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*Teacher perceptions of policy change in teaching Thai: an ethnographic study.*

CHUNLAHAWANIT, Narumon.

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**TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF  
POLICY CHANGE IN TEACHING  
THAI: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements of  
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## **Abstract**

Over the last decade there has been growing interest in applying insights from neuroscience to education, although the justification for doing this is disputed. There has been an expectation in some countries for teachers to engage with neuroscience and integrate these new perspectives into their pedagogical practice. Consequently, as such efforts have been widely applied, there has been discussion in both the neuroscience and education fields focusing on the credibility of interdisciplinary connections neuroscience and education, given they are different disciplines, and how neuroscience can appropriately influence educational change.

Initiatives and texts to guide educators in the critical use of neuroscience research and research on teachers' perspectives on the educational relevance of neuroscience have been studied widely in many countries, particularly in Western contexts. However, there has been less discussion in South Asian countries. Nevertheless, in Thailand, the government has recommended instructional policy for teaching Thai informed by neuroscience. This thesis reports on an investigation into Thai teachers' experiences with the recommended policy guided by neuroscience.

In order to gain understanding of Thai primary school teachers' experiences of the state-sanctioned instructional approach, claimed to be brain-based, I undertook an ethnographic study influenced by thematic analysis of the experience and practices of six Thai primary teachers in six different schools as they interpreted the recommended policies in relation to teaching Thai. The study also sought to understand factors affecting their degree of implementation. Drawing on theories of social practice, influenced by concepts developed by Bourdieu and de Certeau to support methodological triangulation, the research employed four methods: classroom observations, interviews, and documentation and field notes, to develop interpretative understandings of teachers' experiences and practices.

The analysis suggests that despite their general support for this new instruction teachers responded to the new recommended practices differently, depending on contextual and participant-specific factors, including their beliefs about pedagogy and habitus. A model of teacher change emerged that consisted of two categories of teacher responses to the recommended practices. The study's findings suggest that a variety of factors, including teachers' pre-existing beliefs about teaching and learning, teachers' willingness, habitus, and constraining classroom realities and their external factors (e.g. examination, work overload and the supportive administrators), greatly influence their responses to the recommended practices. Significantly, this inquiry revealed that the engagement of teachers with the new policy informed by neuroscience resulted in teachers developing their general knowledge about the working brain and partly transforming their beliefs and habitus, such as their ways of thinking about themselves and their pupils and ways of interacting with pupils in arguably positive ways.

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## **Glossary of Acronyms**

MOE	Ministry of Education
OBEC	Office of the Basic Education Commission
NBL	National Institute for Brain-Based Learning
ESA	Educational Service Area
CLE	Communicated Language Encounter approach
OTEPC	Office of the Teachers' Civil Service and Educational Personnel Commission
ONESQA	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
NIETS	National Institute of Educational Testing Service

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a general outline of this thesis. It contextualises the inquiry, states my rationale for the research, my approach to the research, my research interest, formulates the key research questions and provides a description of the Thai education system. Lastly, it presents an outline for this dissertation. The purpose of this study was to describe and explain Thai primary school teachers' experiences of the new instructional policy change. The general context for this inquiry relates to ways in which education policy informed by neuroscience is understood, experienced and put into practice by Thai primary school teachers.

### 1.1 The rationale for the research

The Thai government established the National Institute for Brain-Based Learning (NBL) in 2005 to study and research the implications of neuroscience for education. Twelve schools across the country, including primary and secondary schools, were selected to implement the brain-based learning approach from 2006. Due to changes in government policy, this organisation was combined with another institute in 2010 and was recently downsized as a work unit. The establishment of this institute drove greater involvement of NBL in integration of neuroscience research into education, resulting in its inclusion in Ministry of Education policy [MOE]. This has led to the promotion of professional development in this area.

This collaboration between the NBL and the MOE resulted in the introduction of official recommended applications of brain research, which have been implemented in 493 pilot schools through a department supervised by the Office of the Basic Education Commission [OBEC], a bureau of the MOE which has operated throughout the country since 2007. At the start of the implementation, the NBL focused on the teaching of Thai in grade one of primary schools with children aged six years old, with plans to continue to other grade groups in primary 2-6 for children aged from 7-12 years old. Subsequently,

implementation included teacher training and the provision of textbook lists and teaching guide books compiled by the OBEC for use by the pilot schools. The OBEC's pilot schools have now begun to assist teachers in carrying out the recommended practices claimed to be brain-based which the NBL have put forward. One-shot training (three day training course) was preliminarily provided for teachers who taught Thai to first graders and then extended to teachers of other grades (second and third grades). Nevertheless, teachers who taught Thai to grades 4, 5 and 6 were given a three-day training course at the same time. The training was organised on a regional basis.

The new instructional policy of teaching Thai informed by neuroscience was revealed to the teachers in the pilot schools by the OBEC. Specifically, the strategies for teaching Thai, as reflected by the recommended practices, were delivered to the teachers. These strategies involve five steps model of teaching, which are as follows: 1) reading aloud by teachers; 2) choral reading (teachers read with pupils); 3) group reading or paired reading; 4) individual reading; and 5) teaching grammar and the rules of the language. How the recommendations were implemented in practice is described in chapter 5.

The interest surrounding education that claims to be brain-based amongst scientists and educators has caused a remarkable upsurge in brain-based products. Nevertheless, the value of these ideas has become the subject of much debate. One significant criticism of commercial brain-based programmes is that such packages and programmes contain a number of "neuromyths" (a term coined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2002). The OECD defines a "neuromyth" as "a misconception generated by misunderstanding, a misreading, or a misquoting of facts scientifically established (by brain research) to make a case for use of brain research in education and other contexts" (OECD 2002). To date, there have been many studies on teachers' involvement with neuroscience, its relevance to educational practice and its impact on teacher development in Western and Anglophonic countries (Howard-Jones 2014 and Dekker et al. 2012), but fewer in Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand.

## 1.2 My approach to the research

The main aim of the policy makers regarding the aforementioned implementation was to bring about a change in teaching practices. It is generally known that teachers play a critical role in efforts to implement education innovations (Driel, Beijaard, & Verloop 2001; Duffee and Aikenhead 1992). Recent literature on educational innovations and teacher change has viewed teachers as leaders of prescribed reform efforts (or a bottom-up approach) rather than as recipients and implementers of the change initiatives of others (or a traditional top-down innovation model) (Richards, Gallo, & Renandya, 2001; Moore and Donaldson 2007). Therefore, many current reform efforts are directed at teachers and their engagement in the reform, and the process of change is viewed as critical (Fullan, 1991). The successful implementation of education policy depends on how policy changes are perceived, particularly by the teachers who translate educational policy change into educational practice.

Thus, this research placed the teachers at the centre, considering particularly at the personal level how teachers interpreted, acted as filters, influenced, affected, mediated and related to educational change, individually and collectively. The general context of this investigation related to the way in which teachers understood, experienced and put the new instructional policy, or the recommended applications of neuroscience, into practice. Inasmuch as the focus was on the new instructional policy change from the perspectives of teachers, the national education system needed to be described and discussed in some detail, in order to explicate the wider context of policy making and the integration of policy text into policy practice. According to Fullan (1991) and Darling-Hammond (1998), new policy for educational change is located in the macro education structure and context as well as in micro dynamics of the policy change process which is interpreted and shaped by teachers. Education policy is contextualised within the national education system, manifesting in collective and personal, individualised contexts. Teachers' experiences and understandings are revealed in relation to the latter circumstances. Notably, it would appear that sustainable education policy change partly relies on the input and contributions of teachers. This suggests that in order to achieve effective

implementation of a new educational policy, it is necessary to comprehend the experiences and understandings of implementers (e.g. teachers) of that policy.

Regarding such implementation, as the previous section highlighted, the appropriateness of applying neuroscience in education has been persistently questioned, and concerns over the spread of neuromyths through so-called commercial brain-based products have arisen. This has created certain important challenges within the Thai education field; in particular, there is a real need for the main strategies to be developed properly at policy level and in practice and for engagement with teachers to ensure that they get the training they deserve.

As stated earlier, policy change and the role of teachers are two critical facets of the process of change. The successful delivery of new education policy initiatives depends on effective implementation by the teachers. Despite the growing body of literature on education and policy change, there has been relatively little research into the experiences of primary school teachers and policy change in the context of Thailand. In addition, a review of the literature set in this national context found little research into the effectiveness of brain-based education or the development of brain-based teaching and learning strategies, based on teachers' implementation. There was an absence of literature providing solid data to identify key constructs or variables related to teachers' interpretations and applications of neuro-scientific research findings.

### **1.3 My research interest**

As a primary school teacher and a temporary education officer working at the OBEC, I wanted to gain more understanding of some Thai primary school teachers' experiences of implementation of the new instructional policy. Particularly, I was interested in understanding the phenomenon of teachers' sensemaking through the implementation of teaching strategies claimed to be brain-based, as well the constraints and opportunities created through the implementation of the related instructional practices. It is likely that knowledge of the experiences and understandings of teachers who adopt and implement policy change may provide some added insight into the complexities of putting education policy into practice, specifically, policy based on the controversial topic of neuroscience and education. In Thai primary education, limited qualitative

research has been conducted to explore and describe how primary school teachers experience educational policy change in terms of their perceptions, interpretations, emotions and understandings, both individually and collectively.

It should be noted that with regards to the abovementioned concerns over linking neuroscience and education, this research uses the term "recommended practices or RP" to refer to the Thai government discourses mandated by the OBEC and the NBL that were given the term "recommended practices informed by brain research".

#### **1.4 Purpose of this study**

The broad purpose of this inquiry was to describe and explain the experiences of Thai primary school teachers concerning education policy change. The immediate objective of this study was to obtain deeper understanding of the issues that influenced their roles as implementers of policy change. Gaining such understanding was a matter of comprehending origins, relevance and consequences of views and beliefs that may impact their educational practice. The potential significance of this study is to extend the knowledge base through a more complex understanding of educational policy change from teachers' perspectives, by providing new empirical evidence.

#### **1.5 An Overview of the research**

The research involved the exploration of the experiences of six Thai primary school teachers in relation to the implementation of the recommended practices informed by neuroscience in teaching Thai, based on the methodological framework of ethnography. The purpose was to explore teachers' thoughts and practices during the teaching of Thai, with regards to the implementation of the recommended practices claimed to be based on neuroscientific research, by developing an empirical understanding regarding the following questions:

- What are teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to teaching Thai?
- How do teachers implement the recommended policy for teaching Thai?
- What are teachers' views on the recommended policy for teaching Thai?
- What factors facilitate and impede teachers' implementation of the recommended policy?

I wanted to explore the experience of six teachers in six schools and the ways in which these teachers made sense of their implementation of the recommended policy informed by neuroscience within the context of their experience. Therefore an ethnographic methodology was appropriate. The teachers' varying orientation and engagement and classroom practices in response to conflicting priorities (e.g. the recommended policy) around their work are highlighted in the thesis. I also examine the reasons underpinning teachers' decision making and practice and relate these to factors that influenced their decisions.

I conducted my research in the interpretive paradigm. I assumed that the experiences of individual teachers of brain-based pedagogy initiatives depended on and were constituted by subjective meanings to individuals and intersubjective processes taking place among individual teachers and their colleagues as well as pupils. Individual teachers in this study had their own unique way of interpreting and understanding events and their own social actions (e.g. a decision to participate in the implementation of and teach the policy initiatives on brain-based pedagogy). Schutz (1967) formulated a method for studying social action that involves two senses of *verstehen* (interpretive understanding). People are engaged in an on-going process of interpreting the phenomena of the everyday world in interaction with their groups, while researchers seek to make sense of people's sense-making. Whereas the interactionist perspective recognises that social, cultural and personal forces influence behaviour, individuals' thoughts and actions are influenced by social forces and processes, shared meanings and symbols and by individual agency and self-motives (Mead 1934).

To study the teachers' experience in relation to educational policy change, I adopted Ball's two-dimensional approach to policy, and a set of conceptual "thinking tools": habitus, doxa, field, capital, and other concepts from Bourdieu's theory and de Certeau's discussions, particularly the notion of "tactics". For instance, Bourdieu's theory drew my attention to the primary school teachers' field and habitus at a time of change, especially the implementation of the recommended practices, which were of Western origin, developed in a different cultural and education context. These perspectives helped me to gain understanding of the complexities of the teachers' practice and to explain the

teachers' understandings of and experiences with the mandated new instructional policy, including constraints and opportunities for implementing such policy. I also employed an inductive approach, influenced by thematic analysis, to analyse the text derived from interviews and observation as well as documentary materials, in order to generate theoretical propositions from the data.

In selecting my research framework, I had to consider the implications of applying Bourdieu's concepts to my study. Therefore a further methodological question that I considered during the research is: Are Western theories such as that of Bourdieu potentially appropriate for explaining my empirical findings in the Thai context? Although Bourdieu's concepts have become a leading reference for sociological studies in Western societies, few recent studies have applied Bourdieu's thinking to the Thai education context and, as far as I am aware, my application of de Certeau's theory to this context is new. Mindful of importance differences with the French case, I had to assess which aspects of Bourdieu's theory (1984 & 1990) and de Certeau's theory (1984) could contribute to a framework that would allow me to adopt a holistic perspective on the teaching of the policy initiatives. The two perspectives are related and offer hypothetical constructs that can be used in different research contexts. Bourdieu's ideas, for instance, enable a context-sensitive analysis and consider both macro (field; rules of the game in Thai primary education and Thai primary schools) and micro elements (such as social capital - that can result in promotion; habitus, for example, in relation to particular teaching approaches) and their interplay, which would allow me to generate a better interpretive understanding of the teachers' experience of the educational policy initiatives. I believe that the outcomes of the thesis show that a multi-level analysis based on Bourdieu's framework has enabled me to avoid the pitfall of making a one sided choice of macro or micro and thereby neglecting potentially important areas such as power distribution and school culture.

## **1.6 Education in Thailand**

Given that this research was conducted in the Thai government primary education system provided by the Ministry of Education [MOE], this section presents some features of Thai primary education in terms of potential implications for teachers' practices. The section deals with the public primary

education context in Thailand, namely field according to Bourdieu's (1984) term. The emphasis of discussion is on issues that may be most relevant to the development and implementation of the recommended practices.

### ***Administrative Structure***

Educational reform in Thailand in the 1990s resulted in establishment of new structures and processes of education (ONEC, 2004). In accordance with the reform, the OBEC was established and works under the supervision of the Ministry of Education [MOE]. The Office of the Basic Education Commission [OBEC] is responsible for the central management of education at pre-primary education and secondary education levels. At the local level, primary schools have since 2003 been monitored and supported by the Education Service Area [ESAs] established under the OBEC in response to decentralization of the educational administration authority as stipulated in the National Education Act 1999. Following the most recent administrative reforms, OBEC was by 2014 overseeing some 28,470 primary public schools with around 4,722,763 pupils and about 288,098 primary school teachers across the country, through 183 ESAs in the provinces and in Bangkok. Primary education is compulsory, lasts six years and the entry age is six (grade 1-6).

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment is responsible for conducting an external evaluation of the schools' educational achievements at least once every five years. Testing is arranged for assessment of all pupils in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. Practically, to fulfil expectations of national curriculum assessment, most ESAs administer an examination for the remaining year groups. According to the Basic Education Curriculum of 2551 B.E., Thai pupils study eight core subjects: Thai language, mathematics, science, social studies, religion and culture, health and physical education, arts, careers and technology and foreign language. History, in 2010 and in 2012, were widely promoted as other key subjects to be studied in every Thai school.

### ***Size of schools***

There are, in general, three sizes of primary school in Thailand. A small school is one which has between 1 and 200 pupils, schools with between 201 and 500 pupils are categorised as medium sized, while large schools are those with more than 501 pupils.

### ***Tuition and government subsidies***

Primary education is provided free of charge by law. However, schools are given authority to mobilize resources through school board decisions. The Thai government also commonly provides general subsidies (tuition fees, instruction materials, textbooks, and school uniforms). Additionally, free lunches are provided for disadvantaged children.

### ***Teacher development***

I now turn to policies and practice related to teacher development as this provides the context for the recent initiatives and recommendations related to neuroscience. The teacher and staff management system has undergone reforms in accordance with the Thai National Education Act of 1999 (amended in 2002) with regard to teacher development. In terms of managing the shift of pedagogy (from teacher-centred pedagogy to learner-centred approach), there is an attempt to develop a new teacher curriculum covering continuation courses that aim to extend the qualifications of serving teachers. Teachers have been encouraged to attend training courses as well as a number of other training initiatives. Additionally, there are recommendations for reduction in teachers' workload, allocation of academic budget for teachers' professional development, and relief of problems arising from teacher indebtedness (Office of the Education Council 2006). A teacher licensing system was also established whereby the minimum academic qualification for becoming a primary teacher is completion of a five-year degree study programme and receipt of a bachelor's degree. There are two channels for fulfilling this requirement:

1. Five-year programme in specialized teacher training institutions, leading to a bachelor's degree. Additionally, graduates from this programme are

required to undertake a one-year internship in an educational institution certified by the professional body in order to be eligible to apply for a professional licence.

2. A four-year university education in disciplines other than education, leading to a bachelor's degree in the area of specialization, followed by one year of teacher training. One year of practical training is also required of all students during the last year of the programme.

Teachers can be promoted from teaching positions to administrative and supervisory positions (e.g. headteacher, deputy headteacher, and supervisor) after passing a test and an interview, administered by the Primary Education Service Area. It is extremely rare that teachers relocate across different levels of education, that is, from primary to secondary schools or colleges or universities. However, such relocation is possible in exceptional cases.

In order to motivate teachers to upgrade their competencies, teacher licensing and improved teacher incentives were launched. A new decentralised system for management of teachers and staff, with responsibility for improving and developing career paths and providing a new salary structure and other benefits, has been established.

### ***Teacher incentives***

A new improved salary scheme was also introduced to strengthen the teaching profession. A system for paying teachers according to rank was established to ensure a progressive career structure. Teachers' jobs are ranked in the following ascending order: teacher, senior teacher, expert teacher, and finally senior expert teacher. When teachers first enter the teaching profession they have the academic ranking of assistant. Generally, the annual increment relies on teaching performance, professional service and acquisition of higher educational qualifications.

Progression through those ranking levels depends on length of service and having satisfactory annual confidential reports (evaluated on three criteria: (1) ethics and morality of professionalism, (2) quality of teaching performance and (3) research papers showing academic performance). To achieve an upgrade from the rank of teacher to senior teacher, teachers must have satisfactory

annual confidential reports, based on the recommendations of a three-person committee consisting of a headteacher and teachers from the local Primary Education Service area. To gain promotion to expert teacher and other higher ranks, they need to be approved by a sub-committee of Office of the Teachers' Civil Service and Educational Personnel Commission (OTEPC) from the Primary Education Service Area. The teacher has to submit documents recording his/her academic performance to the Primary Education Service Area. These documents are then sent to the OTEPC's central office, where they are reviewed by a three-person expert committee for approval.

Additionally, teachers usually get other fringe benefits such as free medical care (teacher's parents, spouse and children) and subsidised child education. In some special cases (for example, teachers who work in remote and/or risk area, teachers who work in schools which do not provide free housing), transportation and housing assistance are either offered free of charge or subsidised.

Generally, teachers' salaries are considered lower than those of other Thai government officers; however, opportunities to move up the scale are much higher in other government sectors. Although teachers' salary scales are revised occasionally, this does not happen on a regular or consistent basis. Like other civil servants, teachers have job security, as they are practically guaranteed lifetime employment. It is remarkably rare for a teacher to be fired, except for reasons of criminal or seriously unethical behaviour. Habitually, Thai teachers' behaviour is partly influenced by the national culture. A person's power in Thailand's organisational or societal culture depends upon his/her title, rank and status (Dimmock and Walker 2000). Thus Thai education is relatively hierarchical compared to the Western system. Such distinctive characteristics of the Thai education field are discussed in more detail in Appendix I and Appendix II.

## **1.7 Contributions of the thesis**

Due to greater professional development in the area of integrating neuroscience research into education in the Thai context, as well as the interest among scientists, researchers, education specialists and policy-makers surrounding the potential of brain-based education, the intent of this study was to explore and

explain teachers' experiences regarding the application in educational practice of neuro-scientific research findings promoted as official pedagogical discourse by the Thai government. Consequently, this study is potentially interesting to a wide range of other people, as well as stakeholders in the Thai context.

- Professionals who are interested in the relevance of neuroscience to education: the study discusses the perspectives and practices of teachers in relation to the meanings surrounding their application of such ideas in real-life schools.
- Policy-makers: through empirical data, this study provides an in-depth understanding of the experiences of teachers from their perspective. This study investigated how teachers actively made decisions about the enactment of the state-sanctioned pedagogies and scrutinised as well the constraints and opportunities associated with carrying out the official pedagogies. This study also suggests some practical recommendations for policy-makers, as well as others who influence national and local education policy.
- Teacher educators: this study discusses how best to support teacher preparation and professional development, both for pre-service and in-service teachers, in particular in the area of supporting teachers to use various discourses (e.g. discourse about language learning for younger learners and the national curriculum) in the field, as well as how to support a change of practice, especially constructing dispositions and habitus for grounding a solid understanding of their practice in constructivist terms, for example.
- Researchers: this study shares my fieldwork experiences of conducting ethnographic research in the particular context of Thai government primary classrooms, and presents the complexity of the research process as well as my strategies to deal with the issue of power in relation to the participants in Thai society and other difficulties in the field.

## **1.8 Organisation of the thesis**

This thesis is organised as follows: Following the first introductory chapter, Chapter Two includes the conceptual frameworks used for understanding teachers' experience of the new instructional policy informed by neuroscience. The concepts used are Ball's two-dimensional approach to policy (Ball, 1994), teacher sensemaking, and the theories of Bourdieu and de Certeau.

In Chapter Three, the methodology of the study is justified and detailed. Issues relating to my role as a researcher during data collection are discussed and modes of resolution explained. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are fully explored.

The findings of the study and the related discussion are presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six, which explore and explain the general school context (e.g. event and activities) the experiences of the teachers with the recommended practices. Chapter Four provides a general description of the six schools in this study regarding certain characteristics, events and activities taking place in the school environment.

Chapter Five addresses how teachers responded to the new demands of the recommended practices and their actual teaching practices. Chapter Six explores teachers' views on and the factors that facilitated or constrained the teachers' implementation of the recommended practices. Additionally, it discusses the teachers' perspectives on the recommended practices and its impact on the teachers' thoughts and actions.

Chapter Seven brings together the results from observations, interviews and documentary sources and discusses the findings by returning to the main research questions and the literature discussed earlier in the thesis. In addition, it presents the study's conclusions, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter presents theoretical concepts employed in the research. It differs from traditional literature reviews in that it set outs the theoretical constructs that inform the research. This difference in focus is due to the lack of extensive previous research on teacher change in Thai language teachers (or similar contexts) or in relation to the introduction of new initiatives influenced by neuroscientific discourse, Thus, I sought theories that could inform my exploratory research in these areas. In my search for theoretical approaches as a means to clarify the practice observed, four possible theoretical perspectives, including 1) education policy: Ball's idea of policy 2) teachers' sensemaking (3) theories of Bourdieu and 4) de Certeau's theory, are considered. Moreover, as initial implementation of the recommended practices of application of brain research was carried out, the final section of this chapter outlines neuroscience and education.

#### **2.1 Theoretical concepts used**

This section focuses on theoretical concepts employed in this study. Section 2.1.1 addresses teachers' sensemaking to facilitate my examination of the relationship between policy texts at the government level and how these policy texts are encoded and decoded within schools. Section 2.1.2 discusses Bourdieu's theory and de Certeau's theoretical discussion and teachers' practices which I adopted to support my analysis and understanding of these practices. The final section moves on to describe Ball's concept of policy and to discuss the initiation, development and promotion of the recommended policy.

My purpose in this section is to describe and explain the relationships between individual teachers, social context and new practice implementation. My intention was not to test hypotheses (e.g. causal relationships between teachers' practices and social context) or use these perspectives as

preconceived theories to dominantly guide my interpretation of teachers' practice. My investigation was intended to allow a much broader range of issues to emerge from the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I was cognisant that it was of paramount importance for me to operate each stage of the research as a reflexive constant, a shuttling back and forth process: the development of possible theory being continuously revised according to data gathered in the field.

I attempted to understand the conditions under which instruction policy change was possible by placing emphasis on policy conditions, and in particular how teachers interpreted the demands of policy initiatives that were imposed on them. The following section briefly details the policy debate in this section, starting off with discussion of what is meant by policy.

### **2.1.1 Teacher sensemaking**

This section reviews the sensemaking framework proposed by Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) to unpack implementing agents' sensemaking from and about policy. This section is divided into five sub-sections. Subsection 1- 3 highlights the core elements of this framework, namely individual cognition, situated cognition and policy signals. Subsection 4 discusses the role of teachers' beliefs. The final subsection examines what teacher agency is.

In accordance with the attempts to change imposed by the demands of the state recommended practices, I adopted a teacher sensemaking framework, offered by Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002, to provide a frame for grasping how the participant teachers make sense of new changes in the field. This framework places emphasis on the sensemaking of local implementers. For many decades, school reform and teacher learning and change as part of long-standing efforts to improve teaching and learning have been investigated in relation to a broad and vast array of topics. Recent studies have added teacher sensemaking to this list. Many educational scholars have taken a sensemaking approach to understanding how implementers construct understandings of the policy message, their own practices in light of the message, and decide to act upon their conclusions about potential change in their practice (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002; Coburn, 2001).

Based on the sensemaking studies of Weick and other cognitive theorists, Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) propose a sensemaking framework that they contend can potentially describe the sense implementers make of institutional policy messages. Spillane, Reiser & Reimer's (2002) work indicates that they are disposed to favour the sense of the structure-agency dialectic - the dialectic of requiring change and allowing for local autonomy plays itself out. Researchers who have studied policy implementation (Coburn 2001; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2000) have described sensemaking as a two-step process. Sensemaking is a process by which implementers choose, interpret, assign meaning to cues in their environment (e.g. policy messages) and continuously act on cues they perceive from their environment. Particularly, the policy interpreters construe what a policy is demanding of them and decide whether to engage with policy and how to implement it. During the sensemaking process implementers decide whether to embrace, oppose, modify, or ignore policy (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2000). Sensemaking is an iterative and on-going process (Weick 1995). Implementers sometimes may make certain decisions about what new ideas mean and what they want to do (or not do) in response to a particular policy, but they might reconsider those decisions once they have an opportunity to use the idea in practice.

Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) suggest that sensemaking operates through the interaction of three key constructs, namely, (1) individual cognition (e.g. schema, beliefs, and knowledge), (2) situated cognition (the situation in which sensemaking occurs), and (3) policy signals. Below I address each element separately.

### ***1. Individual cognition***

For individual cognition, researchers in this field assume that teachers interpret policies in line with their existing beliefs, knowledge, values, experiences and emotions pertaining to a policy issues (Coburn 2001; Weick 1995; Blignaut, 2008). For instance, Coburn (2004) found that teachers, even those who were supportive of the reform effort, came to understand new ideas through the lens of their pre-existing beliefs and experiences. Coburn (2004) investigated the processes by which American teachers in California made sense of policy messages within the context of enacting new reading instructional practice.

Coburn indicated five forms of response employed by the teachers to respond to instructional demand (223 policy message). The most common response of teachers was assimilation of new ideas into their prior practice. The second most common response was rejection; teachers did not do things differently in their classrooms when they contacted with the policy message. Around 7 percent and 8 percent of teachers, respectively, engaged in symbolic response (changing appearance without changing instruction) and parallel structure (adding an additional practice on top of existing practice). Accommodation (restructuring prior practice) happened in 9 percent of cases (where cases equal the 223 policy messages). Coburn (2004) concluded that the understanding of teachers who had begun at the rejection end of the scale, grew and shifted towards the assimilation and accommodation end if the new instructional strategies met students' learning needs.

This framework indicates that teachers' prior beliefs, knowledge and practices perhaps both enhance and interfere with teachers' interpretation and implementation of new ideas. Teachers' existing beliefs and practices pose many challenges to teachers' understandings and teachers' willingness, including:

### ***Different interpretations of the same message***

The existing beliefs, knowledge and experience of implementers shape the implementers' interpretation of new ideas in very different ways. For instance, Spillane and Zeuli (1999) examined how mathematics reforms were interpreted and enacted by teachers in nine school districts. They observed teachers during instruction, conducted interviews and administered a survey about instructional practice. The study showed that policy was altered during enactment as a result of different interpretations of reform principles by the teachers. Teachers made sense via different interpretations of the mathematics ideas and tried out different modes of action because they had different knowledge, beliefs and experiences. Most maths teachers who claimed to be familiar with mathematics reform ideas had changed dimensions of their practice such as material use and grouping arrangement more often than dimensions such as discourse norms and academic tasks. While all 25 teachers reported teaching in ways

they believed were consistent with the mathematics reform ideas, only 4 of 25 teachers observed actually taught in ways that resonated with the reform proposals.

Sherin and Drake (2009) studied patterns of teachers' interpretation and curriculum implementation across 10 elementary school teachers. They investigated the teachers' curriculum strategies. They found that the teachers read, evaluated and adapted the curriculum differently from one another but with patterns of predictability. Reading involved a focus on the general outline of a lesson or on the details of a lesson. Evaluating included a focus on students, teachers or others, and adapting comprised creating, replacing or omitting. The study suggested that the interactive relationship between teacher and curriculum: teachers' understanding of curricular content, was affected by the material, whilst the implementation of the curricular materials was affected by the teachers. Sherin and Drake suggested that teachers' knowledge and beliefs influence teachers' use of new curriculum materials.

### ***Misunderstanding of new ideas as familiar, hindering change***

Implementers' existing beliefs and practices cause them to misunderstand new ideas as familiar, thus hindering change or engagement in reform effort. The implementers' schemas, beliefs and practices are used as filters to guide understanding of the new ideas. Thus the new practices might be interpreted as being the same as the beliefs or practice that the teachers already hold or know.

### ***Understanding might focus on superficial features, missing deeper relationships***

Implementers' prior beliefs and practices result in their understanding being distracted by superficial similarities, thus they become overconfident of their success in achieving the true principles of reform. If teachers misinterpret, they may adopt topics, activities and texts recommended by the new policy but enact them in ways that negate the purposes for which they were designed.

This framework addresses the role of prior knowledge, beliefs, and experience in shaping implementers' understanding of policy and their relation to it. Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) focus on the fact that learning new ideas such as instructional approaches may require reconstructing a complex of existing

schemes, beliefs and practices, as new practices are often subject to being seen as minor variations of what is already understood rather than as different in critically important ways. These scholars employ Piaget's (1972) terms of "accommodation" and "assimilation" to illustrate that learning new practices is not an act of encoding but it requires restructuring a complex of existing schemas and beliefs. Hence, new ideas either are understood as familiar ones, without sufficient attention to features that deviate from the familiar, or are incorporated without restructuring of existing knowledge, beliefs and experience, resulting in little change in existing practice.

### ***Values and emotional association with reforms incur cost to self-image***

Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) suggest that values, emotions, and motivated reasoning come to play in making sense of and reasoning about reforms. Changes in teaching practice affect the core behaviours that are central to one's self-image. The new policy or ideas may work against the existing structure and culture in schools and the visions held by certain implementers with regard to 'good teaching', which may have the effect of decreasing feelings of efficacy and increasing concerns among teachers. Or implementers are biased toward interpretations consistent with their prior beliefs and values. Implementers might feel uncertainty and / or ambiguity regarding their competency in conducting new educational activities and tasks when new demands are imposed (van den Berg and Ros 1999; Geijsel et al. 2001). Schmidt and Datnow's (2005) investigation found teachers' varying emotional responses (from positive to negative) to the reform and teachers' emotions resulted in their engagement with the reform, either from a distance or close-up, in practice when teachers made sense of the reform, especially in classroom practices. Acceptance and adoption of reform could result in some loss of positive self-image, in that teachers want to believe that they have performed well in their role and are hesitant to believe that their efforts have failed.

## ***2. Situated cognition***

The second element of the framework, situated cognition, focuses on the particular contexts in which teachers interpret and enact the new policy. The existing researches on policy implementation identify several factors within the context in which teachers work that may affect how teachers implement policy, such as social interaction with colleagues (Coburn 2001), school leadership, organisational structures, the social environment and the historical context (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002) and characteristics of local organisations (e.g. district) (Coburn, 2001, 2005; Goldstein 2003; Halverson, Kelley & Kimball 2004). Thus changing policy requires creating such elements as supportive school organisational structures (Cornbleth 2001) and favourable examination systems.

Coburn (2005) investigated the role of principals in influencing teachers' sensemaking. Coburn suggested that principals played an important role in shaping the sensemaking process for teachers by influencing where sensemaking occurred. The study showed that principals' understanding of new reading practices could lead to them conveying confusing and contradictory messages about reading instruction to teachers. Moreover, the principals played a role in structuring collaboration in schools (e.g. formal meetings), creating the conditions and providing resources for policy implementation.

Teachers' interaction with their colleagues also shapes how they come to understand the meaning and how to implement the new ideas. Coburn (2001) conducted a case study to examine first and second grade teachers' sensemaking of new reading instruction policy in a California primary school. The study found that teachers made sense of new ideas through formal and informal conversations. Different groups of teachers with different beliefs and practices developed different understandings of the same message. For example, one group interpreted the idea of using assessment to inform teaching as meaning they should plan learning according to a student's progress on a sequence of skills. In contrast, another group construed the same ideas to mean that they should plan lessons in response to the need of students rather than in accordance with a set sequence of skills. Coburn concluded that work with other teachers helped them to cope with multiple and conflicting messages.

### **3. Policy signals**

Policy signals focus on policy representation regarding expected outcomes as expressed in policy messages and design. The signals and messages that a policy sends out are critical to sensemaking efforts that will enable implementers to understand the intentions of policymakers. The greater the clarity, elaboration and coherence of policy messages, the more likely it is that the teacher will accurately make sense of such policies. The representations also include objects and actions (e.g. workshops) associated with a particular policy and its implementing organisation (e.g. school culture) and provide the tools with which implementers construct meaning. Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) point out that providing support for sensemaking is as critical as the content of the messages. It is important to create a system of practice to unpack the change idea and motivate reforms. Such a system should cover various types (e.g. verbal and written media) and provide continuously extended learning opportunities.

In sum, Spillane, Reiser & Reimer (2002) conclude that the implementing agents' sense making is influenced by three components: (1) implementers' cognition - the implementer's schema or worldviews, beliefs and affections (2) the context - contexts of the implementation of new ideas (3) policy signals - text of the new ideas themselves, tools and actions associated with a reform and its implementing organisation. In the preceding sections it has been shown that various factors, some of which may relate to the teacher's understanding, the context in which the initiative takes place, and the representations of policy messages, can affect sensemaking and either constrain or enhance new practices. As the result of the sensemaking process, variation in interpretations of the same ideas or redefinition and simplification of the reform are possible and that results in varied implementation and superficial implementation outcomes of the policy.

I have employed this framework to examine how the participant teachers interpreted institutional policy and took action based on their sensemaking while they had engaged with implementation of the recommended practices. Such investigation would allow me to compare the meaning of the recommended practices as it was intended by policy makers with how it was received by the

participants. Based on this framework, teachers confronted cues (e.g. policy messages) in the environment that in some way interrupted their work, or their thinking about work. Such interruptions triggered teachers' attempts to construct an understanding of what had happened and what to do next. The process of noticing cues is influenced by teachers' beliefs, knowledge, habits and experiences. By paying attention to these cues and making sense of them, the teachers may either assimilate or accommodate the cues (Piaget 1972). The teachers' ongoing sensemaking process may face affective challenges in coming to terms with problems with their current practice. They may rely on superficial similarities between their current practice and the new practices and may lose important aspects of the new instruction in the push to assimilate them into existing schemas.

Recently, only a few studies have adopted the teacher sensemaking framework to examine the sensemaking of teachers in a Thai or similar context. Song (2015), for example, employed teacher sensemaking to investigate teachers in Cambodia – a neighbouring country of Thailand, regarding how they made sense of child-centred instructional policies. The data of this study were derived from questionnaire surveys distributed to 379 teachers and interviews with 30 teachers to examine Cambodian teachers' interpretation of such a modern pedagogy.

To understand thoroughly the role of teachers' beliefs in an ongoing sensemaking process, it is necessary to understand their nature and role, as is discussed in the following section.

### ***Teachers' beliefs***

In order to understand the vital role teachers' beliefs play in sense-making, a more intentional investigation of teachers' beliefs is warranted. Researchers on this topic suggest that a change in teachers' beliefs could also bring about meaningful educational innovation. Some researchers on teacher beliefs and language teaching claim that teachers' classroom practices are determined to a substantial degree by their personal pedagogical belief system (Richardson, 1991). Teachers are more likely to intentionally ignore, resist, subvert or otherwise selectively attend to reform initiatives that are inconsistent with their

own interests and agenda (Datnow and Castellano 2000). Ethnographic studies of existing teachers' classroom practices in literacy instruction conducted by Kator et al. (1991) and Moje (1996) indicate that teachers' existing beliefs and experiences can shape literacy teaching. Accordingly, instructional prescriptions or programmes cannot simply be inserted into an existing pedagogy with different classroom conditions. Those innovations may prove effective in one programmatic setting but not in another, because of the overriding influence of contextual conditions (Barr 2001), unless the web of established relations and the teacher's conceptions of the work of the class support such incorporation (Roehler and Duffy 1991; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002).

However, the relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices, formed during their own schooling (Holt Reynolds 1992), are complex (Fang 1996). Teaching practice does not always follow directly from belief (e.g. Power, Zippay and Butler. 2006; Davis et al. 1993) and, sometimes, change in belief may come after (Guskey 2002), or as a result of, change in practice (Richardson 1990). As regards the influence of beliefs on teaching, they may serve as filters (Pajares 1992) through which the teacher processes subsequent education and teaching experience. Hall (2005) found that simply creating positive attitudes to change is not enough to guarantee that teachers will continue with their effort to change. In other studies, cases have been found where teachers' beliefs about language learning were in strong contrast with practices observed in their lessons (Farrell and Kun 2007). Phipps and Borg (2009) and Power, Zippay and Butler (2006) report that the main factors that lead teachers to teach in a way contrary to their stated beliefs are student expectations and preferences, classroom management concerns and limitations set by administrative and district policies, such as examinations.

### ***Teacher Agency***

This section addresses the issue of what constitutes teacher agency. As earlier discussed, the previous frameworks referred to in this thesis seemingly place emphasis on teacher agency. Teachers are seen as agents of change. Participant engagement or agency is a significant issue as it permits policy to come to life as teachers decide whether to adopt, adapt or ignore policy intentions. To understand individual human agency, Biesta & Tedder (2007)

propose a useful ecological view of agency. They indicate that agency is achieved under particular situations. Agency should not be seen as residing in an individual as a property or capacity; it is not something that people can have; it is something that people do. They suggest that to think of agency as achievement makes it possible to understand why an individual can achieve agency in one situation but not in another. Biesta & Tedder's notion of agency (2007) views agency as a matter of personal capacity to act combined with the contingencies of the environment within which such action occurs. Meanwhile, Biesta & Tedder (2007) state that the achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in a particular and, in a sense, always unique situation (Biesta & Tedder 2007).

By discussing terms of agency, it is my intention to understand the role of teacher agency in education innovation and change. My purpose is not to investigate individual teacher agency. The notion of agency presented by Biesta & Tedder (2007) assisted me in understanding that agency is not a capacity or possession of an individual teacher. Agency is achieved in particular situations. Agency acts are strongly connected to their contextual conditions. Teachers are reflexive and creative and are able to deal with societal constraints as well as societal opportunities.

The analytical perspective adopted in this study located teachers' perspectives within their wider socio-cultural, and educational contexts. Among many other options, this study utilises Bourdieu and de Certeau's theoretical models that are described in the next section.

### **2.1.2 Bourdieu and de Certeau's theories**

This section provides an outline and analysis of the theoretical frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1984; 1990) and Michael de Certeau (Certeau 1984). It is divided into three subsections: Subsection 1 outlines the three concepts of Bourdieu employed in this investigation, namely habitus, capital and field. Subsection 2 reviews de Certeau's theoretical framework. The section ends by locating both of these theories as analytical tools adopted in this investigation.

First, as the main investigation progressed, some questions were posed and initially remained unanswered, such as why the participant teachers were persistent in using their preferred teaching methods, why they selectively enacted certain things and did not enact others and why they modified some things. To analyse the ways teachers navigate through and around policy regimes in the sense of the structure-agency dialectic, I thus adopted the theories of Bourdieu and de Certeau as a lens to interpret the teachers' practices and viewpoints in light of my understanding of the different perspectives on the recommended practices. In analysing the responses of the participant teachers, I have referred in particular to Bourdieu's notion of habitus, capital and field. In addition, the notion of "tactics" of Michael de Certeau has been employed in order to support me in understanding and analysing the complexity of teachers' practices as displayed and discussed by the teachers themselves. De Certeau's theory has been adopted as a framework for locating more opportunities for consumption practices. De Certeau's framework seems to offer a more supportive explanation for actions of resistance to ideas that deviate from prior experience and beliefs of the teachers.

### ***Bourdieu's thinking tools***

This study utilised Bourdieu's (Bourdieu 1990) concepts of habitus, capital and field. Bourdieu introduces the notion of habitus to explain why human social practices appear not to follow regular patterns in accordance to particular external conditions or forces (e.g. culture, income and material) or to some rational calculation. Bourdieu rejects as ambiguous the two opposing explanations of structural determinism and individual rationalism to explain human practice. Instead, Bourdieu (1990) assumes a dialectical relationship between social structures and individuals.

It needs to be pointed out that in this study individual actions are influenced and constrained by social structures, while conversely, objective social structures, such as those institutionalised in Thai schools, are influenced and constrained by individual actions and the point of separation between the two is indefinable. Therefore, for Bourdieu, practice is not determined by the individual agent's conscious and rational discursive evaluation and enactment. Practice is strategic rather than rule-based. Strategies refer to a practical sense of what

players of sport call a feel for the game, as the practical mastery of the logic or the immanent necessity of a game: mastery acquired by experience of the game and which works outside conscious control and discourse (Bourdieu 1990). This is what Bourdieu calls the practical sense of “habitus”; individuals develop routine ways of acting and an implicit “feel for the game”.

### ***Habitus***

Habitus exists as a set of dispositions which guide agents to act in particular ways. Habitus provides individuals with a sense of how to act in their daily lives - a sense of what is appropriate and what is not. Habitus is the principle of practice that is structured by sociocultural conditions in history, and it structures dispositions for present and future practice (Grenfell 2008). Therefore, habitus can be re-structured through encountering current circumstance that reproduces its dispositions. The individual (or group) has a unique habitus (e.g. interest in particular music, art and food and career choices) but there is a collective habitus too (e.g. Thai primary school teachers). Individual teacher habitus is revealed through teachers’ ways of talking, walking, dressing, communicating with others in school, etc. Bourdieu indicates that practices are not a direct result of the habitus but individual practice or social practice is a product of dialectic relations between habitus, capital and situations in the field or social space (Reay, 2004).

### ***Doxa***

Bourdieu’s notion of Doxa (Bourdieu 1990) is that what individuals believe about the world and themselves comes to be viewed as natural and normal in the world (misrecognition). It embraces the whole thought and action of individuals. For Bourdieu (1990), “agents never know completely what they are doing and that what they do has more sense than they know” (pp. 68–69). Routinization of beliefs and dispositions yields (and builds upon) doxa. Therefore, doxa is thought patterns, language patterns, dress patterns, ways of acting, dressing, being, etc. that are perceived as natural or reality to a particular social field. Doxa is, however, not unitary. There is indeed a large number of overlapping, but still different, doxas tied to different social fields.

## ***Capital***

An actor's practices will be modified by a combination of habitus and capital as applied to a social context (or field) (Bourdieu 1984). Capital holding is both inherited from family and accumulated in a career. At stake is the accumulation of capital, which is found in four different forms: 1) economic (e.g. wealth, salary); 2) social (e.g. networks, friends); 3) cultural (e.g. language, education, socio-demographic and pedagogical knowledge); and 4) symbolic (e.g. actor's social class, prestige, respect, status) (Bourdieu 1984). The forms and volumes of capital that actors possess allow different actors to wield power or influence and thus to exist in the field under consideration (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). The struggle for accumulation of particular forms of capital is central to Bourdieu's theory of practices. The valuation of capital by Thai teachers is further developed in section 4.4.

## ***Field***

For Bourdieu (1984), broad society is made up of a number of different fields or social spaces, each of which differs from the others. Bourdieu views each field as characterised by particular logics of practice or rules of the game. Consequently, the concept of field is intended to provide a framework for analysis of the actors and their positions within a given field. An actor's position is a result of the interaction between the individual actor's habitus and his/her position on the field and the extent to which particular forms of capital have been accumulated by that person. All actors bring capital to the game (or field), providing them with more, or less, power to influence the rules of the game. Bourdieu explains the interactions occurring within the field as "struggles," in which actors strategically operate to upgrade their positions. Bourdieu asserts that in spaces of struggle within the field, as bearers of different forms of capital, actors who occupy different capital and have opposite interests, encounter two opposing types (conservative or transformative) of strategies of action (Emirbayer & Johnson 2008).

## ***Critiques of Bourdieu***

The characteristics of habitus, which is rarely or never changing and deeply inscribed in individuals (Swartz 2002), attract criticism that habitus is an overly deterministic concept and rules out the possibility of change and agency of individuals (Adams 2006; Jenkins 1994 and Reay 2004). Nonetheless, as Bourdieu (1990) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argue, ongoing adaptation or change occurs as habitus encounters new situations or fields with which it is not familiar. This process tends, however, to be slow and unconscious, and to confirm and reinforce it rather than transform it.

I drew on Bourdieu's theory to reflect on the unique field of Thai primary school teachers and the schooling field, which are discussed in section 1.6 and Appendix I & II. Utilising Bourdieu's (1984) notion of capital, I identify the forms of specific capital operated within schools by the teachers in this study in section 4.5. In chapter 5 I will discuss the different strategies used to improve or maintain their volume of capital in order to upgrade their social position in a constrained field.

Taking up teacher sensemaking (see 2.1.1), when the field is confronted with changes, the teachers must actively construct understandings and interpretations of the uncertainties and disruption of change and then act on those interpretations. Bourdieu (1984) posits that actors act in the ways they do because of their disposition. The teachers' habitus, particularly the habitus of teaching, likely require adjustment to the new field because changes in the field create a new necessity that may require different coping strategies. Through the sensemaking framework, the change demands trigger a circumstance whereby their personal and organisation identities are being challenged and there is a need to put some order into tensions caused by these change demands. The teachers predictably need to use a variety of cultural resources such as traditional norms and values, assumptions and beliefs to provide cues. Inevitably, these teachers are influenced by their acquired habitus to interpret and actively respond to the proposed change. The existing habitus affects the assimilation of new experiences. Bourdieu describes individual practice as a product of a dialectic relation between a situation and habitus. The individual's habitus tends to protect itself from crises and critical challenges by providing

itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible: that is, a relatively constant universe of situations tending to reinforce its dispositions (Bourdieu 1990). This explanation suggests that the teachers in this investigation seek to confirm and not disrupt their prior beliefs or knowledge of how things are and should be. Therefore, it is possible that teachers' habitus may resist change, despite the power of new practices, when they receive information that goes against their habitus (Roth 2002). Habitus tends to reproduce past behaviour rather than transform it (Bourdieu 1990). Nevertheless, Bourdieu argues, ongoing adaption or change occurs as habitus encounters new fields.

