chinese-Thai Buddhism, in which it is traditional to go to the Buddhist temple as well as to the House of Chinese gods (ศาลเจ้า). In the United States, she practices meditation and chants prayers at home on her own, normally about half an hour nearly every day. Also, she reads many Buddhism Philosophy books. Her routine of Buddhism practice was a part of mind development. For Yonpak, religion and spiritual belief are a strategy to help an individual conquer his or her life obstacles and a powerful mind power to support one's life.

Thamarak

Thamarak, a high-ranked most senior monk in the TOW, is a native of Southern Thailand. He entered his monkhood when he was 15 for one month, as is a traditional Thai custom for males to enter a Buddhist monkhood at least once in one's life. At that time Thamarak decided to change his whole life by maintaining his monkhood because he saw the value of life in monkhood. He stated that "I can do more for the society as a monk. I can benefit the world more in this monkhood." He was really proud of himself for being a monk and stated that,

I am inordinately proud to be a monk. You can notice that monks, even their uniform is different from other people. I am never ashamed to wear robes to show other people. It is

the most of my pride. People here in America also felt impressed with monks' way of life. Two university students in the United States asked me a lot of questions about being a monk. Can a monk get married? No. Why did you decide to be a monk and to refrain from being married layman? I said a monk life is dedicated for others, not for myself. These students were very impressed when I told them... I eat one meal a day, I do not decide about what to wear, but robes. I live in a simplistic life but I work for others. Other people were impressed with me in this monkhood. (Interview, May 19, 2014)

During his monkhood, he studied in a university in India for three years and returned to serve in a Buddhist Thai temple in Bangkok. Later on, in 1989, his spiritual teacher sent him to be a Dharma ambassador in the United States. When Thai people in a city in the West Coast of the United States wanted to build the TOW, Thammarak was invited to take up this project. He then moved from a city in the Midwest of the United States to this city to take part in developing the TOW to be a Buddhist center. He worked very hard to arrange and organize all activities to promote authentic Buddhist teaching in an open and friendly environment. He served as a respectful person in the community for 24 years. He has set up Thai programs in the TOW since 2003. He told me that he wanted bilingual children to feel familiar with their Thai language, Thai culture and Buddhism. He said,

The aim of a Thai program in the TOW is not to convert children to be Buddhists but to make them feel familiar, not to be hostile to their culture and Buddhism... Both parents and children can benefit from going to the TOW.

(Interview, April 29, 2014)

Because Thamarak spent a long time in the United States, he felt confident to use English for his daily life and for dharma talks to people in the United States. He does not have plan for the future, but serving as a Thai monk in the United States made him feel it is worth living in the United States.

### **3.2.4 Data collection strategies and procedures.**

The purpose of this study is to examine the complex and dynamic teachers' linguistic, cultural and spiritual identities as a critical reflection of power relations. All procedures of critical qualitative research in the data collection were chosen by considering teachers' lives, experiences, interaction, and instructions, as well as teachers' perception of success and desirability, which are the pathway to see how power relations play into this context.

#### ***3.2.4.1 Interviews.***

Four in-depth semi-structured interviews lasting about 45–60 minutes were conducted with individual teachers. The interview sessions were designed to help the researcher understand the teacher's background, beliefs, and perceptions of "success" and "desirability." The data from semi-structured interviews were very appropriate to study teacher identity because this form of data captured the invisible perspectives of teachers, a crucial aspect to explore identity. The flexible nature of semi-structured interviewing could also help the researcher to respond to emerging topics or ideas at hand (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). Four sessions of interviewing provided a gradual accompaniment to systematic observation of the teachers' pedagogy and elicited perceptions of the informants' "self," and their presuppositions about the "successful student" and "desirability."

The interview protocol was based on the research questions, in order to understand the identity negotiation as a cultural and spiritual preserver, and presuppositions of “success” and “desirability.” (See Appendix B). For example, the questions “Let’s talk about the concept of a “successful person”—in your view what characterizes a successful person? In what ways do you think it is important to be successful in life?” then followed by questions to tie to teachers’ personal lives such as “How far and in what ways do you think you are a successful person? With the well-designed interview approach, participants’ feeling, thoughts, and experiences, as well as their perspectives were easily spotted (Patton, 2003, p. 353). As the research aimed to conduct the in-depth interview, three techniques of probes were used to deepen the answer to a question (Patton, 2003, p. 354-370). The techniques consist of a) “detail-oriented probes” by asking 5W1H questions to gain detailed information, b) “elaboration probes” of positive gesture and verbal word to encourage response and c) “clarification probes” asking to restate for the explanation.

I arranged the interviews into three sessions at different times: prior observation, in-between observation and final interviews. I planned to set the second and third sessions as opportunities to check teachers’ decisions in situations gained from observation as a part of the validity check. Some examples of situations between periods of observation such as teachers’ pedagogy and interactions needed clarification from teachers.

The interview protocol was based on the research questions, in order to understand the identity negotiation as a cultural and spiritual preserver and presuppositions of “success” and “desirability” (see Appendix A). For example, the questions included: “Let’s talk about the concept of a “successful person.” In your view, what characterizes a successful person? In what

ways do you think it is important to be successful in life?” This was then followed by questions related to teachers’ personal lives such as “To what extent and in what ways do you think you are a successful person?” This interview approach made it easy to spot participants’ feelings, thoughts, experiences, and perspectives (Patton, 2003, p. 353). To ensure an in-depth interview, three types of probes were used to deepen the answers to a question (Patton, 2003, p. 354-370): “detail-oriented probes” to gain more detailed information; “elaboration probes,” including use of positive gestures and words to encourage response; and “clarification probes,” such as requesting a restated explanation when necessary.

I arranged the interviews into three sessions at different stages in relation to the time of observation: interview prior to observation, in-between the observation, and final interview after finishing observation. I planned to designate the second and third interviews as opportunities to check teachers’ decisions about situations gained from observation as a part of a validity check. In some situations, information from the in-between period of observation—about topics such as teachers’ pedagogy or interactions—needed further clarification from teachers. In September 2014, I added an extra interview to ask teachers more about the perceptions of volunteer teachers versus career teachers. Additionally, I asked monks about their daily life dilemma which needed clarification after some observation and response from previous interviews. This was essential for understanding their decisions and thought processes within their monkhood, a part of understanding monk teachers’ spiritual identity. All in all, there were twenty-four interview segments, which were transcribed and translated into English by the researcher. I also asked participants to comment on, to add to, or to clarify their words in the transcripts. According to Merriam (2009, p. 217, 229), this member-checking is a technique used to promote validity because it can identify the researchers’ biases and misunderstanding of what is observed.

All six participants chose to be interviewed in Thai, a comfortable language for the participants to express their voices and intentions. Two teachers participated in the first data collection period (period I). These teachers agreed to participate in this new session of data-collection, which was conducted one year after the previous study. Both teachers recognized the nearly identical questions; still they agreed to be interviewed again in the second period of data collection. The responses of these two teachers who participated in previous study were useful not only to help me see these teachers' negotiation of their identity at two different times, but also to ensure the validity of the interviews. Voices were recorded with permission from the participants. Short notes were also taken during the interviews.

#### ***3.2.4.2 Observations.***

The observation method was used to support understanding of teachers' interactions in the natural setting in and outside the classroom. In classroom observation, teachers were observed in different lengths of time as follows: ten sessions of 30–60 minutes in the classes of Panward, Anotai, and Yonpak (in 2014); twenty-two sessions of 30–60 minutes for Imjai (12 sessions in 2013 and 10 sessions in 2014); three 20–30-minute sessions of Thammarak's meditation class (in 2014); and four 20–30 minute sessions of Wachiratham's meditation class (two sessions in 2013 and two sessions in 2014). (See table 3.2 for a summary of the total time of observations for each participant.) The number of observations in the monks' classes and secular teachers' classes varied because a monk does not teach weekly but instead rotates teaching the class with the other three monks, whereas secular teachers are responsible for the assigned class each week. Also, I observed the instruction of Imjai and Wachiratham in two stages of research; this increased the

number of observations of these two teachers in comparison to my observations of other teachers.

Table 3.2 Summary of total time of observations and interviews

Estimated amount of time	Imjai	Panward	Anotai	Yonpak	Wachiratham	Thammarak
Observations*	22	12	12	12	4	3
Total (hours)	11–22	6–12	6–12	6–12	1.3–2	1–1.5
Interviews**	7	4	4	4	4	7
Total (hours)	5.25–7	3–4	3–4	3–4	3–4	5.25–7

\*Time of observation varied: 30–60 minutes in the secular class; 20–30 minutes for the monks' class

\*\*Time of interview for individual teachers was approximately 45–60 minutes

Additionally, I had opportunities to observe teachers' interaction in different extra-curricular activities outside the classroom. During the course of study in period I (January 6 to April 20, 2013), there were three extra-curricular activities: Children's day activities in a nearby community center (Jan 19, 2013), Makabucha Day (Feb 24, 2013) and "Songkran" or Thai New Year's Day (April 13–14, 2014). During the course of study in period II (April 17–June 20, 2014), there were the following extra-curricular activities: Easter egg-hunt activities (April 20, 2014), Coronation (May 5, 2014), Visakhabucha (May 11, 2014), and American Mother's Day (May 11, 2014). (The days in parentheses reflect the dates the temple arranged for the events; they may not be the same dates as marked in the calendar.) The observation during the extra-curricular activities yielded opportunities to see teachers' participation and interactions relating to their cultural and spiritual identity.

I also attended other activities: teacher-teacher meetings and teacher-parent meetings. I attended one teacher-parent meeting on March 24, 2013. I was invited by the TOW school director from 6 to 8 September, 2013 to video record the training of teaching Thai by a guest speaker from Thailand: Sali Silapasatham, the author of a Thai language textbook titled /SA-WAD-DEE/ “สวัสดี” widely used for Thai language classes in many countries in Europe. After that training, I was also asked to create a video presentation for a TOW funding request to the Royal Thai Embassy in Washington, DC. Even though my participation in this workshop was not during the data collection period, this participation provided me an opportunity to interact with teachers in the TOW and with people in other Thai communities. I was able to observe how teachers in the TOW interact with other Thai people in different situations.

I used an observational protocol (see Appendix C) as a guideline for observation in this study. I paid attention to evidence of belief, values, and norms of teachers from different social status towards the ideas of a “successful person” and “desirable quality.” Field note recording (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007) was used to gather messages, signals, and interaction patterns about teachers’ ideas regarding success or spiritual and cultural development, especially when teachers responded with positive and negative qualities, or rewarding and punishment to address the meaning of desirability and success.

#### ***3.2.4.3 Document collection.***

Document collection is a helpful tool for understanding the real setting of the school as well as teachers’ beliefs intended to employ in the classroom. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 118), documents can provide factual information as well as reflect how producers of

those documents perceive the world. By nature documents are more objective than interview or observation. They are unobtrusive by investigators (Merriam, 2009, p. 155).

The goal of document collection in this study was to help clarify teachers' views about culture, religion, success, and desirability. Documents relating to their teaching, such as teaching materials, the model of content, course syllabi, goals, purpose, and school policies, were collected and used to supplement analysis from data from interviews and observations. The aims of document analysis were to understand meanings embedded in the documents, such as teachers' pedagogy, social values and beliefs. This can reflect the norms relating to language, culture, and spiritual faith in the natural setting.

There were two main types of documents collected in this study.

- 1) School curriculum, a good resource for understanding the real setting of the school, as well as the values teachers viewed and intended to employ in the classroom. These consisted of teaching materials such as lesson plans, reading packet, or textbooks.
- 2) In-school design documents such as school brochures, PowerPoint presentations shown to parents on the orientation day in October 2012, or a video presentation for parents.

The analysis of social practice from the school curriculum reflected the power relationships among language, culture, spirituality in this school setting which supplement the understanding of data gained from interviews and observations. I also asked some questions about teachers' choice of material and their opinions about the documents in the school.

#### ***3.2.4.4 Translation.***

Even though the participants know English well, I provided both English and Thai consent forms for all teachers in order to make sure that all participants were informed about the research procedure in the same way and in both languages they know. All participants preferred using Thai for interviews; therefore, translation from Thai to English was needed in the research reporting.

In this study, I did the translation from Thai to English as well as English to Thai myself; I have multiple roles: researcher, interviewer, and translator of all documents. I am a native Thai who has experiences of translation from English to Thai and Thai to English. For this study, I focused all my translation based on the comprehension by attempting to stay true to the original meaning. I was aware of translating the meaning where languages and cultures are relevant. Also, I tested the readability and naturalness to keep the translation as close as possible to the original with the meaning clear and understandable for all readers from different backgrounds. Also, the participants were invited to check the transcript as well as the translation at their convenience.

### **3.2.5 Data analysis**

#### ***3.2.5.1 Approach to data analysis.***

I used inductive analysis, which is the traditional method of qualitative data analysis (Merriam, 2009, p. 205). Content analysis and analytical induction were employed with all three types of data. Themes, patterns, and categories were constructed from the interviews, observations, and document analysis by coding to understand the negotiation patterns teacher identity in the study setting. Foucault's critical discourse analysis is used to deconstruct powers in this study (see 2.2.1).

Also teacher's identity as a critical reflection of power relations was analyzed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Gee (1999) and Fairclough's (1995). As mentioned in the conceptual framework, the concept of success was structured into all steps of research procedures. The study of identity relating to power relations is discursive and requires a suitable methodology to deploy the critical research. Therefore, CDA is an ideal type of analytical research approach that explicitly connects the way of text with power, as a tool to critique the power relations from the discourse. The benefit of CDA is that it has the explicit practical assumption towards the idea of critical theory by focusing on language in relation to power and ideology.

#### ***3.2.5.2 Theme-building and data coding.***

I assigned codes and used them in the development of themes. I organized my codes based on the goals to explore linguistic, cultural, and spiritual aspects of teachers' lives, as well as some observations of teachers' punishments and rewards of their students. This worked as a way of understanding teachers' perceptions of success and desirability. All these codes were based on seeing the discourses of how teachers negotiate their cultural and spiritual identity. These codes enabled me to investigate recurring patterns and find meaning from relationships in the data. I considered the tactics for generating meaning suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) to digest the data from more concrete to more conceptual—tactics such as grouping, comparing and contrasting recurring themes, and subsuming particular data into the conceptual framework and research questions. I analyzed the data with the strategy of analytic induction (Merriam, 2009, p. 205–206). I tested the “tentative hypothesis,” or with the instance selection from the data all along the process of data collection.

### *3.2.5.3 Gee's discourse analysis.*

Apart from Foucault's discourse analysis of power and content analysis, discourse analysis based on the work of Gee (1999) and Fairclough (1995) was used to understand the connection of words and the world. There were three steps in this process to deconstruct teachers' perception towards the concept of "success." Gee's Discourse Analysis (1999) was applied as follows:

#### Step I: Textual analysis or analysis of form and content

In order to conduct textual analysis to see how cultural and spiritual identity of teachers in TOW reflect the broader views of power relations, I purposefully selected the texts from teachers' interview dialogues in their responses to questions four through nine in the second interview and questions number one through three in the final interview. These questions were designed to investigate how teachers perceived the successful and desirable characteristics of an imaged person who reflected what they hope to see in—and attempt to build in—their students.

I designed the analysis tool to probe teachers' perceptions of success and desirability based on the negative and positive aspects leading to success. Negative aspects can be interpreted by language of refusal, denial, or resistance because they give teachers an unpleasant feeling; whereas positive aspects reflect the language of acceptance because they are pleasant. I focused on negative or positive characteristics of an imaged person by looking at four linguistic indicators to see how participants view people, things, places, and actions, from 5W1H questions. Here are the linguistic tools to help understand how teachers view success and desirability:

- 1) *Giving a definition of an imaged successful person or unsuccessful person.* Indicators are words such as the verbs “to be,” “seem,” “mean,” or similar words. For example, “A successful person is/seems/means etc. + \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 2) *Examples of doing something which lead to success, desirability or positive/negative results.* Some such terms are: “for example,” “such as,” or any stories or terms expressing the examples of the events or situation.
- 3) *Cause of success:* What brings to success and causes desirability, and what causes positive or negative results. Some language indicators to show cause and effect are: “cause,” “as a result,” “result in,” “because,” or “If,.. then.” Some patterns that indicate this are:
 

When/if \_\_\_\_\_ (1) \_\_\_\_\_ , success/desirability  
                   (1) \_\_\_\_\_ then, as a result + success/desirability  
                   (1) \_\_\_\_\_ cause/ result in +success/desirability
- 4) *Comparing and contrasting among causes of success or something positive or negative.* Indicators of language of comparing and contrasting include: “but,” “better,” “more,” etc.

#### Step II Interpretation (processing analysis)

This step was an on-going process analysis continued from the analysis criterion in step I. The interpretation was grounded to find the representation for discourse of socio-cultural practice in relation to the discourse practice. I noted recurring patterns and themes and constructed categories as the tactics to help me interpret the data before noting the relationship of text and power relations in step III.

#### Step III Explanation with Social Analysis from Discourse founded and Sociocultural Practice

This step explained how the negative or positive characteristics relating to success/ failure were used to deal with the discourses of power. Foucault’s concept of resistance/ acceptance to norms established by society was assisted to understand the power relations from

the language interpretation in step I and II. I discussed the sociocultural practice found in language of teacher's interviews to understand how the semiotic patterns of sign and symbol of success relates to the representation of power in the situation, the institution, the community and the society. Here is the example of the analysis.

Right now I think a successful person 1) **can be** anyone who can take responsible for themselves, for their society, for their families. I think like this 3) **because** [pause] 2) **For example**, they are a CEO director; 4) **however**, they do not have time for anyone. It is in an imbalanced life. In the past, I did not think like this but I read many books 2) **for example** the story of Dr. Abhiwat who worked very hard and was regarded as a successful person, but his body did not handle all his work (he got cancer). During Apiwat's life of his hard work, his wife had to make an appointment to talk to him That was not normal. How can he be happy when he has to live like that?

(Yonpak: Interview, June 19, 2014)

- 1) *"can be" = to signpost the definition of success*
- 2) *"for example" = to signpost the examples of successful person or not a successful person*
- 3) *"because" = to signpost the cause of success*
- 4) *"however" = to signpost the contrast of the meaning of success*

According to the above text, there are linguistic indicators showing four language functions. Those were 1) definition of success, 2) example of success, 3) cause of success, and 4) comparing and contrasting. The teacher's perception of success was shown in the underlined texts. These four linguistic indicators in the text showed that this teacher showed a change in her view about success. Her definition of success has changed from a person who achieved to be in a high position like Dr. Abhiwat to a normal person who "can be responsible for themselves, for

their society, for their families.” To explain about her definition, Yonpak gave examples of a CEO’s whose life was supposed to be successful but was actually an imbalanced life; the CEO worked hard and had no time for their personal life nor with their family. This supposed-to-be successful life of a CEO was compared with her real definition of success, which relates to happiness, or “the one who only has a warm family; good children (child), enough money to use as they need,” not equivalent to “living in luxury or being a CEO director.” She provided the reason for her definition of success: that living a life as a CEO “was not normal.” Yonpak emphasized this unusual life of a CEO with the question, “How can he be happy when he has to live like that?” This suggested that the life of a CEO was not a happy life, or not what a life should be. She also used the word “has to” in her ending question of “How can he be happy when he has to live like that?” The word “has to” reflected that the life of a CEO is under obligation of living life as expected within the regulated conditions of less freedom for their personal life.

This step explained how the negative or positive characteristics relating to success or failure were used to deal with the discourses of power. I discussed the sociocultural practice found in the language of teacher’s interviews to understand how the semiotic patterns of sign and symbols of success relate to the representation of power in the situation, the institution, the community, and the society. These characteristics leading to success found in language-in-use directly related to the discourse of religion constructing the belief of right livelihood, which defines one’s health and time and relationship with family as a true meaning of success. These concepts were compared with her past concept of success relating to the concept of capitalism creating the supports of investment, competition, and wealth. Yonpak’s past concept of wealth, fame, and top job status have been resisted by influences of religion.

In Chapter 4, all emergent themes and patterns coming up along the data analysis are scrutinized and categorized into dominant discourses of schooling, language, culture, and religion as a reflection of reality. Chapter 5 addresses motives of power from teachers' perception of success. Chapter 6 examines power strategies in the forms of mechanism of power, discipline, and normalization. These data themes and patterns with logical evidence were synchronized under the theoretical frame and research questions.

### **3.3 Researcher's position**

Even though all data processing was well-defined with the different data sources, methods, and the supporting theory, the human researcher as a primary tool of qualitative research can impact the quality of data (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). My position in TOW mostly benefited this study in some ways and at the same time caused some challenges for the data collection.

Before I decided to study this school context in the TOW, I regarded myself as a full participant in the TOW who frequently came to the temple. I went to the TOW as a practicing Buddhist to develop my mind by attending meditation retreat, weekly dharma talk, or Buddhist special days. When I was sad, I always went to the temple to listen to a dharma talk and get blessed from monks—my strategies to lift my mind up. With the mind connection to the TOW, I always volunteered in various kinds of tasks in the TOW, mostly non-teaching work. Though I did not act in a major role on the TOW working board, monks asked me to help arrange many Buddhist events such as annual ordination, annual alms-rounds, exhibiting at the temple booth in a street fair in a nearby city, and other tasks. I also worked as a laborer to develop the temple landscape as requests were sent in the community. This is a part of my personal connection to the

temple. Participating in many kinds of activities in the TOW, I created strong friendships with monks, other Thais, and some American visitors in the TOW.

In the Thai program in the TOW, I volunteered facilitating in all extracurricular activities as a camera operator and facilitator for school events. I was asked to be a document collector for the school curriculum development process in 2012. This was before the school adopted the textbook by Sali Sillapasatham. Also, I was asked to take care of school pictures and video records of all school activities. I edited the movies for the school as requested. I also assisted co-teaching for a few weeks when teachers in charge needed to be away. The experiences working temporarily as a teaching helper provided me some experiences that teachers in the TOW have faced. This was crucial experience in a qualitative research. My “insider” position benefits this study because I could connect with some teachers on a deeper level as friends. My identity as a Thai Buddhist can provide me with a deeper understanding about the context of the TOW. The knowledge of Thai culture and my first language of Thai enabled me to build a strong connection with teachers in the temple, making the sense of trust and cooperation for data collection.

As a researcher, I still regarded myself as a participant-as-observer, not as a full participant in this school. I am not a current teacher, nor a parent of students in the TOW. I was introduced to Thai teachers and the community of parents as a PhD student in Education who worked as a teacher in Thailand despite teaching adult learners. Some of them assumed me to be a knowledgeable person in about education. They sometimes asked me for opinions about how to develop the school and I have brought my experiences to share with them informally about teaching. I mediated this consultant role at their requests, not as an initiator in school activities. I also informed them about my goal for the study and the commitment to support the school as

usual. I participated in many school activities as well as religious activities. I realized that teachers regarded me more as an observer than a participant after I invited them to take part in this research. One of the examples of being an outsider was that I was excluded from the LINE group of the TOW teachers and parents, a close informal online group. Using the LINE chat room was their effective way of communication to update or discuss whatever they needed to share among teachers and parents without the actual in-person presence. I was not regarded as part of the LINE group but they informed me about their communal agreement in the TOW personally.

Even though being friends can privilege me for the study, it is sometimes harder to work as a researcher. For example, it is very difficult to find some private time for interviewing. If they preferred time for interview session in the temple, there were unexpected visitors in the middle of the interview. Sometime people in the TOW wanted to join in while I was interviewing. I decided not to approve observation by uninvited participants. In each case, I paused the interview until an interruption finished. I decided to keep interviews in the most private setting because the observation of others would make participants feel uncomfortable about speaking freely. At their homes, the distraction from their family also was in consideration. Sometimes while I was embedded at the back of the classroom during the observation, I was asked to photocopy. Additionally, some teachers assumed that I knew everything about the school of TOW. There were many times that teachers I interviewed said, “You already know about this...,” or “As you already know...”

In Thai culture, monks are in a highly revered status. The interviews with monks were done with care. I was aware to avoid any offences against any Buddhist monk’s rules. For

example, in Thai etiquette it is not proper for a woman to speak to a monk alone in private without the presence of another person. With this concern, I needed to conduct a one-to-one interview under confidentiality in a public area, where people can see the monk and me from a distance. The language used with monks was respectfully appropriate. I especially tried to be clear with the questions I used and employed the clarification probes to avoid any ambiguity. The monks were very open and cooperative to share their stories and opinions.

I realized my position of holding the dual roles of a researcher and a school participant, as well as the possibility of biases and misunderstanding of the meaning. To deal with this, I used the narrative field notes techniques from Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 118-122) in every stage of data collection and data analysis to supplement interviews, observations, and document analysis. This field notes included both “descriptive field notes” and “reflective field notes.” I did this by separating descriptive notes from the reflective notes on the same paper. For example, on my field note paper, I reserved the left margin for recording my observation experiences or the transcripts of interview. I recorded what was going on in the classroom or in the setting: conversation, activities, pedagogy, etc. I also included myself as an object in that setting. I reserved the right margin of the paper for reflectivity or what Glaser and Strauss call the “think piece” (1967 cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 122). I recorded the reflective ideas, observational themes, questions and point of clarification, comments, and interpretation, occurring from the descriptive recoding during the data gathering and analysis. This field note technique could help me separate my observation experiences from my personal thoughts. This could help me monitor myself with questions such as: “Who am I?”, “How do I think like this?” and “Where does this idea come from?” This helped me understand my effect as a participant researcher in the study, and increased awareness of my own biases in the study.

### 3.4 Data validity considerations

All procedures in the data collection were established with the consideration of promoting validity and reliability. Multiple methods and multiple sources of data in different time frame were strategically triangulated. Thick description or “highly descriptive-detailed presentation of the setting and findings” were conducted to increase the research’s “transferability” (Merriam, 2009, p. 227).

My position as a TOW member could undeniably influence the data quality and the way of interpreting the meaning. The style of field notes described above provided me the “reflectivity” to see my role of the “human as an instrument” in order to enhance the validity of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183 cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 217). At the same time, I sought out feedback through a peer-reviewing process with an analytical fresh mind. Additionally, a participant check with some further questions about the responses in the interviews could help with cross-checking the meaning in the participants’ dialogues. As Merriam (2009, p. 229 and Maxwell, 2005, p. 111 cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 217) stated, member-checking technique can promote validity as it can “identify the researchers’ biases and misunderstanding of the meaning.”

After teachers consented to be a part of the study, the privacy and protection from any harm as a research code of ethics were discussed before the commencement of the study. Some teachers’ general profile information—age, educational background, current occupation, and teaching experiences—were collected to classify the socioeconomic status of the collection.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Discourses of power: Language, culture, spirituality, and community school**

As mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, in this study I employed the concept of “identity in discourse,” which mainly focused on understanding one’s self-positioning towards the rest of the world (Gee, 2004) as a reflection of power relations. According to Gustafson et al. (2004), discourses reflect how a person acquired a sense of his or her own identity. In case of the identity-in-discourse of Thai teachers in the Temple of Wisdom (TOW), teachers engaged in a complicated process of identity negotiation. They confronted their own confusion in negotiating their identity to balance their conflict of two worlds: the world as an immigrant in the United States, and the world of Thai culture which they maintain within a school setting by enabling strong connections to Thai culture and Buddhist values. I scrutinized the formation of Discourses (big D) from the meeting point of two cultures where these teachers mediated and situated themselves. The stories and experiences of teachers were explored to understand how their identity has been constructed in this discourse.

I focused my investigation on how the teachers interacted with different people in different situations. As in the statement of Hall (1996, p. 4), “identities are constructed within, not outside, discourses.” Therefore, understanding teachers’ negotiation of their identity in the USA, or the way they connect themselves to the world they live in, can display the actual representation of language and power. This understanding can illustrate the meaning representation relating to social norms, values, beliefs, and institutions in this community. All in all, four primary Discourses were observed in this school context: Discourse of schooling,

Discourse of language, Discourse of culture, and Discourse of religion. Here are the details of how those discourses influenced teachers' lives and vice versa.

#### **4.1 Discourse of schooling: Thai community language school as a means of resistance to US dominant normalization**

In the United States, the public education system has commonly been regarded as a more suitable way of educating children than home schooling. Even though there are advantages for home schooling in the United States, the traditional mainstream schools offer more opportunities for the students to socialize with other children and understand positive and negative experiences from the school experience. In other words, it has become a norm, or typical standard to send children to study in public education. Through strategic instruction in English, mainstream education eliminates all home languages, replacing them with the use of only English. Within the mainstream institution, children are acculturated and Americanized into the mainstream US system. Home languages and cultures of minorities have been displaced by English and American culture. To see through Foucault's lenses, the influence of public education in the United States works as a way of "freezing particular relations of power" (Farrell, 2007). The mainstream schools are able to maintain dominant power in the discourse of education. They encourage English use to reinforce this power. This encouragement can be counted as a control technique to make children from different cultures be "American" through normalization, a way to make power-knowledge a society norm.

Under the dominant norm of public schooling, home schooling using Thai language has become swallowed up and decreased in the power needed to sustain children's home language and culture. Some Thai parents expressed their worry about the loss of their children's Thai-

being. The excerpt of an interview in a video presentation (pg. 1 chapter 1) showed that one set of parents sent their children to study in the TOW because their daughter discontinued speaking Thai at home. This concerned the parents, who worried that Americanization prevents their children from using Thai. They feared that losing the ability of using Thai language would detach their daughter from her family members, such as her grandparents in Thailand. For this reason, they decided to send their children to study in this Thai language program in the TOW.

