Literacy Policy in Thailand: A Critical Discourse Analysis

by

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Abstract

This study analyzes policy statements in two influential Thai educational policies, the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and the National Education Plan B.E. 2552-2559 (2009-2016). A Critical Discourse Analysis approach was used to examine if the policy statements contributed to reducing or reproducing patterns of inequities in Thai society.

The word *literacy* in these Thai educational documents is used to mean knowledge and skills and enjoyment in using, reading, and writing Central Thai. The policies assume both an autonomous model and ideological model of literacy. There is emphasis on the necessity to improve literacy rates, but also attention is paid to the possibly unique literacy practices of disadvantaged Thais. The policies assume that literacy develops in individual learners along with critical thinking abilities, self-reliance, and eagerness to develop literacy for lifelong learning. However, the documents also stress the importance of learning how to become a good Thai person, or what I have called “Thai-ness”. Some Thai teachers might see critical thinking abilities and self-reliance in opposition to attributes of Thai-ness, and the policy might better explain the complementarity of these notions.

While changes in these policies have led to equitable opportunities for disadvantaged Thais in many ways, apparent and real contradictions in them may hinder their good intentions. For example, inexplicitness about language policy in Thai schools may prevent teachers from using local languages, despite the policies’ promotion of local wisdom. I argue that changing historical valuations of knowledge and languages will require policies to persuade all that change is desirable.

Similar to developments in the West, family literacy, funds of knowledge, and teacher-parent collaboration are recommended in these two Thai educational documents. Valuing local wisdom in communities and integrating it into instruction and creating closer ties among families and schools are admirable aims, but they may require more fundamental changes in Thai education to become fully implemented. To develop literacy in disadvantaged children may mean not only supporting parents to help their children, but also supporting disadvantaged parents themselves and taking a more ideological view of literacy that recognizes local languages.

**Keywords:** Literacy; Educational Policy; Cultural Capital; Language Capital; Funds of Knowledge; Critical Discourse Analysis.
I dedicate this work:

to my mother, Rumpai Wintachai,
who has always provided me love and support

to my grandmother, YayKaew Senapak,
who has been proud of this granddaughter

to my brothers, my sister, my nieces, and my nephews,
who understand and continue to delight me.

Without them I would not have been able to
complete this journey.
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# Table of Contents

Approval .......................................................................................................................... ii  
Partial Copyright Licence ............................................................................................... iii  
Abstract......................................................................................................................... iv  
Dedication ....................................................................................................................... v  
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... vi  
Table of Contents .......................................................................................................... vii  
List of Figures .................................................................................................................. ix  
List of Acronyms .......................................................................................................... ix  

## Chapter 1. Introduction

### Introduction and Historical Context

My Interest with Literacy................................................................................................. 3  
Literacy Policy in Thailand ............................................................................................... 5  

## Chapter 2. Literature Review: Power, Meaning, and Model of Literacy

### Literacy and Power

Meanings of Literacy ..................................................................................................... 12  
“Autonomous” Views of Literacy ................................................................................... 13  
Other “Autonomous” Models of Literacy ......................................................................... 14  
Concerns about Autonomous Views of Literacy .............................................................. 17  
“Ideological” and Sociocultural Models of Literacies ....................................................... 19  
Summary: Ideological and Autonomous Views of Literacy ............................................ 22  
Literacy Meaning in Thailand ....................................................................................... 23  
Equity and Inequity ........................................................................................................ 24  

## Chapter 3. Policy, Practices, and Literacy Development

### Literacy Development Policies in Wealthy Countries

International Organizations ............................................................................................. 27  
Human Capital .................................................................................................................. 28  
The Impact of Literacy Development Policies .................................................................. 28  
Canada and Sweden ......................................................................................................... 29  
The United States ........................................................................................................... 30  
England ........................................................................................................................... 31  
Australia ......................................................................................................................... 33  
Discussion ....................................................................................................................... 34  
Recommended Practices ................................................................................................. 36  
Family and Literacy ......................................................................................................... 36  
Funds of Knowledge and Literacy .................................................................................... 37  
Teacher-Parent Collaboration ........................................................................................... 39  
Benefits of teacher-parent collaboration .......................................................................... 43  
Barriers to teacher-parent collaboration ......................................................................... 44  
Power, Funds of Knowledge and Family Involvement in Education in Thailand ............ 47  
Summary and Conclusion ............................................................................................... 48
# Table of Contents

**Chapter 4. Methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis** ........................................... 50
- Discourse ................................................................................................................. 50
- Critical Discourse Analysis ...................................................................................... 54
  - Common Ground of Critical Discourse Analysis .................................................. 54
  - Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis ................................................................. 55
- Methodology ............................................................................................................. 58
  - Hamilton and CDA .................................................................................................. 60

**Chapter 5. A Critical Analysis of Two Thai Policies** ............................................. 61
- Introduction ............................................................................................................... 61
  - The Layout and Publishing Values of the NEA .................................................... 64
  - Style and Purpose-- to Dictate or Persuade? ......................................................... 65
  - The Internal Organization of the Document .......................................................... 66
  - Assumptions, Contradictions and Inconsistencies ................................................ 72
  - Unclear Phrases and Terms .................................................................................... 76
  - Summary of Observations of the NEA .................................................................. 76
- The Context and History of the National Education Plan (2009-2016) .................... 77
  - The layout and Publishing Values of the NEP ....................................................... 77
  - Style and Purpose-- to Dictate or Persuade? ........................................................ 78
  - The Internal Organization of the NEP ................................................................... 78
  - Unclear Words and Phrases .................................................................................... 83
  - Assumptions, Contradictions and Inconsistencies ................................................ 85
  - The NEP’s Position on Literacy ............................................................................. 88

**Chapter 6. Conclusion and Discussion** ................................................................. 91
- Chapter Summaries .................................................................................................... 91
  - How is Literacy Conceptualized in Two Influential Thai Educational Policies? .......... 94
  - What is the Discourse around Literacy in Such Documents? ................................ 94
  - Do These Policy Statements about Literacy Reproduce or Do They Attempt to Change Historical Inequities in Thai Education? ................................. 100
- Western Models of Improving Literacy Education for Disadvantaged Learners ....... 104
- Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 106
- Emerging Inequities ................................................................................................. 107
- Coda ......................................................................................................................... 108
  - Limitation ............................................................................................................... 109
  - Future Research ..................................................................................................... 109

**References** ............................................................................................................. 111
List of Figures

Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecology of Human Development Contextual Systems and Examples of Influences on Family Involvement ............... 41
Figure 2. Fairclough's Dimensions of Discourse and Discourse Analysis .......... 57
Figure 3. The National Education Plan B.E. 2552-2559 (2009-2016)'s Organization ................................................................. 80

List of Acronyms

NEA The National Education Act
NEP The National Education Plan
CDA Critical Discourse Analysis
Chapter 1.

Introduction

Introduction and Historical Context

Literacy is a tool that helps individuals to support themselves in living and to keep abreast of new knowledge and technology, which grow more quickly every day. As a poor country, Thailand considers literacy a key factor in determining its quality of life and has made it an essential prerequisite for national development. Attempts to assess and improve Thai people’ literacy have appeared since the first national census conducted by the Ministry of Interior in 1937. The definition of “literacy” in Thailand varies according to the field of work. For example, the Thai literacy promotion policy of the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission defined literacy as the ability to read and write simple sentence statements in the Thai language and command of basic numeracy used in everyday life, while the National Statistical Office defined literacy as the ability to read and write in any language.

Literacy in Thailand has been perceived as a way to strengthen the nation. In the revolutionary period of the 1930s, the government was faced with the problem of replacing the absolute monarchy with a constitutional democracy, and enabling Thai people to become active democratic citizens. To accomplish these objectives and to develop unity among various ethnic minorities having their own local languages, “Central Thai” was promoted as the national language of adult literacy and primary education (Walter, 2002). Between 1940 and 1996, the government attempted to use many methods to assist Thai people in becoming literate. For example, the government set up the Adult Education Division to promote mass literacy, launched a literacy campaign focusing on adult literacy, joined with UNESCO in supporting Thai literacy, expanded compulsory education from four to seven and finally nine years, promoted vocational skills for non-formal education, emphasized the “able to think” philosophy in the learning-teaching process, and also increased the number of literate Thai among the ethnic
minorities, Hill Tribe people, Buddhist monks, southern Thai Muslims, and other Thais who are culturally disadvantaged (Suwanpitak, 2008). Setting clear goals with regard to reducing the rate of illiteracy has also appeared since 1982 in the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan. One goal, for example, was to reduce the rate of illiteracy from 14.5 percent in 1981, to 10.5 percent by the end of 1986.

Concern with developing literacy has continued to be articulated in the National Economic and Social Development Plans from 1963 to 2016, the National Education Plans from 1932 to 2016, and in all National Education Acts established in 1999 and revised in 2002 and 2010. “A great change” happened in 1997. Because of the Asian economic crisis at that time, the government recognized the potential of Thai local wisdom to promote a Sufficiency Economy, a philosophy endorsed by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Wibulswasdi, Piboolsravut, & Pootrakool, 2010). To expand Thailand’s economy, the appropriate plan which is suitable for Thai people and the condition of Thailand need to be considered; therefore, the economic foundation should be strengthened before moving rapidly to advance economic development (H.M. King Bhumibol, 1997 as cited in Piboolsravut, 2004). This idea is similar to Western countries’ concepts of community or locally-based development. Since then, to develop the value of local wisdom in communities, both the formal and non-formal educational systems have had to integrate content relating to community, society, and local wisdom into the core curriculum, including literacy. Therefore, communities have gained more opportunities to become involved in literacy education, and cooperation between teachers and parents has also been supported. Involving communities and parents in education has been a new focus for the Thai education system.

However, the literacy rate of Thai people since 2006 has been a concern because it has tended to decline. In particular, the literacy rate of Thai people over six years old was grouped in the below average group compared to other countries similar in size and economic conditions (OECD, 2007 as cited in Chiangkoon, 2010). Reading habits are another issue. The percentage of Thai people spending time reading has declined. A 2008 survey of Thai reading behaviors showed that on average Thai people spent only 39 minutes per day in reading. Both adults and children living in municipal areas had better reading ratios than those living outside, especially in the northeast area (National Statistical Office Thailand, 2008). The number of Thai people who said that they did not
read at all shocked Thai people and the government. Forty percent of Thai revealed that they did not read books and preferred to watch television and listen to the radio (National Statistical Office Thailand, 2005). The Thai government has identified and tried to solve these problems by specifying developing literacy in the National Education Act, emphasizing the reading agenda for 2008 to 2018, and creating various strategies to emphasize reading. The reading promotion committee of the nation was set up in order to take responsibility for planning and creating social acceptance of lifelong learning. Various methods have been presented, such as promoting reading by using public relations to motivate people to love to read, setting up caravans of books, developing reading skills for students at schools, training Thai language teachers, and creating Thai language clinic projects, developing the atmosphere and environment to support reading, and supporting research to develop sustainable reading (Ministry of Education, 2010).

**My Interest with Literacy**

I am a professor of educational psychology at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. I have been interested in the education of minority students because their learning seems to be obstructed by their incomplete mastery of the central Thai language, by less support in learning from their home environment and parents, and by life styles that do not suit school instruction. For example, Northeast Thailand’s students in rural areas use Isan, a local language to communicate at home, but in school, the Central Thai language is required in instructional activities and for evaluating learning performance. Students from richer families, whose parents are more highly educated, speak central Thai, live in central cities, and can easily adapt themselves and learn well in school. In other word, differences in “cultural capital” provide some students with many advantages while some students are disadvantaged. Thai people have various ethnic and racial identities. Thais in different areas have their own local languages, cultures, and practices. Certainly, a student who speaks and listens to the same language at home, community, and school can learn better and have more confidence in answering and discussing in classes operating in that language. Central Thai is the prestige language favored by high-status people. For reasons of social mobility and occupational security, most parents would like to have their children speak, read, and write well in central Thai. Unfortunately, minority students mostly are from poor families
and they have diverse local languages and life styles, especially those who follow their parents to work as labours in the main cities. How the cultural capital of Thai students who live in poor families with low incomes and speak in diverse local languages plays a role in literacy education interests me and I would like to find ways to help them to be able to succeed in learning.

I became interested in Thai policy statements concerning literacy because I believe policy statements can regulate the instructional direction of the whole country. I wondered if the study of policy statements about literacy development might provide clues as to why the inequities between different groups of learners persist, and how are those inequities mirrored in other aspects of Thai society?

One of my experiences affected me to consider more closely Thai policy statements about literacy and practices in local schools. I was initially glad that Thailand was moving forward to encourage Thai youths to learn and use English naturally by allowing local schools to establish an “English Program”. The English program is teaching and learning the Thai curriculum through the medium of English. In particular, primary school students are provided instruction in English in four subjects such as language, mathematics, science, and physical education, while secondary school students are provided instruction in English in all subjects except Thai and social science in Thai law, culture, and tradition (Ministry of Education Order, 2001 cited in Apiramon, 2011). Every school is able to have at least one English Program class with instruction through English from pre-primary level. Since an English Program is optional, schools needed to manage and organize budgets themselves if they want to launch this program. At every grade level, in general, schools would have one English Program class, but would provide the majority regular Thai curriculum classes. My happiness with this Thai policy changed. My sister in my home town did not put my two nephews in the English Program of the great elementary school in our area because she could not pay the high tuition fees for getting a seat in this Program. Even though she really desired her sons to be fluent in English, in order to gain good opportunities in higher levels of education and work in their future life, she could not afford the English Program. When I think about the atmosphere in schools, I am concerned about the relationships between and social cohesion of these two groups of students: children from rich families and children from average to poor families when they are in school. I have asked myself as an educator: was this policy
reproducing the same pattern of inequalities and unfairness in our society that has characterized it in the past?

My interest was intensified after reading a great deal of literature in my doctoral program about recommended literacy approaches for minorities and disadvantaged students in Western countries, and the theory that supports these approaches, especially Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital. I saw parallels between recommendations to use children’s and their families’ funds of knowledge and the Thai interest in reforming curriculum to include local knowledge by mentioning it obviously in the first National Education Act in 1999. This has led to my interest in critically analyzing educational policy statements about literacy education in Thailand.

**Literacy Policy in Thailand**

Thailand has established two national documents of education in which literacy development has been identified. First, the National Education Plan which was created in 1932, and at present, the National Education Plan B.E. 2555-2559 (2012-2016) is in effect. Second, the National Education Act (different from the Plan) was established in 1999, revised in 2002 and recently Thailand has been using the National Education Act of B.E. 2553 (2010)¹ (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999, 2002, 2010). Even though both “Plan” and “Act” are established for regulating education, the “Act” is set by the government and approved and promulgated by the King, and by law Thais are obliged to enact it and would be punished if they did not comply. The Act is set into effect in a particular year and continues to be law until the Act is revised. The Act provides general principles at the highest national level for all educational organizations and institutes to establish their own plan. Even though the contents of each new Act are revised, the main content do not change very much. The “Plan” of the nation provides educational objectives, goals and frameworks in detail, which all educational institutes should follow. The Plan also has to try to deal with problems of Thailand education in each period of time.

¹ The abbreviation “B.E.” stands for Buddhist Era and it is used in the Thai calendar. The formal use of B.E. started in 1941 which is B.E. 2484.
Thailand’s educational policy developed significantly based on the philosophy of developing a Sufficiency Economy (Wibulswasdi, et al., 2010). The government recognized that agricultural products are the root of Thai economy and society, and thought that developing local economies based on Thais’ traditional skills and local wisdom might activate the Thai economy to help to solve social problems. The 1999 National Education Act of B.E. 2542 was first set up to distribute educational administrative power to the local authorities. While following the core curriculum, this Act stipulated that schools could now develop their own local curriculum in accordance with the needs and local wisdom of their community. Parents, local experts, members of the communities were to be welcome to participate in developing curriculum and instruction. In this way, local content based on each individual community was to be integrated into teaching reading and writing.

From 2010 until 2012, mostly in the period of when Aphisit Vejjajiva was prime minister and now (2013), the period of the Yingluck Shinawatra’s administration, there has been another change relating to literacy instruction in Thailand. Many literacy development projects have been established and communicated to the public widely through T.V., speeches, and newspapers. Through these media and policy statements, the Thai government has been attempting to mobilize citizens to improve Thai literacy in Central Thai language. While the Thai government has clearly indicated a concern with the literacy of its citizens, it is not clear that literacy rates are increasing, or that literacy instruction in schools has changed much to reflect new ideas about local wisdom, accountability and worthwhile curriculum. In my experience as a Thai educator, I also note that literacy has not improved much among my students.

Globally, literacy rates for disadvantaged people such as indigenous people and migrants are low (UNESCO, 2006). Such people have limited resources and schools lack suitable strategies to develop their literacy. This is certainly the case in Thailand. Thai people, especially students who are poor and use their own local language in speaking in their communities, are in disadvantaged situations, and their literacy rates are correspondingly low. In particular, local languages in Thailand are not written but used orally. Even though local languages are not too different from the Central Thai language, embarrassment or having been looked down upon might discourage students in participating in learning activities. Thus, such problems require us to seek
understanding of how power hidden in language operates in policy; for example, how discourse utilized by policy makers might provide advantages to particular groups of people, and disadvantages to others.

Thus, the questions my thesis addresses are:

1. How is literacy conceptualized in two influential Thai educational policies? What is the discourse around literacy in such documents?
2. Do these policy statements about literacy reproduce or do they attempt to change historical inequities in Thai education?
3. Do Western models of improving literacy education for minority students hold promise for changing inequities in Thai literacy education?

In Chapter 2, I begin by reviewing ideas of theorists about literacy and power. I then present various views of literacy making clear the differences between two models of literacy: the autonomous model and the ideological model. I also present critiques of the dominant views of literacy that are influencing literacy policy in some countries.

In Chapter 3, I review the literacy policy initiatives and the critiques of these policies from five rich Western countries (Canada, Sweden, the United States, Britain and Australia). I then present three main recommended practices from educational scholars: family and literacy, utilizing funds of knowledge of families to benefit literacy learning, and teacher-parent collaboration. After reviewing literacy policy in Western countries, I look at some literacy development policies which Thailand recently has undertaken; for example, valuing funds of knowledge and family involvement in education. After examining policy and practice in Western countries and Thai efforts to improve literacy, I discuss my concerns about contradictions between Western and Thai ideas and cultural practices.

Chapter 4 contains the methodology of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and how I will critically analyze discourse about literacy in Thailand. I start by providing meanings for the term “discourse” from three theorists’ point of view (Foucault, 1970a; Fairclough, 1992a; and Gee, 1999). I then review general principles of CDA, Fairclough’s CDA, Hamilton’s (2012) adaptation of Fairclough’s CDA, and critiques of CDA.

In Chapter 5, I present results of my critical discourse analysis of two national education policies which are the National Education Act B.E.2542 (1999) and the National
Education Plan, revised version, B.E. (2552-2559) (2009-2016). I describe the texts and analyze their internal organization for hidden intentions, consistency and inconsistency of ideas. Similarities and contradictions between the two texts are also presented. For the final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 6, I summarize my findings and discuss the results from policy analysis to reply to each research question.
Chapter 2.

Literature Review: 
Power, Meaning, and Model of Literacy

In this chapter, I first discuss how literacy has been conceptualized by theorists who are concerned with literacy and power. I go on to discuss the diverse meanings there are for the term literacy, and provide an overview of different models of literacy. I also present critiques of the dominant views of literacy that have driven literacy policy in many countries. This introduction prepares the way for descriptions and analyses of literacy policy in several countries (presented in Chapter 3).

Literacy and Power

Since the 1960s, many scholars have focused on the social and cultural aspects of reading, writing, and literacy education. These aspects are important because literacy practice is always situated within particular societies and cultures. Learning how to read and write and all other literacy practices as well happen in social and cultural contexts, so it is important to understand those contexts (Fairclough, 1989).

Fairclough (1989, 1995, 2001) and Fairclough and Wodak (1997) are some key sources. Fairclough and colleagues consider the social and cultural aspects of literacy. These theorists argued that, in each speech or writing event, what a person says or writes depends on the situation, the institution and the social structure they participate in. At the same time, the situation, the institution and the social structure are shaped by a person’s literacy practice. Fairclough (2003, p. 218) argued that each literacy event contributes to the development and maintenance of the relations of “power, domination, and exploitation”. From this perspective, the major effects of most literacy events are the production and reproduction of unequal power relations. For example, when a minority student is evaluated as having a low literacy rate, this maintains the power of teachers or
assessors to define what is good or proper literacy. When most people in a particular society have similar ideologies about certain things (referred to as dominant ideologies), one social group will have dominance (Fairclough 1992b). These ideologies can produce, reproduce, or sustain unequal power relations (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Another theorist who has talked about unequal power in society as related to literacy practice is Pierre Bourdieu (1977). Bourdieu argued that individuals bring their habitus, “a set of dispositions created in an individual over time and shaped by structural elements in society, such as the family or schools” (as cited in Marsh, 2006, p. 164), and capital, “an index of relative social power” (as cited in Carrington & Luke, 1997, p. 101) into particular fields in which habitus and different kinds of capital have currency. An individual’s habitus, inculcated since birth—ways of thinking, acting, believing, language, accent, and other characteristics—is evaluated on the basis of their possession of capital. According to Bourdieu (1977), capital is defined in four major forms. The first form is ‘cultural capital’ which refers to: (1) a person’s knowledge, skills, ways of speaking and writing, also called ‘embodied capital’; (2) a person’s possession of material objects, cultural goods, or texts, also called ‘objectified capital’; (3) academic qualifications, awards, or certificates, also called ‘institutional capital’. The second major form of capital is ‘social capital’ which refers to the social relationships a person has and his/her access to and memberships in particular institutions. The third form is ‘economic capital’ which refers the possession of goods or resources that can be changed into money. Finally, the fourth major form is ‘symbolic capital’ which refers to whether or not and how much a person has valuable symbols or signs to exchange or convert to cultural, social and economic capital. Carrington and Luke also refer to ‘symbolic capital’ as “the social phenomenon of prestige, status, and reputation which accompanies the accumulation and recognition of other forms of capital” (Carrington & Luke, 1997, p. 103). Bourdieu added the important insight as well that there are different ‘fields’ or situations in which these kinds of capital have more or less value and can result in different social positions for their possessors (Bourdieu, 1977; Corson, 1993).

Each person possesses capital in different amounts that he or she accumulates from birth. When people come to a particular event or activity with others, each person brings his/her own capital with them and it plays a significant role in leading people to produce
and reproduce the same ways of thinking, doing, acting, speaking, and other habits; thus, unequal power develops.

An individual’s set of skills, dispositions, practices, and knowledge is called embodied cultural capital, and it requires time to inculcate and assimilate. For instance, paintings, books, or texts can be objectified cultural capital, while the authorized social institutions such as schools, colleges, or other agencies that promote a person’s reading or writing ability are what might be called institutional capital (Carrington & Luke, 1997). Families indirectly inculcate various types of capital in their children, capital that “carries implicit and deeply interiorized values” (Bourdieu, 1974, p.32). In each reading event, each student brings different levels of capital to the event, and students who have more particular capital such as knowledge of the standard language, tend to gain more benefits.

Some groups of students have various capital advantages that give them privilege within particular social contexts (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, some groups of people get more chances than other people to gain access to advantageous experiences (Compton-Lilly, 2007). As Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic) commented: “Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relations, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others” (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000, p.12). In particular, Compton-Lilly (2007) revealed in her case study done with an adult student and her kindergarten-age grandson that a low-income family may have strengths in reading in particular ways, but that expertise is ignored by the school which values dominant and mainstream views of reading.