Remarkably, in practice teachers may employ other possible manipulations in their struggles against the dominant party, in which they are constrained to play the game or transform themselves to increase or conserve their capital as suggested by Bourdieu (1984). In the next section, I draw on de Certeau's thinking to explore the teachers' negotiations with the policy initiatives. De Certeau's thinking offers an idea for locating more opportunities for consumption practice which intentionally attempt to evade the new initiatives. Arenas of power relations are also sites of resistance (Foucault 1982). Thus there may be a possibility for teachers to engage in the recommended practices in various ways. De Certeau offers forms of resistance which are not concentrated in the violence of confrontation with the dominant party. Instead, he suggests clandestine forms that entail dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of the dominated (Lankshear and Knobel 2002).

However, de Certeau's thinking (1984) stands in opposition to Bourdieu's belief that all agents' motivations originate and are engendered in our earliest backgrounds. He proposed the idea of tactics allowing the possibility that agents may seize opportunities and ideas from what they encounter without being predisposed to do so. As mentioned earlier, progressed data collected during the main investigation indicates teachers' pedagogic decisions and classroom practices reflect a combination of the persistence of their own practice, perseverance to, resistance to and modification of the new practices. These responses seem to be partly susceptible to the influence of habitus and probably reveal that resistant practices are used to satisfy personal desires.

## ***De Certeau's theoretical framework***

Importantly, Bourdieu's concept of habitus influences de Certeau's discussion. De Certeau and Bourdieu appear to share views on the practice of everyday life by the strong and the weak. However, de Certeau differently addresses the subtle way in which individuals can make do or resist a system. In de Certeau's theory, the less powerful (e.g. teachers) are active agents and have the capacity to change a particular part of their lives. For de Certeau, teachers can create space of agency through the act of implementing the recommended practice. Through small acts of cunning and tactics of resistance, teachers can construct their own space and against the power that disciplines (e.g. the recommended practices policy). Teachers might utilise time and opportunities, as they arise, to use or creatively use or adjust toward policy products in ways fitting their own interests and their own rules. Teachers' resistance is not a case of attempting to revolt against the system. Rather they appropriate and use the dominant order for other means, not intended by the recommended practices discourses (or the strategy according to de Certeau).

De Certeau describes strategies and tactics as actions of respectively the strong (or producers) and the weak (or consumers). Strategies are used by those who possess power (and knowledge). Tactics, on the other hand, are the bricolage and perrugue (or ruses) of everyday life. Tactics involve activated intelligence and calculated experience of everyday struggles, invention and pleasures; they provide techniques of knowing how to manage to live with the structure that can be adapted or manipulated to suit themselves (Certeau, 1984). For de Certeau, tactics are enabled through the absence of a proper locus. The exercise of tactics lacks a specific location and depends on time (de Certeau 1984: xix).

De Certeau illustrates his description of tactics through everyday practices of workers. He calls "la perrugue" "the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer" (Certeau 1984 p.25). The workers do not steal anything from the employer but they take advantage of the company's time and materials to do what they want, such as writing love letters or making furniture using materials belonging to the company, playing games, or chatting online.

De Certeau describes many everyday practices (e.g. reading, walking, and shopping) as tactical in nature. Despite not being equal in power and influence, the reader or the walker can create his/her own space through the act of reading or walking because he or she is not a passive object receiving and consuming the writer or the urban planner. The producers of books or the producers of landscapes do have not the privilege or role of controlling what their reading public actually reads from their products. When the reader reads, he/she takes advantage of an existing occasion, and transforms the occasion into an opportunity (Certeau 1984, p.86). The "opportunity" consists of the readers being free to make their own meanings from texts. Similarly, travellers/shoppers are not constrained by streets or shopping aisles. They can abandon the trails of the urban planner or transform a street into a space through using shortcuts, detours, exploring new trails, etc.

### ***Critiques of de Certeau***

In utilising de Certeau's thinking, I was also aware of some critiques of his theoretical discussion (e.g. Langer 1988; Mitchell 2007). De Certeau did not develop or present a theoretical model that was ready to be applied to case studies (Jenkins 1992). The "quasi-invisibility" of the arts of everyday practice represents a limitation for most of de Certeau's critics (Bennett 1998; Driscoll 2002). Regarding this argument, whilst Buchanan (2000, p.48) claims that one cannot represent the everyday in its entirety, I would argue that it is not impossible to represent at least an element of the everyday. For Morris (2004), de Certeau's approach has limits which stem from his "opposition between" "the official" and "the everyday" and his subsequently inflexible distinction between strategies and tactics. Morris (2004, p.679) argues that "social practices...rarely conform to this either/or model". Bennett (1998) contends that this differentiation is easy to misconstrue. However, Buchanan (2000) argues the idea that strategy and tactics are in opposition in the dialectical rather than the polemological sense.

To anticipate his work, I referred to his philosophical ideas and incorporated them into my arguments. I intentionally drew on his thinking in order to analyse how teachers may appropriately use the policy in individual subversive practices. I accordingly focused particularly on de Certeau's analytical concept of tactics.

Teachers are not only able to be constrained but also potentially able to appropriately resist power (Foucault 1998).

### ***Adopting both the Bourdieu and the de Certeau model***

Considering that both Bourdieu and de Certeau's theories focus almost exclusively on French contexts, particularly the postsecondary education focus of Bourdieu, those explanations may not apply directly to the Thai primary education field. Both frameworks are thus considered to be a challenging theory for this research, because, to date, few studies have applied both concepts to primary education in Thailand. In English language education, a foreigner doctoral thesis has recently adopted the homology between habitus and social structure to uncover the practices and beliefs of 14 English teachers in 6 Thai primary and secondary schools in their implementation of the current English Language policy (Fitzpatrick, 2010). However, based on the theoretical outlines presented in this section, despite the fact that Bourdieu and de Certeau focus on consumption differently, I have employed the theories of both Bourdieu and de Certeau to inform my analysis.

In my analysis, I have employed Bourdieu's ideas of habitus to examine the role that beliefs or dispositions play in instructional practice and how they are reinforced, modified and formed when teachers are implementing official practices. Bourdieu (1990) believes that practice is the product of the habitus, which is likely to relate to a particular field such as Thai primary education (see 4.3). For Bourdieu (1990), there are at least two levels of habitus: individual and collective or (inter) subjective habitus. Thai primary school teachers thus have shared habituses as well as an individual habitus, due to their shared context of teaching. Possibly, habitus leads Thai teachers to hold particular pedagogical principles and use particular techniques. Moreover, according to Bourdieu (1988), central to the social field is the doxa, the attitudes, values and action patterns, which is perceived as natural and neutral commonsense. This notion guide me to grasp the common doxa within the field of Thai primary school teachers, such as the content coverage as described in the national curriculum (see 5.1). Furthermore, Bourdieu's (1990) concept of capital provides a model to think about how teachers accumulate valuation of capital as preconditions for making sense of the new experiences. Thai primary school teachers possess

various types and volumes of capital for making meaning and navigating their choices of practices in the field imposed by the new practices (see 4.4).

Drawing on de Certeau's theoretical model has enabled me to consider what teachers actually do in everyday life. His idea of "tactic" has been used for the analytic framework, since in his work the strategic is what makes tactics possible and creates the possibility for teachers to challenge discipline regimes. For de Certeau, no matter how pervasive the domination of a particular institution, there is always that which escapes and remains other to its orbit (McNay 1994). Particularly, I have used de Certeau's concept of "tactic" to look more closely at ways of practising everyday life and to separate "use" from "user". I do not intend to use it to promote resistance. De Certeau focuses more on the individual as agentive, with practice seen as potentially challenging and/or revisiting the social order through acts of appropriation (Bucholtz 1999). However, de Certeau's concepts are limited to the differential constraints placed on consumers (Langer 1988), while Bourdieu's theory places more emphasis on the social order. This priority is useful to my analytic framework. Using Bourdieu's socio-centric theory is essential in this investigation, to situate the experience of social actors in relation to the broader cultural context. Additionally, the notion of habitus of Bourdieu *"guards against conflating the potential for autonomous action with a celebration of its subversive political significance"* (McNay 1999, p.105) and cautions that "individual agency is not necessarily aligned with resistance" (Lovell 2000). I have employed together the approaches of both Bourdieu and de Certeau in looking at both structures of social reproduction and resistance. For Silverstone (1989), tensions between imposed meanings and created ones, controlled behaviour and the free, the passive and the active *"can be observed in everyday behaviour and traced through the study of the individual and the group. They can be deciphered through ethnographic...case studies"* (p.164).

### 2.1.3 Ball's idea of education policy

This section addresses the meaning of the term "policy", and explores the dynamics of the policy process. In attempting to understand the effect of educational policies (e.g. the recommended practices), I used Ball's (1994) analytic tool to differently conceptualise the policy effects that apply to this study.

In contrast to the traditional/rationalist foundation, postmodernism sees education policy as an interactive process, a dialectic (Bowe, Ball & Gold 1992; Ball 1994). Policy documents and statements are a result of negotiations, contestations or struggles and compromises between the different individuals, groups and interests involved in the policy process (e.g. decision-makers, stake-holders and other interested parties). The contested and disputed character of policy is evident at two main levels of the policy process: "encoding" and "decoding". Correspondingly, Ball (1994) characterises policy as both "text" and "discourse", bearing resemblance to the post-modernist conceptualisation of policy as a dynamic and interactive process whose nature is contested and disputed in the forms of encoding and decoding.

Drawing on Foucault's concepts, Ball (1994) introduces policy as discourse. Ball (1994) argues that discourses are not only about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Policy discourses contain power and knowledge formed by the authors of those discourses. The actors' action and ideas toward policies are limited within particular regimes of truth or knowledge produced through discourse. For this study, an example is that the new instructional practices promoted as officially recommended practices had become a part of the dominant discourse of educational change. Therefore, for example, the perception that new teaching practices are positively correlated with improved performance as well as being regarded as good or appropriate pedagogy has become the unspoken 'truth' in educational policy. Such expected assumptions inherent in these discourses make resistance difficult, but not impossible.

Policy as text, according to Ball (1994), refers to how the policy is written and read as a written text in literary terms. Policy as text recognises the complex ways in which textual representations are encoded as a result of compromises

and struggles among interested groups of authors who, dealing with contradictions, attempt their representations of policy. Thus policy texts often carry meanings representative of conflicts as well as negotiated compromises of their production. Policy authors expect the correct reading but they cannot completely control the meaning of their texts.

For Ball (1994), policy as text provides room for actors' agency to take an active role in the reading and meaning of the policy before the policy is put into action. Teachers' responses to policy may be constrained or enabled by policies (policy as discourse) but this is not necessarily the case. Education policy text is often contested and interpreted by numerous actors, especially teachers, who have their own contexts, their histories and values, and hence multiple interpretations are possible. All these factors shape how policies may be interpreted by readers. Bowe, Ball & Gold (1992) make clear that policy is never simply received and implemented within its intentions. Policy writers cannot control the meanings of their texts, because parts of them can be selected, rejected, ignored or misunderstood. Thus interpretation is always a matter of interactive struggle.

Overall, Ball's conceptualisation of policy (Ball 1994) was employed in order to explore the policy-to-practice contexts in this thesis. His models suggest that policy is being made and remade at different school sites. Ball illustrates the relationship between policy making process at the government level and the implementation of and engagement in policy text and translation of these texts into practice within particular schools. I have investigated the context of practices partly in section 1.1 and Appendix I and Appendix II. How the recommended practices were initiated and developed as a policy document for implementation is scrutinised in next section. Afterward, I will move to examine the consequences of this policy, its interpretation and implementation, in Chapters 4, 5 & 6.

Next, I explore the production of the recommended practice.

### ***The recommended practices***

Following the introduction of the recommended practices in 2008, the OBEC, in collaboration with the NBL, has recently been placing strong emphasis on implementation by teachers in pilot schools of its new strategies for teaching Thai that are claimed to be brain-based (also see 1.1). The officials of the OBEC reported that the new teaching approach was developed by the NBL and that they had no involvement in that process. Meanwhile, staff of NBL stated that they were new staff brought in due to the changes in the organisation, and they were also engaged in the process of developing the framework for all the information introduced to the teachers in this study. They claimed that the approach was developed by external scholars sponsored by the organisation.

All participants and the officials of the OBEC and the NBL reported that training for this approach was based on providing two main kinds of information

- brain development and its relevance to classroom practice, typically through strategies for classroom practices, and
- Strategies for teaching Thai language.

The new approach for teaching Thai, as reflected by the recommended practices claimed to be informed by neuroscience, especially in terms of teachers' approach to reading instruction, placed new demands on teachers. The teachers' interviews and documents gathered from teachers identified five steps of teaching Thai language as prescribed by the recommended practices, which are as follows:

- Reading aloud by teachers
- Choral reading (teachers read aloud to pupils and/or teachers and pupils read aloud together)
- Group reading or paired reading
- Individual reading
- Teaching grammar and the rules of the language

However, the rise of the movement for “brain-based education” or brain-based learning” products or programmes, claimed to be based on the latest brain research, has sparked controversy over the pragmatic implications of neuroscience for education practice, which means implementation is not yet off the ground (Bruner 1999 and Willingham 2008). There are several problems with such summary principles regarding brain-based education products. There have been many unauthenticated claims about the brain, often developed without endorsement by brain scientists as appropriate summaries of the research (Howard-Jones 2007). The OECD (2002), Goswami (2006) and Howard-Jones (2014) raised concerns with regard to “neuromyths”. For example, Dekker et al. (2012) have investigated the prevalence of neuromyths among primary and secondary school teachers in the UK and Netherlands. They have found that more than 80% of teachers believed the following myth statements:

- “Individuals learn better when they receive information in their preferred learning style (e.g. auditory, visual, kinaesthetic)”
- “Differences in hemispheric dominance (left brain, right brain) can help explain individual differences amongst learners”
- “Short bouts of co-ordination exercises can improve integration of left and right hemispheric brain function”.

## **Summary**

I have discussed the theoretical concepts on which this research rests. In addition, the three concepts which framed this thesis have been discussed in this chapter: (1) teacher sensemaking (2) Bourdieu' and de Certeau's theories, and (3) Ball's concept of policy. Looking back at the literature, they share similar views. Teachers are seen as active decision makers and meaning-makers, who do not simply react to external impositions by the context (e.g. educational policy). Instead, they participate in interpretation in order to act upon their environment. The concept of structure/agency being central to Bourdieu's sociology is shared by Ball's concept of policy. Ball's concept of policy as well as de Certeau's frameworks are also inspired by Foucault's theory of power, emphasising more the relationship between power and knowledge and how

discourse functions in practice. Thus what teachers can say, think and how they act is governed by the new policy as discourse and as a consequence there is room available for teachers to interpret and reinterpret the meaning of policy text and put their meaning into practice within their particular context. In addition, the recommended policy that was initially developed and promoted was presented in the final section. Growing interest in neuroscience and knowledge about the brain has encouraged the belief that such knowledge has the potential to be applied to classroom practice. However, progress is obstructed by a deficiency of scientific studies into teaching approaches and poor communication of results among educators and scientists. In this regard, concerns regarding the proliferation of “nueromyths”, for example, have fuelled debate on possible bridging between neuroscience and education.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 The research objective and questions

The purpose of this investigation was to explain and describe selected Thai primary school teachers' experiences of the recommended practices policy change. To recapitulate on chapter one, the research questions posed were:

- What are teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to teaching Thai?
- How do teachers implement the recommended policy for teaching Thai?
- What are teachers' views on the recommended policy for teaching Thai?
- What factors facilitate and impede teachers' implementation of the recommended policy?

As discussed in chapter one, there has been little study of the experiences of Thai primary school teachers concerning Thai language policy change and therefore this study required an exploratory approach. An understanding of the experience and responses of teachers to the pedagogical changes in their particular working context as well as opportunities and challenges arising from teachers' perspectives was therefore required. Interpretations, perceptions, meaning and understanding were to be gained from those inhabiting the field as the study's primary data source (Mason 2002). The research approach, accordingly, is consistent with the ontological and epistemological assumptions that the world and reality are interpreted by people in the context of historical and social practices. Ethnography was considered to offer suitable ways to answer the research questions, and to also satisfy the ontological and epistemological perspectives on the nature of social reality held by the researcher. For me, ethnography provided a means of capturing the lived experiences of teachers over time as they were experiencing the mandated Thai instruction reform to their work. Therefore, this thesis examines the lives of teachers and how education policy impacts on their work using ethnography as a hybrid methodological framework for this research. Ethnography as methodology is addressed in the following section.

## 3.2 Ethnography as methodology

This section comprises three parts. First, it outlines the introduction to and the origins of ethnography. Second, it presents my view on the ontological and epistemological properties of ethnography, to provide justification for the methodological approach taken, and detail of the conduct of the research. Third, it identifies reasons for embracing the ethnographic approach to research.

### ***Definition of the term "ethnography"***

Ethnography has been the subject of considerable debate by a number of scholars in terms of its methodology, for instance, between the claims of positivism and naturalism and the extent to which the ethnographer is conscious of his/her subject position (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, Brewer 2000). "Ethno" means people or folk and "graphy" refers to describing something (Punch, 2014).

There is still considerable controversy surrounding the definition of ethnography, although a range of authors has attempted to define the term. For example, Fetterman (2010) refers to ethnography as the telling of "credible, rigorous, and authentic" stories from the perspectives of local people, and interpreting these stories in the context of people's daily lives and culture. Wolcott (2009) describes ethnography simply as meaning "to write about a group of people". Creswell (2009, p. 13) defines ethnography as "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational and interview data". According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), ethnography usually involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting any other relevant data. Meanwhile, Davis (1999) explains ethnography as a research process based on fieldwork and using a variety of (mainly qualitative) research techniques while engaging in the lives of those being studied over an extended period of time. In relation to ethnography, Delamont (2004) states that there are three closely related terms - ethnography, fieldwork and participant observation - all of which are part of a wider term,

qualitative research.

Alternatively, Savage (2000) argues that there is a lack of clear definition of ethnography; however, the defining characteristic is often participation in observation entailing fieldwork. Ethnography, for Savage, is both a process and a product: the term can apply both to a methodology and to the written account of a particular ethnographic project. An ethnographic approach usually incorporates a range of methods and can combine qualitative and quantitative data. According to Brewer (2000), ethnography is both a method and methodology. Brewer defines methods as a tool (data collection) and methodology refers to the general theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the research. A methodology is a justification of the use of a particular set of methods.

Based on these definitions, there is perhaps agreement among ethnographers today that ethnography can be applied to small scale research that is conducted in everyday settings; uses several methods; evolves in design through the study; and focuses on the meaning of individuals' action and explanations rather than their qualification.

### ***The evolution of ethnography***

Ethnography was developed in the field of anthropology. However, it has recently been applied across the social sciences and areas of applied social science. Early ethnographic inquiry is characterised by the long term living with and experiencing of the social life of the participants, as illustrated in the work of Malinowski (1992), for example. Participation observation and method of fieldwork in Malinowski's work have been considered to be the foremost and most widely used techniques in modern ethnographies. Classic ethnography usually deals with study of foreign and exotic people groups and cultures. In traditional ethnography, the early ethnographic researchers were not familiar with the culture setting under study and would enter the setting with undefined and broad purposes (Morse & Richard 2002). Malinowski's work, however, adhered to the positivist paradigm of the time and sought objectivity by studying other cultures that were different from the researcher's own (O'Reilly 2012 & Brewer 2000).

Dating back to the days of early ethnographical studies, such work was criticised as demonstrating an authority; a colonial Western centric worldview, condemned as ethnocentric (Seale 2012). Nevertheless, this pioneering work provides a model for ethnographic research method. Such early research can assist the researcher of today to understand the ethnographic research process. For Malinowski, his concern in using ethnographic research methods was to find ways to ensure the reliability of data collection. Ethnographic methods must collect concrete data over a wide range of facts.

Over time, ethnography has evolved from its heritage to take on different characteristics based on ideological currents of the given time. The second evolution of ethnography emerged in the Chicago School of Sociology. The ethnographic field and observational techniques are often considered to have their origins within the influence of symbolic interaction and post-structural thinking. Scholars, during the pre and post World War Two period, became more focused on the idea that ethnographies of cultures were not only drawn along ethnic or geographical lines but cultures and subcultures are everywhere and may be relatively unbounded. The early studies used first-hand observation and data collection in situ to study numerous deviant subcultures, such as street gangs, drug dealers, and prostitutes (Brewer 2000).

A second research strand of this school was broadened to study more local and non-deviant cultures, as illustrated by Becker et al.'s work (1961). This kind of research did not involve participation observation over an extended time. In this strand of research, the ethnographers seemed to engage in short-term field visits for data gathering and reporting findings. Hence, ethnography became a detailed way of witnessing human events in the context in which they occur that can investigate and solve problems that are not often accessible to quantitative methods (Brewer 2000).

Most ethnographers nowadays seem to agree that the term ethnography can be applied to any small scale social research that is undertaken in everyday settings; uses varied and flexible methods; evolves in design throughout the study; and seeks interpretative understanding of the meanings of individuals' actions and explanations (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007). Recently, using an ethnographic approach without the use of participation observation has become

increasingly evident. In addition, in recognition of instances of a competing philosophical position such as constructionism, a different view of ethnography has emerged that is contextual and reflexive. Ethnography thus focuses on context in understanding events and meanings and considers the effects of the researcher and the research strategy on findings (Pole and Morrison 2003). In addition, there is increased ethical questioning of research conduct and wide agreement that ethnography combines emic and etic perspectives (Savage 2000).

In brief, ethnography is increasingly being used in disciplines such as education and is a research strategy that has evolved and adapted. The change in approaches to knowledge generation and the nature of knowledge from modern scientific thinking to post-modern thinking have affected the evolution of ethnography. Consequently, ethnography offers both limitations and opportunities for social and culture research. The value of ethnography is its underpinning and fundamental goal to understand a culture. Problems and criticisms of the use of ethnographic approach relate to its largely qualitative character and its basis in the participant observer as the research instrument itself and it is often criticised for lacking representativeness and generalisability. Next, I will address my assumptions on ontology and epistemology and ethnography.

### ***Ethnography and my ontological and epistemological assumptions***

In this section I set out to look at the specific ontological and epistemological issues that have affected my approach to my inquiry and which emerged in the course of it. My ontological and epistemological positions have influenced the conduct of my research approach, ethnography. How I understand my truth, my ontology, is crucial for my inquiry but so is being obvious about how I know it to be true, my epistemology. The clearer I am about the world in which I live and this epistemology the better my position to think about how I might go about making discoveries. The way in which I undertake discoveries, my methods, is my methodology and the validity of these methods is congruent with the way I choose my methodology. In this study, I opted for anti-realism with the ontological position of subtle realism and epistemological anti-positivism. Next, I explore these stances.

Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest researchers examine their beliefs about philosophical stances, regarding ontology (the nature of what is being studied) and epistemology (what is the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known). For example, does the knower need to be objective and affect the outcome as little as possible, or does the knower actively co-construct knowledge with others? The understanding of ontological and epistemological orientations relates to understanding differences in research approaches. The different philosophical orientations will direct the selection of methods to be used in social research.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) also offer an analytical tool to negotiate ontological and epistemological assumptions. For Burrell and Morgan (1979), ontology is the view of how one perceives a reality. A basic ontological question is what the nature of reality is; whether reality exists objectively out there or whether it is a product of one's mind and whether reality is given or a product of the mind. Epistemology, meanwhile, concerns the nature and understanding of knowledge, the theory of how knowledge is constructed and how knowledge created can be communicated to others (Burrell and Morgan 1979).

I used Burrell and Morgan as an analytical tool for negotiating social phenomena and identifying their underlying assumptions. I view understanding of the world and the structures therein as products of an individual's mind and the nature of a phenomenon as relative and subjective for the individual constructing it. Phenomenology provides the idea of a socially constructed reality created through interaction among people, who use symbols to interpret one another and assign meaning to perceptions and experiences. According to Schütz (1967), people make sense of or interpret the phenomena of the everyday world. They learn about the world through social interaction or intersubjective processes that formulate subjective meaning of the world and convey these meanings to others during interaction (inter-subjectivity) and use these meanings to create objective realities. Thus I was inclined toward the view of anti-positivism, reflecting my belief that the social world can only be understood from the views of individuals who are involved in the activities that are to be studied. I have assumed that the making sense process about the instructional policy change, the perceived meaning of the new instruction and

the decision making process of participation with the changes are not objective phenomena with known properties and dimensions.

To explain the idea of personal understanding (or reality), Mead (1934) also presents the idea of self as each of us being both “*I*” and “*me*”. The “*I*” gives us our sense of creativity and freedom to immediately respond to the other. The “*me*” comprises an awareness of how other people expect us to behave at any given moment and in any given situation. Therefore the “*me*” is social. It refers to the shared understandings we respond to as we live. This implicates ontological assumptions for me about how meanings are socially constituted within the field of the common sense world. The individual and collective habitus proposed by Bourdieu (1984) and employed in this inquiry, for example, are relevant to the intersubjective process.

Remarkably, Schütz's (1967) notion of the intersubjective meaning as the basis of social action, points to epistemological consequences for my methodological position in this study. For this investigation, I intended to take on the position of a social research based on Schütz's (1967) sense of *Verstehen*, to interpret the participants' meanings and practice in order to achieve an intersubjective understanding of their intention. This intention reflects an emphasis upon participant observation.

Therefore, understanding of a culture and process of change of experience of teachers with policy change is obtained by the study of people's behaviour in everyday or natural settings, premised on methodology of naturalism such as ethnography. Significantly, postmodernism has made me aware of the danger of making absolute claims about understanding of the social world. However, underpinning this research is my assertion that what is presented can only be considered as a construction of events by using ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007).

Ethnography was considered to be a suitable methodology to gain an interpretative and emic understanding of the experiences of teachers with policy change. Considerably, I have acknowledged my “self” has a particular understanding that relies on such considerations as my pre-understanding or prejudices (Gadamer 1975). Additionally, I can only offer the constructions of

reality as presented to me by participants. The ethnographic texts created during my research project are not, in themselves, presented as "truth". Rather they are offered as tentative representations which may provide artefacts of reflection about teachers' lives within the context of policy change. Practically, I have positioned myself to adopt "subtle realism" as proposed by Hammersley (1992).

Subtle realism is positioned between naïve realism, claiming that a truth has been discovered by objective method, and critical realism, claiming that consideration of multi and fragmented accounts refutes claims for the discovery of one incontestable truth. This approach attests that while no knowledge is certain, there are phenomena that exist independent of us as researchers and knowledge claims about them can be judged reasonably accurately in terms of their likely truth (Brewer 2000).

Notably, I must view people's views and action as constructions and this includes their accounts of the world and me as a researcher. Meanwhile, I should not assume that people's accounts are necessarily true. Notwithstanding these concerns, ethnography is a suitable methodology to achieve my purpose of seeking to understand and explain the participants' perspectives and meanings for phenomena that are observed and the actions that flow from these events and meanings. I thus have sought not to ignore my prejudices (Gadamer 1975), but instead aim to be self-critical, reflexive and use triangulation to eliminate the influence of my pre-understandings on my study which I have largely presented within this chapter.

### **3.3 Rationale for using ethnography**

Attention now turns to my reasons for employing ethnography to better understand the lived experiences of teachers charged with implementing the official initiatives. In the context of this study, I sought to gain understanding about the particular construction of understandings by the teachers who were participants and my partners in this study. I believed that individuals create their own understandings and how these understandings are described and interpreted depends on one's own position relative to the phenomenon. The teachers' engagement with the new instructional policy was a phenomenon

which may have been construed differently by different teachers. I recognised from the pilot study phase that different teachers interpreted and implemented the initiatives both in similar and different ways. What the participant claimed to be doing sometimes did not happen when I observed that teacher teaching in her classroom. Therefore, I understood that the experience of the teachers in this study was too complex to define and measure with standardised instruments (e.g. questionnaires). The teachers' experiences must be observed. Staying on the site with participants in the pilot study phase assisted me in gaining an understanding of these complex and multiple understandings from the actions and points of view of the teachers in the school. Therefore, ethnography was considered appropriate to employ in this study. My reasons for employing ethnography are as follows:

- Ethnography is a research practice involving using multiple methods to collect multiple data sources to enable thick description (Geertz 1973) of people's own construction of their world, and analysis of that data in order to produce a written representation of the socio-cultural life of a particular group or community;
- It makes possible an understanding of (inter-) subjective realities of the participants' world (Schütz (1967).
- It involves understanding the meanings of actions and events of people in a particular culture by focusing on investigating a phenomenon subjectively; that is from both an emic perspective and an etic perspective, to gain an understanding of a cultural group's language, beliefs and experiences (Wolcott 2008);
- It also focuses on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena, rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994, Fetterman 1989);
- Acting in the role of an ethnographer in the field would make me better equipped to see and understand the goings-on, particularly in relation to a rapid change in the field, such as a policy change. It would allow me to capture dynamics of the events, people and situations and to map a whole culture of settings (e.g. schools and classrooms) by participation (Brewer 2000).

This ethnographic investigation used participant observation, interview, conversation and documents as research tools for data collection (also see 3.10). I used practice theory proposed by Bourdieu and de Certeau (see 2.1.2) to understand social life. Ethnography is better viewed using the concept of practice (O'Reilly 2012). This ethnographic study has paid attention to both the thoughts and feelings of participants within the context of action.

### ***Using ethnographic methods in Thai education***

Very little ethnographic research into Thai education has been conducted. This method has, however, been adopted by Thai students who studied abroad, Thai university lecturers and foreign researchers in different fields such as health and social care, social studies. For instance, Raktham (2008), a doctoral student, used ethnographic research methods to explore the influence of Thai national culture on classroom culture. The researcher spent four weeks observing in classrooms, conducting interviews in pairs and groups with students and teachers, to identify whether and how Thai national culture influenced students' patterns of behaviour in English classroom interaction. Pair interviews took place before and after a period of participant observation and were followed by group interviews.

Scott (1998) used ethnography to discover the effect of other culture (e.g. Western values) in the field of youth exchange and study abroad programmes. The ethnographic study was conducted over an eighteen month period and divided into three phases to investigate the intercultural adjustment of a group of Thai adolescent exchange students who lived in the United States for one year. Formal and informal semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants before they took part in the exchange programme, while they were living with their host family in USA, and after their return to Thailand. Informal observations were made of English language instruction in Thai schools.

Fitzpatrick (2011), a non-Thai doctoral student, researched Thai-English language teachers and language policy, to assess their beliefs and practices. Purposive and snowball sampling were employed to select study cases and 14 primary and secondary teachers voluntarily took part in the study. Fitzpatrick worked in six schools for approximately one semester to observe classrooms

and interview the teachers. Documentary evidence was also collected as data in this study.

Lastly, Sørensen's (2003) ethnographic study was used to explore and describe the travel culture of international backpacker tourism in Thailand. The fieldwork used semi-structured interview as a research tool to gather data from backpacker tourists at their accommodation facilities, restaurants, bars, and during transportation, or while on trips (safaris, trekking, etc.). These successful applications of ethnography indicated that this would be an effective approach for my study.

### **3.4 The pilot study**

A pilot study was conducted in a pilot school of the OBEC, with the aim of determining the available information for the main study and to train myself in the many elements of the research process, in order to gain understanding through linkage between methodological theories and practice.

Before conducting the pilot study, I received ethics approval from the faculty-based research ethics committees. Additionally, I gained permission from a head teacher to conduct such a study in a school. In this phase, I worked with a female grade one teacher with over twenty years' experience of teaching preschool and seven years' experience of teaching grade one primary for two months. She and her colleagues who participated in the interviews were provided with a consent letter acknowledging their right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. The study found that she selectively incorporated some teaching strategies of the recommended practices into her teaching practice. She considered the recommended practices to be effective, but she explained that there were many methods of teaching language to young learners, just as there were numerous forms of transportation that people could choose to travel by to reach their target destination. She thus did not carry out teaching language as suggested by the recommended practices. Her reasons for dismissing the initiatives were lack of understanding of the recommended practices, particularly how to design learning activities that matched how the brain learns, the large number of pupils (56 pupils), and her concern about the

improvement in pupils' test scores expected by pupils' parents and school administrators.

### ***Experiences and reflection on pilot study fieldwork***

The experiences and lessons learned from this phase assisted me in clarifying and improving the main research process. Drawing on my actions in the fieldwork, the following experiences were particularly notable:

1. Information about the implementation of the recommended practices in the context of Thai education aided me in determining the scope of information in terms of relevance and appropriateness to my project.

2. I learned how to perform the role of moderate participation (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002). In terms of involvement with people in the school, I trained myself to occasionally participate in activities that the participant was doing, but in order to avoid being too influential and directive, I did not participate in everything. I objectively went to the school to learn about and understand the implementation of the new practices in the classroom, rather than to evaluate the schools or teachers. In classroom observations, I trained myself to act principally as an observer, not as a participant, to use Walsh's (2004) term of "marginality", poised between a strangeness that avoids developing too much rapport and a familiarity that grasps the perspective of people in the situation. Although I had learnt about this experience, I had had ethical concerns about how to create an appropriate impression, to build trust and maintain my strangeness. This concern required me to learn more from the main investigation (see 3.6).

3. At the stage of negotiating access, I acknowledged that my position of working at the OBEC would probably be influential in fieldwork participation and data collection. I trained myself to build trust gradually. I presented myself as a PhD student and stated clearly that my intentions were to conduct a pilot study for a research project. I would not become involved with reporting and evaluating the school's and teachers' practices. For the two months of my stay at the school, I arrived at the school before the morning assembly began and left the school in the afternoon since grade one teachers did not teach Thai language in the afternoon session. The first grade teachers provided a table for

me to sit with them in the teachers' room. The following section explores gatekeepers and participants in the investigation.

### **3.5 Accessing sites in the main investigation**

The focus of this section is on how access was gained to participants' classrooms. In the context in which this study took place, the initiatives initially involved a pilot study based on participation of a limited number of schools selected from each ESA (one-three schools in each ESA). I then focused on studying schools in my city and a neighbouring city, which had pilot schools of the OBEC and NBL. Each of the pilot schools of the OBEC (493 schools) and NBL (12 schools) had a small number of trained teachers, with the NBL's pilot schools having a larger number of trained teachers than the OBEC's pilot schools. This was because some schools had only one trained teacher because the school had sent only one teacher to attend the training. Thus there were between one and three trained teachers in each of the schools that I wished to include in the study.

Before describing research participants, the next section explores the several levels of gatekeeper who controlled entrance into the field.

#### **3.5.1 Gatekeepers**

In order to be granted access in this study, I worked through several layers of gatekeepers at various organisation levels. To gain access to this study, I had to negotiate with three types of access similar to those suggested by Laurila (1997). The first type refers to formal access, where I needed to achieve an agreement between the organisations and myself in terms of what, when and how empirical data were to be collected. The second type is personal access where I knew directors of bureaus/organisations, heads of department/schools and individuals in the organisations. Lastly, in the third type of access, I had to build individual rapport to develop a good understanding and forge collaboration between researcher and organisation. I categorised the levels of gatekeepers I had to negotiate and associate with, along a formal and informal gatekeeper continuum (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1 Different levels of gatekeepers**

Level of gatekeeper	Position of Gatekeeper		Function
Formal higher level gatekeepers	At highest organisational level	Official in the OBEC, and the NBL	Having legal power to give official permission to undertake the research in schools, under their supervision
Formal middle level of gatekeepers	At school level	Headteachers	Having authority to officially approve the granting of access to conduct the research in schools
Informal lower level of gatekeepers		Individual teachers	-Having the authority to allow me to access their classrooms and work with them -Having the power to determine what kinds of data were collected and what they were asked to do.

### **3.5.2 Official approval**

Significantly, initial permission from formal gatekeepers was sought before conducting the main fieldwork. I first approached the OBEC and the NBL since I needed to request their collaboration and permission to work with their pilot schools on my pilot phase before I planned the main fieldwork. I gained cooperation more easily through higher level gatekeepers, perhaps due to one major reason: I shared similar cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1984) (e.g. level of education, position and network relations). Central office administrators gave official permission for me to conduct the studies. Before the main investigation began, I met the staff of OBEC and the NBL to inform them about my main fieldwork.

### **3.6 The sample size**

I used the purposive sampling technique based on information from the pilot study phase. The sample size for this study was not determined in terms of potential generalisability but was intended to gain an in-depth understanding (Brewer 2000). According to Hammersley (1990, p.108), ethnographers are generally “not very effective in establishing the typicality of what they report”. And in the absence of such information we must often suspend judgement about the generalisability of their claims. Ethnography claims only to provide one interpretation of the phenomenon of interest.

Nevertheless, for qualitative researchers naturalistic generalisability is possible. Gobo (2004) suggests that one way of generalising is through transferability that generalises in terms of structures that can be noticed and this is transferred to other cases, something that could be possible to trace in other cases as well. To generalise can be explained by Seale’s (1999) term of inferences; what is discovered can have inferences for another group or maybe the researchers can transfer what they have learnt to another group. Moderatum generalisation, proposed by Williams (2000), is also suggested, due to the cultural consistency generated by shared norms, values, rationality and similar physical contexts.

#### ***Accessing schools***

I used a formal method of obtaining access to schools. Ethically, I attempted to ensure that teachers and schools took part voluntarily in my study. I handed in the invitation letter to schools which were geographically close together. I then followed up by telephoning and meeting with them.

Initially, I observed three teachers in Schools A and D. However, one of them withdrew from the study. Additionally, there were difficulties deterring other teachers from voluntarily taking part my study due to the inspection policy of schools and the OBEC and NBL. This policy resulted in teachers refusing to voluntarily participate in my study. Most teachers reported experiencing stress in preparing teaching for supervision and claimed that they had received negative feedback from classroom visits. I consequently decided to conduct my study on one or two sites but to use multiple site locations. Between January and April, I observed three classrooms, those of Pan, Nom and Tipa. From June

to September, I worked with Ra-tee, Ya and Rai-ra. I spent a half day in each school at least three times per week. I now turn to the detailed information of each participating school.

I finally worked with six schools and six teachers in six pilot schools of the OBEC and the NBL (see Table 3.2). Thus I focused on learning from multi-perspectives and how the initiatives were carried out across the different teachers. To cautiously protect the identities of participants (Wiles et al. 2006), I used pseudonyms and changed school names.

**Table 3.2 Information on the six participating schools**

Schools	Location	Number of teachers	Number of trained teachers	Participants	Time joined the study	Age of teachers	Age of pupils
School A	Suburban	62	3	Nom	February	52	5-6
School B	Suburban	18	5	Tipa	January	55	5-6
School C	Inner city	23	4	Ra-tee	March	53	5-6
School D	Inner city	67	3	Pan	January	52	5-6
School E	Inner city	124	2	Ya	June	58	8-9
School F	country	11	4	Rai-ra	June	52	8-9

The following section offers a description of the schools and further detail about the teachers that participated in this inquiry.

### **3.7 The six schools and six participant teachers**

As earlier discussed, six schools were purposefully selected for the study. I collected data from one teacher at each of the six schools. The six schools were public primary schools supervised by the OBEC, providing free pre-primary education (ages 4 to 6) and primary education (ages from 6 to 11).

#### **3.7.1 School A and Nom**

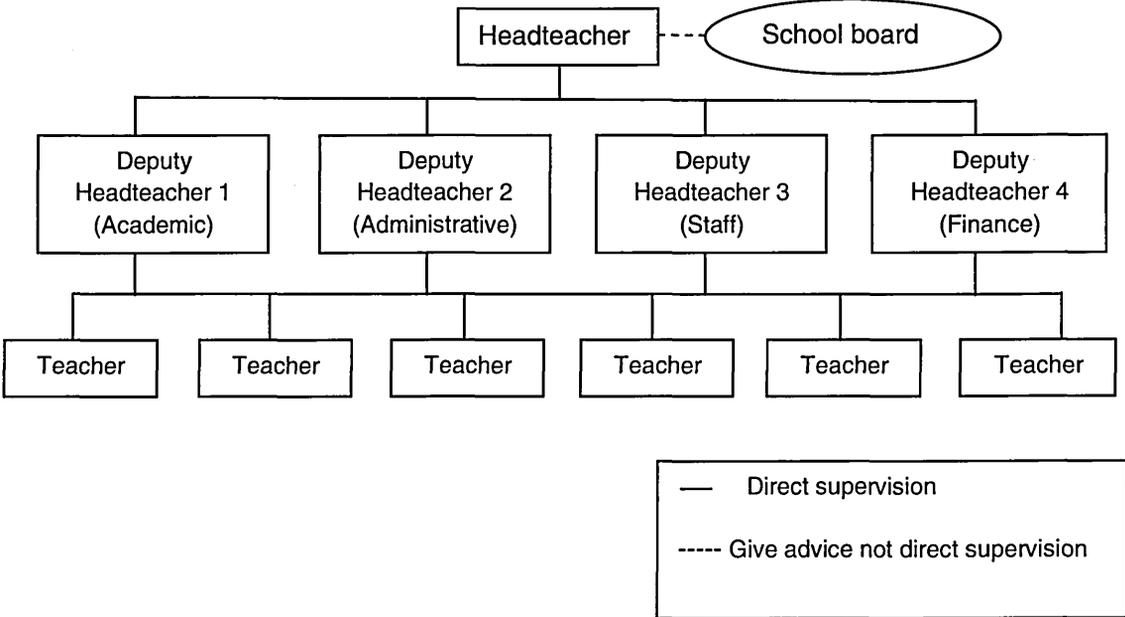
School A, located in a suburban area, was the most prestigious primary school in the ESA because the school has been a laboratory of pre-school teaching for

the OBEC since 1980. As one of the experimental pilot pre-schools for developing the initiatives, School A had been selected by the OBEC to take part in the pilot study phase of the implementation of the recommended practices. In addition, since 2003, School A has been one of twelve schools across the country used as school models for using ICT for administration, teaching and learning.

The school serviced a mix of pupils from low-income farming families as well as some low and middle income pupils. The deputy headteacher reported that most pupils were from low socioeconomic backgrounds but a minority were from professional or merchant business backgrounds. School A had between three and four classes for each grade, from one to six. Teaching and learning was organised in four buildings. Pupils' scores on national and ESA test reports, based on the previous year's data, revealed that the school was ranked among the top five in the ESA.

There were 1,375 pupils, 62 teachers, 2 temporary teachers and 2 school support staff in the school. The school was characterised as a large-sized school, with a management structure which was different from that of the small-sized and medium-sized schools (Figure 3.1). The schools' management structure comprised three grades: head teacher, four deputy head teachers and class teachers.

**Figure 3.1 School A: administrative structure**



The headteacher at the time this study took place had worked in this school since the implementation of the initiatives began. He received a half-day lecture about the recommended practices, conducted by the OBEC. To attempt to implement the initiatives in the school, School A conducted workshops about the recommended practices for teachers in the school on two occasions. The workshops were organised by a trained teacher in school, with ESA supervisors' support. School A was the only school in this study which initiated teacher training in the school independently. It was noted that generally in the Thai education field administrators seemed to bring in assistance from outside consultants to help teachers begin to master the new innovations, rather than using inside agents. For example, School C granted and organised training about the recommended practices by inviting outsources. Talking with Nom's headteacher also confirmed that the school still needed outside consultants to work with teachers.

***Participant one: Nom***

Nom was a member of a three team group of grade one primary teachers in School A, and had been there for fifteen years. She taught seven core subjects in the national curriculum, not including music and physical education. Additionally, a nun from the temple sometimes came to help her teach the Buddhist religion. She used to work in a village school in a rural area before transferring to this school. She and her grade one primary colleagues had the same high-rank title of "expert teacher" and she had held this role since 2005.

Her background was local and she was married to a local, with whom she had had two children. They had both graduated and had good jobs. Both of them often helped Mrs. Nom develop teaching aids to use in her classroom.

Her relationship with others in the school was very good, including the ESA supervisors. Her colleagues and her administrative staff all talked about her in a good way. For instance, she was a hard working teacher and always organised learning activities in her classroom. She had attended RP training three times. She stated that she favoured the recommended practices and that she had asked her headteacher to organise teaching workshops for this approach at her school. She joined the ESA's supervisory team to organise workshops about the

teaching of the recommended practices for her colleagues and other teachers in the ESA. Additionally, she was once invited by the staff of the OBEC to become part of a working group to develop a teachers' guidebook for teaching Mathematics based on the recommended practices. Perhaps, being the trainer for the recommended practices may have increased Nom's symbolic capital (e.g. prestige).

She always arrived at school between 7.00 and 7.30 and spent her morning time, break times and after school hours tutoring low-performing pupils and marking pupils' assignments. Her pupils also liked to play in their classroom rather than play in the playground. Therefore, she often called her pupils to explain, and asked them to correct, their assignments during break times. After the additional hour of tutoring (15.30-16.30), she spent her time doing her paperwork and checking homework until six o'clock, when her husband picked her up.

Her classroom was on the ground floor of a two storey building and her classroom had a traditional layout. Desks were put together and lined up in columns and rows. Pupils' desks were sometimes put together for eighteen pupils (half the class) to sit together but pupils still worked individually.

### **3.7.2 School B and Tipa**

School B used to be a village school. This school was currently considered to be located in a suburban area due to the rapid expansion of that area. The school was located opposite a public secondary school with a good reputation for teaching and learning in the city. School B had 410 pupils and 18 teachers, five of whom had received the recommended practices training for teaching Thai.

The school buildings were built by the Thai Rath Newspaper Foundation and were donated to the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the Thai Rath Newspaper Foundation had continued to support professional development by conducting training once an academic year for teachers.

School B serviced pupils in pre-primary education (ages 4 to 5) and primary education (ages 6 to 11) in three main buildings. Pupils were mostly from low socioeconomic backgrounds, with parents who were farmers or low-skilled workers. Based on the previous year's data, pupils' performance in the national

achievement test was classified as of average mastery. The school had two classes for each grade, from one to six.

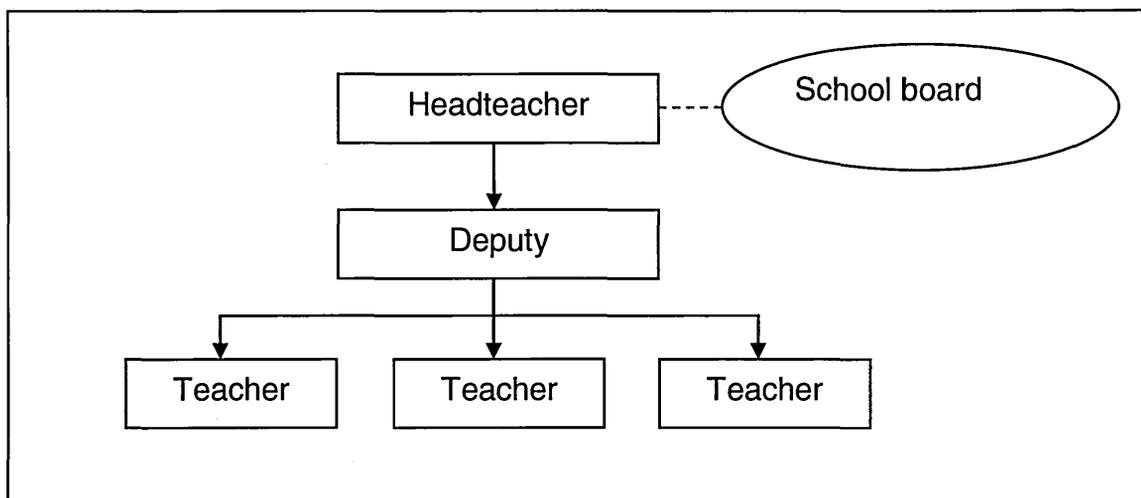
Some teachers told that the implementation of the initiatives had been introduced by a teacher in the school. This was because the school had no administrators at the beginning of the implementation. At that time the previous headteacher transferred to work at another school. Tipa, who had acted as school coordinator for implementation, reported that the school was visited and informed later that it had been selected to take part in the pilot study phase.