This Thai language program is a good example of power of resistance under the dominant American-based discourse. This informal school is regarded as an institution to train students in Thai language and culture as well as a center to familiarize them with Thai Buddhism, which most Thai people choose to hold as their spiritual belief. There are many attempts by teachers in the school to make this program be like a conventional school. First, all Thai people call this Thai language classroom by the title of RONG RIEN (meaning “school” in Thai) followed by the name of the temple. Thai people call all teachers in the TOW by the title of “Kru”—meaning “teacher”—followed by their name, and call the monks by the title “Pra Ajarn” (meaning “monk and teacher”) to show respect for their roles. Also, the school is organized in a similar way to mainstream schools in the United States. There is a school board similar to that of a mainstream school. Currently, sixteen staff members in three groups work together to make the school function. The office staff consists of: one school principal responsible for all work relating to school instruction curriculum and evaluation; one school director taking care of all extracurricular activities and the center of connection to other communities; a treasurer and a treasurer assistant managing funding; a PR and office support coordinator communicating with school and people in the public; a parent/teacher liaison communicating between parents and teachers; a school supply manager procuring tools and equipment; and a special education

coordinator. The teaching staff consists of six main teachers, four assistant teachers co-teaching with the main teachers, and one manners teacher in charge of disciplining children and serving as the master of ceremonies for activities. The monk staff consists of four monk teachers, who take care of meditation sessions. Through a volunteer sign-up system, there are also some activities to engage parents to get involved in the development of the school and temple.

Most volunteer teachers are not professional language instructors. Only a few have teaching experience. All current volunteer teachers are all mothers of children they sent to study in the school. With concern about this, the school director arranged a three-day workshop for teaching training. The school invited a prominent guest speaker from Thailand who has set up a successful curriculum of Thai language class for bilingual students in Europe, the author of textbooks and teaching materials for this curriculum. This workshop was open to all Thai people interested in teaching Thai language for school or for homeschooling. The Thai embassy and the Thai association of the state in which the school is located sponsored the workshop, covering its costs. After this workshop, the TOW school recruited more volunteers for teaching.

However, teachers in TOW faced some challenges to resolve. Students in Thai language class are bilingual Thai-American students. They master English and rarely use Thai in the TOW. They speak English nearly all the time in the school. As an observer, I noticed that students used English to communicate with other kids, with their parents, and with their Thai teachers. Even though Thai people in the temple speak Thai to them, they are likely to keep silent or speak English in response. The typical conversations between teachers and the students consist of the Thai teacher speaking nearly 100% Thai—using English only when students did

not really understand—and students using English all the time when communicating. Here is an example:

Student: I need a paper.

Anotai : MAI MEE KRADAD ROR? (ไม่มีกระดาษหรือ Translated: You don't have paper?)

Student: (Nodding)

Anotai: MAA LEAN MAI MEE KRADAD

(มาเรียนไม่มีกระดาษหรือ Translated: You come to study at school without any paper.)

(Field note, May 11, 2014, 11:12 a.m.)

A student asked a teacher in English to get a piece of paper. The Thai teacher repeated this sentence in Thai with the questioning tone. Student nodded implying yes as the response. The teacher gave him a piece of paper with a comment implying that it is actually students' duty to bring stationery for study.

Another example of a conversation between students and a teacher also reflected typical conversations of this type in a TOW classroom:

Anotai: TAM MAI RAW TONG WEIN TIEN LA LOOK?

(ทำไมเราต้องเวียนเทียนละลูก translated as: Why do we need to wein tien, kids?)

A Student: It's Mother's Day.

Anotai: WEIN TIEN ROB MAE RUE LOOK? [Laughing]

(เวียนเทียนรอบแม่หรือลูก translated as: Will you wein tien around your mom?)

(Field note, May 11, 2014 Time 11:12 am)

In this situation, Anotai asked a whole class if students know the purpose of WEIN TIEN (WEIN= walking around; TIEN= candle(s)), or walking with lighted candles in hand around a

temple or stupa to show high respect, normally to commemorate the Lord Buddha. One of the students replied in English that, “It is Mother Day” which was coincidentally on the same day as Visakha-bucha Day, a religious day to commemorate three important incidents in the life of the Lord Buddha: birth, enlightenment, and passing away. With this child’s response, the teacher replied back in Thai in a humorous way implying that to WEIN TIEN around one’s mother is funny and unusual.

The Thai language classroom in TOW can be counted as a new type of created power competing with the dominant power of US education. (See more discussion in 6.4) Teachers use Thai all the time to the students. They introduce the topic of Thai culture for students to learn. Teachers arrange extracurricular activities such as Loy Kratong, Songkran, and other cultural festivals, to make students familiarized with Thai culture. The school of TOW responds to the hope of Thai families who feel worried that their children will lose Thai identity.

However, TOW is less effective at influencing students to learn, when comparing it to mainstream schooling. All teachers agreed that the program in the TOW is not so prioritized as the mainstream school and this has become a challenge for teachers to face. Students feel like they are forced to study Thai. In contrast, they accept that studying subjects in a mainstream classroom is required and feel doing so is right. Here is an example of students showing less motivation to learn Thai, compared to other languages they study in mainstream classroom. Yonpak shared her story in the following excerpt:

I do not have knowledge of psychology. It is hard for me because of the relationship between teacher and students in this program. I am not a career teacher. Students come to school because they are forced to come. Sometimes I feel heart-broken. For example, they

study Spanish or Japanese in their mainstream classroom. They talk about their Spanish in my classroom. They have Spanish vocabulary lists to recite in my class and practice their Japanese in my class. Then I tried creating Thai word lists for them to recite. They dumped the word lists after class. [laughing]

(Interview, June 19, 2014)

Yonpak shared her insecure and confused feelings about teaching in the Thai language class. She described the students' enthusiasm for practicing Spanish or Japanese in her Thai language class. She actually accused herself of inability to be a professional teacher and engage students to be interested in her lesson.

Likewise, Anotai expressed her challenge in teaching Thai language class. She used the word “*แข่ง* or trying to compete with” the mainstream school, which implied her sense of contestation between TOW and mainstream. She addressed her emotional difficulty when dealing with students who have less motivation to learn Thai language in comparison to the learning the subjects in their mainstream classes. She showed her disappointment and the desire to resign from teaching in the TOW, as in the following excerpt:

When I assigned them homework, they refused to do it with the reason that they have loads of work from their mainstream school. I am not teaching in the mainstream school. It is like I have to compete with the formal school system. Students are opposed to doing my homework with this reason. What can I do? I just told them, “I do not want to force you either.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Yonpak also faced challenges training students in having manners and showing respect to teachers. Yonpak expressed her concerns about training students to learn about good manners. However, she realized that an informal school like the TOW has less authority than mainstream school. She then tried to think of the TOW school as more like a big family than a formal school. Here is what Yonpak stated:

I want my students to adjust and improve their manners and sense of respect. They came to class without greeting me. It is not a formal school and it is hard to set up a class leader to say ‘CLASS ATTENTION’ as the leader might miss the class for whatever reasons. I then greeted them first with ‘SAWADDEE KA’ to make students reply with ‘SAWADDEE’ in return. I accepted that I want TOW to have this system but it is hard as it is not a formal school. Right now, I just think that going to school for them is like coming to meet a big Thai family, to meet an aunt, uncle, and so on. Thinking like this meets my expectation.<sup>2</sup>

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

Yonpak expected to get respect from her students; she wanted to see students greet the teacher first. However, she realized the limitation of the TOW in training them in this pattern. Her statement reflected that she lowered her expectations towards the TOW, seeing it not as a formal school but as a place to provide students with opportunities to socialize like a big family in a Thai community.

The teachers’ expressions about their role as Thai language teachers in the TOW were challenged in the discourse of schooling. This reflection showed how the dominant society

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<sup>2</sup> A note about the transcription: All Thai words (e.g. SAWADDEE KA) and the original, non-translated words (e.g. CLASS ATTENTION) used during the interviews and observations in this study are written in all uppercase.

influences bilingual children in the United States with the use of mainstream education. Also, it reflected the attempt of the Thai program in the TOW to compete with the mainstream school. In the next section, I discuss the discourse of language in the TOW, which influenced the construction of teacher identity to see how power and knowledge played out in the TOW.

#### **4.2 Discourse of language**

Before discussing how teacher identity was constructed in the discourse of language, I would like to present the general background of Thai language in Thailand and in the United States. In the United States, the latest US census (Thailand-USA Information Portal and Hub, 2014) showed that there are approximately 200,000 Thai Americans, or about .05 % of the entire US population. Among K-12 students who speak languages other than English, students of Thai language and Laotians are counted as 0.6% (2000 US census cited in Wiley, 2005, p. 599). With a small number of Thai users, the speakers of Thai are regarded as a tiny group of a minority language that is considered an insignificant language in the multilingual society in the United States.

Conversely, the status of Thai language in Thailand is central as the official language. Thai language is considered as a unique and well-treasured language because of its long-honored tradition. Some people connect the Thai language as the unique language of the only country in the Southeast Asia that was never colonized. However, the expansion of English in the economic world has impacted educational policy in Thailand. The Thai government has launched many campaigns to develop Thai people's English proficiency as a scheme for national development. English has been a mandatory subject for K-16. English proficiency has been valued as a determinant for better prospective jobs in the competitive business world. The confrontation

between the Thai national language of dignity and the English language of opportunity has impacted learners of English in Thailand in many ways. There are many examples of evidence of learners' conflicts related to attitudes about learning English. Some common attitudes of Thai learners towards speaking English have been addressed, such as "speaking English is show off." or "English is not national language" (Pimm, 2014). There was also response by English teachers to encourage Thai students of English to fight back against the negative attitude of speaking English. For example, Adam Bradshaw, a famous teacher of English in Thailand, addressed in his talk show that "Speaking your second language in a clear accent isn't something that should be made fun of. It is okay. It should be done" (Bradshaw, 2013).

As an English learner in Thailand for over 20 years, I experienced my own difficult feelings about using English in a Thai environment. In my elementary school, I was teased among Thai friends when I tried to articulate my English pronunciation. This made me feel that speaking English in the unnatural environment in Thailand is a kind of attention seeking. I feel ashamed to use English to other Thais. With this influence, I never use English to other Thais in normal conversation except for when there are speakers of other languages in the conversation. The attitude of using Thai language to other Thais tends also to impact teachers in the US context where English is authorized. All Thai teachers, either monks or seculars, used only Thai with other Thai people in the temple. They felt like they should use Thai to other Thais as speaking English to other Thais can cause a sense of remote relationship. Wachiratham, a Thai monk residing in TOW, tried to improve his English by attending English class outside the temple because he feels that living in the temple did not provide him much opportunity to

develop his English proficiency. He shared his story of his difficulty improving his English as follows:

My main problem of using English is that I am in a Thai environment where people use only Thai language as a main way of communication. I use English only in the English classroom I attended. But if I accompany Saratham (one Thai monk in the TOW), we sneakily used Thai in class sometimes.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

Thai is a preferred language to use with other Thais in the temple. Even though Wachiratham realized the importance of developing his English, he chose to use Thai with his Thai friend Saratham in his English classroom. Using English seemed unnatural to him for communicating with his Thai classmate. Wachiratham's decision to use Thai with Saratham in English class showed that he posited his linguistic identity in the fixed boundary of Thai language discourse. Still, he realized it put him in a more difficult situation to develop his English.

Under the well-preserved language of Thai people in the Thai language school in the United States, English has unnoticeably dominated their lives. I will discuss this strong structure of English domination in this Thai community. English legitimacy, which misleads the representational meaning in discourse of language, can be seen through people's common beliefs that English is a more important language than Thai. The misconception of representation appears in teachers' language decisions in interacting with people, as well as the beliefs in their ideology and pedagogy. Here are some representations of privileging English over Thai in discourse of language in the TOW.

#### **4.2.1 English is used as a normal means of communication in the US context.**

Even though teachers used only Thai in communication with other Thais, English is their general means of communication with speakers of other languages than Thai. In the situation of communicating with a mix of Thai and speakers of other languages, the teachers use English. It was addressed as a part of socializing themselves into US society. Anotai shared her story about the use of Thai and English in different situations:

Interviewer: HAVE YOU EVER USED ENGLISH WITH OTHER THAIS?

Anotai: No, not at all. Umm, maybe very little, only some transliterated words (คำทับศัพท์ e.g. using the word “พาสปอร์ต—passport” instead of หนังสือเดินทาง-NANG-SU-DERN-TANG . But if there are other FARANG (= foreigners or speakers of other languages than Thai), I will use only English. For example, if I go to a party hosted by my Thai friend’s colleague who does not speak Thai, I will speak only English at that party. It is neither the right time nor the right place for Thai language. It is a kind of bad manners to use Thai at the party. They might think I was gossiping about them.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Anotai used English to uphold conventional politeness to people in the United States. English was used as a standard means of communication. It was also a way to avoid dissonance in the conversational group, as she mentioned that speaking Thai can probably make speakers of languages other than Thai view her as a secret agent in the conversation.

#### **4.2.2 English is not my language.**

All Thai teachers shared their stories of language barriers that caused uncomfortable feelings when they first settled down in the United States. They faced the difficulty of speaking English to express everything they wanted to communicate. Imjai discussed her challenge of adjustment to English, saying that, “My challenge was my inability to use English, and maybe Thai-American cultural differences. It happened to me when I used English. I meant to say something but they understand other things from what I said.” Imjai’s problem is a typical problem for all Thai teachers in the TOW.

Interestingly, all six Thai teachers expressed their communication problems and said the problems were due to the reason that “English is not my (our) language.” This expression reflected a sense of non-ownership of English. According to Kachru and Nelson (1996, p. 79), the nature of “labeling English as someone’s first language” is the attitudinal problem because it created the sense of linguistic power either superiority or inferiority. In the same way, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (1999, p. 417) discussed that the concept’s construction of language ownership leads to the individual problems towards one’s self esteem. Despite the fact that teachers could communicate in English, their English competency did not create a sense of English ownership. Next, I will discuss how English legitimacy excludes Thai language as unintelligible and privilege English as legitimate.

#### **4.2.3 English Legitimacy: Acceptance of English as the most acknowledged language.**

All Thai teachers showed maintenance of Thai language identity by speaking Thai with other Thais and with their bilingual children. However, their effort of maintaining Thai as a way to resist English domination was, in reality, swallowed by “legitimacy” of English, or the acceptance of English as the most acknowledged standard (Motha, 2006, p. 78; Pavlenko, 2003,

p. 329). English legitimacy is a power of stratification by imposing the “miscognition” through meaning as legitimacy. This miscognition is imposed in the attitudinal and pedagogical position in the form of “symbolic violence”, which influences people’s consciousness and recognition to legitimize social meaning of the world over others (Bourdieu, 1984 cited in Lin, 1999, p. 394). I will present as evidence examples in which English legitimacy influences lives in the TOW.

These examples fit into four themes as follows:

#### ***4.2.3.1 Why should I use bad examples of English?***

Teachers’ decision to use Thai with their students and their children is not only to create a situation in which they are speaking Thai to the students. Teachers also have a hidden agenda to avoid the influence of “*bad*” English on their bilingual kids. Here is how Anotai shared her opinion:

.... Another reason I use Thai with my son is because I was not born here. I may not use correct English. My sons may absorb my wrong pronunciation. Why should I use bad examples of English? Let him get the right example from outside (the home). My Thai is clear but my English is not. Who knows, one day my son might correct my pronunciation when I cannot speak correctly. If I insisted on speaking English the way I do, he would copy my pronunciation. No, I do not want this to happen.” [laugh]

(Interview, July 17, 2014)

Anotai clearly rejected herself as a model of an English speaker. She used negative words such as “wrong pronunciation” and “bad example of English” to describe her non-native English competency, and noble words such as “right examples” to describe English from other dominant Americans. Panward also showed the same kind of perception of using Thai instead of English to

bilingual children. Panward believed that her children can speak English well as a part of acculturation at school and she judged her accent as “bad.” Therefore, Panward decided not to use English with her children, as she felt her English might make her children confused. Here is what Panward said:

I am not at all worried that they cannot speak English. They can definitely speak English because they go to school. Another reason is that my accent is bad. If I insisted on speaking English, my children would be confused with my accent.

(Interview, April 27, 2014)

The decisions of Anotai and Panward to use Thai with their children clearly reflected the preconceived notion of prejudice in their practice. This misleading notion supports social discrimination of language by legitimizing native speakers over non-native speakers. Many related terms are made to define this misconception such as “native English fallacy” (Phillipson, 1992 cited in Canagarajah, 1999, p. 85), “native-speaker model” (Cook, 1999, p. 188; Cummins & Davison, 2007), “native-speaker as expert’ syndrome” (Richard, 2008, p. 168). This misconception contributes to the “linguistic insecurity” of non-native speakers, which influences the construct of their linguistic identity as a deficient English user (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 85). Both Anotai and Panward regarded themselves as inferiors in English and tried not to use English with their kids. Contrarily, they regarded themselves as superior in Thai. With this concern, both Anotai and Panward, who used English to other Americans in their conventional life, chose to communicate with their children in Thai. These examples showed the influence of English dominant representation in producing the misconception that a native speaker’s English is an ideal model of English. However, these teachers applied this fallacy as a tool to juggle their

influences of Thai over their bilingual children with the hope to maintain their Thai identity, which will be discussed in the next theme.

***4.2.3.2 Thai teachers/parents insisted on speaking Thai; kids responded in English.***

The maintenance of Thai language was uneasy in the context where English dominance prevails through every single life. Even though Thai teachers in the TOW used Thai with their students and their children, these bilingual kids always responded in English. Panward discussed the children's responding in English:

Panward: I speak only Thai, my husband speaks only Thai too, but my children always reply in English.

Interviewer: HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOUR KIDS REPLY TO YOU IN ENGLISH?

Panward: I don't know how I feel. Actually I want them to reply in Thai. But sometimes they cannot think of the words to reply. When we wanted them to reply in Thai, it was like they responded, "NEVER MIND, (Panward used this word in English) I won't speak with you." They choose not to speak with us if they are forced to speak Thai. Eventually, I let them speak their convenient language. At least I speak Thai and they understand. For me, it is okay if they don't reply in Thai.

(Interview, June 1, 2014)

Panward's resigning herself to her children's use of English showed her negotiation to balance the power struggles as a parent with her children in order to maintain the cooperative relationship between mother and children. Panward realized that her children would reject speaking with her—

–and that it could lead to a problematic relationship in her family if she forced her children to speak Thai. Panward’s subsequent decision to ignore her children’s choice of responding in English was actually a parental technique to avoid a power struggle with her children. Still, the insistence on using Thai helped her maintain her linguistic identity and position herself as an active agent of Thai language use in the family.

Another example of the battle of English legitimacy and the attempts to maintain Thai is in the following excerpt I observed in a conversation between Panward and her family. In this situation, Panward, her husband “Prem,” her son “Palm,” and her daughter “Pear” were in a van going to an event outside the TOW. I carpooled in their car ride and informally observed her interaction with her family. The conversation was recorded in my field note as follows:

Panward: DEW POR LEW SAI TRONG FAIDAENG LAEW JA HEN ‘COMMUNITY CENTER’ (a transliterated word in Thai and pronounced in Thai accent) YOO TANG SAI (เดี๋ยวพ่อเลี้ยวซ้ายตรงไฟแดงแล้วจะเห็นไฟ community center อยู่ทางซ้าย)

[English Translation: Dad, turn left at the traffic light and we will see the community center on the right-hand side.]

Palm: Mom, it is actually pronounced “community center.”

Panward: COMMUNITY CENTER [resaying the word in English intonation]

Palm: COMMUNITY CENTER

Prem : MAE POOD ANGKRIT MAI TOOK MAI HEN JA PEN RAI LAEW PALM  
POOD PASATHAI DAI YANG MAE MAI LAA KRAB

(แม่พูดอังกฤษไม่ถูกไม่เห็นจะเป็นไร แล้วปาล์มพูดภาษาไทยได้อย่างแม่ได้ไหมทีละครับ)

[English translation: Nothing is wrong with Mom’s way of speaking English. Can Palm speak Thai like Mom?]

(Field note, May 10, 2014)

Note that Panward and her husband used only Thai in the conversation. It is so normal for native Thai speakers to pronounce the transliterated words in Thai style with no word stress, a different way from English intonation. Palm's immediate correction of Panward's Thai-style pronunciation of the word "community center" into English pronunciation brought the retort of Prem, Panward's husband. Prem picked a battle with Palm by addressing the concept of superiority of native-speaking proficiency of Thai, to go against his son's English status. Palm stopped the battle with the acceptance of Panward's superiority of Thai over Palm. However, the response from Prem still unavoidably accepted the standard way of English pronunciation and ignored the Thai way of pronouncing English-Thai transliterated words. The conversation of Panward and her family legitimated Standard English and emphasized the superiority of the competency of native Thai speakers over non-native Thai speakers.

***4.2.3.3 Policy of Thai-only in the TOW is identical to TESL/TEFL by native English teachers.***

TOW campaigned parents to use only Thai with their children. This language policy was indicated in the school brochure (see 5.1 for detail of this policy). Also, all Thai teachers in the TOW strictly used Thai language with their students. English was used only in explanation when students did not really understand the instruction. Still, the recognition of Standard English was examined, even in the context of a Thai-only policy. Panward, the school principal, shared her response to a dispute in a teacher-parent meeting about the desirable pedagogy of language teaching as follows:

.... We do not teach Thai by making students memorize vocabulary, but we try to help them to be able to use Thai in their daily life. Speaking Thai-only in the TOW is therefore

a better way than speaking English in the TOW. We don't focus our teaching on grammar-translation of Thai into English. To make you see why using only Thai is better for the instruction, let's think about studying English taught by native English teachers. This way is better and more beneficial than studying English by Thai teachers who teach English based on grammar, not the real communication of English.

(Interview, November 3, 2014 )

Panward's judgment that teaching English by native English speakers was "better and more beneficial" than teaching English by a Thai teacher reflects the "native English fallacy," or the perception that the ideal English teacher is a native English teacher (Phillipson, 1992 cited in Canagarajah, 1999, p. 77-81). The nativeness model of English was used as a model of a pedagogical policy for teaching Thai in TOW. Panward's illustration constructed the illusion of "native English fallacy" as a norm in language teaching. According to Canagarajah (1999) and Phillipson (2008), the native speaker fallacy of English has been manipulated to privilege native English speakers in the economy, in ideology, and in politics. In this situation, Panward employed the conception of native English fallacy in order to authorize Thai teachers in the program as eligible teachers in resistance to dominant English in the United States. Panward's response seemed compelling in the teachers-parents meeting. This reflected that the concept of native English fallacy has been inscribed as an ideal way to teach language.

#### ***4.2.3.4 Conforming to dominant English: My son corrected my English accent.***

Imjai, who speaks English to her son, was different from other teachers. She held very strictly to the policy of Thai-only speaking with her students in the TOW. Actually, she was the one who introduced the Thai-only policy into the TOW. However, she clearly expressed her

preference of using English with her bilingual son, who refused to speak Thai with her. She stated that speaking English helps her convey her real intentions, emotions, and feelings to her son. However, her son's reaction to her English subsequently fixed her in her linguistic identity of native Thai/non-native English speaker. Here is how Imjai described her decision to use English with her son:

Interviewer: Which language do you speak more with your son?

Imjai: I use English more often than Thai. When I want to reprimand him, I will definitely use English, as he will understand me more than using Thai. My words will touch his heart and I want him to get my messages. For example, when I am upset or angry.

Interviewer: Do you feel shy when speaking English with him?

Imjai: No. We are mother and son. Anyway I have a problem these days: that he tried to correct my English accent when I could not speak English correctly.

Interviewer: How did you deal with it when he tried to correct your English?

Imjai: I accepted that my son's correction of my pronunciation sometimes made me angry but I cannot argue anything or do anything about his corrections. When I gained my composure, I tried to follow his suggestion by self-correcting my pronunciation. I think he can teach me and he has a good intention to improve my accent. It is just not the right time to correct me—when I am reprimanding him—and he always does. [laugh]

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

Imjai blamed her English accent, seeing it her pronunciation as incorrect, and tried to correct herself at her son's suggestion. Imjai's son challenged Imjai's authority by the use of native English fallacy. He rebelled against Imjai's reprimands by judging her non-native English accent as something negative that needed to be corrected. His challenges made Imjai upset but she tried to accept this correction as a positive intention. In this situation, her son resisted Imjai's control by using the concept of native English fallacy as a strategy to challenge his mother.

In each of these examples, English dominance permeated these teachers' lives and inscribed their linguistic identity as a non-native English speaker, without ownership of English. English legitimacy was used as a strategic means of power exertion.

#### **4.2.4 Hierarchy of Language: English, other foreign languages, Thai.**

In the discourse of language controlled by society, there is evidence of language hierarchy. Different languages are hierarchized like commercialized products by their values. These values of languages are categorized by their significance for receiving better opportunities in the economic world. It is interesting to note that all secular teachers valued English over Thai; whereas all monks showed no differences between both languages. Anotai expressed what she saw as the advantages of the children speaking English, despite their not speaking Thai:

These kids will benefit from speaking English even though they cannot speak Thai at all. They still have good opportunities in Thailand even they don't speak Thai. Most Thais praised them. It is like "WOW" you are a Thai kid from the United States. Wow, your English is very good. It does not matter that your Thai is good or not. That is why the international schools in Thailand are very popular.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

From Anotai's supposition, bilingual students would get good opportunities and be admired by Thai people because they are able to speak English like an American, even though they could not speak Thai at all. She supported the idea that English brings opportunity, with her observation that parents in Thailand invest a lot of money to send their children to study in an international school in order to provide best opportunities for their kids. Therefore, Anotai's opinion reflected that English is the language of opportunities and of high regard. Another example by Imjai showed her opinion about the status of different languages. She sincerely compared the status of English, Thai heritage language, and foreign languages in the following discussion.

Interviewer: Do you want your son to learn other languages than Thai and English?

Imjai: Yes, actually he is learning French. I sent him to study French because I believe French will directly bring him good opportunity in the future. But learning Thai is to connect with Thai community and to maintain the relationship of mother and child.

Interviewer: Knowing Thai and English, which one is better?

Imjai: English, because our world is the world of English.

Interviewer: How do you think about a Thai like us knowing English—(a short insertion by Imjai: BROKEN ENGLISH)—in comparison to bilingual students who were born and raised in the USA?

Imjai: My child will get better opportunities than me. We know English but not as well as they do. They get more benefit from their native English. For example, if you don't come to study here, or if I do not marry and move to the United States, we won't use English as often. I then say we are luckier than people in Thailand who don't have much opportunities to use English like us.. If we go back to Thailand, we are likely to get better opportunities to work for better-paying jobs in a

foreign company.

Interviewer: You mean English is a language of power?

Imjai: You cannot compare like that. If you compare English with Chinese or French or Spanish, you are comparing apples with apples. But you are comparing an apple with something nobody knows. It is not even in the species category of fruits.

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

Bilingual students, in this argument, should learn Thai because it is a heritage language passed down from their family, or a language of Thai community. Imjai underscored that native English is better than non-native English, as she used the word “broken English” to define English of Thai people like her and the researcher. This clearly showed the perception of non-native English proficiency in the inferior status comparing to native English proficiency in the “superior” status.

When the interviewer inserted the term “language of power” into the conversation, Imjai refused to compare English with Thai because they are not even close in their status to be reasonably compared. She compared other foreign languages such as Chinese, French, and Spanish as having comparable status with English by using a simile of “apples with apples” in the same species. She described the status of Thai language as “something nobody knows,” whereas three foreign languages are, to her, comparable in status with English. Even though Imjai did not mention why English, Chinese, French, and Spanish were more powerful than Thai, these languages benefit the users with better economic opportunities as people vastly use these languages in the world. Thai as a minority language is significant as a part of students’ connection to their parents’ community but valued in a status of low economic prestige.

Language varieties or Thai dialects were also judged as less competent than the central or standard Thai. Imjai expressed her self-recognition of her Southern Thai dialect as her problem in teaching Thai in TOW:

Interviewer: Do you have any challenge from students?

Imjai: They know that their Thai is worse than their teachers. They never questioned my Thai but they questioned about other topics and not the Thai language. But I have a problem myself in pronouncing some Thai sounds. I know it was my mistake. I said sorry to them when this happened. Like the word *อ่าว* /W-OAW/, I pronounce as *ฮ่าว* /H-OAW/ I actually tried to practice this sound on the night before the class. When I taught this, I could not pronounce it. It is my Southern Thai accent (using /h/ instead of /w/ sound). I know it was my mistake. The students did not know but I said sorry to them for my mistake.

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

Imjai, who was born and raised in Southern Thailand, considered her dialect language to be a problem for her teaching Thai in the TOW. She judged her Southern Thai as incompetent. Likewise, Wachiratham from the southern part of Thai also regarded his dialect language as a drawback to speaking English:

English is not my language. Even in Thai language, I am not fully fluent. First, I don't know vocabulary. Second, the pronunciation, especially because I am from Southern Thailand. The way I speak the standard Thai is not clear yet. Then, it is not surprising that

I cannot speak English in clear pronunciation. It is harder to speak clearly for a Southern Thai like me. People do not understand what I speak. It is the problem I need to solve.

(Interview, March 20, 2013)

Wachiratham perceived his Southern Thai language as an impediment to speaking English clearly. He connected his dialect as an inferior for learning a different language. His self-perception reflected his perception of language value; that Thai dialects are less valuable than standard Thai language.

It is evident that teaching Thai heritage language in the TOW needs more sociocultural aspects in their instruction. According to Wiley (2005), regional language varieties are a part of community language but they are excluded from the “standardized language of literacy” (p. 597-598). This is the result of regarding “high-status variety” based on education rather than language variety. In case of Thailand, the prescription of Central or Standard Thai variety as the national and official language for the use in education and government promotion has made the Central Standard Thai become a language of “educated middle and upper classes” (Simpson, 2007, p. 400).

In sum, language is used as a powerful tool to compete with others in the world of opportunities. English and other foreign languages like Chinese, French, and Spanish are preserved as languages of power. However, Thai language connects bilingual children to their Thai community and family. Also, using a Thai dialect language is regarded as a drawback for education, and a dialect is considered a less competent language than the standard Thai in the instruction at the TOW. In 4.3, I will discuss how these diasporic teachers constructed their cultural identity by the discourse of culture.

### **4.3 Discourse of culture**

To understand the discourse of culture, I focused on exploring how teachers prioritized values in the process of judging things or people, or in classifying them into groups. I specifically explored how teachers defined, selected, included, or excluded themselves as members of groups in their relations. In these circumstances, I spotlighted the meeting point of the identity of diasporic teachers. I scrutinized their identity space of home Thai culture and current settlement in American culture. The way teachers construct their identity in this dual space can help in understanding the system of cultural representation, or the discourse of culture. Five themes showed how discourse of culture shaped teacher identity of the double space of Thai and American culture.