People’s practices resulting from their habitus and capital in specific fields tend to be reproduced and “the arbitrary nature of the cultural values transmitted in the curriculum is internalized by individuals over time and subsequently perceived as natural” (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977 as cited in Marsh, 2006, p. 164). It is possible that school literacy practices do not even out class and cultural inequalities but rather make them stronger (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

These practices have educational implications. Educators have to understand that there is no single literacy practice that teachers can use that will benefit all students equally. As well, educators themselves bring particular forms of capital that have been valued by
the school and they may have difficulty even recognizing other kinds of capital. To help
disadvantaged students (i.e., minorities, linguistically marginal groups, the poor and
others) to be valued, their capital needs to discovered and authorized. To make schools
sites of change, rather than limited and restricted institutions, educational policy makers,
educators, administrators, and teachers must look beyond the expected criteria for
achievement in literacy by empowering the value of locally diverse families’ strengths
that students bring, and students’ life trajectories (Carrington & Luke, 1997; Compton-
Lilly, 2007).

**Meanings of Literacy**

To understand the relationship between policy and literacy development, I need to
present an overview of the meaning of literacy as perceived by experts and policy
makers in textbooks, research, and policy documents. What literacy means has been
widely debated for many years. Scholars have questioned not only what literacy means
but also how it is attained and what its consequences are. Reading and writing seem to
have been considered as ways to achieve various national goals such as democracy,
economic growth, and stability, social harmony, and, recently, world market
competitiveness (Graff, 1987; Kalman, 2008). Schools are the main institutions provided
by the state to teach people the basic skills of reading and writing, deemed to be
necessary for success in the job market and to support personal improvement and
enrichment (Kalman, 2008). At different times in history, a literate person has been
described by his/her abilities in five categories: 1) signing his/her name, 2) reading or
writing about daily activities using basic sentences, 3) reading and writing a self-report,
which is not based on a test, 4) passing a written reading comprehension test at a level
similar to the achievement of a 4th grade student, 5) engaging in all community activities
that require literacy to function effectively (Kalman, 2008). Kalman (2008) argued that
when we consider these past views of literacy, the requirements seem quite rudimentary
and need only basic abilities.

Recently, scholars have looked beyond the old definitions relating to the basic skills of
reading and writing. In addition to the comprehension and production of written
language, oral conversation has also been considered as part of what literacy means
(Street, 1993). Gee (1988) argued that oral language practices relate to abstract
thinking, and Street (1993) stated that there has been a shift from dividing literacy from oral to seeing them on a “continuum.” Literacy has also been defined as understanding the nature of “knowledge and use” of the writing system, the relationship between knowledge and use, and the objective of communication and contexts (Farr, 1994).

Seen among the consequences of literacy has been the development of individual ethics and cognition. For instance, the link between knowing how to read and write, and having moral fortitude (Pattison, 1982, Stanley, 1972;) has been posited. Scribner (1988) pointed out that literacy in some societies gains a person respect from others as an honourable, spiritually enlightened person. Moreover, with respect to cognition, an illiterate person is assumed to have learning difficulties and lack abstract thinking ability (Graff, 2008). Similarly, Pattison (1982 as cited in Kalman, 1998) summarized literacy’s meaning in terms of economic and moral consequences, which he defined as:

a dogma characterized by four axioms: a) literacy is reading and writing skills, b) more cultured or civilized persons are people who are literate by this standard, c) the first step in developing the economy and society is promoting reading and writing skills among poor people, d) to protect democracy, moral values, and rational thought, the general public need reading and writing skills. (Kalman, 1998, p. 526)

“Autonomous” Views of Literacy

In contrast, many experts have disagreed with looking at literacy merely as the mastery of the basics of reading and writing (Barton, 1994, 1998; Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Gee, 1996; Street, 1984, 1993). Street (1984, 1993) differentiated the work of two groups of scholars: psychologists and educationalists tended to study literacy by focusing on the discrete elements of reading and writing skills (an “autonomous” view of literacy) while anthropologists and sociolinguists were interested in the social practices and consequences of reading and writing (an “ideological” view of literacy), to be discussed later. Given rich cultural variation in reading and writing practices, confusion about what literacy means has led scholars, especially those who focus on its sociocultural aspects, to realize that certain biases might arise because when we are trying to understand other people’s literacy, we may simply impose particular assumptions derived from our own cultural practices (Street, 1993).
Street (1984) argued that the autonomous model of literacy treats literacy as “independent of social context.” Its intrinsic character acts as an autonomous variable that impacts both society and individual cognition (Street, 1993). The autonomous model assumes that there are similarities between an individual and his/her society; thus, the literacy level of an individual has an effect on the development of the economy, society and politics at the national level (Bartlett, 2008). This idea frequently lies behind many of the characteristics attributed to literate individuals. For example, a literate person is often assumed to be more “modern,” “cosmopolitan,” “innovative,” and “empathic” than an illiterate one (Chammer, 1976; Lerner, 1958; Oxenham 1980 as cited in Street, 1993, p. 7). Even now, some policy documents emphasize literacy as an individual trait and as the way to cure social “ills.” Literacy seems to be recognised as an independent factor for development and change (Torres, 2000). For example, Bolivia looked at literacy as theoretical and practical knowledge using mastery of reading, writing, and arithmetic for a person’s further development while Brazil looked at literacy as the first step for youth and adults to return to school (Kalman, 2008). These interpretations look at literacy as an individual accomplishment, a first step in developing learning and providing a chance to return to formal education for both young people and adults (Kalman, 2008).

Research based on an autonomous model of literacy has mostly focused on two aspects: 1) the consequences of reading and writing for the process of individual cognition, 2) the functional operation of literacy in certain modern institutions. Many educators, linguists, and psychologists focus on individuals and developing their cognition by increasing cognitive skills, improving logical thinking, encouraging self-conscious reflection, and raising other cognitive domains. This autonomous model of literacy, (seen to help make a nation economically competitive), has led to a culture of assessment. We see assessment of literacy skills as a major preoccupation of nations and the international community as well.

Other “Autonomous” Models of Literacy

Lankshear (1998) presented four types of meanings based on constructions of literacy and various characteristics of literacy in his review of educational reform proposals in North America, Britain, and Australia. According to Lankshear, there are four types of
meaning for literacy in policy documents: “lingering basics,” the “new basics,” “elite literacies,” and “foreign language literacy.”

First, Lankshear argued, literacy is constructed as the “lingering basics,” perceived as the ability to encode and decode printed texts. At both school and adult levels, the policy texts Lankshear examined mentioned basic and functional literacy competences. Basic literacy competence for learners in school related to the act of mastering the general techniques and concepts that help learners in their later education to build, expand, and develop knowledge and higher order skills. In contrast, basic literacy competence for adults is defined as the life skills that every adult should have in order to perform particular tasks in their real-life situations such as work, family, and other life events.

The second way educational reform proposals conceive of literacy, according to Lankshear, is literacy as the “new basics,” which relate to higher order skills and more sophisticated and abstract capacities than the “lingering basics.” Critics of the concept of lingering basics argue that they are no longer adequate for modern societies, which tend to have post-industrial information or service economies. Such ideas as “critical thinking,” “critical literacy,” and “effective literacy” are often addressed in the “new basics”. Critical thinking is important for learners as a package of higher order skills consisting of comprehension, problem solving, and analysis, which combine with reading, writing, speaking, and listening to create communication. This combination is often called “critical literacy” (Maxson & Hair, 1990 as cited in Lankshear, 1998).

“Effective literacy” is also frequently used in discussions of literacy policy. As one example, the Australian language and literacy policy stated that the intrinsic purpose of “effective literacy” was to be a flexible and dynamic way to integrate speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills with reading and writing (Lankshear, 1998). As a person gains education and goes through training programs, from such a perspective, effective literacy will continue to develop throughout his/her lifetime. Under the Australian policy, critical literacy was designated as the first goal. In particular, the policy intended that every Australian should develop effective literacy so that he or she could actively participate in Australian society.

A third way literacy is constructed is as “elite literacies.” In reform proposals in the U.S. and other Western countries Lankshear found that educators and researchers paid attention to the application of knowledge from academic learning to the tasks required
for learners to increase their academic subject standards in post-elementary education. For example, in a statement in the Educate America Act in Section 102 (6) (B) (v) (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994), one goal was to increase the number of college graduates who both have a high ability to think critically and can also communicate and solve problems effectively. “Elite literacies” consist of these features: having a high level of ability in a subject, understanding the language of academic subjects, the basic logic and process of inquiry, and having knowledge of literature relating to subjects in order to extend knowledge, theory, and application in real life. The purpose of such features of literacy is to add value in work within modern economies; therefore some experts called this type of literacy construction as “symbolic analysis” or “knowledge work” (Drucker, 1993, Reich, 1992 as cited in Lankshear, 1998).

Finally, “foreign language literacy” was for Lankshear, a literacy construction that derived from “humanist” values supporting foreign language learning and bilingualism in order to increase second language proficiency and maintain community and minority languages. However, he pointed out that in many countries, the real reason for promoting foreign languages is economic. For example, from the Australia’s Language and literacy policy, Australia seems to support people to learn foreign language. Even though Australian English is important for learners to know so as to contribute to economic, diplomatic, strategic, scientific, and technological development, balancing this with knowledge of a diversity of languages is seen to benefit international collaborations and overseas trade (Department of Employment, Education, and Training, Australia, 1991, p.xiii, 14-15, cited in Lankshear, 1998). The U. S. also considers learning languages as crucial for conducting overseas trade. Thus literacy in a foreign language was seen as a particular kind of “elite literacy”.

These four types of literacy defined by Lankshear are constructed as occurring in chronological order. The earliest views of literacy see value in simply the ability of an individual to fulfill basic reading and writing requirements sufficient for developing his/her higher level cognitive skills in the future. The next perspective still pays attention to each person’s cognitive skills but also sees more sophisticated skills as required. These latter two conceptions show the need to develop a person’s general cognitive ability to benefit him/herself in real life. Requiring creative thinking in effectively applying academic knowledge to real work is called “elite literacies,” which refers to the need for learners to
solve problems, innovate and be critical consumers. The fourth type, foreign language literacy, is motivated by recent economic conditions and the dominance of some languages in international trade. Considering literacy’s meanings through discourse in reform texts, Lankshear (1998) found that most such texts emphasize standard languages (importantly, Standard English) and look on literacy as individualized, standardized, and commodified.

Some of the characteristics of the educational reform proposals studied by Lankshear in 1998 conform to the assumptions of the autonomous model of literacy. Literacy is perceived as “individual performance.” Each person is assumed to be able to possess this ability, and, like all skills, it can be measured.

Concerns about Autonomous Views of Literacy

There are substantial concerns about autonomous models of literacy. Lankshear noted that the perception of literacy as an individual capacity and possession might gradually damage the solidarity of communities. This perception is often associated with hierarchies of access to social and other goods and leads to self-interested orientations, and limited sympathies for others instead of encouraging cooperation for mutual well-being. He also noted that in real-life situations the attempt to standardize literacy in order to reach standardized outcomes, “teaching to the test” has become normal practice. Moreover, at the ethical level the term “standardization of literacy” might further disadvantage some groups whose social, cultural, political and economic capital are de-valued. For example, disadvantaged people might regard as worthless their unique literacies embedded in their particular social and cultural practices, such as local languages, life habits, ways of communication, ways of thinking and believing, and so on.

Another characteristic of an autonomous model of literacy is that it tends to turn literacy into a “commodity”. In response to felt needs to support the standardization of literacy in order to develop various aspects of the nation and value in an individual cognitive performance, many educational packages have been created that promise recipes and resources for ensuring required performance results. These include packages of assessment, evaluation, and validation, and professional development for teachers. This perception of literacy, Lankshear argued, makes it like a “thing” with economic value,
which can weaken many other values crucial to economic efficiency such as problem solving, creativity, innovation, and applying theory to practices.

Many quantitative measures use an autonomous definition of literacy to determine whether someone is literate or not and use it to compare people’s levels of literacy ability. The UNESCO definition of literacy which is the “ability to read and/or write, with understanding, a simple short statement on everyday life” is referred to frequently in quantitative works (Bartlett, 2008). However, some have argued that comparing literacy performance between countries by using various quantitative measures based on the autonomous definition may be unacceptable. Wagner (2003) pointed out that literacy represented in statistical reports may test skills in a single official language of a particular country, a language that may not be shared by many. In addition, in indirect reports of literacy ability (such as self-assessment), or reporting by the household head or an authorized person to inform on years of schooling, there is often an overestimation of actual literacy ability. Moreover, UNESCO (2006, p. 182) accepted that there is no standard educational attainment proxy for literacy across poor countries.

Recently, many countries and agencies have used more direct literacy measures and wider definitions of literacy in order to evaluate literacy ability (Schaffner, 2005; Wagner, 2003). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) started to explore literacy using several cross-national and comparative surveys in which the meaning of literacy is constructed across various domains, and persons are not simply classed as illiterate or literate. For example, in a hierarchy of literacy tasks of the International Adult Literacy Survey, an individual is scored on a continuous scale into five levels from the simplest to the most difficult tasks (OECD and Statistics CANADA, 1995). It seems that scholars are still working on how to develop assessments that are smaller, save time, and are cheaper based on an autonomous view (Wagner, 2003).

Bartlett (2008) pointed out that many scholars using a sociocultural approach disagreed with attempts to measure literacy, arguing against considering literacy as a property of individual cognition. Instead, they argued that focus should be on cultural and social relations and practices in activity with written language (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee; 1992; Street, 1984). They also questioned the assumption that “levels” of literacy can be derived from assessments of how individuals decode complex language, arguing that familiarity with content of text is more important to comprehension than language
complexity. Nor did they believe that there is a stable linkage between “skill” and text. They noted that people use multiple skills or cueing systems to read and that each system is mediated by cultural and social contexts (Luke & Freebody, 1997a, b, 1999 as cited in Bartlett, 2008). Dyson (2002 as cited in Bartlett, 2008) showed that in literacy practices, there is a complex recontextualization of children’s practices and symbolic resources which is difficult to measure or predict. Many also denied that there is a universal hierarchy of skills. For instance, Wolfram and Shilling-Estes (1998 as cited in Bartlett, 2008) stated that the validity of standardized tests should be questioned; for example, we cannot make ‘phonics’ standardized across dialects of a language. Moreover, scholars using the sociocultural approach rejected the assumption that literacy is objectively measurable. Bartlett (2008) argued that it has never been possible to measure literacy because literacy practices are contextual and variable. In fact, literacy measures are imbued with literacy ideologies in constructing literacy’s meaning (Bartlett, 2008).

“Ideological” and Sociocultural Models of Literacies

Street (1984) argued that literacy, in its sociopolitical contexts, is not autonomous or independent. Reading and writing have, he noted, social and individual consequences which are incorporated in subsequent social relations. Reading and writing are suitable for different social actors and embedded in beliefs about how the social world works (Street, 1993). A literate person is a person who has the ability to use written language to participate in the social world (or a variety of social worlds). Street (1993) stated that in the “ideological model of literacy”, literacy is viewed as having inextricable links to the structure of culture and power in society; such a view recognizes the diversity of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts. As a result, Street and other scholars have paid attention to the study of social practices by inquiring how contexts such as schools, families, or organizations radically change literacy and how it is practiced (Barton et.al. 2000; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Duranti & Goodwin 1992; Ferdman, Rose-Marie, & Arnulfo Ramirez,1994; Gumperz 1984, 1986; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Kalman, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Street, 1993, 2003).
Duranti and Goodwin (1992) and Gumperz (1984) took the position that it is important to consider the situations of use and the interactive dynamics occurring among participants in particular communicative events in which reading and writing are accomplished. In any one communicative situation, the worldviews, language practices, history, and experiences of each speaker or reader or writer are important. In studying complex contexts and social relationships, scholars try to find out what people like to read and write, the relationship of readers and writers to others, and the ideas and meanings that guide their participation. In written language practices, they consider the social uses of reading and writing such as the particular skills and knowledge both acquired and required, technology, and people’s ideas about these practices (Ferdman et al., 1994). In institutional settings and organizations, power relations help to determine who reads and writes and what they read and write, who the decision makers are, who governs written language and who exercises power in such written language (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Street 2003).

Bartlett (2008) engaged in ethnographic research to find out how literacy is used depending on social and cultural forces in a particular place. She argued that regarding literacy as a single phenomenon that can predict economic or political consequences, is misleading. She studied the role of literacy in economic and political development of Brazil’s students in four literacy programs. She found that the study of literacy in class did not produce an autonomous economic effect on the students or produce human capital that led them to mobilize the economy. Rather literacy instruction provided them with social networks and enabled them to behave and be perceived as more educated. Regarding political development, her results also rejected the conventional development claim that literacy provides political benefits and increases political participation. In her samples she found that literacy instruction did not seem to encourage students to vote or participate in particular associations. However, she did find that being literate can increase students’ self-esteem. This ethnographic study suggests that educational researchers should rethink the relationship between literacy and development. They should not treat literacy as a singular or a single skill that can be measured and placed in a hierarchical array. The impact of literacy cannot be predicted by the autonomous model because it ignores the cultural and social conditions of those learning to interact with written language (Bartlett, 2008).
Many scholars discuss the role of literacy practices in reproducing power and domination. The framework of the “ideological model of literacy” has been used to scrutinize and challenge the ideology in which is hidden (Street, 1993). Street explained that the meaning of “ideology” he used is not as simple as a sense of false consciousness. For him, ideology is based on “the tension between authority and power on the one hand and resistance and creativity on the other hand” (Street, 1993, p. 8). Street insisted that literacy is not a neutral technology as the autonomous model claims. Instead, it is a social and ideological practice engaging power and politics. Literacy acquisition in the dominant discourse leads to the establishment of what is suitable literacy and establishes the legitimacy of struggles for power and position (Street, 1993).

Freire’s (1970) view held that literacy is a complex sociocultural negotiation. Literacy practices shape and are shaped by larger powers and the oppression of the poor may depend on the absence or presence of literacy (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987). McCarty (2005), a critical scholar of literacy, also focused on exploring the connection between literacy and power. McCarty argued that the main question of literacy should not be whether or not an individual can read or write, but rather the social meaning of languages and literacies, in particular, on their roles in human social life.

James Gee’s (1992, 1996) view of literacy is also relevant to the ideological model of literacy. He argued that literacy, the process of learning the letters and sounds, and post literacy, which include complex skills and abilities, were important for the world market in the past. However, for him, these types of literacy are not relevant to the world economies of today. In the review of Lankshear in 1998, Gee defined literacy as powerful literacy. Gee’s view of powerful literacy derived from a distinction between “Discourse” and “discourse” and the difference between “acquisition” and “learning.” The notion of “discourse” refers to the language activities humans engage in their specific communities. By contrast, in any particular group, class, or network, Discourse refers to the meaningful “rules” and being an individual represented as a member of such unit means acting in accord with these rules. If other people can recognize us as being a “this” or a “that” or “a particular version of a this or a that”, such as a middle-class mother or a perfectionist teacher, it means we are in a Discourse. Moreover, if we are in a Discourse, how we are communicate, believe, value things, feelings and actions, and so on can be recognized by others. Language, for Gee, is only one dimension of Discourse.
Gee argued that there are two kinds of Discourse. Primary Discourse comes from our family and group and contains a general understanding of who we are, what people like us do, think, act, value, believe, and so on. Secondary Discourse comes from being recruited to participate in particular outside groups and institutions such as schools, workplaces, and other organizations. Secondary Discourse may draw resources from people who are more or less similar to their primary Discourse. For example, disadvantaged students coming from marginal social groups may struggle in classrooms because their secondary Discourse is less similar to their primary Discourse than it is for others.

The distinction between “acquisition” and “learning” also helps to explain differential access to and control of secondary Discourses. The first language which a child learns is derived through “acquisition,” a subconscious process. Later, in a conscious process, a child will learn language through instruction in grammar and through other activities. Thus, there are two aspects of discursive competence. First, there is “performance” of discourse. The second aspect is “knowledge” about that discourse, which we gain by learning. Knowledge helps us to expand our performance and also to innovate or diversify from it. Gee perceived “literacy” as a product of acquisition instead of learning. Literacy is used “as a meta-knowledge or meta-Discourse (a set of meta-words, meta-values, meta-beliefs) for the critique of other literacies and the way they constitutes us as persons and situate us in society” (SLL, p.144 as cited in Lankshear, 1998, p. 371-372). Dominant educational reform D/discourse, which seems to force people to have standardized competencies by using assessment denies their original acquisition. Thus, Lankshear argued that dominant Discourses from current educational reform proposals are like an elaborate strategy to maintain class, and other particular interests, and reproduce patterns of advantage and disadvantage. It may also be that this Discourse is so embedded in our practices that it appears as reality.

Summary: Ideological and Autonomous Views of Literacy

As we have seen, the meaning of literacy has moved from a simple definition depending on whether or not a person can read or write to more sophisticated views. The two models of literacy discussed, an autonomous model and an ideological model, play major roles in viewing literacy as a concept, constructing its definition, studying its
consequences, framing how to develop it, and expanding it to various fields, such as measurement and assessment, ethnographic studies, policy planning, and so on. In my opinion, it is not necessary to choose a side or decide that one approach is better. Both perspectives of literacy offer valuable insights. The autonomous model isolates literacy as an independent cognitive skill and scholars who take this view are concerned with optimum ways to teach reading and writing and to measure it. Such a view encourages governments, experts, scholars, and even individuals to develop literacy and to discover effective ways to increase it. However, an ideological model of literacy reminds us to not ignore social practices and recognizes the ideological and culturally embedded nature of such practices. It warns us to carefully interpret statistical data from literacy assessments and not rely totally on such information. In our society, which is full of various groups of people with different language, beliefs, religions, socioeconomic and other different characteristics, human rights and equality are important. To understand oppression, the ideological model of literacy enables us to scrutinize the reproduction of power and domination hidden in literacy practices.

**Literacy Meaning in Thailand**

The meaning of literacy in Thailand had been studied by the Office of Non-Formal Education Commission in 2007. There are five periods of historical development in Thailand. In the first period (1940-1947), literacy means “the ability to read and write simple Thai language of adults, as well as understandings in civic duty of the citizens in a democratic system” (ONFEC, 2007, p. 4). In the second period (1948-1960), Thailand became a member of UNESCO. With the influence of the UNESCO, Thai educators realized after World War II that international understanding, the creation of world peace and equality are important for literacy. Thus, vocational skills were integrated in literacy so that the learners could apply to knowledge to improve their quality of life. To the definition of literacy was added the ability in calculation and some knowledge and skills necessary for the improvement of everyday life. In the third period (1961-1976), there are two separate courses of literacy education; rural literacy and urban literacy. The rural literacy emphasized rural oriented contents while the urban literacy is more on basic subjects and the Three R’s skills. Later, the definition of literacy was replaced by “functional literacy” which provides more of a sense of national development. In this time, the illiteracy problem was a worldwide concern so that exploring new concepts and
methods to help Thai adults was consistent with the concern of the international community. The fourth period (1977-1997), the target groups had been used to define the meaning of literacy which is different among each Thai educational organization. In particular, the National Statistical Office defined literacy as the ability to read and write in any language of a person of 10 years old and above, not just the national language. However, the Ministry of Education first identified the target for literacy program which is Thais “who had not completed grade 4 of primary education and still could not read and write simple Thai language and were within the ages of 14-50 which were beyond the compulsory education age level” (ONEFC, 2007, p. 20). Lastly, the fifth period (1998-2007) was influenced by the international organizations which realized the relation between illiteracy trends and low income. There is a link between poverty and illiteracy which is evident in thirty developing countries, where literacy levels correlate strongly with wealth. Thus, the definition of literacy in Thailand includes functional literacy, basic education equivalency programmes, and continuing education programmes for lifelong learning. Lifelong learning was defined to include not only learning from birth to death but also in terms of learning for life and life for learning (ONEFC, 2007).

The meaning of literacy in Thailand from this review was changed by the aid of international organization such as UNESCO which wanted to promote literacy. In Thailand, literacy focused on both functional literacy and the social dimension, taking into account gender, economic status, disabilities, and so on.