School B had a reputation for teaching the recommended practices. It was reported that more than a hundred schools had visited this school to study the initiatives' implementation since 2009. However, the visits affected the teaching and learning of most teachers in the school. To address the problem, the school had recently allowed other schools to visit only on Fridays.

The present headteacher had transferred from another school to work in this school after one year of implementation of the recommended practices. The school had also had a new deputy headteacher who was a secondary teacher and had been promoted from a teaching position to an administrative position. The current headteacher stated that he had little understanding of the recommended practices, since he had received training only once. However, he stated that he had provided a lot of support to the teachers, particularly resources and materials, for implementation of the recommended practices, which he thought was crucial to the designing and organising of learning activities as suggested by the initiatives.

School B was considered to be a medium sized school and the school's management structure is presented in Figure 3.2. School B's structure included a body of administrative staff (head and deputy headteacher) and class teachers.

**Figure 3.2 Administrative structure of School B**



***Participant two: Tipa***

Tipa had been a class teacher of grade one primary for twenty years. She was in her late 40s. Since she was a class teacher, she taught many subjects (6 subjects). Tipa's classroom was on the first floor of the building. There were two classes, grade one and grade two, on the first floor. Tipa's classroom had a traditional layout. Desks were lined up in columns and rows. Two pupils sat together in columns with a small aisle between, but pupils worked individually. Tipa installed a new sofa and bookshelves in the front of the classroom when the school started implementing the recommended practices.

She had been promoted to a trainer in order to train teachers teaching the recommended practices in the OBEC's pilot schools. Consequently, she had been invited by schools and the ESAs to lecture and demonstrate teaching the recommended practices across the country. This experience contributed to her reputation in teaching the recommended practices. In addition, she had always been a key note speaker at her school when other schools visited to study the recommended practices.

She reported that she and the teachers in the pilot school of the NBL had had to attend a series of training sessions between 2007 and 2009. However, the training was conducted as only a one-shot workshop in 2009 and 2010. Between 2009 and 2010, her school had been visited and monitored only once.

She had recently been promoted and held the professional title of expert teacher at the time this study took place (May, 2010). She used to be a school curriculum coordinator. As she had requested a transfer to another school in the next academic year, a new teacher had been assigned to take charge of her duties and she was still working collaboratively to aid this new teacher. She recently took on the responsibility of school curriculum coordinator of the implementation of the recommended practices, grade one curriculum coordinator and duty teacher. Consequently, Tipa possessed more symbolic capital. She was likely to be recognised as an authoritative figure in her school and was highly respected by her colleagues due to her seniority in terms of age, years of working at her school and her management position in the school. Her colleagues reported that they had excellent interpersonal relationships with Tipa. Most of the teachers in this school regularly had lunch together at the school canteen.

She first engaged with the idea of early literacy when she participated in professional development of the implementation of the CLE approach by the OBEC in 1998 (see 4.2). She had also taught, using CLE method, between 1998 and 1999. At that time, she was selected to become a lead teacher in using the CLE approach by the ESA. As she had experience with the CLE approach, she claimed that she was open to shifting her approach to teaching reading in fundamental ways. She believed that reading books aloud was one of the best ways to help children learn to read.

In addition, she stated that the way in which her new pupils learned to read had enhanced her belief that reading stories aloud was one of the best techniques for teaching younger pupils to read. She stated that before participating in the implementation of the recommended practices, she had an unplanned baby. She said she had bought children's books to read bedtime stories to her young child, and she had found that the child loved reading. Therefore, her own child had had a great influence on her engagement in the recommended practices.

### 3.7.3 School C and Ra-tee

This school was established by the Thai government alcohol factory in 1949 for providing primary education to workers at the factory. In 1953, the factory became a private company and thus the school became a private school and began to provide education for both primary and secondary pupils. In 1999, with a change of government policy towards free trade and the free market, the company was closed. The school was transferred back to government control and it became a public school again. Since 1999, the school has provided pre-primary education, primary education and secondary education. Pre-primary and primary education was provided in a U-shaped three storey building, which had an office for the administrative staff on the ground floor. Meanwhile, the three-storey secondary education building was situated on the other side of the street and had a special room for a deputy headteacher with responsibility for managing teaching and learning. The school was also close to a privileged private school (0.9 miles away).

It was a city school, considered as medium sized in Thailand and its management structure is illustrated in Figure 3.2. Most of the pupils were from low socioeconomic backgrounds, with parents who were low-skilled workers or single parents. Pupils' performance in national achievement tests had been reported as average overall. The school had one class for each grade from one to nine. The school educated 305 pupils in 12 classrooms and had 23 teachers at the time this study took place.

The implementation of the initiatives had been started by a previous headteacher. However, teachers in the school had been involved in the process of decision making as they were allowed to vote at teachers' meetings on whether or not to adopt the new practices. Nevertheless, during five years of implementation of the initiatives, the school had had three headteachers. It was reported that the first of these, who initially brought the initiatives to the school, provided a lot of support for the teachers in attempting to carry out the initiatives in their classrooms. However, most teachers stated that implementation was not supported well by the next headteacher, who had a different agenda. For example, the teaching of Chinese was introduced, since the headteacher had obtained a scholarship to study the language for six months in China. During

the study period, grade one to grade six pupils were studying Chinese language.

The third and current headteacher, who had worked in the school for only one semester, stated that she was going to support the implementation since she thought that the teaching strategies of the recommended practices were similar to the teaching and learning concepts of the student-centred approach. She had set up a classroom as both a classroom and a library to collect learning materials, children's books, teacher guides, textbooks, and reports on the implementation of the recommended practices.

### ***Participant three: Ra-tee***

Ra-tee had worked in School E for fifteen years. Her professional title was senior teacher, although she was only in her late 40s. This was because she had worked in a private school before transferring to become a government school teacher in 2004. Ratee had a similar professional title and level of education to the majority of her colleagues in the school. She claimed that as she had previously been a private school teacher, she had not received as much training as in-service teachers. She did not know about the CLE approach since she did not receive the same training as the other five participating teachers. She had never used the storybook techniques to teach reading before participating in the recommended practices implementation. She had also never practised bed-time story reading with her own children.

She and her colleagues reported that they were mostly unfamiliar with organising a variety of learning activities. She said that *'We just used to focus on teaching content, and gave them exercises as drill.'* At the time this study took place, she was a class teacher for grade two primary and had been assigned by the current headteacher to teach Thai for grade one pupils. She had also been assigned as librarian and as school co-op manager. Thus she had to spend time in the morning before lessons started, and at lunchtime as well as after-school hours, working at the school co-op store.

Ra-tee had good relationships with her colleagues and the school administrative staff. She sat with her colleagues in the teacher's room. However, her colleagues reported that they did not strongly support the implementation of the

recommended practices in the school. Ra-tee's colleagues said that, compared with them, Ra-tee had made significant attempts to implement the recommended practices in her classroom. She was recognised by her colleagues as a good and kind teacher who always helped the new pupils with poor reading abilities. Ra-tee spent the morning time when she was not working in the school co-op store and, after school finished, would help the poor readers.

Ra-tee claimed that she had been requested to demonstrate and present her ideas in seminars and conferences for the NBL, but she refused to take part. She expressed feeling a lack of confidence in her teaching, realising what she still had to learn regarding the teaching of the recommended practices.

### **3.7.4 School D and Pan**

School D had a reputation for teaching and learning for free primary education in the area. It was a city school; however, its pupils came from many different classes and backgrounds, including professional workers, middle class families, low-skilled workers, and/or single parent families. The school had 1,387 pupils (pre-school and grades one to six) with 67 teachers, 25 temporary teachers and 21 school support staff, when this study took place. The school was located close to the most prestigious public secondary school in the country, ranked in the top third. Teaching and learning were organised in a three-sided U-shaped building and in another three storey building.

This school was categorised as a large-sized school, like school A. The administrative structure of schools was similar to School A (see Figure 3.1). Since the school had many classes for each grade, a class teacher was selected and appointed to act as grade curriculum coordinator for each grade and to work collaboratively with administrative staff and class teachers.

Some teachers reported that parental involvement was perceived to be low in terms of participation in teaching and learning. They stated that members of the School Board and School Parent Association did not engage in developing the curriculum or in teaching and learning activities at the classroom level. Parental involvement was reported to be high in terms of generating resources and donating funds. Some of the budget to hire temporary and support staff was supported by the School Board and School Parental Association. The

committee of the School Parent Association came to meetings in a room provided by the school every week. Meanwhile, the participating teacher overtly expressed that parental involvement in pupils' education was very low. She claimed that her pupil's parents tended not to support their pupils through reading to their children at home or assisting with homework.

A participating teacher reported that the school was selected and ordered by the ESA to take part in the implementation of the recommended practices. There were three teachers in the school who were ordered by the previous headteacher to attend the training for the implementation. This headteacher, who was in charge when the school began implementing the recommended practices, retired, and was replaced by a new headteacher in October 2009. During the time this study took place at the school, the new headteacher initiated many mandates. Some teachers reported that the new headteacher decided to participate in the MOE project known as World-Class Standard School (focus on school autonomy) without their involvement in making the decision. The aim of this project was to produce World Citizens. Approximately 90 of the schools that took part were secondary schools. Consequently, the school initiatively operated teaching and learning using the English language for some subjects (e.g. Mathematics, Health and Physical Education) at every grade. Moreover, the new headteacher had initiated a new programme named "an enrichment programme for high-ability pupils". If pupils wanted to attend this programme they needed to pass an examination and interview as well as pay an extra tuition fee of around £ 550-600 per year.

In order to prepare pupils for national and ESA tests and the new mandates, the new headteacher assigned every class to conduct a mid-term test to prepare their pupils. The participating teacher reported that the pupils' examination results were used for information to design workshops and continuous professional development in order to develop teacher performance. The participating teacher claimed that all of the headteacher's new mandates seemed to affect teachers' routine working. She and her colleagues had to prepare their pupils for those aforementioned tests. Many teachers' meetings were conducted after school hours and at weekends to prepare for the implementation of these new mandates (e.g. preparing curriculum, annual work

plans, resources and materials for such programmes and administering the exams and interviews for recruiting pupils to participate in the new programme of study).

***Participant four: Pan***

Pan had a senior professional title as expert teacher (see 1.5) and she achieved this promotion before taking part in the implementation of the recommended practices. At the time this study took place, she was preparing her academic reports to apply for an upgrade in her professional rank within the next two years. She held a master's degree in Elementary Education. After she had finished her master's degree, in 1994, she transferred from another city to work in School A.

She acted as grade curriculum coordinator and she was a member of a team of six grade one primary teachers. She had taught grade one primary pupils for more than fifteen years. She taught several subjects, due to her being a class teacher (e.g. maths, Thai language, science, social studies, careers, art and music). Meanwhile, the monk (or priest) from the temple near the school came regularly to teach the Buddhist religion. She claimed that, due to her position, she had a varied workload. She stated that she had to attend many meetings, both inside and outside the school, and that she was very busy with paperwork. Moreover, she reported that she was busy with responding to the new policy mandates of the new headteacher. She often arranged meetings in the school with the administrative staff and with her colleagues to prepare test papers, and school curriculum to serve the new policies, administering examinations and interviews to recruit pupils to the school's new programme, and held meetings with parents.

She was also recognised as a prestigious member of the ESA. She was once selected by the ESA to demonstrate her teaching on a Thai TV teaching programme. She appeared to have very good interpersonal relationships with all her colleagues, as well as with the administrative staff. Her class was selected by the previous headteacher to take part in the implementation of the recommended practices. She reported that she had a good relationship with the previous head teachers. However, she stated that she did not have a close

relationship with the present head teacher, who had started worked in the school four months earlier. Among the six grade one primary teachers, Mrs. Pan appeared to have the most cultural capital (e.g. rank) and symbolic capital due to her position as the grade one curriculum coordinator and the reputation of her teaching skills and abilities.

Her classroom was on the third floor of the building and had a traditional layout. Desks were lined up in columns and rows and pupils worked individually. She and the grade one teachers had lunch provided to them in the classroom by the school canteen while she was looking after her pupils.

### **3.7.5 School E and Ya**

School E was a city school. Based on the inspection report by the ONESQA, this school was the best performing school in the area. School E had 2,152 pupils (pre-school and grades one to six), 124 teachers, 31 temporary teachers and 37 school support staff. School E served a mix of pupils from low and middle income families. The school had also participated in the World-Class Standard School project of the MOE, like School D.

The school acquired a new head and a deputy headteacher who transferred from other schools to work in the school when the implementation of the initiatives had been in place for eight months. Consequently, the new headteacher had not been involved in initiation of the recommended practices.

The School management structure was similar to that of Schools A and D. However, School E had only two deputy headteachers. The school had been waiting for the appointment of two deputy heads by the OBEC. Since this school had a large number of pupils and provided many programmes for pupils, this school selected one class teacher to act as a school curriculum coordinator to help the deputy headteachers. In addition, one class teacher of each grade was chosen to be the grade curriculum coordinator, to collaborate with the administrative staff and the school curriculum coordinator.

The school had eight classes for each grade from one to six. Unlike the other schools, School E's classes, one to four in each grade, were ordinary classes, classes five to six ran extra programmes (focusing on Mathematics and

Science), and in classes seven to eight, foreign teachers taught the English Programme (EP), teaching the Thai curriculum, in the subjects of English, mathematics, science and physical education, in English. Parents and pupils who wanted to participate in the extra EP programme had to pass a test and attend an interview, and in addition pay admission fees of around £7 and tuition fees of between £550 and £600 per academic year. Lottery sampling was used to select pupils to study in the ordinary classroom.

I worked with one of the ordinary grade three classes because Ya was willing to allow me to study her classes. There were three trained teachers in the school, one of whom transferred to work in another school, while another did not teach Thai language at the time the study took place. However, teachers in the school received a one-day training course in the recommended practices because the school could afford to pay for this. The school conducted the training by inviting external experts to train their teachers.

Parental involvement in the school was reported to be very high in terms of generating resources, donating funds and helping with school-related activities (e.g. fundraising and helping out with extra-curriculum activities). In addition, the school received a large budget (around £200,000/year) from local administrative organisations to develop their quality of education.

It was usual for these six schools to organise extra activities related to the national curriculum (e.g. sports, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts). Also schools in this study organised many events which pupils could attend and their work was showcased at events such as the Wai Kru ceremony ("Wai Kru" means "pay respect to the teacher"), Mother or Father's Day, and Buddhist festival days. I observed that pupils' work shown in these festivals was most often a one-page essay or worksheet rather than other assignments such as exhibits or project work.

However, I observed that School E often organised extra pupil activities compared with the other five schools; for example, pupil activities for Thai Language Day (26th June, to celebrate Sunthorn Phu, a Thai poet honoured by UNESCO as a great world poet). This school conducted pupils' competitions in which they read and wrote poems, drew imaginatively and dressed creatively to illustrate stories written by Sunthorn Phu. On Science Day (18th August), the

school held a Science Day Camp where grades three and six presented their projects, and a School Fair took place at the end of the school year. In contrast, in the other five schools the teachers only organised activities related to events in classrooms, rather than celebrating special events.

***Participant five: Ya***

She had been promoted to a higher rank as an expert teacher eight years ago and had been a class teacher for grade three primary pupils in School E for more than ten years. She taught the ordinary class in the five core subjects (maths, Thai language, social studies, science, and health education). She was going to retire in the next two years. Her classroom was on the second floor of a building which also housed the headteacher and assistant headteacher's rooms and the administrative staff. Her classroom layout was similar to that of the other participating teachers in this study, with the pupils sitting in vertical rows and columns and the teacher's desks placed strategically at the front and back of the room, due to overcrowding.

She was a member of a team of four grade three primary teachers who taught "the ordinary class". Ya and her colleague set up the corner of the second floor stairs as their office. Ya and her colleagues, who taught grade three pupils, believed that most pupils who studied in other programmes (e.g. Maths and Science, English programmes) were high performers and were from high socioeconomic backgrounds and / or were from parents who gave good support to their children's learning. But they also claimed that they worked hard to support their pupils to succeed in their studies.

Being in her late 50s, she was an experienced teacher compared to her colleagues in grade three, in terms of seniority and teaching experience. She held similarly high professional rank and educational qualifications to her colleagues who taught third graders. However, Ya held the role of grade curriculum coordinator. As was necessary in her role, she was sent by the school to attend the OBEC's workshop on recommended practices for grade three teachers who taught Thai language. She also said that she received the recommended practices training before she attended the training of the OBEC because the school conducted such training for teachers in school. She also

received the CLE training, thus she knew about the story reading techniques.

### **3.7.6 School F and Rai-ra**

School F was a primary school located in an agricultural community and was in the same city as School E. This school served a mix of Thai pupils from poor farmer parents and other low-income families. In 2011, School F taught 284 pupils from kindergarten through to grade six, 25% of whom were Thai and 75% were migrant pupils (I did not have permission to tell their stories). School F was not a typical school. The school normally provided education for local Thai children. However, due to the success of the national family planning programme throughout the country, the birth rate had decreased dramatically and continuously in the village. Additionally, some parents sent their children to study in the privileged school in the city. Therefore, there were few local Thai children in the school. The migrant children could enter the school for free education without having to provide identification documents. The school's budget was allocated according to the actual number of pupils enrolled at the school.

The school was classified as a small-sized school. The management structure of School F was the same as that of School B (figure 3.2). Nonetheless, a teacher had been assigned by the headteacher to act as the deputy head. The school had 11 teachers and 8 classrooms. Teaching and learning was organised in two buildings; a one storey building was used for grades one to six and another was used by pre-school pupils. This school was visited by a number of teachers to study the recommended practices.

The school had one class for pre-school and for each grade from one to six. School F had been ranked among the "lowest achieving" schools in the area by the ESA. The participant reported that the first and second years of the implementation of the recommended practices were difficult years. This was because pupils' performance in the national and ESA tests had declined.

Teachers reported that the recommended practices had been brought to the school by the present headteacher, who had worked in the school for nine years. Nonetheless, the headteacher transferred to another school later, since he had requested a transfer. Most teachers reported that they were not involved in the process of making the decision to adopt the new practices.

### ***Participant six: Rai-ra***

Rai had worked at School F for seventeen years, while her husband, who taught grade four primary, had worked in the school for twenty-three years. At the time of the study, Rai taught 24 grade three pupils and was ranked as an “expert teacher”, to which she had been promoted in 2009. She held a higher academic rank than the other teachers in the school. She said that she was satisfied with her academic rank. She also had a happy family. Her only son had completed his postgraduate degree. Thus, she was not interested in increasing her professional rank.

She had been a class teacher for third graders for more than ten years. Her classroom was on the ground floor. The school had only one main building, which was single storey, and a school canteen. The office of the head teacher was completely separate from the classrooms. Rai’s classroom layout differed from that of the other participating teachers in this study. The pupils’ desks were portable desks which were usually arranged in columns and rows and sometimes the desks were put together for four or five pupils to sit together when Rai held group exercises for her class. I now move on to describe events and activities in participating schools.

In the next section, I explore the distinct nature of my fieldwork.

### **3.8 The unique field of work and my positioning process**

In the next section, I will reflect on my experience of interaction in the fieldwork. Before doing so, I begin with discussing the influence of the unique Thai primary education field on my research operations. My intention is to reflect on my understanding of how I could enhance my own positioning experience as an ethnographer.

According to Bourdieu’s (1990) notion of field and habitus, I needed to knowingly consider specific features of my fieldwork as being governed by distinctive rules (see Appendix 2). This factor perhaps shaped my research operations and, in turn, possibly shaped the participants’ actions and thoughts. As a researcher, I was perhaps guided by my habitus in performing in the field. I perhaps spontaneously and intuitively acted according to my habitus for

achieving my objectives (e.g. success in fieldwork, gaining trust of participants). I also may have utilised my capital to enhance the success of my fieldwork (see 3.4.2). Bourdieu (1990) describes that the practice of actors is not only calculating and conscious, but also intuitive and unconscious. I therefore may have unavoidably been involved in bias. It was subsequently necessary to reflect on what I was experiencing in the fieldwork in order to understand how I was integrally exercising my habitus and capital in the field. This action could enable me to regain distance between me and the participants.

As a field researcher, I had to deal with my subjective involvement in this study. Being there must be accompanied by a high degree of reflexivity. As I was employing ethnography, there was undeniably bias arising from the impact of my own history, beliefs and values, and the influence of the researcher over the participants' action. Gadamer (1975) indicates that we belong to history. That is why our pre-understandings and prejudices constitute the historical reality of our being. I had to make conscious my pre-understandings and prejudices. I had to be open to the possibilities of other understandings, isolate my prejudices and evaluate an object on its own as well as either assimilating or rejecting prejudices. I understood that I had shared some understandings with the people involved in this study, since I was studying my former community. Given this experience, the shared meaning between me and them may have served as a double-edged sword. My shared understanding may have assisted me to better understand them (e.g. teachers), while it may also have caused me to overlook patterns because they were not strange or new for me or I may have lacked questions for investigating the teachers' situations. Therefore, triangulation of methods was adopted for this study. In addition, a commitment to reflexivity must not be undermined by naïve realism, which assumes that all people define real world objects, events and living creatures in the same way (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

In the following section, I describe my fieldwork experience according to the following topics:

- Participant observer role
- Establishing rapport
- Building empathetic relationships

- Reciprocity
- Balancing my identity in terms of closeness and distance
- Fighting familiarity
- Issues in giving research information
- Multi-site fieldwork and questions of data quality and relationship in the field

### **3.8.1 Participant observer role**

As I employed participation observation in this study, this section discusses my position as an observer in the field. As participant observation is the main method of ethnography, participant observation is not really a method on its own. Participation and observation are inextricably linked (O'Reilly 2012). Participant observation involves being active in research by making notes, asking questions, doing interviews, collecting data, drawing up lists, constructing databases. I used participation to enable me to gain access to teachers to build opportunistic observation, interviews and ask questions as they occurred in the sites. Close immersion in the everyday activities of the participants is necessary for learning and understanding the meaning of actions and for defining situations and context.

Blumer's (Blumer, 1959) framework taught me that teachers in this study brought meaning to their interactions. The meaning they added to their interactions with other people and symbols (e.g. text) constructed as a result of past social interaction were situated in present social interactions and had implications for future social interaction. These meanings could aid me in determining the reasons for their actions. Knowing the meanings also required me to observe when participants used those meanings and to identify the situations or contexts in which those symbols or meanings were used. In addition, Goffman (1959) suggests that people often want to present themselves in their interactions as acceptable people, such as a considerate person, an expert and so on. Our interactions involving our "selves" are presented for the purpose of interacting with others, and are developed and maintained with the cooperation of others. Data thus only present what is

happening; it is not about truth but about people's constructions of understanding through interactions.

Gold (1958) and Juker (1960) describe typologies of the participant observer role that identify four levels of participation or observation: complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer. Guided by my experience in the pilot study phase (see 3.4), I adopted a position between observer as participant and participant as observer. At the first stage of the study I acted as the observer as participant.

Over time, my role developed into one of participant as observer (also see 3.7.1). I transferred my role on a continuum between observer as participant and participant as observer. I chose to act in an observer as participant role, in which I was predominantly an observer with limited participation while I was conducting ethnographic fieldwork. In essence, this meant that I occasionally engaged in activities that my participants were doing, but ensured that I was not actually participating in everything in order to avoid being too influential and directive. The low level of participation and interaction, or my attempts to act as a peripheral member researcher (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002), allowed me to still maintain a conceptual distance as a researcher.

For conducting classroom observations, I took on the role of complete observer. Next, I address building good relationships with participants in this study.

### **3.8.2 Establishing rapport**

This section discusses the imbalance in power relations between me and the participating teachers. I had to realise that the teachers are active, rather than passive actors. I therefore had to generate trust and establish meaningful relationships with the teachers. Managing the relationship with the participants in the study was a fundamental necessity, to build a relationship of trust and cooperation in order to gain rich data.

Underpinning my ontology and epistemology, I had to ensure that the participants were active interpreters who constructed their own, different understandings (realities). Although this made it more of a challenge to build relationships, it meant that my participants retained the power to interpret and

determine my actions and my research activities were carried out within their contexts. To what degree they would cooperate with my main study and be open with me depended on my ability to build and maintain interpersonal relations to gain the participants' trust. I had to positively persuade my participants to trust in me. Likewise, I had to realise that I also inevitably possessed the power as a researcher to interpret and produce a report on my participants' lives. Therefore, I needed to bring these power relations into play in my fieldwork as well as making the epistemological beliefs of the relationship between researcher and the researched explicit through a strategy of impression management.

### **3.8.3 Building empathetic relationships**

This section describes my methodological self-presentation as a trustworthy researcher to persuade the teachers to cooperate with my research. My impression management began at the stage of initial access negotiations. In order to build trust at the beginning of negotiating, I carefully introduced myself as a PhD student and a former primary teacher. I clearly explained my role, and that it did not involve evaluating and reporting their implementation of the recommended practices. They were also told that they would be observed and interviewed and I would keep their identity secret. I let them know about their right to withdraw at any time, as well as their right to refuse the audio recording. It was not necessary for them to prepare anything for my observations.

My impression management consisted of acting in a friendly way, watching and listening, greeting people and showing my respect to the people in school. I attempted to look engaged, alert and interested in everything that was going on, but I tried to participate in activities or events with non-verbal behaviour. I understood that my working position as an official could be influential in the fieldwork. Therefore, I ensured that my self-presentation during fieldwork was disassociated from any threatening perceptions that my participants had of me. I had to leave a good impression as a student researcher, an official and my own self. I learned to listen first then talk. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) warn that researchers have to consider the potential impact of their conduct on further researchers who want to gain access to the setting.

### 3.8.4 Reciprocity

This section examines the relationships between power and reciprocity in the unique Thai education fieldwork. Achieving intimacy and reciprocity are important tools for data collection. Concomitantly, these tools probably give rise to certain moral and ethical obligations in field research. This section is divided into three topics:

- Rapport and power
- Reciprocity and its consequences
- Reciprocity and ethical issues

#### *Rapport and power*

Developing good relationships with participants generates trust in fieldwork. In the same vein, the power-intimacy relationship has to be understood in the particular fieldwork context, in this case the Thai context. A feminist perspective acknowledges that intimacy and reciprocity promote more continuous trust building (Oakley 1981). As time passed, participants gradually accepted me into their social network. I observed this from the way people in school addressed me. In Thai society, when strangers or newcomers meet, the title “Khun” or full name is adopted until a satisfactory relationship develops, at which time kinship terms are used instead. I was called “Khun” followed by my first name or full name at the first meeting. Over time, I began to be called “Nong” (sister) followed by my short name because age and seniority determine the choice of kinship terms and I was younger than the participants. Thai traditional culture places great emphasis on paying respect to elders and individuals of high status as well as teachers, and extreme politeness is an essential Thai cultural norm.

Throughout conducting this study, I learned that I needed to constantly cultivate the participants' trust. It required not only spending time in the schools and attending activities and events, but also providing something extra to foster the participants' trust and willing cooperation. My positions as a PhD student, a research observer and an official did not help me to get closer to my participants. Instead, I learned that utilising something I personally had in common with the participants assisted in developing friendship and earning

their trust. As I had been a primary teacher, and I was younger and less experienced in teaching practice, this helped me develop empathetic relationships and gain trust. Consequently, I attempted to develop relationships with the participants and other people in schools, treating them as brothers and sisters. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) also advocate the position of the novice in conducting fieldwork.

In the Thai way of hierarchical social interaction, I could not equalise the participants as friends since they were older than me. I have to show respect to my elders. Therefore, I tried to manage my self-presentation and interactions with the participants in ways that downplayed (the appearance of) differences between me and the participants. In this vein, I was able to partially sustain relationships as well as to successfully handle spontaneous reactions to people or expected situations in the fieldwork, inevitably guided by my habitus. The impression I established in carrying out the fieldwork partly appeared to depend on bias (e.g. my habitus). Thus my interactions in the field relied simultaneously on both conscious (e.g. my strategic consideration for participants) and unconscious bias (e.g. reactions driven by my habitus). Bourdieu (1990) insists that practices are both conscious and unconscious; people may be conscious of making moves and acting strategically, but unaware that their motives, goals and aspirations are not spontaneous or natural but are given through habitus. My intention here is to reflect that my interactions in the fieldwork were somehow partly involved with bias and that fully unbiased triangulation was required.

Remarkably, there is another side of these power relations of which I had to be aware. Recognising the characteristics of Thai hierarchical relationship, I could have also become the subject of strategic manipulation by the participants themselves, particularly through unspoken power relations, although, as I am a researcher, I became unavoidably involved in the power play related to the topic that I was studying. Both the participants and I possessed the power to build impressions; hence, the participants could in return have manipulated intimacy. Thus I might have come to believe or avoid challenging (e.g. questioning) the higher status and more senior participants. This might then have had an effect on the analysis process. In my own strategies, I was clearly able to use

strategic assets to deal with the participants and other people in schools with whom I interacted. I employed the Thai harmonious social norm of “*sanuk*”, or the feeling of enjoyment, excitement or pleasure that one has in taking part in work, play or any other activities, in order to balance power relations between me and the participants and people in school, who were mostly older and occupied higher positions on the sites (e.g. teachers, administrative staff, support staff, and the ESA supervisors (who government officers employed by the OBEC to take responsibility for supporting teachers and schools in ESAs).

Here *sanuk* activities were employed in order to balance the power relationship between me and people in schools; *khui sanuk* = to be a good speaker. This strategy seems to be similar to techniques generally suggested in literature on interviewing. The interviewer should create an interview atmosphere that is relaxed and informal. The norm of “*sanuk*” goes beyond having fun; it involves attempting to add a sense of enjoyment to every activity of daily life, even criticism. No one indulging “*sanuk*” should be criticised. The Thai behaviour of “*daa sanuk*” (to enjoy scolding others) is likely to be employed when Thais want to criticise others in order to make them feel “*thuuk daa sanuk*”, or to enjoy being scolded in order to build harmonious relationships and maintain others’ self-esteem. If criticism has to be expressed it is usually done indirectly and in vaguely stated terms for the person to be criticised to figure out himself (Komin 1991). The “*sanuk*” strategy also helped me to create intimacy with people on the sites and to maintain a balance between distance and immersion.

### ***Reciprocity and its consequences***

Due to the duration of the study, I inevitably could not avoid reciprocating in informal discussions with some participants. During fieldwork, a strategy of reciprocity that I usually undertook was to show my sympathetic side by listening to the participants' problems or their pride in teaching in an innovative way. I attended activities that they invited me to join in with, such as school trips, local events, school events or meetings and giving feedback. At this point, I was conscious that my presence would have an effect on the setting and stimulate change. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) argue, an ethnographer should be more than an “exploitive interloper”. However, I was not simply the exploitive interloper.

## ***Reciprocity and ethical issues***

This section focuses on the effect of power relations on ethical concerns. As I have discussed earlier, I formed increasingly close relationships with the participants over time. I was invited to participate in many activities and events, such as school trips, ceremonies and parties. Such demands by participants continually increased and even included a request to convey their opinions on schools and policies to the national level due to my position in the organisation under the MOE. Such requests made me tense about subsequently responding to their demands. I was thus faced with ethical issues, for example;

- To what extent I should take part in activities with the participants; and
- How to maintain good relationships with them and whether my refusal could affect their feelings and arouse suspicions about my loyalty towards them.

I sometimes had to face up to my lack of techniques for refusing those requests appropriately and would on occasion attempt to partly involve myself in the participants' activities. However, this proved to be stressful since I sometimes needed to rest or to write up my field notes. In the same vein, I may have engaged in bias by agreeing to their requests because I wanted my fieldwork to be successful and therefore wanted to sustain good relationships with the participants. These circumstances led me to think that some degree of bias is unavoidable if fieldwork is to be successful. Arguably, my attempt to understand my positioning process in the fieldwork enabled me to cope better with different, unexpected, and unplanned situations and people that I encountered within the networks covered by this study. I had to acknowledge that I needed to prepare myself to act in accordance with ethical research demands.

### **3.8.5 Balancing my identity in terms of closeness and distance**

I learned to balance multi-faceted insider-outsider issues (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) through experiencing the complications of the insider/outsider opposing positions in which I found myself. I found that the insider/outsider distinction was as complex as the literature portrayed (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) as I considered myself as not quite an insider and not quite an outsider. I learned to transform my identity along a continuum between

complete insider and complete outsider (Acker 2000), sometimes being closer to the insider position or closer to the outsider position. Whilst I was not a true insider to the extent of having full experience of teaching the recommended practices, I may have had a deeper understanding of the teachers' perspectives and their experience with the recommended practices from spending time in the settings and conducting many interviews and observations. These actions aided me in moving closer to the insider and prevented me from being a complete outsider. I had to train myself to become an independent and unbiased student researcher.

As an insider ethnographer who was investigating my own territory, I experienced failure to achieve expectations of a credible researcher with some members of my original community. For example, as aforementioned, I failed to give detailed information about the research to School D's head teacher in the negotiating access stage. This head teacher thought that if I did not explain clearly to the teacher the issues, activities or kinds of recommended teaching practices I wanted to study, I would not be able to collect any data. I explained to her the purpose of my research, level of participation, the role that I had chosen and my rationale in selecting to be a passive participant and non-participating observer in the classroom.

I discovered that it is difficult to maintain a balance between the roles of closeness and distance. I felt discomfort (Adler & Adler 1998) at being in a marginal status, balancing involvement with detachment. I found that I was perceived as an outsider within my own community. On another occasion, I met the officials of NBL. A lady suggested that, for example, I should report that the recommended practices implementation was still at an experimental stage and people involved in the pilot study phase had been learning from trial and error. At that time, I did not say anything. I did not explain my research since I did not yet know what I was going to write in my final report, and subsequently she and I moved on to talk about other issues.

These situations made me feel uncomfortable. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) explain that the stress experienced by the marginal native is a very common but important aspect of ethnography. Ethnographers must maintain the sense of being strange. I found that in maintaining positive relationships, being

friendly and avoiding looking irritable, it was sometimes difficult to maintain my mental and emotional equilibrium. I learned that life in fieldwork is unpredictable. This reflection aided me in regaining the strange, and highlighted that failure to control my emotions might affect the actions and thoughts of the participants in the field. I learned to understand the ethnographic positioning experience, an understanding that would help me to build my habitus in conducting future fieldwork.

### **3.8.6 Fighting familiarity**

I was conducting this research within my own cultural milieu. Inevitably, I was familiar in a general sense with this macro community or field of primary teachers (e.g. background knowledge of the primary school field, political and moral position, its daily routines and its specialised language). I also possessed similar kinds of capital to other actors in the field. As I possessed a member's knowledge, this enabled me to better understand this complex setting and made for better rapport. For example, my ability to sustain relationships with people in schools relied basically upon my habitus. I consciously and subconsciously knew how to act in a manner that corresponded to people in school's expectations. For example, I was younger than the participants, so it was necessary for me to show high respect towards them.

I have realised that familiarity might blind me to certain aspects of the setting that I took for granted. I might overlook daily routine events which were not new to me. Or I could also rely on my existing knowledge or attitudes for dealing with data. Therefore, such familiarities had to be taken into account reflexively to gain the epistemological distance between me and the observed, or to make the familiar strange. At that time, I held discussions with my colleagues to reflect my experience and get some suggestions from them. I also tried to gather data from other people in schools. Additionally, I attempted to record and take notes as much as possible.

In order to research myself for understanding myself and be aware of my preconceptions and bias, I was required to reflect my similarities and differences for seeking some space between myself as member of a community (similar)

and as a stranger (my new role as a student researcher) that allowed me the position of both insider and outsider (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3 My various similarities and differences with the setting**

Similarities	Dissimilarities
I am Thai.	- I experienced three years living in the UK before conducting my study. This inevitably involved some cultural adaptation.
I graduated with a degree in education in my country.	I have had a chance to study some theories and practices in the field of primary education in the UK where I have been a PhD student.
I was a primary teacher for seven years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers were using the new curriculum and textbooks that I had never used</li> <li>- I worked as an education officer for seven years.</li> <li>- I am a student researcher.</li> </ul>
I work in the primary education field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I had not taught since 2000.</li> <li>- I left the primary education field and have not been working for three years.</li> <li>- I did not know the people and practices in the schools prior to the study.</li> <li>- I did not know conventional rules, symbols and technical words used in the schools.</li> </ul>

I could not escape pre-knowledge about the Thai primary education field (Gadamer 1975). Therefore I had to try to be aware of my biases. I tried to open my mind to different or alternative perspectives from the participants and people in the schools who were of different status and/or gender (Creswell 1994). I also may have had a tendency to come to believe or rely solely on the participants with whom I was familiar and felt most comfortable (Bonner & Tolhurst 2002). Therefore, I sought to have conversations with many people in the schools. Engaging with conflicting or alternative perspectives lent a valuable new dimension to my next round of questioning in fieldwork and to the data interpretation process in general. In addition, I used audio records of interview

data, wrote fieldnotes and collected documents from the setting as much as I could. I read and reread my transcripts and fieldnotes a number of times. Triangulation of my methods and using the approach of “native stepping out” suggested by my supervisors aided me in balancing closeness and distance and enabled me to experience teachers' everyday realities.

### **3.8.7 Issues in giving research information**

Throughout conducting the fieldwork, I had to assess how much information was sufficient for prospective participants and participants, especially regarding the outcomes of my research. As I discussed, I had very limited success in getting permission from trained teachers to involve them in my study. In my first attempt to negotiate with them, most trained teachers who declined taking part in the study explained that they did not employ the recommended practices in their classroom. These teachers did not want their colleagues to know about this. After I had spent time in their schools, these teachers allowed me to observe their classrooms and interview them. However, they continued to refuse to participate in my study and sign the consent letter. The reason given to me during this time was that they felt insecure about their participation in the future, due to my unclear explanation of what my research findings would look like. They thought that the recommended practices might be promulgated by the OBEC in the future as they had this experience in 1992.

Another incident occurred at School A, when the headteacher asked me to inform teachers of the details of my observation activities, rather than reassuring them that they did not need to prepare anything for the observations. However, it is quite difficult to know the entire course the work will take and information provision may affect people's behaviour. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that giving limited information about the study to prospective participants is justified in terms of the need to avoid pointing out the obvious. I needed to be aware of the danger in providing a lot of information that teachers might volunteer to take part in the study due to a desire to seek recognition. They thus might act according to their perceptions of what I wanted for my study.

### **3.8.8 Multi-site fieldwork and questions of data quality and relationships in the field**

Using multiple sites, however, raised questions of depth over breadth (Hage 2005). In this study, I was interested in teachers' participation and experience in using the recommended practices. I did not focus on a particular native people in school. I spent seven months learning from participants who had received training and taught Thai language as a subject. I mainly tried to learn from the participants and was not attempting to know everyone in the schools, although obviously I attempted to get to know some members. I tried to maintain a close relationship with key informants in the schools, such as other trained teachers, some of the participants' colleagues (e.g. the teachers who taught in adjacent classrooms, and close friends of the participating teachers in the schools) and head teachers in order to develop my understandings of the initiative's implementation and as a kind of triangulation. I was not making an effort to get to know these individuals particularly intimately, nor was I trying to study the entire school community. I attempted to join in activities conducted in schools, to meet and build relationships with people in the schools. For example, I tried to attend the morning assembly since every teacher in the schools had to join in. I had lunch with participants and other teachers in schools. I knew few members of staff, and none of those had engaged in receiving training on the recommended practices. Geertz (1973) points out that the goal of being on the site is to at least achieve a hard-earned, genuine and if possible, experiential understanding of the group, but it is not to become a native.

In each school, I used multiple methods and a variety of sources. I was in the classrooms of participants for half of the day. Most participants organised Thai language teaching for an hour per day. I usually sat in the classrooms of the participants. Since the participants were classroom teachers of young learners (5-9 years old), they always sat and worked in their classrooms all day, even though other subject teachers organised some teaching in their classrooms or pupils went to study in another classroom for some subjects (e.g. physical education, science). This was because the six schools being studied did not have rooms for the teachers in schools. I often did not sit in the participants' classrooms when other subjects were taught in the classrooms since I did not

have permission from them to observe their teaching. I sat waiting on the balcony of my participants' classrooms, in the library or cafeteria or talked to or observed teaching of other teachers while I was waiting for my participants to conduct their teaching. Additionally, I conducted interviews with participants and collected documentation (e.g. lesson plans, pupils work, learning materials, tests and teachers' notebook).

I learned that a multi-site study required expending a lot of energy on travelling. In addition, situations in the field could sometimes be unpredictable and this affected my schedule, making it difficult to decide how long I should spend on the sites. For example, the participating teacher in School F took time off for three days. She left assignments for pupils to complete and the headteacher assigned another teacher to maintain pupil discipline while this teacher was absent. In addition, twice the participating teacher in School C was suddenly ordered by the headteacher to escort pupils to competitions conducted outside the school. She phoned me to let me know about her duties. Meanwhile, the participating teacher in School A took sick leave, but again she told me about her change in schedule. One of the teachers also took sick leave unexpectedly.

The following section addresses my efforts to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

The previous section discussed my experiences as the participant observer in the distinct fieldwork. The focus of this section is to explore issues related to participants' rights to personal autonomy including informed consent, right to privacy and right to confidentiality. Throughout the conduct of this research I attempted to safeguard the participants' rights and maintain their confidentiality and anonymity but complete confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed. I have owed a duty to avoid and minimise harm, provide informed consent and protect the participants' confidentiality. I attempted to explain the ethical reasoning that I applied during this investigation. First, I discuss my efforts to protect participants' rights and confidentiality in the pilot study phase and how such experiences guided me through the ethical practices in the main investigation.

Efforts to protect participants' rights and confidentiality in the pilot study phase:

- I attended two workshops on ethical considerations conducted by the university.
- Before conducting the pilot study field, I gained ethics approval from the faculty-based research ethics committee. Access to school was obtained through the OBEC and the headteacher. The teachers were provided with a consent letter with a brief description of the research proposal and the teachers signed the consent letter to confirm their willingness to participate.
- Before engaging in observation work with the pupils, I introduced myself and explained why I was there and for how long I planned to stay in their classroom, to ensure that they understood my participation and their role, in order to respect the pupils' rights during the classroom observations. I also mixed with them in lessons in a fairly informal way while I was in class.
- Repeated explanation of the participants' right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, and the purpose of the study, was provided before the interviews, in order to make sure the participants fully understood.
- All information and names of teachers were kept strictly confidential and were not disclosed to any other person or agency. This applied to all material. I changed schools' and participants' names.

In the next section, I discuss how I protected the participants' confidentiality and anonymity in the main study.

Before I began contacting the participants, I was granted permission from the central organisations (the OBEC and the NBL) to conduct the study in pilot schools in which implementation of the recommended practices was under their supervision. I also gained permission from six headteachers to conduct the study in their schools. Next, I discuss how the privacy of the participants was respected.

## ***Participants' rights and privacy***

This section explores my concern and respect for the participants' rights and privacy. An essential aspect of respecting personal autonomy is the gaining of informed consent from all participants. Mason (2002) and Davies (1999) suggest that it is necessary to provide informed consent including an explanation that is full (e.g. research sponsors) and communicated in clear and meaningful terms to participants in order to explain the purposes of the research and to elicit their cooperation. I took account of this suggestion in my consent approach. Before the research took place, I gave participating teachers a consent letter with an attached brief description of the research, which had been approved by the Faculty-based research ethics committees in the pilot study phase, but subsequently revised. The consent letter noted clearly that they would have the right to give or withhold consent at any time. I asked them to sign the consent form to confirm their willingness to participate in the study and give it to me at any time. In addition, I explained the study to them, their role and involvement in the study, the potential use of data and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time or after the fieldwork had finished. I also informed them that they had the right to choose not to answer any of the questions and to refuse to be recorded on an audio recording device. I repeatedly informed that they could change their mind about participating at any time without having to give reasons to me. Furthermore, they were informed about how I planned to make presentations based on the data at conferences and use data for writing for research journals and my thesis.

Verbal consent was ongoing and provided before and during participant observation, interviews and informal conversation to ensure that the participants knew their rights to withdraw from the interviews at any time, or refuse to answer any question on or off the record that they found intrusive. The off the record information was not be included as data. Remarkably, I did not explain or give participants absolutely every piece of information that they might have wanted about my research (also see 3.6.7), in order to avoid participants' bias from trying too hard to cooperate (Ryen 2004). Throughout the study I ensured that any action on my part did no harm (Goode 1996) and avoided producing negative emotional reactions (also see 3.6.3).

In relation to pupils, I introduced myself to them, told them who I was, why I was in their classroom and where I would sit, to ensure that they recognised me and their role, in order to respect their rights during the classroom observations. How I maintained participants' confidentiality is discussed next.

### ***Confidentiality and data handling***

Throughout the investigation, I became increasingly aware of the importance of ethical deliberations. I put much effort into my commitment to maintaining participants' confidentiality and anonymity but this was a problematic issue as multi sites were studied. It is an obligation of field researchers to guarantee protection of the identity of participants, places and the location of the research. With this in mind, all the information and names of teachers and schools were protected confidentially. All names and places I refer to here have been given pseudonyms. My computer entries were on my code-worded restricted access personal computer. The interview transcripts, field notes, analytic notes and documentary evidence were stored securely in a locked filing cabinet with access restricted to myself. Data audio taped during semi-structured interviews transcribed into word-processed files and all data were protected by entry-restricted codes. When transcribing the use of headphones ensured that no one else could hear the audio taped interview. Paper printouts of each interview were stored in separate folders for each participant and these were kept securely in a locked filing cabinet in my house and office.

Protecting the anonymity of participants and keeping data confidential were of paramount concern for me to protect their identities as much as possible. Special care was necessary because as multi sites were used many people would know each other, especially those in the same school. To address the difficulty in guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity when the data had been disseminated (van den Hoonaard 2003; Wiles et al. 2006), I took several precautions to minimise risk of participants' identification. I incorporated Kaiser's (2009) suggestion that researchers should clearly inform all participants that data given would be contributing to a doctoral thesis and to other future publications. Pseudonyms were used. Additionally, Gray (2009) recommends taking responsibility for reporting findings in a way that matches the data and

includes limitations of the study. Types of data sources used in this research are explained next.

### **3.10 Data sources**

I used three methods of data collection (participation observation, semi-structured interview and collection and analysis of documentary evidence). Throughout the research in the field fieldnotes were a key source of data and are discussed next.

#### **3.10.1 Fieldnotes**

As a vital part of ethnographic research, fieldnotes are a product of and reflect conventions for transforming witnessed events, persons, and places into words on paper (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 1995). Fieldnotes, however, are usually seen as being very personal and idiosyncratic in nature; researchers selectively write about certain things and leave out others. In writing fieldnotes the researcher should record as much as possible of what is perceived to be relevant to the research project (Walford 2009b) and should give attention to the indigenous meanings, detail the social and interactional process and concerns of the people studied.

In this study, I used a form of unstructured observation to record the surrounding events in schools and interactions that occurred, as well as classroom observations. My purpose was to see what was naturally occurring in the classrooms without involving any predetermined ideas. Unstructured observation allows a large amount of detailed information (e.g. context, interactions between teachers and pupils) to be collected as it is recorded.