#### **4.3.1 I am proud to be Thai.**

All teachers said they were proud to be Thai and contented to share the stories of Thai culture with American people. They were always ready to talk about Thai topics such as food, places, customs, and traditions. They showed their will to represent their Thai culture through their way of life. Anotai realized the need to preserve Thai culture in the TOW. I noticed she wore Thai costumes to the TOW for special events and took charge of the arrangement of many Thai events such as Thai festivals held in the United States. Here is how Anotai described what she tried to do to preserve Thai culture:

Anotai: I feel like Thai culture needs to be preserved. If I have any chance to show my Thai culture, I will not miss the chance. I bought a Thai costume for my son and encouraged him to wear it.

Interviewer: How did he feel about this?

Anotai: I tried to encourage him that wearing Thai costume makes him look cool and good-looking. Once I encouraged him to wear Rajpratan (Thai male formal costume) in his violin performance. Anyway, he refused. [laugh]

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Despite her son's refusal to wear the costume, Anotai remained positive and continues encouraging her son to wear Thai costume whenever she can. This suggests that Anotai maintains herself as a cultural preserver of Thai.

#### **4.3.2 I favor the closeness of a Thai family relationship over American individualism.**

Most Thai teachers—either monks or secular—favored a traditional Thai family relationship. They liked a deep connection to their extended family, which includes parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, or others living together or nearby. They believed that the closeness to the elder people in a Thai-styled family can soften children's behavior with love and caring. The extended family is uncommon in the American culture. A typical American family tends to be comprised of a father, mother, and children who normally decide to leave their parents when they grow up. Imjai showed her feeling of fear and distress when imagining her son leaving home to make his own life. She said:

I love Thai family relationships more than American ones. I don't know [pause] like my son. I don't know when he grows up becoming an adult, if he will leave his parents. He will live with us until he is only 16-17. Then he will leave us. Thinking of this breaks my heart already.

(Interview, February 21, 2013)

Imjai addressed her preference of having a Thai family connection. Similarly, monk teachers who preserve their monkhood perceived that American culture is a lonely culture because many old people do not live with their children. Wachiratham commented about the American family:

I commiserate with American society as I saw many elderly people living their lives alone, and it is lonely. Comparing this to a Thai family, we have sons, daughters, grandchildren, etc. living together closely in the same family. This creates the sense of happiness and liveliness. When parents have their children around, they feel happy and this relieves all hardship they faced outside family.

(Interview, February 12, 2013)

Wachiratham showed his preference for a typical Thai extended family to a small American family. He perceived that living in a big family with parents, children and grandchildren can bring happiness and alleviate pain and difficulty, by being with other family members. When the elderly live alone, the end of life is not happy; whereas living with their children and grandchildren is blissful.

#### **4.3.3 I prefer to live in...**

As teachers negotiated their choices, they faced confusion and conflicts when discussing about where they prefer to live—Thailand or the United States. The decisions of Anotai, Imjai, Panward, and Yonpak were based on their family location; whereas Wachiratham and Thammarak prefer anywhere they can support the community as a mission of monks. Regardless of Thai family, Imjai shared her preference for living in Thailand over the United States because she could be herself in Thailand without the concern about people's diversity in the United States. She said,

If I become old, I will return to Thailand [pause] but [pause] I probably cannot [pause] because I have a child here and a husband. My decision relies on my family. I want to go to Thailand because I can live easily. Easily means I can be myself, right? I don't have to think [about myself that] this person is a foreigner. Here, it is a diverse country. I have to think how to live my life here. Still foreigners are foreigners. America is a diverse country... a mix of cultures and races. .... I have to be careful especially in this state. In the past in my job, I worked in a group of people who were Taiwanese, Malaysian, Australian, German, Russian... a diversity of language and multiple races. I need to be careful to speak in a way that I will not upset anyone. Americans are not just Americans, but people of diversity.

(Interview, January 14, 2013)

This showed the difficulty of Imjai's adjustment to the diversity of people in the United States.

#### **4.3.4 Bilingual students are American and will be American**

All Thai teachers shared the view that bilingual students are more American than Thai. It is the result of children's acculturation to American culture. Panward expressed that it is normal that bilingual students follow American norms:

Interviewer: Do you think the students are more Thai or more American?

Panward: They are American and they will be American. We cannot stop this. What I should say is... there is an American norm and it is the norm of these students where they live.

(Interview, April 27, 2014)

American culture has strongly seeped into the life of all bilingual students. Panward acknowledged that Americanization is inevitable for bilingual students. Wachiratham, who identified himself as a 100% cultural preserver, also viewed that bilingual students are like American children. He also discussed his communication problems due to cultural differences. It is hard for him to make bilingual students understand topics that require some sense of Thai culture. Wachiratham explained:

Interviewer: Do you think students in TOW are American-like?

Wachiratham: Ohhh, they are sooo American. They are just like American children. When I teach them, I cannot give examples in the same way I used with Thai students in Thailand. It did not work. For example, I taught students in TOW about taking care of their parents. I taught the way I taught normal Thai children that “You are a child; you will live with parents for good. We are in the same family, we will live together.” These students didn’t understand. They were confused and did not understand why they had to live together for good because when they are 18, they will not live with parents any longer but live by themselves. They see no need for taking care of their parents. It is senseless to explain so many things to them. It is about the SENSE. Phra-ajarn Peter (pseudonym, an American monk in the temple) can teach Dharma in English better. Actually he is not better in terms of Dharma than any other Thai monks. We are all about the same but he has a sense of culture to explain and to make local people in the US

understand.”

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

Wachiratham faced difficulty in teaching dharma for bilingual kids because the children in the United States have been oriented in American culture.

#### **4.3.5 Instilling Thai culture is like playing the game of tug-of-war**

All teachers realized the need to impart Thai culture to bilingual students. Panward expressed that she expected students to be exposed to Thai culture and to adopt good things from both Thai and American culture. She said:

Students should be exposed to Thai culture as it will help the students know other cultures. (...) I don't expect them to hold the same characteristics as a born-and-raised Thai. They will know there is not only a single norm of American culture. I prefer them to apply good things from either culture for their lives.

(Interview, April 29, 2014)

However, the process of instilling Thai culture in bilingual students required huge efforts from family with the support of community. Thammarak described the struggles of two groups—family and bilingual children in dominant American culture—by using the metaphor of “tug-of-war,” as the following excerpt:

Interviewer: What American characteristic do you want students to hold?

Thammarak: I do not want them to totally assimilate into American culture but I cannot stop them. They will become Americans inevitably. It is like the game of tug-of-war. The Thai family wants to impart their culture to the students but these kids are acculturated in American culture. Mother pulls to her side,

children pull back to theirs. Mom pulls more, children pull back. It is like a tug-of-war between parents and children. It depends on how hard parents put their efforts into this. If parents do not pull hard enough, these kids will become just normal Americans.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

According to Thammarak, it is not an easy job to impart Thai culture to these bilingual children because they are already on the side of American culture and resist taking on the Thai side. To do so requires force with a strong intention to help students take on some Thai culture.

Teachers realized the need to impart Thai culture—of which they are proud—to these bilingual students. However, this task is hard and requires effort. The next theme reflects teachers' views toward Thai and American cultures. They see positive qualities of both cultures.

#### **4.3.6 It is an ideal culture to mix the best of both worlds, of Thai and American.**

From teachers' perspective, Thai culture and American culture are markedly different. They defined and characterized Thai and American culture in a similar way. Teachers, ideally, preferred their students to uphold a mix of both cultures. Here is what Anotai discussed about the differences of both cultures:

Interviewer: Between the characteristics of Thailand and American culture, which one do you like students to get more?

Anotai: I want them to have both Thai and American culture. Actually, humility, like Thais have, can help them wherever they live. They can apply humility to anywhere, even in the United States. They will benefit from it. However, I want them to be independent like Americans. They can think independently and do by

themselves. There is no need for waiting for the guidance or command from their senior or family. About discipline, I want them to get from American culture. But for family connection, I prefer them to have the strong relationship with family like in a Thai family, but an American family is fine too. Humility and respect for elders, I would love them to get from Thai culture.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Wachiratham depicted the balance of the positive characteristics of Thai and American culture as a “beautiful picture” and “an art of living one’s life.” Wachiratham shared his optimistic expectation for what he hoped to see in the bilingual students:

Basically, the children in the United States are confident. This is different from Thai children in Thailand. Thai children normally do not ask their teachers questions because they are shy to show or speak in public, but they show respect. To make them confident and show their opinions in a respectful way, and to be confident and respectful is a beautiful picture. It is a beautiful picture. It is the art of living one’s life. If the children ask with respect, the listener will answer with comfort. The listeners don’t understand this culture, they will think that these children are rude or force them to answer the questions.

(Interview, January 20, 2013)

Other teachers held similar views of the differences of American and Thai culture and expected their students to balance both cultures within themselves. American culture values individual uniqueness: People are independent, self-confident, self-disciplined, and goal achievers. This is in contrast with Thai culture, which values the importance of seniority and

family bonds. Thai people are likely to be humble, interdependent, and obedient in order to live in a collectivist culture. These teachers' perception is parallel to the cross-cultural comparison in Gerard Hendrik Hofstede's analysis. According to the dimension of cultural comparison by Hofstede (2014) (See the graph of the six-dimension comparison in Appendix A.), the most distinctive characteristic of the two national cultures is that American is a culture of individualism whereas Thai culture is collectivist. This indicates that Americans "are only supposed to look after themselves and their direct family." This is a huge contrast to Thai people who "belong to 'in groups' who take care of them in exchange for unquestioning devotion."

In sum, Thai teachers in the TOW as diaspora, who moved away from their homeland into a new American culture, have a strong connection with Thai culture. They expressed their pride of their Thai identity and showed their attempts to maintain Thai identity in their community. They favored the Thai family relationship and gave precedence to being with their family over a preference to live in Thailand. They perceived that bilingual students are already Americanized in the dominant American culture; however, they tried to impart Thai to their students. They realized the difficulty of imparting Thai. These teachers do not actually expect bilingual students to adopt 100% Thai culture; contrarily, they wish students to get the best from both cultures.

#### **4.4 Discourse of spirituality**

Buddhism has established itself in Thailand and has enriched the lives of the Thais in all aspects such as culture, arts, beliefs, or family morals. Currently, 95% of Thai people in Thailand are Buddhist—the country ranked as the highest proportion of Buddhists in the world and the third-largest national Buddhist population (Buddha Dharma Education Association, 2008).

All Thai teachers in the TOW regarded themselves as 100% Buddhists. In the process of becoming Buddhists, they were influenced by their family heritage at the beginning of their lives. After their self-exploration of spiritual beliefs through the years, they perceived that they are Buddhists by their hearts. They feel proud to be Buddhists and willing to tell other people from different backgrounds of their beliefs about Buddhism. In the discourse of religion, I observed four themes regarding the role religion played in the lives of these teachers. They are as follows:

#### **4.4.1 I am proud to be a Buddhist.**

All Thai teachers were proud to tell other Americans about their religious faiths and the value they get by following Buddhist principles. Anotai shared her story that Buddhism helped her deal with hurdles in life. She was happy to tell other people about how Buddhism helped her manage her mind when she faced stress. Anotai discussed what she told other people about her Buddhist beliefs:

I told my colleagues in my workplace about Buddhism, in some situations. For example, when I faced difficulty in my life, I told my colleagues that I meditated to help me feel better. I also told them about Buddhist philosophy. For example, my colleagues asked me. "Why do you still look happy even though you may not get chance to continue your working contract? You might not get a visa. You might have to return to Thailand." I told them I am OK with this. I think that I still have my future. And it is because I live myself in the present time the way Buddha suggested. I don't know the future but I will do in this present day the best I can do.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Anotai's colleagues felt impressed with her emotional management when facing difficulty in her work. Anotai told her colleagues with pride that following her life in the way of Buddhism's principles can help her pass life's difficulties.

Within the monkhood status, both monks showed their pride to be monks. They accepted that living as a monk is very much different from living as a layman. There are many specific rules to control their lives as monks. However, they were proud to sacrifice their lives to serve for Buddhism. Wachiratham told his story about the reaction of his classmates after he told them how a monk lives:

I noticed that my class was excited when they knew my life routine was unique. When they knew that I do not eat meals between 12 pm and the morning. I take the vow of chastity. They were surprised at this. They asked me how many days I worked. I told them every day, a job with no salary like a volunteer job throughout my life. And yes, I feel so proud to be a monk.

(Interview, January 18, 2013)

#### **4.4.2 Thai Buddhism is inherited, but it is fine if children want to change their religion.**

Thai Buddhism is inherited through the Thai family as a legacy in the beginning of a Thai child's life. Imjai expressed that it is natural for Buddhism to be passed on from parents to children. She described how she became a Buddhist:

I think it is about the familiarity with Buddhism. I told people that my parents are Buddhists and I follow them. My son also told his friends that he is a Buddhist because

he goes to the temple. It is the same way that his friends go to church with their parents.

(Interview, April 21, 2014)

Imjai perceived that not only Buddhism but also Christianity are passed from parent to children. The children learn about religion by following their parents to the religious institution such as Buddhist temples or Christian church. With this parents' influence, they have opportunities to familiarize with religions.

Even though Thai Buddhism tends to be a family legacy, teachers held the view that Buddhism is optional for children and they can choose any religious faith they want to hold. All teachers did not mind if their bilingual students wanted to convert to any religious faiths because religious belief is an individual choice. However, Panward wished the students to be a moral people; therefore, she brought her children to the temple to help them learn about Buddhism. She realized the need to train a child to be a good person. Panward shared her opinion as follows:

Interviewer: What do you think about Thai bilingual students becoming Christian?

Panward: If they choose to be, it is okay. If they think Christianity fits their preference, it is fine because everyone can have different beliefs. But I believe in Buddhism. I think it is good for them. Therefore, I bring my children to the temple to know that there is Buddhism and it is like this. If my kids think other beliefs are better for them, I accept their opinions. All religions are good to make them become good people. I therefore come to the temple to introduce them to Buddhism.

(Interview, June 1, 2014)

The freedom of religious belief was addressed in the TOW. Even Thammarak, a monk teacher whose role relates to teaching Buddhism, showed no concern if bilingual students of the TOW would become Christian or any other religion. Contrarily, he was concerned if students faced self-conflict by choosing faiths based on parents' influences instead of their own choice. Thammarak said,

Interviewer: What do you think about students becoming Christian?

Thammarak: I feel nothing. Do not make students feel conflicted. For example, a mom is a Buddhist and may not believe in Christianity but a father is Christian and rejects Buddhism. The children might have conflict in choosing either religious faith. I do not want them to have conflict within themselves. Make them know that doing good deeds will make them happy. Both Lord Buddha and Jesus are great men. Choosing whatever they think it is good and brings them happiness from either one, or even from both great men.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

Both secular teachers and monk teachers do not intend to force their students to be Buddhists. However, they saw the need to train children to learn about Buddhism as a way leading them to be a good person. All religions were good, they felt, and students have freedom to choose their own religious beliefs.

#### **4.4.3 Buddhism is ...**

Teachers defined Buddhism in a similar way: as the way of living life under the rules of Buddhism to control their behaviors. Following Buddhist principles can bring the practitioners

and society happiness and peace. Here are the definitions of Buddhism as defined by individual teachers:

Anotai: The way of thought. It is similar to the way of life. I think of dharma principles and the rules to control one's behavior

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Imjai: Being a Buddhist is not about showing respect to the Buddha image or monks but about helping other people. I followed Buddhism's rules which make me feel relieved and happy.

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

Panward: A way of life. It is like a principle to hold and to follow. The simple principles are five precepts. If everyone lives their life in the Buddhist way, society will become peaceful.

(Interview, June 1, 2014)

Thammarak: The way of life' away from credulity but true understanding. One who lives the Buddhist way of life will not deeply suffer. They can solve their life problems from the source.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

Wachiratham: A state of one's mind which is devoted to other people. This person can forgive other people's bad actions or mistakes. This state is enlightened, awakened and brightened. This state is the nature within all humans, with no boundary of race, gender, and religion.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Yonpak: The way of life by following Buddha's teachings such as the Five Precepts. It is the way of daily life, and if people follow Buddhism, it can bring peace to the society.

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

The definitions of Buddhism reflect teachers' positive views towards Buddhism as a part of one's mind development as well as a peace-making force in the society. According to these definitions, Buddhism can help a holder of the beliefs "control one's behavior," "feel relieved and happy," and "solve life problems." It can also lead one to be "enlightened, awakened, and brightened." The society therefore will be in peace if people follow Buddhism.

#### **4.4.4 Genuine Buddhism and false/fake Buddhism**

Buddhism is perceived as purely beneficial to its holders and society. However, teachers realized that rituals and spiritual beliefs were also a part of Buddhism that could negatively impact the belief-holders. These rituals and spiritual beliefs hybridized the original Buddhism into a new form of Thai Buddhism under Thai culture. Panward pointed out the differences between genuine Buddhism and false Buddhism, which is influenced by spiritual beliefs or rituals, in the following excerpt.

Interviewer: Does being a Buddhist make a person unsuccessful?

Panward: No, not at all. If that person holds the real/genuine Buddhism

Interviewer: What do you mean by real and not real Buddhist?

Panward: For religion is not about core principle but rituals with some "influence" by other spiritual beliefs. For example, the belief about auspicious timing is not

originally a Buddhist principle. Later on, it has become a part of Thai people and was included as a part of Thai Buddhism. If people rely on auspicious timing too much, it can sometimes have negative impact on their lives. For example, the belief of stepping out of the house with the right foot first is still okay for me or changing my plan because it is raining is okay for me too. If following the auspicious time makes me feel secure, it is OK. If following these rituals is too much—for example, if auspicious time pushes me to do this within ten minutes only—this negatively impacts me because I rely on auspicious timing too much.

(Interview, June 27, 2014)

Genuine Buddhism based on original Buddhist principles was perceived unquestionably positive, while negative feedback towards Buddhism was actually about aspects of false Buddhism. Thammarak realized that Buddhism is unfairly used to define some groups of people relating to politics. Here he talked about Buddhism of the Karen tribe who live between the border of Thailand and Myanmar. He called Karen Buddhists fake Buddhists, not genuine Buddhists. Thammarak said:

The conflict of Buddhist Karen and Christian Karen is not at all about the religion. They do not fight because of different religious beliefs. They fight because they want to occupy the territory. With the term “Buddhists,” which they use to call themselves, people might think Buddhists are cruel. The shooters and killers who call themselves Buddhists are just Buddhist pretenders. Actually these Buddhists should be regarded non-religious as they do not have morality in their hearts. They are just fake Buddhists. Genuine Buddhist

status is not by birth certificate or by family. Acting like a devil cannot be counted as following Buddhist principles. These people actually have no religion but followed their parents who called themselves ‘Buddhists’. It is not just about being Buddhist; there are also a lot of fake Christians in this society.

(Interview, October 20, 2014)

Teachers viewed genuine Buddhism as a purely positive influence to belief-holders and society. Buddhism influenced by other cultural and spiritual beliefs away from core Buddhism principles cannot be called a genuine Buddhism because superstition can negatively influence the believers. Also, the term Buddhism has been wrongly used for political benefit. This is regarded as a fake Buddhism.

#### **4.4.5 Challenges of being a monk: a defender of people’s faith in Buddhism**

In Thai Buddhism, monks are holy men who are in the highly revered status for Thai Buddhists. Their role relates to being “Human Resource Developers” (Noknoi, 2008). Buddhist monks perform as teachers for people’s spiritual development. They represent Buddhism as successors of the Lord Buddha. They are governed by the 227 monastic rules to keep their life ascetic. For example, they eat food only in the period from dawn until noon. They are also celibate. It is an offense for monks to touch or be touched by women in Thai culture. Both monk teachers expressed their challenge being monks. Thammarak discussed his challenges as follows:

Interviewer: As a monk, do you face any challenges?

Thammarak: A lot. High-technology modern life can blemish the purification of mind. It makes the status of being a genuine monk more difficult. It is also hard to maintain under the monk regulation, under the laws, under the patronage

of people. These people own monks; therefore, we need to gratify them and to satisfy their request. At the same time, we need to be cautious not to violate the rules and regulations. [pause] Thai people place monks in a highly revered status. Some deeds actually do not break the monk rules but rules about those deeds have been lately stipulated by people in Thai society and they assume these are monk rules. If a monk disregards the newly created norm, it will offend people's feelings. The offensive deed is probably not that serious. Like, if I go shopping in the department store, I will avoid pushing the shopping cart. If someone takes picture of me pushing a shopping cart, I might get troubled with the image of a bad monk. Being a monk is placed high; I need to defend people's faiths in Buddhism.

(Interview, October 20, 2014)

Thammarak faced challenges in modern life under all kinds of rules and norms. For him, "genuine monks" need to avoid all kinds of possible sensual pleasures. In Thailand, some monks do not even touch money to declare their purified status. Thammarak showed his intention to be a good monk. He also cared about the feelings of benefactors, as they supply necessities for his living. He has to behave as a good monk and avoid ruining his image as an example of a good monk. Even in the United States, it is normal for everyone to go shopping and use shopping carts. Thammarak decided to avoid pushing shopping carts to save his image of a good monk. He viewed that it was his responsibility to defend Thai people's faiths in Buddhism. This reflected that lives of monks in the foreign culture of the United States are even harder.

Wachiratham also shared his challenges of getting criticized about his clothes in a cold-weather country as follows:

Once, I went to Canada. I was wearing long sleeves there; some Thai people saw the pictures of me. They asked me if I was a Mahayana monk... If I don't wear long sleeves, I might die of cold (figuratively). [laugh]

(Interview, October 20, 2014)

All in all, Buddhism holds the true and ideal value of humanity and morality for teachers in the discourse of religion in the TOW. Buddhism strongly influenced teachers to live their lives under Buddhist principles. Teachers were proud to be Buddhists and strongly believed in its positive benefits for anyone to be a good person. With this concern, teachers brought their children to the TOW to familiarize them with the Buddhism environment. Buddhism is, therefore, likely to be inherited. However, the teachers relate other religious faiths as right and subject to choice, and believe that other religion faiths have been grounded on the same concepts of ethics and humanity as Buddhism. Therefore, they were not concerned if students convert to other religions. The concern was about false Buddhism, which got influenced by wrong beliefs and devilish politics. They felt it is necessary to differentiate genuine Buddhism from false Buddhism. Monks faced challenges, as they perceived themselves to be defenders of people's Buddhist faiths. Even though they live in the United States, they were concerned about saving their image as a good monk to defend the faiths of all Thai people in the United States and Thailand.

#### **4.5 Chapter summary**

The negotiation of teacher identity in the TOW program represents how power is exercised far and wide. This was reflected in the way of representing knowledge about schooling, language, culture, religion, and Buddhist temple. In the discourse of schooling, the Thai community school in the TOW experienced challenges from American mainstream schools. Teachers faced the challenges of students' resistance of going to school at TOW. In the discourse of language, students have acculturated into American culture and preferred using English instead of Thai as a home language. English status has also been legitimate by everyone in Thai language program. In the discourse of culture, teachers attempted to impart Thai culture within these children as they believed that dual Thai-American culture is better than either single culture. Lastly, Buddhism closely connects Thai lives and has influenced Thai families. Students go to the temple with the same intent as their parents.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Perceptions of success: Identity, norms and power motives**

In this chapter, I present teachers' perceptions of success. These perceptions explain their power motives and serve as a substantial force influencing their drive to achieve what they see as success in life. I divide this chapter into four parts. In 5.1, I explore a symbolic representation of teacher identity negotiation in society and offer a semiotic analysis of the role of power in teacher's perceptions of success. This helps with exploring the substantial force it has in teachers' lives. In 5.2, the perceptions of success and teachers' situated identity are presented to explain social expectations and norms that regulate teachers' lives. In 5.3, four examples of teachers' drives for success are extracted to highlight the substantial force mentioned previously. The final section, 5.4, is the summary of the chapter.

#### **5.1 A symbolic representation of teacher identity negotiation in society**

Foucault's theory can help explain how power is exercised in the network of relations in society. However, several points in his theory of power have received many critiques. First, Foucault did not account for the motive of power. His theory did not really include autonomy in power relations. The theory ignored "what one is" or "why power is exercised" but focused only on how one interacts in the complex network of power under normalization (Clarke, 2008; Yarbrough, 1999, p. 36-37). Also, Foucault's study of power focuses on understanding the power of individuality. Even though Foucault did not reject extensive power as he discussed normalization, his theory was unable to explain the "substantial force" of power such as economic, exploitative, ethnic, cultural, and religious power (Robin, 2008).

With the limitation of Foucault's theory in explaining what one is and the extensive forces of power, I employed the concept of "semiotics," or the study of signs, as a part of social life, for the analysis of teachers' perceptions. Signs in this understanding exist not just in physical forms, but also in all representations of meaning, which are "the construction of reality" (Chandler, 1994). According to Chandler (1994), semiotics relates to reality and "reality is a system of signs." Semiotic analysis can associate with any theoretical and methodological stance of researchers. As Chandler (1994) stated, "What individual scholars have to assess, of course, is whether and how semiotics may be useful in shedding light on any aspect of their concerns."

In this study, semiotic analysis works as a tangible tool to probe into teachers' personal motives. The perception and analysis of signs and minds in connection with the world can, in this study, lead to a clearer understanding of teachers' motives and the extensive power influencing teachers' lives.

To understand power in a semiotic way, I employed teachers' perceptions towards success for a few reasons. First, teachers' perceptions can display the identity construction within substantial forces. According to Clarke (2008), the realm of perception where teachers are authorized to choose to be or to become something involves powerful "emotive and affective forces." Therefore, teachers' perceptions of their own success can help explain their identity construction through their imaginative and emotive aspects. Identity, in connection with emotion and affect—in the form of motives—will lead to the understanding of political purpose and substantial power.

Also, teachers' perceptions of their success can enrich the study of diaspora identity construction in dynamic aspects of time and space. Teachers' concepts of success connect their past experiences and backgrounds, their attempts to achieve desirable goals at the current moment, and their plans to attain their future ambitions. The concept of success can also capture the interconnected worlds of Thai and American contexts that these diasporic teachers share. Teachers' perceptions of success are, therefore, useful for the study of identity in diaspora and in the dynamic processes of the past and future.

Additionally, the concept of success itself is strongly associated with the concept of referent power, referring to the reward gained from one's capabilities and one's support of legitimate power. Success in this sense is relevant to a personal goal as well as the desirable qualities or the traits necessary for that goal. The concept of success can yield an understanding of teachers' basic self-perceptions as well as their perceptions of society. Therefore, teachers' perceptions of their own success can display their needs and identity motives, a basic part of human nature, as well as the powers underlying these motives.

In the realm of affective and imaginative psychological foundation, teachers' perceptions of success fit very well with "motivated identity construction theory," which explains motivational influence on identity process. This theory illustrates six motives in identity construction: 1) self-esteem, 2) continuity, 3) distinctiveness, 4) meaning, 5) efficacy and 6) belonging (Vignoles, 2011, p. 411-418). The way teachers' view themselves as successful persons in a positive light reveals their self-esteem motive. The exploration of teachers' connection of their past, present, and future identities shows the "continuity motive." Teachers' perceptions and self-categorization directly relates to the distinctiveness motive, which

categorizes teachers distinctively. Teachers' perceptions of success can also show their needs to find the "significance or purpose in one's existence," or meaning motive. The perceptions of what teachers have achieved can also explain how teachers see themselves "as capable of acting on their world," which is their efficacy motive. Lastly, teachers' needs to gain social acceptance or closeness to others also reflect the belonging motive. Teachers' perceptions of their own success directly relate to their identity motives. These perceptions can provide a lens to understand teachers' identity motives and their needs to achieve success in society. The motives, which are profoundly determined by substantial power, have influenced teachers' lives.

My focus was neither on understanding nor on judging the effect of identity motives. In fact, I intended to investigate social norms or standard from teachers' motives reflecting from their perceptions towards success. Teachers' perceptions of success would reveal their motives in connection with their personal lives under social norms that reflect the economic and politic ideologies in society.

To analyze teachers' perception toward success, I applied Gee's discourse analysis (1999). (See 3.2.5.3 for more information). The analysis was done to interpret the social expectations of a successful person, regulated norms, and how teachers views "who they are," "what they do," and "what made them feel they are successful or unsuccessful" in society. This kind of top-down analysis will help explain the power from substantial forces in teachers' lives. The semiotic analysis was used to supplement the power analysis, based on Foucault's theory (see chapters 4 & 5), which explains how power is exerted from all individuals in society.

## **5.2 Perception of "success" and the situated identity relating to their success**

This section presents teachers' perceptions of the meaning of success, which are influenced by society and controls teachers' lives. Teachers' self-judgment of their own success was explored. I divided this section into three main themes: external and internal success; success in society's views, through which teachers regard themselves; and the influences of Thai culture and religion on one's success.

### **5.2.1 Differences between external success and internal success**

Teachers' perceptions of the meaning of success separated it into two main categories: external and internal success. External success involves money, status, and things, whereas internal success is about spirituality, emotion, and mental quality. Wachiratham addressed the differences between the two kinds of success in the following excerpt:

There are two types of success: one is to live a comfortable life and the other kind of success is to solve one's own problems and to relieve oneself from suffering. Yes, a person succeeds when he gets a high salary, has a happy family, has everything and graduates with a high degree. All of these are the external successes. Even though we have everything, we may still be unhappy, e.g., we are easily upset, jealous, envious, revengeful, mean or selfish. This person cannot be counted as a completely successful person, when he faces suffering and still cannot manage things or manages with unsuitable solutions. This cannot be called successful yet. Success actually relates to refraining from one's cravings and greed, even though one does not graduate with a high degree. This is about controlling internal desires.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Other teachers in the TOW also perceived success in the same way, even though they did not address the terms of internal and external success. Here is how Anotai defined success, in which she differentiated external success from internal success.