Even though, the meaning of literacy in Thailand is clear, in this study, I may gain more understanding when I pay attention directly to particular educational policies. To understand what national educational policy makers mean by literacy development, analysis of written languages in policy might help me to discover ideology and power that lead to inequities.

**Equity and Inequity**

There are two dimensions to educational equity: fairness and inclusion. Fairness is making sure that “personal and social circumstance such as gender, socio-economic status or ethnic origin should not be an obstacle to achieving educational potential” (OECD, 2008, p. 2). Inclusion means making sure that all people gain a basic minimum standard of education such as reading, writing, basic arithmetic (OECD, 2008). The
OECD (2008) noted three key policy areas which can affect equity in education: the design of education systems, both in- and out-of-school practices, and allocating resources. In this study, I choose to examine potential causes of inequities or equities in Thai education. The words inequity and inequality have been used interchangeably but in this thesis I prefer to use the term inequity, as I am not only concerned with equality of opportunities but also with equity in outcome (Vandemoortele, 2012).
Chapter 3.

Policy, Practices, and Literacy Development

In this chapter, I review literacy policy initiatives in four rich Western countries (Canada, Sweden, the United States, England, and Australia), as well as present critiques of these policies. I also describe briefly literacy instructional practices promoted by Western academics. I then present some literacy development policies that Thailand recently has tried to implement. Finally, I reveal my concerns about possible contradictions between valuing new ideas and Thai cultural practices.

Policy statements aim to set goals and regulate the direction of an organization’s development at a particular time. Educational policy conveys to educators and other people involved, the what, how, and why of institutional educational priorities, beliefs and practices (Alford, 2005). Since various scholars and policy makers have made clear their belief that literacy can strengthen nations and should be the starting point of development, literacy projects have captured the attention of state and policy makers in many countries (Kalman, 2008; Pattison 1982; Street 1984). Increasing interest in literacy can be found around the world: for example, the declaration of the Decade for Literacy in 1990 of the United States, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act also in the U.S., and the literacy surveys of many industrialized countries such as the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the Adult Literacy and Life skills Survey (ALLS), the People’s Republic of China’s minority/indigenous language policy and practices, which was adopted from the Soviet model from the 1950s, and as an example of a poor country, the promotion of reading habits in the national agenda of Thailand established for 2008-2018.

Many countries have for a long time tried to develop their citizens’ literacy abilities (taking an “autonomous” view of literacy). In the past, literacy was often used to serve the causes of “morality” and “nationalism” (Veeman et al., 2006). Promotion of literacy was related more closely to religion than to government. For example, in seventeenth
century Europe, morality was inculcated into people through promoting a common moral code (Veeman et.al, 2006). Furthermore, a person who could read could get a position in the church. In the twentieth century, in some poor countries made up of various races or whose people speak different languages, literacy campaigns were promoted to support governments' plans to build the nation: examples between the 1960s and 1980s include Cuba, Tanzania, and Nicaragua (Veeman et.al, 2006). Today, many scholars believe that economics is the main reason the governments of many wealthy countries are paying greater attention to literacy development (Davenport & Jones, 2005; Fehring & Nyland; 2012; Hamilton & Pitt, 2011; Lo Bianco, 2001; Veeman et.al, 2006).

Even though Thailand, a poor country, is different from wealthy countries in many ways, including economics, culture, society, language, and religions, the view of the connection between policy and literacy development in wealthy countries provides me helpful perspectives for examining the development of a “literacy discourse” in Thailand. In the following, I present the main factors that lead the governments of wealthy countries to give a high priority to literacy in their national policies. I also present some of the research that argues against some of the goals or methods of these governments.

**Literacy Development Policies in Wealthy Countries**

Although the national governments of wealthy countries consider their citizens' literacy as a government responsibility, “literacy development” has generally been discussed more as an issue for poor countries. Based on a human rights orientation, the goals, objectives, and actions of international organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO, tend to focus on literacy problems in poor countries, suggesting formal, non-formal, and adult education (Lo Bianco, 2001). Recently “literacy development” has become a crucial issue for wealthy countries as well. International organizations and valuing of “human capital” have influenced the views of government and policy makers toward literacy development.

**International Organizations**

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have all used literacy as a way to compare countries.
Since 1994 numerous surveys comparing literacy ability in youth, adolescents, and adults have been published such as the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). For example, the 1994 IALS showed that adult literacy levels in Canada and the US were relatively lower than those in northern Europe. According to the IALS, more than 40% of adult Canadians had inadequate literacy skills, and England and the US had greater literacy problems than most countries (OECD and Statistics Canada, 1995). The 2005 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALLS) showed that wealthy countries had a high percentage of adults lacking the literacy skills needed for effective participation in the global economy (Veeman et.al, 2006). The ALLS result was unchanged from the 1994 IALS findings (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2005). In the 2003 and 2007 PISA, even though the US students had the highest score among other countries in Grade 4, the Grade 8 students had lower scores, and the Grade 10 students scored among the lowest (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2003, 2007).

Human Capital

“Human capital,” a term derived from international organizations, also influences literacy policies in wealthy countries. The OECD defines human capital as the knowledge, skills, ability, and other characteristic embodied in each person that are relevant to economic success (OECD, 1998). Human capital is defined as a combination of “skills”, knowing how, and “knowledge”, knowing what, so that people can benefit themselves (Machlau, 1984 as cited in Lo Bianco, 2001). Lo Bianco (2001) wrote that in acquiring human capital, people invest themselves with skills and knowledge and sell themselves in the market. One aspect of human capital has been literacy. From the viewpoint of business leaders, low literacy performance in a nation inhibits per capita incomes and GDP growth (Veeman et.al., 2006). Governments and policy makers therefore look at literacy as an economic imperative or a barometer showing a nation’s economic success and human capital.

The Impact of Literacy Development Policies

In wealthy countries governments and policy makers have called for standardized measurements of literacy, specification of the best literacy teaching methods, the
promotion of literacy programs to increase literacy performance of all learners at every level, and support for research in such areas. These governments subscribe to the autonomous model of literacy. However, scholars who support the ideological model of literacy argue that to increase citizens’ literacy performance and decrease the problem of oppression in society, governments, policy makers, researchers, and teachers should not ignore the local circumstances of disadvantaged groups, indigenous people, migrants, or people in particular communities, who have race, language, religious, and other social and cultural differences from the mainstream (Camangain, 2011; Freire, 1998; Luke, 2003). Even though many wealthy countries face these issues as a result of being multicultural societies, the autonomous model of literacy performance based on single standard of proficiency, has had priority in national policy. In the following, I illustrate some impacts of literacy policies in Canada, Sweden, the United States, England, and Australia respectively.

**Canada and Sweden**

In Canada, which recognizes the importance of and makes available for free a formal education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 levels, adult literacy performance as evaluated by ALLS and IALS is a concern. Comparing Canada and Sweden, Veeman and colleagues (2006) investigated why adult literacy levels in Sweden were higher and less dependent on past educational attainment and the socio-economic status of an individual than they were in Canada. They asked: what roles do governments play in adult education for Canadians and for Swedes? How do Canada and Sweden differ in adult literacy policies? (Veeman et.al, 2006). They found that there are many causes for these differences. Sweden established “Folkbildning” or popular education institutions in the 1800s based on assumptions of assets among the people (peasants, the unemployed, the working class and sometimes lower middle class). By contrast, Veeman argued that Canada’s “Literacy and adult basic education” sites were based on perceptions of deficits within the student body. As well, the involvement of levels of state policy and funding of adult education in these two countries are also different. The Canadian government has a lower level of involvement in adult literacy than the Swedish government. Canada tends to leave the responsibility for provision of adult literacy opportunities to volunteers and the private sector. In contrast, the Swedish government uses national guidelines and funding to regulate and direct adult education through both formal and non-formal sectors. For access to basic adult education, Swedes who are
between eighteen and fifty years old pay no fees. Canadians who are twenty-one and older have access to adult basic education but funding is only provided for some target populations. Moreover, there are no tuition fees from kindergarten through university in Sweden while in Canada, tuition is charged at universities and technical institutes. The results of adult literacy performance from ALLS and IALS reports have led researchers and adult educators to study the effects of literacy policy in developing adult literacy and to provide advice for Canadian’s governments and policy makers.

**The United States**

In 2000, President George W. Bush declared that reading was “the new civil right.” Two years later the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was established. Based on data on literacy performance from both international and US organizations, the government and policy makers have since paid more attention to the development of literacy at all levels. The results of the 2003 and 2007 PISA showed that literacy performances of U.S. Grade 8 and 10 students were at a low level compared with other wealthy countries, and there were high rates of under-achievement on state reading assessments (Center on Education Policy, 2007) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007 as cited in Snow, Martin, & Berman, 2008) as well as lower adult literacy performance compared to Scandinavian countries from the 1995’s IALS and the 2005’s ALLS (Veeman et al., 2006). This has led the federal government to go beyond individual states’ traditional policies on literacy.

In accordance with the NCLB federal policy, based on the need for all students to learn and the desire to improve instruction, more accountability for student learning has been established, including academic content standards, teacher quality, and student assessments. In state education policy, sanctions for schools that cannot meet annual yearly progress on the standardized academic outcome of the federal requirements have been set. The policy also provides for future education as a reward system for students whose performance is outstanding.

Scholars and researchers have considered feedback from ground level studies or district contexts after the government has implemented particular projects or set particular policies (Camangian, 2011; Mangin, 2009; Snow, Martin, & Berman, 2008). Snow and colleagues analyzed the adolescent literacy plans established since 2002 of four states
and suggested that to increase adolescents’ reading performance, state policy makers needed help from higher education institutions to develop and evaluate initiatives (Snow et al., 2008). They were also of the opinion that broader comparisons between states would help to improve adolescent literacy. This study considered it important for state level authorities and researchers to collaborate on large-scale policy and to provide significant information on each state to help policy makers make decisions on the development of adolescent literacy. Similarly, the influences of district contexts on reform efforts in national and state policies were examined by Mangin in 2009. To develop instructional teacher-leader roles, the “Literacy Coach Role” has been implemented at the district level in several school districts in 2006–2007. Mangin concluded that innovations like these need local scrutiny. Camangian (2011) argued that the top-down literacy policy of the NCLB looks at all students similarly and tends to reproduce dominant school discourses, while cultural biases in the traditional curriculum prevents disadvantaged students from having a positive orientation to schooling. He suggested that grounding literacy in students’ lives by teaching them to self-actualize and to voice their humanity is the real solution to inequality in schooling and society.

**England**

To develop policies for literacy instruction, the English government studied international and local data and was influenced by other countries’ best practices. The Labour government tried to raise standards of literacy at the primary school level, by setting up the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in the 1990s. In the education reform of the 1990s, the English government established a scale for literacy competence. In the 2000s, government and policy makers have focused on both “large scale reform” and “sustainable reform” (Fullan & Earl, 2002; Hargreaves & Fink, 2000). Many scholars have studied policies and compared government strategies (Fullan & Earl, 2002; Hamilton & Pitt, 2011; Mills, 2011; Jolliffe, 2006; Machin & McNally, 2008).

Jolliffe (2006) compared two large-scale British literacy reforms for primary schools: 1) the NLS and 2) the UK Success for All (SFA) (adapted for the United Kingdom from an American initiative in the late 1990s). The NLS aimed to raise standards for literacy and promote improved literacy instruction in the “Framework for Teaching,” which gave “detailed guidance for teachers, a supporting professional development program and other community-based elements” (National Literacy Strategy, n.d.,p. 4 as cited in
In this strategy, literacy instruction was to be “discursive, interactive, well-paced, confident and ambitious” (DfEE, 1998, p. 8 as cited in Jolliffe, 2006). An example of a method for such instruction is the “Literacy Hour”: a plan that was said to ensure a balance between whole class reading and writing, group guidance, and independent work.

The later SFA strategy promoted a belief in “talent development” and was based on the work on cooperative learning by the American theorist Robert Slavin. Emphasizing prevention and early intervention, SFA stressed that early years assessment and education was key to producing high levels of academic achievement. SFA entailed a 90-minute block of literacy teaching for all elementary school children and focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension and vocabulary development (Slavin, Wordsworth, & Jones-Hill, 2005). It was claimed that SFA was more effective in the teaching of literacy than the NLS but it was more expensive (particular materials were used and had to be purchased) and required more teacher and class time to implement.

While the NLS has been characterized either as “a straightjacket” or a “highly flexible framework” (Beard, 2002; Fisher, 2002), many scholars supported it. They claimed the NLS had a great impact on the literacy teaching in primary schools and argued that the “Literacy Hour” could raise achievement from 2 to 3 percentage points in the reading and English skills of primary school students (Machin & McNally, 2008). Fisher (2002) and Machin and McNally (2008) claimed that the “Literacy Hour” as the literacy teaching method of the NLS in England was more effective and cheaper than other methods and is now used in most English primary schools.

In 2003, England launched the Primary National Strategy (PNS) for literacy, which was an extensive plan said to simplify the structure of the objectives, with the identification of 12 strands of learning, giving a broad overview of the literacy curriculum in the primary phase. Learning objectives are aligned to the 12 strands to demonstrate progression in each strand (Department for Education, the United Kingdom, 2003). While said to simplify objectives, the PNS is very complex in practice. Mills (2011) argued that implementation of it entailed power conflicts among three groups: head teachers, teachers, and policy drivers. Mills concluded that when implementing a particular literacy strategy into schools, the connections between political change, power, and literacy policy should be studied.
Australia

Three major literacy policy documents issued between 1987 and 1998 and two literacy assessments at the national level launched recently illustrate the literacy instruction policy of the Australian government (Fehring & Nyland, 2012). The first literacy document, the National Policy on Languages, launched in 1987, supported linguistic and cultural pluralism in the context of politics and society in the 1980s. Edwards (2010 as cited in Fehring & Nyland, 2012) analyzed this policy and found that there were three main discourses that constructed literacy in it: as personal growth, as human capital, and as a mechanism to achieve more equity. The perception of literacy as human capital still functioned, Fehring & Nyland (2012) argued, as the neoliberal discourse in Australia in 2012. The second literacy policy, Australia’s Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy, was issued in 1991. Edwards (2010 as cited in Fehring & Nyland, 2012) found that in the context of globalization’s effect on world economics, literacy in this document was considered as an opportunity to build the economic nation, a human capital asset, and a quantifiable economic resource for predicting deficits in education. Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools, the third literacy policy document, came out in 1998. In it, literacy was characterized as an ‘inoculation’ to vaccinate children and prevent disadvantage in the future.

The Australian government considers that literacy and numeracy are the cornerstones of all learning and that it is crucial for children to develop these foundation skills at the earliest possible time in their school years. A key priority has been to focus on achieving real, sustained improvements in the literacy and numeracy skills of Australian children to better prepare them for their futures. Ensuring all students gain at least a minimum acceptable standard in literacy and numeracy is critical in overcoming educational disadvantage. This means that literacy and numeracy practices are central equity issues in education today (DEST, 2005).

The Plan included instructions to teachers to balance instruction in formal aspects of written language (phonological awareness, spelling patterns, spelling-sound relations and so on) with attention to the functions of written language, fluency, and the literacies of the new technologies. The Plan also advocated “Four Blocks” for literacy instruction: guided reading, self-selected reading, writing and working with words.
Standardized testing is common in Australia and the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) provides a battery of tests to assess students’ reading, writing, language and numeracy. These tests are administered by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the result of which are published on the MySchool website, a ranking of Australian schools in terms of their achievement on these tests. With the impact of international comparisons in literacy performance, the federal government implemented the NAPLAN across Years 3, 5, 7, and 9. Fehring & Nyland (2012) pointed that because of the current prominence of NAPLAN, teaching to the test has become more evident in Australia. They also criticized the testing, arguing it imposed a uniform curriculum based on the notion of Standard Australian English.

Discussion

Most wealthy countries, as we have seen, intend to improve literacy instruction and learning, especially at the primary school level and see this as the responsibility of government. As well, newly-available international comparisons of all ages’ literacy performance, have led most wealthy countries, to move from seeing literacy as inculcating moral values and building the nation and democracy, and to prepare citizens to be ready to compete in globalized economic markets. National policy currently pays attention to discovering effective teaching and instruction methods, changing the curriculum, and making other educational innovations to raise literacy standards. Assuming autonomous models of literacy, national testing systems to determine standard literacy performance have proliferated.

There are many arguments against the economic approach being the main driver in literacy development policy. The fact that less attention is being paid to cultural and social differences has been a critical issue for many years. Most wealthy countries, with many indigenous groups, also attract migrants. These multicultural nations and multilingual societies have faced many problems such as language and cultural rights and loss, literacy disadvantages and inequity, and so on. Camangian (2011) urged researchers and teachers to help policy makers in developing literacy policy by providing them with research results from teaching students based on cultural differences in order to help to solve problems of social inequities. In local communities where students have
particular needs, Chamangian argued that teachers should pay close attention to conditions that shape student identities, and actively design curriculum including both school content and students’ cultural frameworks in order to teach them to self-actualize and voice their human rights. Likewise, Sharp (2012) reminded us that “Critical Literacy” instruction could improve educational outcomes in 21st century classrooms. This method requires teachers to understand students’ culture to make sure that they do not intentionally reproduce relations of power and domination in the classroom, and to align themselves with students to struggle against power relations that subordinate them and to address real-life problems that they encounter. Fehring & Nyland (2012) argued that national literacy assessments should not depend on macro level testing programs; rather it should reflect knowledge diversity so that we can understand learners’ future potential. The observers also argued that the literacy curriculum and assessment practices should take greater account of parental expectations and the diversity of students’ needs in the local educational community.

Literacy development policy has also been critiqued for its acceptance of neo-liberal discourses (e.g. Hamilton & Pitt, 2011). Hamilton & Pitt (2011) observed that English adult literacy policy reflects the tensions between ideals of equity and the need to compete in a regional and global economy. They claimed as well that government assumes a simple cause and effect link between literacy levels and national prosperity and that they perceive citizens only in terms of economic productivity. In addition, to solve complex social inequalities, governmental policy has taken a simplistic view of the challenges adult literacy learners face, and frame the issue as a matter of individuals having a duty to improve and change themselves by retraining.

Many teachers, local experts, language professionals and many researchers have argued that diverse policy interventions have not aided in literacy development. Many governments of wealthy countries have great concern about the literacy performance level of their citizens, especially as they survey results of international assessments of literacy and their possible involvement in future competitive economics. Many scholars have pointed out that literacy policies pay little attention to the diversity of cultural and social contexts of literacy learners and have argued that standardized literacy assessments to judge learners as a part of human capital accounting, affect teachers’ professionalism and autonomy. Such assessments draw from autonomous models of
literacy and support policy goals, but fail to solve social inequity (Lo Bianco, 2001; Literacy Research Association, 2004; Nitiri, 2009). Even though much concern is evident and there have been many attempts from scholars to urge their governments to focus more on local cultural and social differences, government and policy makers seem to ignore this direction of literacy development.

Recommended Practices

Despite international policy initiatives not proving to be overwhelmingly successful in improving literacy outcomes, some educational scholars have certainly made recommendations for improving literacy instructional practices. I have reviewed three recommended practices: family and literacy, funds of knowledge, and teacher-parent collaboration.

**Family and Literacy**

Ladson-Billings (1992, 1996) found that creating instructional contexts that are relevant to students' cultural identities and community knowledge, enhanced the literacy achievement of African American students. In Canada, every province has also taken account of this issue, for example, creating the Parent Engagement Office in the Ontario Ministry of Education to promote parent engagement in education. In the UK, the government realized that to improve people' literacy in civic participation, the literacy skills of communities need to be supported. Therefore, community-focused literacy initiatives have been instituted so that schools, libraries, museums, early years centers and other community organizations can join each other to improve literacy across all ages (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). Family literacy, especially in the UK, has not only encouraged teachers and parents together to support children, but also has been working on parents' literacy themselves. Pahl and Rowsell (2005) have urged that in future, practitioners should pay more attention to a closer alignment between home and school.

Educators have also encouraged schools to integrate knowledge and skills from family and community, especially from minorities and immigrants, into their multicultural curriculum. However, the multicultural curriculum has been criticized by educational theorists that it is superficial and inaccurate (Olmedo, 2004). To integrate local
knowledge and skills from home to schools, it has been suggested that teachers should try to discover and value family and community’s knowledge and skills, and then learn to integrate properly such knowledge and skills into curriculum.

Anderson, Freidrich and Kim (2010), in a review of research on families and literacy development argued that not all programs of family literacy resulted in positive relationships with the school; they noted that some such programs operate on a “deficit-model” perspective on minority families, but programs that are responsive to local needs and changing contextual conditions definitely do have positive outcomes.

Funds of Knowledge and Literacy

Vygotsky’s (1978) view of cultural-historical psychology emphasized “how cultural practices and resources mediate the development of thinking” (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005, p. 1). This inspired Luis Moll to combine this view with the cultural emphasis of an anthropological approach to education to introduce the concept of “funds of knowledge.” Moll and his colleagues claim that parents actually have “local household knowledge” that is absorbed by their children while they are being raised. Teachers should try to understand and discover their students’ and their families’ “funds of knowledge” in order to use them to develop innovations in teaching, and develop effective literacy lessons (Gonzalez, Moll; Amanti, 2005 & Moll et al., 2005;). This household view “contrasts sharply with prevailing and accepted perceptions of working-class families as somehow disorganized socially and deficient intellectually” (Moll et al., 2005. p. 75). Many working-class families are seen to lack the ability and knowledge to be able to support their children in schooling (Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002) and they are also seen to turn over responsibility for their children’ education to teachers (Mills & Gale, 2004). In contrast, the main concept of the funds of knowledge perspective is that families have abundant knowledge; especially various families with rural backgrounds know a great deal of particular local wisdom and skills. However, the school overlooks such knowledge and skills and does not use them in order to teach academic skills. Moll argued that “networks of knowledge” are available and accessible through social networks of exchange (Moll et al., 2005). Local households contain plenty of cultural and cognitive resources, and teachers can capitalize on knowledge and skills to develop classroom instruction beyond what students commonly learn in schools (Moll et al., 1990; Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Households’
knowledge and skills may come from information associated with households’ rural origins or be related to people’s careers in farming, animal management, construction and building, and other areas (Moll & Greenberg, 1990).

Moll and colleagues (1990) investigated how teachers can make use of funds of knowledge in their teaching. However, they soon found that the teachers tended to rely on the researchers to acquire information for teaching because they provided them with information about household knowledge and skills. The researchers also partnered in analyzing the classrooms, discussing household observations, and developing innovations in the teaching of literacy. In 1991, Moll’s team (Velez-Ibanez et al., 1991 as cited in Moll et al., 2005) provided workshops to train teachers in techniques for collecting households’ information directly from each family. This study showed the benefits that both teachers and students gain. When teachers have chances to meet and know more about their students’ households’ knowledge and skills, it was immediately helpful in the classroom.

Besides parents, it has been discovered that funds of knowledge from elderly people and others who has been silenced in society can be applied and integrated into literacy lessons (Kelly, 2004; Marshall & Toohey, 2010; Olmedo, 1999, 2004). A four-and-a-half year old child from a working-class family, who had a grandmother supporting him at home by providing texts and modelling literacy practices, showed more interest and activity in reading and writing in nursery school (Kelly, 2004). It is not only teachers and students who gain benefits from integrating funds of knowledge into literacy lessons, but also elderly people have changed their attitude towards their ability. In Olmedo’s study in Chicago, reading and writing activities designed by teachers provided a chance for Spanish-English students to obtain knowledge directly from grandmothers in the community. This Project Generation found that grandmothers who were old and had little formal schooling, appreciated better what they knew from their life experiences and gained more confidence in their ability to teach the new generation after spending time in telling their stories and discussing with Grade 4 students, while students were challenged about their misconceptions about elderly people in their community (Olmedo, 2004). Marshall and Toohey (2010) observed a school community’s funds of knowledge project in the communities and families of Punjabi Sikh students in a Canadian elementary school. The project worked successfully in inviting students to bring
household knowledge such as the first language and grandparents’ knowledge to school to support previous work. However, Marshall and Toohey (2010) noted that when the funds of knowledge included “difficult knowledge” that teachers do not talk about or when the contents challenge common curricular and institutional practices of the school, such knowledge does not become incorporated into school knowledge.