To record people and events in school and informal conversation, I jotted down notes and then wrote up the notes for that half-day, either before leaving school or as soon as convenient after leaving school.

For classroom observations, I used a form of unstructured observation to observe teaching Thai. I positioned myself as a non-participant observer, sitting at the back of the classroom or in a place provided by teachers, to record the interactions in the classroom, which allowed me to maintain my detachment

from the teachers and pupils. Each participating teacher was observed during between 18 and 25 lessons.

I showed my classroom observation descriptive writing to the participants because I wanted to make it clear what I was writing. In the event, I tried to record as much as possible - or at least as much as my memory and time would allow. On some occasions, it was either impossible or inappropriate to take notes, as for example, when I was fully participating in activities and chatting informally in schools and in a car when my participants or other teachers gave me a lift home, to the bus station, on a study trip or to participate in local events. At those times it was necessary to write fieldnotes almost entirely from memory, which was sometimes problematic. The form of semi-structured interview conducted in this study is described next.

### **3.10.2 Semi-structured interview**

The purpose of the interview was to assist the observations made and to explore participants' personal accounts of their experiences and opinions about the new practices and to contribute to triangulation of data. I employed semi-structured interview (Fontana and Frey 1994) in this study. Semi-structured interview was considered suitable for the exploration of experiences and opinions of participants. The rationale for using semi-structured interviews was as follows:

- According to Rossman & Rallis (2003), action research requires an open-ended interview style. Consequently, the researcher and participants can shape the conversation to both portray participants' lived experiences and assist in constructing a liberating experience;
- Studying several participants required the standardisation of question stems in order to ensure that cross-case themes were relative to the same underlying social constructs being studied;
- It allowed me to explore emergent themes and ideas arising out of the conversation and facilitated interpreting and representing participants' experiences and perspectives in their own language (Kvale 1996);

- It allows the interviews to proceed as a conversation that encourages participants to play an active part in the research (Gubrium and Holstein 1997);
- It enables the active involvement of participants in communicating the sensemaking process according to which they interpret their own experience; and
- Although interview schedules were prepared to ensure the same information was obtained from each participant, there were no predetermined responses, and in this form of interview I was free to probe and explore participants' perspectives.

I developed pre-constructed interview guides from the research questions and the emergent understandings gained from participant observation. The questions were modified and added after each interview for clarity and/or theoretical development. In addition to my fieldwork, I conducted (and digitally recorded) 33 semi-structured interviews with the participants and 34 interviews with people in schools to gain better understanding of the community in which the participants worked. The interviews varied in length from thirty minutes to one and a half hours. The interviews with the participants were conducted in familiar and comfortable locations - teachers' own classrooms, libraries, in their lunch time or their free time, after school finished or at the weekend. I transcribed the interviews into text (Thai), later given to the participants to be verified for accuracy. I also discussed with the participants my summary of their teaching practices, experiences and perspectives on the recommended practices. Moreover, pair interviews were conducted after the series of individual teacher interviews, to further explore the general nature of comments from different individuals. Sometimes other teachers unexpectedly joined in this form of interview.

Informal conversations often happened spontaneously at the end of the observed lessons of the participating teachers or during the lessons while pupils were completing their assignments, as well as during routine interaction. They usually expressed their feelings after or during the classroom observations. They attempted to explain what had just happened in the lesson I had observed. At this point, I realised that I had to distinguish between solicited and

unsolicited oral accounts, as indicated by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007). Information that flowed from their explanations or justifications in these situations might be related to their emotional reactions to the lessons. Hence, the observation data collected while those events occurred were significantly relevant to interpreting the unsolicited discussions that I had with the teachers at the end of lessons. I wrote down those conversations and made shorthand notes of short incidents in my notebook. As I sought a cultural understanding of the views and experiences of participants, documentary evidence was also drawn on and is discussed next.

### **3.10.3 Documentary evidence**

As part of the data collection process, documentation was collected that helped in understanding the implementation of the new practices and assisted collection of further data. When using documents it must be understood that documents are "social fact" (Atkinson & Coffey 1997) and concern must be shown about the processes through which texts portray 'reality' rather than with whether such texts contain true or false statements. Based on Scott's (1990) Brewer's (2000) discussion, I adapted the classification of the types of documentation used in this inquiry (Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4 Details of documents provided by organisations and participants**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Type of information</b>	<b>Document title / folder</b>
To obtain information about the recommended practices	Official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Books produced by the NBL</li> <li>- Annual report of the NBL</li> <li>- Teacher's guide book on the recommended practices produced by the OBEC and the NBL</li> <li>- Formal notes sent back and forth between the OBEC, ESA and schools</li> <li>- PowerPoint presentation and leaflets produced for teacher training</li> <li>- The national curriculum from 1999 to present</li> <li>- Pupils' textbooks from 1999 to present and teachers' handbooks</li> </ul>
To gain understanding of teachers' practices during the implementation of the recommended practices	Personal/Unsolicited textual data  (Data already in existence from teachers in schools participating in this inquiry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Worksheets and workbooks produced by teachers for pupils' practices</li> <li>- Notebooks of teachers for recording learning progress scores and brief summary about pupils</li> <li>- Teaching aids (e.g. songs, children's books written by teachers, word flash cards, jigsaws)</li> <li>- Semester report on pupils' learning outcomes for submission to pupils' parents</li> <li>- Pupils' writing</li> <li>- Pupils' portfolios</li> <li>- CD recording of teacher training</li> </ul>
To better understand teachers' experiences and their professional development	Personal/Unsolicited textual data (Data already in existence from teachers in schools participating in this inquiry)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers' portfolios</li> <li>- Teachers' report for upgrading their professional teaching ranks</li> </ul>

### 3.11 Data analysis

This section describes the development of my analytical approach and how I conducted analyses. Initially, I utilised thematic analysis, including using those concepts discussed in chapter 2 (e.g. Bourdieu's and de Certeau's theories). My analysis was aimed at understanding rather than explaining social action and events within particular settings and contexts.

Thematic analysis is a useful analytic approach in this study because it has no association with any particular theoretical orientation. It can be related to a range of theoretical concepts, such as a social constructionist framework, viewing that language is used to construct the way in which individuals see the world. Regarding ontological assumptions, thematic analysis considers how people reflect on their experiences to produce meanings and make sense of them (Donyai 2012). Applying thematic analysis to qualitative research data analysis involves developing a thematic code by three different means: theory driven, prior data or prior research driven and inductive and data driven (Braun and Clarke 2006 and Boyatzis 1998).

Among the above approaches, I principally utilised the data-driven approach and the theory-driven approach. Using two approaches was effective for my study because this study needed to analyse multiple units from each participant. Thematic analysis provides a comprehensive process to enable a research study to identify numerous cross-references between the developing themes and the entire data (Hayes 1997). My study goal is to learn each participant's perspectives and experiences forged from their encounters with the reform implementation. The data-driven approach works directly with transcripts or textual data and enhances the using of such data. Working with this data can lead to recognition of silent voices or perspectives hidden in that data (Boyatzis 1998). Using the theory-driven approach assisted me to develop codes or themes based on theories. According to Boyatzis (1998), the wordings, meanings, expression of the elements of theory may be specific to the context of the research field.

The noteworthy aspect of the above process of data analysis was that my analysis was predictably influenced by my own experience/values and

theoretical concepts used as described in chapter 2. As discussed in chapter 3, rather than denying the influence of my prior knowledge or bias and existing theoretical concepts, I had to be aware of them and take them into account and reflexively minimise their influence through the research process (see 3.1, 3.6, 3.10 and 3.11). Glaser (1998) suggests that the researcher's perspectives are incorporated as simply more data to be constantly compared. However, the researcher's perspective is not privileged in relation to the other multiple pieces of data that generate theory development. In addition, theories as described in chapter 2 were used as means of clarifying the practices observed. Bourdieu (1990) also suggests researchers use his concepts as an analytical tool to increase their understanding of human behaviour by understanding how various discourses impact upon the individual (Connolly 1997). Arguably, it is doubtful that any theory can be purely data-derived because all data interpretation can be influenced by the researcher. The researcher is part of the social world being studied. Thus it is important for me to be reflexive and to discuss how my pre-understanding/attitude and ideas of pre-existing theories may have influenced my interpretation, selection of themes and conclusions.

To reduce my authority, preconception and biases, I compared data from observations, field notes, interviews and documents and discussed this with my supervisors. I intended to align the picture of this phenomenon as faithfully as possible to the participating teachers' lives. Nevertheless, the possibility was that the bias of me could still have an effect. For instance, the interview transcripts were translated by me from my own language and my interpretation may have been affected by my translation. As discussed in 3.8.4, such reciprocity enacted by me, on one hand, inevitably may partially affect the behaviour of participants, even unintentionally. On the other hand, it subsequently may benefit the teachers.

### ***Developing codes***

The analysis stages in this study took place concurrently alongside data collection, as suggested by authors such as Silverman (2001) and Miles and Huberman (1994). In this study, I relied heavily on the research instruments of interviewing and observation.

Transcripts and other text from fieldwork were coded as follows: the first stage was to ensure the accuracy of the data; that is, I read and listened to the data thoroughly to identify data that appeared to have particular importance. I added notes to particular messages that formed in my mind about codes and meanings. I took great care to avoid forcing data into categories because a code existed for them. In the second step, I divided the transcribed data into what seemed to me to be the basic elements or concepts that had been expressed, while keeping in mind the other variables. Finally, I grouped the data according to themes or topics. After completing these steps I continued by constructing a coding frame.

### ***Developing Themes: an inductive way***

I read and listened to all of data. I reviewed data sources (see 3.10) many times and from these reviews I created an outline from this data. I identified any overlaps or similarities in patterns found within the data. During this process, I used multi techniques to develop a meaningful and coherent picture of the data, including an unordered descriptive meta-matrix, tabulation, writing a case summary, and thematic chart (see Appendix III). I primarily defined and labelled to identify each data element and function for each element in relation to another element.

In this process, I went back to the original data and attempted to determine the existence and nonexistence of these earlier themes. The analytic codes and themes that emerged were not forced to fit with existing literature or theory or my predetermined ideas. In addition, I worked back and forth between the data and the classification system to verify the accuracy and precision of themes and categories and the placement of data in categories (Patton 1990).

Next, validity and reliability are discussed.

### **3.12 Validity**

This ethnographic research sought to learn and understand the participants' experiences of the new practices. This study did not engage in testing any hypotheses to propose sets of universal criteria. I did not seek confirming data to prove or disprove hypotheses. For Hammersley (1992), ethnographic

research does not involve assessing the validity of the cultural perspectives of those being studied. The commitment to understand the perspectives of others need not entail questioning the truth or falsehood of cultural representations. Hammersley (1992) suggests ethnographers should employ the ontological position of subtle realism, recognising the phenomena exist separately from the researchers but that descriptions can only represent and never reproduce that reality. What interpretive ethnography sets out to do is provide an account of the social world from local, context-specific perspectives. Especially, participants were the best indicator of validity. Consequently, my findings were valid to the extent my analytical construct included the perspectives of participants I was studying.

Two ways that I used of enhancing the probability that the findings would be credible, were triangulation and reflexivity. Triangulation involves the comparison of results from different data collection modes. In this study, I collected observations, interviews and documentary evidence which varied in length in order to improve a more interpretive understanding (Guba & Lincoln 1989). However, Silverman (2011) warns that triangulation might be better seen as a way of making an inquiry more comprehensive, or of encouraging a more reflexive analysis of data than a test of validity.

A reflexive approach was also used throughout the study from the pilot study phase to the writing up of the study. To encourage reflexive thinking I maintained a reflexive writing style, recording my feelings, problems, emerging questions and thinking, in order to remain aware of my personal prejudices (Gadmer 1975). The criterion of reliability is discussed next.

### **3.13 Reliability**

Since ethnographic research occurs in natural settings and focuses on processes, accurate replication is very difficult to achieve because an event in a natural setting cannot be reproduced. Ethnographic research necessitates an accurate description of the phenomena under study. However, the flow of information to support the accurate description may vary (Nurani 2008). In ethnographic research, the ethnographer is the research instrument. Therefore, the activities of ethnographers at all phases of the research process are at the

centre of the question of reliability (O' Reilly 2012). The reliability of the researcher requires multi angles and viewpoints (Jorgensen 1989). To improve reliability, I thus attempted to gain access to social phenomena from multiple participants' perspectives, from each participant via numerous methods. I welcomed answers and sought out responses that were different or deviant from the majority of the answers in order to gain better interpretive understanding of the experience of the participants, rather than generalisable themes. Every piece of data was used and informed my analysis (Silverman 2001).

### **3.14 Limitations**

I have deeply investigated the participant teachers' perspectives and their practices through the collection of rich data and the use of a wide range of theories to understand these teachers and their experiences of teaching the recommended practices. Nonetheless, the specific nature of research conducted by a single researcher brought with it a number of possible limitations which, however, offer perspectives for future research. This study was conducted with a limited number of participants (mainly primary teachers who taught Thai), and in the unique primary education field. This clearly marks my role in relation to the research construct and the generalisability of this study.

First, I realised that I acted as a key instrument of collection and interpretation of data to understand the meaning of action from the participants' points of view (Schütz 1967) and that these processes appeared to rely on my knowledge, skills and experience in the process of interpretation of social phenomena (Heidegger 1962; Gadamer 1975). In addition, I was aware that my interaction in the field partially depended on my intuitive, emotional, spontaneous reactions, as guided by my habitus, in order to subsequently sustain relationships as well as to manage the unplanned and often unexpected situations in the field. My actions and behaviours in the field were partly strategic, precisely because, as Bourdieu suggests, 'the notion of strategy, like the orientation of practice, is not a conscious or calculated action but the intuitive product of knowing the rules of the game' (Mouzelis 2007). I could not become a neutral researcher. I faced up to this issue in order to acknowledge its effect throughout my study and to seek a more enhanced and transparent

understanding of my positioning experience which can serve me in better preparing for my next fieldwork. In this study, I used several strategies to eliminate my bias, such as employing multiple sources of data and methods of data collection, participant validation, and multiple theories to triangulate my interpretation and understanding.

Secondly, although participants volunteered to take part in this study, this sampling method did have limitations. First, this sample was not truly representative of the target population, and second, participants' interest in participating in the study may have led to bias (see 3.8.5 & 3.8.6).

Finally, in this study I sought a deeper understanding of the insiders' perspective and their practices, rather than breadth of information. I believed that the findings would be transferable (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Patton 2002) to some extent because of the similarity between the contexts, in particular within the Thai government primary school context. The following are examples of such findings:

- The influence of the recommended practices on teachers in the pilot schools and other primary schools which were initially interested in implementing these recommended practices;
- The impact of Thai cultural norms (the power relations between administrators and teachers, people in schools, and teacher and pupils) and teaching culture/habitus (e.g. transmission oriented) may affect all Thai primary teachers and pupils;
- Characteristics of working conditions and context such as administrative support, the requirement of preparing pupils for the standardised test and other examinations and the availability of material learning resources, constraints on budgets, and implementation of the recommended practices, may be common to many primary government schools.

## Summary

This chapter discussed the researcher's methodology and why this researcher was tending towards the subjective and intersubjective nature of belief. The researcher's theoretical lens and perspectives were in the realm of the interpretive approach and I chose the research method of ethnography. The chapter also reviewed my experience with the pilot study and described the procedures of data collection techniques and data analysis which used grounded theory. Across-case perspectives gained by observing, interviewing in the field and the review of documentary evidence helped to provide rich descriptions of the teachers' perspectives and meanings for the situations that were observed. Additionally, I shared my experiences in dealing with some of the challenging aspects of the particular fieldwork context, Thai education. Utilising Bourdieu's 'thinking' tool, I examined my positioning experience as an ethnographer. As I was conducting fieldwork that had particular features and rules, I was mindful of the risk of bias and that moral and ethical obligations might consequently arise. During the fieldwork, I sometimes exercised my habitus and my capital in social interaction to attain objectives that would contribute to the success of the fieldwork. It seems to me that my habitus and capital not only inevitably gave rise to bias, but also became devices that helped my work in the field. By making clear my own position, I not only intended to reflect the actual circumstances in the field, but also to provide transparent understanding of the ethnographic positioning experiences and their effects on my work and how these supported me in recovering the distance that I lost in the field. By acknowledging clearly that I as a field researcher come loaded with my presuppositions and a distinct agenda of collecting data for my project, I also hope that these experiences will enable me to modify my habitus for the next fieldwork.

In the following chapter a variety of themes and subthemes which emerged from the empirical data are discussed and interpreted.

## CHAPTER 4

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

This is the first of three chapters that presents and discusses the study's findings to realise the research aim of describing and explaining teachers' experiences and understandings of the recommended policy change in teaching Thai. This chapter provides a general description of the six schools in this study. It begins with a description of events and activities taking place in the school environment (4.1), followed by description of physical classroom settings and teaching aids (4.2). The next section (4.3) describes assessing pupils' achievement and is followed by a section identifying teachers' additional responsibilities (4.4). This chapter also analyses the forms of capital deemed valuable in the participating six schools that were considered significant to implementation of the recommended practices (4.5).

#### **4.1 Events and activities**

This section discusses four observed events: the flag-raising ceremony and instructional and recess time and lunch time as well as end of school day.

##### **4.1.1 Before daily teaching: flag-raising ceremony**

A common ceremony conducted in the six schools was the flag-raising ceremony. The flag-raising ceremony is a kind of national ceremony that is conducted by government institutions throughout the nation. At all six schools, morning assembly activities started at 8.00. Most pupils and teachers arrived between 7.00 and 7.30. Unlike the others, in schools A and F pupils had to clean areas selected by their schools before assembly began. At around 7.50 most teachers and pupils assembled in the school playground or in the school hall in order to prepare for assembly. Pupils lined up in their classes for the assembly. The class teacher walked around the lines to monitor discipline.

In Thailand, every radio and T.V. station plays the Thai national anthem at 8 o'clock sharp. Thai people are expected to stop whatever they are doing and stand to attention wherever they are, to pay respect when they hear the anthem being played, even if they are in the park, a shopping mall, a train or bus station, all over the country. Thus public schools in this study began their morning assembly activities with the flag-raising ceremony at 8.00. During this time the pupils sang the national anthem as the flag was raised, and in schools D and E the school band played the national anthem while the pupils sang, followed by Buddhist chanting (if pupils were not Buddhist, they just stood to attention). However, in school F, pupils said vows and recited the school motto and creed, or recited Thai poetry. Following this, representatives of grade five or six pupils introduced Thai words or Thai phrases selected by them to the other pupils.

When this had been completed, a duty teacher gave a short talk about moral ethics (the purpose of this was to provide training by asking witty questions, telling a story or instructing pupils on how to act properly) or else imparted news or other information that pupils needed to know. In School F the duty teachers in the school inspected pupils' hygiene (e.g. nails, ears, teeth and length of their hair). Personal hygiene was thought to be important by teachers. Pupils in the other five schools were also inspected for hygiene by the class teachers during learning hour. Thai government schools had further regulations regarding the tidiness of pupils' hair and pupils were also required to wear school uniforms.

Occasionally the headteacher made a speech or gave a short talk related to pupils' everyday life. The pupils usually walked in lines back to their classrooms at about 8.20. However, the pupils in school F exercised for around 30 minutes before walking in orderly lines back to their classrooms. This was because the headteacher's policy based implementation of teaching strategies on the recommended practices.

#### **4.1.2 Instructional and recess time**

Pupils in the large sized schools (School A, D and E) (see Table 3.2) were required to spend more time in school than those at the middle sized schools (see 1.5). Those three schools were similar in that they all assigned an extra hour of classroom instruction time after school for low-performing pupils,

tutoring reading and mathematics, and/or for pupils whose parents worked longer hours and were unable to collect their children at 3.30. Remarkably, School D offered extra activities such as music, art, dance, sport and foreign languages. In contrast, the middle sized schools did not provide additional instruction. Commonly, the six schools that participated in this study assigned the same number of periods to all subjects as presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Timetable of the six schools**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Period of study</b>
Morning assembly	8.00-8.20	20-25
Class 1	8.30- 9.30	50-60
Class 2	9.30-10.30	50-60
Class 3	10.30-11.30	50-60
Lunch	11.30-12.30	50-60
Class 4	12.30-13.30	50-60
Class 5	13.30-14.30	50-60
Class 6	14.30-15.30	50-60
-Tutoring or Extra activities	15.30-16.30	50-60

Lessons began at 8.30 and continued until 3.30 or 4.30. In classrooms, when the teachers entered, the class leader said “pupils, show respect” or “pupils stand up, please”, and then all of the pupils stood up and said “wai” (traditional Thai greeting) to their teachers and greeted them in unison. At the end of the lesson, pupils said “thank you, teacher” and “wai” again.

In the classroom, pupils had to take off their shoes when entering the school buildings. It is a mandatory tradition that Thai people remove their shoes before entering a house or places such as temples. In Thai beliefs, a person’s feet occupy the lowest realm of a person’s existence. The head is the highest, and feet are the lowest. Pupils would put their shoes in front of the classroom wall or on shelves inside the classrooms. Teachers explained that taking shoes off also helped to keep the classrooms clean and was particularly appropriate in a warm climate. If they wanted to go to the rest room or drink water, pupils had to get permission from their teachers.

Unlike in the other schools, there were some conventional activities on Friday afternoon in Schools B and C. From 14.30-15.30, pupils gathered in the school hall for a meeting. The headteacher or a deputy headteacher or deputy teachers then gave an instructional talk to the pupils. Also, other teachers gave a talk or gave important information to the pupils. After that pupils sang Buddhist chants and the Thai king's anthem before going home.

#### **4.1.3 Lunchtime**

Pupils had a 15 minutes recess to drink milk and relax during the morning or afternoon session, depending on their class teacher, and they had an hour's recess from 11.30 to 12.30 for lunch, to play, and to clean their teeth and freshen up. Unlike the others, pupils in School E had another break of around 15 minutes to have a snack or fruit prepared by the school. Their break time was dependent on their class teachers' discretion.

First graders in Schools C and D had their lunch in their classrooms while others had their lunch in cafeterias. Pupils lined up in the corridors to receive their food from the teachers or supporting staff and then took their food back to eat at their desks. The class teachers of these pupils also had to have their lunch in class with the pupils to help and to monitor and maintain pupils' behaviour and discipline.

Pupils in Schools A, B, and F had to line up in the corridors to walk to the canteen and then buy their food at the canteen. They freely selected their seats. In contrast, pupils in School E sat in line while their volunteer friends served food on plates. When the food was served the duty teachers used microphones to instruct pupils on good manners and to say a kind of grace together with pupils before they could have their lunch. It was explained that school policy was to make pupils aware of food waste. When these pupils had finished their food they put the waste food into a bucket and washed their bowls, spoons and forks and took them back up to the classroom. Conversely, lunch in School F was prepared by teachers for poor pupils and was on sale very cheaply to other pupils. Reportedly, this service was offered in order to ensure pupils had a nutritious lunch.

#### **4.1.4 School end**

School ended at 3.30pm or 4.30pm, depending on each school (see Table 4.1), as discussed earlier. When the 3.30 school bell rang, pupils were seated at their desks. The class leader said “pupils, show respect, please”, and then all pupils said *wai* to the teachers and said “thank you” before leaving the classroom. However, at around 3.20, pupils in school F stood in rows again in front of the flagpole. The duty teacher said a few sentences and then allowed them to go home.

#### **4.2 Classroom physical setting and teaching aids in the six schools**

The layouts of the participating teachers’ classrooms were similar in seating style and how equipment and materials were arranged. These six participants’ classrooms usually had pupils sitting in two or three lines of desks facing the blackboard and teachers. This may be because the classrooms observed had large numbers of pupils (24-40). Unlike the others, the classroom of the participant in School F (see 3.6.6) had portable desks and pupils sat on the floor. She explained that this was because the class had a large number of pupils in the last school year. Thus she was suggested to use portable tables because they were easier to move when conducting activities.

These six schools had large blackboards at the front of the classrooms. Two to three bulletin boards installed in the classroom were used for conveying content by teachers, as well as for displaying pupils’ work. I observed that decorating the bulletin board based on the lessons being taught in class, or with pupils’ craftwork or artwork in other subjects was very rare. Bulletin boards were often decorated based on upcoming Buddhist festival days and upcoming holidays (e.g. New Year’s Day, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day). In addition, behavioural expectations (e.g. don’t play together or talk while studying, don’t use negative words) were posted in all participating teachers’ classrooms, except for Rai-ra’s.

At the beginning of the academic year, the six schools appointed a committee to select and purchase all teaching and learning materials used in the schools. The committee was composed of representatives of the school board, administrative staff, parents and teachers. Schools could purchase materials and textbooks that they wanted, while the OBEC provided guidelines and lists of textbooks and additional materials to schools.

Since 1950, Thai textbook production from primary to secondary level had been assigned to a committee established by a department of the OBEC, in cooperation with the MOE. Alternatively, private publishers were also allowed to produce Thai textbooks. The private publishers could submit their textbooks to the MOE for review and accreditation.

In teaching Thai, teaching aids supplementing lessons often include songs, word cards, games and textbooks. I observed that textbooks and course-books were the main teaching aids. The majority of pupils in this study used both textbooks which were developed by the OBEC and the new textbooks, promoted by the NBL. However, pupils in the classrooms of some participants (e.g. Pan and Ya) only used OBEC textbooks.

Textbooks developed by the OBEC were classified into three types: textbooks, children's books (Thai poetry) and workbooks. The reasons for this separation, as explained by the OBEC staff who took responsibility for developing these books, was that the textbooks could be reused by new pupils. In contrast, textbooks promoted by the NBL contained the three aforementioned features of OBEC textbooks in one book. Teachers in this study agreed that the new textbooks of the NBL were better than the OBEC books in terms of colour quality, quantity of photos and number of exercises. Pupils could practise in their textbooks and did not have to copy exercises down in their notebooks. However, the new NBL textbooks were three times more expensive than the OBEC textbooks. Next, assessment of pupils' achievement in the participant schools is explained.

### 4.3 Assessing pupils' achievement

There were differences between the kinds of examination used to assess learner progress in the six schools (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Types of Examination used to Assess Learner Achievement

Kind of examination	Schools	Remarks
- Half-semester examinations	Schools D and E	Subject teachers prepare paper tests and class teachers administer the exams.
- End-of-semester	All six schools	

As displayed in Table 4.2, two types of examination were used to evaluate learner achievement in the six schools. The end of semester examination was administered in all six schools, whilst two additional examinations were used to assess pupil achievement in Schools D and E: one halfway through the semester and one at the end of the semester. In the classroom, subject teachers monitored and evaluated learner progress during the lessons.

The six schools set their own calendars for these examinations. Such examinations were usually administered over two to three days, depending on what the school decided. The examinations often took around half a day – between 9am and 11.30am, then again between 12.30pm and 1.30pm. After 1.30pm, participating teachers often organised review sessions, tutoring sessions or break time at their discretion.

The six schools all organised practical exams that took place a week before the end-of-semester examinations began. In these practical exams, pupils were tested on, for example, reading aloud, speaking in front of the classroom, listening comprehension, writing freely about a topic or pictures, and, in addition, cookery, sports, drawing and craft skills.

#### **4.4 Teachers' additional responsibilities**

In practice, all six schools gave the class teachers additional responsibilities besides teaching classes. Thai government public teachers were required to do extra work to meet the criteria for salary increments and promotion. Participants in the large sized school took on fewer extra responsibilities than the teachers in the middle sized school as they had deputy headteachers or support staff to take responsibility for many of the extra jobs. Also, three large sized schools in this study hired temporary teachers for subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Art, Music, ICT, Thai language and PE as well as English language.

Participants were assigned extra work relating to administration and other work, such as school curriculum coordinator, sports coordinator, community relations, student activity coordinator, cook, school finance officer, school clerk and school purchasing officer, at the school head's discretion.

Since participants were class teachers, their duties included teaching preparation, including assembling related documents (e.g. teaching aids, lesson plans, class worksheets, evaluation forms) and checking homework. Additionally, they had to prepare a teaching portfolio and annual reports to be submitted to agencies concerned with external quality assurance. Most of them had to work during the summer break and weekends to prepare these reports.

Moreover, these teachers were usually assigned responsibility for other, temporary, duties. For example, they were often ordered to collect information about pupils and schools and to produce reports for the ESA and the OBEC. As an example, during study time, the government ran a "school trip programme" and allocated a budget to schools to organise activities. Teachers had to plan these activities, organise them and write reports.

It was usual for them to be assigned extra tasks when the school conducted events (e.g. Mother's Day, Father's Day, Buddhist festivals or the school's birthday). They had to decorate the school hall and prepare exhibitions, boards, pupil showcases and food. They also had to participate in local administrative organisations' activities. For example, they had to train pupils to perform local dance or music, or, when requested, send pupils' art or craftwork to events organised by local organisations. Some teachers may have requested to join

the committees for competitions (e.g. poetry, dance) conducted by these organisations (fieldnote, 04/07/2011). In June, some teachers in School F were appointed by these organisations to the election committee for Thai members of the House of Representatives. Consequently, four teachers were absent from their class for a day, attending a meeting conducted by these organisations. Table 4.3 illustrates the additional responsibilities of participants.

**Table 4.3 Additional Work of Participants**

Teachers	Academic role	Additional work
Nom	Grade one class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grade curriculum coordinator</li> <li>- School gardener</li> <li>- School coordinator to develop teaching aids</li> <li>- Duty teacher</li> </ul>
Tipa	Grade one class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School coordinator of implementation of the recommended practices in school</li> <li>- Grade curriculum coordinator</li> <li>- Duty teacher</li> </ul>
Ra-tee	Grade two class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School co-op manager</li> <li>- School bank project</li> <li>- Librarian</li> <li>- Duty teacher</li> </ul>
Pan	Grade one class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grade curriculum coordinator</li> <li>- Duty teacher</li> </ul>
Ya	Grade three teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grade curriculum coordinator</li> <li>- Duty teacher</li> </ul>
Rai-ra	Grade three class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School curriculum coordinator</li> <li>- Duty teacher</li> </ul>

Next, I address types of capital that are deemed the most valuable in schools taking part in this study.

## 4.5 Forms of capital deemed valuable in the participating six schools

In this section, I discuss my findings with respect to specific capital of recognised importance in the six schools taking part in this study. Regarding the notion of capital as defined by Bourdieu (1984), teachers in this study talked about capital considered valuable in their schools as being very relevant to the implementation of the recommended practices. The data suggest that there were various forms of capital operating within the six schools, of which the following four types were considered of high importance: 1) promotion; 2) institutional position; 3) face and 4) good relationships with administrative staff.

### 4.5.1 Promotion

In Thai public schools, year-end promotion was one kind of economic capital which was regarded as significant in competition among members in schools. Nom (See 3.6.1) expressed that *“my extra assignments besides teaching my class may not seem to increase my chances of receiving a promotion”*. Nom’s comment shows that promotion was considered by her as a kind of capital.

Getting a promotion in the Thai primary teachers’ field means that when teachers are offered promotion their salary increases by two steps on the salary scale. In general, Thai teachers’ salary is determined in line with their academic ranking (4 categories: teacher, senior teacher, specialist teacher and senior specialist teacher). Each rank has its own salary scale (minimum to maximum level) as well as an efficiency bar<sup>1</sup>. For example, the senior teacher rank has 20 salary levels (Thai Government Teacher and Education Personnel’ Salary Scale and Remuneration Act, B.E. 2547 (2004)). In each Thai government fiscal year (1<sup>st</sup> October - 30<sup>th</sup> September), it is usual for teachers to receive a one-step annual increment, if they reach the required standards in their disciplines. It used to be the case that when a teacher reached the maximum step of his/her scale and did not request or submit his/her reports to the OTEP in order to upgrade their position, he/she could not get promotion but could get a top up of 5% calculated from his/her current salary every year until he/she retired. But

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<sup>1</sup> A level of salary scale defining the minimum level of pay for each rank. Teachers had to reach this scale if they wanted to request the OTEP to upgrade their rank (e.g. from teacher to senior teacher).

this regulation was cancelled in December, 2011. For example, Tipa (see 3.6.2) had been in this situation before and during the time this study took place. However, she was upgraded to specialist teacher in May, 2011. Therefore, her name was going to be put forward as a candidate for promotion in the scale rank of specialist teacher in the next fiscal year.

The teachers in this study reported that the set of criteria used for gaining promotion tended to be vague and complex.

“I don’t know how to say it. I don’t know; promotion depends on the headteacher (*talks quietly*). It is not just your improved performance in teaching but you have to carry out other responsibilities productively...” (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 07/03/2011)

“An example of one who often gets promotion.... For me, Mr... seems not to perform well teaching in the classroom. But he knows how to make the headteacher recognise his abilities.... Mr.... does every job that is assigned by the headteacher. He is very kind and everyone likes him.” (A deputy headteacher of School F, interview which was conducted in his classroom, 14/07/2011)

In the above statements, Nom and the deputy headteacher seemed to agree that there were many criteria for promotion of teachers in schools. Nom's comments suggested that candidates' suitability for promotion was determined by two main criteria: good teaching performance and the amount and quality of other responsibilities assigned by the head teacher. Nom added that she thought that indicators showing good teaching abilities are, for instance, high pupil test scores, pupils in class winning prizes in competitions, and the teacher's success in professional competitions. Meanwhile, the administrative staff expressed other criteria for promotion, related to personal discipline matters – personality (e.g. kindness and good relationships with colleagues).

The school leaders in School A claimed that they had developed criteria to decide which staff to promote. One deputy headteacher explained that rather than giving promotion to a small group of teachers, to increase their salary by two steps on the salary scale, the committee used the technique of paying one and a half steps of the salary scale to teachers in order to show fairness, increase the numbers of teachers who achieved the criteria, and reduce conflict. However, promotion was still implemented in the six schools to enhance productivity and performance.

#### 4.2.2 Institutional position

Teachers in government schools had to take responsibility for additional work assigned by the headteachers (see 4.4). Most teachers in the six schools claimed that appointment to a particular institutional position, made by the headteacher, was likely linked to the possibility of achieving other capital (e.g. promotion, influence and credit).

Rai-ra (see 3.6.6) claimed that teachers who work in financial positions are often subsequently offered promotion. Her comment about appointment as a financial officer assisting promotion might be explained by the fact that financial tasks in school were regarded as tough jobs. Such jobs required dealing with lots of financial documents in accordance with the regulations of the Thai Ministry of Finance, to achieve transparency. Therefore, the most influential positions and thereby those that actively generated a return in terms of high possibility of accessibility to capital, were held by teachers who acted as school financial officers.

In addition, the institutional positions most coveted were those of school curriculum coordinator and grade curriculum coordinator. Although these positions did not involve directly supervising other teachers, holders of such positions could give advice to other teachers in the school and work collaboratively with administrative staff. In addition, all Thai primary schools have recently been required to develop their own school curriculum in accordance with the National Act 1999. This position was thus viewed as a significant, important and hard job by teachers in this study. Consequently, this position was thought to facilitate potential gain returns in other capital (e.g. influence, social recognition and face). For example, the school curriculum coordinator of School E did not have to teach classes. He had his own office to work alone in. Moreover, he had the authority to visit classrooms at any time to discuss things with the other teachers.

### 4.5.3 The idea of “Face”

The idea of “face” was the third type of symbolic capital recognised as important within the contested space of the six schools. Tipa (see 3.6.2) expressed that “*I have to save my face*” (interview which was conducted after the teaching observation in her classroom, 17/02/2011) to illustrate that due to being a reputable trainer, she should use the new practices in her classroom in order to maintain her prestige.

The idea of “face” is important in Thai social interaction. Face is regarded as prestige, dignity, honour, respectability, credibility and integrity. One gains face or increases face, for example, by accumulating wealth, occupying high positions of power, getting high-paid work, being reputable, gaining influence and doing the right thing in the eyes of others or having functioned adequately in the position being occupied. Saving face or keeping face seems akin to preserving or maintaining one’s value or reputation. To make a person lose face, regardless of rank, is to be avoided at all cost (Komin 1991).

### 4.5.4 Good relationships with school heads

Good, close relationships with administrative staff were considered as highly important social capital. The following are typical comments:

“To get a promotion here, you should not argue with the head, but talk positively about him both inside and outside school and do everything that he assigns.” (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 24/07/2011)

“We have worked hard... but we are never offered promotion or verbal rewards. In contrast, Mrs..... usually gets promotion..... We don’t know what extra responsibilities she has taken on for developing our school. We only know that Mrs.... has a very close relationship with the headteacher. It may be because they are from the same city.” (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011)

“I argue with him when he assigns me to take care of plants in the school nursery because I teach first graders.... He and I have not had a close relationship. I do not often get promotion compared with some teachers. But it is alright.” (Nom, interview conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 07/03/2011)

These statements suggest that these teachers claimed the school leaders were considered to be the most powerful network of connections in the school. These teachers believed that good relationships with school leaders might optimise their chances of promotion. In Thai primary schools, the headteachers were the

most senior and of highest status in the hierarchical school structure. Additionally, the school leaders formed the committee who made decisions about promotions in the schools, as well as assigning extra responsibilities for the teachers (see 4.4). Moreover, the headteachers acted as primary evaluators at the school level when it came to writing their opinions about teachers' performance when teachers wanted to upgrade their academic rank. Finally, headteachers were required to produce confidential reports about teachers when they wished to transfer to other schools. In Bourdieu's framework, social capital consists of two dimensions: 1) social networks and connections or relationships, and 2) sociability (Bourdieu, 1984). Particularly, Bourdieu indicates that people must construct social networks and then skilfully maintain the networks over time in order for them to acquire broader possibilities for accomplishing things of interest. The teachers in this study recognised that the school leaders formed a prestigious network of connections, and that they should maintain good relationships with them as a resource to maximise their interests.

## **Summary**

This chapter has highlighted aspects of school context in this study. This overview of certain events and activities contributes to this inquiry into the schools and their implications for the behaviour of teachers in the schools. It describes students' activities around the school, both in formal or scheduled and informal or non-scheduled activities. This chapter has also demonstrated that the participant teachers worked in unique fields that corresponded to Bourdieu's (1990) sites of contestation between actors. How Bourdieu's capital may potentially be deemed of high value within the six schools was also discussed. Such capital comprised: 1) promotion; 2) institutional positions; 3) the idea of "face"; and 4) good relationships with administrative staff.

In the following chapter the teachers' responses to the recommended policy is examined.

## CHAPTER 5

### TEACHER RESPONSES TO AND PRACTISING OF THE RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

This is the second of three chapters that discuss the study's findings. This chapter examines the teachers' responses to and their practising of the recommended practices and addresses the question of how teachers interpreted and carried out the recommended policy in teaching Thai and what the teachers thought about their practices, that is, their dispositions. The next chapter will focus on investigating their reasons for their typical responses to the recommended practices and the impact of the recommended practices in terms of teacher professional development. The teachers' responses to and their practising of the recommended practices, based on five significant themes that emerged relating to their responses and their teaching practices, are discussed next.

#### **5.1 Extent of the teachers' engagement**

In this section, I examine how the six teachers responded to the recommended practices. These six teachers displayed different orientation toward the recommended practices. For example, the participants' instructional practices toward the recommended practices typically appeared to range from the least (e.g. balancing phonic approach with addition of certain recommended activities) to the highest level of orientation (e.g. mixed pedagogical techniques).

Two categories of teacher responses to the recommended practices emerged from data analysis. These categories were developed in response to patterns evident in the data on likeness between teachers in terms of teaching the recommended practices at similar frequencies in their classrooms and their fidelity to instructional change. Several points of comparison, determined from inductive analysis of data, were considered in determining these categories: degree of teacher engagement in the recommended practices (from no involvement to consistent involvement); primary willingness to involve with the

instructional innovations (from none to very willing to involve); frequency of using and commitment to use the recommended practices in their work (from no use to consistently attempted use of many strategies). Two categories of teachers emerged from the analysis (see Appendix V):

- Teachers who were enthusiastic about the recommended practices are Nom, Tipa and Ra-tee
- Teachers who were sceptical about the instruction innovations are Pan, Ya and Rai-ra

These responses are discussed in more detail below.

### **5.1.1 Teachers who were enthusiastic about the recommended practices**

#### ***Nom: "I like to teach as suggested"***

Nom (see 3.7.1) expressed her passionate belief that the recommended practices were appropriate approaches. Nom stated that she attempted to teach the recommended practices, of which she was a strong supporter. In her words:

"I do like this approach... It helps me to better understand my pupils' learning mode and confirms my beliefs about what makes for good teaching..." (interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, when school ended, 14/02/2011)

"I agree with everything... I like this approach" (interview which was conducted in her classroom, 07/04/2011)

Nom's statements illustrate that she enthusiastically engaged in the recommended practices. Her enthusiasm for the recommended practices, however, came from long ago methods of in-service training. The explanation for her active commitment to teaching the recommended practices perhaps is the consistency between her beliefs and teaching strategies of the recommended practices. She asserted that she held beliefs about good instruction that closely aligned with those promoted by the recommended practices (e.g. using teaching aids and hands-on activities). She was also familiar with the reading aloud technique, which was the first step of the five-steps model for teaching promoted by the recommended practices, as a way to effectively teach language to young learners. This was because she had experienced using stories in the reading aloud technique introduced in 1997

(see Appendix I) and claimed that she had used this technique. Such experience had also led her to write children's books to supplement her teaching income since then.

Feasibly, Nom's enthusiastic engagement in the recommended practices might have stemmed from her own beliefs and pre-existing practices. Her greater engagement in the recommended practices may have been possible because she did not need to modify her beliefs. Instead, understanding and adopting the recommended practices might have been a process of reconfirming and strengthening her deeply-held beliefs. Viewing through Certeau's theory, she may have tactically interacted with the recommended practices by utilising her prior knowledge to create her space while she was moving in the game. Her pre-existing experience enhanced her willingness and confidence to engage in the new practices, feeling that some of the teaching steps of the recommended practices were not new to her and she knew how to use them productively.

Her enthusiasm for teaching the recommended practices was well represented in lesson observations. Observations showed that Nom employed and incorporated many teaching strategies of the recommended practices with greater frequency in her classroom, in comparison with other participants. She was the only one among the participants who integrated texts from storybooks being read to teach other subjects (e.g. how to write mathematics word problems). However, classroom observations of her teaching Thai revealed that she often read stories aloud and continued with using direct teaching of specific aspects of literacy (e.g. phonics, structuring spelling and grammar). In her interview she also confirmed that she did not follow the five steps of teaching Thai from the recommended practices as well as the CLE approach (see Appendix I) which she knew before. After two months of classroom observations and in the third interview, she stated:

"I taught spelling and grammar after reading aloud activities during this time. I did not use paired and group reading activities as suggested by the recommended practices. I have so many other responsibilities at this moment" (interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 07/03/2011)

Her statements indicate that she focused on meaning before focusing on the form of the language. However, her pupils had limited opportunity to engage in communicative tasks in pair and small group work activities as recommended by the recommended practices. It is clear from her statement that she

selectively embraced some steps of the five steps model of teaching language from the recommended practices, particularly the steps of practice of reading aloud and teaching grammar. This quote also illustrates that her efforts at instructional change were constrained by external forces (e.g. overloaded with routine responsibilities).

***Tipa: "I use two different methods"***

Tipa (see 3.7.2) expressed that she attempted to teach the recommended practices due to the consistency between her pre-existing beliefs and experience and the principles underpinning the initiatives. She explained that her prior experiences with story reading, her childhood experience and her family life motivated her active orientation. Tipa was trained in using story books to teach reading and had been recognised by the ESA for her performance, before participating in the initiatives. Additionally, she referred to childhood experiences of reading aloud with her father and reading bedtime stories as a mother. These experiences resulted in her strong belief in the positive benefits of reading aloud to children. In an interview conducted in the school hall, she stated her commitment to ongoing delivery of the recommended practices, particularly reading aloud techniques; *"I will continue reading stories aloud to my pupils as I did with my child"* (interview, 31/03/2011). Similarly to Nom, Tipa had greater involvement in the recommended practices, since she perhaps did not need to adapt her beliefs, due in part to her prior experience with some teaching strategies of the recommended practices (e.g. reading aloud).

Conversely, Tipa expressed her comments about the recommended practices. She believed that the specific aspects of language (e.g. alphabet, vowels, spelling, and rules of language) were necessary elements of teaching the beginning level classes. In the second interview, conducted in her classroom while the pupils were not there, she said, *"pupils need to know vowels, letters and how to blend the sound-spelling patterns, so I often teach these skills in the morning session. I, however, frequently use language activities as suggested in the afternoon session"* (interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 08/02/2011). At this point, her comment shows she seemed self-contradictory – holding parallel sets of beliefs about language learning (e.g. phonics approach and literature-based instruction).

In addition, she stated that the recommended practices did not sufficiently emphasise teaching reading comprehension; *“I am not sure about the effectiveness of suggested activities such as role play or group discussions in developing pupils’ comprehension”* (interview conducted after the teaching observation, 08/02/2011). Her suspicion about the recommended practices deterred her from adopting the five steps model of teaching language proposed by the recommended practices (see 1.1). She, nevertheless, used parallel approaches to balance her pedagogical preferences and the external pressure. She carried out two instructional approaches that were based on different assumptions about teaching and learning (interview, 31/03/2011). During the morning session, she frequently taught by focusing on the phonics approach, using textbooks for whole-class instruction in order to expose all pupils to what they needed to know. Additionally, she often employed the learning activities of the recommended practices (e.g. reading aloud, small group and peer reading) in the afternoon sessions.

Tipa’s response to the recommended practices indicates her appearance of compliance. Her interviews also illustrate that she seemed passive in her engagement in the recommended practices. She also stated, *“my face, I have to save my face..... I must keep my word; I have to teach what I have said”* (interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 17/02/2011). These comments reveal that as a holder of a high-profile professional identity (including trainer and school coordinator), she may have felt a need to defend her position in line with the times by displaying her acceptance of the recommended practices in order to preserve her authority and her professional identity. Her identity had brought its own pressure for her to present a positive image and her school image by displaying the use of the recommended practices, which was regarded as good practice.

Another explanation for Tipa’s passive involvement in teaching the recommended practices is that she was not particularly pressured by promotion. This was because her current rank when this study took place prevented promotion (see 4.5). Additionally, she had requested a transfer to another school. She thus seemed under pressure to teach the initiatives. Tipa’s strategy appeared to be more or less concerned with the conservation or improvement of her capital in order to upgrade her position in the social space (Bourdieu,

1990). She may then have sought a strategy for conserving her capital rather than changing her capital.

***Ra-tee: "It can be of use sometimes"***

Ra-tee (3.7.3) expressed favourable opinions of the recommended practices and its suggested principles. However, she said that her engagement in the recommended practices was passive (the first interview, 05/04/2011, conducted in her classroom with the presence of her colleague). There are perhaps two reasons for her passive commitment to translating the recommended practices into her classroom. Firstly, she claimed that she had very little knowledge of the recommended practices. Secondly, she believed that direct teaching of phonics was more necessary than the learning activities as suggested by the recommended practices. She said:

I like the language learning activities of this approach...But I cannot organise all the activities...I arrange them sometimes...I consider this approach an extra activity. I can organise language activities as suggested after they know letters, vowels and spelling. I focus on covering content in the curriculum which is used by teachers across the country.....The time needed to carry out the recommended activities is very difficult. You should understand that activities should be organised but they should not be conducted too often as pupils will not gain anything..." (the second interview, which was conducted in a staff room, 11/07/2011)

Ra-tee's comments reveal an apparent contradiction in her thinking. Firstly, her statements suggest that she believed that pupils need to be taught specific aspects of language (e.g. the alphabet and vowels) from the beginning. She also believed that pupils could not read a text unless they knew the meaning of all the words that occurred in it. Her comments related to reading text exploitation imply a view of reading that focuses on language forms rather than sub-skills of the reading process (or focus on meaning). Therefore, she might have believed that teaching phonics was more effective than reading aloud for helping pupils to be able to read. Her comments did not reveal disagreement with using the teaching strategies of the recommended practices to teach language. However, it might be possible that she doubted the effectiveness of the initiatives. Consequently, she decided to use the recommended practices as an additional activity.