My definition of success is so simple. Other people might think my definition is much lower than the standard of the word “success.” For me, [successful] persons can live by themselves, take responsibilities in their work and duties by using their skills, work in secure jobs, and be happy to do whatever they do in whatever role in the society. For example, mothers who can take good care of their children and do not trouble others can be called successful. There is no need to be a CEO or in a high position. They can just take their skills and knowledge to their work and benefit others. Also, they work for others. For me, teaching in the TOW is a kind of work I can do for others. I can make it successful because I spend my time and effort for others. I am happy. I care about achieving my intention to do best in my role and for others. I also train my son to do for others. For example, I encouraged him to set up donation drives for the sheltered instead of collecting gifts for himself on his birthday.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

In Anotai’s view, people are more successful if they can benefit others. In this definition, Anotai regarded herself as a successful person because she volunteered in the TOW. She felt satisfied to dedicate her time and effort for others.

Between external and internal success, all teachers gave precedence to internal success. Thammarak was one of the teachers who valued success into different categories. He

considered people as becoming more successful when they can control their inner drives, or internal success. Here is what he said:

Successful persons are ones who are happy and make others happy. They do not trouble other people. Actually based on Buddhism principles, the highest accomplishment of success is to achieve nirvana. They refrain from all cravings, desires, or any stimuli. They do not hurt anyone anymore. Some people may call graduation successful but success is higher if they work for others, and it is the highest success when they are abstained from all passions, desires, and sensuality. We should less positively value success of worldly achievement.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

For Thammarak, success was hierarchized by actions, and the level of success relied on Buddhist principles.

Teachers identified success by its influences, through either materialism or Buddhist principles. External success relates to possessing materials such as wealth or high status in society. Oppositely, internal success based on Buddhist principles relates to helping others and the achievement of nirvana, or the state of mind which abstains from all passions, desires, or sensuality. In 5.2.2, I present teachers' perceptions of success in relation to social views and expectations, which prescribe them to be the kind of teachers to be.

### **5.2.2 Social views of success and teachers' self-reflection about success.**

Semiotic analysis of teachers' perceptions explained that teachers judged their success by comparing what they have achieved in life with what society regards them to be. Through the

process of self-assessing their own success, teachers mentioned the attainment of their ultimate goals, or so-called success in their perceptions. The analysis showed that teachers of different roles and statuses set different goals to achieve. They situated themselves into different channels for success according to their perceptions of society. This sub-section discusses teachers' self-reflections about their success. The different spiritual statuses of teachers—either secular or monk—inspired how they live based on their self-determination. See table 5.1 for the details of teachers' self-reflections about success and the social views of success in their perceptions.

***5.2.2.1 Secular teachers—Success means being in a balance of external and internal success.***

The concept of success in the view of secular teachers relates to both external and internal achievement. They perceived that they have achieved less external success than what society regards as success. Secular teachers showed their ambitions and endeavor to achieve a higher status in the structure of success in society. Even though these teachers realized they did not attain the state of success in society, they felt satisfied with what they achieved and still insisted on calling themselves successful persons because they were able to balance themselves to reach both external success and internal success.

Anotai, who regarded herself a successful person, recognized living life on dharma as a key to make her feel successful. She expressed that she would never become a successful person if she relied solely on societal views of success:

Interviewer: What makes a person successful?

Anotai: Dharma helps. If we do not feel [what we have achieved] is sufficient no matter

how much we can gain, we will never reach success.

Interviewer: Do you regard yourself successful?

Anotai: I am. I have good family. I have a house to live in. My life is comfortable. I feel satisfied with myself. Some might think I am not a successful person as I spent a long time in my PhD program. I studied my PhD for nine and a half years. But I don't think that matters. I don't blame myself because I worked and studied at the same time.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Similarly, other secular teachers in the TOW—Imjai, Panward, and Yonpak—regarded themselves as successful persons because they are happy with what they have currently done and possess in their roles and statuses:

Interviewer: Do you regard yourself a successful person?

Panward: [Laughs], I think I am a successful person because I don't want any more than what I have and what I do.

(Interview, June 1, 2014)

Yonpak: Yes, I am OK to be a successful person. I am neither in debt nor in trouble. I have sufficient money to use. I have a child. I do not burden others. I think I am okay to be called successful.

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

Imjai: I think I am [laughs] because I am happy with what I have accomplished in my life. I have done many good things for others, I think because I am humble and self-confident. I help others. I am honest and patient.

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

From the response of secular teachers, their understandings of success involve having a good family, living a comfortable life, having money, and volunteering. These teachers realized that success in a social view might be unattainable with their personal roles and statuses. However, they balanced the motive to achieve those ultimate goals with their self-satisfaction toward what they have and what they have achieved. These motives for success were under the control of their self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency.

#### ***5.2.2.2 Monk teachers: Success relates to mind development.***

Monk teachers did not regard worldly requirements as a part of success. Contrarily, their success was inspired by the aims of living in the life-long volunteer job of monkhood and spiritual development. Wachiratham, who regarded himself as a successful monk novice, showed his determination to develop himself to a higher status of spirituality:

Interviewer: Do you regard yourself as a successful person?

Wachiratham: I do what I can in my ability to achieve this. Monks are classified into two groups: novice monks and Buddhist saints. A novice monk is a monk who needs to practice more to develop his mind; he can teach in society and help society with his ability but only to some extent. I am still regarded as a novice. I cannot say I am truly successful until I am a Buddhist saint who abstains from all passions, desires, and sensuality.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Thammarak viewed success as an unspecific point in a process relating to mind development. He emphasized contemplation as a path to his success in the role and duty he gained in society. Thammarak discussed his own success as follows:

Interviewer: Are you a successful person?

Thammarak: Where is one's success? There is no specific point to be called success. I can only tell myself if I have done my work well yet. And success can be counted every day in every single minute. I perform dharma practice by contemplating on my duty every day. Success is the result of my dharma practice. I check my success every day. It is not right for me to say that this person is successful because he has billion dollars. It may make this billionaire look like a successful person; actually he is not at all if he cannot achieve happiness within himself or contemplate about himself. For me, success relates to working in my role and success is what I achieve through my inner insight about my role.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

Thammarak disregarded external markers of success such as money and possessions. He focused his meaning of success on the dharma practice along with working in his role and duty. He suggested the value of contemplation, which relates to "vipassana," a kind of meditation to gain insight through reflection in Buddhist practice. Thammarak regarded himself as a successful person only when he could reach happiness within himself. Both monk teachers valued internal success, relating to the control of one's mind to achieve happiness, in the role of being a monk,

or people who dedicate their lives for the discipline of dharma, or Buddha teaching about nature law to releasing one's suffering and Buddhist principles.

From the analysis of teachers' self-reflection of success, each teacher has different specific meanings of their own success in regard to their roles and statuses. However, all of their perceptions together formed a general pattern of motives for success. These motives also showed social views of success, or norms which dominate an individual teacher's self-judgment about their ambitions as a successful person.

### **5.2.3 Thai culture and spiritual belief in relation to success.**

This section shows teachers' perceptions of Thai culture and religion in relation to success. The findings showed that Thai culture and religion were interrelated with success. Thai culture was viewed as having both positive and negative impacts on one's success, whereas core Buddhist principles were perceived as positively leading to success. Teachers also emphasized that success in morality was more important in life than was success in material achievement.

From teachers' perspectives, Thai culture can be beneficial as a path to success; at the same time, Thai culture can hinder one's success. Teachers mentioned some typical characteristics of Thai culture, such as humility, peace loving, and obedience, which can impact one's success in both positive and negative ways. Imjai perceived that Thai humility benefits one's success:

Interviewer: Do you think Thai culture can benefit one's success?

Imjai: Yes, [through traits] such as humility. Wherever you work, if you are humble, you will become a valuable person because a humble person is affectionate toward

other people. Humility helps people love you more. For me, all through my life, I count myself as a successful person because I am humble and help others.

Helping others is a kind of connection in business. It works well in the business world.

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

Unlike Imjai, Anotai viewed Thai characteristics as having both positive and negative effects on one's success. Anotai discussed Thai culture and success as follows:

For a job interview, a Thai characteristic is being humble, which actually decreases the opportunity to get a job. We do not speak to sell ourselves which makes it hard to advertise our skills. We have not learnt to do this. When I started working, my supervisor told me, "You need to take ownership. You worked and you should take credit. Tell them you worked on this project." The good point of having a Thai style is that I can get along well with other people. It is hard for me to get angry or fight with anyone in my work place. This helps me maintain a good relationship with other colleagues. I think it is Thai culture—or it is about me? But most Thai people are like this.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Yonpak related Thai culture to Buddhism as a path to success. Thai culture was more of a drawback to success, whereas Buddhist principles had only a positive effect and acted as a pathway to one's success. Yonpak discussed culture, Buddhism and success:

Interviewer: Can Thai culture help one to become successful?

Yonpak: I am not sure about Thai culture but Buddhism can definitely help. I am not sure if in this way Thai culture is the same as Buddhism? Anyway, I am sure that

Buddhism's principles help to bring success. Being a Thai, one may act too humbly, communicate indirectly, and depend too much on others. But being a Thai is good in that the society will hardly become violent.

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

Yonpak addressed three characteristics of Thai culture—humble, indirect, and dependent—as they relate to one's success. These could, in this view, be both benefits and drawbacks to one's success. She emphasized that Buddhist principles can have only a positive effect on success. Yonpak also mentioned the influences of reading dharma books in her prioritization of internal success over external success. She said:

Interviewer: What makes a person become successful in their life?

Yonpak: [Five-second pause] I paused long because I need to specify the indicator for the word success. ... If I answered this question in the past, I would say that a successful person was the one who has lots of money, wealth, and secure job. The family is well-off in an affluent condition. I mean they have—ohh!—money to do whatever they want to do. But now I changed my mind after I read many dharma books. I think a successful person is one who has only a warm family; good children (or child), and enough money to use as they need. There is no need to live in luxury or be a CEO or director.

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

Yonpak compared her meaning of success in two different periods of her life: in the past and the present time. Her past perception of success relied on material achievement. Yonpak shifted her perception and prioritized more a view of self-sufficiency under the influences of Buddhist

principles, about which she was inspired after reading dharma books. She showed that Buddhism helped her balance internal and external success. Currently, it is necessary for her to have money enough to use as wanted. However, the relationship with her family has become more important to her than wealth.

As mentioned before in Chapter 4, teachers differentiated genuine Buddhism from superstition. Following Buddhist principles only supported one's success. Superstition and some spiritual rituals were viewed as a separation from genuine Buddhism that could negatively impact one's success. Panward discussed such rituals and beliefs as a hindrance to one's success:

Panward: Buddhism directly supports one's success. Buddhist principles can foster a positive attitude about success.

Interviewer: Does Buddhism obstruct success?

Panward: Not at all, if it is genuine Buddhism. As we know, religion does not come with only principles but also with rituals and beliefs. For example, the belief in auspicious time has become a part of Thai Buddhism. This belief can harm one's success. One who is too strict to this kind of beliefs, for example, has to step the right foot before leaving home. It is something like auspice; if it is too much, it can impact one's work if one truly believes in auspicious timing.

(Interview, June 1, 2014)

Culture and religion are melded together as one and shape the way people see the world. In other words, religion together with the work of culture, which was influenced by beliefs and creeds, shape a society (Cohen, 2011). Wachiratham viewed the interwoven connection between Thai culture and Buddhism. He mentioned that Buddhism influenced Thai culture with the forms

of Buddhist tradition, and influenced the way of Thai living. Buddhism and Thai culture were melded together into a “Buddhism Thai culture.” He mentioned some typical Thai characteristics that were influenced by Buddhism in the following excerpt.

Thai culture is mainly influenced by Buddhism, passing on in the forms of Thai tradition and way of Thai life. The examples of the Buddhist Thai culture are such as [the fact that] we know that Thailand is recognized as a land of smiles because people help one another to be in a state of pleasant feeling. One example is in LONG-KAK (LONGKAK, which means helping others to grow rice in the countryside in Thailand without any payment. Normally they treat the helpers with a special feast or feasts in return.) There is no need for hiring other people to help for labor in the countryside, but they are willing to help their neighbors. Also, they are treated back with a feast in return for the good friendship. This shows Buddhist Thai culture that recognizes and trains people to be kind-hearted to others. Also, gratefulness is important. Grateful persons will not disappoint their families. The strong connection in family will help them live in peace. This is another example of the real Buddhist Thai culture.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Wachiratham viewed some characteristics of Buddhist Thai culture such as good-heartedness, helping others, and gratefulness. This could lead to people’s good friendship, and peaceful living. Gratefulness strengthened family relationships and influenced children to have good behavior. Wachiratham also showed his concerns about the changes of Buddhist Thai culture into a new culture of more materialism. The materialism makes people disregard religion and

negatively impacts Thai culture, he expressed. Thai culture under materialism may induce people to be more successful in business, but less successful in morality. He said:

It is dangerous for Thai culture to adopt materialism. We have made our lives more convenient and ignore the effect on our society. People have discarded religion and now focus on being as materialistically rich as they can. “How can I be successful in the business world? I don’t care I have to exploit others on the way to my success. If I have to cheat, I will do so in order to get the best benefit.” This unhealthy type of success is not beneficial to the world. This is dangerous because people abandon religions. I am worried that Thai people in the new generation run their lives too much after materialism and try to compete with others while they focus on external success, and ignore internal success, which relates to developing their minds. They focus only on achievement in business and do not care about others. Even though they can be rich and achieve in business, they are less successful than their ancestors who live their lives under religion and help other people rather than thinking of themselves.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Buddhism was viewed as a more important factor for internal success. Even though Thai culture under materialism will make people gain more ambitions to live a more convenient life and to succeed in the business world, teachers felt that achievement in morality was more valuable than the achievement of material things. Religion and morality, they expressed, needed to continue shaping people’s values to prevent the influence of materialism and its dangers to society.

### **5.3 Four drives to teachers’ success**

This section discusses teachers' drives to achieve success, which were scrutinized from teachers' perceptions of their own success. In Table 5.1, I compare the views of teachers about their achievement with the standard values of success in society, including norms about success, the predictors of success, and the achievements of a successful person.

Four driving factors behind teachers' success emerged from their perceptions of the concept of success. Here is a discussion of each drive to succeed as it relates to the individual position of success within the social norm and expectation:

### **5.3.1 Teachers' drive to success 1: Material security (money, fame, and name).**

The first drive to success was the determination to get material security. All teachers considered material security as what society expected them to obtain. Everyone wished to possess valuable objects and social status. The common concept of success in society relates to money, fame, and name. This reflects a world of competitiveness that drives people to try to develop skills and knowledge in order to get good jobs, gain lots of money from their work, live comfortable lives, and be well known. Anotai described the role model of a successful person in her perceptions as follows:

My parents are good examples of successful people. Both of them work in a governmental institution. They did not study abroad; they only graduated in Thailand. They are successful because they have made their family successful. They both have successful careers. My mother is a teacher and also works in research and was awarded insignia. My dad is not a pilot [in the Royal Thai Air Force, pilots are a higher status than other Air Force officers], but eventually he was promoted to an Admiral. Both are happy with their achievement. All their children graduated and received at least a bachelor

degree; higher degrees than a bachelor's I regard as extra benefits. Their children can live and never burden anyone, with no debts. If I set the goal that my children have to graduate with a PhD, it is too pressuring. Or that my children have to study abroad; this is also another pressure. Anyway, both of [my parents] could still send my brother and I to study for our master's degrees abroad. This showed that they are successful.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Anotai implied that her parents spent a lot of money for their children's education by sending them to study abroad, which is counted as higher status than studying in the Thai education system. Her perceptions of a successful person showed the social motive of success relating to good education, good work, and money as an investment for better status. Goal achievement and competition in the career path are the ladders to success.

The motivation of success to achieve things relating to higher status and better economic benefit in the society reflects the motives under capitalism. Capitalism is a power structure of economic and social relations dominating all human lives in the society. It drives people with profit motive to survive in the competitive world of benefits. As Boik and Fioramonti (2014) stated, the purpose of capitalism is to maximize monetary benefit by increasing one's purchasing power in the market. The perceptions of all teachers in the TOW relating to the need to have money, a good job, and a comfortable life reflected their motives to survive remarkably well in the world of capitalism. The idea of competition and hierarchy in an economic system—or capitalism—is not originally from traditional Thai culture. Rather, these ideas come from Western cultures and are spreading to every single life in the world. According to Kohls (1984), competition, and free enterprise, materialism, and future orientation are counted as American

values. These values corresponding to an economic system inevitably become a part of powerful force dominating all people and societies. This text showed that the Western economy system and competition permeate all lives.

Capitalism also honors achievements and diligence. People value profits, and this system can bring out the best from one's potential. To achieve this success, people work hard and develop their skills to gain more profit in the economic and political world. Teachers reflected on the qualities needed to achieve the material security by their hard works. The qualities that predict success in money, fame, and name are: diligence, work passion, honesty, courage, and ambition. (See table 5.1)

None of the teachers regarded the drive to achieve material security as the most important indicator for their success. For secular teachers, this drive was important as they tried to gain money by working to live a comfortable life. However, they realized the need to balance this drive in the suitable way with mental development. Comparatively, monks addressed this drive as important for normal people, but not at all for monks. Wachiratham stated that materialism is not what Buddhism suggests to follow. He discussed the idea that he does not look like a successful person by the definition of normal society; however, he still regarded himself as a successful person because he worked for society. As he explained,

A successful person can make themselves and people around them happy. They do not make trouble for others. The lowest kind of success is something such as academic achievement. The higher success is to work for others in the society. The highest success is by developing oneself over all kinds of desires. I do not judge people by whether they graduate in which degree—bachelor, master, or PhD. Persons who work hard to benefit

society are more successful. Persons who can overcome their desires and passions are even more successful. In Buddhism, we care more about developing the mind. We do not value materialism. It is the lowest kind of success. If you judge me from external success, I may be less successful than many people. In [measures of] external success, such as having a car or having a family, being a monk does not provide the opportunity to achieve this kind of success. However, if you judge a monk from internal success, you will see a monk has more opportunity to work for society. We have more of a chance to commit to moral virtues. We work for Buddhism. I call this success.

(Interview, June 26, 2015)

Wachiratham compared external success relating to obtaining materials and status with internal success, which is about working for society. He hierarchized kinds of success and regarded material security as the lowest. Achievement in education or possession of objects for comfortable life, as a path of success in material security, he considered in the lowest position of success, comparing to working for others or refraining from all desires. See more discussion about the motive to maintain ethics and morals in *Teachers' drive to success 4*.

### **5.3.2 Teachers' drive to success 2: Health.**

Only Yonpak addressed the need to be healthy as one of her motives for success. She perceived that it is necessary to balance time and work in life in order to maintain oneself in a condition of good health. Good health is related to happiness and well-being, she expressed. Yonpak related health in the opposite position to *motive 1* (material security). She regarded the need to have money and to work in a good job as success; however, these need to be in balance with what one's body can handle. She said:

The meaning of success relates to happiness. Anyone who can be happy with themselves is successful. They have enough money to live happily, not living a difficult life with no money. They have time for their family and remain in good health.

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

Yonpak also addressed the idea that hard work, which is the gateway to success in material security, is in contrast with maintaining good health. She gave an example of a famous, well-off, Thai scholar and businessman who faced health problems:

.... [This is] the story of Dr. Abhiwat, who worked very hard and was regarded as a successful person, but his body suffered from a lot of stress and he ended up with cancer. During Apiwat's life of hard work, his wife had to make an appointment to talk to him. That was not normal. How can he be happy when he has to live like that?

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

For Yonpak, the true meaning of success included not only money and status but also maintaining one's health in good condition. Good health was used to contrast with living life in compliance with the "spirit of Capitalism," which encourages diligence as the means to achieve wellbeing (Weber, 1930).

### **5.3.3 Teachers' Drive to success 3: Social Belonging—family and community.**

Teachers' third drive to success is grounded in the value of being in a good relationship with other members in their social network. This relationship can be classed into two groups: the kinship relation of family, and the relationship with the community in which they live. Teachers' perceptions of success connect to the ability to have a good family and to work for others in a positive relationship with the community.

Teachers regarded having a good family as part of their success. Generally, having a good family meant having warm and nice relationships within a family. Yonpak explained the meaning of a good family as follows:

Good family means everyone lives together with love and understanding. We can communicate among members. Love is like food for heart and understanding is immunizing. Communication can help everyone love and understand one another well and be in a good relationship. The relationship within the family warms my heart and brings happiness into life.

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

The typical meaning of a good family was that people loved and understood their family members. For Yonpak, communication was the way to spread love and understanding, maintaining a good relationship within family. For Anotai, her family was also part of her success. Family involved directing their children toward success. Family trained Anotai to be self-sufficient and mentally strong. Anotai discussed how her self-sufficiency, a path to her success, was shaped by her family guidance.

Success is about oneself as well as family. It is hard to live without them. I consider myself successful. I graduated and have a good family. If I judge my success based on society's expectation, which is more than what I have, I would not yet be successful. I have to get this amount of money and to be in this and that status only, and have to be a manager or the owner of a business. It is hard to achieve all of these expectations. I have to be strong to say I have enough. The main reason to be successful is because I was brought up and trained by family to feel I had enough. It is not just what society tells me to be.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Anotai gave credit to her family as a part of her success. In her view, a family is involved in training children to be strong people and to feel happy with what they achieve in their lives in a demanding society.

Apart from having a good family, belonging to a community outside the family is also a motive of all teachers. To maintain in a good relationship in the community, working for others was relatively important. Generally, all teachers addressed the importance of maintaining good relationships with other people in the community. Imjai, the director of the TOW, connected the meaning of success with the ability to promote cooperation between other people. Imjai discussed the idea of a successful person:

Successful people are people who are happy, lively, and friendly. We can always see their smiles on their faces. It is impossible to live alone in the world; we rely on others. Actually, success comes from others as it is easier to succeed with the cooperation of others. As well, a successful person makes people happy and brightens other people around to achieve things together.... You can see all successful people will help other people. Like our Thai king or Bill Gates, they help people. For ones who have a lot of money but never help anyone, I am not sure if they are happy or not... But for me, I feel happy to help others.

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

Table 5.1 Summary of motives to achieve success, expectations, and achieved success

Teacher's Drives to Achieve Success		Monk or Secular	Norm and standard values of success	Predictors of success	Teachers' achievements of success	
Material security (money, fame, name)	Secular		<i>Anotai</i> : Academic achievement, fame, high governmental position, no debts, sending kids to study abroad, comfortable life, good house	Responsibility, diligence, hard work, ambition	Graduation, good housing, no debts, comfortable life	
			<i>Imjai</i> : Work	Working hard	n/a	
			<i>Panward</i> : Good job	Work passion	-	
			<i>Yonpak</i> : Money, fame, secured job	Diligence, honesty	sufficient money, comfortable life	
	Monk		<i>Thammarak</i> : Comfortable life, money	Diligence, mind strength	-	
			<i>Wachiratham</i> : Academic achievement, money	Courage, diligence, passion to work, responsibility	-	
Physical Health	Secular		<i>Anotai</i> : n/a	n/a	n/a	
			<i>Imjai</i> : n/a	n/a	n/a	
			<i>Panward</i> : n/a	n/a	n/a	
			<i>Yonpak</i> : Good health	Balancing time and work	Health	
	Monk		<i>Thammarak</i> : n/a	n/a	n/a	
			<i>Wachiratham</i> : n/a	n/a	n/a	
Social Relationship	Family	Secular	<i>Anotai</i> : Good child(ren)	n/a	Good family	
			<i>Panward</i> : Good family	n/a	n/a	
			<i>Yonpak</i> : Good family	timing for family	Good family	
			<i>Imjai</i> : Good family	n/a	Good family	
	Monk		<i>Thammarak</i> : n/a	n/a	n/a	
			<i>Wachiratham</i> : Good family	respecting senior, gratitude to parents	-	
	Friends and community	Secular		<i>Anotai</i> : Working for others	n/a	Working for others
				<i>Imjai</i> : Friends and community, helping others	Social skills: being nice to others, humility	Helping others, humility, being nice to others
				<i>Panward</i> : Working for society	n/a	Working for society
				<i>Yonpak</i> : n/a	n/a	n/a
Monk			<i>Thammarak</i> : Working for society	Buddhist principles, being humane	Working for others, teaching others	
			<i>Wachiratham</i> : Working for society	Being gentle, being kind-hearted	Working for society, preserving culture and Buddhism	

Table 5.1 (contd)

Teachers' drives to achieve success	Monk or Secular	Norm and social Expectation	Predictors of success	Situated success
Maintaining Ethics & morals	Secular	Anotai: Living a balanced life	Self-contentment, self-assure from social pressure	Self-contentment, sufficiency
		Imjai: Being a good person	Being good-hearted, honesty, compassion	Being good-hearted, self-contentment
		Panward: Free from all suffering (ultimate happiness), happy with current situation	Self-contentment, good attitude	Being passionate, self-contentment
		Yonpak: Balancing life, doing good things for society	Being big-hearted, moderation, being humane	Buddhist principles, balancing life
	Monk	Thammarak: Spiritual enlightenment	Abstaining from desire, passion, and anger; self-contentment, self-sufficiency	Self-contentment, self-sufficiency; abstaining from desire, passion, and anger
		Wachiratham: Consciousness when happy or suffering. Wisdom and mentality to solve problems	Abstaining from desire, passion, and sexuality, forgiving others' faults, unattachment, generosity	Abstaining from desire, passion, sexuality; generosity

Imjai expressed the characteristic of a successful person as being able to build social networks to support oneself and others. This reflects the privilege of favoring the interpersonal over individualism. This quality is a Thai distinctive characteristic that is different from American values, which prioritize individualism (Komin, 2001). The ability to facilitate actions from the network of relationships in this view is closely related to the “social capital” of Coleman (2011) and Bourdieu (2011, p. 99) or a “resource for persons” in sharing norms of reciprocity. The ability to engage in the broader network of relationships by helping others and behaving with the Thai desirable value of being friendly can foster a social power as a resourceful asset.

Many teachers related Thai culture as a benefit for building up strong connections with other people. As mentioned in 5.2.3, some typical Thai characteristics such as humility and modesty were valued as a positive way to make one affectionate and foster the opportunity to make friends and connections in society. To build a connection with the community, teachers showed attempts to make children belong to the Thai community as well as to learn how to develop social skills to connect with others in the community. They believed that family plays the key role in training their children to connect with the community.

All teachers emphasized the need to train their children to volunteer and do things for others as a part of establishing a strong connection to the community. However, the feeling of belonging to a community requires time and effort by family training. Imjai also explained that her volunteer work in the TOW led to not only her own success but also the path to success of her son and other bilingual students. She reflected:

I volunteered because I love to help others and it will, in return, make me happy. I also believe my son will learn something from seeing me volunteer for the community. I saw him apply the quality of being a good person for others himself. Once, his dad asked him what quality a CEO needs to have. He replied that it was being nice to others. He spoke exactly the same thing as what I think and did. I believe he learns from my example. It is better than telling him to do or to be. He should see me as an example that I work for others. Also, TOW can provide the opportunity for students to make friends. They come to meet bilingual friends and have a chance to know people in a Thai community. They learn Thai language and culture.

(Interview, April. 21, 2014)

Imjai showed how her motive to volunteer for others could bring success. By volunteering for others, she could accomplish her personal happiness and train her son to volunteer for others, as well as create a space for bilingual students to make friends and build community in the TOW.

#### **5.3.4 Teachers' drive to success 4: Ethics and morals**

The fourth drive to success relates to spiritual connection and to the concepts of happiness, right and wrong, and good and evil. Teachers emphasized this motive to maintain ethics and morals in opposition to motive 1 (possessing objects and status). All teachers realized the magnetization of worldly capitalism, which influences them to develop their knowledge and skills to gain money and to achieve a high status in society. This strong influence of worldly power is hard to resist; therefore, teachers employed ethics and morality to keep a good balance of materialism and mind development in order to help them feel happy with themselves.

Teachers perceived the world as a competitive space for everyone. They are influenced by the power of materialism because they have attempted to achieve their best to gain money, fame, and name. However, they realize that competition has never come to an end and no one is going to achieve real success solely by following the competitive norms in society. To fight for true happiness, they felt, one needs the right attitude developed by following Buddhist teachings. Teachers addressed the importance of Buddhist principles as a pathway to achieve real success and access true happiness. Anotai showed her intention to help students become successful by developing the attitude of self-sufficiency, regarded as a part of Buddhist principles. Here is what she said:

Interviewer: What can you do to help students in the TOW become successful?

Anotai: I want to help bilingual children in the TOW to learn about self-sufficiency.

Whatever they possess, they should feel happy with it. They should not adhere themselves to their desires to gain things; for example, I have to get this make of car before I am called successful. I do not mean they should stick to the same position without any improvement. But they should not be too ambitious. I want them to be progressive and ambitious but not extremely to hang their life or their happiness on their ambitions or somebody else's expectation. This is what I wish the students to be. They should feel happy. Following Buddhist principles can help them be self-sufficient.

(Interview, July 17, 2014)

Even though Anotai recognized the need to improve for the better status in the society, she highlighted the need to prioritize morality. She raised the concept of self-sufficiency to balance one's life to meet true happiness. Anotai's faith in self-sufficiency implied her autonomy, meaning one's determination to account for one's actions. She gave credit to Buddhist principles as the means to success and true happiness. Anotai felt Buddhist principles were not at odds with achieving material security. She emphasized that Buddhism can go hand-in-hand with the virtue of being hard-working. She explained,

Being a Buddhist can help one to achieve success. Buddhism does not teach one to be lazy to work; contrarily, it teaches to detach from one's desire. Happiness is within one's heart. Do not hang your happiness with somebody else's expectation.

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Anotai explained the cooperation between Buddhism and one's success in the material world. Buddhism, she saw, can help one's mind to let things go without making one become lazy. In

other words, refraining from one's desire does not go against working hard in one's jobs. On the contrary, it supports people's minds to feel happy with their lives in a society in which unrealistic expectations are created. Apart from self-sufficiency, other Buddhist principles they saw as helpful to one's success included forgiveness, dharna (giving), the belief in karma, and middle path. Yonpak discussed following all of these Buddhist principles as a way to one's success:

Interviewer: You told ne Buddhism helps one succeed; how?