There are many pathways for teachers to find out and integrate families’ funds of knowledge into literacy lesson (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Dyson 2003; Frank, 1999; Gregory, Long & Volk, 2004; Haight, 2002; Kenner, 2000b; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll et.al. 1992; Olmedo, 2004; Rogoff et al. 2001). Teachers must respect that children have valuable experiences with literacy both from home and outside school, and then observe and interact with students, especially visiting their families and other contexts where students are expert (Frank, 1999). They can come to value community members and learn their knowledge and practices, develop a perspective based on the ability of both community members and the teacher, and explore various ways to link curriculum and local funds of knowledge to weave literacy from students' interest, families, communities, and popular culture into a classroom (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Dyson, 2003; Gregory, Long & Volk, 2004; Kenner, 2000; Moll, et al.1992). Teachers might nurture learning communities in the classroom and school to provide students with a chance to learn from each other (Rogoff, et al., 2001). In addition, teachers should try to maintain children's first language by paying attentions to various sorts of texts produced by bilingual children at home, and try to create bilingual contexts in school, provide students opportunities to be experts in their own languages and culture, and provide students chances to involve themselves in play and informal learning interactions with others who speak the same languages or speak languages that they are learning (Gregory, Long & Volk, 2004; Kenner, 2000).

**Teacher-Parent Collaboration**

For several decades, much research has demonstrated the benefits of parental involvement in students' cognitive development and achievement (Byrk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Fan & Chen, 2001; Feuerstein, 2000). A study of 100 successful and 100 problematic elementary schools in the U.S. revealed that for quality education, one of five important supports is strong ties between home and school (Byrk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). This research demonstrates that home and school should work together, share opinions, and help their students or
their children develop literacy practices (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). In the following, I present a theoretical discussion of teacher-parent collaboration, discuss the benefits of teacher-parent collaboration and point to its barriers. Most of this research has been carried out by North American researchers in North American communities.

Bronfenbrenner (1979 as cited in Kreider and Sheldon, 2010) tried to explain the connections of various people and contexts that influence a child’s development directly and indirectly. His “ecological system theory” can be illustrated by a set of concentric circles surrounding the child as shown in Figure 1.

The innermost circle Bronfenbrenner called the “microsystem”, which has the most influence on a child, represents interactions between parent and child, teacher and child, and student and peer in which parent and teacher are central actors who nurture and teach children. The “mesosystem,” the next circle out, represents the home-school relationship such as parent-teacher interaction. The next circle, called the “exosystem”, represents the influence of family occupational status on a child. The outer-most circle called the “macrosystem,” represents forces from outside such as education policy, cultural norms, and economic trends. The last factor outside the circle, is called the “chronosystem,” is about developmental and historical shifts in practices and resources. This theory help educators not only understand child development but also understand family involvement which happens in many contexts such as home, school, community and relates to various people such as a child, parent, teacher, peer, and others (Kreider and Sheldon, 2010).

Parental involvement is a concept that can include many different activities that can range from visiting a school once a year to frequently meeting with teachers to share ideas. Fullan (1982) divided parental involvement into four forms: instruction at school, instruction at home, school governance, and community service. In 1991, Tomlinson presented four forms of parental involvement: exchange of information (by letters, circulars, reports, visits); personal involvement in educational matters (homework or classwork); informal involvement in administrative matters by the parent association; and formal involvement in school governing. Coleman and Collinge (1991) pointed out that parents can influence the school system in one of two ways. In their involvement in governance issues, parents can benefit the school and prove students a more positive
school environment while by involvement in instruction and learning, parents can aid in students’ academic success.

Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecology of Human Development Contextual Systems and Examples of Influences on Family Involvement. (Kreider & Sheldon, 2010, p.11)

Epstein (1995) attempted to present a clear definition of parental involvement. She applied Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system of spheres of Influence and added the notion of the three sphere being overlapping (Epstein, 2001, 2010; Epstein et al., 2009).
The three circles represent family, school, and community which support a child, who is more likely to experience academic success if all three groups share the goal of educational achievement. The beliefs, resources, and practices of each group, as well as the interpersonal and interinstitutional interaction that connect the various contexts, affect how close or far the three groups are to one another. Epstein applied her theory to the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), which was established for this purpose, and also provided NNPS with six types of involvement to create partnerships of school, family, and community related to specific school improvement goals.

The six types of home-school relations proposed by Epstein (1995) seem to be the most comprehensive model of parent involvement: 1) parenting—schools and communities helping families to establish home environments that support children and helping schools to understand students’ families; 2) communicating—establishing two-way communication between home and school about school programs and children’s progress; 3) volunteering—recruiting and organizing help and support for school functions and student activities; 4) learning at home—helping parents help their children at home with school work, academic decisions, and other related activities; 5) decision making—including parent in school governance; 6) collaborating with community—integrating resources and services from the community to support schools, students, and their families, and doing the same for the community by assistance from schools and families. Epstein argued that educators can use these six types as a guide to help develop more comprehensive programs of partnership. In terms of Epstein’s framework, Type Two, Three, and Four involvement focus on instructional concerns while the others are not directly related to instruction.

Chrispeels (1996) proposed a conceptual model which focuses on mutual and overlapping roles and responsibilities of home, school, and community in developing collaborative partnership in the pyramid shape comprised of four typologies: 1) Co-communicators—the involvement of all families and school personal in two-way and multi-dimensional communication; 2) Co-supports—the involvement and school in three critical support activities such as fulfillment of basic obligations of child-rearing by parent or other family member, support of school by family members through fund-raising, volunteering, participation in school activities and school events, and provision of support for families by school and communities such as before and after school care; 3)
Co-Learners and Co-Teachers—opportunities for formal and informal learning by both parents and staff through home-school communications and school-sponsored workshops and opportunities also for parents to act as teachers in workshops and at home through involvement in homework and home learning activities; 4) Co-Advisors, Advocates, Decision-Makers—opportunities for parents to become meaningfully involved in decision-making activities that are focused on important school goals and are not simply endorsements of administrative decisions made prior to actual consultation with parents.

Chrispeels’ typology presents the full potential for family/school partnership and Chrispeels’ “Co-” model also effectively represents the two-way nature of interaction. Being responsive to homes and families and proactive in their teaching of teachers, and being responsive to schools and teachers, and active and proactive in their participation of parents, can create teacher-parent collaboration in a classroom/home situation (Tabin, 1999; Wolfendalle, 1994).

**Benefits of teacher-parent collaboration**

Many observers have argued that everybody benefits if parents are convinced to get involved in their children’s education (Georgiou, 1997). For students, parental involvement is likely to relate positively to students’ academic achievement (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1992; Fan & Chen, 2001; Feuerstein, 2000; Henderson; 1987; Morrow and Young, 1997; Overett and Donald, 1998). Besides, improving in educational performance, parental involvement can enhance development of self-perception, value, interest, efficacy, positive attitudes about schooling, a sense of personal responsibility for school learning outcomes, time spent on learning tasks, attention to and persistence in completing schoolwork, aspiration, positive behavior, and motivational orientation of students (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002). Moreover, students can benefit indirectly from changing attitudes and practices of their teachers. Teachers pay more attention to students whose parents are involved (Epstein, 1992).

Parents, too, benefit from effective parental involvement. They get a greater appreciation of their role, sense of adequacy, social networks, motivation to continue their own education (Davies, 1988), develop stronger perceptions of their own success with their
children (Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002), and an enhanced feeling of “ownership” of
the school, which leads to stronger support for the school’s needs (Epstein, 1992).
Parents are more involved in learning activities to help their child when their child’s
teacher contacts them (Ames, Tanaka, Khoju, & Watkins, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992;
Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995).

When parents feel satisfied, it also creates many benefits for teachers. In particular,
teachers who work effectively with parents reported that their relationships improve and
they gain stronger parental support (Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002). Teachers come
to realize that it is easier to work with the help of parents, while school administrators
tend to give better evaluation reports to teachers who include working with parents in
their plan (Epstein, 1992).

**Barriers to teacher-parent collaboration**

The research identifies barriers that impede effective parent involvement in their child
literacy. Some parents who are working class or immigrants, tend to turn over
responsibility for their children’ education to teachers. The main reason for this is their
lack of confidence in their ability and knowledge to work with their children (Brog &
Mayo, 2001; Mills & Gale, 2004; O’Cornor, 2001). Working-class parents tend to view
teachers as experts who know best about their children’s education. In contrast, middle-
class parents believe in sharing responsibility, mutual relationships, and having the right
to intervene in their children’ schooling. Some parents also think that they are equal to
teachers or have superior educational skills and higher prestige than teachers (Lareau,
1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Symeou, 2007).

Even though both teachers and parent realize the importance of their involvement to
enhance their students/children’s academic ability, there are often pragmatic difficulties.
Inflexible work schedules and inadequate access to transportation limit the ability of
parents who have many responsibilities at work or at home, to participate in school
activities (Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002).

Teachers too might have limited time to plan and to work with parents because of their
workload, a lack of school support, a lack of skill and knowledge necessary to form
constructive collaborative relationships with parents (Epstein, 1995; Granfield & Smith,
1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002; Moles, 1993). In particular, teachers often
report that lack of time and money prevents them from responding to parents more effectively (Moles, 1993). In supporting parents to help their children’ literacy, teachers should not assume that parents know how to deal with children who are struggling. McNaughton, Parr, Timperly, and Robinson (1992) reported that in New Zealand a majority of teachers who routinely asked parents to listen to their children read to them, did not follow up with parents to find out what they were actually doing. Most teachers thought that they had provided specific guidance, but most parents were not likely to be able to help struggling readers effectively without focused and supported instruction. It is important to provide guidance to parent to help them gain confidence in their ability.

Many parents are not able to help their children with school work. They either do not understand the content their children are taught or are not familiar with changing methods of instruction, and thus simply may not understand the child’s homework (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995). Parents who have had negative experiences in education and have a lack of experience in dealing assertively with professionals often feel that their voice is “out of place” and feel as if they are “talking to a brick wall” when they describe how their requests were met in educational contexts (Reay, 1999).

Parents may also experience psychological barriers in working with schools because they had unpleasant personal school histories themselves with poor treatment at school, personal battles with poor physical and mental health, and so on (Hoover-Dempsey & Walker, 2002). There are four psychological constructs that can predict the decision of parent in school involvement in secondary-grade levels according to the work of Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995): 1) parents’ role construction, 2) parent self-efficacy for helping their children, 3) parents’ perceptions of teacher invitations to become involved in a school, and 4) parents’ perceptions of students’ invitation. Deslandes & Bertrand (2005) also found that parents’ understanding that involvement at school is their responsibility and parents’ perceptions of teacher invitations are the most effective predictors of parental involvement. Belief in their efficacy to help their children succeed in school is related to increased parental involvement (e.g., Bandura ,1997; Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie, 1992). Belief in their own ability and self-efficacy regulates the parents’ actions and behavior and increases interest and persistence of work (Bandura, 1997). Thus, low self-efficacy both from parents and
teachers in working with each other and helping students in academic areas impede teacher-parent collaboration to enhance their students/children cognitive development.

Even though parent-teacher collaboration is accepted and valued by teachers, some teachers feel disempowered by parental involvement. There is a tension between encouraging parents to participate and collaborate in a school and maintaining their professional boundaries. Some teachers are afraid of interfering, lack of authority, autonomy, and sense of control and explain that they need trust and empathy from parents about their judgment, especially from middle-class parents (Borg & Mayo, 2001; Crozier, 1999; Lareau & and Horvat, 1999; Lewis & Forman, 2000; Mills & Gale, 2004; O’Connor, 2001; Symeou, 2007). In addition, some teachers tend to assume that parents are not interested in helping their children in academic issues or they are not able to do, especially working-class parents who are in low SES and minority parents (Dvies, 1988, 1993; Eccles & Hrold, 1993; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Tabin, 1999). In some cases, teachers are not either “anti-parent involvement” or “pro-parent involvement” (O’Connor, 2001). Although they acknowledge the right of parents in getting involved in their children’s education and the important of teacher-parent collaboration, they have doubts about parents’ ability and educational knowledge. Some teachers think that participating without interfering the class or learning process is more suitable for working-class parents (Borg & Mayo, 2001; Crozier, 1999; O’Connor, 2001).

The social class of parents also plays an important role in determining parental involvement levels in schooling. Because many working-class parents believe in the separation of responsibility in education and lack educational experiences, economic resources, social networks, and the confidence in their ability, they feel unable to participate in school activities (e.g., PTA meetings, volunteering events, school visits) or to have discussion with their children’s teacher. In addition, for immigrant parents, language barriers are another factor that prevents them from communicating with a teacher. In contrast, parents of the middle or upper class are likely to gain more advantage in schooling by using their cultural capital (Crozier, 1999; Reed-Danahay & Anderson-Levitt, 1991; Symeou, 2007). The cultural capital of some parents cannot facilitate them in involving in academic areas if it is not linked to legitimated standards in specific social settings or valued by the school (Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Lewis & Forman, 2000; Symeou, 2007).
The language of the parents influences their involvement (Anderson-Levitt, 1989; Reay, 1999). Language is not neutral because it reflects the social class positioning of the speaker (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). “Linguistic capital” is “both an integral part of cultural capital, and more specifically, the profit accrued by speech produced through occupying positions of legitimacy and authority within a particular field” (Bourdieu, 1992 cited in Reay, 1999, p. 161). Lack of linguistic capital contributes to parents’ sense of inefficacy in home-school interaction.

Power, Funds of Knowledge and Family Involvement in Education in Thailand

The research reported above is mostly North American’s contexts but similar to disadvantaged people mentioned in this review. Most Thai parents in rural areas are members of the working class, poor, speak local languages that are not Central Thai, and have little education themselves. Thus, the barriers noticed in the research have relevance for Thai education. I consider power, funds of knowledge and family involvement in Thai education in turn below.

The theoretical framework that Bourdieu (1977) has offered, is relevant to inequities in literacy education in Thailand. There is great inequality in socioeconomic status in Thailand, and as Bourdieu pointed out economic capital differences can affect the quality of education. In addition, disadvantages resulting from local language use may cause inequity in Thai students’ ability to learn to read and write in the standard language. Thai governments since the 1930s have attempted to create a sense of nation among various ethnic groups, by making Central Thai the dominant language of Thailand (Diller, 2002). Thai became the prestige language. Recognizing the cultural capital of Thai students who live in poor families with low incomes and speak in a local language must be considered in any reform efforts.

Discovering knowledge and skills from students’ contexts to integrate into the curriculum is relevant to developing literacy education in Thailand which since 1997 has started to encourage teachers to involve parents and the community into the school process. It was the first time Thailand officially tried to encourage teachers to value parents’ competence which contrasts with traditional practices in which parents and teachers had very different duties with respect to children. Local knowledge is devalued in poorly low
educated parents and teachers are seen by most people as superior in knowledge. However, as we have seen, even though Thai people in rural areas are disadvantaged, they have in each community a unique culture, knowledge, wisdom and skills handed down from their ancestors. Therefore, the literature review relating to Moll’s funds of knowledge will provide me ways to examine the attempt of Thai educators including policy makers, to help teachers to realize parents’ and community’s competence and bring it to literacy lessons.

In my opinion, the concept of funds of knowledge provides the idea of mobilizing the cultural capital of students and their parents, especially in disadvantaged areas. Enhancing the cultural capital of parents by valuing their households’ knowledge and skills might be a good start in motivating them to become involved in their children’s academic tasks. Literacy contents relating to the household knowledge of parents and students obviously benefits teachers in developing suitable instruction in their classrooms, benefits students in developing their knowledge based on what they already know, and also benefits parents, older people, family and community in appreciating their competence. It is possible that, if parents begin to realize their potential to assist their children in reading and writing tasks and that their cultural capital is accepted by teachers, the collaboration between teachers and parents will strengthen, and finally children will gain benefits.

**Summary and Conclusion**

As Thailand’s education system has started to encourage teachers to value local wisdom in communities and involve parents in schooling, teacher-parent collaboration might be more possible than previously. However, the ideas and philosophies that underlie notions like funds of knowledge and parental involvement might be in direct contradiction with many established values in Thailand in general. Thai people, especially in rural areas, believe that the teacher is superior and should be respected; consequently, in the past, sharing academic ideas between villagers and teachers rarely happened. These beliefs, values, and ways of thinking of teachers and villagers, which are formed from their family and school over time, might come to be seen as natural. Thus, I have concerns about implementing ideas from Western research in Thai education. Studies that I have learnt from western countries will be the framework to
help me examine Thailand literacy’s development, but in practice, Thailand might have particular ways based on funds of knowledge and working between families and teachers, which are suitable for its culture and society. In Chapter 4, I present the methodology of critical discourse analysis and how I will critically analyze discourse about literacy in Thailand.
Chapter 4.

Methodology:
Critical Discourse Analysis

In this chapter I discuss Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the methodology I have used to study recent literacy improvement policy documents in Thailand. I outline the methodological framework by considering what is meant by “discourse”, what CDA involves, and draw heavily on Fairclough’s (1992a) CDA as well as an adaptation of it in Hamilton (2012).

Discourse

The word “discourse” has been used for several centuries in the sense of formal speech or writing. Now “discourse” has several definitions used by thinkers in various areas. I will present the view of discourse of such writers as Foucault (1970a), Fairclough (1992a), and Gee (1999).

In the 20th century, Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, was one of the most influential people in using the concept of discourse. Foucault proposed that discourse is not speech patterns, writings, usage of language, or dialects in communication but rather the system and process for constituting the identity and significance of things and increasing the acceptance of such identity and significance in society (Foucault, 1970a, 1972a). In order to construct an identity in one’s society, a person has the duty to learn the discourse or what people do: for example, their beliefs, customs, values, and practices. Foucault’s view of discourse is that it is knowledge at a particular point in time about power relations, ideology, hegemony, logic, rules, and regulations. In every era, discourses have been influenced by and combined with their preceding texts and their contexts so that they form innumerable networks. As a result of this action, nobody can claim to be the owner of a discourse (Foucault 1970a, 1972a). Foucault argued that
discourse has the power to determine the value of things or classify what is good or bad in any particular society. A person decides how to speak, act, believe, and think by a complicated network of discourses in his/her life. In other words, an author or a speaker follows, reproduces, and repeats rules that have historical antecedents.

For Foucault, power and knowledge are interconnected, and negotiation and struggle characterize both. Power can hide, suppress, eliminate, or destroy the emergence of identities and the significance of things that are different from the privileged ones (Foucault 1970, 1970a, 1972a). For instance, from this point of view, the terms “underdevelopment” and “third world” are the product of the discourse of “development,” which constituted identity and significance after World War II (Charoensin-o-larn, 1999). These discourses have made people in the third world countries, including Thailand, realize and accept that their countries are underdeveloped and that the only way to eliminate this negative classification is to try to develop, change, and do as developed countries do. These three terms have meaning in contexts of unequal power. In particular, discursive practices reproduce dominant identities and significance through speaking, reading, writing, or discussions in educational institutes, government, and private companies as well in the media. However, the discourse of “development” covers, hides, or replaces local wisdom and local culture of the third world by the term “underdevelopment” (Foucault, 1970, 1972a; Charoensin-o-larn, 1999).

Foucault asserted that scholars should engage in “archaeologies of knowledge” (or discourse analysis) to discover the process, steps, order of events, and other details that constitute identity and the significance of things. In so doing they will understand how particular arrangements and understandings are sustained and what power associations they carry with them. Discourse Analysis finds “hegemony,” the ways discourse constructs relations of people, situations, events and their hierarchy (Foucault, 1970).

Foucault’s discourse framework has provided ways to look at discourse to understand and realize its processes and effects and provided deeper ways to understand language use than by focusing only on grammar, speech patterns, writing styles, or usage of language and dialect. However, some scholars using discourse analysis within a Foucaultian framework have had difficulties finding coherent descriptions of how to do the analysis because it lacks precise methodological principles (Graham, 2005;
Harwood, 2000). Another scholar whose work in discourse analysis provides more direction is Norman Fairclough.

Fairclough, a British linguist, explained that “discourse” is used in three different ways. The first way is in its most abstract sense. Discourse refers to “language use as social practice”. The second way that discourse is used is as “the kind of language used within a specific field,” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138), such as political discourse or scientific discourse. Finally, it is “a way of speaking which gives meaning to experience from a particular perspective,” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138) such as a feminist discourse or environmental discourse.

Fairclough brought together Foucault’s concept of discourse and the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and proposed that discourse is “more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice” (1992a; p. 28). The word “social practice” is meaningful. “Social practice” implies a dialectical relationship, a two-way relationship, between a particular discursive event and its situation, its institution, and its social structure. In other words, “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped” (Fairclough & Wodak, 2007, p. 258). For instance, in a particular conversation between a student and a teacher, what they talk about, how they act, and how they do so using their voices, the content of their speech, their non-verbal language, and other features are regulated and shaped by the topic of conversation (e.g., a subject, a test, a party), the place of the event (e.g., a classroom, a sidewalk, a school, a shopping mall), their status in society (e.g., a teacher and a student in a Thai school, relatives, a customer and a seller). At the same time, the situation, institution, and social structure will be regulated and shaped by such conversational events. Reproduction in discourse practices (customary ways of organizing conversation) will help to sustain a person or people’s social status, but sometimes, a transformation can occur (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011). Thus speech events can reproduce as well as transform social life.

Fairclough (1993) saw discourse events (instances of language use) in three dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. “Text” is either speech or written language, “the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event” (Fairclough, 1993, p.138). Fairclough added that visual images or sound can also be text. His analysis of text involves Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (Halliday,
“Discourse practice” is the process of production, distribution, interpretation, and consumption of text. The analysis of discourse practice emphasizes the interaction between authors or speakers and readers or audiences. “Sociocultural practice” frames discourse practice and text. In particular, it deals with how an instance of discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of text happens or acts regulates/shapes and is regulated/shaped by members in a particular situation, institution, and society.

James Paul Gee, similarly to Fairclough, included influences from post-structuralist thought (e.g. Bakhtin, Bourdieu, and Foucault) and Neo-Marxist critical theory (e.g. Althusser, Gramsci). However, regarding linguistic thought, Gee was also influenced by American non-Hallidayan models, sociolinguistics, and literacy criticism (Rogers, 2004). Gee first made a distinction between “discourse” with a small “d” and “Discourse” with a capital “D”. Gee (1999, p. 7) uses “discourse” to mean “language-in-use,” which integrates with non-language “stuff” to enact specific identities and activities. The word “stuff” means “Discourse,” which he sees as the ways of acting, interacting, feeling, believing, valuing together with other people and with various sorts of characteristic objects, symbols, tools and technologies (Gee, 1999; Lankshear, 1998). Thus, for him, “discourse” (language-in-use) is melded with “Discourse” in order to help a person to recognize her or himself and others, in certain ways that s/he and others consider meaningful. For example, when a student asks a question in a class, the student’s language integrates with his/her particular posture, feelings, beliefs, and values displayed by various symbols. These factors combine to how the student’s question is perceived by the teacher, classmates and the student him/herself.