Secondly, her comments indicate that although she did not totally reject the importance of language learning activities as suggested by the recommended practices (e.g. group and peer reading and communicative activities), she appeared not to be convinced of the value of such activities. She tended to doubt the extent to which pupils really learn – in particular a benefit in acquiring words – information or facts when they engage in activities (e.g. “*Yes, activities should be organised..*”). Finally, she appeared to focus more on covering content than the actual learning of content. Her teaching choices seemed to be filtered through her belief of “not enough time”. This belief in “covering content” may be seen as a rule of the game in Thai primary schools, according to the lens of Bourdieu’s concepts of doxa and miscognition. For Bourdieu (1990, p.68-69) “*agents never know completely what they are doing and that what they are doing has more sense than they know*”. Doxa is the set of core values and discourses of a social practice field that have come to be viewed as natural, normal, and inherently necessary, thus working to ensure that the arbitrary and contingent nature of these discourses is not questioned or even recognised (Nolan 2012). Ra-tee’s belief was that teachers should teach all the content in the national curriculum within the timeframe advised in the state curriculum. The rules of the game may be thought of in the following ways: If pupils do not explore what they need to know or do not play this game, pupils can fail examinations. Subsequently, pupils might be labelled as slow/struggling pupils, resulting in the blame falling on school leaders, and pupils’ parents. Or, teachers may be blamed by their colleagues for not covering all the content in the curriculum. During the time in which this study took place, the other participants also indeed expressed that they thought they might be blamed for not covering the full content of the curriculum. Rai-ra (see 3.6.6), for example, reported that she felt that other teachers had not done their jobs in supporting pupils in learning to read when she discovered that some of her pupils had poor reading abilities. Covering content within a specific timeframe may become a social practice in the Thai primary education field without question and might be viewed as common practice, or what Bourdieu referred to as doxa, and that may lead to misunderstanding (Bourdieu, 1990). The regulative content coverage within a particular timeframe might have discouraged Ra-tee from modifying her pedagogies.

Lastly, her comments show that she made compromises by using the recommended practices as additional activities. Her teaching practices revealed that she welcomed modifications to her teaching. She integrated language learning activities of the recommended practices (e.g. stories reading aloud) into her practice. The lesson observations showed that she usually read stories aloud on the first day of the week. She explained that this activity could build vocabulary acquisition and provide an enjoyable experience for pupils. She often used texts from stories to recontextualise her teaching on the middle or last day of the week, by telling pupils to write words she had told them from memory, or write and draw freely about stories being read. However, she ignored some steps of the recommended teaching strategies (e.g. group and peer reading activities). Her attempts to differentiate instruction illustrate that she may have been rethinking her fundamental assumptions about teaching language for beginning learners in general, coupled with her limited understanding of the new practices (e.g. reading stories aloud technique).

Her integration also demonstrates that she perhaps involved with appropriate tactics in order to balance the official pressures. In the moments of her interaction with the opposing demands (i.e. the recommended practices and her interests), she tactically selected some steps from the recommended teaching strategies, such as reading stories aloud, and then incorporated them into her pre-existing beliefs and practices (e.g. phonics approach) to bring them in line with the initiatives. She may have chosen such a teaching activity because she considered that it was useful for her pupils and it may also have been unavoidable.

### **5.1.2 Teachers who were sceptical about the recommended practices**

#### ***Pan: "I would not follow any particular method"***

Pan (see 3.7.4) had limited involvement with the recommended practices. She was vocal about being uncomfortable about modification of her pre-existing practice; her comments showed that her acceptance of the official pedagogy was without enthusiasm. She expressed openly her undisguised dismissal of attempts to employ the practices as suggested in her classroom. She wanted to use her preferred practices rather than adopting the initiatives.

Her distaste for the recommended practices was likely to be rooted in one or more of the following reasons. Firstly, she thought that the recommended practices were just another innovation in a long line of the recommended practices and they were just a passing trend. She said:

“It might be stated differently. It might be a new approach....But teachers are attacking the same old skills. Why do they tell us to follow their ideas? ... I want to use my preferred pedagogies to solve the difficulties that I am facing.... Teachers cannot follow this format in everyday.... This approach is closely similar to the way we taught Thai in the past. We used poems, fun stories to teach Thai.....Other new approaches will be proposed soon” (the third interview, which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 21/01/2011)

Her statements show that she doubted the thinking behind the initiatives. She thought that the recommended practices may have been one more approach in a line of newly designed teaching approaches. She believed that although the recommended practices were promoted as a new approach, teachers were required to teach the same skills required for the subject matter. Consequently, her quotes show a tendency to reject teaching the recommended practices (e.g. “*why do they..*”). She openly stated that she wanted to use her preferred teaching practices.

Moreover, from her statements (e.g. “*This approach is closely similar...*”), she considered the recommended practices as being familiar. Her seeing the recommended practices as familiar may be because she paid less attention to other aspects that diverged from the familiar. As can be seen from her explanation “*we used poems...*”, she appeared to talk about the materials used to teach Thai rather than the approaches for teaching language. Further, she believed that the recommended practices were just a passing trend (e.g. “*other new approaches will...*”). She thought that the five steps of the recommended practices for teaching language were just not applicable in everyday classroom practice (e.g. “*Teacher cannot follow...*”).

Finally, she commented on the value of investment for pupils. She thought that materials promoted to supplement teaching language by the recommended practices (e.g. textbooks and children’s storybooks) represent the high cost of investment in the programme. She overtly stated:

"Schools and parents cannot afford the new textbooks and children's books. There are many commercial textbooks which are less expensive....Teachers can use other textbooks or course-books to help them to complete their studies by paying less" (the second interview, which was conducted in her classroom, 21/01/2011).

Her comments show that she tended to personally dislike the recommended practices. She did not appear to have high expectations of change in her pedagogical instruction (interview, 21/01/2011 and conversation, 21/09/2011, conducted after classroom observation). Perhaps her comments against the recommended practices were overtly expressed to defend her own practices, which appeared not to be actively aligned with the recommended practices, and the observation data indicated that she had not changed her instructional practices much. She focused on grammar teaching. Her interview was consistent with observation data. She expressed, "*I do not adopt the format of the initiatives. I focus on teaching spelling and grammar*" (interview which was conducted in the library after the teaching observation, 07/02/2011).

#### **Ya: "*Blurring of teaching strategies*"**

Ya (see 3.7.5) stated clearly that she was passively engaged in the recommended practices, stating, "*I do not use everything of this practice*" (conversation before the teaching observation, 07/07/2011). Her statement shows her partial acceptance and use of the initiatives, although a certain level of passive involvement in the recommended practices is also apparent. She explained that she generally agreed with the general concepts of the recommended practices but these practices were not necessarily needed by her personally. Her explanations for making little effort to adopt the recommended practices were expressed in terms of pedagogical issues, as she stated:

"I think it is a good programme...But the teaching strategies are more appropriate for teaching first or second grade pupils, rather than my pupils" (the second interview, which was conducted in her classroom, 24/06/2011)

Additionally, she was suspicious of the development of the recommended practices, as the following comment illustrates:

"The name of this approach may differ from others, but the teaching strategies are the same as in the other approaches" (conversation with her before the teaching observation, 07/07/2011).

"The description of the teaching strategies proposed is blurred. There is no major difference from what we have known, such as read aloud" (conversation with her before the teaching observation, 08/08/2011).

Ya's comments showed that she felt scepticism about the development of the recommended practices and thought that they were simply rebranding of an older approach under a new title. Additionally, her comments (e.g. "*the description of the teaching strategies proposed is blurred..*") seemed to indicate Ya's suspicion and confusion regarding the distinction between the pedagogical strategies of the recommended practices and conventional teaching strategies commonly known in the education field. She stated that she thus chose to adopt some suggestions of the new practices in her classroom, rather than making greater changes to her teaching methods. The observation data were similar to her interview data: Ya made some efforts to employ the recommended practices in her instruction. She integrated a few suggestions from the recommended practices into her classroom teaching. She, for instance, introduced short exercises to her classroom. She used the new textbook and materials introduced in the training to teach her pupils. She did not, however, use the five steps model of the recommended practices (see 1.1).

***Rai-ra: "Some recommended ideas are inappropriate"***

Rai-ra (see 3.7.6) openly declared herself as a general supporter of the initiatives. However, she expressed her suspicion about the principles of the recommended practices. There are perhaps two reasons for her scepticism. Firstly, she believed the principles of the recommended practices were unlikely to be different from common practices known and used in schools, such as the national curriculum. Secondly, she said that she had become dubious about applying the recommended practices to teaching Thai:

"It is suggested that there should be less focus on teaching grammar. It is inappropriate that teachers teach Thai without teaching the rules of language and grammar. The suggestion of using the reading aloud technique in class is likely to be suggested without concern for the teachers' health. Reading aloud may be possible to carry out. But group reading activities are not appropriate practice for me. I think the struggling readers do not benefit from this activity" (interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 20/06/2011).

Rai-ra's comments reveal many contradictions in her thinking. Her comments demonstrate that Rai-ra seemed to come to disagree with the suggestion that there should be less emphasis on teaching grammar, as it was probably inappropriate in practice. Additionally, she argued that reading aloud might not be properly implemented in everyday practice. Nevertheless, her statements

show that she was not entirely against this technique (e.g. *“it might be possible for...”*). It is possible that she might not have been absolutely convinced by the effectiveness and efficiency of reading aloud techniques. In addition, she believed that group work was of little value to her pupils, particularly the poorer readers. Therefore, her suspicions over the effectiveness and efficiency of some strategies for the teaching of the new practices seemed to pull her away from using the recommended practices in her classroom. From another perspective, Rai-ra’s comments may be seen as a defence of her passive engagement in the recommended practices.

Observation data showed that she selectively integrated the initiatives’ suggestions into her practices, whilst new practices incompatible with her beliefs were discarded. She did not carry out the five steps of teaching Thai as proposed by the initiatives. She said, *“I teach as I have always taught. This approach is very few different from teaching methods suggested in the national curriculum”* (interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 29/06/2011).

However, she seemed to seek opportunities to show her active engagement in the initiatives. She appeared to act in a tactical manner in order to show her active orientation. She, for instance, posted the timetable on the wall, displaying the time she had allocated to activities for the teaching of Thai, as suggested by the initiatives. However, she did not carry out those activities during my observation. She set up a reading corner but she did not use storybooks in instructional activities with her pupils, and these books were purely for pupils to read for pleasure. She also assigned a head pupil and pupil volunteers to lead the class exercises before daily lessons, responding to the recommended strategies for using exercises as suggested in the training.

Shortly, in analysing the continuum of teacher responses to the recommended practices several themes emerged. First, all the teachers made some adaptations to the recommended practices. However, the level of enthusiasm for the recommended practices did not necessarily predict the degree of fidelity with which the teacher taught them. Three of them were sceptical, believing that the recommended practices tended to work against their own beliefs. Others, who were more enthusiastic about the recommended practices (Nom, Tipa and

Ra-tee), made adaptations regarding selective incorporation of teaching strategies from the recommended practices, with varying frequency and depth of implementation.

Noticeably, Ra-tee seemed to alter her existing beliefs and practice regarding teaching and learning language for younger learners in comparison with the others. Viewing through the teacher sensemaking framework, Ra-tee seemed to make sense of the new instruction partly through assimilation (Spillane, Reiser and Reimer 2002). She re-examined her own beliefs and shifted her practices to better align with her newly acquired views about teaching and learning. Although she did not use the recommended strategies for teaching Thai in the classroom particularly frequently, compared with Nom and Tipa, she appeared the most likely to be willing to learn and embrace the new practices. Conversely, Nom and Tipa embraced the selected teaching strategies of the recommended practices which were more closely aligned with their existing beliefs and experiences about language learning (e.g. literature-based instruction), and incorporated them into their practices. Their teaching practices coincidentally corresponded to those recommended by the initiatives. Thus, although it might appear that they consciously enacted the ideas described by the initiatives, it could more accurately be understood to be a direct reflection of their personal understanding and beliefs about learning and teaching language.

In contrast, teachers who were sceptical about the recommended practices (Pan, Ya and Rai-ra) openly stated that they did not enact the instructional practices as suggested by the recommended practices. They understood what changes the recommended practices required them to make, but elected to disregard the proposed changes in terms of their own practices. They defended their pedagogical choices, arguing that the recommended practices represented merely a trend in language teaching (e.g. Pan) that was likely to change within a short period of time. Meanwhile, Ya doubted the formulation of teaching strategies as proposed by the initiatives. These teachers believed that the limited changes they had chosen to implement were those that appropriately served their pupils. Thus, despite their familiarity with teaching strategies of the recommended practices, the instruction innovations had done little to shape their beliefs or teaching habitus and their practices.

Second, the response of the teachers was to consciously choose to incorporate, alter or ignore the teaching strategies of the recommended practices. The teachers exercised their agency to interpret and then select, reject or modify received policy. The data suggest that the pedagogical decisions made by these teachers were solidly grounded in their beliefs about appropriate practices, beliefs that did not necessarily align with the initiatives. For example, the teachers stated they were firmly in favour of their existing teaching practices (e.g. teaching spelling and grammar). For most teachers in this study, focus on the form of language occurred prior to focus on the meaning. Through the lens of Bourdieu's notion of habitus, practice is moderately produced by the habitus – both individual and collective practice. This may explain that the focus on teaching spelling and grammar may represent both the individual and collective habitus of these teachers. These habituses and their personal theories of what it means to teach language have been difficult to modify. Rather, these habituses and their personal beliefs of what it means to teach and learn language have affected the way these teachers have interpreted the recommended practices and how (or if) changes have been enacted in their classrooms.

Third, the teachers' responses to policy seemed to be very much related to their positions in the field. Participant teachers who became trainers (i.e. Nom and Tipa) were more actively engaged with the recommended practices than participants who did not hold this high status. Their identity and reputation may have placed them in a position where active involvement in the implementation of the recommended practices was necessary due to the high pressure brought by their high stakes. Assuming these teachers were interested in acting strategically, they did so in order to increase or maintain their capital, according to Bourdieu (1990). A certain degree of active involvement in the recommended practices was needed in order for them to capitalise on and/or conserve their capital. Active engagement in the implementation of the recommended practices could help them to establish a good impression among the administrators about their teaching performance. Consequently, they would be recognised for their good performance or would be offered capital (e.g. promotion). The next section reports the findings regarding the teachers' classroom practices.

## 5.2 Increase in reading aloud for beginning-level classes

This section reports on the six teachers' classroom practices in terms of oral reading. Data showed that the first grade teachers increased the reading aloud practice for beginning-level classes. Generally, the findings showed that, perhaps unsurprisingly, compared to the third grade teachers the first grade teachers read aloud more often to their pupils. Reading aloud was the first step of the five steps for teaching language of the recommended practices that the teachers in this study were encouraged to adopt, and lesson observations confirmed that three of the four first grade teachers (Nom, Tipa and Ra-tee but not Pan), compared to the third grade teachers, read stories orally more often to their pupils. Stories from books were read much more frequently in the classrooms of Nom, Tipa and Ra-tee, while Thai textbooks were preferred for reading aloud in Pan's classroom. The first grade teachers also reported that they had increased their focus on the practice of reading aloud, as Tip and Nom's statements demonstrate:

"I used to read aloud to them when I wanted to. But I have read aloud to pupils on a regular basis since I have participated in this implementation." (Tipa, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 08/02/2011,)

"I read every storybook provided aloud to them in the first semester. I repeatedly read aloud to them in this semester" (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 14/02/2011)

As previously discussed in section 5.1, Nom and Tipa had received training and had experience with the reading stories aloud technique before they became involved with the recommended practices. Such experience may have motivated these two teachers to read story books aloud to their pupils. Or they might have been tactically capitalising on their prior experience with another related approach to guide their use of the recommended practices. The data suggest that within the recommended practices those teaching strategies that are more consistent with teachers' beliefs and habitus are more easily accepted by teachers.

Perhaps, modification of habitus occurred with regard to Ra-tee, who claimed that she was never trained in the reading aloud technique. Her employing this technique in her practice indicates that she had rethought her approach to teaching language to younger learners. She thus built on her prior experience when she encountered the recommended practices. She not only based her

practice on her predetermined habitus about language learning but also interacted with and modified her old habitus. Her modification also indicates the power of discourse, which partly shaped Ra-tee's teaching practice while, on the other hand, feeding into Ra-tee's thinking system and her habitus.

In the case of Pan, despite having prior experience with reading aloud practices, she selected to read aloud textbooks to her pupils. Perhaps she may have read fewer story books or picture books because she interpreted text to mean a textbook. She expressed that the practices of reading orally to pupils is a common practice of first grade teachers because the first grade pupils are not able to read by themselves at the beginning of their journey of learning how to read (interview which was conducted after the teaching observation in her classroom, 21/01/2011).

The interview and observation data indicated that the third grade teachers read aloud less often to their pupils. Ya and Rai-ra, (the third grade teachers), explained consistently that they sometimes read text from textbooks orally to pupils to demonstrate how to read accurately rather than to inspire them. These two teachers put children's books and other books provided in the reading corner for pupils to read in their break time and for the quicker pupils who could complete their assignment before the lesson's end. This result is consistent with findings from the studies by Jacobs, Morrison & Swinyard (2000) and Crockton (2010). Jacobs and colleagues, using a survey of 1,874 kindergarten and primary teachers (grade one to grade six) in public and private schools in the USA, investigated how often the respondents read orally to their students. Results of the study showed that few teachers above the second grade read orally to their pupils. The study also found that primary grade teachers often read picture books aloud, while intermediate teachers read more chapter books. Similarly, Crockton's study (2010) found that primary teachers read aloud to their students more often than intermediate teachers. This investigation found that, consistent with research by Jacobs, Morrison & Swinyard (2000) and Crockton among teachers in other geographic areas, reading aloud to pupils occurred in the classes of Thai first grade teachers rather than those of third grade teachers.

The following section addresses the high focus placed on the form of language by all participants.

### 5.3 High focus on linguistic forms

This section examines the greater focus that all six participants persistently placed on linguistic forms in their teaching practices. Observations indicated that the four macro skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing, were not taught equally by the six participants. All of them allocated more time to teaching spelling, grammar and other rules of language, rather than developing the ability to communicate (using the four skills). The following lessons delivered by Pan (who was sceptical about the initiatives) and Tipa (who was enthusiastic about the initiatives) were selected to provide a picture of the amount of class time allocated to reading and practising aspects of language presented to pupils rather than speaking practice over the course of one week, as shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Pan’s and Tipa’s classes between 31/01/2011 and 04/02/2011**

Date	Pan	Tipa
Class 1: 31/01/ 2011	Vocabulary testing- pupils write words spoken by the teacher in their notebooks while analysing their structure.	Pupils’ recitation (Thai poems for memorising vowels and phonic tones), questions to link back to the previous lesson, explaining the phonic tones by using short movement activities, songs and a chart of the phonic tones. Pupils are asked to complete exercises.
Class 2: 01/02/ 2011	Review session: practising using an old test	Pupil recitation, using word cards and a chart of the phonic tones to review the previous lesson, and completing exercises.

**Table 5.1 (continued)**

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Class 3: 02/02/ 2011	Pupils' recitation(Thai poems for memorising vowels and phonic tones), providing an explanation and individual pupils practise the phonic tones exercise	Vocabulary testing - pupils write words heard from the teacher in their notebooks while analysing the structure of the words. Pupils who complete and correct errors in their work are allowed to read storybooks that they like.
Class 4: 03/02/ 2011	Review session: practising using an old test and an individual oral reading test.	Review session: writing sentences, pupils write freely about the topic: "I love to read books".
Class 5: 04/02/ 2011	Pupils visit library for individual reading. Teacher picks some pupils randomly to tell their friends about the text being read by them. Homework is to draw freely about the books being read	Review session: writing sentences, pupils select their favourite book to read and record the reading

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As seen in Table 5.1, describing all ten lessons delivered during one week by two teachers, the lessons had an obviously displayed and explicit focus on reading, grammar points and vocabulary. Only one of Tipa's five lessons (class 1) employed communicative activities (e.g. songs) for pupils to engage in the lesson. Meanwhile, Pan's class 5 lesson was the only one of her lessons that provided an opportunity for pupils to develop their speaking and listening. Additionally, a low level of pupil engagement in class activities and a high emphasis on the drill and practice model of instruction were obviously displayed. Pupils seemed to study independently, with teachers acting as a resources provider, helping pupils on an individual basis but not teaching as a group.

These data suggest that the teachers seemed to maintain their preferred teaching strategies or their teaching habitus. The focus on linguistic form may be both the collective habitus and individual habitus of these six teachers. The preferred focus of these teachers on the aspects of form of language as discussed in this section and in section 5.1 indicates that the teachers in this

study were experiencing conflict and struggle about pedagogical principles (e.g. phonics and whole language instruction), rather than pedagogical techniques in their pedagogical decision making. The participant teachers' infrequent use of lesson plans is now discussed.

#### **5.4 Mental plans**

This section investigates the six teachers' infrequent use of lesson plans in teaching Thai. All participants relied more on mental planning. Tipa and Rai-ra had a Thai semester plan for the previous semester, while Ya used weekly lesson plans for teaching Thai which were produced by her colleague. Nom and Ya reported that they wrote detailed plans just for one subject that they favoured. For example, Nom chose to write detailed plans for mathematics and Ya produced lesson plans for health education.

The teachers explained their delivery of lesson without detailed plans and how they retained the detail of lesson plans in their head in the following ways:

"I use my teaching experience to plan in my head" (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 14/02/2011)

"Teaching is in my blood" (Ya, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 24/06/2011)

"I sometimes plan in my head the content that I will teach and how to explain content when I am in bed. I use the ways of explaining grammar rules that I'm used to, that work for me .... But if they don't work, I modify my ways of explaining or change materials" (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 24/07/2011)

From the comments, three important points emerge. Firstly, the teachers reported that they preferred the use of mental plans rather than written plans. Secondly, Nom's and Ya's comments suggest that they drew on their accumulated teaching experience to guide planning of their teaching. Thirdly, Rai-ra's comments indicate her mental plans contained a general idea about what she intended to teach and how best to explain language knowledge. Rai-ra expressed that what she should teach stemmed from her concentration on pupils' understanding of content, rather than the activities that she would do. Her comments also suggest that she might have addressed covering content, instead of the ideas about how to organise sequences of activities to support pupils' understanding. Moreover, Rai-ra's comments show that she developed her preferred way of explaining language content and materials through the

daily experience of teaching.

The reason explained for using mental plans was the requirement of adjustment of daily teaching in line with ongoing development of pupils' interest, teachers' preferences and immediate teaching needs. The following are typical comments:

"I want my pupils to choose by themselves what they want to study rather than writing pre-designed lessons." (Tipa, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation in her classroom, 08/02/2011)

"I observe my pupils' responses (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted in a staff room after the teaching observation, 09/08/2011)

The following lesson observation revealed that teachers deviated from using written lesson plans in response to their interests (e.g. materials and techniques that they knew worked for them), and immediate teaching needs.

Nom assigns her pupils to make a fan from an ice-cream stick to study final consonant sounds according to Thai grammar rules. This lesson is conducted due to a request from pupils because they saw ice-cream sticks created last year by the previous first graders while Nom was cleaning a classroom (Fieldnote on 09/03/2011).

Tipa adjusts the length and focus of activities as she thinks fit by assigning activities (finding words from books in classroom) for pupils to continuously practise the new aspects of language introduced to them in the previous hour (Fieldnote on 25/02/2011).

Ra-tee changes the topic of the lesson that she plans to teach tomorrow because she finds from the remedial hour (after-school hour) that three poor readers cannot read some words. She modifies tomorrow's lesson to teach vowel sounds (Fieldnote on 20/07/2011).

Ra-tee changes the topic of the lesson immediately after she is told to send samples of pupils' handwriting for a competition organised by the ESA (Fieldnote on 09/08/2011).

Based on the discussion of the data in this section, the instructional decisions made by these teachers were likely to be partially retrieved from their accumulated experience and were partly made in the moment for ongoing stimulation (i.e. pupils' and teachers' interest and particular situations). These teachers exercised subtle agency in relation to two aforementioned determinants. The decisions made in the moment for the presentation of the lessons might involve 'la perruque' (Certeau, 1984), which is more concerned with subtle moments of creativity to cope with the complex, changing and uncertain environment in the classroom. de Certeau asserts that *actors' practice relies on their wit and cleverness, which he refers to as "metis – a form of intelligence that is always immersed in practice and which combines flair, sagacity, foresight, intellectual flexibility, deception, resourcefulness, vigilant*

*watchfulness, a sense for opportunities, diverse sorts of cleverness, and a great deal of acquired experience” (Certeau 1984, p. 88).*

Meanwhile, the teachers' decisions were also shaped by their prior experiences. Data showed that these teachers preferred to retrieve and reuse teaching strategies or activities that had worked successfully for them in the past, or their teaching habitus. Utilising Bourdieu's theory (Bourdieu, 1984), there could be several possible explanations, as teaching habitus appeared to make these teachers recognise teachable moments without having to concentrate on them in a conscious manner. Referring to the above fieldnotes and extracts from the teaching practices, it seems that the prevalent class organisation involved whole class teaching and individual pupil practice with teacher-centred instruction. Therefore, the instructional decisions of these teachers may decidedly rely on teacher-centred instruction, while they favour teaching with mental plans. It becomes obvious that an effort to change teachers' discursive practice was much harder to reconcile with a clearly-defined programme of content and procedures (Barr, 2001). In part these difficulties may have a lot to do with the resistance built into the nature of habitus (Roth, 2002). Following Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus, habitus tends to produce actions consistent with prior experience. Having discussed how participant teachers adopted particular teaching strategies for teaching language according to the recommended practices, I now turn to investigate how the participants used other classroom strategies of the recommended practices that claimed to be brain-based.

### **5.5 Differing degrees of use of other classroom strategies of the recommended practices**

This section examines how the six teachers employed other teaching strategies of the recommended practices. Specifically, the six teachers were encouraged to adopt teaching strategies from the instructional innovations that were claimed to be brain-based. The six teachers all confirmed that they incorporated other such recommended practices classroom strategies into their classrooms. The specific strategies they had integrated into their practices had been introduced in the training and included:

- Preparing pupils' brain readiness before lessons begin
- Incorporating music and art into classroom settings
- Creating a happy classroom
- Modifying the physical environment
- Nutrition: drinking water and eating breakfast

Observation data showed that the ways in which the six teachers put the above list of strategies into practice varied from class to class. The use of these strategies in the six classrooms is explored in more detail below.

### **5.5.1 Preparing pupils' brain readiness before lessons begin**

The participants all claimed that they were advised to prepare their pupils' brains before lessons begin. They stated that they were recommended to begin every lesson with activities that would energetically stimulate the brain's readiness to learn. Observations showed continuity in the way this focus was put into practice.

The practices most commonly observed in these teachers' translation of this strategy were short exercises, (e.g. singing, dancing and clapping hands) and meditation activity. Short practices were used more frequently in Rai-ra and Nom's classroom compared with those of the other participants. Rai-ra assigned a head pupil and pupil volunteer to lead class exercises before the start of morning and afternoon sessions. Classroom observation of Nom also showed that she usually carried out a short movement exercise before classes started.

This is exemplified by following Nom's teaching for a week (Table 5.2: Nom's teaching practices). As is shown in the table, during the five class hours in the week, clapping hands, singing, dancing and short exercises were usually used for energising pupils' readiness and attention before lessons started.

**Table 5.2 Nom's teaching practices**

Class hour	Date	Stimulating activities used
Class 1	21/02/2011	At the end of the Thai lesson, pupils clap hands while singing and sit quietly and close their eyes
Class 2	22/02/2011	Before studying mathematics, pupils sing and dance together
Class 3	23/02/2011	Before the Thai lesson in the afternoon, pupils stand up in a line to clap their hands and dance together  Pupils recite Thai poems and clap their hands before completing their individual science assignments
Class 4	24/02/2011	After finishing studying Thai, pupils are told to sit in a circle. They are asked to sing and clap their hands and sit quietly and close their eyes before studying mathematics.
Class 5	25/02/2011	Pupils clap their hands and exercise before studying mathematics.

Meanwhile, Ya and Ra-tee claimed that brain gym exercises were suggested in the training for stimulating pupils' brains. However, neither of them employed brain gym in their classrooms due to their limited knowledge about this approach.

However, Tipa's school interpreted and put this strategy into practice differently. Pupils in Tipa's school were encouraged to engage in a meditation activity before the afternoon session began.

This strategy, nevertheless, was commented on by Ya and Pan. Pan thought that it was a common practice for most teachers to prepare pupils before lessons. She believed that neuroscience research might have been used as a means to increase justification of this strategy, helping it to be perceived as high profile, as she expressed:

"It is just that knowledge about the brain is burgeoning at the moment. Teachers normally use many techniques to motivate pupils to learn" (conversation with her in her classroom before the teaching observation, 26/01/2011)

Ya also questioned the greater focus on movement activities of this strategy, rather than using a variety of techniques and activities. She stated:

“This suggestion seems to focus more on using movement activities, rather than using a variety of techniques to prepare pupils for the content” (conversation with her in her classroom before the teaching observation, 07/07/2011)

The suspicion of this strategy on the part of both teachers appeared to lead them not to make an effort to include the strategy in their teaching. Ya said “*I sometimes use movement exercises to make them relax when I see they are exhausted*” (conversation with her in her classroom, 07/07/2011).

### **5.5.2 Incorporating music and art into classroom settings**

The suggestion to introduce music and art into lessons was reported and acted upon variously. This strategy was differently translated into practice at two levels. At school level, extra time was allocated for studying these subjects (two separate learning hours per week) in the schools of Tipa and Rai-ra. In contrast, the other schools in this study spent an hour studying each subject.

Five of the teachers (excluding Ra-tee), attempted to integrate songs and art into their lessons. Observation data revealed that Nom used singing, dancing and short movement activities in her classroom to a greater extent than the other participants. All of them, however, often incorporated art into their teaching by asking pupils to illustrate stories they had written after reading texts in children’s book or textbooks. Conversely, Ra-tee explained that her reasons for not including singing and dancing in her teaching practice were her difficulty in performing these activities due to her personality and her concern with content coverage. She also reported that she did not play music in class, although it was suggested that she do so. She thought that it was unusual to do it this way (interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 21/01/2011).

### **5.5.3 Creating a happy classroom**

Avoiding punishment or making threats towards pupils were regarded as strategies to apply in classrooms in order to create a happy atmosphere. Efforts to include positive suggestions and neglect criticism, or provide more non-judgemental feedback were overtly reported by the six teachers. Contrastingly,

Ya stated that she thought that this strategy did not differ from the vision of pupil outcomes promoted in the era of learning reform in 1999. She explained that pupils' happiness was one of the most desirable outcomes of a Thai education. She thus believed that this strategy was not new practice and that her suspicion tended to deter her from putting it into practice. She overtly stated "*I do the same as I always did. I have not changed*" (conversation with her in her classroom after the teaching observation, 08/08/2011).

Interestingly, Rai-ra's school put this strategy into practice differently. New play equipment was installed for pupils to play and exercise with during their recess periods in order to promote a happy feeling among pupils.

#### **5.5.4 Modifying the physical environment**

Three of the teachers reported they were advised to modify the physical environment, while the other three did not talk about this strategy. Keeping their classrooms clean, tidy, and well-ordered and adding colourful decorative elements (e.g. posters, bulletin board, and furniture) were practices adopted by Tipa and Rai-ra. Rai-ra's school had also improved the school area with bright decoration and by installing coloured play equipment constructed from recycled and natural materials.

The other three teachers differently commented that teachers should provide a stimulating environment. However, they talked about the insufficiency of resources in schools as a reason for their rejection of attempts to enrich the classroom environment. Further, Nom talked about this strategy differently from the other participants. She understood that she should change the structure of lessons to engage multiple senses experiences, beginning with concrete visuals, followed by pictures, and then moving on to symbols (interview, 14/02/2011, conducted in school canteen after observation).

In addition, relating to this strategy, interesting opinions were expressed by two teachers about the education environment and education outcomes. Tipa stated her belief that the formal education environment was a significant factor influencing her pupils' development, as exemplified by this statement:

"One reason leading me to participate in this implementation is that I want to get the support of a lot of learning resources, such as storybooks... My pupils are from poor families or farms. These resources can enhance my pupils' learning" (Tipa, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 08/02/2011)

Ya also thought that teachers' knowledge and skills were essential elements of the education environment in improving pupils' achievement, as illustrated by her statement "*I do not expect too much from this approach*" (interview which was conducted in the teachers' room after the teaching observation, 22/07/2011).

The above statements of those two teachers suggest that provision of an enriched education environment in schools as well as the knowledge and skills of teachers are significant factors in influencing pupils' learning. In particular, Tipa possibly believed that there is no genetic difference between children from wealthier families and those from poor families. Instead, poor families would lack the necessary resources to help their children.

### **5.5.5 Nutrition: drinking water and eating breakfast**

Pupils in the six teachers in this study were encouraged to drink plenty of water and were allowed to keep their water bottles on their desks. Additionally, three teachers put portable water tanks in the corridor for pupils to easily access the water during lessons. Ra-tee also mentioned that a healthy breakfast can enhance learning. She thus always asked her pupils whether they had had breakfast (conversation in her classroom after conducting the first interview, with the presence of her colleague, 05/04/2011).

The five aforementioned strategies, claimed to be brain-based, were incorporated into the participants' classrooms differently. The data suggest that these participants possibly believed that these strategies were appropriate practices. Additionally, these data suggest that policy statements are subject to multiple interpretations depending upon teachers' beliefs, values and experience. Teachers shape and are shaped by the policy discourse (Ball 1994).

## Summary

This chapter demonstrated how the participant teachers responded in different ways to the invitation to change, varying widely in the frequency and eagerness with which they implemented the recommended practices. The participants fell into two different groups in terms of their responses. The first group included teachers who had strong enthusiasm for the recommended practices, so that they had adapted their approaches to the new practices by selectively incorporating the new ideas into their existing practices. The second group consisted of teachers who were sceptical about the recommended practices. They consequently tended to decline to teach the new ideas. The data suggest that teachers' beliefs, habitus and their prior practices influenced their interpretation and willingness to change their practices in response to the new ideas and their ability to practise in ways suggested by the recommended practices. They seemed to preserve their pedagogical preferences or the teaching habitus, which they had seen work. For example, they favoured the direct teaching of phonics and grammar and drill-practice approaches. They attempted to put teaching strategies of the recommended policy into practice differently in the classrooms. The data suggest that the teachers tended to perceive those strategies as useful practice.

The following chapter will examine the participants' views on their typical responses and the reasons underpinning those responses.

## CHAPTER 6

### TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

This chapter explores the reasons underpinning the participants' responses in terms of the different ways they enacted the recommended policy and the viewpoints that emerged concerning how the recommended practices impacted on them. This chapter falls into three parts. The first part considers the participants' opinions of the recommended practices. The second part explores the factors that contributed to and constrained their implementation of the recommended practices. The final part deals with teacher development and the recommended practices and examines the effect of the recommended policy on the professional lives of the teachers in this study. Firstly, the teachers' views on the recommended practices are examined.

#### **6.1 Opinions of the recommended practices**

This section reflects teachers' comments on the recommended practices. All participants reported that training for this approach was based on providing two main kinds of information: brain development and its relevance to classroom practice, typically through strategies for classroom practices and strategies for teaching Thai. The six following themes emerged from the data, and are discussed below:

- Useful ideas, but they lacked understanding
- Familiar ideas
- Vague teaching strategies
- Not applicable to some grade levels
- Create conflicting demands
- Doubt about the brain and its relevance to classroom

### 6.1.1 Useful ideas, but they lacked understanding

Most participants shared the view that the recommended practices were valuable ideas. Nevertheless, they reported that they had insufficient understanding about the ideas. Four of the six participants expressed that they thought that the recommended practices were, in general, useful, particularly as there were more trained teachers in the NBL's pilot schools than in the OBEC's pilot schools. Nom firmly believed that this approach was beneficial for pupils. Nom stated, "*this approach is very good practice*" (interview, 07/04/2011). Ra-tee and Tipa also thought this approach was particularly beneficial in supporting pupils in learning to read and love reading. The following extracts reflect their responses:

"It is a worthwhile approach" (Ra-tee, the first interview, which was conducted in her classroom before the teaching observations, 05/04/2011)

"It helps my pupils love to read" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 22/06/2011)

"This approach is working well in helping children learn to read" (Tipa, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observations, 08/02/2011)

Meanwhile, Pan and Ya generally accepted the recommended practices. They simply believed that the recommended practices may be a better approach. However, they complained about it several times, with such complaints relating to pedagogical practices and materials. The following are their comments:

"It is a new approach... It seems too similar to common practices that we have known... The format for teaching language is very rigid" (Pan, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 21/01/2011)

"It is a good programme.....But the new textbooks promoted by them are more expensive." (Ya, interview which was conducted in her classroom before the teaching observation, 07/07/2011)

The teachers' voices about the recommended practices suggest that the recommended practices tended to be generally accepted as good practices. Their acceptance was possibly due to the power of the recommended practices as an official discourse (Ball 1994). For Ball (1994), teachers' thinking and actions regarding education policies exist within regimes of truth produced through discourse. The teachers' agency was partly constrained within the regime of what it was possible to say, think, know and do.

Although all participants thought that the recommended practices were a worthwhile approach, they explained that their understandings of the approach were limited, especially their understanding of brain development and its relevance to classroom practices. The teachers' assessment of their understandings is reflected in the following quotes:

"I can't remember the names of its structure and the explanations of how it works" (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation when school ended, 14/02/2011)

"I only remember that the structures of the brain have a front part, back part, the left and right brain..." (Ya, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 26/06/2011)

"I do not understand how the brain learns and how to design learning activities that match to how the brain works..." (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted before the teaching observation, 05/04/2011)

"I can remember the brain comprises the left brain and the right brain" (Pan, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 28/01/2011)

The above statements show that these four teachers might lack understanding of the knowledge about the brain's functioning and its relevance and application to pupils' learning. In general, there is a consensus that teachers' understanding of the principles of an innovation is an essential part of the successful implementation of any innovational policies (Careless 2013). The second viewpoint of the participants on the recommended practices discourses is now discussed.

### **6.1.2 Familiar ideas**

Data showed that all participants reported that they were familiar with the teaching strategies of the recommended practices. The six teachers clearly stated that the recommended practices' teaching strategies closely aligned with teaching and learning promoted within the reform document in 1990 and the present national curriculum, as the comments below illustrate:

"This approach is the same as the focus on learning reform in 1999. Pupils should construct their own understanding and knowledge" (Ya, the first interview, which was conducted before the teaching observation, with the presence of her colleague, 22/06/2011)

"It recommends using drill and repetition which are familiar teaching strategies to us" (Pan, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 07/01/2011)

“Many strategies of this programme had been introduced during the reform, such as hands-on activities and parents’ involvement in pupils’ assessment....It suggests using teaching aids. Generally, whichever teaching methods they use, teachers should supplement their teaching with learning materials” (Nom, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 21/02/2011)

“Reading aloud, peer and group reading are commonly known by teachers” (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011)

The data suggest that the participants interpreted the recommended practices through the lens of their existing experience and habitus. This finding is in line with Coburn’s 2001 and Blignaut’s 2008 research, namely that teachers’ beliefs, as well as their prior experience, influence their interpretations of new practices. In all six teachers’ views, their experience played a significant role in their construction of meaning from the recommended practices policy. On this basis, the successful translation of policy into practice or any changes these teachers make often challenge their existing knowledge and habitus (or dispositions) of teaching practice. Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) indicate that learning new ideas such as instructional approaches requires changing the way teachers think about certain issues, which is a deeper and more complex change.

Nevertheless, the participants also indicated a few differences between the recommended practices and teaching strategies as identified in the reform and the national curriculum document.

“Colourful instructional materials are highly recommended because they enhance pupils’ memory. Other teacher trainings do not suggest this” (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011))

“Teachers should make classrooms threat or stress free” (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 22/03/2011)

“It is suggested that pupils should include exercise before daily teaching begins” (Ya, interview which was conducted before the teaching observation, 22/06/2011)

All these differences (e.g. having an enriched sensory environment with colourful materials) identified by the participants are significantly related to over-interpretation in moving from neuroscientific research into education practice (Goswami 2008). Next, the ambiguity of strategies for teaching the recommended practices is discussed.

### 6.1.3 Vague teaching strategies

As discussed in 5.1, Pan and Ya thought that the recommended practices were re-branding a familiar approach. Due to this suspicion, Ya obviously considered that the recommended practices' teaching strategies tended to be ambiguous, as she stated:

"The name of the approach may differ from other approaches, but the teaching strategies are the same as others. The descriptions of teaching strategies proposed are blurred. There is no major difference between them and what we have known, such as using real objects or concrete materials to supplement teaching and multi-sensory contributions to learning" (conversation in her classroom before the teaching observation, 07/07/2011)

Her statements indicate that Ya thought that the recommended practices as a teaching approach differed in name only from other approaches (e.g. "*The name of the approach may differ from..., but the teaching strategies are the same...*"). She seemed to believe that the teaching strategies of the recommended practices were ambiguous because they were too similar to the teaching strategies offered by other approaches that she had known and commonly used in schools. She may have considered that the new approach should offer new or different teaching strategies from the conventional approaches known by most educators. Ya's doubt about the initiatives that she was teaching suggests that her previous experience may have led to frustration on her part. Based on this data presented thus far, it seems that Ya's existing beliefs and experiences interfered with her ability to make sense of the new practices.

The fact that some participants considered the four themes that emerged regarding the teaching strategies of the recommended practices were not appropriate for their grade level is explored in the following sub-section.

### 6.1.4 Not applicable to their grade level

Two participants expressed what they considered appropriate for their pupils when they made sense of the recommended practices. They used the notion of grade-level appropriateness as criteria for deciding to what extent to employ the new practice. Two third grade teachers stated that some strategies of the recommended practices seemed inappropriate for their grade level and thus declined to embrace such teaching strategies, as the following quotations illustrate:

“Trainers often introduce the same content in training every time I attend, such as using consonant sounds or words to teach language and stories reading. This content is more appropriate for teaching the first or second grade pupils than third grade pupils... Reading aloud is not appropriate for third graders” (Ya, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 24/06/2011)

“The suggestion of using the reading aloud technique in class is likely to be suggested without concern for the teachers’ health. It might be possible for reading aloud to be carried out. But group reading activities are not appropriate practice for me” (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 22/06/2011)

From the above comments, both third grade teachers based their rejection of some of the teaching strategies of the recommended practices on their consideration that such strategies were inappropriate to their particular grade level. Ya felt that using consonant sounds or words and reading aloud were not appropriate approaches for third graders. Rai-ra also stated that reading aloud might not be proper practice because it may cause health problems. However, she did not absolutely reject the practice of reading aloud (e.g. “*it might be all right..*”). Rai-ra’s statements also indicate that she believed that reading in groups was likely to be inappropriate for the poorer readers. This belief may have discouraged her from using this activity in her classroom (see 5.1.6). These two teachers had vague understanding of the recommended practices they were implementing. This experience led to frustration on their parts.

The data demonstrate that the recommended practices’ messages were often interpreted in light of the knowledge base these teachers already had. As they had their own perspectives about what constituted good teaching and learning, these perspectives influenced them and were obviously observable in their classrooms (see 5.1). Two of these teachers’ views on reading stories aloud and pair and group work reading contradicted the intent of the recommended practices. Clearly, the recommended practices strategies were in conflict with these teachers’ existing knowledge and guided their interpretation of new understandings. The next sub-section discusses how the teachers perceived the recommended practices as creating competing pedagogies.

### 6.1.5 Create conflicting demands

This section investigates how the six participants found themselves negotiating with perceived conflicts of demands that arose when they were confronted with state-sanctioned methods of instruction in their particular context. They reported that the introduction of the recommended practices consistently created a certain amount of tension for them. The following comment is typical:

"I accept the trainers' ideas. However, I want to use my theoretical rationales to make changes to the recommended practices in order to appropriately respond to my immediate teaching needs...I mean, I can use this approach in some situations. Meanwhile, I can use my preferred teaching that can help my pupils to achieve the objectives of each lesson. For example, I want to teach pupils to be able to write sentences. I adopt only the step of teaching grammar of the initiatives to my classroom without reading storybooks aloud to pupils" (Pan, the third Interview, which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 21/01/2011).

Pan's comments illustrate her frustration and contradictions in her thinking. She expressed conflicting views as to what constituted appropriate practice in response to the conflicts imposed by the official instruction. On one hand, she wanted to use her preferred pedagogies (e.g. *"Meanwhile, I can use my preferred teaching"*). On the other hand, she did not completely reject the new practices (e.g. *"I can use this approach..."*). She artfully described her compromise on conflicting pedagogies by making adjustments to the official practices to respond to the need that arose from the assessment of her current situation (e.g. her interests and pupils' needs). Her claim of compromise showed her attempting to respond best to the pressure imposed by the official discourses rather than her own appreciation of the new pedagogical values. She chose to use her preferred teaching, which in her view constituted good teaching. Viewing her decision in accordance with her preferences in terms of de Certeau's perspective (Certeau, 1984), her choice illustrates that she engaged in tactically resisting the officially recommended practices. Alternatively, viewing through Bourdieu's (1984) notion of habitus, she may not have wanted to deviate from the comfort zone of teaching practices with which she was familiar.

In another case, Ra-tee also talked about the tension that arose through managing conflicting priorities in the context of her teaching while she engaged with the recommended practices.

"I do not do all the things mentioned in the recommended practices...I combine teaching methods....I have to consider the national curriculum and ESA guidelines.... I am concerned about exposing all pupils to content that is identified in the curriculum....I consider this approach as an extra activity.....I sometimes want to organise more activities than I am doing right now. But I have a lot of extra assignments; time is too short for any extra work or duties for me.... I do not have enough time to develop materials. I often use materials provided by the ESA.... It is not right to neglect extra duties to focus on creating materials, is it?" (Interview which was conducted in the teachers' room after the teaching observation, 08/08/2011)

In Ra-tee's comments, it can be seen that she was faced with multiple conceptions of good pedagogies. She was not only negotiating with the recommended practices but also a variety of official discourses in the field (e.g. mandated national curriculum and other guidelines). Her comments showed that she experienced frustration concerning the conflicting concepts conveyed through different discourses and other pressures in the context of her school.

Her comments posed three interesting points. Firstly, she appeared to view the national curriculum as the source that had had the greatest influence on her instructional decisions. Nevertheless, she tended to describe this discourse simply as a list of topics that she needed to cover. This discourse seemed to influence her thinking about content rather than teaching methods (e.g. "*I'm concerned about exposing..*"). Her comments also suggested that she placed a high priority on the covering of content over the actual learning of content.

Secondly, she expressed a desire for pupils to engage in classroom activities as suggested by the recommended practices (e.g. "*I sometimes want to...*"). Nevertheless, her desire then became filtered through the constraints of time and her overload of extra work. Similarly to Pan, she claimed a number of contextual factors were constraints on her employing the recommended practices in her actual teaching. Her disquiet on this point showed the contradiction in her thinking. Her comments do not suggest that she utterly rejected the practices suggested by the recommended practices. Instead, she believed that her application was constrained due to the time constraints and her additional responsibilities (see 4.4).