Yonpak: Buddhism tells people to be a giver, not to take revenge. The more you give, the more you get back in return. It may not come directly from the one to whom you give but it comes from others in the network. If we learn self-sufficiency and live in the middle way, it can make society more peaceful. I also read a dharma book which suggested that there are two buffaloes within us. You need to balance these two buffaloes. One represents wisdom—this buffalo thinks before doing—whereas the other buffalo is the power user, like Westerners. They want to use power, want to go to the moon, want to get whatever they want. Eventually they lose self-consciousness and never feel satisfied with what they have. Contrarily, if you only think without any power, you will never go anywhere.

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

Teachers also mentioned forgiveness as a way to deal with one's anger and dharna, or the virtue of giving, as relating to the destruction of greed, hatred, and delusions. The law of karma, or that people doing good things brings good things to their lives in return, serves to make one do

only good things. They also addressed the practice of mind to balance life into moderation, or Noble Eightfold Path, which is known as the middle path or middle way. Yonpak's example of two kinds of buffaloes within a mind explains the middle path. This middle path helps enable self-consciousness and made those practicing Buddhism to balance themselves in a productive way.

Buddhist principles were also addressed as the way to encourage a sense of social belonging (motive 3). For Wachiratham, Buddhism can be used as a strategy to train children to see the need to work for others and to support community. Wachiratham told the story of the positive influences of Buddhist principles in encouraging a Thai child to support the TOW community:

The children here are taught to hold to equality and ignore gratitude to the parents. There were parents telling me that they invited their son to the temple. The son asked them why he needed to go, saying, "I am not a member in the temple like you. [laugh] If you want to go, just go. It is not at all about me. Why do I need to help the temple? I am not a member." It was because he was not born in Thailand where Buddhism is a part of Thai lives. He cannot feel that Buddhism or the temple belongs to him. He cannot think that devoting his time and efforts to the public is good. To solve this problem, parents need to apply Buddhist principles to explain that helping others be happy makes you feel happy in return, and it benefits society. With the help of the parents and with the monk's suggestions, their son comes more often to help the temple.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

This excerpt showed that cooperation of family can support moral commitments for the community. It also reflected some of the intention and conflict of bilingual students in participating in the Thai temple. In the process of training children to be involved in the community, there were pull-and-push dynamics within the family's deliberation to make their children involved in the community, and there was resistance by the children. Wachiratham had a strong faith that Buddhist teaching was positively involved in influencing children to open their minds to cooperate and engage in helping others and community.

The analysis of teachers' perceptions of success can explain the societal norms regulating their behaviors. Teachers self-normalized in order to meet socially expected norms. Both their motives to achieve success and the way they situated themselves as successful people revealed substantial power that influenced their perceptions and their decisions. Even though this exploration was based on teachers' imagination, the semiotic analysis of teacher perceptions of success can reflect how teachers live their lives under their perspectives of social expectations. This also shows the dynamic of identity construction through the process of their self-normalization under social norms of substantial power.

#### **5.4 Chapter summary**

The findings in this chapter discussed teachers' perceptions toward success as a way to understand the substantial forces influencing their lives. Scrutinizing the substantial power from teacher's perceptions of success and desirability, there was some evidence of capitalism as an influence in their lives and other people's lives. Diagram 5.1 shows the relations of broader power to teachers' lives as well as how teachers connected themselves to other sources of power to resist the power of economy.

From teachers' perceptions about the concept of success and how they situated themselves as successful people, four drives or motives to achieve success were reflected. This implied the substantial power of economy and social power. Within a world where capitalism prevails everywhere, people are motivated to achieve money, fame, and name. It is regarded as important to survive in this world of capitalism. However, individual teachers also created other related motives to resist the power of capitalism. Teachers focus on health, social capital, and ethics-morality-positive beliefs to take part in resisting the power of economy. All teachers seemed to realize the danger of capitalism and addressed the need to balance the power of money, fame, and name with health, social capital, and ethics-morality-positive beliefs. These teachers also showed attempts to maintain their happiness, which they regarded as a genuine measure of success for their lives.

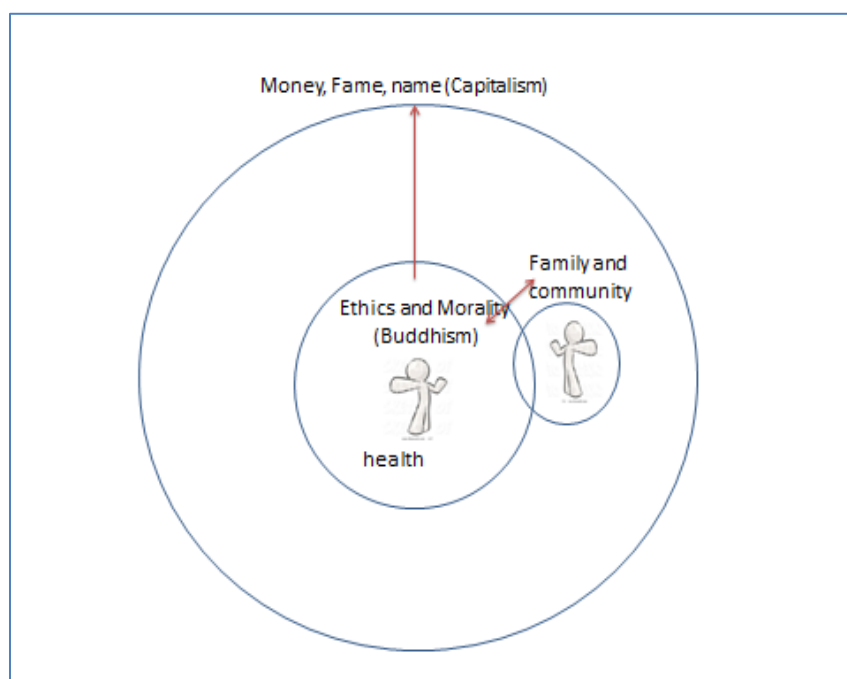


Diagram 5.1 Teachers' four drives to success, and substantial power in relations

## CHAPTER 6

### Strategies of power through teacher identity negotiation

In this chapter, I discuss strategies of power used in the school context of TOW. I divide this chapter into four parts. First, I display the mechanism of power, or the operation of power, by presenting the interaction of teachers with other people in the school, which is in a network of power. In the second part, I focus on disciplines used to regulate the behavior of individuals in society. This was to see the underlying norms in the chain of power between teachers and students. Next, I explore in depth teachers' perceptions of what it means to be a good teacher, in order to see the norms influencing their identity construction. Finally, I examine the process of normalization, which relates to the shift to the temporary construction of identity as well as the development of power-knowledge in this Thai heritage language school. To explain power and its means of controlling behavior, I employ Foucault's view of power as the framework for the study.

#### 6.1 Mechanism of power

The mechanism of power was used as my goal for the power analysis. According to Foucault (1982), power is not the "property" nor "possession of dominant class," but a relation. Power, in this view, is a multiplicity of forces, a net-like relation. It operates from the micro level to the broader level. To study the mechanism of power in this sense, I focused on answering the following questions, based on Foucault's suggestion to deconstruct power relations:

- 1) Who has power?
- 2) Who lacks power?
- 3) What does the power mechanism consist of?

4) How do powerful agents use the power they have?

5) How did their actions affect powerless agents?

Foucault addresses the question of how power is exerted, in order to see what happens when individuals exert power over others (Foucault, 1982, p. 786). The power mechanism actually relates to the relationship between partners. In this study, I present the mechanism of power by displaying the relationships among teachers, parents, and students to explain the roles and status of the powerful and powerless agents. I show that teachers in TOW are both powerful and powerless at the same time. As powerful agents, these teachers deployed and strengthened their teacher status to influence the Thai community effectively. They created “social capital” or a network of Thai community connection to promote their mission of cultural preservation. As a result, teachers and parents could generally form a strong team of Thai cultural preservers.

Teachers from different spiritual status were involved in different relationships in the network of power. Secular teachers acted like frontline warriors in the battle over heritage language and cultural preservation. They encountered resistance by uninterested students, which caused them to struggle to maintain their authority. Unlike the secular teachers, monk teachers are highly revered in the Thai community. They are involved in assisting the development of students’ minds to basic morality, both directly with students in the meditation classroom and indirectly by teaching parents to teach Dharma to their children. Here are the details of how teachers became a vehicle of power in the network of power mechanisms.

#### **6.1.1 Teachers as influential agents with strong determination to teach.**

These teachers can be regarded as influential agents because they played a leading role in the TOW community. They were involved in fundamental changes in the school and Thai

community. They were honored for their volunteering and dedication to developing Thai proficiency for bilingual students. These teachers have shown their commitment to the development of the TOW by constructing a community network of teachers–parents and school–community. They set up strong connections to create a close-knit Thai community in the TOW.

#### ***6.1.1.1 School policy strengthened Thai community in TOW***

With their dual role of teaching and community development, teachers in the TOW can greatly encourage parents and community to get involved in Thai lessons. Teachers in the TOW are directly involved in setting up policy. Influencing school policy was one of the strategies teachers developed to strengthen the community. They did so through the cooperation of parents in support of students' learning.

The following selected excerpt was from the school brochure distributed to parents during the school orientation on September 7, 2014. It shows how policy in the TOW convinced parents to support the development of students' Thai language learning as well as to partake in the school–community relationship. This brochure was provided in both Thai and English; I chose only English text about the school's requests for parents' cooperation. All texts were the exact words used in the brochure, except the pseudonym of the school and the e-mail contact of school staff.

At TOW, Thai Language School is a parent-run cooperative, and its success depends on everyone doing his/her part. We are asking the following cooperation from the each parent:

- Speak Thai to your child as much as you can at home.
- Be on time when the class starts (10 am).
- Try not to miss class. (Each student must attend a minimum of 70% of class sessions.)
- Help your child with homework assignments.
- Help explain the rules and regulations of school to your child.
- Parents should read weekly email from school.

- Notify teacher if your child has any food allergy or health issue.
- Please make sure you keep the school office informed with any address, phone or email changes. (xx e-mail address of the parent-teacher liaison )
- Each family is required to volunteer at the temple at least 20 hours. Parents can volunteer in many ways at the temple, not just for their child's class. TOW is very generous to offer free facility and utilities to our Thai Language School. We pay no rent to the temple. Some examples of the way you can help out are cleaning dishes, sweep the floor, pick up trash and/or vacuum the classroom after the class is over.

(School brochure for parents, September 7, 2014 )

In the brochure, the school requested support from parents to help their children develop Thai language as well as to participate in school activities and the TOW community. To develop students' learning of Thai language, parents were asked to speak Thai at home, to bring their children to school consistently and punctually, to spend time with the students' homework, and to inform students about school policy as needed. Also, parents were requested to support the temple in various jobs. Consequently, the Thai language school of the TOW has contributed to the temple in many ways. The parents volunteered to assist in the temple chores, taking on tasks such as serving as a librarian, organizing the dharma book library, or cleaning.

Most parents have become more cooperative in participating in the school and temple activities. Teachers who were mainly in charge of the school became connectors to create a sense of community among parents, children, and other Thai people in the TOW. Imjai described the positive feedback she received from parents of students in the TOW and discussed the benefits of the Thai language school for building a community in the TOW:

The school is beneficial for not only students but also parents. There were many parents telling me [something] like, if we don't provide Thai classes for children, they (parents) wouldn't go to the temple this often. Previously they did not care why they need to come.

But now they come here every Sunday because they have to send their children to school. Indirectly, they got benefits from coming to the temple because they participated in dharma teaching by monks and had opportunities to meditate in a group. Also, the kids at school make more friends at school. The school has become a bigger group of connection now.

(Interview, June 14, 2014)

In addition to making school arrangements and developing school policy, teachers were also involved in the school expansion. They advertised the benefit of the school verbally to their acquaintances and encouraged them to send their children to study in the TOW. There has been an increase in the demand to send children to study Thai in the TOW. The TOW expanded the school by increasing the number of classrooms and facilities to meet the bigger number of students. The funding was supported by the temple and by community donations. The number of students has increased from 10–20 students in 2012 to 60–80 students in 2013–2014. It can be said that these teachers acted as influential agents in expanding the Thai community in the TOW.

#### ***6.1.1.2 Recruiting teachers: Friendship, seniority and authority in the TOW.***

Teachers in the TOW employed social capital as an asset in attaining more volunteer teachers to meet the increasing number of students. Strong friendship and Thai-style seniority were used as strategies to recruit teachers. Age and seniority matter in the Thai community: The younger show respect to the older and are prone to follow their requests and suggestions. According to Hofstede (2014), Thai culture is “collectivist” in that people retain their loyalty to the group. This loyalty is even more important than other societal rules and regulations.

Illustrating an example of how Thai loyalty and seniority were employed to recruit more teachers to meet the increasing number of students, Imjai, a director of the Thai program at TOW and the most senior teacher, described how she influenced other volunteer teachers to teach in the TOW. Imjai made good use of her personal friendships to benefit the school. She explained her use of influence on her peers in the process of recruitment:

Interviewer: How did you choose teachers for TOW?

Imjai: I focused my requests on ones who look like good teachers of Thai language, the ones who showed their care about having this Thai language program. I informally invited them to teach in the TOW or let them know that I was interested in them. But some, like Patama, did not want to teach at all and refused my invitation. However, I can see she could be a promising teacher. I then kept asking her and finally she agreed to serve in the TOW. Actually, Patama decided to teach because she did not want to say no to me. Friends will always help friends, right?

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

Imjai demonstrated what her principles were by choosing teachers by their promising nature and by their dedication to maintaining the Thai language program. Patama, who is Imjai's close friend, finally decided to teach because of her loyalty to her friend. Imjai used her friendship with Patama to influence her decision to teach in the TOW.

Thai seniority has also been used as a technique of power to recruit and influence teachers in the TOW. Imjai made good use of her senior status in the TOW program to be the center of authority and to get support from all of her peers. Seniority is a power strategy because

it influenced teachers' decisions to teach in the TOW. Many teachers shared their reason for teaching in the TOW—which was typically not entirely because they were interested in teaching there. At first, many actually did not want to teach, but they were asked by their seniors to support the program. It is Thai culture to conform to the elder's requests. The following excerpts by Anotai and Panward showed why they decided to be teachers in the TOW.

Interviewer: What made you committed to teaching in the TOW?

Panward: I wonder about this too. [laugh] It was because I promised to do it. It has become my responsibility to take care of the class. I do not want to trouble others if I did not do as I promised them to do. It is not good to change one's mind often. Even when I was downhearted, I still came to teach.

(Interview, April 27, 2014)

Even though Panward sometimes faced her own resistance to teaching, she came to teach because she did not want to break her word to other Thai friends in the community. Her decision to teach reflected how loyalty serves as a means of power exertion in the Thai community.

Anotai's decision to teach in the TOW serves as another example of the influences of Thai seniority in this situation. She reflected,

I promised Imjai and other seniors in the TOW that after my doctoral graduation, I would teach in the TOW. Then, after my graduation, the school was expanded and needed more teachers. They pulled me in; [laugh] they said I could teach. I was also willing to support them. If you had asked me if I liked teaching, I would not have known the answer. I had never taught like that. But teaching in the TOW is like helping the temple, helping the

society. It is a chance to support them. OK, I was asked to teach kids. It was fine and I have been teaching since then.

(Interview, April 30, 2014)

Apart from loyalty and seniority, the authority to accept students into the program was also used as a technique to recruit more volunteer teachers. Imjai told me that in the process of teacher recruitment, she also targeted parents who looked like good teachers-to-be. With this concern, she prioritized accepting children whose parents agreed to volunteer to in the TOW over children whose parents refused to teach. Yonpak was one of the teachers who agreed to teach because she wanted to send her daughter into the program. She started as a teaching assistant as part of her training. After about three months, Yonpak impressed other teachers with some creative teaching lessons and finally was invited to be a teacher in charge of a class. Here is what Yonpak stated about her reasons for teaching in the TOW.

I started teaching because I wanted to send my daughter to study in the TOW. The school actually accepted the students' registration by using a waiting list system. I was lucky to be invited to be a teaching assistant because my daughter could study then. In the beginning, I did not have to prepare lesson plans. I just helped the leading teacher. Later on, other teachers invited me to take charge of a class and I agreed.

(Interview, April 20, 2014)

The process of teacher recruitment in the TOW showed how friendship, seniority and authority influenced volunteer teachers. In the next section, I present a picture of how teachers acted as powerful agents by designing their own lessons.

### ***6.1.1.3 Teachers have freedom to create their own lessons***

Teachers in the TOW have fundamental freedom to lead their classes, to select the curriculum, and to organize all teaching materials and activities. Yonpak was a teacher who liked to create her own activities differently from the suggested school curriculum activities. She learned examples of teaching techniques from online resources such as YouTube and Google searches. She stated that she partially created her lessons based on the school curriculum. Moreover, she tried to tailor her lessons most usefully for students by involving their parents. Yonpak believed that this was a better way to help students learn Thai. Yonpak described her teaching strategy for involving students' families in the lessons:

Here I know the lessons students have learned before. For example, they had already studied about family the previous year. I chose the topic of family and created activities in which they had to ask their parents at home about family information such as their place of birth, reason to stay in the United States, information about their grandparents, why their grandparents passed away, and so on. This would provide a reason for them to talk about Thai family with their parents. [pause] It is a million percent likely (she is absolutely certain) that parents helped their children work on the assignments. That is a kind of building a good relationship between them. I believe it is the real goal of giving assignments. Students will learn more from family. Actually, teachers at the school are just guides to learning.

(Interview, June 19, 2014)

It is interesting to note that Thai teachers in the TOW are influential agents in the organization of the school. They helped strengthen community in the TOW. They invested their

social capital to enable families and other people in the Thai community to influence positive change. However, the path of being teachers in the TOW was not always smooth; these teachers faced some student resistance, which forced them to struggle with their identities. In 6.1.2, I discuss the challenges with these teachers faced by student resistance and the way teachers dealt with the resistance.

### **6.1.2 Teachers are contested: Teachers' struggles with student resistance in the classroom.**

As Foucault (1978, p. 40) stated, "Where there is power, there is resistance." This means that when teachers exert power, there are always "free subjects" who have freedom to resist the act of exercised power. The power is in the dynamic struggle, an ongoing conflict relating to attempts to control others and the responses to those forceful actions. Foucault did not view power in the form of the oppressor and oppressed but rather people as free subjects who can control and resist within the networks of power relations. In the TOW situation, teachers attempted to influence students to learn Thai language and culture; however, their efforts were resisted. In this section, I describe the resistance that teachers in the TOW confronted and how they located themselves in the immobilized situation of the powerless.

Even though Foucault focused only on understanding how power is exerted and the impacts of power, subjective emotion and motivation were disregarded (Celikates, 2014). I still include teachers' feeling and emotions, which I describe as a motive for power in Chapter 5. Teachers' feelings and motives deepen the understanding of the situation of subjects in the circulation of power.

As mentioned in 4.1, one of the challenges teachers faced in was the student preference for English as a main language for communicating in the TOW classroom. Still, all teachers in the TOW insisted on speaking Thai to these students. However, they tried to adjust themselves by overlooking when students responded in English. Teachers also mentioned other challenges related to students' resistance to studying Thai in the TOW. Following are the details of the ways students openly contested—and tried to compete against—teachers' efforts to teach Thai in the TOW.

#### ***6.1.2.1 Students are present in class but absent in their spirits.***

Teachers faced challenges in their classroom management. They faced student resistance in the form of indifference toward participating in classroom activities. According to teachers' opinions, the lack of interest increased when students got older. Imjai described the student attitudes:

Imjai: Students in the Intermediate class are more challenging than other classes. It was hard for them to pay attention in class. The more age they gain, the less interested they are in class. The older students feel like, "I do not go to school to play. If I am not interested, I will not do anything."

Interviewer: How do you feel about this?

Imjai: Nothing. I don't know what to do. I just keep on teaching the way I do. In class when they need to participate, I force them to. These students' resistance is a challenge for me. It is suffering, boredom, and everything.

Interviewer: It seems like you feel sick of this resistance?

Imjai: Not much now, I try to ignore my negative feelings and fix my own heart. Some

teachers can accept students' ignorance. For example, some students refused to participate but did not disturb the class. The class could still go smoothly. For me, I cannot let go of their ignorance. I want them to participate like normal students. I tried to push them to participate. Sometimes, there were students whining or acting grumpy. I ignored and let it go. Still I won't let these whining students grab attention and disadvantage the others.

(Interview, June 14, 2014)

The student resistance reflected their disregard for teacher authority. This resistance put Imjai into the immobilizing situation of tension over teaching. Imjai accept her conflict when facing student resistance. She tried to negotiate herself as a teacher by controlling her insecure mind through evading her emotion from the distress and disappointment. She also persisted in using her teacher authority to control the disturbing students with her own code of conduct for her classroom management. Imjai presumed the cause of student resistance was that they were forced to come to school. She explained,

It is a challenge in the school because students are from different backgrounds. They have different personalities. Also they did not choose to come to study Thai but were forced to come. They are present in class but absent in spirit. I need to try to make them enjoy studying. I need to find a way to deal with individual students.

(Interview, June 14, 2014)

Imjai described students' reactions in the Thai language classroom with the expression that "students are present in class but absent in spirit." This statement reflected Imjai's picture of students' ignorance, which was the consequence of parents forcing the students to come to

school. Imjai related the reason of student resistance to her compulsion to bring her son to study in the TOW. She believed that student resistance is a normal reaction. She even needed to force her child to study for his own benefit, as she described in the following conversation:

Interviewer: You said you want children to have friends and learn Thai culture?

Imjai: Not just friends, but friends who have similar backgrounds, such as children whose parent(s) is/are Thai. I have thought about this before, that children can get a better command of Thai language from home. Here in TOW, we just guide them to learn better Thai. Only 2–3 hours a week is not enough to make them speak Thai.

Interviewer: You told me that your son doesn't want to go to the school of TOW?

Imjai: He does not at all. But I feel I need to force him to come for his own benefit. I think children resist because it is in their nature to resist. Sometimes we have to force them to participate because they won't agree with anything we want them to do. Also, they already study a lot in their (mainstream) school. It is normal for students to resist as they are forced to study in TOW. Moreover, Thai language is a hard language to learn, since they don't use Thai in their first-hand experiences. Like my son; it is hard to make him use Thai as fluently as French, the language he studies five days a week.

(Interview, June 14, 2014)

Likewise, Panward recognized that students did not come to study by their own choice but by their parents' recommendation. Under this pressure, the students resisted the compulsion to learn by disrupting the classroom. However, Panward decided to maintain her authority as a

teacher through classroom management, by applying her rules and regulations to control interrupting students. Panward said:

The students do not understand why they need to come to study Thai. Some of them were not willing to study but their parents forced them to come. They do not want to study, they do not have good background using Thai at home, and they were not interested in learning Thai. They are likely to “DISRUPT” the class. I let them study but if they disturb others, I ask them to leave the class.

(Interview, June 27, 2014)

***6.1.2.2 Sometimes I feel I don't have to teach. I am just a volunteer teacher.***

Teachers' authority and their role as the teacher were sometimes challenged by not only students but also students' parents. Yonpak showed her bitter feelings about some parents' refusal to cooperate in training their child to behave in classroom.

There were students who could not sit properly. They were restless and disturbing. They could not sit still. I tried to tell them nicely first to sit properly, to remove the legs from the desk. Stop this. I once discussed with one student's parents. These parents said it was their son's habit. Their son did not mean to ignore me. He listened to me but it was just his style to sit like that. Then, how can I punish the students who have this personal problem?

(Interview, June 19, 2014)

The refusal of the parents to accept Yonpak's requests of training their son about good manners caused her to feel disappointed and to face the loss of teacher authority. Yonpak revealed how she mediated her teacher identity when facing the student resistance, as in the following excerpt:

Students are forced to study in the TOW. They don't want to come and I feel so tired. Sometimes I feel I don't have to teach. I am just a volunteer teacher. But since I bring my daughter here, I should come.

(Interview, June 19, 2014)

Yonpak clearly felt de-motivated about teaching in the TOW because students and parents did not value her. She faced challenges toward her authority as the teacher. She lost the authority to control her class. To manage her uneasiness about losing her teacher authority, she described herself as a volunteer teacher, who has more freedom to resign from teaching, not a career teacher who needs to work for a living. She stepped her "self" partially backward into her comfort zone where she did not have to worry about the loss of her professional identity. Yonpak's mediation of teacher identity corresponded to the study of Wu, Palmer, and Field (2011), which claimed that volunteer teachers in community-based schools require more sense of teacher professionalism. In this situation, Yonpak employed the status of a volunteer teacher to restore her feelings after her discouragement from student and parent resistance.

### ***6.1.2.3 Teachers adjusted themselves to the way bilingual students are***

Teachers lowered their expectations about proper manners for bilingual children in the TOW. They perceived the nature of bilingual children, who were born and raised in the local culture of the United States, as different from the nature of Thai children in Thailand. Imjai described this as follows:

Interviewer: Do students here honor teachers in the same way as students in Thailand?

Imjai: No, not at all. But I understand them that their culture is different from Thai

culture. I am okay with this. We need to understand why they behave like that. It

is the local culture and they were born and raised in the United States. We cannot expect them to honor us like respectful teachers by our teacher status like in Thailand. It is their culture.

Interviewer: You mean you have to adjust yourself to the local culture?

Imjai: Yes. Actually respect is necessary for all of mankind, all languages and races. But here the respect is not at the HIGH LEVEL like in Thailand. I believe they are respectful to us but not as much as children in Thailand are. At least they listened to me. They followed my suggestion despite not doing it promptly. This is fine for me already. There is no need to show as much respect as Thai students do to their teachers in Thailand.

Panward used an interesting power strategy to balance her teacher authority. Panward lowered her authority to cope with bilingual students' manners in the classroom but decided to act like a stricter teacher to control students' manners when they were outside the classroom:

Interviewer: Are you serious about students' manners?

Panward: You mean something like rolling on the floor in the study class, right? I am not, but I told my students that they cannot do this rolling outside the classroom. It is not okay and I will try to keep eyes on their manners outside the classroom. If they behave too improperly, I will reprimand them. For example, if people in the middle of the chanting session and my students make loud noises, I will stop them.

(Interview, June 27, 2014)

Two different tactics Panward used to control her student reflected her temporary identity shift in different social situations. According Foucault, identity is not fixed but is constructed through interaction with other people. Every person has no real identity; instead, it is structured by society and it is changing. In the case of Panward, she regarded these bilingual students as children in American dominated culture. She adjusted herself to their manner. She allowed students to engage in some kinds of behaviors that are not proper in Thailand, such as rolling on the floor. However, to the public outside the classroom, Panward chose to follow the norms of the Thai community and gain her teacher authority by forewarning and reprimanding students if their behaviors were against Thai norms. The example of Panward's decision to manage students' manners showed her identity normalization into the contexts of different dominant norms. I will discuss more about normalization and discipline in 6.2 and 6.3.

Panward's different reaction towards students' behaviors in different places also related to her use of morality to avoid conflicts with her moral values. According to Johnston (2003, p. 103), the relationship of teacher–students involves the moral rights and responsibility of being a teacher. It is ideal to balance “authority”—or the ability to maintain respect for her in her role as the teacher—with “solidarity,” by taking sides with students and making them see teachers as their allies. In case of Panward, the negotiation of her identity in different situations helped her balance her authority and solidarity to maintain a good relationship with her students and still remain her teacher's authority in the eyes of other Thai people in the public.

### **6.1.3 The best way to influence students with Thai is by taking them to Thailand**

Teachers sent their children to study in the TOW with a hope of helping them make friends with Thai-American students and learn Thai language and culture. However, they

understood that studying in the TOW was a secondary experience for students. Panward shared her opinion that she did not expect the TOW to acculturate her kids effectively with Thai culture. Instead, her children will learn much more from visiting Thailand every summer. This was the reason why she decided to visit Thailand every year—to have her children experience real Thai culture. Panward stated:

The reason I sent my kids to study in the TOW is to make my kids exposed to culture that is not just American. Actually, they won't acculturate into Thai by studying in the TOW. They only know about Thai information. Students will really get the real Thai [culture] when we take them to Thailand every year, in the real Thai society. They learn the real Thai people, Thai culture. And that is my plan: to bring them to Thailand every year.

(Interview, November 3, 2014)

Panward also described the increasing motivation of her children to learn Thai after visiting Thailand:

After many visits to Thailand, my daughter has more drive to speak Thai. But my son still does not have much yet. Lately, I tried to make an agreement with them to speak Thai during weekend. I encouraged them to speak Thai by telling them that, 'If you do not speak Thai for a long time, your Thai tongue will be stiff. Your friends in Thailand will tease you because you could not speak Thai clearly.' It was funny when my kids asked me to speak English with them during weekdays and they would speak Thai during weekends in return. I refused. [laughs]

(Interview, November 3, 2014)

Panward has faith in the first-hand experiences in Thailand as the best way to increase her children's motivation to learn Thai language.

Imjai, as a school director, foresaw the need to create a Thai exchange project by sending bilingual students to attend a Thai summer camp in Thailand. She believed that this future plan would help students learn the real ways of Thai culture. Imjai discussed her future plan:

I won't stop only in the TOW. I know many people in Thailand. I hope to send our students to Thailand as exchange students like a summer camp. They will get much more there. They will see how Thai people live and the Thai way of life. I think we can help them see this. If I am still here in this position (in the TOW), I will try to make this project happen.

(Interview, June 14, 2014)

Imjai showed her ambition to influence bilingual students to learn Thai language and culture. Even though her plan is still in her imagination, she showed her strong intent to manage this with the goal of helping students in the TOW get first-hand experiences in an authentic Thai environment.

#### **6.1.4 Monk teachers are not in direct battle with students**

As mentioned before, monks are in a highly revered status for Thai Buddhists. Even though they teach bilingual students, the school protocol by secular teachers protected monks from all students' challenges. From my weekly observation in the TOW, the meditation session by monk teachers in the TOW was arranged formally in a respectful way. Students under the monitoring of volunteer teachers are required to follow codes of conduct when interacting with monks. Students were requested to refrain from some actions in a monk's classroom, such as

making loud noises, using headphones, pointing feet at an image of Buddha or at other people, chewing gum, and others. The students were asked to sit properly and to behave in the meditation session.