Comparing Gee to Fairclough, Fairclough relies more on a linguistic analysis of texts of Halliday’s systematic functional linguistics, focusing on analysis of syntactic, genre, and text functions. In contrast, Gee’s methodologies are based on six categories: world building, activity building, identity building, political building, connection building, and semiotic building. However, they both believe that discourse constitutes identities and can create unequal power. Moreover, both of them pay attention to roles and the interaction between an author and a reader or a speaker and an audience.
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach that consists of different perspectives and different methods for studying the relationship between language use and social context. CDA focuses on the significance of the context of language use to discourse (Wodak, 2001) and the relation between language and power (Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 2001). CDA was first constructed by a network of scholars in a 1991 meeting, including Gunther Kress, Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk, Theo van Leeuwen (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA has been widely developed from diverse approaches, theories, and methods. Among the well-known approaches of CDA are the Discourse-Historical approach of Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisgl, the Corpus-Linguistics approach of Gerlinde Mautner, the Social Actors approach of Theo van Leeuwen, the Dispositive Analysis of Siegfried Jager and Forenting Maier, the Sociocognitive approach of Teun van Dijk, and the Dialectical-Relational approach of Norman Fairclough (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This section reviews general principles of CDA, Fairclough’s CDA, Hamilton’s (2012) adaptation of Fairclough’s CDA, and critiques of CDA.

Common Ground of Critical Discourse Analysis

Many theorists propose the general principles of CDA from their own perspectives and use their own terms (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Meyer, 2001; Van Dijk, 1993). The eight general principles of CDA proposed by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) have been widely cited. I summarize these general principles of Fairclough & Wodak (1997) as follows. The first principle is that CDA addresses social problems, and focuses on the linguistic characteristics of social and cultural processes and attempts to reveal power relationships that are frequently hidden. The second principle is that power relations are discursive. CDA explains how the social relations of power are exercised and negotiated in discourse. The third principle points out that discourse constitutes society and culture. In every spoken, written, or other language use, discourse makes a contribution to reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including relations of power. Discourse does ideological work is the fourth principle. Ideologies are produced in discourse. To understand how ideologies are produced, we need to consider the discursive practice of how texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they
have. The fifth principle is that discourse is historical. Discourses can be understood with reference to their historical contexts. The sixth principle is that there is the link between text and society and how it is mediated. CDA makes connections between sociocultural processes and structures and between sociocultural processes and properties of texts. The seventh principle claims that discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory. CDA is more than textual analysis. Interpretation and explanation of texts are open and may be affected by new readings and new contextual information. The last principle is that discourse is a form of social action.

**Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis**

Fairclough (2001) saw CDA as an approach that provides researchers ways to investigate language use within social context by considering the relationships between text and context, discourse and society, and language and power.

One major feature of the framework of Fairclough’s CDA is the inclusion of processes of production and interpretation or consumption. It means the reader or the author, the speaker or the audience, are important in analyzing the way they react to each other in term of producing and consuming text. Another special feature of Fairclough’s CDA is that language use (text) is both socially shaped and socially shaping. This aspect shows the importance of focusing on the link between text and sociocultural practices since they work as a mediation of discourse practice. In particular, in each discursive event, language use is always simultaneously constitutive of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and beliefs, and these three aspects of society and culture always shape language too (Fairclough, 1995). However, the relationship of language or text and society is not direct. That is the reason the term “mediation” has been used to describe the relation between language or text and society. Discourse practice is the medium to bring out values, beliefs, conventions, and norms of society (Fairclough, 1995).

As for discourse, Fairclough also proposed a three-dimensional method of *discourse analysis*: description, interpretation, and explanation. Description is a linguistic analysis of a text; interpretation is an analysis of the relationship between discourse processes (the processes of production and interpretation) and the text; explanation is an analysis of the relationship between discursive processes and social processes (the relationship
between the text, its producers and interpreters, and the social environment in which text production and interpretation occurs). CDA starts by analyzing text, which involves the linguistic analysis methods mentioned above. Next is the interpretation of how the text is produced, distributed, and interpreted, in the sense of what discursive practices and conventions are drawn from what order of discourse it is. For instance, a conversation between a doctor and a patient can see as a medical consultation and counseling. The relationship between a doctor and a patient is also considered to be dependent upon the nature of the situation, institution, and society. The doctor as the subject and the speaker, the patient as an audience, and the histories that they carry, are crucial. Finally, the analysis of the relationship between how text is produced and interpreted and the nature of sociocultural practice provides the explanation.

Figure 1 presents Fairclough’s dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis. Discourse or each discursive event is seen as (i) a language text, spoken or written, (ii) discourse practice (the production and interpretation of text), and (iii) sociocultural practice at the situational, institutional, and societal levels. Looking at Figure 1, we can see that in a discursive event, for example, a conversation between a doctor and a patient, is seen as simultaneously a text, discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), and sociocultural practice.

Text analysis concentrates on its formal features based on Halliday’s multifunctional approach to language: grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and metaphors. First, it is necessary to identify “the communicative event,” which refers to any instance of language use such as, a video, a newspaper, a discussion, a political speech (Fairclough 1995b). Second, “the order of discourse” must be determined: that is the ‘totality of discursive practice of an institution and relationship between them,’ also needs to be known (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138). Each order of discourse has specific discourse practices in which text and talk are produced and interpreted. Discourse types consist of discourses and genres (1995b. p. 66).

Analysis of discourse practice focuses on how authors of texts draw on existing discourses and genres to create new texts and how receivers of texts apply such discourses and genres in interpreting them. An analyst can draw on an intertextual chain of text when the same text can be seen in different versions. When there are different
versions, an analyst can formulate a hypothesis about the production conditions by considering how structure and content are transformed.

Figure 2. Fairclough’s Dimensions of Discourse and Discourse Analysis

Analysis of sociocultural practice focuses on two questions. First, the analyst must discover the relationship between the discursive practice and its place in the order of discourses. The main questions that need to be answered are: To what kind of order(s) of discourse does the discourse practice belong? How are the discourses distributed and regulated across texts? The second aspect is to understand the social and cultural relations and structures that constitute the wider context of the discursive practice. The example question is: To what kind of institutional and economic conditions is the discourse practice subject? For final conclusions, other questions must be addressed, such as: Does the discourse practice reproduce the order of discourse and contribute to the maintenance of the status quo in the social practice? Has the order of discourse
been transformed and then contributed to social change? What are the ideological, political and social consequences of the discursive practice? Does the discursive practice conceal and strengthen unequal power relations in society, or does it challenge power positions by representing reality and social relations in a new way?

**Methodology**

The following outlines five steps to illustrate the methods of CDA (Fairclough, 1993, 1995a, 2001; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Along with these five steps, I also provide my plan of study.

The first step is setting the research problem. The goal of critical discourse analysis is an explanatory critique that points out a social problem that the research should help to solve. Individuals or groups of people in society can identify a problem. It can also be identified by a researcher who tries to disclose a misrepresentation (a mismatch between reality and how people view this reality); the misrepresentation functions ideologically. For my research, the general problem that I am concerned with is how Thailand’s educational policy might promote literacy so that poor rural people have the same access to literacy as others? The North American, British, Australian, and Western European literature I have studied suggests that developing literacy by focusing on collaboration between teachers and parents and families, has been suitable for instruction of disadvantaged peoples. The Thai people I am concerned with face similar challenges to the minorities studied elsewhere in that they have various backgrounds and local knowledge that has not been seen as valued capital. Even though Thailand has attempted to improve literacy, I suspect that current literacy policy in Thailand still produces and reproduces social problems. In particular, comparing with Thai who speak central Thai to poor Thai using particular local languages, it is clear that the latter have fewer opportunities to access literacy and gain suitable ways to develop their literacy ability.

The second step is setting the research questions. For CDA, a researcher should start by drawing on discipline(s) such as history, sociology, and social psychology. The question should be set on the assumption that discursive practice both reflects and contributes to social and cultural change. In my study, I set the research questions as follows:
1. How is literacy conceptualized in two influential Thai educational policies? What is the discourse around literacy in such documents?

2. Do these policy statements about literacy reproduce or do they attempt to change historical inequities in Thai education?

3. Do Western models of improving literacy education for minority students hold promise for changing inequities in Thai literacy education?

The third step is to select the research material. What material is chosen depends on the research questions and the knowledge of a researcher related to materials within the institution of interest or the social domain and how and whether a researcher can gain access. For my study, I chose to analyze two influential policy documents: the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and the National Education Plan B.E. 2552-2559 (2009-2016). Recently (2013) Thailand has established the third National Education Act B.E. 2553 (2010) after the second National Education Act B.E. 2545 (2002) because of failures in the integration of several separate organizations recommended in the second National Education Act. It was thought that separation of these integrated organizations would allow them to work more effectively. Since the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) is the first Act which led to the biggest change in Thai education from the past, I decided to analyze it.

In the fourth step, if talk is used as material, a researcher needs a way to make a transcription of it. The transcription process involves interpreting the spoken language (Fairclough, 1992). In particular, when speakers overlap in a conversation, the transcriber needs to decide who interrupts whom and who the speaker is. As I am not using any spoken text in my study, this step will not be undertaken.

The fifth step is analysis. The analysis has to go through three levels: text analysis, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. Texts from all sources are to be analyzed in terms of their formal features such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure, etc. Then, the analyst must first classify the communicative event and find the order of discourse, genre, and the subject, and specify who is the author and/or audience. In each order of discourse that has a specific discourse practice, I consider which texts are produced and interpreted, how authors of texts play on existing discourses and genres to create a text, and how receivers of text apply such discourses
in interpretation of texts. Finally, the analyst focuses on how text is produced and interpreted in wider social milieux.

**Hamilton and CDA**

Hamilton (2012) has adapted Fairclough’s CDA and simplified it, especially with reference to textual. As a sociologist of literacy, she is interested in how government policy in adult literacy education has ramifications in local settings when teachers and students interact, for example. Because I am working with translated text, and because CDA is most commonly used done for English documents, I have decided to use Hamilton’s framework for analysis of Thai policy documents. In short, Hamilton argued for a methodology that specifies answers to the following questions.

- Where, when and why was the document produced, what use does it have in organizations that produce it? How does it fit within other discourses of which it is part?
- What is its layout? Does it use pictures; statistics? What kind of publishing values does it have?
- What is the style and purpose of the document? Does it dictate or persuade?
- How long is the document and how is it organized?
- Who is the assumed audience of the document?
- Who is the author? (Collective/Single/Anonymous or named)?
- In what ways are actors portrayed (Children, teachers, parents, etc.)?
- What are the major arguments? Are they contradictory? What meanings of words are assumed, nor spelled out?
- What social actions are advocated? Who has agency to enact these actions?

These, then are the questions I applied to analysis of the National Education Act and the National Education Plan. I found them helpful and informative. In Chapter 5, I report on my findings.
Chapter 5.

A Critical Analysis of Two Thai Policies

Introduction

In this chapter, I present a critical analysis of the National Education Act first, then examine the National Education Plan. For each policy, I provide the context and history of policy formulation, the document’s layout and publishing values, the document’s style and purpose, the document’s internal organization. Then, assumptions, contradictions and inconsistencies and unclear phrases and words are pointed out. Finally, I present my opinion as a conclusion to my analysis of both policy documents.

The Context and History of the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999)

There were many factors that influenced Thailand’s educational reform during the 1990s (Carnoy, 2003; Fry, 2002; Hallinger & Bryant, 2013; Jungck & Kajornis, 2003; Kaewdang, 1998; Mounier & Tangchuang, 2009; ONEC, 1999; Pipatrojanakamol, 2004). Like other poor countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand focused on providing free compulsory education by expanding from six to nine years, and by making free education optional to twelve years. Policymakers felt that in a globalized world, to continue economic development and to cope with future problems, more knowledge, as well as new skills, capabilities, and positive attitudes in the labour force were required. The need to initiate educational reform became more serious in 1997 because of the Asian economic crisis and with the falling of the government of General Choavalit Yongchaiyudh (Fry, 2002; Klein 1998; Parichart et al., 1998). These events influenced Thailand to review and establish a new constitution. The new constitution, approved in 1997, introduced challenging guidelines for educational development in law. The first National Education Act (NEA) was established in August 19th, 1999 and outlined new initiatives and reforms of Thai education for the 21st century.
The 1997 economic crisis inspired Thai policymakers and most experts to rethink Thailand’s development in the past. Regarding the economy, they realized that Thailand imported a lot of foreign luxury products, and that Thailand was becoming a materialistic society. In a speech on December 5, 1997, his Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej, concerned about the crisis, proposed the philosophy of “Sufficiency Economy” or “setakit popieng” in Thai which means “the economics of having enough” (H.M.King Bhumibol, 1997 as cited in Fry, 1999; Piboolsravut, 2004). This philosophy emphasizes a Thai Buddhist form of voluntary simplicity to help Thai people cope with the then-present economic crisis and to prevent the crisis from happening again (Fry, 1999; Piboolsravut, 2004). Before developing the Thai economy, the King proposed that Thai people should focus on income distribution to develop an overall economic foundation. People in rural areas, the majority, he argued, should be helped to be able to survive and live happily by “self-reliance.” The philosophy provided suggestions on various aspects of life that would lead to a sustainable way of living to help Thai people to be ready to meet the challenge from future changes. This philosophy has been interpreted as having three characteristics: moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity with the requirement of two conditions: knowledge and morality. In particular, the philosophy suggests that people should adhere to the middle path or moderation. For knowledge conditions, in every decision, work, investment, and other acts, people should apply knowledge and implement it with reasonableness by thinking carefully and always considering causes and effects. For moral conditions, “Sufficiency Economy” requires that people have awareness of ethics such as honesty and integrity and living with perseverance, harmlessness, and generosity (Piboolsravut, 2004). Eaewsriwong (2000 as cited in Piboolsravut, 2004) argued that this “Sufficiency Economy” is a cultural and moral standard for people who live with nature without feeling greedy but love sharing.

Moreover, a well-known Thai expert, Wasee (1998) provided strategies to shift Thailand’s development by focusing on being more balanced and emphasizing social and spiritual development and also environmental and cultural preservation. These recommendations appeared in the details of the new constitution, and were echoed in the NEA.

Pipatrojanakamol (2004), a Thai educator who analyzed the policy formation of the 1999 National Education Act, found there were two main reasons for its establishment: 1) various accumulated problems in Thai education and 2) the enactment of the Thai
National Constitution B.E. 2540 (1997). With respect to the first reason, Thailand had a lack of policy consistency because the party in government had changed so often. Even though Thailand had the National Education Plan (NEP) to direct educational development, the NEP was not a national law. It was felt that the NEP could not regulate the direction of educational development effectively. Many educational policies including the NEP had been changed depending on the ever-changing political climate. The economic crisis in Thailand between 1996-1997 caused the Thai government to realize the weakness of their structure, administration, and management. Poverty was increasing and most people in agriculture sectors had difficulty adjusting to current circumstances. Moreover, the influence of other cultures coming through the media and new technologies caused many problems in Thai society such as materialism, amoral competitiveness and the neglect of traditional Thai cultural practices, which led in turn to drug problems, crime, losing connections among home, temples, schools, and community, and other social problems. However the ability to catch up with new knowledge coming from the globalized world through media and technology was also seen as important to allow Thai people to learn. The various problems Pipatrojanakamol (2004) alluded to can be classified into six issues: education administration, educational quality, allocation of funds, the audit and evaluation system, equality and the right to study. The second and most powerful reason to establish the NEA was section 81th of the Thai National Constitution B.E. 2540 which stated that concrete rules were necessary to regulate Thailand’s education. The urgent needs to reform Thai education persuaded politicians and government to include section 81 in the Thai National Constitution in 1997.

In the process of the National Education Act’s legislation, Pipatrojanakamol (2004) found that relevant information and 42 policy research studies had been used for consideration and drafting of each section in the act. From many act drafts, the act drafted by the National Committee on Education was chosen as the master draft to work from, along with four other drafts from four political parties. A variety of stakeholders were invited to take part in the drafting processes. The demand and requirements from various groups were considered and negotiated. In summary, educational experts played a main role in producing the NEA, but there was a good deal of community consultation in drafting it.
Three years after the first NEA was promulgated, the government announced a revised National Education Act of B.E. 2545 (2002). It was passed on December 19th, 2002. There are three reorganizations of bureaucratic responsibility in the revised Act: the Ministry of Culture instead of the Ministry of Education was now to be responsible for cultural and artistic concerns. Second, the administration and management of education was to be done in “educational service areas”. Third, the Commission of Vocational Education was to be responsible for proposing policies, development plans, standards, and core curriculum for all levels of vocational education. Religion, arts, and culture were to be portfolios under the Ministry of Education. Recently, in 2010, a third NEA was passed. The third NEA was announced because of a change in the organization of the educational service areas. To increase efficiency and flexibility, jurisdiction for education was separated into two organizations (the educational service area of primary school and the educational service area of secondary school).

In summary, new versions of the NEA were established because the government realized that the integration of several separate organizations was not working well. Some formerly integrated organizations were separated, including the Office of Vocational Education Commission, the Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education, and the Ministry of Education Operation Center. In this analysis of the NEA, I will rely mostly on the 1999 version, as it was the first Thai education law, and it charted a course for Thai education that was demonstrably different from what had been in the past. In addition, most main contents are still kept. I will note in what follows when these slight changes were made in subsequent Acts.

The Layout and Publishing Values of the NEA

The NEA (1999) is published on 210 x 146 mm or A5 paper with forty-one pages of contents. Every single word and number is typed in Thai. The yellow cover page is thick and shiny with blue text while the interior pages are white and thinner with black text. There is a red garuda picture at the middle top of the cover page. The garuda picture or “Khrut” is used on all government documents. There are only three titles on the cover page: the first is “The National Education Act B.E. 2542”, typed in blue at the middle of page under the Khrut, and at the middle bottom, the second and third titles are “the Office of the National Education Commission” and “Office of the Prime Minister”, also
typed in blue. This distinctive print titling, the Khrut and the mention of various national offices, adds to the authority of the document.

Content pages are on white paper and typed in black. Nine chapters are listed on the table of contents page. Following the table of contents is a page that shows the sign of the King, the title National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) in bold print, the King’s name and “Enacted on the 14th Day of August B.E. 2542; Being the 54th Year of the Present Reign”. On the top of each page throughout the Thai document (but not the English translation) we see page numbers, the title “Royal Thai Government Gazette”, the book and section of the Royal Thai Government Gazette, and the date of August 19th, 1999.

Except for the garuda and the sign of the King, there are no other pictures in the document. It is written in formal Thai orthography and numbers, but includes no statistics, tables, models, graphs, or other images. There are nine chapters and 78 sections. Sections 70-78 are the “Temporary Provisions”. At the end of the document, on the left side is shown that it was countersigned by Chuan Leekpai, the Prime Minister. The Act is thus presented as a serious government document that is endorsed by all levels of authority in the nation, and as such, demands compliance.

The back cover of the document is typed in large red capital letters saying, “Education develops humans, humans develop the nation, the Office of the National Education Commission determine to develop Thai education”2. The left bottom of the page is typed in 12-point font capitals in blue and gives the address of the Office of the National Education Commission, the telephone and fax numbers including the URL to contact if audiences have any questions. This first NEA did not provide details of printing place, the number and the time of printing. The back cover is less formal than the front cover or contents, and invites readers with questions to contact, if not real people, real offices.

Style and Purpose-- to Dictate or Persuade?

The style of all versions of the NEA is to enact and dictate. In almost every section, it prescribes who must do what, how this must be done, and for whom. Verbs such as

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2 การศึกษาพัฒนาคน คนพัฒนาชาติ สํานักงานคณะกรรมการการศึกษาแห่งชาติ มุ่งมั่น พัฒนาการศึกษาไทย
“have to”, “must”, “provide”, “manage”, “arrange”, “organize” (ต้อง ให้ จัด จัดให้) appear in almost every section to prescribe what an actor must do. In some sections, the sentences indicate the rights of learners (e.g. “learners have a right to develop...” (in NEA, Chapter 9, Section 66, p.33).

With respect to authorship, the NEA is not specific but puts the names of the Office of the National Education Commission, the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Kingdom of Thailand on the front cover where usually an author’s name might go. The fact that no authorship is ascribed to any person or persons increases the sense of the seriousness and gravity of the document. Rather authorship appears collective and the Act seems to articulate a consensus among educational experts, educational organizations, main political parties, and representatives of various groups.

**The Internal Organization of the Document**

The actors in the document are the government (e.g., the State, Ministry), persons in particular educational positions (e.g. instructors, teachers, faculty staff, educational institution administrators, educational administrators), educational organizations (e.g. local administration organizations, schools), other organizations (e.g. community organizations, private organizations), general people (e.g. parents, private persons, professional bodies). Most sentences start with the name of the actor followed by what such actor has to do. For example, in Section 30, the Act states: “Educational institutions shall develop effective learning processes. In so doing, they shall also encourage instructors to carry out research for developing suitable learning for learners at different levels of education” (p. 16). Parents are mentioned as actors in Section 11 “Parents or guardians shall arrange for their children or those under their care to receive compulsory education as provided by section 17…” (p. 7), and they are also mentioned as being represented on advisory boards of educational institutions, but more often they are mentioned as being recipients of benefits. “Children”, “students”, or “Thais” as learners are portrayed as receivers of the actions of others. An example is in Section 15: “Informal education shall enable learners to learn by themselves according to their interest, potentialities, readiness and opportunities…” (p. 9).
Parts of the NEA (and its revisions) reflect major changes in Thai education, and its stipulations are also more explicit than in any previous Thai educational document. I review some of those major changes below:

*Providing education for all and increasing educational opportunities:* The NEA requires that education is provided to all Thais, including children, youth, adolescents, adults, workers, retired workers, and elders, and challenges educators to adapt educational styles to be more suitable for learners of all ages. The Act requires compulsory education for nine years for children aged seven to sixteen (Chapter 3, Section 17). In addition, 12 years of basic education with quality are available free of charge as the Act states that

> In the provision of education, all individuals shall have equal rights and opportunities to receive basic education proved by the State for the duration of at least 12 years. Such education, provided on a nationwide basis, shall be of quality and free of charge. (Chapter 2, Section 10, p. 7).

The Act further stipulates that learners will gain more chances to enter and transfer their study to different types of education or institutions:

> Credits accumulated by learners shall be transferable within the same type or between different types of education, regardless of whether the credits have been accumulated from the same or from different educational institutions, including learning from non-formal or informal education, vocational training, or from work experience. (Chapter 3, Section 15, p. 10)

The Act also stipulates that disadvantaged Thai people who have problems in learning because of physical and mental disabilities will be supported to be able to gain basic education:

> Persons with physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social, communication, and learning deficiencies; those with physical disabilities; or the cripples; or those unable to support themselves; or those destitute or disadvantaged; shall have the right and opportunities to receive basic education specially provided. (Section 10, p. 7)

The Act can be seen to establish the principle that disadvantaged people were an educational priority, as seen by subsequent policy statements including the minority
groups of the hill tribes, the disabled, street children, and others (ONFEC, 2007, p. 39). The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008), passed more recently, summarized the principle: “the curriculum facilitates equal access to qualitative education for all” (OEC, 2013, p. 7).

Collaboration from all segments: The Act observes that education needs collaboration from all sectors of society. It states that educational institutions in co-operation with individuals, families, communities, community organizations, local administration organizations, private persons, private organizations, professional bodies, religious institutions, enterprises, and other social institutions, should contribute to strengthening the communities by encouraging learning in their community as stated in Chapter 4, Section 29. Therefore, each community is to be able to provide education and training. Exchanges of development experience among communities are promoted. At the school level, collaboration between school and its local community is supported. In particular, it observes that beside the core curriculum for all Thais prescribed by the Basic Education Commission, a school could establish its own curriculum relating to the needs of the local community and society:

[B]asic education institutions shall be responsible for prescribing curricular substance relating to needs of the community and the society, local wisdom and attributes of desirable members of the family, community, society, and the nation (Chapter 4, Section 27, p. 15).