Finally, her statements indicate her pedagogic choices were very pragmatic (e.g. "*I do not do all things..*" and "*I combine teaching methods*"). She seemed to use her discretion to make choices on assessing what was appropriate or possible within her particular contextual conditions and her interests. Her choice

of practice did not fully follow or discard the recommended practices mandate. Rather, she decided to engage in pragmatic ways that were consistent with her interests (e.g. "*I am concerned.*") and that took account of her constraints (e.g. "But I have a lot extra assignments..") as well as the opportunities of her situation (e.g. "*I often use materials...*"). Statements like, "*It is not right to neglect extra duties to focus on creating materials, is it?*" illustrate that her discretion in engaging with the official discourse resulted partly from mismatches between her interests and demands imposed by the requirement of extra work which Thai primary teachers had to do to achieve the criteria for salary increments and promotion.

She compromised on these multiple pressures by modifying her pre-existing teaching by selecting some techniques from the new practices and inserting them into her pre-existing belief system (e.g. "*I consider this approach as an extra activity*") (also see 5.1.3). Her teaching habitus may explain her conservative practice (Bourdieu, 1984). Additionally, her selection and combination of competing pedagogical demands in her teaching practices might be her tactic for coping with the opposing forces in de Certeau's (Certeau, 1984) framework.

Such tensions of balancing competing demands of the recommended practices were also noticed in all the other participants' comments.

"I am not sure about the effectiveness of the suggested teaching strategies such as role play and group discussions in developing reading comprehension....I mix things...The way I choose teaching materials or what content to be taught, depending on ongoing situations" (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011))

"The description of the teaching strategies proposed is blurred....I only employ some things, such as materials suggested in the training" (Ya, the second interview, which was conducted in her classroom, 24/06/2011)

"This approach seems not to give more details on how to teach grammar of language....I teach grammar after reading aloud activities" (Nom, conversation in her classroom while she was decorating a bulletin board, 25/02/2011)

"They suggested using activity based learning....But if pupils are having an enjoyable time and interacting with other pupils in the classroom, are they really engaged in meaningful learning?..... I implement various techniques and strategies from many teacher trainings that I used to attend" (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted in her classroom, 21/06/2011)

These participants expressed frustration over the new practices. Their statements reveal they selectively adopted some elements of the recommended practices and incorporated them into their existing teaching in order to modify their previous practices, to bring them in line with demands of the new practices. The practice of selection and combination of different teaching approaches to balance different conflicts may have led them to find themselves (e.g. their identity – who I am (Weick, 1995) and situationally frame answers to the question of what was going on here (Goffman, 1974), such as protecting their comfort and their interests (e.g. preferred teaching methods and maintaining their capital) as well as benefiting their pupils through their use of the recommended practices. Next, the participants' experience of doubt about the knowledge of the brain and its relevance to classroom is addressed.

### **6.1.6 Doubt about the brain and its relevance to classroom**

This section explores the participants' suspicion about the recommended practices claimed to be based on neuroscience. The following quotes from the teachers' comments about the classroom strategies of the recommended practices:

"I do not understand how the brain works. It is said that if pupils do not use the brain or they do not think, their brain cells will die. But I do not think the cells will be dead" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted in a staff room after the teaching observation, 09/08/2011)

"I can remember that this approach focuses more on the development of the child's brain. The brain comprises the left brain and the right brain, so teachers should design learning activities in order to enhance the ability of the two hemispheres of children's brains to work collaboratively, so that children can achieve both cognitive skills and creativity"(Pan, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 21/01/2011)

The above comments show how these two teachers understood the working of the brain and "brain based" pedagogical strategies. Ra-tee's comments reveal she felt dubious involving synaptogenesis and pruning, critical periods and plasticity. Pan's statements demonstrate she has engaged with the idea about left and right brain that claims some hemispheric specialisation in terms of the localisation of different skills.

In addition, other participant teachers expressed their understandings of the linkage between knowledge of neuroscience and its educational relevance as introduced in the recommended practices training. The following extracts are typical responses:

“They say that if teachers threaten pupils, their brains will be affected. But I cannot tell you what part of the brain is affected. What the effects of the threats on the brain are. I know that I should try to not threaten them” (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation when school ended, 14/02/2011)

“I teach spelling patterns rather than teaching memorisation of unconnected rules of spelling. This practice is based on the principle of the recommended practices that explains that the brain's search for meaning occurs through patterning” (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 26/06/2011)

The above comments illustrate their understandings of the connection between the relevance of neuroscience to classroom practice and knowledge about the brain. Consequently, there is a possibility that these teachers would believe these assertions. Subsequently, these statements about the brain and its relevance to classroom may support the teachers in this study in developing their general awareness of the brain.

Recently, many studies have shown that teachers often believe in common misconceptions about how the brain works (Howard- Jones 2014; Dekker et al. 2012; Tardif; Doudin and Meylan 2015 and Pie et al. 2015). These studies found that samples believed incorrect statements about how the brain works, defined as “neuromyths”. The study showed that both teachers and prospective teachers believed in the reality of hemispheric and modality dominance but only a few were aware of the Brain Gym<sup>®</sup> method. In Tardif, Doudin and Meylan's (2015) study, the misconceptions mentioned and displayed by the teachers appear to be similar to those in previous studies, concerning brain exercises/brain gym, the connection of high consumption of water with enhanced learning, the capacity of breakfast to stimulate the brain, and that enriching the environment can improve the brain.

Apparently, it is difficult for teachers to make a distinction between accuracy and inaccuracy of information about the brain and its influence on learning. As Weisberg et al. (2008) have pointed out, those experimental reports which offer explanations involving brain information or the use of neuroscience terms seem to make people more likely to believe the ideas. McCabe and Castel's study (2008) has also shown that participants are more likely to believe research findings when they are accompanied by brain images, even when there are errors. Similarly, Thai teachers in this study may correspond to the non-expert group and the neuroscience students in the studies by Weisberg and colleagues and McCabe and Castel, who favoured the information in explanations

containing neuroscience terms and brain images. The neuroscience information made the explanations look more satisfying than they actually were, or at least, the teachers did not have an adequate level of knowledge to protect themselves against the general credibility of neuroscience findings.

Overall, section 6.1 describes that teachers expressed a positive view about the recommended practices, thinking that it was a worthwhile approach. The teachers' descriptions about the recommended practices showed that their prior knowledge, experience and beliefs had profoundly affected the ways they made sense of the recommended practices. They felt familiar with the recommended practices and some of them had become dubious about the teaching principles behind the recommended practices. This finding suggests that the six teachers still held and valued their preferred practices or professional discretion about what was best for their pupils. Their positive view about the recommended practices did not necessarily lead them to modify their prior beliefs and practices about teaching and learning. The requirement of the recommended practices that they fundamentally change their repertoire of existing beliefs, knowledge and practices tended to pose a serious intellectual challenge for the participant teachers. They appeared to adhere faithfully to their existing ideas. The discussion clearly revealed the teachers' preferences to combine their existing approach and the new practices or to embrace both the new ideas and preferred ideas about teaching and learning. It also appeared that the teachers tended to provide different reasons for merging or embracing the two approaches.

The following section offers a discussion on the emergent themes about constraining and contributing factors that influenced the teachers' responses to the recommended practices, especially their pedagogical decisions.

## 6.2 Factors that influenced teachers' responses

### 6.2.1 Motivators to teach the recommended practices

This section discusses motivating factors cited by the teachers that had led them to embrace the recommended practices.

#### *Prestige, praise and faith*

As has been illustrated earlier in section 5.1, prestige seemed to have a great influence on the way teachers' engaged with the recommended practices. Some participants (e.g. Nom and Tipa) who held authoritative positions such as trainer, grade coordinator or school coordinator seemed to confirm their active participation in the implementation. This was because having a high-profile professional identity and status brought pressure on the individual concerned to maintain and increase their self-image as well as that of their organisation. In addition, having such an identity brought more "face" (see 4.5) to these participants and they needed to save face or protect themselves from losing face through passive orientations and engagement or through not teaching the recommended practices. For Bourdieu, social actors are aware of forms of capital and value which characterise the field of activity when they are moving in the game (Bourdieu, 1990).

Praise provided another motivation for Nom and Tipa to attempt to adopt the recommended practices. These two teachers stated that they felt proud when pupils' parents and colleagues gave them positive feedback about their pupils' work or achievement. The following statements are typical reflections of these feelings:

"The third grade teacher always tells me that my pupils' writing is of better quality than the other grades' pupils" (Tipa, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 08/02/2011)

"My colleagues always say they like the pupils' work hung on the wall or bulletin boards when they walk past my classroom" (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 17/03/2011)

"I feel pleasure when I see parents satisfied with their children's work. I always get positive feedback from pupils' parents" (Nom, conversation before the teaching observation, 25/02/2011)

Nom's and Tipa's comments suggest that the pride and encouragement received from colleagues and pupils' parents became a source of energy to sustain them during the difficult attempt to orient to the proposed change.

In addition, personal faith was expressed by six participants as an influence on teaching the recommended practices. The following are typical statements:

"I try to do as suggested. I feel sympathy for them. Most of them are from poor families. I will continue teaching as recommended. I pay for materials myself for use in the classroom. When I see them learn better, I want to do more. I '*tum bun*'" (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 14/02/2011)

"A retired teacher tells me that '*tum bun*' by teaching children is the greatest thing. I will continue do this" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted in the teachers' room with five teachers attending the interview, 25/03/2011)

"I try to use it, although there is an absence of supervision or consultation by superiors or officials because I am old and I '*tum bun*' (Ya, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 24/06/2011)

"I sometimes feel frustrated but I try to '*tum bun*' because my son is studying. I am trying to teach as suggested. Such efforts would help my son to succeed in learning" (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 24/07/2011)

"*Tum bun*" is a belief relating to Buddhism. Most Thai expect to "*tum bun*" or "do good deeds", or earn merit in one way or another. Thais believe in "do good, receive good; do evil receive evil". If they do good deeds, they will receive good things in the future. In the above statements, Nom, Rat and Ya claimed that their efforts to include the recommended practices in their teaching were driven by their personal faith in "*tum bun*". They believed that teaching pupils was a good deed which might contribute to their receiving further good things. This faith led them to use strategies for teaching the recommended practices in their classrooms. Rai-ra's comments suggest her faith in "*tum bun*" gave her energy and induced an uplifting, better feeling about her work.

Possibly, an explanation is that these teachers utilised "faith" to assist them in maintaining impression management. The recommended practices were state-sanctioned instructional practice. This mandate raises the possibility that the teachers were subject to institutional pressure, resulting in their acceptance that the recommended practices were appropriate pedagogy or good pedagogy. Therefore, the participant teachers might have felt the need to defend their practices by asserting such faith to create a certain impression to management and to show that their actions were consistently congruent with the expectations of institutional pressures.

### ***Enthusiasm for incorporating the recommended activities***

The second factor motivating teachers to attempt to teach the recommended practices is the personal enthusiasm for incorporating the activities. Nom's interest in incorporating the recommended activities into her teaching is illustrated by the following comments:

"I had always used them before I had taken part in the implementation.... After attending the training, I have realised that I have to organise activities more than before"  
(Interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 07/03/2011)

Nom's enthusiasm for incorporating the recommended activities into her teaching was obvious in her comments. In classroom observations her greater incorporation of activities and materials as suggested by the recommended practices into her teaching, compared with the other participants, was also very obvious. For example, she frequently took her pupils to take care of and observe young plants, or to collect litter or clean areas in the school. After finishing these activities, pupils were asked to write freely about their experiences (fieldnote 07/02/2011). Viewing through Bourdieu (1990), her enthusiasm may have been driven by her need to show her support for the implementation of the recommended practices. She might have wanted to maintain her capital (e.g. her reputation as a trainer). Moreover, the recommended practices were regarded as institutionally-appropriate pedagogy. In this vein, the recommended practices became an official choice for Nom's decision-making about pedagogy.

Furthermore, activity based learning was a practice not only promoted by the recommended practices discourse, but it was also suggested and required by other discourses in the field of Thai primary education (e.g. the national curriculum). These demands might have pushed Nom into enthusiastically incorporating several learning activities into her teaching.

## ***Positive effects on pupils***

All of the participants, except Ya, reported that improvements in the pupils' outcomes encouraged them to engage with the recommended practices:

"They like reading. They are not lazy about reading. I will read aloud for them" (Nom, interview which was conducted when her school began the end of term holiday, 07/04/2011)

"My pupils learn a larger vocabulary from storybooks and the new textbooks provided than when they read just the old textbooks" (Nom, conversation after the teaching observation, 18/02/2011)

"The quality of my pupils' writing is good. Reading aloud fosters pupils' imagination. They have their own ideas for writing freely about the topic assigned" (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011)

"Pupils gain many benefits from reading aloud. It builds pupils' word banks" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted in the teachers' room after the teaching observation, 11/07/2011)

The above comments pose two interesting points. Firstly, vocabulary acquisition by pupils and their improved reading habits motivated these four teachers to continue to teach the recommended practices. It is possible that when these teachers observed the gradual development of pupils' vocabulary and their love of reading, they attributed such development to their teaching of the recommended practices. Consequently, they continued to use this approach. Guskey (2002) believes that teachers may change their beliefs about new instructional practices when they observe their changes gradually leading to an increase in pupil achievement. Guskey notices that such changes in beliefs do not derive from professional development but are the result of experiences of successful implementation.

Secondly, another interesting point raised by these teachers' comments is that they seemed to focus on the positive effects of the new practices in terms of the specific knowledge and skills of Thai language learning (e.g. vocabulary acquisition and writing skills) rather than broad skills (e.g. communication skills, developing collaborative skills).

The experience of successful implementation had also led Rai-ra continuously to adopt the recommended practices in her classroom. This is exemplified by her following comment.

"I bring activities and materials introduced in the training to try out in my classroom. If it works with my pupils, I use it. If my pupils understand the content, I keep using it." (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 24/07/2011,)

Rai-ra comments suggest that when she used the new activities and saw them "work" (it facilitated pupil's understanding of content), she continued using them. Her experience of success in using such activities or what she mentioned as "what works", tended to influence her thoughts and her actions in continuing to use the activities of the new practices.

Some teachers claimed that their desire to improve pupils' learning outcomes greatly motivated their engagement in enacting the recommended practices. They believed that they were taking greater responsibility for pupils' learning and that the recommended practices were alternative ways to do so. The following are typical responses:

"Pupils' learning is my responsibility. Pupils' learning is one reason for teaching the recommended practices every day" (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011))

"Participating in this implementation helps me to gain new knowledge, which I can transfer into teaching my pupils" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted in a teacher room after the teaching observation, 09/08/2011)

### ***The supportive administrator***

The participants stated that administrative support was another issue and driving force influencing the teaching of the recommended practices. Interestingly, the discussion with the teachers showed how intervention by administrators could both facilitate and frustrate the participants' teaching of the recommended practices. All of the participants shared the view that they needed support from the school head in implementing the new teaching method. The following are typical comments:

"I am pleased with the new head teacher. He gives his authority to approve every receipt when orders are placed. .. I bought materials, games and logos by spending the budget allocated to schools ...." (Ya, the second interview, which was conducted in her classroom, 24/06/2011)

"He provides many more resources to us. He follows up on the progress of the implementation in the meeting. But classroom supervision is not conducted.... I need moral support from the head teacher, especially verbal encouragement, and his understanding of and creative thinking about teaching and learning ...." (Tipa, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 17/02/2011)

Ya's and Tipa's comments show that they received positive support regarding resource provision from their headteachers. In addition, Tipa's explanations indicate that she needed support from the administrators in terms of follow-up training and classroom observation. Tipa wanted further guidance about instructional matters, as well as emotional support from her headteacher, rather than just provision of resources for using the initiatives in the classroom. Her comments (e.g. "...but classroom supervision is not conducted...") reveal that classroom visits by administrators were necessary during her attempts to implement the recommended practices. Similarly to Tipa, Ya wanted support in the form of instructional consultation. Ya stated that:

"I try to use it, although there is an absence of supervision or consultation by superiors or officials....They should come to help" (Interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 24/06/2011)

The need for support from administrators among teachers in Thai schools when change takes place confirms the finding by Hallinger & Kantamara (2000). Hallinger and Kantamara (2001) claim that Thai teachers' lack of support from headteachers during the stage of change implementation reflects the high power distance dimension of Thai culture (also see 4.3). Hallinger and Kantamara (2001) indicate that this cultural norm seems to result in superficial responses by teachers since teachers as subordinators are expected to show obedience without challenge, at least on the surface, in response to the change agenda, and commitment to implement the new practices as ordered.

The above discussion relates to a study about change in the role of Thai headteachers in the literature. Since the advent of the learning reform era in Thailand, headteachers have been expected to take on the roles of instructional leadership and leadership for learning. Hallinger & Bryant (2013) examined the change in secondary Thai school headteacher instructional leadership during the reform era from 1999-2008 by synthesis of findings drawn from empirical studies of education reform in Thailand. They found that there has been a lack of change in Thai headteachers' role behaviour as instructional leaders. Secondary school headteachers were perceived to engage in their instructional leadership role more actively in only two dimensions: defining their school's mission and promoting a positive school learning climate.

Unlike the other participants, Nom stated that her headteacher provided great support. Nom's headteacher conducted three separate days of training for the recommended practices at Nom's suggestion. Nom commented:

"He allowed the conducting of training and provided a budget. He attended the training all day" (Interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 14/02/2011)

In addition, there is another interesting point reported by some participants. Some teachers claimed that feedback from classroom instructional supervision tended to constrain teaching of the recommended practices. The following are some typical comments:

"Teachers in this school never have anyone observing teaching. We feel embarrassed when our classrooms are observed while we are implementing this approach. I have to tell the officials to please not seriously criticise our teaching" (Tipa, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 18/01/2011)

"Yes, I got a negative feedback from classroom supervision. I try to think in this way when I receive serious criticism; there are many things that I have to improve in my teaching" (Ra-tee, the first interview, 05/04/2011, which was conducted in her classroom with the presence of her colleague)

The above comments show that Tipa and Ra-tee felt threatened when their teaching was observed and seriously criticised. One teacher at Tipa's school stated, after classroom observation by the administrator, "*I have requested to be transferred to another school. I am not a student teacher who has to be observed teaching*" (conversation with her after finishing the interview, 21/02/2011). Tipa's headteacher also reported that "*many teachers in school tell him that they want to transfer to other schools due to classroom observation policy*" (Interview, which was conducted in school playground, 03/02/2011). In brief, the discussion indicated that administrative support was required. There was a particular need for instructional support from the administrators, such as classroom supervision with positive feedback. In this study, supportive administrators were both a contributing and constraining factor in teaching the recommended practices.

### ***The pressure brought by official discourse***

As discussed in section 2.1.1, in conceptualising *policy as discourse* (Ball, 1994), teachers' behaviour or their responses to education policies exist within a particular regime of truth and possible knowledge produced through discourse. In this vein, this seemed to have also become a driving force for teachers in

talking about and implementing the recommended practices. All the participants stated that the recommended practices were a useful and worthwhile approach for enhancing pupils' learning (see also 6.2.1). All of them considered the recommended practices as official, appropriate or good pedagogic practices. This is illustrated by the following comments:

"I felt very satisfied with this approach when I observed pupils could read a whole book, even though I asked them to read only one page" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted in a staff room after the teaching observation, 11/08/2011)

"I like it. It is useful ... Every teacher likes it. But I have many pupils, so I cannot produce learning materials for every pupil. I have a heavy workload" (Ya, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 07/07/2011)

The above comments illustrate that the two teachers believed the recommended practices were beneficial to pupils. Possibly, the recommended practices discourse may have wielded influence over these two teachers' thoughts and views. Their agency may have been constrained by the regime of what it is possible to say, think, know and do in the recommended practices discourse (Ball 1994). However, Ya's statements also demonstrate that her decisions to employ the recommended practices were filtered through the constraints and opportunities provided by the context of her teaching situation. This clearly shows that policy is subject to interpretation. Teachers did not simply receive and carry out the practices as intended by the policy designers. Teachers are shaped by the discourse and on the other hand they shape the discourse (Ball, 1994). Having discussed factors that may turn teachers against using the recommended practices, the next section explores factors that may push teachers towards using the recommended practices.

### **6.2.2 Factors hindering use of the recommended practices**

This section focuses on why the teachers rejected use of the recommended practices. There were numerous concerns affecting the degree of teachers' engagement, as identified from the data, which are discussed below.

#### ***Feeling blamed***

Concern about being blamed by their colleagues is reported as the first factor inhibiting engagement in the recommended practices. Two participants (Tipa and Ra-tee) claimed that they felt concerned that any blame from colleagues

could fall on them if it was discovered that they had pupils who weren't able to read and write. This concern was expressed as below:

"It is impossible for pupils to remember everything that they have learned, such as grammar and spelling....I always focus on teaching these skills, so other grade teachers cannot blame me...." (Tipa, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 08/02/2011)

"I never teach first graders. .... I tell the first grade class teacher that it takes time to teach pupils to read and write fluently..... She always helps me to teach the struggling readers while I am teaching....The priority in my teaching is to focus on teaching spelling, grammar and writing" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted in the teachers' room after the teaching observation, 11/08/2011)

The above comments reveal that they were concerned that they might be blamed by their colleagues for their pupils' lack of specific skills and abilities (e.g. reading skills, and grammar). Consequently, in their teaching they put greater focus on form rather than on meaning and communicative skill and abilities. However, what is obvious from their comments is that they did not report that they had been blamed for not supporting the teaching of Thai.

### ***School and outside policies***

The effects of school policies and the ESA's constraining instructional decisions were discussed by three teachers (Nom, Ya and Rai-ra). Although they seemed to view the recommended practices as beneficial, these teachers saw their instructional decisions as being burdened by what they perceived to be outside forces. Ya and Rai-ra talked about school policies and suggestions of outside forces, as these comments illustrate:

"In the teachers' meeting, the school leaders say that they expect that the quality of education provided by the school has to reach the highest scores in every category of school inspection" (Ya, conversation on the balcony before starting the teaching observation, 24/06/2011)

The ESA's supervisors always discuss the low pupil achievement when they inspect the school" (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 22/06/2011)

Perhaps, Ya and Rai-ra felt frustrated by school policies and the ESA. Their comments do not imply that teaching the recommended practices were prohibited by their administrators. Instead, these comments suggest that they were constrained by school policy or the suggestions of their superiors. They seemed to see school policy or the suggestions of superiors as immediate pressure which demanded immediate responses.

Similarly to Ya and Rai-ra, Pan tended to attend to the school policies. Pan also spoke openly about her workload as a result of the new school policies (e.g. mandating the enrichment programme and the mid-term examination). She appeared to focus on responding to the headteacher's immediate policies rather than focusing on implementing the new practices. She expressed that

"I use my preferred teaching during this time. I use styles of teaching that I like....I am now focusing on the additional responsibilities assigned to me" (Interview which was conducted in her classroom before the teaching observation, 07/01/2011)

Another example of how school policy seemed to influence teachers' practice was evident in the practice of Nom. Her school had a policy of inviting officials of the ESA and parents to observe in the classrooms to appreciate and understand the work of the teachers. However, the date of this event was changed suddenly and that appeared to affect Nom's teaching. For instance, she had to stop organising her integrated lessons and spent class hours helping her pupils to collect and present their work in folders (fieldnote, 23/02/2011). She also had to work in the evenings and at weekends to help her colleagues to prepare materials, boards and decorate the school for the visit.

### ***Examination***

Examination is the third barrier that potentially prevented the teachers from teaching the recommended practices. Ya and Rai-ra were concerned about examinations, as these comments illustrate:

"The administrators are not satisfied with the scores in the third graders' standardised test last year....I now administer mock exams monthly in order to prepare my pupils to meet the high expectations of the school policies" (Ya, conversation with her on the balcony after she finished meeting with school heads, 24/06/2011)

"I think the headteacher has become interested in improving pupils' achievement recently... He recently seemed to change his focus. He currently tells us that the pupils' standardised test scores have to rise by 5%.....(Rai-ra, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 22/06/2011.)

Ya and Rai-ra's statements indicate that they may think that their superiors' focus was on improving pupils' attainment (e.g. "*I think the headteacher has become interested..*"), which would shape the practice of these teachers. In particular, Ya's quotation clearly demonstrates that she reacted to school policy by preparing pupils for the exam. In the case of Rai-ra, she perhaps misinterpreted the intentions of her superiors (note Rai-ra's wording "think").

She might have spoken about her superiors' suggestions in ways that fitted her preferences in order to match her current practice as observed. She might have felt that she needed to defend her passive engagement with the new practices by describing examinations as constraints.

Pan was also concerned about her pupils achieving high test scores while she was negotiating with the new school mandates and the recommended practices. Pan's classroom appeared to emphasise test preparation. She neglected to organise learning activities suggested by the recommended practices. Instead, she organised a revision session, as well as mock exams, before the mid-term and term-end exams to prepare pupils for getting high scores, claiming that it was expected by the administrators. Observation data showed that she discussed the mid-term test results with pupils after their scores on some subjects declined (science and maths) (fieldnote, 04/02/2011). She also told her first graders to take their studying seriously before the testing began, as illustrated in Extracts 1 and 2 below:

**Extract 1**

Pan: "All of you must take the exam next week and we are going to take the term end exam in the next four weeks. You will transfer to the next grade. You are smart pupils. But you need to have self-discipline, so that you will succeed." (Fieldnote, 22/01/2011).

**Extract 2**

Pan: "I had a meeting with the headteacher today. In the meeting we agreed that pupils' test scores in each grade will be ranked from high to low. Who does like this policy? Who does like this policy? ..... We need to study hard. Tell me, what do you have to do?..... I will start testing oral reading tomorrow. I will test reading Thai poems individually" (Fieldnote, 24/01/2011)

Perhaps, these teachers prepared pupils for exams because they sought to protect their pupils from failure, which was a pressure within the field in which they worked. In addition, these teachers might have needed to improve their pupils' academic performance in order to impress management. Better pupil achievement may have ideally demonstrated the effectiveness of their practices. Pupils' high academic performance might be seen in the eyes of others as indicators of better teaching performance. Consequently, good results might help these two teachers to keep, as well as gain "face", since "face" (see 4.5) is related to Thai people's position in society.

### ***Belief in strategies for teaching that they knew worked***

The fourth possible hindrance to participants' participation in teaching the recommended practices might be their preference for teaching strategies that they had seen work for them. All the participants, who had taught for more than twenty years, developed strategies for teaching and managing their classrooms that they had known work, or their teaching habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), through their experience. These teachers accumulated personal knowledge of techniques and materials as well as a personal style that felt comfortable to them. The discussion in sections 5.1 & 5.4 demonstrated that while all the participants added the recommended practices to their teaching they clearly felt more comfortable with their existing and preferred practice.

### ***An Overload of Routine Work and Responsibilities***

As discussed in 4.4, Thai teachers, besides teaching, were also required to do extra work to meet the criteria for salary increments and promotion. Five participants, excepting Ra-rai, described their experience of difficulties budgeting their time for creating activities and developing materials as they struggled with their overload of routine responsibilities and other mandate-related projects. The following are typical statements:

"I have only an hour or two in each day that I do not teach. But I have so many other responsibilities besides teaching my class" (Pan, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 21/01/2011)

"I want to teach as I did before the reform. I just teach. I did not have more paperwork to do before the reform. I am so bored and tired of extra assignments" (Tipa, interview which was conducted after teaching observation, 18/02/2011)

"I have to take turns taking care of the school co-op store, school bank project and other special activities and functions. I don't have enough time to develop materials" (Ra-tee, the first interview, which was conducted before the teaching observation, 05/04/2011)

These teachers voiced their difficulties in teaching the recommended practices, concerning the overload of routine work and responsibilities. They believed that this overloading created constraints on their teaching of the recommended practices. These teachers added that with their routine work, they could hardly afford the time required for teaching the recommended practices. They felt frustrated as they knew they were not doing their best in teaching the new practices, due to the demands on their time. Next, discussion will focus on the

areas identified as creating contradictions between Thai learning culture and the recommended practices as an approach imported from the Western context.

### ***Gap between different rational orientations: preferred practice and the recommended practices***

This section examines the possible constraints on the adoption of the recommended practices in the Thai classroom, namely the Thai culture of learning. The participants in this study were expected to adjust their views and practices according to the demands of the recommended practices, regarded as not only institutional pressure but also as official appropriate pedagogy. There may have been a gap between the current practice of the participants and the practice promoted as appropriate by the recommended practices, as the latter were developed within a totally different, Western educational culture (see Appendix I). In relation to the recommended practices, these teachers identified four areas as contradictory to their preferable practices and/or teaching habitus.

### ***Should Pupils' Errors be corrected?***

The topic of error correction sparked controversy among the six participants and they cited two questions related to error treatment over which they felt most ambivalent: 'Should learners' errors be corrected?' and 'How should errors be corrected?'

Five of the participants, excepting Nom, stated that while they did not disagree with the suggestion of avoiding correction of errors in pupil's writing they doubted statements such as:

"Teachers do not need to correct all the mistakes pupils make" (Ya, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 07/07/2011);

"Red ink is inappropriate to mark the pupils' errors" (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 24/06/2011); and

"Teachers have to be sensitive about writing feedback on pupils' writing" (Ra-tee, the first interview, which was conducted in her classroom with the presence of her colleague, 05/04/2011)

They reported that the trainer in the teacher training tended to consider marking pupils' errors as confrontational and threatening. The pupils might perceive pointing out of their errors as criticism and become demotivated.

All participants insisted that errors should not be ignored. They thought that error correction was a means of improving pupils' language. In actual practice, the six participants marked, underlined or crossed out pupils' errors. The following are typical statements:

"I circle errors to let them know about their mistakes and thereby they will not ask me again how to make it correct. I sometimes correct them" (Ya, conversation with her on the balcony before the teaching observation, 08/07/2011)

"I am a teacher. I need to mark their errors when they make them because they are errors. The trainer suggested that teachers should call pupils to explain later. But how many pupils in my class are there? I cannot explain to every pupil" (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 22/06/2011)

"I have changed the way I correct the errors. I mark them to let them realise their mistakes but I do not correct all the mistakes. I call on them to explain later" (Tipa, conversation with her after the teaching observation, 23/02/2011)

The above statements show that these three teachers chose to identify pupils' writing mistakes. These three teachers thought that errors should be identified to ensure that pupils worked accurately, as they had been taught. Ya and Rai-ra stated that mistakes should be corrected at the moment they are made, otherwise pupils keep on making the same mistake. Contrastingly, Tipa reported that she had changed the way she marked. She marked the work, but did not correct the mistakes. She stated that she discussed errors with pupils individually. However, Rai-ra chose to mark mistakes rather than explaining errors individually to pupils. She explained that she was concerned about having insufficient time for explaining to every pupil.

Moreover, Ra-tee stated that she could be blamed by pupils' parents if she did not correct every error. She said:

"I used to face serious criticism. One mother called me while I was at the beauty salon and came to see me at school to complain about the error treatment. I first used cross marking and I then changed it, since the answer was correct." (interview which was conducted in a staff room after the teaching observation, 09/08/2011)

Another issue that was mentioned concerning error treatment regarded the colour of pen used for marking errors. The participants asserted that they used red pens, blue pens and pencils to spot the errors. Observation clearly showed that all participants used any pens that they had to hand. Tipa explained that "*most teachers use red or blue pens because they always have those pens.*" (conversation with her after the teaching observation, 23/02/2011). Rai-ra and Tipa asserted that red pen made the errors easier for pupils to spot, whereas

the other participants reported that they used any ink (red, blue, black and pencil) to mark the errors, depending on what was available for them at the time.

### ***Is it real learning when pupils participate in activities?***

The second factor constraining teaching the recommended practices is that the teachers doubted the effectiveness of activity-based learning. The participants reported that they were told in the training that pupils did not learn much by sitting passively in class listening to teachers. However, the interviews suggested that three participants tended to question the contribution of practical classroom activities to learning. They appeared to doubt the effectiveness of classroom activities in developing pupils' knowledge and skills. Such suspicion appeared to cause the teachers to be dragged reluctantly towards using in their classrooms the learning activities suggested by the recommended practices, as these extracts illustrate:

"Pupils cannot play all day. They will never get information... But I try to use activities. This is because the policies of the new headteacher have mandated that every teacher has to teach innovatively" (Ya, conversation with her on the balcony after the teaching observation, 08/08/2011)

"Sometimes I let them participate in activities. You have to understand that classroom activities should be organised sometimes, but not often, because pupils will not get anything out of it. I have to give them information too" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 11/07/2011)

"The first time I heard that pupils should engage in classroom activities. I felt uncomfortable because the headteacher can misunderstand, thinking that I am not teaching but letting my pupils play. I could not maintain class discipline. I disagreed with this suggestion. Later, I explained to the headteacher and he understands" (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011)

From teachers' comments, there are three interesting points that could be made. Firstly, Ya and Tipa seemed to see classroom activities as fun activities because they used the word "*play*". They thought that participating in classroom activities tended to mean that such engagement was for enjoyment rather than for a serious or practical purpose.

Secondly, Tipa's explanations reveal that she thought classroom activities partially challenged the disciplinary management ("*I felt uncomfortable... pupils play and I cannot maintain discipline...* "). This view of classroom activity challenging class discipline was also shared by Rai-ra. She expressed:

"When pupils engage in classroom activities, as you see in a pre-school classroom, it seems like chaos happens in the classroom" (interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 29/07/2011)

Rai-ra's statements show that she felt concerned about discipline while pupils were engaging in activities (e.g. the noise generated by talking).

Finally, Ya and Ra-tee's comments indicate that they seemed to doubt the effectiveness of classroom activities for pupils' learning. However, their interviews did not show that they totally rejected the role of classroom activities in pupils' learning. As Ya commented, "*Pupils cannot play all day*", whilst Ra-tee explained that "*Activities should be organised sometimes, but not often*". These two teachers thought that classroom activities should take place, but not every lesson. Perhaps they did not fully believe in the effectiveness of activities in developing pupils' knowledge and instead placed priority on content mastery rather than developing learning processes and skills. Ya's comments tended to illustrate that she thought that participation in activities would not support pupils' acquisition of a body of factual knowledge. Ya believed that if pupils were participating in classroom activities, they might not be learning anything ("*They will never get information*"). Meanwhile, Ra-tee also thought that lessons should occasionally include activities, but not too often. This might be because she too assumed that pupils might not learn anything when they were involved in classroom activities. Additionally, Ya and Ra-tee's comments indicate they seemed to be concerned that their teaching schedules would fall behind the schedule designated by the national curriculum. Their teaching schedules had to achieve uniform progression through the curriculum content.

Another possible explanation for Ya and Ra-tee not entirely rejecting the role of classroom activities in pupils' learning is that classroom activities were promoted as appropriate practices by the school policies and other official pedagogies. As seen in Ya's comment: "*But I try to use...because the policies of the new headteacher...*", her instructional decision choices were constrained by authority policies. The demands of the policies may have pushed them to recognise the usefulness of the activities. These teachers felt the need to express their acceptance of integrating classroom activities into their teaching.

Data observation also confirmed that these teachers did not entirely reject the role of classroom activities in learning, but seemed instead not to be convinced of their effectiveness. This is exemplified by Tipa's school practice suggesting that teachers were concerned with passing on factual knowledge because they doubted the effectiveness of activity based learning. Tipa and her colleagues organised extra activities for pupils after the term-end exam. Pupils spent a week participating in ten 'learning stations' (e.g. maths, science, reading activities, physical education) (Fieldnote, 09/03/2011). Tipa explained that she and her colleagues organised those activities because they wanted to ensure that pupils had a chance to engage in activities as suggested by the recommended practices, as well as by the national curriculum. But they chose to conduct the above activities after the examination because most teachers were concerned with the need to cover the syllabus and prepare their pupils for the examination.

### ***How to Celebrate Pupil Learning***

The practice of pupils celebrating their achievements is the third area of tension between teachers' expectations and the expectations of the recommended practices. The six teachers reported that it was suggested they should give pupils opportunities to celebrate what they have learned and their efforts. However, displaying pupils' work led them to pose questions in interpreting and putting this suggestion into practice. This resulted in variety in the ways that different teachers displayed work.

Ya doubted the validity of the suggestion of celebrating the work of every pupil. She questioned whether it was good practice to display work by all pupils. Did pupils learn something from their work being on display? She stated:

"I do not understand how to display the pupils' work appropriately. But I have tried to do it... I observe that few pupils walk over to look at things on the bulletin board. Some of them glance at the board when they walk past" (conversation with her after the teaching observation in her classroom, 08/08/2011)

As seen in her statements, she felt dubious about how to display pupils' work on the bulletin board. She questioned how displaying work on the bulletin board helped pupils to acknowledge their efforts. She explained that she thought that only the best work produced by pupils should be displayed, rather than hanging up every pupil's work. Displaying the best work would present pupils with high

quality examples, giving them ideas on how they should improve their work next time. In practice, Ya marked the pupils' work according to three grades (excellent, good and pass) and selected examples of each grade to display.

Meanwhile, Pan, Nom and Rai-ra selected the better products of pupils' writing to display on the bulletin board and the classroom wall. They graded and checked pupils' writing then returned it to each pupil and pupils put the paper into folders. Or they sometimes stapled the stack together after collecting pupils' paperwork. At the end of semester, they gave the folders to the pupils.

In the case of Ra-tee, she felt suspicious regarding "was pupils' work displayed on bulletin boards more valuable than teacher-made or store-bought pieces on display?" Should displays be made by pupils or by teachers? She stated that the class teacher of grade one primary did not agree with showing every pupil's work in the classroom because it could make the classroom look messy. Her colleague thought that the class displays should consist of teacher-work rather than primarily pupils' work. Her colleagues thought that the teacher-made board could provide more useful information to pupils. Ra-tee discussed finding ways to display pupils' work with her colleagues. Finally, Ratee did start to display her first graders' writing by using a portable board.

In contrast, Tipa reported about her difficulty in finding a way of displaying pupils' work. She explained that she struggled with finding ways to display every pupil's work because she was not used to displaying pupils' work. She had limited space in the classroom because of over-crowdedness and this and the way in which to display the work were her main problems. Finally she chose to hang pupils' work at the front of the classroom. Importantly, the teachers seemed to focus on how they displayed pupils' work rather than how displays contribute to the development of pupils.

### ***To what extent should I adapt my role in teaching?***

As described in Appendix I, a Thai teacher's status is described potentially as that of an authority figure. The discussion with six participants showed that they claimed that they made efforts to adjust their roles in the learning process. However, their roles were negotiated in different ways, as exemplified in the following quote:

"I use to have a question mark in my mind as to whether or not pupils can work as we are told they could in the training. However, they can write freely..... Their abilities make me realise that I am not a leader in classroom learning anymore. I am a partner in their learning. I now never think that children cannot think by themselves" (Ra-tee, interview which was conducted in her classroom with the presence of her colleague, 05/04/2011)

"The trainers want us to be as close to the pupils as a sister or a friend. But my age and the grade one primary pupils' ages are ultimately different. I thus act as their mother and their friend. We can play, laugh and share things together..... They suggested to me that I should narrow the generation gap between teachers and pupils" (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011))

"Here, pupils can talk, discuss, ask questions and express their feelings and opinions in class..... But we cannot adopt the whole of the Western-educational culture. Yes, I allow them to talk freely but they have to perform in a proper manner based on Thai expectations when they want to express their opinions. Manners maketh the man. For example, they have to know how to talk and behave properly towards older people... I am both their teacher and their mother. I have to teach them to develop, both academically and personally" (Ya, conversation with her on the balcony before the teaching observation, 22/07/2015)

These three participants' statements display their attempts to adapt to the changes that they were being asked to make to their role. Ra-tee's comments suggest that she might change the way she thinks about her role (e.g. " *I am a partner in their learning*"). She might shift from the role of authority in imparting knowledge to being the partner of her pupils in the learning process. She also altered her assumptions about learners who were not passive pupils (e.g. "*I now never think children...*").

Tipa and Ya's comments raised some interesting points. First, both of them negotiated their roles in different ways. Tipa favoured acting as a mother and the pupils' friend, while Ya preferred to take the position of mother and teacher. In Thai fundamental beliefs, the relationship between teachers and pupils is likely to be viewed as similar to the relationship between parents and children. Teachers frequently are regarded as second parents (Prathoomthin, 2009; Pagram & Pagram 2006). It is common for most Thai teachers to call their pupils, students, trainees, apprentices and disciples – *luuk sit* (*luuk* means son or daughter and *Sit* means learning child). *Luuk sit* is used to demonstrate the characteristic of Thai society that people live together as relatives (or *Yaat* for Thai word). Children are taught to regard all who are older as aunts, uncles or grandparents and those younger as sister/brother, niece/nephew or son/daughter. Thus Thai teachers are regarded as having the same status and obligation as a parent. The teachers' role relates to this caring image; they are normally expected to take on the responsibility of guiding their pupils not only

academically, but morally, inside and outside the classroom. It is possible that Tipa and Ya might understand their overall roles both as knowledge providers (teacher) and as the supporter (mother) helping pupils to live better lives.

Secondly, their comments show they tended to conserve the authority underpinning the role of parent and teacher. In the Thai context, sons, daughters and pupils are expected to show great respect towards parents and teachers. Tipa's comment on another occasion might illustrate this value:

"Teachers have been considered as highly authoritative people because teachers are regarded as second parents." (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011)

Finally, Ya's comments show a contradiction. She claimed that she provided pupils with as many opportunities as possible to talk and discuss. Her comments suggested that she might change her role perception, moving from a transmitter to a facilitator role, at least in terms of offering chances for pupils to engage in discussions or activities in classrooms. However, her statements suggest that the notion of knowledge transmission was implicit in her words. She stated that she had to implant the expected norms of societal knowledge. She might have believed that transmitting knowledge (e.g. norms and culture) was one role of teachers. Moreover, her quote "*But we cannot adopt the whole of the Western...*" suggested that Ya perhaps thought Thais should consider some of the practices of imported ideas more in terms of cultural appropriation (e.g. "*they have to know how to talk and behave properly towards older people*").

Similarly to the other participants, Pan and Nom believed that they had shifted their role perceptions in terms of providing chances for pupils to become involved in classroom activities, as the following extract illustrates:

"I like to use questions to make them feel curious. Thus they sometimes talk too much or even ask me questions. Such behaviour by the pupils might lead other teachers to believe that my classroom does not have good discipline. If you observe other classrooms, pupils only sit, listen and study quietly" (Pan, interview which was conducted in the library after the teaching observation, 07/02/2011).

"I like to organise activities for them. I like to see them experimenting by themselves, such as measuring the playground by walking, interviewing villagers and cleaning the school" (Nom, conversation while she was preparing her document for organising a workshop for teachers in another school, 10/04/2011)

Statements of two teachers show that they had experienced a shift in their role perception, now placing themselves as facilitators in the learning process. Importantly, Pan's comment shows that she believed that she acted as a facilitator to encourage pupils to engage in class discussion. Nonetheless, the role of transmitter was apparent in her wording. Her focus on knowledge transmission was obvious (e.g. "*I like to use questions..*"). Remarkably, Pan thought similarly to Rai-ra that pupils' engagement in classroom activities might be seen as challenging to a well-disciplined classroom by other teachers.

In addition, I observed that the participants made efforts to shift their roles in certain ways. Their attempts to write comments on pupils' writing were evident. Five out of the six participants, excepting Pan, reported that they used to mark and score pupils' work. However, they were currently trying to provide positive feedback by writing comments (e.g. '*I like your idea*', '*Keep trying*', '*Wish you success as you wish*', '*Good piece of work, but there are some spelling mistakes*', '*Very good*', '*Your writing has some errors, so I cannot understand the story*').

During the interview, Rai-ra showed her comments on pupils' work as an example of her grading, and her comments on pupils' writing are illustrated in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1 Rai-ra's comments on pupils' essays and scores given**

Teacher comments	Scores (10 points)
Read before handing in	5
There are some errors. Consequently, the mistakes make your story difficult to understand.	6
Should make an outline before writing	6
The outline is great, but some errors	7
Good writing	9
Very good writing	10

Conventionally, all participants overtly stated that they usually marked pupils' work by using their minds to manipulate a set of criteria while reading pupils' work in order to make a grading decision. Viewing this explanation through the lens of Bourdieu's theory (Bourdieu 1984), this practice perhaps involved a subconscious

decision which was acquired through their habitus. These teachers acquired the habitus and practical mastery of marking through a form of socialisation that emerged from doing the job over time. They learnt to mark by marking.

The discussion demonstrates that these teachers have likely adapted their role in the learning process. Data suggest that they might have modified their role in the classroom to somewhere between transmitter and facilitator on a continuum, even though none of them overtly expressed this. Although they tended to express their belief in teachers as facilitators of learning, they also referred to teachers as authority figures who knew and attempted to impart knowledge. The role of knowledge transmitter was also apparent in their teaching practices.

In addition, the adjustment of their instructional role by encouraging pupils to engage in discussions, for example, suggests that they seemed to interpret the role of facilitator at the micro level of classroom interaction, rather than at the course level where pupils were supposed to take part in decision making for course planning, implementation and assessment. They tended not to modify their roles by facilitating pupils to collaboratively take responsibility for their learning. Buraphan (2010) studied 110 Thai pre-service science teachers participating in a teacher preparation programme, focusing on the change of beliefs in teaching and learning science from teacher-centred beliefs to student-centred beliefs. The students were asked to construct, describe, draw pictures about their own metaphors of teaching and learning science, and to take part in interviews, before and after participating in the programme. Buraphan found that more than half of the volunteer students (16 out of 30) confirmed a major change, while the others confirmed a moderate change (6 of the 30), minor change (5 of the 30), or no change (3 of the 30) in their teaching and learning beliefs during their teacher education. Buraphan concluded that changing pre-service teachers' belief that teaching is transmission of knowledge is a difficult and challenging task.

Similarly, Trakulphadetkrai's (2012) study of 1,000 Thai mathematics teachers also found a positive correlation with the classroom authority belief, indicating that the stronger the belief that mathematical knowledge is permanent and fixed, the stronger the belief that pupils should be obedient to their teachers and

should not question their teaching.

Another reason that may explain the need for these teachers to report the change in their instructional role is their prior experience with the learning reform in 1999. Since the advent of the learning reform movement in Thailand in 1999, Thai teachers have been encouraged to subscribe to and enact student-centred beliefs, placing the teacher as a facilitator of learning. Based on experience in the learning era and having taken part in the recommended practices implementation, it could be that these typical experiences influenced these teachers to overtly state that they acted in the facilitator role.

In brief, this section discussed the issues of contradictions between the teaching strategies of the recommended practices and the participants' preferred practices in the Thai primary education field. Some areas of conflict were mentioned by the participants as partially influencing their participation in the recommended practices. The areas of conflict included error correction, beliefs about pupils' classroom activities and learning, celebrating pupil learning and teachers' instructional roles. The discussion identified that the culture of the Thai teachers (e.g. beliefs, values, and collective habitus within the teaching community) wielded influence over teachers' thinking and their responses to the recommended practices.

Overall, section 6.2 has presented influencing factors in teaching the recommended practices. The discussion showed there were both possibilities and constraints for the implementation of the recommended practices in the participants' classrooms. There were several factors driving the participants to teach the recommended practices, including prestige and faith; enthusiasm for incorporating activities of the recommended practices; desire to develop pupils; and positive effects on pupils. The factors possibly constraining enactment of the recommended practices included the following concerns: colleague blame; school and outside policies; examinations; beliefs in strategies for teaching that they had seen work; overload of routine work and responsibilities; and the gap between different rational orientations: preferred practice and the recommended practices. The teachers' decisions on how and to what extent they should engage with the new game were the result of their negotiating their interests, their beliefs as well as the opportunities and constraints around their lives and

work at that moment. The effect of the recommended practices on teacher development is discussed next.