Monks were rarely involved in managing the classroom; mostly the manners teacher and other volunteer teachers took control of students' behavior. After lunchtime, teachers or parents on volunteer duty marshaled students to the meeting room. The manners teacher is the leader of the student class in charge of guiding them through all rituals. After all students were present in their sitting row, a parent or a teacher on duty of the day would go to invite the monk to the meditation class. The general pattern of the meditation instruction started with showing respect to the monk teacher and the Buddha image, some dharma discussion, and five-minute meditation, then finished by showing respect to the monk and Buddha image before leaving. Individual monk teachers in weekly rotation took responsibility for preparing the dharma topic, activities, and teaching materials. Normally, Thai monks used Thai in their instruction. Students mostly replied in English but were encouraged by both volunteer teachers and monks to reply in Thai. Thai teachers sometimes assisted as translators for both monks and students when needed. With the school protocol that secular teachers created, secular teachers safeguarded monks from students' challenges.

***6.1.4.1 Monks attempted to indirectly influence students with the cooperation of parents.***

Monks realized the need to teach basic dharma to children in the TOW. However, they believe that teaching morality requires cooperation from all agents, not only from monks.

Thammarak highlighted the need of cooperation by parents, secular teachers, and monks as follows:

Lay people work and do not have time to study dharma. They expect school to teach dharma, and the schools do not care about religion. They put emphasis on teaching knowledge for the benefit of earning money in the competitive world. It is not okay to leave out the crucial part of mind development. Teaching religion has become the duty of the temple or church. Actually, helping students develop their minds needs to start from parents. Parents need to demonstrate as examples the way they want their kids to do things. Some topics, such as religion, may be too difficult for parents to explain. Monks need to take care of this.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Thammarak expressed that teaching morality to develop the mind cannot be conducted purely by monks, but must involve the cooperation of parents and secular teachers. Likewise, Wachiratham discussed the need for cooperation between monks, parents, and teachers:

To teach morality most effectively requires cooperation from both monks and parents. Both monk teachers and secular teachers can support each other to bring the positive Thai culture and beliefs to students. Sometimes monks cannot communicate to make students understand the story. Parents can teach this better because they can communicate better with their kids. However, it is complicating for parents to directly teach dharma. Monks should start the topic and parents should discuss it with their kids again for more understanding.

(Interview, October 21, 2014)

***6.1.4.2 Monks found teaching bilingual students more challenging than teaching Thai students.***

Even though monk teachers were rarely involved in disciplining students, they faced the challenges of teaching bilingual students, who were born and raised in the local culture of the United States. Both Wachiratham and Thammarak addressed the difficulty in dealing with bilingual students in the TOW as compared to Thai students in Thailand. Here is what Thammarak said:

Thammarak: It is challenging to teach students here. Children in Thailand will be more obedient. It is easy to manage the classroom. Contrarily, children born and raised here need more freedom. They are independent. It is difficult to communicate with them.

Interviewer: How do you deal with this?

Thammarak: I adjusted myself to them. I tried to find effective teaching techniques and materials. For the young children, I chose simple and short topics to be easily understood and to connect with their daily lives. For older children, it is possible to teach more complex dharma. I also employed teaching materials such as pictures and other teaching aids.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Thammarak emphasized a challenge of teaching management for the classes in TOW. For him, students in the TOW are more independent and hard to control than Thai students in Thailand, who are more obedient. He realized that he needed to develop his teaching techniques as well as to apply teaching aids to engage TOW students' interests. Similarly, Wachiratham

discussed the need to adapt teaching strategy to effectively communicate with bilingual students. He was more concerned about teaching bilingual students when he discussed the problem with telling stories about magic and superstition to bilingual students:

Everything needs to be modified when teaching dharma to bilingual children. I have to find the best way to communicate with them. Last month, Lalita (a parent of a student in the TOW) came to ask me a question. There was a monk using pictures to narrate the history of the Lord Buddha. The problem occurred when there was a picture showing superstition and magic of Lord Buddha. It showed that Sitthata (Lord Buddha) took seven steps straightway after his birth. Lalita's daughter resisted this teaching; she told her mom at home that it was impossible that a newly born baby can walk right away. She said, "Mom, why did that monk teach me like that? It is not true. How can a baby walk and speak as soon as it was born?" Lalita then asked me to deal with this. I then suggested her to explain her daughter that the monk used a metaphor to explain the history of Lord Buddha in a figurative way. There was underlying meaning: this baby would declare his teaching to seven regions in India. The lotus receiving his footsteps means he would be welcomed in public. It did not really mean he could walk immediately. It is a figurative style used to engage people who like magic and superstition. The children in the United States are taught to live with logical reasoning. All kinds of these stories will be difficult for them to understand and so we need to explain the beliefs on the foundation of logic. If this was taught to Thai children, they could understand the sense and feel attentive and entertained because they do not reject magic and superstition.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

Wachiratham raised the problematic issue of using stories about magic and superstition as examples when teaching about Buddhism. Bilingual students refused to accept teachers' instruction if the teaching is not logical and convincing. This supernatural topic caused a student's doubt, which might lead to a loss in faith toward the monk or even toward Buddhism. Learning from these parents' feedback, Wachiratham emphasized the needs of cultural awareness and sensibility when teaching dharma for bilingual needs.

***6.1.4.3 Being a monk is beneficial to teach morality but unfavorable to discipline students' manner.***

Monk teachers mentioned the advantage of being a monk in training people about morality to people. Wachiratham and Thammarak said:

Wachiratham: Being a monk is more beneficial for teaching religion because people will listen to me more. This is because... being a monk, I live my life as a good example in the way of Buddha's teaching.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

Thammarak: Being a monk means to try to reach the ultimate goal of nirvana, and to help society develop their minds. Monks have to live their life peacefully before they are going to teach other people. People will trust monks as a good example of living life morally.

(Interview, April 29, 2014)

Both Wachiratham and Thammarak are confident that being monks can benefit their teaching because they can maintain their positions as good, moral teachers. However, being a good monk

is sometimes in conflict with being a good teacher. Wachiratham shared his conflicts about being in both statuses:

Interviewer: As you mentioned, you are both monk and teacher; have you ever felt you do not complete these two roles?

Wachiratham: In the Buddhist aspect, I will never be complete until I reach nirvana. In the social aspect, I sometimes feel like I cannot be both a good monk and a good teacher at the same time. For example, I might focus on loving-kindness but be lenient in teaching them to be well disciplined. I might not be strict with students' manners. It is different from a secular teacher who reprimands students immediately. Loving-kindness is superior for a monk but a good teacher should be strict enough to control students' behavior. There was a student telling me that she liked my class so much because I was not strict at all. Actually, I should feel good about this feedback but I realized that having loving-kindness can impact the disciplining system. I was aware about this and tried to balance and make good use of mercy in the right situation

(Interview, October 21, 2014)

For Wachiratham, being a monk who maintained kindness and mercy toward all lives was in conflict with exerting a teacher's authority to control students and train students to have good manners. He realized the need to balance himself with both the authority to manage class and the solidarity necessary to be a merciful and compassionate teacher.

In sum, teacher identity is dynamic and is constructed by interactions with other people. Power was produced as productive as well as repressive. Teachers engaged in a complex system

or network of relations, throughout which there were chains of power and power circulated. Teachers exercised power over students and their children. The Thai community generally supported the power of teachers. However, students resisted teachers' power, under the complex network of local culture in the United States. In the next part, section 6.2, I focus on exploring teachers' techniques to control students' behaviors through punishment and rewards.

## **6.2 Discipline: Punishment and rewards**

Discipline is a power technique used to train or to force individuals or groups to act or not act in certain ways. It influences both individual behaviors and behaviors in the community (Foucault, 1977). Discipline is involved in the functions of everyone's life in a social domain. As Foucault (1984, p. 195) stated, "The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes." In other words, discipline is exercised not only onto the "offender" but also onto everyone in the whole society. Therefore, the enforcement of discipline helps us understand norms in society.

In order to understand norms manipulating people in this context, I examined teachers' perceptions about students' conduct or actions that were regarded to be normal or deviant in this community. I explored teachers' decisions about providing rewards to or imposing sanctions on students as part of corrective training in conduct. As Foucault (1977) stated, "To punish is to exercise," Therefore, I investigated in particular teachers' techniques of rewards and punishment to retain or redeem their power in classroom management. My intention was not to understand the techniques teachers used to discipline students but to undercover the idealized norms teachers

expected students to follow. With this goal, I explored the situations or students' behaviors that led teachers to decide to punish or to reward as a way to control students' conduct.

### **6.2.1 Punishment**

According to Pongratz (2007), punishment in school is a pedagogic form of discipline as a part of students' learning process. It is legitimized as a way to construct "a normalized school pupil" (Kost, 1985 cited in Pongratz, 2007, p. 33). It is, therefore, normal for children to be subject to pedagogic discipline in the school. In the TOW, teachers used a variety of forms of punishment over students. These started from the weakest forms of sanctions and ascended to more serious consequences if the actions were still continued. For instance, Anotai used escalating forms punishment as part of classroom management when students behaved undesirably. My observations in a field note taken May 11, 2014 reflect this:

While Anotai was in front of the classroom discussing with a group of nine students how to interview parents for a class assignment, a student started tapping his desk by flipping his pencil case rhythmically. Swiftly, Anotai turned her gaze on that student. They made eye contact and the student stopped flipping his pencil case. After a few minutes, the same student started flipping his pencil case again. Anotai turned right away to that student and said, "Be good; do not make noise." Only a few minutes after that, the same student started a third round of tapping. This time, Anotai said, "Hey, the noise is disturbing. The class next door is hearing your noises." The student stopped flipping, but not long afterward, he started flipping the case again. Anotai finally said to that student, "If you flip the case and made that noise again, I will confiscate your pencil case and give it to Noppon (Anotai's son who is a few years younger than this student). I am sure Noppon will definitely like your case."

Anotai casted various levels of sanctions, starting from a pause with a disapproving look, to a call for behaving better, to addressing the reason to stop flipping the case, and finally to a warning to confiscate the pencil case. The series of warnings of consequences she imposed on this student was intended to terminate the disturbing noises and to imply that tapping the desk was improper. Anotai used her messages of disapproval on this student to discontinue the tapping. The final penalty was the potential repossession of the pencil case. From this situation, the behavior norm underlying Anotai's disciplinary punishment was that tapping the desk (by flipping the pencil case) is disruptive because it disturbs other people with noises, and it should be dismissed. In other words, it is unacceptable to distract other people in a classroom or a neighboring classroom. The consequence of doing so may lead the offender to lose one of his belongings.

Teachers in the TOW said they avoided physical punishment; the worst punishment they imposed was isolation and a short period of detention. Anotai shared how she punished the students:

I punished students by sentencing them to detention. Students wanted to go for lunch early. If they did something wrong, they would have to stay in longer in class. If they persisted in that bad action, I would keep them in class. I sometimes made a threat to report them to their parents when they ignored the lesson, [by saying,] "Do you still want to study? If you don't, I will send you to your mother." These kinds of punishment could calm students down and help students behave better. I normally punish students when they disturb other people and that disturbance delays the flow of the class, makes a nuisance, or annoys other people in class.

(Interview, July 17, 2014)

In this section, I do not focus on what punishments were used to control students; instead, I use teachers' punishments as a way to investigate all circumstances under the control of teacher. This analysis was intended to observe underlying social norms and the violations of those norms that made teachers decide to bring forms of punishment into classroom. Observation of teachers' sanctions and teachers' opinions about their imposition of punishment also merit exploration. Some norms were determined as follows:

***6.2.1.1 Social norms: Tilting chairs and putting feet up on the table is too much.***

Tilting chairs is considered improper in Thailand. Yonpak, who was trained to avoid tilting chair when she was young in her Thai school, showed her conflict about whether she should punish the students or not. Yonpak stated:

..... In Thailand, if we sit and tilt or rock a chair, we might be hit by teachers (get punished). Sitting on the chair with two legs is not acceptable at all. This is a challenge for me as I cannot be too strict too about their manners. They will be bored if I complain too much about this. So I remind myself that it is a language lesson. And it is not fun to keep eyes on their behaviors.

(Interview, June 19, 2014)

Yonpak showed her conflict towards students' behavior of tilting chairs. It was an unacceptable behavior but she hesitated to punish students for it, as to do so would be about manner training, not related to language class. However, in contrast to Anotai, Yonpak tried to change the students' manners. She kept warning students not to tilt their chairs. I heard her try to stop a student from doing so, saying, "Sit still. Do not sit like that; you may fall over and hurt

yourself.” Anotai tried to stop this student from tilting the chair by relating the request to personal safety.

All teachers are serious with students about not using feet to touch anything or anyone. They mentioned that they would immediately stop this action and reprimand the students. Here is what Anotai said about using feet:

Students in the TOW have been raised as American children even though they are actually Thai by race. Some behaviors such as putting feet on the desk, I could actually ignore, but “HEY;” we are in a Thai language classroom and it is in Thai society. I, therefore, have to tell them, “Take your feet down from the desk, dear.” If they dispute me completely or argue tooth-and-nail, I think I am okay with that, but putting their feet up on the table is too much. What I have to adjust is myself, in order to deal with the way the children act. I need to tune myself into the way they behave.

(Interview, October 23, 2014)

Anotai expressed her opinion that bilingual students tended to be informal like many local American students. In Thai culture, feet are preserved as the lowest parts of body and should be kept away from contact with other people, as it can be insulting (Wyam Thailand, 2015). Anotai expressed that ignoring such behavior is ironic for her, since the Thai classroom is supposed to train students with Thai culture and manner. As a Thai teacher in the TOW, Anotai decided to use some forms of sanctions to stop this kind of student behavior.

This choice to use punishment clearly relates to her identity normalization in the discourse of Thai culture. She chose to maintain her teacher identity by upholding the idea that the use of feet is an improper manner, and she showed some signs of disapproval to this student.

I noticed other teachers in the TOW stopped this behavior as well. During my observation in Yonpak's class, a student put his feet on the desk in the classroom. First, Yonpak made eye contact with that student and said, "Where are your feet placed?" The student realized Yonpak's disapproval and removed the feet from the desk. Not much later, the same student put his feet on the desk again. This time, Yonpak said, "Can you sit better than this?" as a second warning call. She implied that sitting with feet up is not suitable and that she expected this student to sit better. When the same student put his feet on the desk yet again, she said, "If you put your feet on the table again, I will have you place your feet over there (on the table) without any permission to take your feet down." Yonpak warned this student with possible punishment to mock the behavior of putting feet on the desk and to signal it as an undesirable behavior worthy of punishment. The warning to this student showed the turn of her disapproval of undesirable behavior into a kind of penalty.

#### ***6.2.1.2 Social norms: reporting to parents if students challenge teacher authority.***

One of teachers' strategies to maintain their authority was by stating a threat to call students' guardian or parents and involve them in students' challenges. When a student in Yonpak's classroom lost energy and pretended to sleep instead of taking notes, Yonpak said to that student, "Do you want me to call your mom or dad to take notes for you?" After Yonpak's suggestion, that student unwillingly continued note-taking. The warning of including parents' involvement in disciplining students seems effective in controlling students in the TOW. This kind of punishment or warnings of consequences implied the expectation for students to follow teachers' authority.

#### ***6.2.1.3 Social norms: Not touching monks is a serious restriction.***

Physical contact is a sensitive issue in the perspective of Thai people. Female students touching monks, either intentionally or unintentionally, would be a serious situation that all teachers would directly stop. Imjai raised this kind of undesirable behavior in the conversation:

Interviewer: If the students put their feet on the table—

Imjai: My students did! And I really stopped them.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you think you could not stand if students did?

Imjai: Yes: Female students coming very close to the monks. They probably do not know about this required manner. Or they may know about it but they are careless. Anyway, I stopped them immediately and told them not to be close to monks. Actually, I think it is the duty of parents to train their children before they go to the temple. It is necessary to tell their female children that females cannot touch monks.

(Interview, June 14, 2014)

In Thailand, woman touching monks is regarded as a taboo. The status of monkhood is highly respected, with strict rules of conduct. This traditional Thai value strongly influenced these teachers. Secular teachers showed no reluctance to stop this behavior with reprimanding words.

In contrast to the teachers, the monks did not take unintentional physical contact as seriously as secular teachers did. Still, they would tell students to avoid this touching.

Wachiratham said:

Interviewer: What do you do if a female student touches you either by accident or due to the lack of cultural awareness?

Wachiratham: I am okay. Actually, physical contact with monks is a scandal for Thai people. Actually, there are no monastic rules about touching females. It is an offense only if that monk has desire to touch females. In the case of the students in TOW, the girls do not have any intention to harm.

Interviewer: Will you tell them about this?

Wachiratham: I do if they are old enough, like grade 1–2 or older

(Interview, October 21, 2014)

The seriousness of physical touching revealed the socially normative attitude that monks are preserved as holy and that, therefore, it is prohibited for a female student to touch monks. Contrarily, monks viewed such touching with reasonable understanding. They were more flexible toward this restriction than secular teachers were. (See chapter 4 for more information.)

### **6.2.2 Rewards.**

Apart from the use of punishment, teachers also used giving rewards as a technique to stimulate students to behave with desirable characteristics, as well as a way to redeem teachers' authority in classroom. Panward emphasized that a reward was a more desirable way of controlling students' behaviors than punishment. However, she still used both punishment and rewards together because punishment helped her control students' undesirable behaviors but rewards encouraged them to do good things. Panward explained:

A reward is another tool I use to control class. Children always love rewards. Actually, rewards are better than punishment. But still I need to use punishment to control some behavior and to make the class move on. I used redeemable stickers if they submit homework in time. I also used some gestures to admire a good student. For example, if a

student did a good job in class, I will tell other students in class, ‘Hey, classmates, this student did a good job. Let’s clap our hands to congratulate him.’

(Interview, June 27, 2014)

Other teachers in the TOW have similar techniques of giving rewards to support students’ learning and to empower students to behave desirably. Some common rewards included using encouraging words (such as excellent, good, nice), admiring students when they do well in class, or offering special authority to dismiss students from class early if they work quickly and effectively or behave well in the class.

Teachers’ decisions about when to reward students revealed some underlying social norms about desirable qualities. One norm of a good student was to obey teachers’ authority and instruction. According to the teachers’ commonly held beliefs, a good student should also do assignments, attend class frequently and punctually, submit assignments on time, participate in school activities, make correct answers, get high scores on tests, and maintain good conduct. The desirable qualities associated with the concept of a good student as discussed by Amirault (1995 cited in Johnston, 2003) are: doing well in academic progress—such as passing tests— and showing morally desirable behaviors such as being obedient, persistent, and hard-working.

### **6.3 Norms of a good teacher**

This section describes teachers’ views about the characteristics of a good teacher and their self-judgment in their role as teachers. This analysis explores norms considered desirable for teachers, norms that regulate their identity construction. According to Foucault (1977), forms of knowledge and one’s expertise are involved in one’s identity construction as well as in the way one exerts his or her influence on others. Therefore, teachers’ views in response to questions

such as, “What is a good teacher like?” and, “How do you situate yourselves as teachers?” would present the fundamental values that influence their decisions and interactions with other people. In Table 6.1, I summarize teachers’ perceptions towards the concept of a “good teacher” and their self-assessment. All teachers’ quotations were grouped and compared to see how teachers normalize themselves as teachers, information which is a crucial part of understanding these teachers’ professional identity construction.

### **6.3.1 A good teacher is...**

Generally, teachers perceived the characteristics of a good teacher in similar ways, which can be categorized into three groups: knowledge and teaching skills, determination to teach, and being a moral model.

The first feature, knowledge and teaching skills, consisted of strategies to make students learn as well as possible. This also included teachers’ abilities to solve problems when teaching. Academically, the TOW set up a teacher training by inviting a guest speaker from Thailand to talk to teachers and the school. They tried to find extra financial support for teacher development. Annually, teachers met to revise their curriculum. Even though they did not set up teaching evaluation, they shared their lesson plans and observed other classes as a part of teaching development. These teachers showed their intention to improve their teaching skills and school curriculum to most benefit students’ learning.

The second feature, determination to teach, related to emotional strength and willpower to engage in teaching. It included teaching devotion, patience to deal with students, and willpower to face any teaching problems. Teachers in the TOW addressed their strong determination and willpower to teach. They devoted time and effort to teach in the TOW.

Teachers regarded their teaching role as consisting of valuable tasks to complete. Under the role of teachers, they hoped to develop students' Thai language and culture. They acted as cultural preservers of Thai as a part of their instruction.

The last feature is maintaining a moral model for students. Teachers believed that a good teacher is a good-hearted person, or one who lives life with basic moral qualities. The desirable qualities were conscientiousness, good-heartedness, and conducting oneself well.

### **6.3.2 I am fairly a good teacher**

All teachers viewed themselves as good teachers. They believed that to some extent they have achieved desirable qualities of a good teacher based on the three aforementioned features. All teachers had a positive self-attitude about teaching ability, and saw being a good teacher as an ongoing process requiring endless self-improvement.

Teachers' perceptions about their need to improve their teaching are shown in table 6.1. Teachers each listed different traits of good teachers and showed different concerns about what they needed to do to improve as teachers. Anotai needed to improve herself by devoting more time to improve her pedagogy. Imjai was concerned about her knowledge and skills to teach advanced learners. Panward reflected on her teaching in her current class and was determined to find better ways to motivate her students to learn. Yonpak judged herself as an inexperienced teacher and desired to make students enjoy learning. Both monk teachers, Wachratham and Thammarak, were not confident about worldly knowledge; they believed that understanding more worldly knowledge could help them use it for examples when teaching about good and bad deeds.

Table 6.1 Summary of teachers' perceptions about a good teacher and their perceived position

Teachers	A good teacher is...	I am a teacher who... I need to improve
Anotai	<p>Teachers are role models. They need to behave well in all aspects of their lives. Students will see us in various situations, not just in the classroom. Therefore, we should behave all the time as if we were superstars [laughs] of good morality for students, [modeling behavior such as refraining from lies. Also, if I use incorrect language, parents might not trust me that I can teach language well. I have to be aware of all aspects relevant to teaching. A good teacher needs to devote his or her life to students' learning. It is more than learning in class but their learning outside class in the real-life learning process. Teaching is not just a duty.”</p> <p>(Interview, October 23, 2014)</p> <p>(Characterisitcs: a role model in and outside of class, a morally-behaved person, devoted, knowledgeable)</p>	<p><b>I am a teacher who...</b> I tried to do everything as a good teacher like what I just said. I also want to guide students to think by themselves. (Interview, October 23, 2014)</p> <p><b>I need to improve...</b> I still need to improve myself as a good teacher. I will spend more time for lesson planning. I will devote more time for creating activities for them, but I have kids to take care of. I believe I can do better as a good teacher but it is about time and about teaching techniques of which I need to find more for students. (Interview, October 23, 2014)</p>
Imjai	<p>Teachers devote their time and efforts for the best teaching. They conduct their lives with morality. They are good role models. They are good people in society. At the least, they should hold to Buddhism's five precepts. They are wise to solve problems from [various] sources, since different situations need different solutions. Good teachers also need to devote themselves to teaching-learning, even for more than their own sake. (Interview, October 25, 2014)</p> <p>(Summary: dedicated to teaching, a moral model, a good person, a problem solver)</p>	<p><b>I am a teacher who...</b> I think I am quite a good teacher. I do my best to impart knowledge. When I teach, I will do everything to support students' learning. I am dedicated to my teaching. I count myself as a good person. The students know how I behave. It is not okay if a teacher does bad things such as committing adultery. (Interview, October 25, 2014)</p> <p><b>I need to improve ...</b> I can help students learn the best with all my knowledge and skills but I still questioned myself, that I may not be a good teacher yet, if I have to teach more advanced learners. (Interview, October 25, 2014)</p>
Yonpak  (Interview, November 1, 2014)	<p>A good teacher needs to be ready to be a giver. They know what to teach and love to impart knowledge to others. They can make change and help students learn based on their ability and their needs. (Interview, November 1, 2014)</p> <p>(Summary: devoted to teaching, loves to teach, makes changes, makes the lesson meet their students' needs)</p>	<p><b>I am a teacher who...</b> I have good intentions and a devotion to teaching. (Interview, November 1, 2014)</p> <p><b>I need to improve ...</b> I need more teaching experiences. I want to create a learning environment that can make students enjoy learning. (Interview, November 1, 2014)</p>

Teachers	A good teacher is...	I am a teacher who... I need to improve
Panward	<p>Good teachers love to teach and make students love to learn. They need to find their techniques to energize students to learn. They need to know students' needs and personalities and try to use students' information to make them love to learn. Games and rewards might be needed for students' learning. Teachers have to behave to be a good example, since students are likely to ABSORB and imitate how teachers do things. If the students see their teachers lie, they might also lie. (Interview, November 3, 2014)</p> <p>(Summary: love for teaching, skills to motivate, strategies to make students learn and understand, being a moral role model)</p>	<p><b>I am a teacher who...</b> I am guidance. I am committed to teaching. I actually love to teach by nature. [laugh] I love to explain and make people understand. It is a kind of drive within me that I feel like I can give them. I also behave like a good person. (Interview, November 3, 2014)</p> <p><b>I need to improve...</b> I am not yet a 100% teacher. Students sometimes did not want to study. I have tried to motivate them to learn but I still don't know why I cannot help them make much progress in their Thai learning. (Interview, November 3, 2014)</p>
Thammarak	<p>A good teacher is a person who is patient in order to deal with children, to develop themselves, to catch up with new knowledge, and to be responsible to teaching and for students' learning. They need to teach both skills and knowledge for students' future careers as well as a way to help students live life as a complete man. Teachers have to be understanding and calm. They need to sacrifice themselves for other people. (Interview, October 20, 2014)</p> <p>(Summary: patience, self-development for skill and knowledge, sacrifice for others)</p>	<p><b>I am a teacher who...</b> I focus on maintaining morality because a monk lives for developing virtues. I teach students to be good human beings. I love to be a teacher as it is a great job to guide people to release their suffering. (Interview, October 20, 2014)</p> <p><b>I need to improve...</b> I think I am a good teacher but I am still not a knowledgeable and skillful person. However, I have 100% determination to improve myself as a teacher. (Interview, October 20, 2014)</p>
Wachiratham	<p>A good teacher needs to have strong determination to teach their students to [develop] career knowledge and be a good-hearted person. Teachers need to have willpower to teach. They teach students to learn academic knowledge for their future career. This knowledge might help students apply for achieving wealth. Teachers should also instill students with consciousness and make them become good-hearted people in this society. Teachers should do everything to help their students develop both knowledge and mind. (Interview, October 21, 2014)</p> <p>(Summary: determined to teach, having willpower, a knowledge giver and a moral supporter)</p>	<p><b>I am a teacher who...</b> I have a strong determination to be a great teacher with all my life. I am doing whatever to develop my students' hearts and minds. I try to help students to apply the knowledge for their living and to live safely in the society and to be a good person in the society. (Interview, October 21, 2014)</p> <p><b>I need to improve...</b> As a monk teacher, I need to open myself to world knowledge so that I can really tell them that this worldly thing is good or bad. (Interview, October 21, 2014)</p>

## **6.4 Normalization**

Normalization is a social strategy to manipulate members in society. It controls people's behaviors by using idealized norms of conduct for people. Foucault (1977) addressed normalization as a powerful tactic to control people with the minimum employment of force through the idea of "normal" or "natural" engagement in everyday life. Normalization is involved in constructing one's identity under the regulation of society. Foucault, in Clark (2008), stated that identity is constructed in relation to discourse and the process of normalization.

Along this normalization process, one puts his or her self into the normalized categories to which one chooses to conform, or one chooses to deviate from the norms. In this study, I explore how teachers posited themselves in the process of normalization to manage their self in the society as well as to control students' conduct. Also, I explore the production of power by self-normalization, which leads to creating new knowledge. I claim that normalization in relation to teachers' identity in the TOW led to two opposing effects: identity conflict and newly created knowledge. The influence of the process of normalization was as follows:

### **6.4.1 Dilemma of conflicting norms: Identity struggle**

Under the administration of social normalization, teachers performed their professional roles as Thai language teachers who influence students to learn language and culture. The teachers' identities, which were constructed by their self-normalization under social influences, impact their teaching decisions and their performance as good teachers.

Normalization indicates categories or groups in which some people are recognized to be and expect others to recognize that they are in. Normalization shapes identity, which is in nature changing and reconstructed, within the fixed boundaries of socially accepted norms. Identity

construction under a complex chain-power network sometimes brings an individual into self-conflict. The following are two examples of evidence of identity struggle that occurred when teachers faced conflict in their self-normalization to unite two different dominant norms.

***6.4.1.1 Identity in conflict: Freedom of speech, or the King of Thailand.***

Yonpak adjusted herself to the American “normal” way of life and accepted bilingual students’ American acculturated nature. However, she was caught up in a dilemma about what to choose when teaching in the TOW. In this situation, Yonpak brought up the topic of the King of Thailand, who is highly respected as the “Lord of the Land,” symbolizing the center of all Thai people’s hearts. However, students discussed the king in a customary American way, which caused Yonpak to feel stunned and unable to claim her Thai cultural identity. Yonpak said:

Yonpak: The students have their own opinions and are open to talk about anything. For example, I showed them pictures of the King of Thailand. Students started commenting about the King, “He is very old and getting older and older. Then, this means he will...” [pauses for a few seconds] Something like this. How can I deal with this situation? Maybe it’s because I am a Thai.

Interviewer: Do you mean it is not a good thing to discuss death?

Yonpak: Not proper at all [to talk about the death of the King] but at the same time students should have freedom of speech to discuss whatever they are curious to talk about, including the King of Thailand.

Interviewer: What did you do in this situation when they talked about the king like this?

Yonpak: I tried to change the topic. I did not really know if I should tell them to stop or to continue. I had no right to answer about this. But I think it is not okay to stop

them from speaking about anything as they have right to. Then, it is not okay to tell them, “We should not talk about this.” I should not stop them. But the death of the heart of all Thai people is not proper to be discussed at all.