This provision might be seen as equivalent to the Western notion of using community funds of knowledge in curriculum planning, and is of particular interest to me as it relates to literacy education. Moreover, the national policy points out that educational provision shall be based on partnerships with individuals, families, communities, community organizations, local administration organizations, private persons, private organizations, professional bodies, religious institutions, enterprises, and other social institutions (Chapter 1, Section 9 (6), p. 6). Other ministries, bureaus, departments, state enterprises, and other state agencies are to be authorized to provide specialized education in accord with their needs and expertise, bearing in mind the national education policy and standards while the criteria, methods, and conditions as stipulated in the ministerial regulations shall be observed (Chapter 3, Section 21, p. 11-12). In addition, the Act states that the State shall promote the running and establishment, in
sufficient number and with efficient functioning, of all types of lifelong learning resources (Chapter 4, Section 25, p. 14).

These policy statements present strategies from the State level, ministry level, and educational institution level, to increase harmony, reduce conflicts between particular groups, and connect rich and poor people in communities to help each other to mobilize educational development. Interestingly, such collaborations seem to focus on learners in school or formal education system.

Distributing power: The Act states that the Ministry of Education needs to decentralize power in educational administration and management regarding academic matters, budget, personnel and general affairs. These administrative matters should devolve directly to the Committees, the educational office of each district, and its schools. Each district organization has the right to organize education itself depending on the readiness, suitability, and the needs of the community. The Ministry has to coordinate, evaluate, and support the educational organization of the district. Again, in alignment with the Act, the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008) stated that “the curriculum facilitates decentralization of authority by allowing society to participate in educational provision, which suits prevailing situations and serves local needs” (OEC, 2013, p. 7).

Lifelong learning: The Act stipulates that every Thai should be provided opportunities to learn anywhere and anytime, so that lifelong learning will occur. For example in Section 4, it states:

Lifelong education means education resulting from integration of formal, non-formal, and informal education so as to create ability for continuous lifelong development of quality of life” (p. 2). “In organizing the learning process, education institutions and agencies concerned shall: ...(6) enable individuals to learn at all times and in all places.” (Chapter 4, Section 24, p. 14).

It further states that the State should promote all types of lifelong learning resources such as “public libraries, museums, art galleries, zoological gardens, public parks, botanical gardens, science and technology parks, sport and recreation centres, data bases, and other sources of learning” (Chapter 4, Section 25, p. 14). These policy statements impacted the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission (ONFEC), for
example, in establishing the importance of a variety of non-formal and informal education programmes (e.g., distance education and all kinds of educational media to provide lifelong learning for out of school learners by distance education), and to be responsive to the needs of individuals, communities, and particular areas, (ONFEC, 2007, p. 39).

The standard and quality assessment system: The Act requires that all educational institutions be evaluated by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment which was established as a public organization. This system comprises both internal and external quality assurance. All educational institutions have to receive external quality evaluation at least once every five years and the last results have to be available to the general public. The educational assessment system subsequent to the Act has evaluated functional literacy, basic education equivalency programmes, and continuing education (ONFEC, 2007). Evaluation of Thai educational provisions have tended to be concerned with both functional literacy and social and cultural literacy.

Having knowledge and skills: The Act states that formal, non-formal and informal education have to emphasize knowledge and skills. Emphasized are knowledge and skills that relate to being Thai such as Thai history, society, politics, natural environment, religion, arts, cultures, sports, local and national wisdom, especially with respect to the Thai language. However, knowledge and skills in science, technology, mathematics, and other languages are also emphasized (Chapter 4, Section 23). Subsequently, the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008), pointed out that in the main foci had to be developing Thai children and youth at every level of basic education by focusing on providing quality knowledge and essential skills to survive in the changing society and to seek lifelong knowledge (OEC, 2013). Moreover, the Ministry of Education (MOE) paid attention to developing linguistic skills of learners, especially the use of English language in communication (OEC, 2013, p. 14-15).

Balancing the inculcation of knowledge and morals, good values, and desirable attributes: The Act requires that the objective of education is not only knowledge and skillful citizens but also moral development. A Thai person needs to be both a smart and good person at the same time. The Basic Education Core Curriculum in 2008 applied this principle in setting the aims of the core curriculum; learners were to learn not only knowledge and skills but also:
Morality, ethics, desirable values, self-esteem, self-discipline, observance of Buddhist teachings or those of one’s faith, and guiding principles of Sufficiency Economy; patriotism, awareness of responsibilities and commitments as Thai citizens and members of the global community; awareness of the need to preserve all aspects of Thai culture and Thai wisdom protection and conservation of the environment, and public-mindedness with dedication to public service for peaceful and harmonious co-existence (OEC, 2013, p. 7).

In particular, this moral stance includes: (Sajja-the truth with honesty; Tama-practice to restrain oneself, maintain self, self-control; Kanti-tolerance of the words or deeds of others; Jaaka-sacrifice, donating possessions i.e. money and assets). All of these characteristics were included in the Basic Education Curriculum in 2008 (OEC, 2013 p. 17).

*Increasing thinking ability and the sense of self-reliance:* The Act emphasizes that Thai people should be trained in thinking processes, management, how to face various situations, and how to apply particular knowledge for obviating and solving problems by themselves. Again, this text is linked to subsequent policy with “thinking, problem-solving, technological know-how, and life skills” included in the subsequent Basic Education Core Curriculum in 2008 (OEC, 2013, p. 7).

*Increasing good reading habits and sense of inquiry to learn continuously:* The Act states that in organizing the learning process, educational institutions and agencies should organize activities for learners to acquire good reading habits or having avidity for reading. Many organizations and various segments in communities should support this and get involved. Many projects have been established to support this notion such as the good quality of public libraries, electronic libraries, mobile learning, the book houses, and other supporting reading habit projects.

*Valuing local community and local wisdom:* The Act observes that Thai people need to understand local knowledge and the value of local wisdom and Thai wisdom in community. Schools are encouraged to consider the state, problems, local wisdom, and strengths of their own local community in order to integrate it into curriculum content. Moreover, schools or other educational organizations are encouraged to mobilize human resources by contributing their experience, knowledge, expertise, and local wisdom for
educational benefits. As I have mentioned before, this provision looks similar to the funds of knowledge notion in Western educational literature.

In summary, all of the main concepts in the NEA 1999 (i.e., providing education for all and increasing educational opportunities; collaboration from all segments; distributing power; lifelong learning; the standard and quality assessment system; having knowledge and skills; balancing the inculcation of knowledge and morals, good values, and desirable attributes; increasing thinking ability and the sense of self-reliance; increasing good reading habits and sense of inquiry to learn continuously; and valuing local community and local wisdom) provided more opportunity for all Thai people to be literate through all kinds of education and reduce the unfairness in education between rich and poor Thais.

**Assumptions, Contradictions and Inconsistencies**

The Act contains are many instances when “Thai-ness” is used to refer to the characteristics of being a good Thai person having a solid Thai identity. While not explicitly stated always, examples of phrases relating to “Thai-ness” include; “pride in Thai identity” (p. 5); “promotion of religious, art, national culture,…local wisdom, Thai wisdom” (p. 5; p. 13); “Knowledge about the historical development of the Thai society and matters relating to politics and democratic system of government under a constitutional monarchy” (p. 12); “Knowledge and skills in languages with emphasis on proper use of the Thai language” (p. 13); “inculcating good values, morals and desirable attributes in every subjects” (p. 13); “The Basic Education Commission shall prescribe core curricula for basic education for purposes of preserving Thai identity….while basic education institutions shall be responsible for prescribing curricular substance relating to… local wisdom.” (p. 15); “…being a good citizen of family, community, the society, and the country” (p. 15). In these policy statements, “Thai-ness” seems to cover these characteristics: promoting religions, art, and culture of the nation; local wisdom; Thai wisdom; having knowledge about Thai history, Thai society, and matters relating to politics and democratic system of government under a constitutional monarchy; having knowledge and skills in the Thai language including using it properly; having good values, morals, and desirable attributes; and being a good citizen of family, community, the society, and the country; and being proud to be Thai.
“Thai-ness” might be seen by some as in conflict with other goals the Act sees as important. The Act sees it as necessary for Thai people to be creative thinkers (Chapter 1, Section 7, p. 6), critical thinkers (Chapter 4, Section 24, (3), p. 13), flexible thinkers and able to apply knowledge for solving problems (Chapter 4, Section 24, (2), p. 12). These thinking abilities should be inculcated for Thai people as tools to analyze events, problems and create works without conflict with Thai ways if the teacher understand that Thai learners can be critical and creative as well as being modest and humble in Thai ways.

However, Thai teachers might perceive critical thinking on the part of students as improper and not in accordance with the Thai-ness goal: promotion of religious and national culture, inculcation of good values, morals and characteristics in every subject. It is possible that such Thai teachers feel that students must follow or preserve good Thai ways of living that include believing and following parents, elders, boss, and seniors. It is important for us to consider how to help Thai teachers to be role models in enacting being good Thais and critical and creative thinkers. Teachers who understand and enact this will no doubt help disadvantaged people such parents and villagers in communities to see how they may also become such role models for their children.

A similar possibility for confusion arises with the concept of “self-reliance” in the Act. “Self-reliance” is mentioned in Chapter 1 as a desirable attribute, and the Act states that “self-reliance” is an educational goal for Thai learners (Section 7, p. 6). Again, this goal may cause some confusion, as it might be interpreted as in conflict with Thai-ness. Hallinger & Kantamara (2010) argued that in Western countries, autonomous "individual selves" are seen as desirable, whereas many Asian countries promote a collective sense of citizenship.

However, derived from the philosophy of the “Sufficiency Economy” (the economics of having enough), “self-reliance” is seen as the capacity to cope with complicated and uncertain problems (e.g. political problems, illicit drugs, floods or other natural disasters, economic crises, and other problems). The NEA implies that Thai learners’ goals are to gain both Thai wisdom and universal knowledge, including how to be self-reliance in order to survive. Thus the concept of “self-reliance” does not contradict the Thai way of life, even with increasing universal knowledge from Western countries.
“Self-reliance” not only has its roots in the Buddhist Bhali phrase stating that ‘Atta-Hi-Atta-No-Na-to’ or in Thai “อัตตาหิ อัตตโนนาโถ” or in English “one should rely on one-self”, but also from H.M. the King’s Sufficiency Economy philosophy which promotes the view that individuals as well as families, villages, communities, and organizations should do good things to help themselves with their own local resources and use available assistance, so that one can be of better help for more disadvantaged neighbours. In fact, part of Thai-ness is that anyone who is able should feel obliged to give assistance to poor people who are in need, as well as to the people facing disasters such as big fires, flooding, without waiting to be requested to help. We also believe that everyone should help themselves first. Thus the concept of giving or donation can only be done by those who are “self-reliant” and have more than enough to share with other.

Therefore, how to help Thai teachers to realize that being a good Thai and having self-reliance needs to be a concern in implementing the Act. Again, if Thai teachers can be good role models in being good and self-reliant Thais, this may help not only their students but other disadvantaged people such as parents and villagers in communities.

The Act expresses support for collaboration among all segments of Thai society and especially emphasizes the importance of collaboration between schools and its local communities in the State level, ministry level, and educational institution level in Section 25, 27, 29 of Chapter 4, Section 9(6) of Chapter 1, and Section 21 of Chapter 3 as already mentioned. While in many ways an admirable goal, such collaboration is quite different from practice heretofore, especially in villages and among poor people. Experts in local wisdom, villagers and parents, highly value and respect teachers who, they feel, have more knowledge than they do, and they also perceive a teacher as a second parent of a child in school. The Act’s insistence on collaboration aims at reducing gaps among learners, teachers, parents, villagers and other relevant organization. However, implementation of this goal is not easy. In particular, actual collaboration especially in academic activities such as establishing local curriculum, discussion, and participating in teaching may be problematic. From the side of local villagers, their local languages might impede local villagers to communicate with Central Thai speaking teachers while the schools might reproduce their conventional styles of working by providing little opportunity for villagers to participate.
There even may be more contradictions, as the policy states that Thai cultures, Thai ways of belief and practices, and correct use of the Thai language (Central Thai) (Chapter 4, Section 23, (4), p.13) are to be promoted and taken pride in. In this sense, Thai-ness may refer to more national rather than local, ways of being. Instead, using proper and accurate Thai language is emphasized, and Central Thai is used as a symbol of Thai identity. With wording, therefore, it may seem to Thai teachers that the government wants Thai people to value their local wisdom but not their local languages.

However, the policy statements have tried to convey the values of local language through valuing local wisdom (Chapter 4, Section 24) and encouraging it to be integrated into the school local curriculum (Chapter 4, Section 27, 29). One can assume that local dialects were considered as a part of local wisdom and instruction, but the lack of any explicit mention of them in the Act makes their value and status uncertain. In addition, The Act states that non-formal education must demonstrate flexibility in determining:

> The aims, modalities, management procedures, duration, assessment and evaluation conditional to its completion. The contents and curricula for non-formal education shall be appropriate, respond to the requirements, and the needs of individual groups of learners (Chapter 3, Section 15 (2)).

Again, it can be assumed that this policy statement takes local languages into account, but it does not explicitly mention them. Since the main audience of NEA’s policy statements are educational organizations which must adopt this policy to establish more specific plans for themselves, the wording of the Act with respect to language may be very important.

Still another inconsistency or apparent contradiction in the Act is related to providing free basic education for 12 years (Section 10, p. 7) and at the same time, providing special channels for educational institutes to act as business organizations, and to look for income from their services (Chapter 8, Section 59, p. 30). This brings to mind the example I used in Chapter 1 regarding my sister not being able to afford tuition fees for a special educational program for her children. Even though a student does not need to pay for tuition but he or she may need to pay to gain higher quality and various educational activities created by a particular school. In this way, educational institutions in the Act are both public (State supported) and private (paid for through special levies).
If education is to really be available and free for all, such special levies may not make sense, and particularly may affect the quality of education available to minority and poor Thais.

**Unclear Phrases and Terms**

The Act uses in various places, abstract like “goodness” or “virtue” (ความดีงาม) as objectives of both academic and professional education (Chapter 4, Section 28, p. 15). This directive: “The substance of the curricula, both academic and professional, all aim at human development with desirable balance regarding knowledge, critical thinking, capability, virtue and social responsibility” (p. 15), for example begs questions about what is meant by each phrase or term and what a “balance” among them would look like. Such ambiguity may cause schools or teachers to have difficulty interpreting the meaning of the directive.

The Act also uses the phrase the “learning process of the Thai people” (Chapter 9, Section 67, p. 33). This policy statement urges the State to study and develop technologies for education that are suitable for the “learning process of Thai people”. It is not clear what is meant by this phrase, and its relation to Thai-ness is also not clear.

**Summary of Observations of the NEA**

The NEA (1999, 2002, 2010) represented a profound change in Thai education, and as such is important to consider carefully. I reviewed the major elements of the Plan earlier in this chapter, and here summarize my observations.

The Act explicitly supports “local wisdom”, “local culture”, “the nation’s culture”, ideas that were not present in earlier articulations of Thai educational policy. The Act recognizes local wisdom and the strengths of local community and urges educators and all organizations and institutes to support education and persuade Thai people, especially students, to value it.

This provision is positive for poor Thai people in local areas (disadvantaged groups) because it seems to recognize their cultural capital. Collaboration between local community and various educational sectors and organizations to support both students
in school and adult learners is similar to the idea of “funds of knowledge” in Western literature. However, while disadvantaged Thai people have been encouraged to value and learn from their wisdom, the Act says nothing explicitly about the unique local languages in particular areas, which are important tools to gain local knowledge. Rather, it promotes “Central Thai”, linking usage of this to being a good Thai citizen. Similar to past government policies that tried to unify various ethnicities and races by using Central Thai, this policy implies that the only linguistic capital to be recognized in Thailand is Central Thai. Thus, a person who uses central Thai accurately has more access to educational opportunities, and can gain more benefits in society.

I go now to discuss the National Education Plan (2009-2016). This plan was developed after the Act and in compliance with it, and part of the context for the plan was the previous text.

The Context and History of the National Education Plan (2009-2016)

A National Educational Plan (NEP) was established in 1932 to direct all educational organizations, institutes, and educational personnel. Subsequently, NEPs have been issued at various times. I choose to study the ninth Thai NEP for 2009 to 2016 because it is the first time that a revised NEP was established before the previous NEP’s time frame was finished. The eighth NEP was put into effect in 2002 and was to last until 2016, but it was replaced by a revised version, the ninth NEP for 2009 to 2016. Since the Office of the Education Council (OEC) under the Ministry of Education has the main duty to produce the NEP, six reasons for replacement of the eighth plan by the ninth plan are explained in the policy document. Because I was not able to find an English version of the NEP, all translations in this section are mine.

The layout and Publishing Values of the NEP

The ninth National Educational Plan was first published in March 2010 and 5,000 copies were made available. A summary version of the document was published in April, 2010. The NEP is published on standard paper (210 x 297 mm or A4) while the summary version, like the NEA, is published on 210 x 146 mm or A5 paper. Both the complete and summary versions were published and distributed by the Office of Education Council,
Ministry of Education. On the cover page of both documents is printed the title: The National Education Plan, revised version (B.E. 2552-2559), and The National Education Plan, revised version (B.E. 2552-2559): summary), respectively. At the middle bottom, the name of the Office of Education Council, Ministry of Education is shown under its logo. Both versions were published to distribute to educational organizations and institutes, including other relating sectors for free.

Unlike the NEA, the NEP contains diagrams and many tables to present numerical information from various sources. Reading much like a research report, the document is separated into chapters and contains many references. No statistics are used but percentages are used to explain the results of educational development in the past in the Plan’s Chapter 3. The appearance of the NEP 2009-2016 is conservative and like most academic writing, it probably is not inviting to readers other than those who are responsible for implementing it. The summary version is slightly thinner, and more compact.

**Style and Purpose-- to Dictate or Persuade?**

The styles of the chapters vary in the NEP. Chapters I, 2, 3 and 4 are descriptive, with Chapter 2 being a review of educational research literature (mostly Thailand-based). As a “guide” from the government, it is more nearly persuasive than commanding in style. In Chapter 5, however, which contains the guide, sentences begin with words like: “develop”, “support”, “provide”, “enhance”, (พัฒนา สนับสนุน จัดให้ ส่งเสริม), and thus appear to be imperatives. Sentences in the Objectives, Policies and Operational Frames take the following forms: What must be done, how to do this and for whom, or what must be done, for whom and how to do this, or what must be done and how it must be done.

**The Internal Organization of the NEP**

The complete NEP includes 6 chapters with 181 pages while the summary version is more compact with 89 pages. The first two pages of both present an introduction from the Secretary of the Council. The complete version, which will be discussed here, provides six chapters: Chapter 1 introduction which includes background, operation, the results of educational development in the past, main philosophy and operational frame,
the intention, the objectives, the principles of the plan, and the conditions for practice;
Chapter 2 discusses the effects on education of developments in the world’s and
Thailand’s social, economic, environmental, scientific, technological, political and
governmental, and demographic circumstances; Chapter 3 is the study of educational
development in Thailand in the past; Chapter 4 outlines urgent problems; Chapter 5
contains educational objectives, policy, goals, and operational frames; Chapter 6
outlines the administration of plan into practice.

The appendix of the complete version shows: the ratio of learners per population in each
basic education level in each year; the number of learners in vocational and higher
education levels; the number of learners whose education is provided by religious
institutes; the results of educational quality evaluated by the Office for National
Education Standards and Quality Assessment; the number of disadvantaged learners
and learners with disabilities; the number of learners in non-formal education institutes;
the expense for education of the state; and estimated numbers of learners in many
levels in the future.

In comparison to the NEA, the print in the NEP is smaller and more difficult to read.
Objectives, policy, goals, and operational frame of each objective of the NEP are
presented in Chapter 5 with outlining around the topic of each objective to make it
obvious and easy to find on the page. After the title of the objective, overall goals are
presented. Again, this style of presentation seems to indicate the Plan is to be used by
educators who will have the interest and patience to read small text and lists of
objectives.

There are three main objectives of the NEP 2009-2016. Each objective has its overall
goal and policies. Each policy has its goal and operational frames. See the chart below
to see the organization.
Figure 3. The National Education Plan B.E. 2552-2559 (2009-2016)’s Organization

The first Objective “develop and balance people in all aspects as the basic principle of development”⁴ (NEP 2009-2016 p. 109, my translation), consists of 6 Policies and each Policy has 11, 6, 10, 9, 6, 8 Operational Frames, respectively. The overall goal for this Objective states:

³ พัฒนาคนอย่างรอบด้าน และสมดุล เพื่อเป็นฐานหลักของการพัฒนา
Thai people are good, smart, and happy. They have both academic knowledge and vocational capacity. They are eager to learn and search for knowledge in lifelong learning. They are proud to be Thai. They can work and live with others happily. These are goals and basic principle of sustainable development of the country \(^4\) (NEP 2009-2012 p. 109, my translation).

The second Objective “create Thai society to be moral, wise, and a learning society”\(^5\) (NEP 2009-2016 p. 118, my translation) consists of 3 Policies and each Policy has 4, 4, and 9 Operational Frames, respectively. The overall goal for this Objective states:

Thai society is a moral, wise, and learning society. Thai society has knowledge, innovation, technology, and intellectual property for learning. All characteristics lead to a sustainable and healthy\(^6\) learning society in which people will live happily and helpfully. \(^7\) (in NEP 2009-2012 p. 118, my translation)

The third Objective “develop society environment as a basis for developing people and creating moral, knowledge, and learning society”\(^8\) (NEP 2009-2016 p. 121, my translation) consists of 5 Policies and each Policy has 7, 8, 8, 7 and 7 Operational Frames, respectively. Its overall goal states:

Thai society has a sustainable and good environment to develop people. Thai people use information technology for learning and education, have efficient educational administration by distributing power to educational institutes, educational service area, local administration, mobilize resources and collaborate with all sectors both in area and other countries. With these characteristics of Thai society, it leads the ability in

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\(^4\) คนไทยเป็นคนดี เก่ง มีความสุข มีความรู้จิตรการและสมรรถนะทางอาชีพ ได้เรียนรู้ และแสวงหาความรู้อย่างต่อเนื่องตลอดชีวิต ด้วยศีลธรรมหลัก ปรัชญาเศรษฐกิจพอเพียง มีสุขภาพทั้งกายและใจที่สมบูรณ์ มีความภูมิใจในความเป็นไทย สามารถประกอบอาชีพและอยู่ร่วมกันผู้อื่นได้อย่างมีความสุข เพื่อเป็นภาพรวมและฐานหลักของการพัฒนาประเทศอย่างยั่งยืน

\(^5\) สร้างสังคมไทยให้เป็นสังคมคุณธรรม ภูมิปัญญาและการเรียนรู้

\(^6\) The word “healthy” written in Thai as a noun “well-being” (สุขภาวะ)

\(^7\) สังคมไทยเป็นสังคมแห่งคุณธรรม ภูมิปัญญาและการเรียนรู้ มีการสร้างองค์ความรู้ นวัตกรรมและเทคโนโลยี ทรัพย์สินทางปัญญา เพื่อการเรียนรู้ นำไปสู่สังคมแห่งการเรียนรู้อย่างยั่งยืน นี้สุขภาวะ ประชาชนอยู่ร่วมกันอย่างสันติสุขและเอื้ออาทร

\(^8\) พัฒนาสภาพแวดล้อมของสังคม เพื่อเป็นฐานในการพัฒนาและสร้างสังคมคุณธรรม ภูมิปัญญาและการเรียนรู้
working and competition with other countries in order to live happily with helpful sense.9 (NEP 2009-2016 p. 119, my translation)

The NEP was established in alignment, of course, with the NEA in 2002 and the tenth National Economic and Social Development plan for 2007 to 2012. Most major concepts in the NEP are similar to those in the NEA, but the NEP’s policy is more practical and provides more operational details for educational institutions.

The writing style in the NEP is readable but it is perhaps not as “reader-friendly” as it might be. Because it was produced fairly quickly there may not have been time for extensive overview of the text. The later-produced summary of the text is easier to read and comprehend.