### **6.3 Teacher development and the recommended practices**

This section investigates the effects of the recommended practices on teacher development. The participants in this study also referred to the beneficial effects from involvement in the recommended practices on their beliefs and practices in relation to teaching and learning. These effects could be identified through five general categories, including:

- Altering the ways they think about themselves and pupils;
- Modifying the ways they interact with pupils effectively;
- Confirming their existing beliefs and practices
- Fulfilling their need for appreciation of their job performance; and
- Changes in the ways teaching was organised.

#### **6.3.1 Altering the ways they think about themselves and pupils**

Changing the ways they think about themselves and their pupils was the first theme identified in the participants' comments. Five participants, excepting Pan, found that engaging in teaching the recommended practices helped them think about their own work and their pupils. This is exemplified by Ra-tee's statements:

"Practising reading storybooks helped me to understand my pupils. Reading aloud helped me to learn how to observe my pupils. They may not be able to sit still but they are highly energetic and imaginative. They have their own opinions after listening to books being read..... Their abilities made me realise that I am not a leader in classroom learning any more. I am a partner in their learning. I now never think children are unable to think by themselves" (Ra-tee, the first interview, which was conducted in her classroom with the presence of her colleague, 05/04/2011)

Ra-tee's comments illustrate many interesting points. Firstly, Ra-tee had changed the way she thought about her work. Her statement "*Reading aloud helps me to learn to observe my pupils*" shows that she might have rethought her role as a learner in the process of teaching and learning. She did not just play the role of a teacher, but also the role of learner.

Secondly, she was probably rethinking the role of teachers and pupils in the learning process (e.g. "*I am not a leader... "I am a partner..*"). She appeared to think that teachers are not sources of all authority and knowledge in a classroom. Her comments reveal that she thought that she was now a partner to the pupils, who contributed to the pupils' learning process. Moreover, she seemed to understand the nature of her younger pupils ("*they are highly energetic and imaginative*").

Thirdly, Ra-tee's comments precisely indicate that she was thinking more positively about pupils' ability to change and learn. The statement that "*I now never think children are unable to think by themselves*" suggests that Ra-tee might have shifted her belief about pupils as receivers to be filled with knowledge. She now seemed to view pupils as her partners in the learning process and as active learners.

On another occasion, Ra-tee said that her engagement with knowledge of the brain enhanced her positive thinking about her pupils. She explained how her use of information learned during the training supported pupils in understanding themselves.

"I like this approach because I can use information learned in the training to teach my pupils.... They tell us that the brain cells will die if they are not used.... I personally do not believe it as told... I convey this information to my pupils. If you don't use your brain, your brain cells will die. You will not become a smart child. I am just joking.....Excitingly, I have never had this experience before. One day, a boy runs to see me and tell me he can recite multiplication tables.... He tells me that he is worried that his brain cells will die if he do not use them...I feel confused. I do not know how to deal with it...Then I tell him why don't you try to recite them forwards and backwards.....I find that three pupils can do it" (interview which was conducted in a staff room after the teaching observation, 09/08/2011)

Ra-tee's explanation indicates that although she disbelieved information given in the training, she accidentally used that information to help her pupils. She then found that such information could apply in her work. Such information helped her pupils change the way they thought about themselves. Although anecdotal, the neuroscience content knowledge seemed to give Ra-tee a more positive attitude towards pupils' ability to change and learn. Moreover, such content brought out Ra-tee's understanding about the brain as well as her enthusiasm for the recommended practices. The crucial point is that Ra-tee's beliefs and understanding of the recommended policy claimed to be brain-based were changed by the experience of successful implementation, as evidenced by

changes in pupils' ability, and this might have led to her having some incorrect understanding about the working of the brain.

### 6.3.2 Modifying the ways they interact with pupils effectively

All participants claimed that brain development knowledge enabled them to interact with pupils more effectively and with greater understanding. As discussed in section 5.5, the information conveyed to them was that teachers should interact with pupils without making threats or providing negative feedback. All participants stated overtly that they were more sensitive to their pupils. The following are typical comments:

"I was very strict and serious with my pupils before taking part in this implementation. I called every pupil up to be tutored. I covered all the content in textbook. I now focus on the happiness of pupils. I am not very concerned with covering the syllabus" (Rai-ra, interview which was conducted in her classroom after the teaching observation, 21/06/2011)

"The trainers said that teachers have to know about how the brain works. They said that if teachers threaten pupils, the threats will interrupt the brain system in an area which may be called the "limbic". I cannot remember the brain system or name. But I know that I should not act in a way that threatens my pupils" (Nom, interview which was conducted in her classroom, 07/04/2011)

"This approach and me; I organise fun activities such as singing, do not punish my pupils and I praise them when they do either better tasks or poor work. I give them extended time to complete assignments because it may help them not to become stressed" (Ya, the second interview, which was conducted in her classroom, 24/06/2011)

As seen from the above comments, the teachers might have rethought how they should sensitively interact with pupils. They seemed to agree that they should manage their statements or actions without making threats. Rai-ra and Ya tended to recognise the importance of happy pupils and pupil safety. Rai-ra's comment suggested that she shifted to this viewpoint by placing less focus on covering content. This action might reduce pupils' stress. Meanwhile, Ya chose to incorporate fun activities and to praise her pupils in order to make them happier. Additionally, Ya claimed that the recommended practices helped her to be more patient with pupils (*"I do not punish...and I praise them.."*). The data suggested that the participants appeared to rethink their pupils and their own work. Nevertheless, it is noted that the promotion of the concept that efficient learning does not take place when the learner is experiencing fear or stress indicates engagement with neuro-myths (see 5.5).

### 6.3.3 Confirming teachers' existing beliefs and practices

Teachers' engagement in the recommended practices might have had an effect on reconfirming teachers' pre-existing beliefs and experiences. It is discussed in 5.1 & 5.5 that Nom and Tipa's active involvement in teaching the recommended practices may have been partly driven by their pre-existing beliefs and experience. For example, both of them reported that they used to use the reading aloud technique to teach reading before they took part in the implementation of the recommended practices. These two teachers' active participation in teaching the recommended practices was probably a process of reconfirming their pre-existing beliefs and prior experiences. In addition, these two teachers reported that their participation in the recommended practices confirmed their beliefs about materials and activities that they had seen "*work*". As Nom stated:

"I always use materials to supplement my teaching. But I never knew that using teaching aids is one of the teaching strategies of the recommended practices.....When I attended the recommended practices training, I knew that what I have been doing is right. When pupils are happy their brains are ready to learn" (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation when school end, 14/02/2011)

"I used to use activities as suggested, such as group reading, reading aloud, journal writing....My colleagues complain about having to read many storybooks aloud in their classrooms. I tell them to be patient and try to encourage them to do as suggested by the recommended practices. I use to attend the CLE approach training ... I firmly believe in the effectiveness of reading aloud" (Tipa, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 18/02/2011)

These two teachers claimed that they had carried out some recommended teaching strategies before they had taken part in the recommended practices. For instance, Nom used teaching aids to prepare pupils' readiness before daily teaching began, while Tipa mentioned that she organised activities for reading and writing instruction, as promoted by the recommended practices. Moreover, Tipa's comments show that she believed in the effectiveness and efficiency of the reading aloud technique in teaching reading to young learners, before participating in the recommended practices (e.g. "*I used to...*").

Their comments suggest that involvement in the recommended practices tended to be a process of reconfirming and strengthening their deeply-held beliefs about what they had seen "*work*" (e.g. reading aloud methods and using teaching aids). Additionally, Nom's wording: "*I knew that what I am doing is right*" and Tipa's wording "*I tell..... and try to encourage them to do as*

*suggested..*" raise an interesting point. These quotes indicated that being able to connect their prior experience and existing beliefs to the recommended practices might be a process of developing a higher sense of self-confidence about their knowledge and skills.

Nom and Tipa's statements about the recommended practices reveal that this approach seemed to enhance their beliefs and their work with pupils, beyond having an effect on their specific teaching methods. However, as a note of caution, these two teachers had not been properly informed about the pragmatic implications of neuroscience for teaching and learning.

#### **6.3.4 Fulfilling their need for appreciation of their job performance**

Some teachers found engagement in the recommended practices to be interesting, in turn helping them to appreciate how well were they doing their job as a teacher. Nom, by saying in the previous extract: "*when I attended the recommended practices training, I knew that what I have been doing is right*", posed two interesting points. Firstly, the way she talked about herself suggested that she found what she had been doing was better practice for her pupils. She had performed well and her efforts had not failed. Her positive self-image was raised when her attempts were rewarded with positive feedback. In the same vein, such appreciation of her efforts increased her satisfaction with the recommended practices. Secondly, this statement suggests another effect of the recommended practices on Nom's thoughts. Nom used this approach as a way to explain and justify her instructional practice within the framework of neuroscience.

Nom's satisfaction with the recommended practices was also confirmed in a comment on another occasion:

"I want to add more that student teachers should learn about this approach. This approach is a very good approach. It can help them to understand how the brain works when a child learns" (Interview which was conducted after the teaching observation, 07/03/2011)

These discourses show that Nom thought that prospective teachers should learn about the recommended practices because they should know about learning and brain development as well as strategies for teaching based on neuroscience. Student teachers also have responsibilities to build children's brain potential.

Ra-tee also felt that participation in the recommended practices was a good opportunity for continuing professional learning. She stated:

"I find learning about the recommended practices is a good opportunity to learn new ideas. I do like it. I can use the new knowledge to develop my pupils.... I think it has given me more opportunity to learn more about the children.....It is like, it should be on-going, finding new teaching methods to support my pupils' learning" (the first interview, which was conducted in her classroom with the presence of her colleague, 05/04/2011)

The comments illustrate she thought engagement with the recommended practices offered her opportunities to learn new practices. Participating in new practices not only inspired her to begin to experiment with the new knowledge in her classroom, it may also have made her feel good about her role as a proper teacher. The way she was talking about herself indicated that she had an ongoing desire to teach in an innovative way. Her expression of desire for ongoing self-improvement (e.g. *"It is like, it should..."*) suggested that to be a good teacher, she was driven to find new ways to do something different for her pupils.

### **6.3.5 Change in the ways teaching was organised**

The fifth possible effect of the recommended practices on teacher development was their effect on the ways in which participants organised instruction. Referring to sections 5.1, 5.5 & 6.1, the participants selectively incorporated some teaching strategies of the recommended practices into their instructional repertoires. For example, they integrated movement breaks, encouraging pupils to exercise before lessons began (e.g. short exercise and singing). They claimed that they established a fun and threat-free classroom climate by providing positive feedback and integrating singing and dancing activities. They encouraged pupils to carry and put out water bottles on their desks and/or provided portable water tanks for pupils' ease of access. Their efforts to selectively incorporate the recommended activities or materials illustrated that the participants tended to do some things differently from their prior practices. However, their efforts to change suggested that they were more likely to change the ways they organised instruction, rather than their pedagogical choices. As Rai-ra stated:

"I think one change influenced by this approach is that I focus less on covering all content in textbooks. I just introduce concepts and give two or three examples from them. I currently teach differently to teachers in other schools....They allocate many

Rai-ra's statement shows that she believed that she had modified her instructional repertoire ("*I think that my change...*"). However, such change ("*I focus less on...*") reported by Rai-ra likely suggests that she tended to make shifts in organising her teaching, moving from greater to lesser emphasis on covering all content in the textbook. She also seemed to consider the amount of teacher-talking time. From classroom observation data, she did not use literacy activities as suggested by the recommended practices. Thus she seemed to change the way she managed her lessons, rather than changing her instructional approach.

Other participants also openly stated that there had been little change in their classroom practices as a result of the recommended practices and that they taught as they had always done. The following are typical comments:

"Personally, I like to organise activities.... This approach aids me to understand teaching more than before. For example, I should begin using real objects to supplement teaching, and then present materials before introducing pupils to symbols" (Nom, interview which was conducted after the teaching observation when school ended, 14/02/2015)

"I teach as I have always taught. I think this approach focuses on learning by playing. I use songs, hand clapping or short exercises before the lesson begins" (Ya, conversation with her on the balcony before the teaching observation, 08/07/2011)

"I used to conduct literacy activities as promoted by the recommended practices, such as group reading, reading aloud and journal writing..... This approach helps me to organise such activities regularly" (Tipa, interview which was conducted with the presence of three colleagues, 31/03/2011)

The above statements indicate that these teachers recognised that they taught in the ways that they had always taught. Their statements demonstrated that the recommended practices provided them with suggestions for how they should organise their instruction. Nom claimed that this approach aided her in gaining an understanding of the proper way to use materials to supplement teaching, whilst Ya explained that teaching should include fun or energising activities before lessons start. The initiatives' influence on her attempts to organise regular literacy activities was reported by Tipa. The data suggest, however, that these teachers were making changes in lesson management and materials rather than changes in their instructional approach.

Observation data were consistent with interview data in indicating that the participants might have modified the way they organised their teaching, rather than their pedagogical approaches. The following three lessons exemplify the teaching practices of Nom, Tipa and Rai-ra. The first lesson field note was taken in Nom's classroom and the second and third lesson field notes were taken in Tipa's and Rai-ra's classroom respectively.

Nom writes words on the blackboard. She asks the whole class to discuss the words written on the blackboard to review the rule on final consonant sounds that was studied the day before. Next, pupils are asked to select one final consonant sound and to write the name of the consonant sound on the paper distributed by Nom. After that pupils are assigned to cut words constructed by the rule of consonant sounds chosen by each pupil from newspapers and glue the words on the piece of paper (Fieldnote, 02/03/2011).

Pupils are asked to sit on the floor at the front of class. Tipa spends an hour teaching one of the final consonant sounds. Tipa uses word cards, pictures and songs to supplement her teaching of the consonant sound. She assigns pupils to write freely about the pictures shown in the front of the classroom. After pupils complete their assignment, Tipa allows them to take a break. Tipa begins the new lesson by assigning pupils to find words constructed by using the rule on the final consonant sound from textbooks and storybooks and to write words on the paper she distributed (Fieldnote, 25/02/2011).

Rai-ra writes words on the portable board and asks questions to discuss the words constructed by using short vowels or long vowels. She continues with distributing word cards to each pupil and asks them to put word cards on the blackboard on which Rai-ra draws a line to divide it into two columns (long vowels and short vowels). Each pupil walks up to put a word card on the blackboard. Nom asks pupils to read each word card on the blackboard and asks them whether it has been put in the right column, as well as discussing the short vowels and long vowels. Pupils are asked to complete exercises in the textbook (Fieldnote, 11/07/2011).

From the above lesson observations, the three participants tended to include activities and materials as suggested by the recommended practices in their teaching. However, the typical features of instruction were whole class teaching and pupils completing assignments individually. Pupils engaged in activities, yet they participated in one activity for an hour rather than getting involved in a variety of activities, and they had little chance to work in pairs or small groups. The pupils followed the teacher's detailed procedure, rather than using their own initiative and taking advantage of communicative activities to speak or communicate their thoughts with others. From the example of these three lessons, these teachers were likely to change how they organised their instruction, rather than their methods of teaching.

## Summary

This chapter discussed how the six teachers made sense of the new experiences in their work. It described teachers' discussions of the state-sanctioned instruction. Their comments showed that they believed that the recommended practices were a good approach; it was beneficial for their pupils. However, these teachers claimed that they felt familiar with the teaching strategies proposed by the recommended policy. Meanwhile, their discussion of the recommended practices showed that their knowledge of the content of the approach, such as knowledge about the brain and its involvement in teaching strategies of the recommended practices was insufficient. Some of them expressed doubts about the recommended practices and their strategies for classroom practice. Additionally, conflicts were perceived by the teachers within the different demands of the official discourse, as well as their personal interests, with conflicting priorities appearing to influence their choice of option-taking for classroom instruction in the light of their view of what constituted good or appropriate teaching according to their preferences, immediate teaching needs (e.g. pupils' needs) and the requirements of the new practices. The response of these teachers was to choose to embrace the new practices and they also taught in pragmatic ways that were consistent with their beliefs and their preferences about how they could best meet the needs of their pupils and their immediate teaching needs, according to the possibilities and constraints given in the field.

## CHAPTER 7

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents an overall summary of the research, its main findings, implications and contributions, as well as some suggestions for future research. The purpose of this conclusion is twofold. First, to bring together the material of the substantive chapters by selecting the main unifying themes that can enable us to understand the teachers' experience of the recommended practices. Secondly, to suggest further directions for research and raise issues concerning policy implications.

This study sought to describe and explain the experiences of six teachers in implementing the new instruction policy and this understanding was developed by the use of ethnographic methodology to provide a qualitative interpretation. The study was conducted in the context of government primary schools of the OBEC in Thailand, in six schools. Thus, it adds to the limited literature on educational innovation in South East Asia and similarly to the limited research based on teachers' interpretation of initiatives informed by neuroscience. The educational context of Thailand, in which the recommended practices were initiated and developed, was discussed in Chapter 2 and the field of Thai school primary teachers and the schools' contexts were investigated in Chapter 4. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 explored teachers' experience of using the recommended practices.

The key questions that guided this study were:

- What are teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to teaching Thai?
- How do teachers implement the recommended policy for teaching Thai?
- What are teachers' views on the recommended policy for teaching Thai?
- What factors facilitate and impede teachers' implementation of the recommended policy?

In this research, drawing on Ball's (Ball 1994) conceptualisation of policy, teachers' sensemaking (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002) and Bourdieu's and de Certeau's theories have been used as the theoretical framework to explore and explain the experiences of teachers with the implementation of the new instructional policy. Ball's approach to education policy has supported me to understand the effect of education policy on how teachers make sense and make use of new national policy.

To answer the research questions the three analysis chapters were structured around the following areas:

- The teachers' settings in the context of Thai education (see chapter 4);
- The teachers' response to and practice of the recommended practices (see chapter 5);
- The reasons why the teachers wanted or did not want to teach the recommended practices (see chapter 5&6).

The key findings in relation to each of the questions guiding this study, to explore in more detail the participant teachers' experiences of the new policy, are outlined below.

## **7.1 Findings**

### **7.1.1 Inconsistency between teachers' expressed beliefs and observed practices regarding the recommended practices**

This study found that the participants endorsed the recommended practices as beneficial and useful, and were familiar with the teaching strategies of the recommended policy (see 6.1). However, such positive views and familiarity were not accompanied by fundamental changes in their classroom instruction. Overall, the participants still adhered to their preferred teaching approaches and appeared to adapt their instructional repertoire rather than adopt the recommended practices. There was only selective incorporation of the recommended practices into their practice, while the teachers' own favoured teaching practices and activities still dominated in the classroom. This finding

suggests that the teachers' expressed beliefs may not have been echoed in their practices.

Consequently, the recommended practices failed to encourage and support the kind of instruction envisioned by policy makers. The evidence of this study revealed a mismatch between teachers' interpretation of the recommended policy intentions. For example, the recommended practices dictate that instruction should emphasise activity based language learning such as singing, role play and small group activity. These methods involve providing pupils with opportunities to engage personally with the learning process, instead of merely completing set exercises. The lessons observed consisted mainly of getting pupils to work on exercises (see 5.3, 5.5 & 6.2), nothing corresponding to policymakers' intentions of activity based learning. This evidence suggests that the deeply rooted messages of the recommended practices (e.g. activity based learning) are perceived by the teachers as simple and superficial when they translate them into classroom practice.

The superficial responses to the recommended practices ideas reported here corroborate previous research on policy implementation. Spillane and Zeuli (1999) reported that teachers often practise only the superficial, behavioural regularities of the new practices, but hold on to their existing beliefs during curriculum change. A similar finding is also reported by Thai researchers on teachers' responses to change and reform. Cheewakaroom (2011) and Fitzpatrick (2011) found that there was greater inconsistency between policy and practice of English language reforms in the Thai context. All teachers in the study by Fitzpatrick (2011) were aware of child-centred pedagogy; however, the observations revealed very few examples of this style of learning. Similarly, Chorrojprasert's (2005) survey study, investigating 485 secondary teachers' use of new learner-centred strategies, such as pupil portfolios, found that teachers still relied on the teacher-centred teaching approach. Chorrojprasert indicated that the policy direction contrasted markedly with the existing teaching practice of Thai teachers. Meanwhile, Cheewakaroom's (2011) study found that differences were identified between what the policy suggested and what teachers taught. In Cheewakaroom's study, whilst the teachers espoused learner-centred pedagogy, this was not practised in any detail.

### **7.1.2 Changes in teachers' methods of Thai instruction: changes in the structure of teaching rather than the pedagogy**

As has been discussed earlier, the participants selectively incorporated the recommended practices, which suggest that they changed the structure of their instruction rather than changing the pedagogical method of their teaching of Thai. None of the teachers followed the new model of teaching language suggested by the recommended practices. Each of them had a different way of coping with this (see 5.1). Three of them (Nom, Tipa and Ra-tee) selectively chose to incorporate the reading stories aloud technique for teaching language into their pre-existing practices. Specifically, Nom and Tipa embraced this teaching technique because it was consistent with their preferences and prior experience. Meanwhile, Ra-tee chose the reading aloud technique from the new practices that she considered to be "what pupils need".

In contrast, others (Pan, Ya and Rai-ra) did not embrace this technique, but persisted with their favoured method of teaching language which seemed to be similar to the phonics approach. Thus I have found a similar continuum of adaptation to that found among American teachers in Spillane and Zeuli's (1999) and Coburn's (2004) studies – ranging from rejection on one end to accommodation on the other end.

All participants increasingly used teaching materials, such as the new textbooks, story or children's books, learning activities and materials from the training. However, they dismissed small group work activities (see 6.2). These changes illustrate the use of a wider range of texts and increased incorporation of learning activities from the recommended practices. The teachers' responses to the recommended practices were likely at the lesson management and the content level. Despite these noteworthy modifications, they did not relatively change their teaching in response to the practices as recommended.

Partially, their responses indicate that they tended to experience conflict and struggle regarding the pedagogical principles (e.g. phonics and whole language in reading instruction) in their pedagogical decision making in teaching Thai. In particular, these teachers may view literacy teaching as essentially the transmission of skills, rather than viewing literacy learning as something that

takes place in a social environment through intellectual exchanges on which what is to be learned and is to some extent a joint construction of teacher and students (Fischer 2006). In terms of language learning, classroom interaction is perhaps central to the learning process. The changes these teachers made to their instruction suggest that the trajectory of bringing a particular practice into the domain of discourse to bring about a desired change is not as simple as the teachers doing what they were told to do (Roehler and Duffy, 1991). Evidence from this investigation indicates that implementation of the recommended policy is not a simple process, as text or people's talk are rejected, selected out, interpreted, reinterpreted and re-created based on experiences and interpretations of interpretations (Ball, 1994). Change should be considered in terms of the teaching habitus of the teachers (e.g. the particular assumption on pedagogical principles and techniques for teaching literacy, drills and exercises).

### **7.1.3 The possibility of teachers' habitus transformation**

Based on the discussion in 7.1.2, teachers' approach to processing new knowledge is likely to be a conservative process, rather than any radical transformation. However, this study found evidence of the participants' modification of their old habitus, through the social interaction involved in every teaching practice, when they encountered the new experience of the recommended practices. Transformation of habitus appeared to have occurred with regard to the case of Ra-tee. Despite her claim not to use read-aloud techniques with younger learners, the study found that Ra-tee seemed to rethink her teaching of language to the beginning-level class. Aware that her pupils from economically disadvantaged homes needed vocabulary development, she selectively added reading stories aloud to her existing teaching practice (see 5.1). Her response to the recommended practices indicates that she was no longer only basing her teaching on her predetermined habitus about language learning but also interacting with and modifying her old habitus. Such response likely indicates the power of discourse of the recommended practices; it shapes on one side, whilst on the other side, it modifies teachers' habitus.

Although Ra-tee may have shifted her habitus, data demonstrated that she made only minor attempts at changing her teaching of Thai. Interview data indicated that she was prevented from teaching in line with her recently refined

habitus by her particular circumstances, such as time constraints and workload. Consequently, she was evidently satisfied with the compromise in approach that she was able to reach. The influencing factors for teaching the recommended practices are developed in the following section.

Moreover, this study indicates the teachers' belief that the new practices had some positive impact on their beliefs and practices in teaching and learning. This finding implies that the implementation of the recommended practices appeared to be successful to some degree in engaging the teachers in examining and changing their beliefs and practices through the learning experiences associated with the recommended practices (see 6.3). Furthermore, this finding suggests that teachers' beliefs play a crucial role in their adoption of new ideas and achievement of sustainable professional development, a finding that is in line with earlier studies (Kelchtermans 1993; Freeman 1993). Existing studies assume that teachers' beliefs and habitus drive their actions; however, experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or addition to beliefs as well (Richardson 1996; Roth 2002).

#### **7.1.4 The interplay between various facilitating and frustrating factors in teachers' responses to the recommended practices**

There were both opportunities and obstacles in translating the principles of the recommended practices to participants' classrooms (6.1&6.2). The different levels of engagement among the teachers in this study resulted from the variety of interrelated factors at play, simultaneously contributing to and hindering their implementation of the recommended practices. Their decision making and options taken on practices had related to their consideration of the many contingencies and constraints present in their classroom realities and traditional values or the rules of the game in the field.

Teachers reported that both internal (within their control) and external (outside their control) factors influenced their differing responses to the recommended practices. They claimed that the various contingencies that motivated them to teach the recommended practices included: prestige, praise and faith; enthusiasm for incorporating activities; positive effects on pupils; supportive administrators; and pressure brought by the official pedagogic discourse (see

6.1). Meanwhile, they believed that they were constrained from applying the recommended practices by such factors as feeling blamed; school and outside policies; examinations; their existing beliefs and experiences; and overload of routine work and responsibilities (see 6.2).

Existing literature in the field of school reform and education change in Western and Thai contexts indicates that a wide variety of external factors may influence teachers' responses to new instructional initiatives, including supportive administrators (Hallinger and Kantamara 2001); a stable school environment that encourages change (Boyd 2002); examination (Fitzpatrick 2011); and teacher workload (Chorrojprasert 2005). In this study, the participants' concern over these conditions tended to outweigh their expressed beliefs about the recommended practices and prevented them from translating those beliefs into classroom practices. As the data showed, administrative support played a dual role, both as constraint and encouragement for implementation of the new practices, for all the teachers. The teachers expressed that they needed encouragement and instructional leadership from their headteachers to support them in implementing the new practices, rather than merely supplying the necessary resources (see 6.1). They wanted headteachers to visit their classrooms to assist in the adoption of new instructional approaches and routine teaching and learning. Meanwhile, some teachers reported that classroom observation feedback from headteachers adversely affected their self-esteem.

In addition, a number of internal factors have affected the teachers' enactment of the new instructional policy in this investigation. Teachers' embracing of the recommended practices in their classrooms seemed to be influenced by whether or not they perceived the benefits of engagement in implementation of the new practices. Both teachers who were very enthusiastic and those who were sceptical about the recommended practices perceived that there were benefits of participating in the recommended practices. They perceived such benefits as varying from teacher to teacher, ranging from increased professional growth (e.g. prestige, status, face and promotion) to improved pupil outcomes. Significantly, this study's result suggests that enthusiasm plays a positive role in motivating some teachers to use the new teaching policy. Importantly, if teachers are interested in the new teaching policy, this motivates them to try it out, helps them to make sense of it and, finally, to convince them to adopt it.

### **7.1.5 Teachers' understandings about the knowledge about the brain**

The analysis made it apparent that as the teachers engaged with the recommended practices, they developed their own ideas about brain development and teaching strategies claimed to be brain-based. Consequently, they appeared to use neuroscience as a framework for explaining and justifying their teaching practices.

Their responses to the recommended practices demonstrated that they tended to recognise that neuroscience enhanced their work with pupils beyond affecting their particular teaching methods (e.g. story read-aloud). In particular, in the cases of Nom and Tipa, for example, their active engagement in the recommended practices actually assisted in the process of reconfirming and strengthening their deeply held beliefs about some teaching techniques (e.g. read-aloud) (see 5.1.2 & 5.1.4). This is because their formatted motivation for these practices came from methods learnt long ago during their training. At the same time, the state messages, as embodied in the national reform document or national curriculum, were either contradictory or such documents actually served to support these teachers' approach to teaching (e.g. hands-on activities, activity-based learning). Importantly, these teachers did not distinguish the varying role of neuroscience in terms of specific classroom practice. Their participation in the recommended practices led them to believe in the value of neuroscience for specific teaching strategies such as read-aloud technique and using colourful teaching aids. The danger here is that these teachers and possibly all the teachers in this study may think that there are brain-based reasons to adopt read-aloud techniques and other strategies for teaching the recommended practices. The contributions of this study are discussed next.

## **7.2 Contributions to knowledge and the research**

This study contributes to knowledge through compiling experiences from teachers in Thailand on policy implementation, driver and barriers as well as teachers' change.

### **1. Bridging the gap between policy and practice**

This research extends the range of existing theories surrounding policy change and practice issues by compiling teachers' perspectives in terms of their experiences. One particular contribution is the identification of multiple interpretations of the new teaching policy by different teachers, which highlighted the gap that exists between policy and teacher practice. Different perspectives all influence the change process both in the production and implementation phase. Whilst this has been reported in Western contexts, the study adds to the literature by showing that in the Thai context too, policy implementation is not a purely linear process, but rather a recursive process.

Additionally, this study also contributes to the knowledge of policy and practice in that to have success in achieving policy change, there should be consistency between policy and practice. More effective implementation can be achieved by attending to the various factors contributing to successful change, such as more provision of substantial, on-going professional development and a better support system for efficient leadership within schools for sustainable change that draws on research in the Thai context.

### **2. Teachers' change**

A further contribution is that this thesis has added to the expanding literature on theory of change and theories of policy and practice, specifically teachers' change and their contribution to policy implementation. The emphasis was on how teachers understand and react to the effects of new instructional policy change. As such, this study provides useful information regarding their perspectives on the policy change, their beliefs in the practices in relation to teaching Thai and what teachers actually taught using such change. This study demonstrates the analysis of teachers' position-taking strategies is important for understanding the contradiction between new policy development and

implementation; and understanding different pressures / priorities that have influenced teachers' pedagogical decision-making during implementation is important in understanding the lack of implementation of the change process. It became clear that teachers' stances enhanced or inhibited their willingness to engage the new instructional change (see 5.3, 6.2.2 & 6.3). For policy to succeed, it requires to take cognisance of teachers' dispositions toward the intended change.

### **3. Broadening the link between teacher sensemaking and social practice theory**

This study also makes a contribution to the connection between teacher sensemaking framework and social practice theory. I have embraced teacher sense-making to explain how teachers made sense (intra-subjective; inter-subjective and organisation meaning [e.g. rules, norms and policies]) of their work in their schools whilst they were negotiating and mediating the educational practices claiming to be brain-based, as well as to explore Bourdieu's terminology; sense-making being the process through which the habitus negotiates, interprets and constructs change within the field of government primary education in Thailand.

In terms of methodology, this study has extended conjoint analysis in the Thai context, using Bourdieu's and de Certeau's theory, to understand teachers' engagement in the theoretical developments within their fields, and how they combine them with their own lived experience to shape future actions through critical reflection. The successful application of, for example, the concept of habitus in Thailand, although moderated to account for cultural specificity, demonstrates that Bourdieu's theory is powerful in educational research in Thai and perhaps similar contexts. I also investigated areas of the framework used in this study, such as policy analysis, teachers' sensemaking, sociology, in an innovative way, to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' thinking and possibly broaden the horizons and produce insights for further research. The above contributions of the present study indicate useful areas for further research which are discussed in the following section.

Next, the implications of this study are discussed.

## 7.3 Implications

According to the findings of this study, I would recommend policy makers, teacher educators and social researchers to consider the following proposals:

### Implications for policy makers

Two particular areas are potentially worthy of consideration by policy makers: establishing systems to support teacher change and raise teachers' awareness of neuro-ethics and neuro-education literature. These areas are discussed in detail below.

1. This study has shown that it is crucial to establish systems to support teachers in changing. It was found that there were differences in interpretation and implementation of the recommended practices which reflected the autonomy of the interpreters. Thus policy makers should consider and acknowledge teachers as active interpreters in the implementation process. Additionally, this investigation found that the effectiveness of instructional change relied on actual implementation within the school and classroom realities. This suggests the need for support mechanisms to help teachers to adapt to the new requirements. Policy makers need to take into account key factors regarding the implementer(s) and the local contexts in which the required changes are to be operationalised, in order to establish harmony between the policies and the reality of teachers' teaching (e.g. administration, educational values in the field, examinations, materials and resources, teachers' work overload and teachers' learning). In this study, participants voiced their need for support in understanding how to implement the policy innovations, for instance. Therefore, each of those areas should be studied carefully, in order to devise a holistic system to support delivery of the new forms of instruction in classrooms. Some emergent questions may require investigation, for example:

1. Due to the choice of pedagogies appearing to reply partially on the participants' habitus, to what extent, and under what conditions can teacher reflection transform habitus?

2. How can teachers be helped to recognise the connections between different curricula as well as across the whole area of learning assessment?

3. How do teachers interpret the relationship between examinations and classroom pedagogy?

2. As discussed earlier, many teachers in this study demonstrated understandings about their perceived pedagogies claimed to be brain-based (see 6.1.6). Regarding concerns about neuromyths (Howard-Jones 2014), there is clearly a need for further action to enhance teacher educators' awareness of neuro-ethics and neuro-education literature (Fischer, Goswami and Geake 2010; Hardiman et al. 2012 and Sylvan and Christodoulou 2010).

### **Implications for Teacher Educators**

I have claimed that personal practical theories appeared to influence the practice of language teaching. It is also clear that training support encouraged Ra-tee to consider new ways of thinking about reading instruction and such ideas influenced her incorporation of teaching strategies and activities (see 5.1). Clearly, teacher educators (e.g. universities, national/local level) have a responsibility to actively engage prospective and practising teachers in activity based learning in order to build an experiential grounding and solid understanding of using such methods in the classroom. In addition, having an opportunity to reflect on their beliefs and past experiences, their teaching habitus and doxa, including contextual factors (e.g. teachers' time and resources and examination), is equally pivotal to the process of belief and habitus change.

Furthermore, education officials (e.g. state curriculum staff) who influence local educational policy need to consider the contradictory messages teachers have received from different discourses and must be mindful of teachers' interpretations about the nature of official documents, in order to provide professional development activities that will enable teachers to deal with this issue (see 6.1).

Thus, firstly, education officials should explicitly address these misconceptions about the curriculum through working with teachers. Secondly, at the same time, local support is crucial in order to help teachers reconsider how they think about teaching. Finally, as the national curriculum was viewed simply as a list of topics, the message of reform in national curricula as well as the initiatives must

be presented explicitly for teachers, namely that curriculum and initiatives are intended to shape pedagogy and guide the selection of content based on national standards and benchmarks. Possible further research is discussed in the following section.

#### **7.4 Possible Future Research**

This section makes recommendations for further research based on the findings of this study.

There is urgent need for research into how to achieve greater consistency between policy and practice and thereby greater effectiveness of the change to new instructional pedagogy in the Thai context. The study has also shown that there are various issues regarding neuroscience and education in the Thai context that could be interesting to investigate through further research, for instance:

- What is the role of neuroscience in Thai education?
- What is the current understanding of the application of neuroscience in education in other contexts?
- What is the general attitude of teachers towards the relationship between neuroscience and education and the application of neuroscience in education?
- To what extent are educators confused about neuroscience and its relevance?
- How does their knowledge of neuroscience enhance their work beyond the possibilities of new methods for teaching?
- How do teachers' perspectives on brain development and function influence their practice?
- How can education policies better prepare and nurture teachers for developments in neuroscience research around education?

In this study, I investigated the experiences of the participant teachers by using an ethnographic approach. It would be interesting to use this method to

examine other settings. Conversely, the rich data and analysis in the study could provide the basis for research involving a greater number of participants, using only interviews rather than observation or potentially surveys. Additionally, in this study my data included discussions and conversations with other agents who were involved in the implementation of the recommended practices, such as headteachers and officials from the ESA and the OBEC. Thus it could be beneficial to investigate further the experience of these groups of people and to understand the possibilities and constraints they encounter in their roles in terms of policy implementation.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This study investigated some Thai primary school teachers' experiences of implementing the new instructional policy informed by neuroscience for teaching Thai. Through this inquiry, I have attempted to focus on learning from the teachers, not intruding and manipulating them, but rather giving them the opportunity to "voice" themselves on this momentous education policy change. This has been a gratifying and profound journey. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to these six teachers and other people in schools who shared so much of their time and insight and wisdom to bring this thesis to fulfilment.

The research question was addressed as follows. First, the experiences of primary school teachers were analytically described, emphasising the complex nature of the recommended policy change. Second, the analysis showed how translation of intended policy into classroom practice could be inhibited, partly due to a lack of understanding of the principles underlying the initiatives, the variety of beliefs and experiences, and constraining classroom realities and school context. This might implicitly allude to a probable gap between education policy change implementation and education practice. In particular, in relation to neuroscience and its application to education, the study indicates that a complex process of interpretation and adaptation takes place related to teachers' existing beliefs, practices and habitus. This suggests that a simple transmission model of policy change and professional learning would not be appropriate, in the Thai context at least, for supporting teachers' engagement with ideas from neuroscience. Thus, third, the study may contribute to the body

of knowledge of education policy change, and the study's practical suggestions for professional development regarding interventions informed by neuroscience could assist teacher educators and policy makers. Fourth, I showed in this inquiry that from the ontological and epistemological perspectives, teachers' realities and construction of understandings are many. Different perspectives influence the change process, both in the production by policy makers and implementation phases by teachers. The understandings gained through this study have the potential to inform education policy makers about the complexity of seeking to transform educational practice through policy change.

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# APPENDIX I

## THE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

### 1. Primary education reform

This section briefly describes the current Thai primary education field. Since the education reform of 1990, the organising system, structure and process of education have been restructured and developed to bring necessary changes at all levels. This process included many changes within the education system, such as the provision of a twelve-year basic quality education free of charge, decentralisation of finance and administration, giving schools more freedom to set curricula and mobilize resources, setting of educational standards, raising the professional standards of teachers and staff and teaching and learning process, particularly pedagogical reform (from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach) according to the Thai National Education Act 1999, amended in 2002.

Since 2003, twelve years of compulsory and free basic education have been mainly provided to Thai children by the Ministry of Education [MOE], covering 6 years of primary schooling (called Prathom 1 to 6) or grade 1 to grade 6 with age range of 6-11, followed by 3 years of lower secondary (called Mattayom, 1 to 3 or grade 7 to grade 9), covering the age group 12-14 and 3 years of upper secondary schooling (called Mattayom, 4 to 6 or grade 10 to grade 12), an age range of 15-17.

According to the administrative reforms, public primary schools have been monitored and supported by ESAs and under the supervision of the OBEC. There were 175 ESAs in 2003 and this number increased to 185 in 2008. In 2010, the ESAs were reorganised into 183 primary education service areas and 42 secondary education service areas. Each Primary Education Service Area is responsible for approximately 200 primary schools. Most of the government Thai primary schools supervised by the MOE commonly offer two levels of school education, pre-primary (children aged 4 - 6) and primary level.

After the first decade of reform efforts, many studies on the results of the educational reform reported that it had not been as successful as expected (Wongwanich et al. 2015; Suknaisith & Wongwanich 2012). Currently, the issue of reorganising the administrative system is still a matter of controversy. For example, one area of emphasis of the system reform has been decentralisation of administration of the education system, which has led to efforts to transfer schools under the OBEC to local administrative organisations. This effort, however, has resulted in contradictions. Most teachers protested against the policy and still strongly disagree with the transfer. In 2010, around 430 schools voluntarily transferred. Tayraukham's survey (2009) found that teachers in 19 provinces of the North-eastern region expressed anxiety over the transfer of schools to local administrative organisations. The reason was that teachers were not sure about the quality of their local organisation, including their vision, leadership ability and their financial resources.

Regarding the education process, a problem with quality was evident (Panhoon & Wongwanich 2012; Suknaisith & Wongwanich 2012; Thongnoi, Srisa-ard & Sri-ampai 2013; Wongwanich et al. 2015). Foremost among Thai educational policy concerns was reform of learning towards a more creative and constructivist approach to knowledge acquisition. According to the 1999 National Education Act, the proposed learning reform was essentially a shift from focusing on content to focusing on human beings as learners and their needs. A learner-centred approach had become mandatory in all Thai schools. The main aim of developing teachers in relation to teaching and learning practices is to encourage a change from teacher-centred to learner-centred teaching approach. Teachers have been advised to play the role of facilitator and encourage students to develop active learning with freedom in thought, action and problem solving within the extent of the ethical and moral values of the society (Office of the Education Council, 2006; Fry 2002).

To materialise the learning reforms, many strategies have been adopted. For instance, numerous teaching training courses to change teachers' behaviour from teacher-centred teaching to learner-centred learning have been organised by the OBEC and related organisations (e.g. universities) (Office of the Education Council 2006). Teachers and educators have been also supported to

attend training courses abroad. Additionally, the change to the new curriculum issued in 2001 allowed schools to prepare their own school curriculum appropriately to actual situations and serve their real needs. However, this change also caused a high level of concern among teachers since such change required teachers to have the knowledge and skills to create their own school curriculum and suitable teaching and learning activities (Sangnapaboworn, 2007).

Graham (2010) indicates that the challenges posed by this shift firmly remain. A study by Hallinger & Lee (2011) found that a decade after the formal initiation of education reform, the nation's teachers had yet to change their behaviour regarding teaching and learning, ICT implementation and school management systems to a substantial degree. Furthermore, any such modifications did not improve teachers' ability to develop students according to the real purposes of education reform. Education quality, in particular student and teacher quality, was reported to require urgent improvement (National Council for Education, 2009, Foreword page).

There were a number of problems. Pillay (2002) indicates many difficulties in teacher development in accordance with the reform. First, stakeholders at all levels do not have adequate essential knowledge and skills about new learning and teaching methods. Second, there is a lack of local experts to distribute the new knowledge and skills amongst the teachers. Moreover, an appropriate alternative model for in-service training is not available. Thirdly, there is a lack of accreditation among many providers offering teaching training and staff development. Finally, there is deficient planning for national implementation and specification of support and commitment by the government.

Other problems might be largely attributed to the fact that the underlying ideas for reform projects in many cases have been borrowed from Western values regarding education reform. Moving from imported education reform to practice appears to bring challenges or issues of appropriate interpretation by teachers and educators (UNESCO-PROAP, 1999). During 1999, the first year of implementation, for example, the terminology 'student-centred learning' was used to signal the intent of changing the teaching and learning vision. But there was no Thai equivalent for this terminology. This ideological term was probably best translated into Thai as the equivalent of learning where the student was the

'centre-middle'. This caused much confusion to practitioners in schools in attempting to change their practice and classroom environment. Later, in 2000, Thai policymakers selected the different terminology of 'learning where the learner was important', which corresponded closely to the English term of the 'learner-centred classroom', as a replacement for the earlier terminology (Hallinger, 2001).

An additional challenge was posed by the conditions of teaching. Thai teachers had an overload of responsibilities; there were inadequate materials and equipment as well as insufficient budgets. Moreover, large class sizes, overloading of routine work and responsibilities were examples of the obstacles reported in the Thai context that have profoundly affected teachers' response to the reform effort (Chorrojprasert, 2005). Cohen (1990) argues that these conditions do not sufficiently account for teachers' resistance to being more adventurous in their teaching and trying something new. Next, the reading instruction policy in Thai education is discussed.

## **2. Reading instruction in Thai primary education**

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Thai primary schools were sites of reform that was partially focused on changing how children were taught to read. A review of the Thai national curriculum developed in 1978 identified that the curriculum documents did not advocate particular prescribed teaching methods but instead provided ideas for organising activity-based language learning. Punnotook (1999) claims that from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, before the evolution of formal education and up to the late 1950s, textbooks for young learners were developed based on a spelling-sound system. Traditional Thai language textbooks relied heavily on the synthetic method, by which the child first mastered the letters, then syllables, next words, and finally sentences. Thai writing was the representation of sounds by letters. Hence, it was natural that the teaching of the sound-symbol relationship received priority. This approach was likely to be deeply institutionalised in reading instruction at that time.

The major shift began in 1945, with the influence of modern Western psychology; the new textbooks became the inspiration for a whole-word approach to reading instruction (Punnotook 1999). In 1955, a textbook was

developed based upon such an approach and was mandated and distributed to schools. However, after one year of implementation, this approach began to attract criticism from students' parents and the press. Critics began to call for a return to phonics and a heavy skills orientation. Then in 1956, the MOE responded by revising the old textbooks on the basis of the whole-word method rather than letter-sound correspondences. This approach gained a particularly high profile in Thailand in 1960, with the Thai MOE making it a specific element of its curriculum policy on appropriate reading instruction. This shift was fundamentally different from conventional wisdom, and, in turn, was linked to the beginning of the government's adoption of teachers' manuals focusing on the whole-word approach from that time until the present day. From 1978 to the present, the production of Thai textbooks, from primary to secondary, has been assigned to a committee established by a department of the MOE, in cooperation with the MOE. Alternatively, private publishers are also allowed to produce such books.

A major policy shift led to the emergence of yet another version of early reading instruction in 1998. An early intervention programme known as Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) was piloted. This initiative ultimately made its way into government policy and spawned professional development and instructional material provision across the country within the National Primary Education Plan (Walker, Rattanavich and Oller, 1992). Thai primary teachers, including some participating teachers, were consequently bombarded with conflicting messages about what constituted good ideas about reading instruction. The CLE is an integrative approach (or balanced approach) that attempts simultaneously to accommodate both phonics-based and whole language theories in the teaching of reading. The notion of CLE for grades 1-3 involved the following steps (Rattanavich, 1992):

- Step 1: Shared reading experience (e.g. organise activities such as planting beans or initial text reading (a simple story);
- Step 2: Reviewing the text, using role-playing, mime, retelling a story, discussion and so on, based on the activity or text;
- Step 3: Negotiating the learner's own text, as a whole group;

- Step 4: Making a big book; individual learners copying their own version of the text and rereading it;
- Step 5: Language activities; elaborating activities and games in small groups (to develop more specific literacy skills such as phonics, word building-skills, sentence construction, spelling, punctuation and grammatical structures).

However, in 1999, this initiative ended, and a new curriculum was mandated in 2001 and revised in 2008. The current Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E.2551 (A.D. 2008) only provides the basic strand of what is to be learned in Thai language and measures of quality of learning (Grade 3, Grade 6, Grade 9 and Grade 12), with grade level indicators identified. Thai language skills are split into five strands, namely Reading, Writing, Listening, Viewing and Speaking, Principles of Usage of Thai Language and Literature and Literary Works. With the introduction of the 2001 National Curriculum, Thai was made compulsory from the first grade of primary school, with primary grade 1-3 pupils taking 200 hours per year (5 hours per week), whilst the number of hours of Thai instruction decreases in primary grades 4-6 – to 160 hours per year (4 hours per week). There is, however, an absence of suggested teaching approaches for language instruction.

Following the introduction of the recommended practices in 2008, the OBEC has recently been placing strong emphasis on implementation by teachers in 493 pilot schools of its new strategies for teaching Thai (also see 1.1). The strategies provide a framework of teaching, especially in terms of teachers' approach to reading instruction. These involve reading aloud to pupils; teachers reading aloud with pupils; small group reading; independent reading; and structured grammar work with the whole class.