(Interview, May 21, 2014)

For Yonpak, it is against Thai norms to discuss the death of the King of Thailand. She felt it is unacceptable to talk about his loss. Her uncomfortable feeling was reflected even in the way she narrated this story—omitting the term “pass away” in her statement by using a pause. However, she hesitated to terminate students’ discussion because she believed that a good teacher should foster freedom of speech in the classroom, and that students have a right to express their opinions. Yonpak counted this as a complicated situation to be solved, and regarded her national Thai identity as a problem within this conflict. Eventually, she chose to respect students’ freedom of speech by refraining from expressing her disapproval of students’ talk about the King.

***6.4.1.2 Identity in conflict: A good Thai monk teacher is strict about the rules, but this can make him look unfriendly in the United States.***

The other example of identity struggle came from Wachiratham. He came to the United States to work as a “dhammaduta,” or a monk who is dedicated to spreading Buddha’s teaching in foreign countries. With his role as Buddhist monk representative in the United States, Wachiratham tried to adjust himself to American culture, and remains revered among Thai people. He self-normalized himself to both cultures: Thai and American. Wachiratham registered for an English class with goals of improving his English and familiarizing himself with

American culture. At the same time, he follows a rigorous life to make himself worthy of reverential salutation.

The status of monks encountered conflict when monks came in contact with other Americans. One example Wachiratham discussed was the way of greeting by shaking hands, which is normal etiquette in American culture. However, it is offensive for monks physically to touch women. Wachiratham talked about his struggle with being a monk in the United States:

I need to care about my image as a good Thai Buddhist monk. When they take pictures, it will go to public and on social media. Monks may not have any desire about physical touching, but people will imagine negatively that the monks offensively broke monks' rules. In my English class, it was difficult for me. For example, female classmates meant to introduce themselves by shaking hands. I refused. It looked like I was impolite. They asked me why they could not shake hands with me. What wrong with women shaking hands with monks? It is hard for them to understand this. At that time, I was clumsy and I could only said it was about Thai culture: Monks cannot touch women.

(Interview, October 21, 2014)

Wachiratham felt that the image of Buddhist monks must be well preserved to avoid rumors and disputes. Therefore, he maintained in his fixed identity as a monk, rather than shifting himself to be a polite person in American society. According to Foucault, identity is dynamic and it is shifted by interaction with others. Even though Wachiratham decided to stick to his fixed identity as a Thai monk, his decision to decline shaking hands put him into an uncomfortable situation. To defend the shift of his identity as a Thai monk, he employed his power technique by introducing that his way of life is regulated by monks' rules and Thai culture. It was not because

he discriminated against women. His explanation can somewhat neutralize his American classmate's resistance against him. However, his identity was temporarily shaken.

#### **6.4.2 New created knowledge: Thai culture in adaptation to American culture.**

Knowledge is connected to the network of power. Foucault (1977) emphasized that knowledge and power are entwined. He stated that, "A site where power is exercised is also a place at which knowledge is produced" (Foucault, 1977 cited in Smart, 1985, p. 64). "Power produces knowledge" (Foucault, 1977, p. 27) and at the same time knowledge serves in power construction (Foucault, 1977). In other words, power and knowledge directly imply one another. Knowledge is used to guarantee the use of power to control other people in society. In this part, I explore the knowledge that the TOW created. I probed into teachers' decisions and strategies they used to influence bilingual students. I focused my deconstruction on power and knowledge relation in the normalized discourse to understand the movement of knowledge, where the power contestation takes place.

##### ***6.4.2.1 Created activities in the TOW are Thai-American oriented.***

Even though TOW is a Buddhist Thai temple, the school provided various kinds of activities based on both Thai and American cultures for bilingual students in the TOW. Activities related to Thai culture were well maintained. Some activities of traditional American culture were also arranged. All teachers—even monks—agreed to support the arrangement of American activities in the TOW. Thammarak, a monk, shared his opinion about arranging activities of American culture in the TOW as follows:

Interviewer: I noticed that the school arranged an Easter egg hunt in TOW. How do you feel about this?

Thammarak: The children feel they belong to American culture. We arranged this for them. They would enjoy it.

Interviewer: But it is not Thai. You don't mind?

Thammarak: I don't. We do not resist cultural differences. Whatever is good for them, we should support. Also, students have grown up in American culture; they are supposed to get and learn about American culture.

(Interview, May 19, 2014)

All teachers supported the arrangement of fun activities for bilingual students. They did not differentiate by whether activities were based on Thai or American culture. Imjai, the director of the Thai program, who initiated most activities in the TOW, expressed her reasons for arranging activities relating to American culture:

Interviewer: I noticed that the school arranged an Easter egg hunt in TOW. How do you feel about this?

Imjai: We had an egg hunt, and trick-or-treat on Halloween. I want them to enjoy and have fun in the school. We do not have to arrange only Thai ceremonies.

(Interview, May 4, 2014)

Anotai felt that the TOW should create all kinds of fun activities for students—not only about Thai culture but also about American or any other different cultures:

Interviewer: What is the purpose of Easter?

Anotai: The children live in the United States. It was Easter and students still come to study. We then want them to participate in fun activity. Even though Easter is not

Thai culture, nor Buddhism, students live in American culture. We should create this for them to join and have fun.

Interviewer: How about Mother's day or Father's day? Which version—the Thai or US date —did the school celebrate?

Anotai: We did both days. But on Thai Mother's Day we did not have class. We then celebrated on American Mother's Day. We also celebrated Thai Father's Day, New Year, and Thai New Year. We celebrated every occasion, even Chinese New Year [laughs] I told them about TAE EAI (old tradition to give money in red envelop during Chinese New Year day). [laughs]

(Interview, June 15, 2014)

Anotai addressed that the TOW arranged activities to be accessible—neither Thai nor American culture was favored. Also, she agreed to arrange any kinds of cultural event as long as it can entertain students and motivate them to come to school. Correspondingly, Panward emphasized accessibility as a factor for activity arrangement in the TOW. She summarized two main reasons that TOW created activities for bilingual students:

Interviewer: I noticed you had activities for Mother Day.

Panward: We did some. Some events such as Songkran, TOW arranges, and we come to celebrate. It depends on the event or ceremonial day. We also had Easter last week.

Interviewer: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THESE ACTIVITIES?

Panward: First, we want [students] to have fun. Second, we want them to be aware of that is going on in the current society. Like Easter: People here celebrated. The

students will learn that people have egg hunts. These activities will broaden their view. Or Songkran: They will know that in Songkran, there is ceremony called Rodnamdamhua (รดน้ำดำหัว) or pouring water on the hands of revered elders and asking for blessing.

(Interview, June 1, 2014)

Generally, all teachers saw the importance of arranging both Thai and American activities for bilingual children in the TOW. They felt students should have opportunities to experience not just Thai culture, but American culture, or even other cultures. The decision in selection of the occasions for celebration was made based on the school's accessibility and students' joy from participation.

#### ***6.4.2.2 The role of the Thai temple has been expanded.***

The role of the TOW has been expanded into more than just a center of Buddhism, the normal role of Thai temples in Thailand. The role of the TOW has become being a center for Thai community in the United States. People come to the TOW not only to develop their minds or to make merit, but also to meet other Thai acquaintances. Sending their kids to study in the TOW provided opportunities for parents to practice dharma, make friends with other Thais, familiarize their kids with Thai culture and people, and volunteer for the temple. Here are the details of supplementary roles of the TOW in the United States.

##### ***6.4.2.2.1 A center of Thai/Thai-American community social gathering***

Teachers in the TOW agreed that they go to the TOW for many purposes, not only to make merit, but also to join in social gatherings. Anotai, a devout Buddhist, shared her additional purpose of going to the TOW:

Interviewer: Do you often go to the temple?

Anotai: In Thailand, I did not go to the temple as often as here. I normally chanted and made merit in the almsgiving before. I guess I got this routine by following my grandmother. She chanted when I was young. I followed her to the temple and went to a meditation retreat about every two years when I was in Thailand. But here I go to the temple more often. I go to the temple for not only a religious purpose but also a social purpose. Temple is the center for Thai society. It is the place where I can meet Thai people. It is more than just a temple like in Thailand.

(Interview, April 30, 2014)

#### Opportunities for students to learn concrete example of Thai culture

TOW is regarded as an institution that preserves Thai language and culture in the United States. The TOW is a place of hope for diasporic Thai parents to teach their children about Thai culture. The TOW functions as a “technology of power,” or a form of power associated with social institutions in controlling people, (Foucault, 1977) in this case to maintain Thai culture for bilingual students. Yonpak was a parent who sent her daughter to study in the TOW with the hope of providing more opportunities for her child to learn Thai culture. She accepted that the TOW has more authority than her own efforts in imparting Thai knowledge to her child. Yonpak said:

I go to the temple because I want my daughter to see what Thai society is like. Thai temple is the only place in the United States that can provide concrete examples of Thai culture. It is hard to explain to my daughter about Thai culture. Last year, my daughter attended the Loy Kratong ceremony in TOW. However, it was not floating a kratong in

the water, but on the temple yard. It was fun, though it was not the normal way of Loy Kratong, and at least my daughter can revive her memory of experiences in Thailand when she was two and a half, [when] she attended the Loy Kratong festival...

(Interview, June 19, 2014)

The TOW can provide an example of Thai culture in a concrete way for Yonpak's daughter to learn. However, Yonpak realized that the tradition was adapted due to issues of accessibility and suitability for this US-based Thai temple. I informally asked one of organizers who arranged Loy Kratong about the decision to arrange Loy Kratong on the temple yard instead of the lake. She said it is because floating *kratong* in a natural water resource is illegal in the United States. With this limitation, teachers arranged Loy Kratong on the ground instead. This activity was intended to foster students' learning of Thai culture, even if not in the original way to celebrate Loy Kratong festival, which seeks to preserve the meaning of the connection in Thai lives' to the water spirit. The Loy Kratong celebration was just a stimulating environment that teachers created for students' learning of Thai culture in the United States.

#### *6.4.2.2.2 Opportunity for students to build on intercultural awareness.*

As mentioned before, teachers realized that bilingual students have been Americanized. They held the view that it was impractical or even impossible to prevent students' Americanization. It is to work against the current to try to shift their students to be 100% Thai. Teachers did not attempt to go against American culture; contrarily, they set up a Thai environment as an extra way of learning other cultures under the leading American culture. Panward recognized American culture as a dominant culture for bilingual students. Learning

Thai in the TOW, she felt, is just an extra benefit to help bilingual students increase cross-cultural awareness. Panward said:

Learning Thai language in the TOW increased the opportunity to gain more knowledge of other new cultures from other groups of people. It is like opening students' eyes to a wider world. They will see other cultures, other traditions, etc. which are different from here (American). For social practice, they learn to socialize with people from a culture other than American.

(Interview, June 27, 2014)

According to this excerpt, Panward regarded Thai culture as a new culture “from other groups of people.” She regarded Thai as one of a group of “new cultures” for bilingual students. Whereas, American culture was addressed with the word “here,” representing the closer relationship of students lives with American culture. She stated that learning Thai benefits students by broadening students' perspectives to experience the “wider world.”

*6.4.2.2.3 Goal of the TOW: to resolve students' identity conflict of being Thai-American.*

The TOW has come to reflect a hope to prepare students to counteract their frustration or their conflict of having dual cultures. With their expectations for the TOW school, teachers wanted students to include Thai culture as a part of their identity. Anotai showed her expectation of students' outcomes after studying in the TOW:

Interviewer: What do you expect the students to get from TOW?

Anotai: I want them to grow up to be a person who can adjust to both cultures. It is actually good. They will know the diversity of culture and races. It will broaden

their\_world and worldview. They will accept things happening to their lives more easily. They will open their minds to accept the differences of cultures. I want them to know that there are two cultures in the TOW but that both cultures can go hand-in-hand. They won't have a personal conflict of cultures.

(Interview, July 17, 2014)

Thammarak and Wachiratham also showed their concern about identity conflict for bilingual students. To them, the most desirable goal was to help students peacefully develop their Thai-American identity. The fundamental goals of TOW in the perception of Thammarak and Wachiratham are shown in the following excerpt.

Interviewer: What do you expect students to be after studying in the TOW?

Wachiratham: They should not look down on Thai culture. They should know Thai values that have been handed down from their ancestors. They should know the real values of Thai culture. I wish that they will not abhor their Thai being and culture. They should see the value of Thai and face the least conflict within themselves. The core of Thai tradition is purely from Dharma and focuses on being grateful to benefactors. They should learn these values.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Thammarak: At least they will not look down on their own culture; [they will] accept their Thai culture. They respect parents and teachers. This is what they need to be trained about. They should be humble and polite.

(Interview, June 26, 2014)

Wachiratham and Thammarak shared the same expectations towards bilingual students. First, they wished to help students resolve the conflict of their dual Thai-American identity. They insisted on the value of influencing students with Thai culture because students were Thai, as inherited from their Thai family. The most important goal of studying in TOW, to them, was to develop a positive attitude toward Thai culture. They felt that students should also acquire some desirable Thai characteristics, such as respect, humility, gratefulness, and politeness.

Overall, the new created knowledge of Thai culture as adapted under dominant American culture was instigated to acculturate bilingual students with some Thai. Activities of both Thai and American origins were arranged in order to engage students in both cultures. The role of the temple has been expanded not only as a place of merit making or mind development but also as an opportunity for students to learn concrete Thai culture, to build on intercultural awareness, and to resolve any conflict they might have about their dual Thai-American identity.

## **6.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I discussed how power played out in the school context of the TOW. The mechanism of power, discipline, and normalization were discussed to understand relationships in the context of power in this situation. As Foucault (1976, p. 89 in Gordon, 1980) stated, “Individuals are vehicles of power.” I summarized the operation of power and relationships, drawing from the interaction of teachers in the TOW with other people, the discipline or techniques they use to control students’ behavior, and their self-normalization in the process of identity construction (Diagram 6.1).

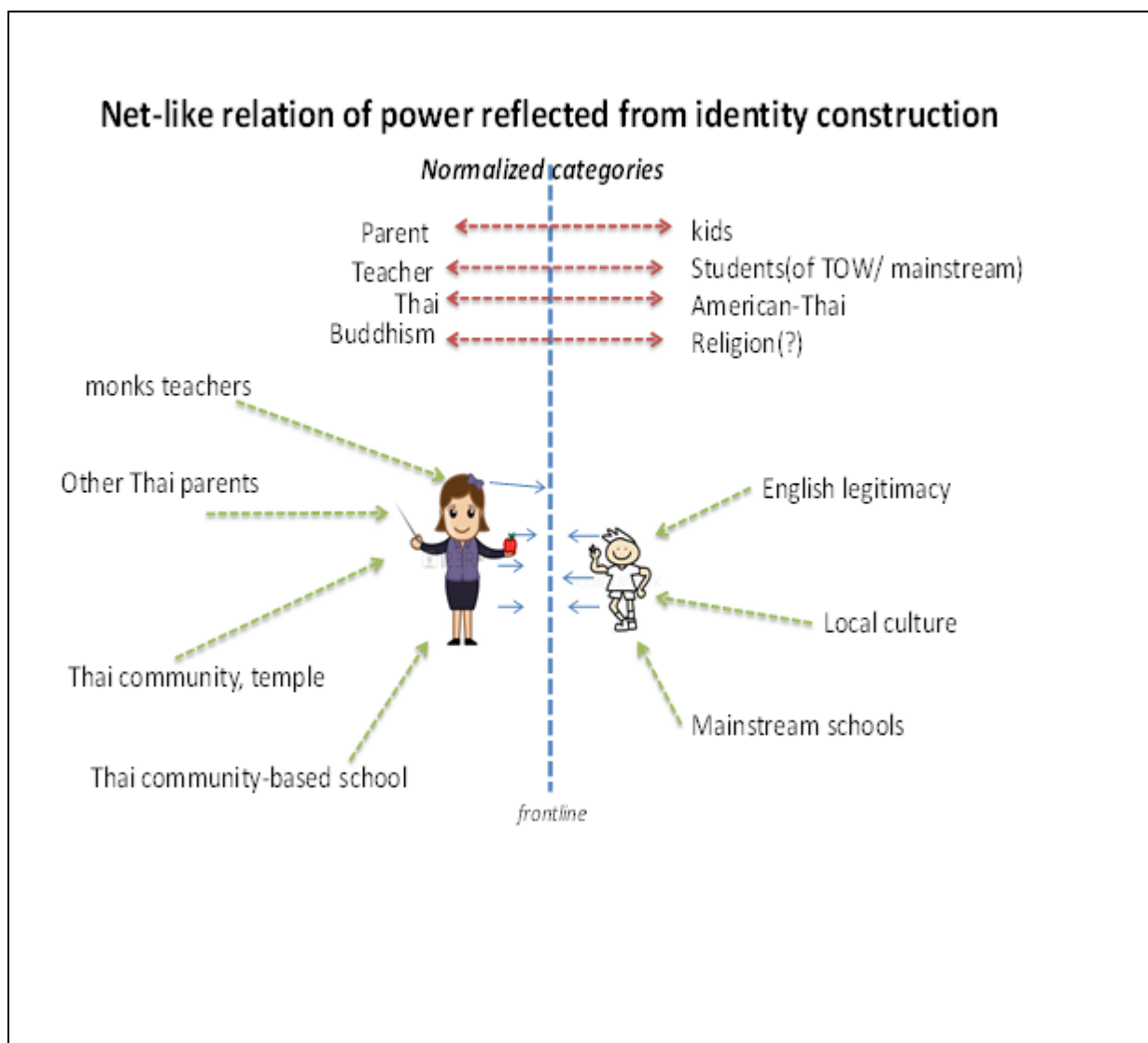
By using Foucault’s concept of power to examine power, I illustrate an example of the net-like relationship of power he describes. According to Foucault (1982 in Celikates, 2014, p.

7), identity is constructed within “agonism,” which is the struggle between the will to overpower and the will to resist or be stubborn. This relationship is dynamic and the power freely circulates from any subjects and from everywhere within this net-like power structure. The construction of teacher identity, therefore, directly connected with this network of power. In the reaction of ongoing agonism, teachers and students reciprocally resist, exclude, and block each other. The relation of teachers and students are the result of power relations showing in the model of war of two sides against each other. Both teachers and students have freedom for their actions under the normalized categories placed by their opposite statuses: Parent/kids, teachers/students (of the TOW and of mainstream US education), Thai/bilingual (Thai/Thai-American), and Buddhists/unconnected faith holders. These normalized categories become influenced by the societal norms within which they are structured.

In the role of a teacher in the TOW, teachers were expected to find and carry out the most suitable ways to achieve the mission of preserving Thai language, culture, and morality for bilingual students. The community selected means of preserving Thai-native culture. Power or strategies to control others were not used as forms of oppression and repression to overpower. According to Foucault’s view, the effect of power can be positive as well as negative. In the mission of the TOW, teachers directly carried out their role to influence students with Thai language, culture, and morality under the supports and influences of other Thai people in the Thai community. This mission was uneasy when teachers felt challenged by student resistance in various forms. Teachers created various kinds of power or strategies to cope with this resistance. They used some approaches to discipline to control students’ behaviors, such as rewards and punishment.

Normalization caused teachers to struggle in their identity position in the borderland of two cultures. For teachers, self-normalizing under norms of two cultures was a challenge. At the same time, normalization created a new movement of knowledge in the TOW, which inspires bilingual students to accept their dual Thai-American identity.

Diagram 6.1 Power relations



## CHAPTER 7

### Conclusions and implications

#### 7.1 Overview of research

This is a qualitative critical research study exploring power relations in a community-based school located in a Buddhist Thai temple. The research analysis relates to many study areas including heritage language education, teacher identity, and the study of power, as well as culture and spirituality in language teaching.

Research in the area of Heritage Language Education (HLE) is still underrepresented. Moreover, there are some critical needs for research in nontraditional educational settings as well as on languages of small groups of users (Deusen-Scholl, 2014). Heritage Language Teaching (HLT) should not be treated as the same as Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), which overlooks the real needs of language minority communities (Wiley, 2005). This study, which was based in a community-based school of a Thai heritage language program, should, therefore, expand the HL education literature in an area that needs more attention.

Also, teacher identity is an important topic in language teaching and learning that needs to be explored further. Research on teacher identity in HLT is still in a shortage (Cho, 2014) and there is a need for more studies to maximize teachers' potential for their professional development. According to Clarke (2008), teacher identity is essential as a "crucial component determining how teaching and learning are played out." The nature of identity can therefore work as an efficient conceptual tool for teacher development.

Power relations should also be addressed in language education because they provide for a critical investigation accountable to social justice in education. Power itself has socio-cultural

and socio-political aspects. More studies on language teaching address the power relations in their fields, such as e.g. bilingualism (Austin, 2009), culture (Hino, 2004 cited in Matsuda, 2009, p. 162), religion (Wong & Canagarajah, 2009) and others. Most of the studies of LT and power are in the areas of ESL/EFL, and they rarely touch on the area of HL. Therefore, there is a true need to investigate culture or spirituality of teachers in HL contexts.

With all of these bases, this research was conducted to explore teacher identity as a reflection of power relations in a Buddhist Thai temple by answering the following questions:

- 1) How do Thai language teachers negotiate their linguistic, cultural and spiritual identities within Buddhist schools in the United States?
  - a) What discourses do teachers draw on to talk about their identities?
  - b) How do teachers from different religious status bring in their stories?
  - c) How do the social differences among teachers influence their teaching?
  - d) In what senses, if at all, do teachers act as cultural and spiritual preservers?
  
- 2) To what extent and in what ways do the identities these teachers negotiate reflect the network of power relations?
  - a) How do teachers view and communicate the concept of “a successful person” and “a desirable quality”?
  - b) How does teacher identity as being a cultural and spiritual preserver relate to how they view “a successful person” and “a desirable quality”?
  - c) How does power/knowledge play out in the Thai language classroom, and in what way?

With the lens of Foucault's study of power, the findings of this study portray the circulation of power in the net-like relation of teachers' interactions with other people. I especially delved into the cultural and spiritual identity negotiation of six Thai heritage language teachers to understand the relevant power relations. The system of representation, which defined, categorized, and regulated the production of knowledge in this school context, was presented within major discourses. I also presented the strategies teachers used in their teaching roles together with the ways they constructed and reconstructed their identity. In the next section, I summarize all findings in the research and highlight some areas of discussion relating to the findings.

## **7.2 Summary and discussion of thematic findings**

### **7.2.1 Summary of the findings**

This study illustrated how teacher identity was used as a reflection of power relations. The findings of this study were outlined in three main areas: discourses of power, analysis of teachers' perception of success, and strategies of power. These findings were presented in chapters 4–6.

#### ***7.2.1.1 Discourses of power: Schooling, Language, Culture, and Spirituality***

Four discourses structured the lives of teachers and their network of people. I explored how knowledge was constructed, defined, and produced. The knowledge in discourse was produced to control and categorize things as right or wrong, good or bad, and suitable or unsuitable in this school. The discourse of schooling showed the major influences of the

mainstream school system in the United States. It normalized the educational system and this influenced HL education in the TOW. Teachers adopted the operation styles of formal US schools as a model in organizing and designing this community-based school of the TOW. However, the TOW faced being less authorized by society. Students prioritized the mainstream school over the TOW. This impacted teachers' authority to teach. It showed the need in the broader society to recognize the existence of HLE.

The second discourse, the discourse of language, revealed the strong influences of English-only policy in the United States. English-only policy has an attitudinal impact on students' lives as well as teachers' lives. Also, languages were categorized by career opportunities; therefore, English and some FL such as Spanish, Chinese, and French were perceived to be privileged over Thai heritage language. This can be seen from the attitudinal evidence in the TOW language policy of using Thai and upholding an approach to communication that regards "nativeness" as the ideal model. The school needs more emphasis on liberating its way of teaching Thai Heritage Language as a language of Thai community. This would better uphold a sense of having a heritage language, for both teachers and students.

In the discourse of culture, teachers made an effort to impart Thai culture to students. They viewed culture as a static typical quality within Thai and American society with some judgment. They categorized Thai culture as a collective culture and saw Thai people as humble and peace loving, whereas they saw American culture as independent and saw Americans as confident to achieve goals and open to showing their opinions. Teachers wished to bring out the best of both cultures in their students. They believed that the balance of both Thai and American cultures would make bilingual students achieve goals of success and live harmoniously in the United States.

The fourth discourse, of religion and spiritual beliefs, played a major role in the TOW as a way to control one's conduct and way of thinking. Buddhism is inherited, and it was used as a tool to connect both teachers and bilingual students to the Thai community. However, following other religious faiths was regarded as one's right and choice, and there was a view that students can change religions if they have faith in other beliefs. Teachers tried to expose students to Buddhism as a part of moral training, in the beginning of the lives of bilingual students. However, all teachers separated Thai Buddhism into two layers: core Buddhism and rituals. The core Buddhism based on reasoning relieves one from suffering. All teachers viewed the core Buddhism as consisting of beliefs that were purely positive to the belief-holders. In contrast, rituals and superstition were judged as "false Buddhism," which they felt needed to be considered with concern for its negative impacts.

Teachers' spirituality strongly influenced their way of thought and life pursuits. The discourses of spirituality influenced teachers' way of life, way of thought, and way of being a teacher.

The theme of discourses of power showed the influences of schools, language, culture, and beliefs over the lives of teachers as represented through their decisions. The created discourse implied attitudes of Thai heritage language, Thai culture, and beliefs.

#### ***7.2.1.2 Perception of Success: Identity, Norms, and Power Motive.***

This theme showed how teachers perceive what success means, and how that relates to their views about their own success. Teachers' perception showed the normative patterns influencing their lives. Their motives were influenced by the social norms and expectations that they presupposed. Teachers showed their attempts to normalize themselves to meet their ambitions. Four drives or motivations to achieve success implied the substantial influence of

economic and social power: capitalism, health, social capital, and Buddhism. It is interesting to note that secular teachers were inevitably driven to success to achieve money, fame, and name in the world of capitalism. Spiritual status also shaped teachers' motives to succeed; monks were less influenced by economic power than were secular teachers.

All teachers realized the danger of capitalism overshadowing their lives. They employed Buddhist principles as a forceful power to minimize their desires to achieve the best economically and gain the most material security. The Buddhist way of thought helped keep teachers' lives in balance and harmony, where the true meaning of happiness dwelled. In addition to Buddhism, social capital and health maintenance also had a part in enabling teachers to resist ambitions to achieve the best in the world of capitalism.

#### ***7.2.1.3 Strategies of Power: Power Relations through Teacher Identity Negotiation.***

Following the Foucauldian lens revealed that power shapes the way teachers visualize their sense of self and others. Everything teachers did, every decision they made, and every interaction with others they had constructed how they shaped their lives and impacted others. Teachers used various kinds of strategies to influence students and others in the way they believed would result in the best outcome. The negotiation of teachers' identity showed their self-normalization to social norms as well as the production of new created knowledge within the TOW. Teachers showed their attempts to influence bilingual students to learn Thai language, culture, and Buddhist morality. Teachers also built cooperation with other members of the Thai community.

Teachers used their teachers' authority to control students' behaviors. Both punishment and reward were used as forms of incentive and discipline to interrupt undesirable actions and to promote desirable conduct. Interestingly, teachers punished students when students exhibited undesirable manners that went against Thai culture or religious beliefs, such as students'

placement of feet on the table, or physical contact with monks. Conversely, teachers used rewards to encourage students to perform well in class, to actively have good conduct, and to be studious in their achievement of education in the TOW.

Teachers' views about the characteristics of a good teacher were also explored and compared with how they judged themselves in their role as a teacher. This vision showed that norms of being a good teacher required three components: knowledge and teaching skills, determination and devotion to teach, and a moral model. Their views about the desirable characteristics of a good teacher confirmed their self-inspiration to be a good teacher. Teachers' motivation was shown through their decision to teach, their determination to teach, and their interaction with other people in their teachers' role in the TOW.

Normalization, which is used as a process of strategies to shape the conduct of societal members, was reflected in teachers' negotiation of identity. I scrutinized the process of normalization from the way teachers placed themselves into normalized categories, either conforming or deviating from social norms. This showed that teacher identity has typically been constructed under socially accepted norms. Resistance to social norms caused teachers to struggle. In the process of knowledge production under norms, teachers in the TOW, as part of the Thai-American Diaspora, showed their influence in expanding the role of the TOW. The TOW has been created to become not only a place of spiritual development for activities such as merit-making, meditation, or dharma discussion, but also a center of Thai community within its adaptation in American culture.

Before discussing overall findings, I will clarify my expectations from this study. Even though I studied the power relations, I do not mean to explain the original sources of power, as it is impractical to determine the origins of power and identity, which are dynamic. Instead,

through critical study, I wish to raise consciousness and know what is going on in this particular social process. I do not believe my findings would be true in or generalizable to all situations; rather, I claim that they appear to be evident in this context based on the information I gathered and in the range of the critical lens I bear.

It is everybody's right to understand the relevant powers behind any action. As a metaphor, even when we get a serving of food that may taste delightful or be offered by someone we know, it is still good to know the ingredients and the cooking process. Is there any contamination to the ingredients that may harm our health or other people's health? Is it hazardous or allergenic? Is it good for our health? Background questions similarly need to be raised about knowledge applied to all social practice. We need to increase the critical sense to scrutinize the relations of power to understand whether the knowledge we consider as true is friendly or invisibly hazardous. This reflects what Foucault stated in *On the Genealogy of Ethics*: "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do."

### **7.3 Discussions of thematic findings: implications and questions**

The analyses of the three themes discussed in chapters 4–6 led to conclusive arguments in the following discussions. Some implications and questions for further thought were also added. Here are some conclusive arguments from this study:

#### **7.3.1 The community-based school of the TOW is valuable**

According to Hashimoto and Lee (2011), a HL school is beneficial to retain HL, and the United States needs more community-based HL schools for bilingual students. I support their

claim for many reasons. First, the TOW school functions as more than a place of HL learning. It unites Thai HL speakers to bilingual students in a real situation. Learning HL in the community-based school is, therefore, meaningful. Students are open to learning not only linguistic content but also culture, beliefs, and norms in the authentic community. Learning in their heritage community can provide opportunities for them to familiarize themselves with the value of their community and cultural differences in the United States.