The intended audiences for the NEP are not exactly specified but one can assume that it is directed toward educational organizations and institutes relating to education because such organization and institutes need to establish their own plans that are consistent with the NEP. Similarly, no single author of the document is indicated and authorship appears to be collective from a single organization called the Office of the Education Council (OEC) under Ministry of Education. A particular group of experts from the Department of Policy and Education Planning (a subcommittee of the Office of the Education Council), worked on the first draft. The names of the persons sitting on this subcommittee are listed, and the names of persons on the “working group” for the NEP are also listed in the summary version of NEP. Seven members and two advisors to the working group (all of whom have doctoral degrees) drafted the document. In the process of formulating the Plan, various experts from related organizations were invited to participate in considering the plan. In sum, authorship of this document is collective, but the naming of committee members, unlike in the NEA, suggests that the document was socially produced by educational experts whose “educational capital” is considerable.

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9 สังคมไทยมีสภาพแวดล้อมที่เอื้ออำนวยต่อการพัฒนาคนอย่างมีคุณภาพและยั่งยืน มีการนำเทคโนโลยีสารสนเทศมาใช้ เพื่อการศึกษาและเรียนรู้ มีการบริหารจัดการศึกษาอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ มีการกระจายอำนาจสู่สถานศึกษา เขตพื้นที่การศึกษา และองค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่น มีการระดมทรัพยากรและความร่วมมือจากทุกภาคส่วน รวมถึงความร่วมมือในภูมิภาค และก้าวหน้าทางด้านการศึกษา ขึ้นอยู่กับความสามารถในการร่วมมือและแข่งขันของประเทศ และการอยู่ร่วมกันกับ ผลลัพธ์อย่างยั่งยืน มีการพึ่งพาอาศัยและเกื้อกูลกัน
The Objectives, Policies and Operational Frames in the Plan do not always specify who is responsible for what actions. As I pointed out earlier, many sentences start with verbs without subjects. For example, “Objective 1- develop and balance people in all aspects as the basic principle of development” (NEP 2009-2016 p. 109), “Policy 1.1-- develop the quality of education…” (NEP 2009-2016 p. 109), “Operational frame 1.1.1-- develop and prepare children's readiness for learning…” (NEP 2009-2016 p. 110). The verbs most used in the objectives, policies and operational frames are “develop”, “support”, “provide”, and “enhance” (พัฒนา สนับสนุน จัดให้ ส่งเสริม). Since the NEP is to be the national guide for all educational organizations to use for establishing their own objectives, policies, and actual plans themselves, one can assume that educational organizations are to be the heads of these sentences. “Improving”, “developing”, “balancing” and so on are high-level tasks for educational institutions, and thus it may be that the NEP is not directed toward individual educators or persons. For instance, “develop National Qualification Operational frame to guarantee capacity and ability of all people who graduate at any level.” (Operational Frame 1.4.3, NEP 2009-2016, p. 110), “support educational institutes to search for income…” (Operational Frame 3.4.2, NEP 2009-2016, p. 110) are not individual responsibilities. Sometimes, the recipient of actions are specified, as in, “support the higher education institutes to produce excellent teachers and develop teachers by focusing on research…” (Operational Frame 1.6.4, NEP 2009-2016, p. 117).

There are some Objectives, Policies and Operational Frames that do specify tasks for individuals. An example may be found in: “support the state and organization and institutes to set the admirable system for Thais who are keen on art, culture,…, local wisdom in order to be the role model for youth and society…” (Operational Frame 2.2.2, NEP 2009-2016, p. 119).

Unclear Words and Phrases

Many words and phrases are used in the NEP referring to Thai culture, art, history, wisdom, local wisdom, valuing in being Thai, being proud to be Thai. Words and phrases which relate to a notion of “Thai-ness” include: “…inculcate the sense to protect,
maintain, preserve, and disseminate arts, culture, traditional custom of the nation, including good values and local wisdom”\(^{10}\) (Operational Frame 2.2.4, NEP 2009-2016, p. 119, my translation); “enhance and support the strength for organizations or institutes which are responsible for developing Thai uniqueness, values, and pride in being Thai”\(^{11}\) (Operational Frame 2.2.4, NEP 2009-2016, p. 119, my translation); “support and promote education, training, and learning of local administration which is consistent with the national standard and education system with concern for the preservation of arts, custom, local wisdom, and good local culture”\(^{12}\) (Operational Frame 3.2.3, NEP 2009-2016, p. 123, my translation). These phrases and words elaborate what being a Thai is. Questions such as how to decide what are good values, how much the word “culture” covers, what kinds of behaviour shows pride in being Thai, and other ambiguities, have no clear answers. Putting those phrases and words throughout the NEP tells a reader, without specifying in particular that “Thai-ness” is enormously promoted.

Medical metaphors are used throughout the document. Thai people are said to be “ill” (เจ็บป่วย) and the problems in Thailand are diseases which can spread rapidly. The Plan wants to help Thai people and Thai society to have “well-being” (สุขภาวะ). The illness needs to be cured urgently, and Thai citizens need to be protected with “vaccine”, and develop “immunities” (ภูมิคุ้มกัน). Examples include: “Thai society is ill from an imbalance of social structure, social development, and cumulative problems…” (NEP 2009-2016, p. 17, my translation); “…Thai society lacks immunity to resist consuming through media and information technology…” \(^{13}\) (NEP 2009-2016, p. 17, my translation); “…Thailand’s education system needs to be prepared to be cured…” \(^{14}\) (NEP 2009-2016, p. 43, my translation).

\(^{10}\) …ปลูกจิตสำนึก อนุรักษ์ รักษา ทํานุบํารุง และเผยแพร่ศิลปะ วัฒนธรรม ขนบธรรมเนียมประเพณีของชาติ ตลอดจนค่านิยม ซึ่งสืบคํานึงและภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่น

\(^{11}\) ส่งเสริม สนับสนุนการสร้างความเข้มแข็งให้กับสถาบันทางวัฒนธรรม ที่พันธุ์นิยมที่ยึดถึงการฟื้นฟูและเอกลักษณ์ไทย ค่านิยม และความภูมิใจในความเป็นไทย

\(^{12}\) สนับสนุนส่งเสริมการจัดการศึกษา อบรม และเรียนรู้ ขององค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่นที่สอดคล้องกับมาตรฐานและระบบการศึกษาของชาติ และค่านิยมในรูปการรักษาศิลปะ วัฒนธรรม และค่านิยมท้องถิ่นและภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นและวัฒนธรรมอันเดิมของท้องถิ่น

\(^{13}\) …สังคมไทยขาดภูมิคุ้มกันจากการบริโภคผ่านสื่อและเทคโนโลยีสารสนเทศ...

\(^{14}\) …ระบบการศึกษาจำเป็นต้องเตรียมการและเข้าไปเยียวยา…
translation). Creating “immunity” by the network of houses, religious institutes, schools, communities, and media, is one strategy to develop morality in the Thai educational system (NEP 2009-2016, p. 64, my translation). The philosophy of “Sufficiency Economy” is mentioned as a vaccine for Thailand’s social, economic, education problems (NEP 2009-2016, p. 16, 23, 34, my translation). These metaphors appear in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. The language is strong and frightening and seems designed to persuade readers to agree with the necessity for the new National Education Plan for 2009 to 2016 presented in Chapter 5. The phrase “well-being” (สุขภาวะ) is also used to explain the goals of Thai society when it becomes a moral, wise, and learning society (NEP 2009-2016, p. 118). The word “well-being” comes from the Thai health organization that promotes holistic well-being in four dimensions: physical, mental, social, and spiritual. Moreover, in Operational Frame 1.2, the word “immunity” is used as the way to protect Thai morality and ethics by collaboration from all social sectors (NEP 2009-2016, p. 112). The ideal learning society is sustainable and has well-being as mentioned in Objective 2 (NEP 2009-2016, p. 118).

Assumptions, Contradictions and Inconsistencies

Policy statements in the NEP state that Thais should be knowledgeable about international issues and about technology to rival others (presumably in a globalized world) but they also state that Thais should rely on their own strengths and be satisfied with what they have been or are doing. Adhering to the notion of a “Sufficiency Economy” with being ready to compete with other countries are possibly contradictory and certainly confusing, at least to this reader.

“The Sufficiency Economy” (เศรษฐกิจพอเพียง) which was bestowed by His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej, is the main philosophy in the NEP. Based on this philosophy, the NEP describes three characteristics: moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity with the requirement of two conditions: knowledge and morality. In particular, the philosophy holds that people should adhere to the middle path or moderation. For knowledge conditions, in every decision, work, investment, and other acts, people should apply knowledge and implement it with reasonableness by thinking carefully and always considering causes and effects. For moral conditions, the philosophy of a
sufficiency economy requires that people have awareness of ethics such as honesty and integrity and living with perseverance, harmlessness, and generosity (Piboolsravut, 2004). Furthermore, people need to prepare themselves in order to face change and problems (self-immunity or ภูมิคุ้มกันตัวเอง in Thai). From this philosophy, local wisdom and local knowledge in each family, village, and community is to be valued. People should develop and preserve their local wisdom to benefit themselves in activities like creating particular jobs and products. Integrating local wisdom and knowledge into school curriculum is also seen as important. The author applied this philosophy to picture ideal Thai learners in the future. In so doing, the Plan states Thai people will have an education that will lead them to be proud of their cultures and local knowledge and use such wisdom to help them to be able to live and face with unstable problems in the future. “The Sufficiency Economy” seems suitable and doable for Thai people who have unique cultures and rely on agriculture products.

However, in a globalized world now and in the future, competition with other countries will be necessary and frequent, and the written statements in the NEP (2009-2016) may be unclear to some Thai teachers as audiences. If one does not understand well the philosophy of a sufficiency economy, it may appear that a philosophy of Sufficiency Economy” does not encourage people to try hard to compete with others.

Written statements in the NEP sometimes provide clear explanations about how a “Sufficiency Economy” philosophy is consistent with economic circumstances, but sometimes the policy is confusing and sometimes it seems to promote negative attitudes toward poor or disadvantaged people who follow the philosophy. In particular, the preparation of Thai people to be ready to compete with other countries both in Asia and the world is seen as necessary in the NEP 2009-2016, and competitiveness in a globalized world is explicitly stated. The negative effects if people misunderstand the philosophy of a Sufficient Economy are mentioned in Chapter 2 of the Plan with the explanation that this philosophy does not mean to neglect or ignore the importance of development and competitiveness among countries. Rather, Thai people need to develop their country by knowing information in order to survive in a globalized world (p. 21). Moreover, “the creative economy” is mentioned along with “the Sufficiency Economy” so that Thai people should integrate these two concepts to benefit the country. In particular, the NEP argues that Thai people should apply local knowledge to
create new technologies and develop products. In summary, the philosophy of a sufficiency economy should be adhered to as the best way of life and thinking of Thai people, and at the same time, a creative economy can help them to be able to add value to their products.

Since the philosophy of a sufficiency economy is the foundation of the eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016), which includes the new NEP (2012-2016), I would like to provide the perspective of NESDP’s policy makers toward implementing this philosophy. The people-centered development approach in the Eighth NESD Plan (1997-2001) including the philosophy of sufficiency economy was adopted as a main guiding principle in the Ninth Plan (2002-2006), and continued in the Tenth NESD Plan (2006-2011) (NESD Board, 2011). The NESD Board (2011) found that since over the years the philosophy of a Sufficiency Economy has been gradually applied extensively. They found that Thai society has greater resilience in various aspects and could cope effectively with the impact of the 2008 global economic crisis. Thailand also had strong economic performance, high employment, and strong communities and family ties. In addition, the Green and Happiness Index (GHI) reflected well that Thai people had 65-67 GHI’s level (NESD Board, 2011, p. i). However, some obstacles still remained and a low quality of education is one of the problems. In the eleventh NESD plan (2012-2016), it is expected that Thailand will face with more complicated domestic and external changes, and so it is necessary to utilize the resilience of Thai society and economy to prepare Thai people and Thai society to manage well when they encounter challenges in well-balanced development based on the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy. One strategy to enhance resilience is to encourage Thai people to maintain good values and culture to contribute social cohesion and reduce the negative influence of the modern world and conflicts in Thai society. Thus, this later policy states that all Thai people should apply this philosophy in their daily lives and teach the younger generation to recognize Thai values and identity (NESD Board, 2011). In summary, the eleventh NESDP (2012-2016) adhered to the philosophy of “Sufficiency Economy”. The integration of the development of people, society, economy, environment and politics at all levels (i.e. family, community, the nation) was said to increase Thailand’s capacity for resilience and adaptation. This notion of people-centered development articulated in both the NEA and the NEP is still applied throughout the national development process (NESD Board, 2011, p. vii).
Bunyasrie (2010) argued the compatibility of a sufficiency economy and a creative economy, whereby Thais would not only adopt as a mode of conduct the philosophy of moderation and satisfaction, with initiative in capitalizing on its cultural heritage and culture. While these two ideas for economic development can be argued to be compatible, their integration is subtle and may not be immediately apparent.

I am concerned that some written statements in the NEP may confuse an audience, especially Thai teachers, about how competing with other countries in a globalized market co-occurs with the words “being enough, moderate, or adequate” (มีความพอเพียง พอประมาณ) (p. 16, 19, 23) which are mentioned often. A society that defines itself as “adequate” (and having enough to survive) is probably not a competitive society which focuses on profit and getting wealthy (p.19). In addition, the NEP’s position, sometimes, is not clear on local wisdom coming from some statements. For example, the lifestyle relating to the quality and sustainability of natural resources and local wisdom is called “rural society” (สังคมชนบท) (p. 19). This might convey to Thai people that people who value local wisdom, based on a sufficiency economy, are rural groups. Some audiences who are not understand well the philosophy may question that does this mean that rural poor people should value and develop their local wisdom while urban rich people can partake of new international knowledge? Conveying the philosophy of “Sufficiency economy” with being competitive in the economic world, the NEP, like other educational documents, may need careful consideration and wording.

The NEP’s Position on Literacy

In the NEP, I see attempts to create exciting new pathways for education in Thailand. With respect to literacy, one of the goals of Policy 1.1 is that learners have knowledge, ability, and capacity in reading and writing Thai and foreign languages and love reading but there is no actual Operational Frame to reach this goal. In particular, stated in this goal is:

Learners have knowledge, ability, and capacity in reading and writing Thai and foreign languages, calculation, critical thinking, solving problems, creative thinking, love reading, the habit of eagerness to learn, inquiry and self development over the lifespan, having both academic
knowledge and vocational capacity, working in the career and live happily with others based on the sufficiency economy philosophy\textsuperscript{15} (in NEP 2009-20016, p. 110, my translation).

In contrast, in all 11 Operational Frames in order to reach this goal, literacy development is focused on increasing learning achievement in general and increasing learning achievement in five subjects in which Thai language is placed as the last subject. Operational Frame 1.1.2 states: “provide curriculum, instruction, activities, measurement and evaluation in all kinds and all level of education to help to develop learners…to have higher learning achievement …”\textsuperscript{16} (p. 110, my translation). Operational Frame 1.1.3 states “increase the level of educational quality in science, mathematics, English, social studies, and Thai language in order to enhance learning achievement”\textsuperscript{17} (p. 110, my translation). Regarding Operational Frame 1.1.3, the words foreign languages are interpreted to be “English” and “Thai language” is ranked as the last priority. There is no text in Operational Frame of Policy 1.1 to suggest how “reading and writing Thai and foreign languages” and “love reading” might be accomplished. However, it can also be interpreted that local languages of the target groups have been considered in education and as ways to evaluate learning achievement. Disabled people (i.e. mental or physical disability) and disadvantaged people (i.e. minorities who have different cultures, labourers, elders, etc.) are to be provided free education at least 12 years with quality and such education must be various, flexible, and accessible for all of them (Operational Frame 1.3.1 and 1.3.2, p. 113).

Literacy development in the Plan is focused on the ability to think. The goal of Policy 1.1 is: “Learners have knowledge, ability, and capacity in …, calculation, critical thinking, solving problem, creative thinking…” (in NEP 2009-2016, p. 110). This desire is also are

\textsuperscript{15} ผู้เรียนมีความรู้ ความสามารถ มีสมรรถนะทั้งด้านการอ่านและการเขียนภาษาไทยและภาษาต่างประเทศ การคิดคำนวณ คิดวิเคราะห์ แก้ปัญหา การคิดริเริ่ม สร้างสรรค์ รักการอ่าน มีนิสัยใฝ่เรียนรู้ สามารถเรียนรู้หัวใจตนเอง สร้างความสามารถ และพัฒนาตนเองอย่างต่อเนื่องตลอดชีวิต มีความรู้จักรวาลและการสมรรถนะทางวิชาชีพ สามารถประกอบอาชีพและอยู่ร่วมกับผู้อื่นได้อย่างมีความสุข สามารถเรียนรู้ตลอดชีวิตเป็นพลังงานที่มีคุณค่ามากที่สุด ต่างจากศักยภาพของผู้เรียนที่มีการศึกษา

\textsuperscript{16} จัดหลักสูตร กระบวนการเรียนการสอน ชีวิตการเรียนการสอน ที่มีการพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์การศึกษา เพื่อให้ต้องการพัฒนาผู้เรียน...มีผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนสูงขึ้น...

\textsuperscript{17} ยกระดับคุณภาพการศึกษา วิทยาศาสตร์ คณิตศาสตร์ ภาษาต่างประเทศ ภาษาไทย และภาษาไทย เพื่อพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์ทางการเรียนให้สูงขึ้น...
mentioned in Operational Frame 1.1.2: “provide curriculum, instruction, activities, measurement and evaluation in all kinds and all level of education to help to develop learners ...to be able to think, be critical, solve problems, think creatively,...”¹⁸ (p. 110, my translation). As in the NEA, the attempt to protect and preserve Thai cultures, morals, and customs, and so on and to make Thais value being Thai and proud to be Thai, might in the view of some teachers, contradict with developing thinking ability of learners. Learners are at the same time to be critical but also to protect, preserve, and value Thai cultures, local cultures, morals, ethics, have good values and desirable Thai characteristics, have a Thai identity, observe the national customs as shown in policy 1.2, the goal of policy 1.2, Operational Frame 1.2.1, 1.2.4, 1.2.5, 1.2.6, 2.2.4, 3.1.2, 3.2.3 (NEP 2009-2016, p. 112, 119, 121, 123).

In summary then, the NEA and the NEP describe requirements of and changes in Thai education at quite a high level. However, some of the audiences for it and the NEP are the same, such as educational institutions, educators, teachers, and other relevant sectors. The NEP is more specifically for educational planners and gives specific objectives and ideas for implementation. To make sure that all Thai teachers understand the meaning, of both policies, careful attention to explicit wording and discussion of apparent contradictions in policy may be very important.

¹⁸ ขั้นหลักสูตร, กระบวนการเรียนการสอน, วิธีการ, การวัดและประเมินผล, ทุกระดับและประเภทการศึกษา, เพื่อเชื่อมต่อการพัฒนาผู้เรียน...ให้สามารถคิด, วิเคราะห์, แก้ปัญหา, คิดวิจิตร, ส่งเสริมสรรพสิ่ง...
Chapter 6.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this thesis I have critically analyzed two Thai educational policies in order to see how Thai educational policy conceptualizes literacy, how it sees (or does not see) the possibility of reproduction or emerging new production of power and domination hidden in literacy practices, and the possibility of implementation of Western ideas about improving literacy education for disadvantaged people in Thailand. In this chapter, I summarize the main points from each chapter. I then conclude and discuss the research results.

Chapter Summaries

In the first chapter of literature review, Chapter 2, I reviewed studies of literacy and power by theorists such as Fairclough and Bourdieu. Fairclough in particular pointed to how literacy contributes to the development and maintenance of relations of “power, domination, and exploitation” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 218), showing that dominant ideologies can reproduce, or sustain unequal power relations (Fairclough 1992b; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Bourdieu (1977) argued that individuals bring their habitus and capital into particular fields and both play a significant role in leading people to produce and reproduce practices that develop unequal power (as cited in Marsh, 2006; Carrington & Luke, 1997). In literacy instruction, schools can contribute to stronger class and cultural inequalities with instructional practices that differentially reward some students and disadvantage others (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

I then discussed the various meanings of the term literacy. Street (1984) offered two models of the meaning of literacy. The autonomous model views literacy as an independent cognitive skill in which individual reading and writing ability can be measured. Developing literacy and discovering effective ways to increase it are the ways scholars who accept the autonomous model see it. However, the ideological model of
literacy sees literacy as a situated practice, such that it takes different forms in different contexts. Pointing to the variety in dialects, languages, beliefs, religions, socioeconomic and other different characteristics in modern societies, literacy is seen to have inextricable links to the structure of culture and power in society (Street, 1984). Many scholars have pointed to the diversity of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts (Cole & Scribner, 1979; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984). From this perspective, assessing “literacy” by measuring achievement on standardized tests might be unreliable. The literature I reviewed in Chapter 2 urges me to examine what particular national education policies in Thailand means by literacy development and what models of literacy it assumes. In addition, since inequalities in literacy education in Thailand are relevant to the theoretical framework that Bourdieu (1977) has offered, I in this study, have paid attention to how Thai educational policy might reproduce or lessen traditional inequities.

In Chapter 3, I reviewed literacy policy initiatives from four Western countries (Canada, Sweden, the United States, England and Australia), many of which assumed an autonomous model of literacy. These policies attempted to measure and assess standard literacy performance and then to improve it. In literature that discussed the literacy development of disadvantaged, indigenous groups and minorities, one can see a more ideological, socioculturally-sensitive model of literacy. Since Thailand has poor and disadvantaged people as the majority of its population, lessons learned in literacy development from other countries may be very important. There are some recommendations for improving literacy instructional practices for disadvantaged students and minorities from educational scholars in Western countries. The first recommendation illustrated in the work of Ladson-Billings (1992, 1996) and Pahl & Rowsell (2005) is valuing family engagement to enhance the literacy ability of not only students but also their parents by recognizing and working with families’ cultural identities and community knowledge. The second recommendation is to apply Moll’s funds of knowledge approach to literacy instruction. In many studies (Compton-Lilly, 2003, 2007; Dyson, 2003; Gregory, Long & Volk, 2004; Kelly, 2004; Kenner, 2000b; Marshall & Toohey, 2010; Moll et al., 1990, 2005; Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Olmedo, 1999, 2004), it is argued that teachers should discover local household knowledge (e.g., particular local wisdom, skills, local languages, the first language, and so on) absorbed by children while they are being raised, and that teachers should use such knowledge to
develop effective literacy lessons. Teacher-parent collaboration is the third recommendation that might benefit disadvantaged students in literacy. Based on many studies such as Anderson et al. (2010), Chrispeels (1996), Epstein (1995, 2001, 2010), Epstein et al. (2009), Hoover-Dempsey & Walker (2002), Tabin (1999), teacher-parent collaboration can help teachers and school administrators gain more effective and stronger parental support which benefits student performance in the long run. These recommendations are relevant to Thailand’s policy statements since Thailand education has started to value local wisdom and communities.

A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the methodology I employed in this study and it is presented in Chapter 4. Fairclough (1992a) proposed an approach to CDA based on Foucault’s concept of discourse in the 1970s and the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Discourse, in Fairclough’s view, is “language use” which is a type of “social practice” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 28). Discourse is also “socially constitutive as well as socially shaped” (Fairclough & Wodak, 2000, p. 258). There are three dimensions in each discourse event: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 1993). In doing CDA, Fairclough (2001) advised researchers to investigate language use within social contexts by considering the relationships between text and context, discourse and society, and language and power. His three-dimensional method of discourse analysis consists of: description, interpretation, and explanation. Description is a linguistic analysis of a text; interpretation is an analysis of the relationship between discourse processes (the processes of production and interpretation) and the text; explanation is an analysis of the relationship between discursive processes and social processes. I have applied questions from Hamilton (2002) who adapted Fairclough’s CDA to her study of how government policy in adult literacy education had ramifications in local settings when teachers and students interacted.