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## APPENDIX II

### SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THAI PRIMARY EDUCATION FIELD

This section highlights some salient features of the Thai primary education field that were considered very relevant to the formation and implementation of the recommended practices. This study empirically examined the experiences of teachers who encountered a new experience (i.e. the recommended practices) in a field with which participants were not familiar. In Bourdieu's notion of field, there are particular rules of the game in each field. There are four distinct characteristics which might be thought by teachers and other people in the field as the existing rules of the game in Thai education, including the hierarchical education system; the importance of education; power relations in schools and power relations in the classroom; and rote learning.

#### **1. The hierarchical education system**

Attempts at a decentralisation policy in primary education had been premised since 1978 and such initiatives were more advanced by 1999. For instance, the idea of school-based management had its basis in education decentralisation in 1997. Despite an apparent increase in the quality of delivery and the responsiveness of providers to local constituents within Thailand's current education system, it has been observed that the system has to contend with a strongly hierarchical nature (Fry 2002; Vorapanya, 2008). Office of the National Council's (2007) study indicated that the central organisation still retains a central role in managing education due to familiarity with the top-down approach to policy decisions, even though decentralisation of authority to education service areas has been mandated.

Recently, the administrative system has been characterised by a three-level structure: the national level, the educational service areas level and schools. The national level still plays a central role in terms of responsibility for managing education within the broader framework of policy, standard setting, regulation, licensing and some elements of supervision. This also includes decisions related to the national curriculum content, instruction time, budget, teachers' salary and resources allocation. The role of the ESAs includes putting

government educational policy into practice, monitoring, empowering and supporting the educational management of the office area in managing education for achieving objectives, leading to the student reaching the required educational standards. Schools are responsible for the formulation of local education policies and planning as well as the management of education in their schools. Conversely, UNESCO (2007) reported that schools in Thailand have less autonomy regarding finances and control of resources. In short, the administrative and management structure of Thai primary education seems still to reflect dominant, subordinate and intermediate position relations.

## **2. The importance of education**

The second possible salient characteristic of Thai education field is that Thais, in general, place only moderate value on education and its related values. Suebnusorn and Chalamwong (2010) believe that Thais do not place high value on the importance of knowledge for the sake of it and indicate that Thais value and give importance to form more than content of education. Most Thais view education as a means to facilitate children's social mobility rather than an end value in itself (e.g. improving social position, gaining increased prestige or achieving higher income and subjective satisfaction with one's occupation above one's counterparts who do not have college certificates or degrees) (Komin 1999). Probably, Klausner's (1993) work on Thai culture best demonstrates the lack of importance attributed to education in the Thai context. Klausner considers, among other things, law, village life, Buddhism, ceremonies and festivals, labour relations, family structure, cuisine and eating habits, ghosts, taboos, and language, but fails to consider education or educational institutions.

## **3. Power relations in schools**

The third possible salient feature of Thai power relations in schools is the high power distance between the leadership and the stakeholders in schools. Furthermore, the relationships in schools appear to hold unique challenges for the people within them due to particular local cultural values. Some studies focusing on leadership and school improvement demonstrate that the norms of the educational system and the culturally expected norms both wield influence

over the implementation of new initiatives (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000).

Thai society places great emphasis on deferential behaviour and submissiveness in its relational orientations. Thai society is arranged in a hierarchy such that almost every relationship is defined in terms of superiority or inferiority. Thais place great value on seniority and status by birth, age, knowledge, education. Thus relationships are hierarchical and conflict is avoided in order to promote harmony and such superficial relationships are likely to be valued by most Thais. Expressions of feelings or emotions are discouraged and one's feelings should be kept to oneself, as expressed by the Thai term '*kreng jai*' (this word has no English equivalent: its closest meaning is "to be considerate, to feel reluctant to impose upon another person, to take another person's feelings (and 'ego') into account, or to take every measure not to cause discomfort or inconvenience for another person" (Komin 1999). In particular, subordinates or juniors appear to accept the orders of their superiors or elders in practical terms, with a tendency to '*kreng jai*' or show deference for high seniority and status.

There are other Thai custom terms, such as *kreng glua*, *hai kaid*, which may shape the attitude and behaviour of teachers, pupils and stakeholders in the Thai school context. *Kreng glua* refers to the feeling of respectful fear ). *Hai kaid* means to show proper respect, honour and sometimes "giving face" in interactions with each other in Thai society. *Hai kaid* particularly applies to a person who could be considered senior by age, rank or position and creation of a situation where that person is not looked on in the very best of lights. With regard to high power distance in Thai schools of the head teachers due to high rank or age, it may be possible that teachers, pupils or parents feel "*kreng glua*" towards head teachers and administrative staff. Additionally, the subordinates (teachers, pupils, and parents) are expected to "*hai kaid*" to the headteacher or administrative staff because of his/her status, position or seniority.

Moreover, most Thais tend to regard strong leaders as possessing "*baramee*" (personal power) that can influence the direction of the group in Thai schools and other organisations (Hallinger et al. 2000). "*Baramee*" is not the same as bureaucratic power. A leader acquires *baramee* over time through interaction and experience in the public or corporate arena. If a leader begins to behave

well, he/she is generally building his/her *baramee* and one day he/she will be a well-respected and well-loved leader. Leaders with *baramee* are viewed as sincere and have the moral authority to lead.

Given these cultural norms, differences in power and status may be accepted as natural. Headteachers may accept the great power accorded to leaders within Thai values. It may be possible that a style of leadership prevails in which subordinates need to follow the orders of the head. Headteachers may expect their orders to be heeded without complaint or resistance, but this is not necessarily the case in reality. In addition, regard given to the management structure at school level, based on the three grade levels of management: headteacher, deputy headteacher and class teacher (see Figure 4.1 and 4.2), is likely to illustrate the characteristics of a hierarchical structure. The headteacher seems to play a central role in decisions on the day to day management of school education. Consequently, administrators are accorded a relatively high degree of authority and social deference and the acceptable response of Thai staff is to offer relatively little discussion and few questions. This feature is likely to be broadly observed in Thai school organisational management (Hallinger and Kantamara 2001). Eldridge and Cranston (2009) examined how Thai culture affected the management of higher education organisations and found that administrative staff were usually not expected to be consulted by their staff, and staff viewed modesty as their most appropriate form of behaviour.

Hallinger et al. (2000) explain that this is because Thai teachers appear to behave so as to fulfil their socially expected roles. High deference, respect, and "*hai gaid*" toward those of senior rank, status and "*baramee*" in Thai social relations, therefore, tend to shape Thai school staff compliance and practice in the form of 'surface compliance' with the implementation of the new practice (Hallinger and Kantamara 2000). Thus, Hallinger and Kantamara (2001) assert that the head teacher/principal's support for an innovation is more important in Thai schools than in Western contexts.

#### 4. Power relations in the classroom community and rote learning

The fourth possible salient characteristic of the Thai primary education field is that of hierarchical power relationships in the classroom community. As earlier discussed, Thais respect hierarchical relationships, and Thai children are commonly taught appropriate behaviour concerning that hierarchy. They are likely to be taught to recognise the difference between “high places” and “low places”, particularly in the roles of older and younger or adults and children or teachers and pupils, for example.

The relationship between teachers and their pupils is similar, in that seniority and status rule. Thai teachers are viewed as demonstrating moral goodness through the giving of knowledge. Consequently, high status is given to Thai teachers. Thai students consider themselves to be inexperienced, and hence they are not in a position to share or express ideas (Adamson 2005). It is possible that the Thai social values of *kreng jai* and *hai kiad* may affect the relationship between teachers and pupils in the classroom community. Pupils are expected to *kreng jai* and *hai kiad* to their teachers, whilst teachers do not take being challenged or questioned by their students kindly (Deveney 2005; Foley 2005).

Another Thai social value, expressed by the notion of “*Bun khun*” (or the reciprocity of goodness) (Tiranasar 2004), may exercise influence in the power relations in classrooms. *Bun Khun* is described as a constant awareness and consciousness of the benefit or favour another person has bestowed. For instance, what parents or guardians do in raising their children, or what teachers do in teaching pupils, or what employers do for their employees, is considered *bun khun*. Kindness must be recognised and appreciated as well as returned. Therefore, *bun khun* is one of the most highly valued characteristics in Thai society. People should express a feeling of *bun khun* and adhere to practices involved in returning kindness, often on a continuous basis and in a variety ways. *Bun khun* cannot be and should not be measured quantitatively in material terms. Thai schools and educational institutions are likely to hold “*Wai Khru*” ceremonies regularly for pupils to pay respect to their teachers, in order to express their gratitude and formalise the pupil-teacher relationship.

The unique Thai social values of *kreng jai*, *hai kiad* and *bun khun* may have an impact on pupils' thinking abilities and learning interactions in the classrooms. In the light of these norms, Thai teachers and pupils demonstrate little in the way of debate and argument in interaction, and pupils are unquestioning as well as uncritical in their thinking and behaviour in classroom interactions compared to pupils in Western classrooms (Baker 2008). A reluctance to talk and rote learning are thus commonly found (Eldridge and Cranson 2009). Raktham (2008) explains this passive attitude to learning could be explained by the Thai national culture: both teachers and students are fully aware of their roles and status in the class and are acting according to their understanding and expectations of these roles (e.g. the value of *kreng jai*). Therefore, the feature of rote memorisation might reflect another salient feature of learning styles in Thai classrooms. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there are similarities between other Asian cultures and Thai culture in attitudes toward critical thinking and argumentation. As Hongladarom (1998) argues, the notions of critical thinking, logic and argumentative thinking in Asian philosophy have been suppressed in favour of other values such as social harmony and intuitive thinking.

In order to identify the potential implications for teachers' practices, this section has focused on discussion of issues that may be most relevant to the implementation of the recommended practices in the Thai primary education field. I have therefore investigated some salient characteristics of the primary education system in Thailand. The introduction of the recommended practices, coming from a different Western-imported educational culture, created challenges for the teachers in this study. The teachers were expected to make professional adjustments to enable new practices to be achieved. The review suggests that there might be a gap between the recommended practices, a different Western-borrowed educational culture and the actual classroom practice of teachers in this study. For instance, they were expected to integrate games, songs and activities into everyday learning and teaching. In order to organise these activities, teachers were expected to modify their views on their roles and the role of their pupils. Next, I address types of capital that are deemed the most valuable in schools taking part in this study.

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## APPENDIX III

### Examples of data analysis: initial coding framework and initial category framework

Table1 Different degrees of adopting reading aloud technique

Structure one (Teacher3 and Teacher2)	Structure two (Teacher4)	Structure three (Teacher1, Teacher5 and Teacher6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers read storybooks aloud</li> <li>- Teachers reread stories</li> <li>- Teachers ask questions about the characters and plot</li> <li>- Teachers explains the text or retell story again</li> <li>- Teachers read text and pupils read repeatedly line by line</li> <li>- Teachers summarise the text being read</li> <li>- Teachers use texts being read to contextualise their introducing spelling or the rules of language or writing teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teacher reads stories aloud</li> <li>- Teachers ask questions about the characters and plot</li> <li>- The teacher reads texts and pupils read repeatedly line by line</li> <li>- The teacher summarises the text being read</li> <li>- Teachers sometimes assign pupils to draw and write freely about stories</li> <li>- Or teacher tells selective vocabularies from stories and pupils write those words from their memories in notebooks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grade one teacher reads texts in textbook aloud, while in grade three classroom</li> <li>whole class read in choral or selected pupils read out loud to the entire class -</li> <li>Teachers present spelling or the rules of language</li> </ul>

Table 2 Each teacher's use of the steps of teaching reading from the recommended practices

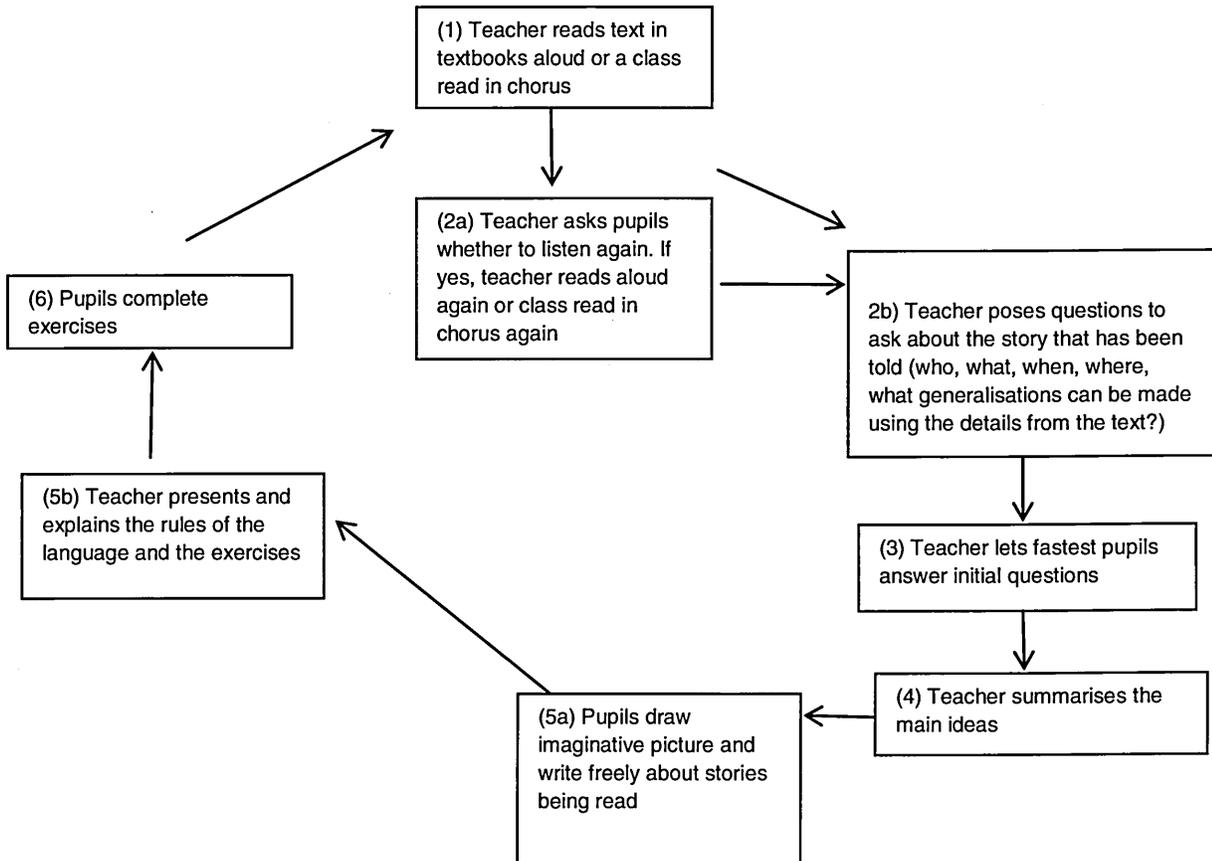
Steps of teaching reading from the recommended practices	Pan	Nom	Ya	Tipa	Ra-tee	Rai-ra
1. Reading aloud	Never	Often	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never
2. Small group reading	Never	Never	Never	Occasionally	Never	Occasionally
3. Pair reading	Never	Never	Never	Occasionally	Never	Never
4. Reading independently	Never	Occasionally	Never	Sometimes	Never	Never
5. Teaching grammar	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often

Table 3 Frequency of question types used by each teacher

Question types	T.1	T.2	T.3	T.4	T.5	T.6
Open	22%	6%	6%	26%	25%	22%
closed	74%	94%	94%	39%	60%	74%
Repeat	4%	0%	0%	35%	15%	4%
Prove	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

## Structure of shared reading in Tipa's class

### The first structure of shared reading in Tipa's class



**Table 4 Theme: Teacher's voice about the new practices**

Tipa	Ra-tee	Ra-rai	Pan	Nom	Ya
<p>School gets more benefit from this project. The school now is a leading school in implementing the BBL approach.</p> <p>The OBEC invited me to be a trainer.</p> <p>This approach is working well in helping children learn to read.</p>	<p>The NBL staff sometimes gives negative feedback... but I think I need to change and improve my practice after getting feedback. They come to help us, I think.</p> <p>I take part in the project since I think they will suggest me everything. In reality, I have to find ways to apply it to my classroom by myself.</p> <p>I am appreciating taking part in the project since it is a good opportunity for me to learn new knowledge.</p> <p>It is a worthwhile approach. It helps my pupils love to read.</p> <p>Story books and children's books help pupils to learn to read and develop their imagination and open their worldviews.</p>	<p>I never get supervision from administrative staff and ESA' supervisor and OBEC's staff. The NBL's staff and experts visit my classroom but they just sit, observe, photo copy my paper and take pictures. They never say anything about my practice or give any comments on my lesson plans.</p> <p>The NBL staff ask me to develop learning material but they just fund a small grant. I have stopped developing it now.</p>	<p>It is a new practice but it is seems too similar to common practices that we have known.</p> <p>ESA always selects my school to take part in the new projects. They never ask us whether we would like to participate or not.</p> <p>The new textbooks are very expensive compared to the OBEC textbook.</p>	<p>I am close to the supervisors from ESA. I talk to them on the phone to tell them about the training when they do not attend the training.</p> <p>It helps me to better understand my pupils' learning mode and confirms my benefits about what makes for good teaching.</p> <p>I request a headteacher to organise workshop for teachers in the school since I think, this new approach is very useful.</p> <p>The headteachers from other schools would like to invite me to train their teachers.</p> <p>The new text books and story books and children's books are useful for pupils' learning to read.</p> <p>I agree with everything about this approach.</p> <p>I like this approach.</p>	<p>The OBEC staff only visit us to ask about new Thai textbooks. They should visit for support rather than to conduct a survey.</p> <p>It is good programme. Every teacher in the school likes it.</p> <p>I never get supervision from administrative staff and supervisors from ESA.</p>

**Table 5 Comment 2: MATERIAL**

<b>Tipa</b>	<b>Ra-tee</b>	<b>Ra-rai</b>	<b>Pan</b>	<b>Nom</b>	<b>Ya</b>
My favourite thing about this project is provision of story books and children books. That's why I take part in this implementation.	Story books and children's book help pupils learn to read and develop their imagination and open their worldviews.	The NBL staff ask me to develop learning material but they just fund a small grant. I have stopped developing it now.	The new textbooks are expensive. We think they are not worth it for our pupils.	The new text books and story book sand children's books are useful for pupils' learning.	The new textbooks are expensive.  The OBEC provides more children's books than pupils want. Pupils do not read them, typically thicker books.

**Table 6 Feature of classroom**

<b>Case</b>	<b>Desk arrangement</b>	<b>Materials present</b>	<b>Rules/expectations posted</b>
Teacher 1	Desks in straight -line rows. Rows of desks facing the teacher	1. Texts/workbooks  2. A TV	-
Teacher 2	Desks in straight -line rows. Rows of desks facing the teacher	1. Texts/workbooks  2. Children's book (Thai and English)  3. Teaching materials and Instruction chart (songs, alphabets & game)  4. Toys and other learning manipulative (blocks, Lego, games)  4. Class display board that display topics of teacher	Behavioural expectations posted
Teacher 3	Desks in straight -line rows. Rows of desks facing the teacher	1. Texts/workbooks  2. Thai children's books  3. Teaching materials and Instruction chart (songs, alphabets & game)  4. Class display board that display pupils' product	1. Behavioural expectations posted

Table 7 Practices of first grade teachers

Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
<p>1. Her practice in teaching Thai illustrates that she combines some steps of recommended practices with her favourite existing practice.</p> <p>2. Extra time is allotted to organise reading activities recommended</p> <p>3. Varied learning activities and task assignments for pupils intended to facilitate pupils' participation</p> <p>4. Some strategies of the recommended practices in teaching reading are likely to be combined with the teaching practices she always used before.</p>	<p>She combines some steps of recommended practice (story reading) with the ways she has always done.</p> <p>1. She read-aloud 2 times / week and use question-answering orally to examine pupils' understandings about the stories. Next she told class to write words from the story by telling class. The class writes word down on their notebooks, if someone cannot write or remember those words they can copy from the story books. She sometimes asks the class to draw pictures about the story and write about the story.</p> <p>2. She teaches the rules of language 3 times/week by using textbook and assigns pupils to write Thai alphabets as homework.</p> <p>3. Some strategies of the recommended practices in teaching reading are likely to be combined with the teaching practices she always used before</p>	<p>1. Her practice as observed shows she often teaches reading and rules of language.</p> <p>2. Characteristics of teaching are teacher reads and pupils repeat texts, teacher explains, questions, and gives examples. Pupils complete exercises individually. There is absence of pair or small group work.</p>	<p>The features of her instructional practice demonstrate the combination between the new practices with her preferred existing practice.</p> <p>Varied learning activities and task assignments for pupils intended to facilitate pupils' participation are often organised.</p> <p>Varied learning activities and task assignments to integrate Thai with other subjects matters are observed</p>

Table 8 First grade teachers' practices

Tipa	Ra-tee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has taken part in the project for 5 years</li> <li>- Used to be trained with the idea of Concentrated Language Encounter [CLE]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has taken part in the NBL project for 5 years</li> <li>- Never was trained with the CLE ideas.</li> </ul>
Introductory activity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recitation of Thai children's poems, Thai words or alphabet for memorising and counting 1-100</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Checking pupils' absence (she is not class teacher)</li> <li>- Recitation of Thai children's poems from the textbook that are taught in the previous lessons</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Or, assigning the pupils to "free writing activity"</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking about the previous lesson or checking pupils' homework or book assigned to read as homework.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Or, Asking class to read textbook in chorus</li> </ul>	
Main Teaching Activity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers read stories aloud and questions about stories are posed and fastest pupils are usually allowed to answer out loud</li> <li>- OR pupils read the story books in chorus, big group reading, small group reading, and pair reading are followed</li> <li>- Teacher summarises the main idea and pupils are assigned to draw picture and write about the story</li> <li>- Or teacher presents and explains the new rules of language by using teaching aids such as colourful word cards, song, games. Question-answering technique is used to establish levels of understanding by letting faster pupils answer, sometimes teacher nominates some pupils to answer</li> <li>- Pupils complete exercise in textbooks or worksheet individually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers read stories aloud and questions about stories are posed and fastest pupils are usually allowed to answer out loud</li> <li>- Teacher summarises and asks class to tell her while she writes a summarising story on the blackboard and class copy what is written on the blackboard in their notebooks</li> <li>- Or pupils are asked to draw pictures and write about the story.</li> <li>- Or teacher asks class to repeat her reading aloud then she introduces and explains spelling and rules of language</li> <li>- Pupils completes exercise in textbook individually</li> </ul>

Table 8 (continued)

Tipa	Ra-tee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asking the pupils to hand in their assignments, giving permission for pupils to go to the rest room and asking the pupils to prepare to study the next lesson</li> <li>- Asking pupils to borrow story book to read at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asking the pupils to hand in their assignments and setting tasks such as reading book with parents, practising handwriting, and completing exercises for pupils to do at home.</li> </ul>
Pupils usually sit, listen and work with effort individually	Pupils usually sit, listen and work with effort individually
Rarely work in pair or work collaboratively	No small group working
No more than three pupils in class ask for help (spell difficult word for them)	
Handing in their notebooks for checking and marking when they complete their assignments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Verbal control strategy is used to promote good discipline and appropriate working atmosphere - before and between studying and doing their assignments in order to make sure the pupils pay attention, listen and behave properly or when rules are broken</li> <li>- Walking around classroom to provide support and check pupils complete their tasks</li> <li>- Rare to praise pupils but she sometimes says good and well done to the class and no feedback provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gently calling names of pupils who are not paying attention or did not complete their exercise</li> <li>- Walking around classroom to provide support and check pupils complete their tasks</li> <li>- Praising by saying well done, very good, correct when students present their work to her while she is walking around classroom.</li> </ul>

Table 9: Characteristics of teacher-student oral exchanges

Tipa	Ra-tee
Teacher talk - Control class discipline - Explain content, how to complete exercise and assignment	Teacher talk - Monitor time - Explain content, how to complete exercise and assignment
Pupil talk - Answer question	Pupil talk - Answer question
Question types	
Open 26% closed 39% Repeat 35% Probe 0%	Open 20% closed 50% Repeat 20% Probe 10%

Table 10 An example of initial coding from interview transcript

Talk with Teacher 1

At Library Time 10.30-11.45

Interview transcript	Initial codes
<p>Interviewer: tell me about your yourself</p> <p>My goal is to get promotion and to become expert teacher. I spend my free time to write the paper for upgrading my ranking. But I do everything for my pupils. I focus on their learning. I know exactly what I want to do and to be. Everyone wants to be a success and happy.</p> <p>How many years have you been teaching?</p> <p>Many many years. I cannot remember. I work with many headteachers. The new one seems to be a nice person. She provides us everything that we ask her. I have been teaching more than 20 years. I am quite close with the old headteacher. He helps me a lot. He is good. He was a supervisor before he became a headteacher. He has more working experience. He is smart and has more tactics. Many initiative projects have been brought to this school. They are many. I think he just pays lip service. For example, staff of KM project visit my school. My old headteacher just sits and listens to the evaluators' talk. After that he can present content that the evaluators want to hear. He makes us feel that every project brought to the school is not an extra job. He is excellent. No other head can do it like him. I mean no other head can make teachers in school feel they do not have extra jobs or more tasks to do when the school is selected to implement the new project. The better head should make staff feel that the new project is not additional responsibilities. The new project is a routine job that teachers always do.</p> <p>Who brought the recommended practices to the school?</p> <p>It may be.... by the old headteacher. I am not sure. But this school is always selected to take part in new policy mandated by the superiors.</p> <p>Why do you attend the training of the recommended practices?</p> <p>Local Education Service Area (LEA) chooses schools to participate in the new practices. The LEA selects schools that meet their criteria. They think that this school is the best school in this area. Therefore, the LEA always choose this school to take part the new mandates. I am a head of school curriculum coordinator for the first graders. So, I have to attend the workshop. I did not agree to be a volunteer. No one is willing to take part. We are ordered to attend the training of the new practices.....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion</li> <li>- Pupils' learning</li>   <li>- Life story</li> <li>- The new headteacher and The previous head</li> <li>- Additional responsibilities and new policy</li>   <li>- How the new policy is brought to school</li> <li>- Additional responsibility</li> <li>- Reasons for attending training</li> </ul>

## Case summary

Mrs. Rarai's classroom has 24 pupils. She has fewer pupils compared with other teachers in the school, who have more than 40 pupils in their classes. Mrs. Rarai's classroom has a traditional layout. Her classroom is between grade one and grade two. Portable tables in her classroom are lined up in rows. She tells that it was suggested that she use portable tables because she used to have a large number of pupils.

She has taught in the school for 17 years and also her husband has worked in the school for 22 years. She teaches 25 hours per week and took responsibility for extra jobs which are assisting coordinator of school curriculum, duty teacher and other tasks that are assigned by the headteacher, such as procurement, caretaker.

She received the training between 2007 and 2008. But she did not teach with the ideas of the recommended policy in the first year of the implementation because she did not understand the approach. She and her colleagues began teaching with the new ideas in 2009. She claims that the new ideas are brought to the school by the headteacher.

Recently, she has not tried to apply the new ideas to her classroom since she is worried about pupils' test results. She also thinks that the headteacher pays attention more to pupils' exam result. She claims that the headteacher has not visited her classrooms for two years.

She uses a learning timetable which is not approved by the headteacher. She teaches Thai three times a week. She spends two hours teaching Thai each time.

However, in her practice of teaching Thai language, she combines techniques for teaching Thai language suggested in the previous curriculum and techniques introduced in trainings (e.g. ESA's training and the NBL's training). Although she set two hours for books being read aloud to her class, she and the students do shared reading rather than reading aloud read by her. After finishing reading, she introduces grammar or spelling of Thai language and asks pupils complete exercises in textbooks. She usually uses new textbooks recommended by the NBL to teach Thai. She does not read aloud to her pupils. She asks pupils to read orally aloud when they have free time.

In addition, she sometimes spends time in the afternoon to study Thai or orders pupils to complete their exercises that they cannot finish in the morning sessions. But she did not report to the headteacher about her new learning timetable since the headteacher suggested using and organising learning activities that followed the recommended policy.

Rarai thinks that teaching strategies of the new teaching policy are similar to teaching strategies suggested in the national curriculum. She views that the new practices are easy in practice because the new textbooks recommended by the recommended practices contain less content than the old version. She thus is not worried about covering all the needed content. However, she explains that the new version and the old version of the textbook have the same content. Consequently, she sees that she changes her behaviour. She is not feeling stressed in teaching her pupils. She explains that she often used to take more seriously transmitting content of the subject as much as knowledge to pupils through memorisation and practice and drills. The new policy suggests teacher do not focus so much on subject content. The approach emphasises pupils' happiness.

She reports that she never attends training organised by other organisations (e.g. the ESA) after the school has implemented the new policy, since the headteacher does not allow teachers in the school to attend trainings that are not conducted by the NBL. Then she acquires new information or knowledge of other training by talking with her friends who teach in other schools or studying from her children's textbooks to update her knowledge.

Teaching practice: Balancing skills-based approach with some activities

She does not implement the steps of teaching reading as they are described in the recommended practices document. She does not carry out activities for reading instruction promoted by the recommended practices. However, her teaching timetable displays that she teaches the Thai language based on the structures of the recommended practices. She teaches Thai three times per week (Monday and Wednesday (2 hours), and Friday (an hour)). She allocates two hours to teach each time.

The structure of Mrs. Rarai's interaction includes the following iterative sequences:

1. Teacher introduces new words or difficult words from passage being read aloud
  2. Teacher begins reading the first sentence of passage;
  3. Pupils begin reading the following sentence and the whole passage in chorus with teacher;
  4. Teacher poses questions about the story that has been told (who, what, when, where, what generalizations can be made using the details from the text?)
  5. Teacher lets fastest pupils answer out loud;
  6. Teacher tells pupils to raise their hands;
  7. Teacher nominates a speaker (usually high-achieving pupils);
  8. Teacher rarely or sometimes provides feedback (usually encouragement);
  9. Teacher summarises the main idea;
- and then either (4) Teacher asks pupils to read the next passage in chorus and teacher sometimes demonstrates annotation and spelling when pupils read incorrectly or cannot read or (5) Teacher lets fastest pupils answer out loud without raising their hands (9) Teacher summarises the main ideas;
10. Teacher presents and explains the rules of the language and the grammar;
  11. Pupils usually complete exercise individually or pupils sometime complete exercise in groups.

Factors influencing Rai-ra's implementing of the new policy

Supporting factor	Hindering factor
1. Benefit of getting higher promotion of career	1. Management style of headteacher
2. Follow-up from the headteacher and superiors	2. Vague promotion policy criteria
3. Faith	3. Examination
4. Benefit to pupils	

Table 11 An example of Initial category framework after reduction initial coding  
 Framework

The new policy	Practice	Reasons	Supports
Views on - Against - For	Teaching practice (Data from classroom observations)	Reasons given why they have attempted to carry out the new policy	Administrators' support
Meaning	Teaching practice (Data from interview)	Reasons givens why they have not attempted to implement	Colleagues
Suggested strategies of the new instruction	How to design learning lessons	Promotion	Parents
Teachers' understanding - the new policy - teaching strategies informed by neuroscience	Textbooks	Impact of testing and external exam	Local Educational Area supervisor support
	Prior experience	Impact of the outside school policy	The OBEC
	Role of teachers and pupils	Life story	Policy
	Cultural norms of teaching and learning		
	Classroom management		
	Pupils' success		
	Professional development: impact of new practice to their teaching practices		

## APPENDIX IV

### CLASS OBSERVATION FIELDNOTE EXAMPLE

Table 1 Excerpt from a lesson transcript of Mrs. Tipa (16/02/2011, 9.45-11.30 AM.)

After Mrs. Tipa distributes worksheet exercise to pupils, she asks pupils to read texts in worksheet in chorus and continues with the below interaction between teachers and pupils.

#### Line no.

- 1 Mrs.Tipa: Can you remember about the text? Read it again.  
Mrs. Tipa: What title should you give the story? You can give whatever. It is not necessary to give the same title.  
Pupils: -
- 5 Pupils: Puppetry  
Mrs.Tipa: Shall we try, who are in the text? Count them. Who are they?  
Pupils: O and Pom  
Mrs. Tipa: Who else?  
Pupils: Nook
- 10 Mrs.Tipa: Who else?  
Pupil: Wan  
Mrs.Tipa: Who else?  
Pupils: Luk-kwae  
Mrs.Tipa: Who else?
- 15 Pupils: Sister  
Mrs.Tipa: Who are they? Tell again  
Pupils: Nook  
Mrs.Tipa: Who?  
Pupils: O and Sister
- 20 Mrs.Tipa: Who else?  
Pupils: Luk-kwae  
Mrs. Tipa: How many characters are in the story?  
Pupils: Five characters  
Mrs. Tipa: How many characters?
- 25 Pupils: Five  
Mrs. Tipa: What are they doing? They are five characters in the story.  
Pupils: Playing puppet  
Mrs. Tipa: Where are they playing?  
Pupils: Under a tree
- 30 Mrs. Tipa: Under the tree. Where are they?  
Pupils: They sit under the tree  
Mrs. Tipa: Who are they? Where are they? Who's doing the play?  
Pupils: Pom  
Mrs. Tipa: Who are audience?
- 35 Pupils: Nook and O

Mrs. Tipa: What does happen at the end to the story?

Pupils: -

Mrs. Tipa: What do the five characters in the story do?

Pupils: Holding the puppets

40 Mrs. Tipa: Besides, they are playing with the puppet, what are they also doing? They built puppets. Let's turn to the worksheet. Read questions of the exercises and answer them.

The pupils begin completing the question one of the exercises. Mrs. Tipa stands up at the front of the class and look at the pupils.

45 Mrs. Tipa: I would like to check. Those who have finished question one put your pencils on the desks. Put your pencils down. Read question two of the exercises. What does this question ask for?

The pupils read the question.

50 Mrs. Tipa: What are the children doing?

Pupils: Hold up the puppets, jump and play marbles.

Mrs. Tipa: The question asks that what the children are doing. You must answer all of the activities that the children do.

55 The pupils write down the answers on paper while Mrs.Tipa walks around the class to check and provide support. Mrs. Tipa asks the class to read the next questions of the exercise in chorus and the pupils write down the answers individually; meanwhile, Mrs. Tipa walks around the class to check and help the pupils.

60 Mrs.Tipa: Those who complete all the questions, please draw and paint pictures about the story. Do you hear me? We will write freely about this story tomorrow. We can't write now because you seem to have lost your concentration.

Table 2: A brief excerpt from a lesson transcript of Mrs. Tipa's practice  
(23/02/2011, 9.30-11.30 AM)

Line no.

- 1 After finish Maths lesson, the pupils are asked to move to sit on the floor at the reading corner. They are asked to recite the Thai poems to memorise one rule of Thai language. Mrs. Tipa shows the elephant picture to the class after they finish recitation and asks pupils to talk
- 5 about the picture shown.  
Pupil: Elephant, Bai-Bua, Bai-Bok  
Mrs. Tipa: Let listen to this song. Mrs. Tipa sings a song hung on a portable board. Mrs. Tipa: Repeat me, sing this song.  
The class sings the song three times.
- 10 Mrs. Tipa: What can you learn from this song? What is the final sound used for these words (she points at the song lyrics). Mrs. Tipa reads the lyrics loudly and asks what the final sounds of these words are? (She points at the lyric)  
Pupils: -
- 15 Mrs. Tipa reads the song loudly and asks what is the final sound used? She continues reading the song lyrics.  
Mrs. Tipa: Can you see the final of sound used for these words? What are the final sounds used for these words?  
Pupils: -
- 20 Pupil: Mae Kong [ŋ] (one of the final sounds).  
Mrs. Tipa: Which words in this song are used "Mae Kong"  
Pupils: Chang, Kwang  
Mrs. Tipa: What is the final sound used at the end of this word. She points at the word "Chang" in the song chart?
- 25 Pupils: NG = [ŋ]  
Mrs. Tipa: Tell me again which words in this song are used the alphabet of "NG"  
Pupils: Chang, Kwang and Klang  
Mrs. Tipa: Are there any more words that you can find?
- 30 Pupils: Pung  
Mrs. Tipa: Read these words.  
The pupils read words from the song sheet that are pointed at by Mrs. Tipa. Mrs. Tipa: Do you observe that these words use alphabet "NG", so what is the name of the final sound used?
- 35 Pupils: Mae Kong [ŋ]  
Mrs. Tipa: I want all of you to write freely about this picture. She shows the elephant picture. You can pick a piece of paper at my table and then complete the writing. Also, you should draw and paint your pictures.

Table 3: A brief excerpt from a lesson transcript of Mrs. Ra-tee's practice  
(8/7/2011, 13.30-15.30 PM)

Line no.

- 1 After checking pupils' attendance, the class is asked to recite the seven Thai poems taught before. Then Mrs. Ra-tee tells pupils to move to sit at the story corner. After managing the seating and discipline of the class, Mrs. Ra-tee: Repeat after me. Mrs. Ra-tee reads text line by line from the textbook
- 5 then pupils repeat chorally. When Mrs. Ra-tee finishes reading she rereads the text again and tells the class to repeat after her again.  
Mrs. Ra-tee: Can you read it?  
Pupils: Yes  
Mrs. Ra-tee: Read it again. The class read chorally.
- 10 Mrs. Ra-tee demonstrates some pronunciation of some words and asks the class to read it again when pupils cannot read correctly.  
Mrs. Ra-tee: Which words from the text use HAAW NAM (Thai consonant clusters of letter)? Who does know the answer? Please find out the answer.  
A boy: /nuu/
- 15 Another boy walks to stand and points at textbook held by Mrs. Ra-tee and says /nee/. Then four pupils walk from their seats to look at Mrs. Ra-tee's textbook. Mrs. Ra-tee: Please clap your hands to reward yourself. We learnt a new word today. Listen carefully, Manus. How many words are there from the text which use the rule of HAAW NAM and what are they?
- 20 Pupils: /nuu/  
Mrs. Ra-tee: Please read these words together and spell them. Sak, (who are playing with friends), please spell this word. Sak spells the word.  
Mrs. Ra-tee points to the words in the textbook.  
Mrs. Ra-tee: Well done. Please read the text and find out other words which
- 25 follow the principle of HAAW NAM?  
Pupils: /nee/  
Mrs. Ra-tee: JuRa-raiRa-tee, spell the word, please. Tanawat, please spell the word. She points the words in the textbook.  
The class spells the word in chorus.
- 30 Mrs. Ra-tee: Well done. Next, please find the words that use a vowel /i/  
Five pupils run to point their fingers at Mrs. Ra-tee's textbook. Mrs. Ra-tee: OK, OK. Well done, return to your seat. I want you to read the text again. Then the class read the text chorally while Mrs. Ra-tee points to the text in the textbook.
- 35 Mrs. Ra-tee: I want you to write the words that use vowels /a/, /a:/, /i/ and the principle of HAAW NAW and write them down on the paper I want to assess that you can remember what we have learnt. I will give paper to you. Most of the pupils run to the teacher.  
Mrs. Ra-tee tells the class to move and sit at their desks and complete the
- 40 assigned task. Mrs. Ra-tee walks around the classroom to check, provide support and organise the discipline of class while the pupils complete their tasks. At the end of the language hour, she assigns homework from the textbook for the class.

Table 4: A brief excerpt from a lesson transcript of Mrs. Ra-rai's practice  
(29/06/2011, 9.00-11.30 AM)

Line no

- 1 After greeting and checking pupils' homework, she tells the class to move to sit on the floor at the front of the class.  
Mrs. Ra-rai: Can you remember the song that was sung yesterday? Let's sing it again. The class sings the song.
- 5 Mrs. Ra-rai: Today, we are going to study about consonant words that are not often found in books.  
Mrs. Ra-rai puts word cards on the portable and asks the class to read and explains the meaning of the words.  
Mrs. Ra-rai: Class, please observe, whether these two words are read in the same sound?
- 10 She picks the word cards from the board and shows to the class and then asks "Read this word."  
The class reads the words  
Mrs. Ra-rai: So, are these words read in the same sound?  
Pupils: Yes.
- 15 Mrs. Ra-rai puts the new word cards on the portable board and asks the class to read and observes whether the words are read in the same sound. Mrs. Ra-rai continues with asking the class to explain the meaning of four word cards shown on the portable board.  
T: Tell me, don't worry about the wrong or right answers.
- 20 The quicker pupils answer her questions.  
Mrs. Ra-rai explains the meaning of those words and she gives examples of sentences that include some words being studied. She also sometimes asks the class to give examples of sentences that include those words. She then asks the class again
- the
- 25 Mrs. Ra-rai: "What are the differences between these two words?" She shows the word cards.  
Pupils: The two words are pronounced using the same sound  
Mrs. Ra-rai: What are the differences between the two words?  
Pupils: The final letters and the final sounds  
Mrs. Ra-rai: This word read " ROT-CHAT" and the meaning is favour.
- 30 Pupils: The final letters are differences between them  
Mrs. Ra-rai: This word reads "ROD" and the meaning is a car.  
Pupils: The meaning is different.  
Mrs. Ra-rai: Clap your hands, pRa-raise this answer. This word means to pour but this word means a car. So, what is the difference between them?
- 35 Mrs. Ra-rai: The meaning of the two words is the difference. Thus these words are consonant words.  
Mrs. Ra-rai asks the class to explain the meaning of other pairs of words continuously. After that, she introduces the new song to the class and the class practise singing the song three times.
- 40 Mrs. Ra-rai: So, What is a consonant word? The words that pronounce the sound in the same sound but they have different meanings.  
Mrs. Ra-rai: Are you tired? She continues with introducing the new sentences which consist of consonant words and asks the class to explain the meaning of the consonant words. She writes the new consonant

- 45 words on the blackboard and asks pupils to read and explain the meaning, including giving examples of sentences which use the consonant words being studied.  
Mrs. Ra-rai: Listen! She shows a dictionary to class.  
Mrs. Ra-rai: Would you like to get this?
- 50 Pupils: Yes.  
Mrs. Ra-rai tells the class to gather into five groups and assigns each group to find three consonant words from the dictionary. The class works in groups while Mrs. Ra-rai walks around the classroom and provides support as well as explaining how to use the dictionary and how to
- 55 complete the task. The quickest group walks to hand in their task to Mrs. Ra-rai.  
Mrs. Ra-rai: You have to write sentences that use the consonant words that your group select from the dictionary. Mrs. Ra-rai continues walking around the classroom, while some groups walk to ask her to check their tasks. Each pupil group presents their tasks in the front of the classroom.
- 60 Mrs. Ra-rai hangs their tasks on the portable board. After that, the pupils are asked to read text in the textbook in chorus. Mrs. Ra-rai asks pupils to respond to questions about the text being read. She finally ends her teaching by explaining and assigning the class to complete exercises in the textbook.

Table 5: A brief excerpt from a lesson transcript of Mrs. Pan's practice  
(28/01/2011, 10.30-11.30 AM)

Line no

- 1 After finishing teaching Maths, Mrs. Pan continues by teaching Thai Language instruction.  
Mrs. Pan: Are you ready? Shall I start!  
Pupils: Yes.
- 5 Mrs. Pan: We read about "we love wild animals" and "we love rivers" from the Thai textbook yesterday. What is a topic that you would like to write about freely today? Should we write freely about what the priest taught you in the first learning hour? Please read the topic that you wrote in your notebooks yesterday. The pupils open their notebooks and read in chorus.
- 10 Mrs. Pan: What is the title of the topic? What does the topic talk about?  
Pupils: Lord Buddha (this topic was taught by the priest in the first learning hour).  
Mrs. Pan: What did you say? Chid-Cha-Nok, don't say too much. I think, Lord Buddha is difficult topic, I think. Could you write a story about Lord Buddha? What do group one think? Can group one write about Lord Buddha?
- 15 Group One pupil: Yes, we can  
Mrs. Pan: I will help you to write this topic.  
A girl: We loved Lord Buddha.  
A boy: We have Lord Buddha in our houses.  
Mrs. Pan explains the different meaning of two words: Lord Buddha
- 20 and Buddha image. Then she asks the class to select which topics that they want to write about.  
A girl: Lord Buddha  
Mrs. Pan writes "We love Lord Buddha" on the blackboard  
A boy: We give food to Lord Buddha.
- 25 Mrs. Pan: We cannot give food to Lord Buddha because  
A boy: He dead.  
Mrs. Pan explains Thai words used for the King and Royal families to the class. Then she asks the class to make sentences about the topic and tells her to write on the board.
- 30 A girl: We love Lord Buddha  
Some students begin copying the sentences on the blackboard into their notebooks.  
Mrs. Pan: Don't write it down in your notebook.  
A boy: We pay respect for Lord Buddha.
- 35 Mrs. Pan writes sentences on the board when the pupils tell her and she encourages her pupils to make sentences and controls the class discipline. Some pupils copy the sentences on the board into their notebooks. When a sentence is written on the board. Mrs. Pan asks the class to read the sentences
- 40 on the board chorally and tells the pupils to copy into their notebooks.  
A boy: Can I write my own sentences?  
T: Yes, you can if you can do better than this.  
A boy: Can I draw a picture?
- 45 Mrs. Pan tells the class to draw picture about the topic if they want. The pupils hand in their assignment for checking to Mrs. Pan who stands up in the front of the classroom

## Appendix V

Table 1 Description of teacher categories

Categories	Level of engagement	Teachers who were sceptical about the recommended practices		Teachers who were enthusiastic about the recommended practices	
		None	Small, inconsistent and random attempts at using some materials received from the training	Small, inconsistent, and random attempts at using many steps of teaching as recommended	Consistent but selective, attempts
Frequency of implementation	Frequency of implementation and commitment to implement	None	Small, inconsistent and random attempts at using some materials received from the training	Small, inconsistent, and random attempts at using many steps of teaching as recommended	Consistent but selective, attempts
	Depth of implementation	None	Broad but Shallow and superficial attempts at implementation	Adding selected recommended strategies to her practices	Selectiveness of the recommended strategies with reflecting upon the larger structures of her beliefs about teaching and learning
Fidelity to instructional change	Engagement in the recommended practices	None	Inconsistent involvement. Innovation has no particular significance to the teacher	Targeted involvement; teacher is interested in innovation insofar as it fits her prior beliefs.	Consistent and constant involvement. Innovation is of importance to teachers.
	Primary willingness to involvement with the recommended practices	None	Vague / Either completely willing to or not complete willing to	Willing to	Strong willing to involve

Table 2 Expanded description of teacher categories

Teachers' willingness			
Not willing to	Vague / either completely willing to or not completely willing to	Willing to	Strongly willing to
Negative comments  Suspicious	Negative > positive comments  Willing as being made according with outside condition and/or in order to enable her/them to cope with external constraints	Positive comment but negative comments did not mention  And/or  Positive comments > Negative comments	Positive comments
Pan	Ya and Rai-ra	Tip and Ra-tee	Nom
Teaching practice was carried out as it always was done  Did not adopt or adapt or apply the recommended practices principles to classroom	Few strategies of the recommended practices were selected to adopt and implement in classroom	Some strategies of the recommended practice in reading teaching were likely to be combined with the teaching practices they always used before	Some strategies of the recommended practices were likely to be combined with the previous teaching practices that they always used before.  Varied learning activities and task assignments for students intended to facilitate students' participation.  Varied learning activities and task assignments for students appeared to promote integration of other subject matters
Instructional Characteristics (Frequency and Depth of implementation)			