The TOW is also a new creation of mixed Thai and American cultures. Teachers held themselves to Thai norms and expectations of the Thai community. However they also commonly adjusted themselves to American ways. While maintaining Thai culture, teachers did not exclude American culture, but instead set up the TOW with both Thai and American culture for bilingual students. For example, they organized all kinds of Thai activities as well as some American events such as Halloween or Easter activities for students to participate in. Teachers also expected their students to get the best of both cultures. They preferred their bilingual students to adopt Thai characteristics of humility, seniority, and family connection together with American characteristics of self-confidence and independence. They believed the mix of the best of both cultures would help students become successful and live peacefully in the context of the United States.

Additionally, teachers worked from their own inspiration without the control of the government. They had freedom to design curriculum, to provide teaching resources, and to collaborate with other teachers, parents, and community members. Teaching from their own inspiration helped teachers design lessons based on real needs for actual communication.

### ***Implication***

Informal community-based school particularly meets needs of home and communities; therefore, more school establishment should be encouraged. Also, it is essential to sustain a HL school as a center of community support. Heritage language can be a tool of cooperation between various agents. Policy makers should also value HLT as a right, and a source of personal attainment. Additionally, mainstream schools should acknowledge the existence of HL schools in their instruction.

*Unanswered questions for further thought*

- What is the long-term consequence of HL schools in adaptation of both cultures? Will this be helpful or unhelpful for HLE?
- How can a school help bilingual students feel more inspired to learn their HL?
- How can educational communities make the best use of community-based schools?
- What policy can support community-based schools to be centers of cooperation?
- How can mainstream schools support HLT?

**7.3.2 English legitimacy/ language legitimacy is everywhere; even in HLT.**

Many studies addressed the privilege of English in various contexts of English language teaching. In this study, I claim that English legitimacy and hierarchies of languages prevail everywhere, even in the context of Thai HLT.

The “native-speaker model” (Cummins & Davison, 2007, p.8), or the notion that the ideal language teaching is by native-English speakers, has become a tool of English legitimacy, even in the HLT context. Teachers in the TOW adopted this misconception, which supports linguistic discrimination. They viewed themselves as non-owners of English who could be bad examples of English for their bilingual children. This legitimizes native speakers over non-native speakers.

They also arranged TOW policy and pedagogy in parallel to the ideology of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). For example, the TOW's principal expressed that the reason for adopting a Thai-only policy in classes was because of belief that native-English speakers are the ideal teachers for ELT. Therefore, the nativeness model of English was used as a model of a pedagogical policy for teaching Thai in the TOW. Teachers gained confidence with their Thai language proficiency as legitimate teachers. However, they did not feel proud of the uniqueness of Thai language, but rather of their native status as Thai.

There is also some evidence of language discrimination. Teachers prioritized English and other FL over minority languages. Languages are regarded as commercialized products; they are placed into different status based on their economic benefits (languages as national resource-reference). Some languages are held in a powerful status, such as English, Chinese, Spanish, and French. In comparison, Thai language was seen as far less important among those powerful languages (see 4.2.4). Moreover, there was also the privilege of standard Thai over other Thai dialects. When languages are judged as to their economic value, the minority languages are placed into an inferior status. The perception of language hierarchy is regarded as a sign of public alarm, which harms all areas of language teaching.

### ***Implication***

Language policy should acknowledge minority languages in order to support a positive attitude about learning one's HL as a part of one's identity. The policy of languages as national resources should be reconsidered because it values minority languages as a lower priority for the country's development. The policy should address languages as a right, as a community attainment, or as a tool for individualism. The mainstream should include all voices from

different cultures and backgrounds to help teachers and learners gain a sense of belonging to a special, unique culture and community. A positive attitude toward people's own languages is needed to foster social justice in language teaching.

An HL school needs to regard socio-cultural aspects such as home and community in language teaching. HL instruction should not simulate FLT or ELT, which more deeply engraves language discrimination and impairs HLT. Teachers need a critical awareness of language discrimination in teaching. To liberate HL from language discrimination, teachers need to increase their socio-political awareness in their classrooms (Reagan & Osborn, 2002). Teachers should move from relying on prescriptive pedagogy of ELT to a non-alignment way of teaching, grounded on community values instead of supporting dominant structures of politics and economics.

*Unanswered questions for further thought*

- How can English legitimacy be inscribed in other language teaching contexts?
- How can educators help HL learners and teachers get away from feeling “neither here nor there?”
- How can educators help HL teachers create a sense of language uniqueness?

**7.3.3 Cultural and Spiritual Identity: developing a strong sense of teacher**

**professionalism.**

Wu, Palmer, and Field (2011) stated that teachers in community-based schools lacked a sense of teacher professionalism because they regarded themselves as volunteer teachers, not professionals. I partially agree with Wu et al. (2001). It is true that teachers in the TOW felt discouraged when they faced students' low respect. This led the teachers to feeling low self-

esteem and the loss of authority in their teacher role. For example, a teacher (Yonpak) felt rejected by students in class because students prioritized mainstream school subjects over her Thai lesson. She changed how she described herself, stepping back to the identity of a volunteer teacher, whose role is not that of a professional teacher. In this situation, teachers doubted their own professionalism, just as Wu et al. (2001) stated.

However, teachers in the TOW had individual freedom to manage their own classes. Even though they faced students' resistance in the classroom, they modified their classes based on solidarity instead of authority. In the case of Yonpak, she tried to position herself as a family member of all students, instead of as a professional teacher. (see p. 98) The school culture has been harmonized as though teachers and students are from the same big family. This is a typical Thai way to give precedence to "collectivity," rather than "individualism" (Hofstede, 2014).

To view teacher professionalism through the lens of post-modernists, I claim that teachers employed their cultural and spiritual identity to strengthen their own teaching profession. According to Ozga (1995), teacher professionalism is not about achieving the fixed requirements in their professions; on the contrary, it is an "ideological construct" positioning "in a particular socio-historical context." Professionalism is, therefore, dynamic and specific to individuality.

Individually, teachers felt proud to preserve Thai culture. They showed their intention to inspire students to maintain Thai-American cultural and linguistic bilingualism. Teachers made good use of their first-hand experiences in Thailand for their instruction in the TOW. In their classes, they represented experts in Thai culture. They also employed some characteristics of Thai culture to build up social capital as a way to bond their community members together. For example, seniority and humility were highlighted in the school. Additionally, teachers applied

their cultural characteristics to benefit teacher recruitment and cooperation from other Thai community members.

Teachers' spirituality also influenced teachers' ways of living. Teachers connected Buddhism to their spirits, not just as a means of corresponding to social norms. This was parallel to the description by Ha (2008) about the impact of morality on Vietnamese teachers. Ha (2008, p. 185) stated that morality is "attached to the heart," and thus different from "'dry' norms" which regulate one's self-perception and control teachers' concepts of what to do. In TOW teachers' personal lives, Buddhism inspired their way of living and decision-making. Teachers lived their lives under Buddhist principles and applied their morality to guide their role as a good teacher. For example, teachers addressed the need to work for others: They considered volunteering to teach in the TOW as an example of pursuing their morality. They believed that working for others is a kind of merit-making, as they sacrificed their time and effort for the benefit of other people in the Thai community.

Buddhism clearly influenced teachers' construction of moral identity through their personal way of thought and their motives for their success. Secular teachers applied the concept of self-sufficiency as a way to resist their ambitions to achieve money, fame, and name in the world of capitalism and materialism. Buddhism guided their way of thought to control their desires, to balance their lives, and to live happily in the world of competitiveness and economy. In the case of monk teachers, they each lived their lives closely to principles of Buddhism as a Bhikku, or a monk who lives a simple life for the liberation of all suffering, outside of the world of materialism. They lived their lives to achieve the ultimate goal: to refrain from all desires.

Some studies have addressed the relationship of language teaching and religious beliefs (Edge, 2003, Varghese & Johnston, 2007; Wong & Canagarajah, 2009). These showed how

spiritual beliefs impact teacher identity. Most of these studies focused on situations in which ELT was a tool of Christianity's expansion. In this study, I not see teachers employing Buddhism as a tool of politics, but rather as a tool for morality and humanity. Teachers in the TOW regarded Buddhism as providing a pure, positive value for the mind and a practice in which the goal is to achieve the state of "no-self" or "emptiness" called nirvana. The view of pure Buddhism is similar to the concepts of morality and self-reflection. Teachers also compared Buddhism with other religions, suggesting that the religions all shared the same core teachings, which address humanity and morality. Teacher's viewed selecting religious beliefs as an individual's right; therefore, students, they felt, can choose to be or not to be Buddhists as they prefer. However, teachers accepted that some people exploit religion as a tool of power. They perceived that Buddhism also has some rituals and superstitious beliefs that can be regarded as false Buddhism, and that these beliefs are wrong if they support one's creed instead of morality and humanity.

### ***Implications***

This study showed that these teachers' cultural and spiritual identity impacted their personal lives and their teaching. This finding can be applied to other HL contexts in similar backgrounds. To provide practical support for teachers' professional development, teachers should be guided with inter-cultural awareness in order to bring out their personal values as assets for their teaching. I also suggested the need for teachers to make good use of culture, spirituality, or even other socio-cultural-political elements, in order to develop their professionalism. Additional future studies about teacher identity and power in various language teaching contexts are needed.

*Unanswered questions for further thought*

- What can educators do to help teachers in community-based schools improve their professionalism?
- Can cultural and religious beliefs also strengthen teacher professionalism in other communities?
- What other socio-cultural-political factors can benefit teachers' professionalism in HLT?
- How do culture and religion have an impact on teacher professionalism in the contexts of other types of language teaching (ESL, EFL, FLT)?

**7.4 Limitations**

This study rests on data from observing six teachers in the TOW. The participants in this study are from similar backgrounds. This may restrict the understanding of social differences among teachers. Social differences related to socioeconomic or political factors were not distinguished. Moreover, I conducted the study from only one Buddhist temple in the United States. However, Thai Deravatti Buddhism has many branches and sub-beliefs, the different varieties of which I did not indicate in this study.

Also, my national identity as a Thai can probably limit my study. Since I was deeply oriented in Thai culture and Buddhism myself, I may make assumptions about certain things, causing me a specific bias when dealing with the interpretation of the study. At the same time, I faced a difficulty when I interviewed the participants. I sometimes felt as though teachers did not understand why I asked such silly questions to which every Thai is supposed to know the answers. Many times when I interviewed them, they made the answers short and responded with phrases such as, "As you already know..." or, "You know this?" It was true that I know about

Thai culture but the information needed to come from their responses, not my knowledge. Therefore, I continued asking for concrete details and avoided my own assumptions when interviewing. However, my position may have limited the responses from the participants because they assumed I knew about Thai culture.

### 7.5 Concluding Remarks

*"I know who I am... and who I may be if I choose."*

—Translated from *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes (Chapter 5, part 1)

This quotation from one of the most popular novels of all time, *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, is fitting for the concluding remarks of my dissertation because the line is Don Quixote's response to Sancho Panza, who questioned Don Quixote's creation of self. Don Quixote's statement is comparable to the identity construction of teachers in the TOW. The teachers in TOW chose to battle with the Americanization of their children even though they realized this fight is futile. They each went into this battle as a Thai teacher in the TOW who preserves Thai language and culture, fighting for what is right and with the belief in living life according to these ideals. They chose to posit themselves as cultural warfare heroes in their borderland. They adjusted themselves with strategies to induce bilingual Thai-American children to open their hearts and take in Thai culture themselves. Even though the teachers' idealistic values and ambitions to preserve Thai language and culture within these children had some challenges, the teachers empowered themselves with inspiration and dreamed of achieving this "impossible dream."

Similar to Don Quixote, these teachers each chose to be like a knight—to help others, to live an adventurous life, and to achieve fame to be acknowledged in their community. For some

people, these teachers may be comic figures enmeshed in their own idealistic fantasies, owning no nobility whatsoever in the system of education. For other people, these teachers are honorably and nobly dedicated to their ideals, regardless of how fantastic they are. They have become dedicated to their ambition to change the world into what they feel it should be. They fight to maintain what is right. They have showed the power of individuality in changing their world and their surroundings. They attempted to resist norms and created new kinds of power to preserve Thai culture and beliefs for their students.

Life may be satirical, either heroic or comic. It depends on how we perceive ourselves and are perceived. One can be a clown in some eyes. In other eyes, one may be honorably respected as a courageous hero who pursues a quest to go into an unbearable battle with pride in his or own identity.

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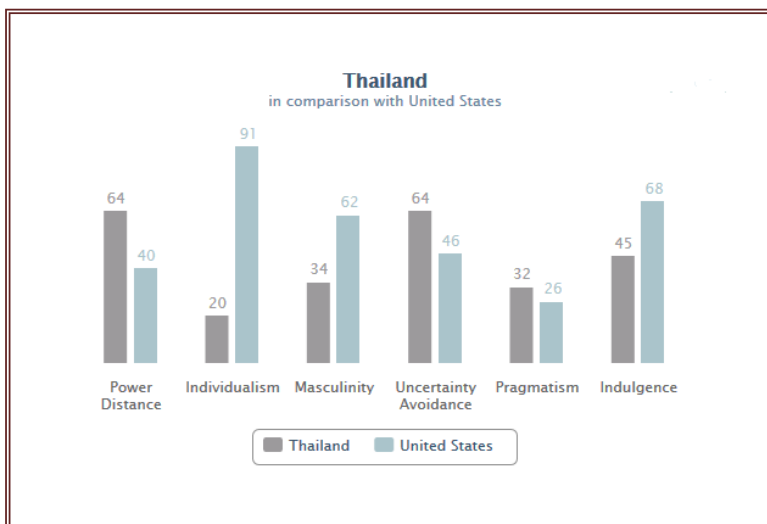
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## APPENDIX A

### Dimensions of cultural comparison by Hofstede

Hofstede, G. (2014, 12 5). *Cultural tools: country comparison*. Retrieved 12 5, 2014, from The Hofstede Center: <http://geert-hofstede.com/thailand.html>



What about Thailand?

#### Power distance

This dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal – it expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities amongst us. Power distance is defined as *the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally*.

Thailand scores 64 on PDI index, slightly lower than the average Asian countries (71). It is a society in which inequalities are accepted; a strict chain of command and protocol are observed. Each rank has its privileges and employees show loyalty, respect and deference for their superiors in return for protection and guidance. This may lead to paternalistic management. Thus, the attitude towards managers are more formal, the information flow is hierarchical and controlled.

#### Individualism

The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is *the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members*. It has to do with whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We". In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In Collectivist societies people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

With a score of 20 Thailand is a highly collectivist country. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group' (a family, extended family, or extended relationships). Loyalty to the in-group in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. In order to preserve the in-group, Thai are not confrontational and in their communication a "Yes" may not mean an acceptance or agreement. An offence leads to loss of face and Thai are very sensitive not to feel shamed in front of their group. Personal relationship is key to conducting business and it takes time to build such relations thus patience is necessary as well as not openly discuss

business on first occasions.

### **Masculinity**

A high score (masculine) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner/best in field – a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organisational behaviour. A low score (feminine) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. ***The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine).***

Thailand scores 34 on this dimension and is thus considered a feminine society. Thailand has the lowest Masculinity ranking among the average Asian countries of 53 and the World average of 50. This lower level is indicative of a society with less assertiveness and competitiveness, as compared to one where these values are considered more important and significant. This situation also reinforces more traditional male and female roles within the population.

### **Uncertainty avoidance**

The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings with it anxiety and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways. ***The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these*** is reflected in the UAI score.

Thailand scores an intermediate 64 on this dimension, but it slightly indicating a preference for avoiding uncertainty. In order to minimize or reduce this level of uncertainty, strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations are adopted and implemented. The ultimate goal of this population is to control everything in order to eliminate or avoid the unexpected. As a result of this high Uncertainty Avoidance characteristic, the society does not readily accept change and is very risk adverse. Change has to be seen for the greater good of the in group.

### **Pragmatism**

This dimension describes ***how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future***, and societies prioritise these two existential goals differently. Normative societies who score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Those with a culture which scores high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

Thailand's low score of 32 indicates that Thai culture is more normative than pragmatic. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results.

### **Indulgence**

One challenge that confronts humanity, now and in the past, is the degree to which little children are socialized. Without socialization we do not become “human”. This dimension is defined as ***the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses***, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called “indulgence” and relatively strong control is called “restraint”. Cultures can, therefore, be described as indulgent or restrained. With an intermediate score of 45, a preference on this dimension cannot be determined for Thailand.

## APPENDIX B

### Interview protocols

#### A. Initial interview

Introduction: Thank you for your time and support to participate in the initial interview study. As I informed you before, this study is about the identity of a language teacher as a cultural and spiritual preserver in the Thai language classroom provided by the Buddhist temples. In the first interview, I'd like to you to talk about your personal life and experiences in the United States, your opinion about the program, and the reason you decided to teach in this program. You can select either language (Thai or English) in which you prefer to be interviewed.

#### 1. How long have you been in the United States? How often do you use English in daily life? How do you feel when you use English in the United States?

*[Probe: Do you feel comfortable to use English? Why or why not? / Are there any problems of English communication you faced? / Have you ever used English with other Thais? Can you give examples of the situation? / How often do you use English in temple in the classroom?]*

#### 2. How often do you show or talk about Thai culture such as stories, food, etc. to other people in the United States?

*[Probe: How do they respond to Thai culture? Do you feel proud of / comfortable or uncomfortable to share Thai culture to other people in the USA? / How much do you like living in the USA? / How much do you like living in Thailand? / Where do you like to live more? — What makes you prefer to stay in Thailand / the USA? Why or why not?]*

#### 3. What makes American culture different from Thai culture? How do you think about Western culture? Can you compare it with Thai culture?

*[Probe for: Can you compare your view about (American & Thai) family relationships, value of materialism, technology, competition, violence, independence, etc.] Which culture do you prefer your students to hold more?*

#### 4. Many critiques about American culture that are informal and more direct in communication; whereas Thai culture care about not making others lose faces and is more formal, how do you view this?

*[ Probe for: How do you think this is important? How do care about these differences? How do you adjust yourself with the differences?]*

#### 5. How often do you involve in Buddhism ceremony arranged by the temple?

*[Probe: What type of activities do you normally involve? What activities in the temple do you volunteer? What made you choose to volunteer in the temple?]*

**6. How often do you tell other American that you are Buddhist?**

*[Probe: What made them you tell them you are Buddhist? When do you tell them? What was their response? How do you think about Thai children born in USA holding Christianity? Do you think Thai children/ bi lingual Thai-American students should be Buddhist? Please explain.]*

**Now let's discuss about your teaching in this program.**

**7. How long have you been teaching in TOW?**

**What made you decide to teach in TOW?**

*[Listen for: their desire of teaching—Thai culture or spirituality, community development, personal reason to be a teacher; Probe: what was it about the school that made you decide to teach in the ABM school?]*

**8. To what extent and in what ways do you feel that you are qualified (suited) to teach here?** *[Listen for: proficient in Thai language, experience, being a Thai model, etc.]*

**9. Who involved in designing the curriculum for the Thai class at TOW?**

*[Probe: How much control do you have over what you teach and how? Who or what else influences what you teach and how? Listen for: to what extent the teacher is involved in his or her teaching. Do you make your own decisions about materials selection? Probe: How extensively do you impart Thai culture in Thai lessons to your students? Do you have any criteria to select topics relating to Thai culture or Buddhist belief?]*

**B. In-between interview**

Introduction: Thank you for your time and support for the second interview. In this interview, I would like you to discuss about some of your personal views about culture and Buddhism, and your perception about the concept of “success.” You can select either language (Thai or English) in which you prefer to be interviewed.

We discussed in the first interview your personal experiences and views about Thai and American cultures, religions, and languages. Continuing from this:

**1. How much and in what ways do you regard yourself as a “cultural preserver” or someone who supports Thai culture? Why?**

*[Probe for: What do you do to preserve Thai culture? / How do you relate culture into the lesson?]*

**2. How much and in what ways do you regard yourself as a “spiritual preserver?” Why?**

*[Probe for: How do you preserve practice of Buddhism? / (How) do you relate Buddhism into the lesson?]*

**3. What desirable qualities should students develop during the class at TOW?**

*[Listen for: What desirable qualities from Thai culture do you impart?/ What desirable qualities that you consider to be from American culture do you focus on in the classroom? / How do you impart these qualities into the lessons?]*

**4. Let's talk about concept of a "successful person"—In your view, what do you think characterizes a successful person? In what ways do you think it is important to be successful in life?**

*[Probe: What makes a person become successful in their life? / How do they need to become successful?]*

**5. How much and in what ways do you think you are a successful person? What makes you think so?**

*[Listen for the characteristics of a successful person in their perception to their own life. Probe: What do you regard as failure in life? How and why you perceive that as failure? ]*

**6. Can you think of any Thai person who you count as a successful person? What are some characteristics they possess that make them successful?**

*[Listen for the characteristic of "success" from their role model; Probe: how do you define the word "success?"]*

**7. How do you think being a Thai helps students become successful in this country? Why?**

*[Listen for how teacher connects culture to the success, or if teachers think in the opposite way. Probe: How do you think being Thai makes it more difficult for students to be successful?; How can Thai culture help students become successful?]*

**8. How do you think about being a Buddhist helps students become successful in this country? Why?**

*[Listen for how teacher connects Buddhism to success, or if teachers think in the opposite way. Probe: How do you think about being a Buddhist makes it more difficult for students to be successful? How can Thai Buddhism help students become successful?]*

**9. Talking about the Thai class in TOW, how do you think the school can support your students to become successful in life? How?**

*[Listen for activities, actions the teacher did or trained the students to do to succeed (in what way). Probe: What did you do to help them be successful? What Thai culture / Buddhist philosophy do you apply to support them? What American culture or philosophy from other religions such as Christianity do you apply to support them?]*

### **C. Final interview**

Introduction: Thank you very much for your time and support. This is the last interview. In this interview, I will focus on your expectations for the students in the program; what “desirable quality” is needed to make them become a “successful person.” You can select either language (Thai or English) in which you prefer to be interviewed.

#### **1. What is your goal of teaching Thai language for American-Thai students in the United States?**

*[Probe: Which language is more important for students’ success—Thai or English? Why do the students need to learn Thai/English?]*

#### **2. Talking about the Thai class in TOW, in what ways, if at all, do you think the school can support your students to become successful in life? Can you give some examples?**

*[Listen for activities, actions the teacher did or trained the students to do to succeed (and in what way). Probe: What did you do to help them to be successful? Is this difficult?]*

#### **3. What desirable quality should students develop after taking a class in TOW?**

*[Listen for: belief, norm, perception of a desirable student—e.g. grateful, responsibility, etc.—teachers expect for their students.]*

#### **4. How much do the bilingual-bicultural students need to use Thai language?**

*[Listen for desired characteristics / skills of language. Probe: Why is important for them to (speak, read, write)....in Thai? How, and to what extent does ability to use Thai help students become successful in life? Or in the opposite way—How does the ability to use Thai make students have more difficulty becoming successful?]*

#### **5. To what extent do the bilingual-bicultural students need to know Thai culture?**

*[Listen for: how the teacher thinks about the importance of maintaining Thai culture. Probe: Why is so important for them to know Thai culture? / How and to what extent does holding Thai culture help students to be successful in life? Or in the opposite way—How does holding Thai culture make students have more difficulty becoming successful?]*

#### **6. How important do you think it is that the bicultural children should be Buddhist?**

*[Probe: What do you mean by Buddhist? How important is it that students should hold Buddhist philosophy? Why is so important for them to hold Buddhist philosophy? / How and to what extent does being a Buddhist help students to be successful in life? Or in the opposite way—How does holding Buddhist philosophy make students have more difficulty becoming successful?]*

#### **7. To what extent, as noticed, do the students in TOW see the importance of learning Thai? What makes you think so? Can you give an example?**

*[Probe: What challenge do you find in teaching Thai language in the course? / Is there any resistance to learning Thai language/Thai culture/Buddhism you have found? How do you manage this?]*

**8. How much do you worry (if you do) about bilingual students become Americanized and losing Thai identity? In what way? Can you give examples?**

*[What Thai qualities, and to what extent, do you expect the students to, at least, hold/ have? Can you give examples?]*

**9. What challenges in the classroom (if any) have you found from the difference of Thai language from their normal English language? What challenges in the classroom (if any) have you found from the difference of Thai culture from Western culture that they learn from their mainstream program? What challenges in the classroom (if any) have you found from the difference between Buddhism and other religious beliefs that they learned from their friends at their mainstream program?**

*[Probe: What do you do in the classroom to face these challenges?]*

**D. Extra interview**

Introduction: Thank you again for your time and support. This is designed to supplement the previous interview information. In this interview, I will focus on your definition of being a teacher (or the role of being a teacher and being a monk, if participants are monks). You can select either language (Thai or English) in which you prefer to be asked. This extra interview should take approximately 15–30 minutes.

**1. As we know, there are many idioms or expressions about teachers' roles; for example, "teachers are hiring boats," etc. From your view, a teacher is.....**

*[Probe: Can you give the definition of a teacher? Is it hard to be a teacher? Why is it hard to be a teacher? How? What kind of teacher do you think you are? Why do you think so? What is the characteristic of good teachers? Do you think you are a good teacher? Why or why not?]*

**2) Do you think volunteer teachers are different from career teachers? How? Why do you think so?**

*[Probe: What makes volunteer teachers different from career teachers? What made you decide to be a volunteer teacher here?]*

**3) Have you ever punished students? How? Why? Have you ever rewarded students? Why? How? Can you describe the situation?**

*[Probe: When did you punish? What makes you punish? What is the feedback from students and/or other people about the punishment/reward? How do you feel about this?]*

**4) Can you weigh the importance of the following: 1) being a good-hearted person; 2) being a successful person (from your definition in the previous interview); 3) being a person who achieves/advances in their career (and people acknowledge this). Which one is the most important? Can you rank them from the most important to the least important? Why do you think like that?**

**5) (For a monk) As a monk, can you define the meaning of being a monk? What is the role of the monk?**

[Probe: What makes monks different from secular people? Are you happy to maintain your monkhood? Are there any challenges of being a monk? Are there any challenges of being a monk in the United States? Please talk about about this. As all Thai people know, it is a monk's strict custom that women must never come into physical contact with or directly hand anything to a monk, but some local people do not know. Have you ever faced the problem of women physically contacting you either by accident or because of a lack of cultural awareness? What did you do when this happened?

## APPENDIX C

### Observation Guide for study of teacher identity

The observation in this study will emphasize teachers' roles and interactions with other people from settings of both inside and outside the classroom. I will look for evidence of the belief, values, and norms of teachers from different social status about what makes a "successful person," and about what "desirable qualities" teachers expect to see from students. This includes messages, signals, and interaction patterns about success, spiritual and cultural development and engagement when dealing with positive and negative qualities that make a "successful person," as well as messages, signals, and interaction patterns related to perceptions of "desirable qualities," "achievement," "Thai culture," "Thai Buddhism," and related topics.

**Data record:** In the classroom: Actions, body language, and relevant occurrences will be recorded basically through the researcher's memory and the field notes. A sound recording will also be made during the class observation, whereas outside the classroom, what is observed will be recorded only through the researcher's memory and the field notes.

#### Categories of teachers' roles and their interaction in different settings

Interaction and discourse patterns:

- What language do they normally use—English or Thai—to different people?
- What discourses of success do they have, and what opinions about characteristics of positive and negative qualities?
- How do teachers encourage students toward a positive quality (e.g. any compliments, rewards), or discourage them from a negative quality (e.g. punishment, reprimand, etc.)?
- What do teachers talk about Thai/Western characteristics?
- How was the classroom arranged?
- What do teachers do?
- What is their role in each event?

Interaction in different context and setting

I Teachers' interaction in the classroom

- What activities did the teacher create?
- What is the role of teachers: Facilitating? Teaching? Serving as a cultural model? As a moral/spiritual model?
- What content do they teach? What is emphasized?
- What teaching techniques are used? What is the sequence of teaching, approach, etc.?
- Any praise, encouragement, or compliments? What is considered a positive/desirable quality?
- Any punishment or reprimand? What is considered a negative/undesirable quality?

## II Teachers' interaction outside the classroom

### In temple

#### With students

- Any praise, encouragement, or compliments? What is considered a positive/desirable quality?
- Any punishment or reprimand? What is considered a negative/undesirable quality?
- What is the role of teachers: Facilitating? Teaching? Serving as a cultural model? As a spiritual model?

#### With students' parents

- Any feedback about students' study: What is considered a negative/undesirable quality? What is considered a positive/desirable quality?
- Any discussion about the students' achievement? If so, what achievement do they mention?

#### With other people—either Thais or Americans

- What is positive or negative about things they comment?

### Outside temple (Only on a special occasion, e.g. an outside trip)

#### With students

- Any praise, encouragement, or compliments? What is considered a positive/desirable quality?
- Any punishment or reprimand? What is considered a negative/undesirable quality?
- What is the role of teachers: Facilitating? Teaching? Serving as a cultural model? As a spiritual model?

#### With students' parents

- Any feedback about students' study: What is considered a negative/undesirable quality? What is considered a positive/desirable quality?
- Any discussion about the students' achievement? If so, what achievement do they mention?

#### With other people—either Thais or Americans

- What is positive/negative about things they comment?

## VITA

*Jitpicha Jarayapun* received her Doctorate from the University of Washington in Curriculum and Instruction (Language, Literacy, and Culture) in 2015. She earned her Master's in Linguistics from the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, and her Bachelor of Education from the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University. She worked as an English teacher in the Royal Thai Naval Academy (RTNA) for over a decade. Her research during her work in the RTNA was connected to her English teaching development, through focus areas such as a needs analysis, English for a Specific Purpose, life-long learning process, and textbook analysis. During her PhD program, she developed her research interests in language teacher identity, culture, and spirituality. She believes that, first and foremost, teacher quality is fundamental to education. Language-teacher education must not only develop knowledge and teaching skills, but also help teachers locate their “self” in the world where all powers are related and influence teachers' careers.