My critical analysis of two Thai specific educational policies: the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) and the National Education Plan B.E. 2552-2559 (2009-2016) appears in Chapter 5. I explain the contexts of production of the documents; the documents' appearance, style and purpose; internal organization; assumed audience, author(s), and actors; the major arguments; and finally what appears inconsistent, contradictory and assumed in them. This analysis was performed in order to answer three major research questions:
1. How is literacy conceptualized in two influential Thai educational policies? What is the discourse around literacy in such documents?

2. Do these policy statements about literacy reproduce or do they attempt to change historical inequities in Thai education?

3. Do Western models of improving literacy education for minority students hold promise for changing inequities in Thai literacy education?

The next section of this chapter will examine those questions in turn.

How is Literacy Conceptualized in Two Influential Thai Educational Policies? What is the Discourse around Literacy in Such Documents?

The meaning of literacy is not directly defined either in the National Education Act (NEA), or in the National Education Plan (NEP). In fact, the word “literacy” is not used much in either document, and we thus must infer its meaning to the policy makers through other statements of educational goals and aims. Here I discuss general educational goals of the policies and those that relate specifically to reading, writing, literacy and language.

There are two places in the NEA in which words relevant to literacy or language practices appear. The first is, “Education through formal, non-formal, and informal approaches shall give emphases to knowledge, morality, learning process, and integration of the following, depending on the appropriateness of each level of education:…(4) Knowledge and skills in mathematics and languages, with emphasis on proper use of the Thai language” (in NEA 1999, Chapter 4, Section 23 (4), p. 13). Another mention in the Act states: “In organizing the learning process, educational institutions and agencies concerned shall: … (3) organize activities for learners to... love reading” (in NEA 1999, Chapter 4, Section 24 (3), p. 13). One can assume from these words that literacy, to Thai policy makers, is using the Thai language properly (that is, using Standard Thai), and that language knowledge and skills are like knowledge and skills in mathematics. In addition, the Act enjoins educational institutions to instill an emotional response to written language, i.e. to love reading. While the evidence is scanty, since there is little direct mention of literacy, it appears that the authors of the Act use both autonomous and ideological models of literacy: they do not make reference to the situatedness of literacy, nor to how language and literacy and power might be
related. In addition, the use of “the Thai language” makes no explicit recognition of the many local languages spoken by rural Thais. Since the NEA is a general law for all educational organizations to adhere to, its text provides policy planners the flexibility to apply it to their own particular policy or plan. Local languages also can be interpreted to be included in the word “languages” in the sentence which the education provides learners “Knowledge and skills in mathematics and languages, with emphasis on proper use of the Thai language” (in NEA 1999, Chapter 4, Section 23 (4), p. 13).

Literacy is referred to in the NEA in indirect ways. This discourse seems to assume that literacy should be developed with abilities such as critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and having self-reliance while learning. Moreover, such literacy should be developed as lifelong learning, derived from collaboration in educational management by various sectors especially local communities; further, the development of these abilities should be provided to people for free for 12 years, and should serve the promotion of Thai-ness including local wisdom. These are examples: “the learning process shall aim at ...pride in Thai identity, ..., promotion of religious, art, national culture, sports, local wisdom, Thai wisdom, ..., self-reliance, creative thinking, and acquiring thirst for knowledge and capability of self-learning on a continuous basis” (NEA 1999, Chapter 1, Section 7, p. 5-6); “In the provision of education, all individuals shall have equal rights and opportunities to receive basic education provided by the State for the duration of at least 12 years. Such education, provided on a nationwide basis, shall be of quality and free of charge” (NEA 1999, Chapter 2, Section 10, p. 7); “Educational agencies shall mobilize human resources in the community to participate in educational provision by contributing their experience, knowledge, expertise, and local wisdom for educational benefits...”(NEA 1999, Chapter 7, Section 57, p. 28).

In the National Education Plan (NEP), as in the NEA, the meaning of literacy is not defined directly. There are four places in the NEP that words which are relevant to literacy appear. The first example is: “learners have knowledge, ability, and capacity in reading and writing Thai and foreign languages, calculation,... love reading...”¹⁹ (NEP 2009-2016, the Goal of Policy 1.1, p. 110, my translation). The second example is in

¹⁹ ผู้เรียนมีความรู้ ความสามารถ มีสมรรถนะทั้งด้านการอ่านและการเขียนภาษาไทยและภาษาต่างประเทศ การคิดค้านบน...รักการอ่าน...
Operational Frame 1.1.3 which states the necessity to “increase the level of educational quality in science, mathematics, English, social studies, and Thai language in order to enhance learning achievement”\(^{20}\) (NEP 2009-2016, p. 110, my translation). The third example is in Operational Frame 1.3.5 which encourages “enhancing literacy (รู้หนังสือ) and a campaign for Thai to have reading habit…”\(^{21}\) (NEP 2009-2016, p. 113, my translation). The last example is in Operational Frame 3.5.6 which concerns the enhancement of “the instruction of international languages as a second language in the basic level of education, and enhance the learning of a third language such as a neighboring Asian language, or a language of individual interest in order to communicate and open the learning vision widely and boundlessly”\(^{22}\) (NEP 2009-2016, p. 127, my translation). Literacy in the NEP appears to mean having knowledge, ability, and capacity in reading and writing Thai and foreign languages, (and enhancing knowledge, ability and capacity) and also loving reading. Having “knowledge, ability and capacity in reading and writing Thai” and enhancing or increasing those attributes also suggests an autonomous model of literacy, wherein reading and writing are invariant individual skills that “increase”. The ideology model of literacy also appears with respect to target groups. As in the NEA, the NEP does not discuss contextual factors in literacy, nor power relations. As well, the policy dictates that Thais are to learn international languages. “International languages” seem to mainly mean English. In particular, the Operational Frame 1.1.3 which is under the Goal of Policy 1.1 mentions support for “foreign languages” for Thai learners, shows that “English” is the preferred language and that it is important to increase its learning achievement. Presumably, “having a reading habit” will increase the literacy of Thai citizens.

Mentioned only once directly, literacy in the NEP appears to be a skill that is developed with thinking abilities such as critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem solving;
learning by oneself and desiring to learn over the lifespan (NEP 2009-2016, Operational Frame 1.1.2, p. 110). In addition, in this Operational Frame, the enhancing of learning achievement is required. I find that educational institutions should “provide curriculum, instruction, activities, measurement and evaluation in all kinds and all levels of education to help to develop learners…to have higher learning achievement …” (NEP 2009-2016, p.110).

In summary, from both policy documents, literacy in Thai education is:

- Knowledge and skills in using Central Thai properly23,
- Knowledge and skills in reading and writing Central Thai,
- Knowledge and skills in languages
- Knowledge and skills in English as a foreign language,
- Loving reading,
- Knowledge and skills in an Asian language or in a language of personal interest,

In addition the documents state:

- Literacy ability can be shown by the level of learning achievement but particular evaluations for target groups can also be used,
- Individuals develop their literacy along with thinking critically, thinking creatively, and solving problems,
- Individuals develop literacy by relying on themselves or having self-reliance in literacy development,
- Individuals should be eager to develop literacy to learn as lifelong learning.

There are some apparent contradictions and inconsistencies in literacy conceptualizations in the documents. The promotion of “Thai-ness” might be interpreted to conflict with other goals of the NEA and the NEP that consider as important such characteristics as “thinking ability” and “self-reliance” by some Thai teachers as audiences. Thai-ness is seen as a goal, and promotes religious, national, and local culture, customs, good values, morals, ethics, and desirable attributes in every subject. These policies suggest that Thai education should preserve good Thai ways of living in

23 This adverb, ‘properly’, is associated with the autonomous model—implying that proper use of language is autonomous of context. Such a view does not recognize variability.
the same time with developing thinking abilities and self-reliance. Thai-ness, critical and creative thinking, self-reliance are compatible based on the “Sufficiency Economy”. However, interpretations of the policy might lead readers to think they are in opposition to one another and it would be helpful to articulate their complementarity. So that all Thai teachers avoid misunderstanding, it might have been useful for the policy makers to discuss directly this apparent contradiction.

There is contradiction between the two policies. The NEA stipulates that “learners gain free education with quality for at least 12 years”. Even though the policy of providing free education for at least 12 years also was mentioned in the NEP, in some policy statements, learners are requested to be responsible for their cost of learning (NEP 2009-2016, Operational Frames 3.4.3, p. 125). Even though the policymakers added a phase indicating individuals are responsible for costs “especially in higher education”, all learners in every education level are now in practice seen to be responsible for costs.

The NEA was established with a good deal of community consultation, and has been influenced by educational experts who played a main role in producing it. It is a law endorsed by all levels of authority that demands compliance. As already mentioned, drafts of the Act were established by four political parties and the National Committee on Education which takes into account many studies from various fields including educational experts’ opinions. In drafting the NEA, a variety of stakeholders were invited to take part. Demands and requirements from various groups were considered and negotiated. Finally, the Act was promulgated by the King, Bhumibol Adulyadej. Well organized and well written, it was published for free and distributed to all educational organizations, institutes, and other relevant places. Policy statements in the NEA are authoritative and demand compliance, and the NEP which under the Ministry of Education intends to persuade the audience and provides more details and specifies what schools, educational organizations, educators, teachers, and other relevant sectors should do to achieve the Objectives, Goals, Policies, and Operational Frames.

In the literacy conceptualization of these two Thai educational polices, there are four significant attributes that should be highlighted. First, literacy is seen as elite literacy. Kalman (2008) stated that reading and writing seem to be considered as ways to achieve various national goals of any country. However, literacy in Thai educational policy requires more than rudimentary or basic abilities, but at a level to comprehend
and produce written and oral language, which Street (1993) considered as part of what literacy means. Regarding the literacy classification based on constructions of literacy and various characteristics of literacy in the review of educational reform proposals in North America, Britain, and Australia by Lankshear in 1998, literacy in Thai education is elite literacy. The goal of Thai literacy needs to develop a Thai’s general cognitive ability which is ability in thinking critically, creatively, and solving problems to benefit oneself in real life. In particular, “the creative economy” is mentioned along with the “Sufficiency Economy” in the policies which means that the concept of literacy needs higher thinking ability to integrate local wisdom and new knowledge in order to create new innovation to benefit the Thai economy in real situations.

Second, based on the classification of literacy by Lankshear (1998), literacy is seen as foreign language literacy. The priority language in Thai education is Central Thai. To enhance the country’s ability to cooperate with Asian and other countries to benefit higher education level and business, the policies state that Thais need to learn foreign languages. English is the second priority while any Asian country's language and languages of personal interest are ranked as a third priority (in NEP 2009-2016). The reasons to support foreign languages in literacy development are to prepare Thai people to be ready for the Asian Free Trade Area to be established in 2015, emphasizing collaboration and competition in higher education level and trade. While in many Western countries the concept of foreign language literacy is derived from “humanist” values supporting foreign language learning and bilingualism in order to increase second language proficiency and maintain community and minority languages (Lankshear, 1998), in Thailand, foreign language learning is seen as instrumental in developing the Thai economy.

Third, as I have pointed out already, in these Thai educational policies, we see both autonomous and ideological views of literacy. The autonomous view of literacy is the more explicit, especially in the NEP. The ideological view may need more description and discussion. However, policy in Thailand at least points out differences among majority learners and individual groups of diverse learners and literacy, something that is not commonly recognized in many other countries that are full of minorities, various races, and disadvantaged people.
Fourth, literacy is seen as a tool to maintain Thai identity (nationalism). Literacy instruction in Thai educational policies requires the inculcation of desirable attributes called “Thai-ness” in learners. All educational sectors (e.g. parents, families, local communities, religious institutes, private groups of people, and relevant institutes) are urged to collaborate in the inculcation of Thai-ness attributes. Thai-ness attributes include promoting and protecting religious, art, and culture of the nation, local wisdom, Thai wisdom; having knowledge about Thai history, Thai society, and matters relating to politics and democratic system of government under a constitutional monarchy, having knowledge and skills in Thai language including using it properly, having good values, morals, and desirable attributes; and being a good citizen of family, community, the society, and the country; and being proud to be Thai. Thai-ness attributes are mentioned many times in both policies, and show the attempt of policymakers to build national identity in all learners through educational and literacy development. In this sense, literacy is seen as a tool to create and continue a national identity. Kalman (1998) stated that reading and writing skills for the general public can bring not only economic consequences, but also national consequences such as the protection of democracy, moral values, and rational thought. Drance-Francis (2006) argued that literacy is both the mechanics for social change and politics and representation. He believed that there is automatic relationship between print and ideas, between ideas and action, and between national identity and political nationalism. Print which students read helps them to construct the national consciousness (Drance-Francis, 2006).

Do These Policy Statements about Literacy Reproduce or Do They Attempt to Change Historical Inequities in Thai Education?

Thai educational policies aim at providing more chances for all Thai people to be literate through all kinds of education and at reducing the unfairness in education between rich and poor Thais. In some ways the policies has been successful at reducing inequities in education, but in other ways, they might be seen to reproduce educational and economic inequities. The policy of free and compulsory education, for example, directly affects many Thais who might not otherwise have gone to school. However, the policy of allowing educational institutions to raise funds much like businesses, may sabotage efforts to provide quality education for all.
The reproduction of inequity in accessing good quality of education comes from the inconsistency in policy statements that provide special channels for educational institutions to trade their competency and services. Both the NEA and the NEP state that free basic education for at least 12 years is available for all Thais beginning when they are 7 years old. Another policy both in the NEA and the NEP supports state educational institutes which are legal entities to earn interest from their properties (e.g. services, human resources, knowledge properties, and other properties). Even though it is stipulated that the right to search for income need not be inconsistent with the free education policy, unfairness in the quality of education happens. In addition, the NEP (2009-2016) urges Thai learners to take responsibility for their educational costs (because learners gain benefits from such knowledge and skills directly). On top of “free education”, a student needs to pay to gain higher quality, challenge, and various educational activities created by a particular school. When poor students cannot afford these unexpected costs, inequity in gaining a good quality of education in a school is produced.

Since there is great inequality in socioeconomic status in Thailand and most Thai people are poor, Bourdieu's (1997) view of the effect of economic capital differences on educational inequity is relevant to this case. One form of capital, “an index of relative social power” (as cited in Carrington & Luke, 1997, p. 101) which a student brings into particular fields such as school, is “economic capital” which refers to the possession of goods or resources that can be changed into money (Bourdieu, 1977). Student capital in different fields or situations has more or less value and can result in different social positions for their possessors (Bourdieu, 1977; Corson, 1993). Similar to what Carrington & Luke (1997) and Compton-Lilly (2007) found, the low economic capital of poor Thai students cannot be used to get an extra particular academic activity, while some students who have more economic capital get more chances to gain access to advantageous experiences provided by the school. In addition, Bourdieu and Passeron in 1977 (as cited in Marsh, 2006, p. 164) argued that people’s practices resulting from their habitus and capital in specific fields tend to be reproduced and “the arbitrary nature of the cultural values transmitted in the curriculum is internalized by individuals over time and subsequently perceived as natural.” This unfairness tends to be reproduced over time, and finally such inequity will be perceived as normal which all Thai people need to accept.
Inequities in Thai education have historically been a characteristic of education in Thailand. Before the first NEA was promulgated in 1999, each Thai had to pay for all levels of education. The policy of compulsory education for 6 years or 9 years in the past could not be enacted because poor people had no money to pay for such schooling. Instead, their children helped their parents to work to gain more income for the family. The equal possibility to be literate and gain a good quality of education was aimed at in the two policy statements we discuss here, and inequities have been reduced but they have not been able to eradicate all forms of inequities.

The language capital of different Thai citizens and the policy statements relevant to achievement in the Central Thai language also has the possibility to reinforce inequity. The educational policies mention the mobilization of local wisdom, but more explicit discussion of the worth of local languages for learning might be required. Since these languages have always had low status in Thailand, a direct effort may be necessary for convincing teachers, students and parents that learning can be done through the medium of a local language. In policy statements, Central Thai seems to be the priority language that all Thai people need to master. With respect to language alone, it is possible that there are disadvantages for Thais who do not enter school speaking Central Thai. Valuing local wisdom could increase the language capital of most Thais who live in rural areas, who are poor, and who have little education themselves.

Focusing on proper use of, and reading and writing the Central Thai language in Thai educational policy which may reproduce historical inequities in literacy. In a particular situation in school, a student takes along his or her “habitus” and “cultural capital” which he or she has accumulated since birth (Bourdieu, 1974). “Habitus” includes ways of thinking, acting, believing, local language, accent, and other characteristics. “Cultural capital” is the valuation of habitus. Families and communities inculcate various types of habitus in their children that “carries implicit and deeply interiorized values” (Bourdieu, 1974, p.32). A student’s habitus and capital play a significant role in how students are valued in school. In particular, since the Central Thai language is valued by the school coming from policy statements, to help students to master in it, the school has to use the Central Thai language, measure its performance through standardized tests to prove literacy development. Thus, students who have more “Central Thai capital” which suits a school’s preference would gain more advantages in gaining attention and compliments.
from teachers and peers, and opportunities to increase Central Thai ability. In contrast, the dialects of disadvantaged students are not valued much and they are not only useless in the school field, but also act as a barrier for development of literacy (in Thailand’s concept). When this situation happens many times, unequal power comes to be seen as natural. Barton, Hamilton and Ivanić (2000, p. 12) pointed out that “Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relations, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others”. Compton-Lilly (2007) supported this view of dominant literacy. She found that an adult student and her grandson who is from a low-income family may have strengths in reading in particular ways but that expertise is ignored by the school which values dominant and mainstream views of reading. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) mentioned that school literacy practices do not even out class and cultural inequalities but rather make them stronger. This inequity has been reproduced in Thailand for many years.

Being a literate Thai who can read, write, and speak in Central Thai, has been encouraged to strengthen the nation since the revolutionary period of the 1930s. One of the strategies to construct a constitutional democracy that would replace the absolute monarchy was to enable Thai people to become active democratic citizens, and to develop the unity of various ethnic minorities having their own local language, was to promote “Central Thai” as the national language of adult literacy and primary education (Walter, 2002). The government announced that Thai citizens had a duty to read and write in Central Thai language. Inequities in being literate have been produced since then and current policies reproduce those inequities. In particular, between 1940 and 1996, the government continued to find out many methods to assist Thai people in becoming literate. For example, the government set up the Adult Education Division to promote mass literacy, launched a literacy campaign focusing on adult literacy, joined with UNESCO in supporting Thai literacy, expanded compulsory education from four to seven and finally nine years, promoted vocational skills for non-formal education, emphasized the “able to think” philosophy in the learning-teaching process, and also increased the number of literate Thai among the ethnic minorities, Hill Tribe people, Buddhist monks, southern Thai Muslims, and other Thais who are cultural disadvantaged (Suwanpitak, 2008). Up until now, the educational policies still focus on mastering Central Thai language to be a literate Thai.
The balance between the Central Thai and local languages in literacy needs to be focused. There are some good examples from Thailand’s neighbor countries. Singapore and Malaysia’s governments have provided education for learners in their home language, the national language and English (i.e. Mandarin, Bahasa Malay, Tamil) in various ways (Wee, 2003; Gill, 2007). These countries have good performance in business and protecting local values and cultures, and may provide models for Thailand to consider.

Even if Thailand is able to offer opportunities for schools to establish their own local curriculum focusing on local languages, local knowledge and local wisdom, new sorts of inequities may be arising. Students in urban areas might have more chances to gain knowledge and skills in various technologies (i.e. computers and other digital media) or international knowledge. Ways must be found to put resources in the hands of all Thais so that the new opportunities that the new technologies offer may be shared equitably across rural and urban areas. Based on the suggestions mentioned above, policy makers and others who are responsible for establishing educational policies might consider how to convey better their understanding of the social and cultural conceptualization of literacy, and indeed of language and knowledge generally.

**Western Models of Improving Literacy Education for Disadvantaged Learners**

The third question this thesis addresses is do Western models of improving literacy education for minority students hold promise for changing inequities in Thai literacy education? In this section, I consider the suitability of three practices recommended in Western educational literature for Thailand: family and literacy, funds of knowledge, and teacher-parent collaboration.

Though the Western literature that supports these educational practices is separate, all of them in some way urge schools and families to construct closer ties and support one another in the education of children. Thai educational policy supports the joint responsibility of family and school in educational management, and works towards enhancing parent roles in their children’s learning. However, in the NEP, the role of parents in literacy seems to emphasize only young children (from 0 to 5 years old). An example is in Operational Frame 1.1.1 which states the need to “develop and prepare
readiness for all pre-school children at 0-5 years old before entering the primary school...especially, enhancing...to join the responsibility for providing parents, guardian, and people who are preparing to be parents; so that, pre-school children will be well developed and be ready to study and learn in higher educational levels”24 (in NEP 2009-2016, p. 110, my translation), while at higher educational levels, parents are asked to support morals, ethics, good values, and other desirable Thai attributes. The roles of parents and families in literacy and educational development in Thailand is realized and supported in general, but families are seen, however, as secondary to the more central role of school in educational and literacy development. The traditional conceptualization of schools and teachers having more responsibility for educating children than families may impede family participation, and imaginative ways of including families in schools need to be found.

In many ways, supporting families to assist in literacy instruction seems especially relevant in Thailand where in rural areas, collective practices along with strong family relationships, support development of children naturally in their particular community contexts. Ladson-Billings (1996) found that creating instructional contexts that are relevant to students’ cultural identities and community knowledge, enhanced the literacy achievement of African American students. In Thailand, since most parents are disadvantaged (e.g. poor, having no job, being unable to read and write in Central Thai) educational institutes may consider to working with families in order to help them not only to help their child but also help themselves to develop literacy as same time like some family literacy projects in the UK (Pahl and Rowsell, 2005).

Thailand’s educational policy encourages teachers to value local wisdom in communities and support parental involvement in schooling. Thus, teacher-parent collaboration seems more possible than previously. This idea is similar to Moll & colleagues (2005)’s funds of knowledge notion which recognizes the knowledge held by members of disadvantaged communities and the value of that knowledge. Implementing a funds of knowledge perspective would require practical change in Thai education. Instead of

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24 พัฒนาและเตรียมความพร้อมทุกด้านให้เด็กปฐมวัยอายุ 0-5 ปี ทุกคนก่อนเข้าเรียนประถมศึกษา...โดยเฉพาะการส่งเสริมให้...ร่วมรับผิดชอบให้ความรู้แก่ชุมชนผู้ปกครอง และผู้เตรียมตัวเป็นพ่อแม่ เพื่อให้เด็กปฐมวัยมีพัฒนาการตามวัยอย่างมีคุณภาพ และมีความพร้อมในการศึกษาและเรียนรู้ในระดับสูงขึ้น.
blaming poor parents for their deficient intellects, the funds of knowledge view recognizes disadvantaged people as having valuable cultural capital.

**Conclusion**

Thailand, like other countries that have used literacy to strengthen the nation, has established literacy projects as the starting point of development (Kalman, 2008; Pattison, 1982; Street, 1984). Currently, the governments of many wealthy countries pay attention to literacy development to increase their country’s standings on international tests of literacy, and as a barometer showing a nation’s economic success.

For Thailand, literacy development is used as a means to promote nationalism and to survive economically in the globalized world after facing a dramatic economic crisis. Throughout Thai educational policies, the words relevant to literacy development are “local wisdom” derived from the “Sufficiency Economy” which means the economics of having enough (as cited in Fry, 1999; Piboolsravut, 2004) bestowed by the recent King and based on Buddhist instruction. The policy statements contribute to the discourse that attributes of Thai-ness can help Thai people to survive in the economic globalized world.

In wealthy countries, the autonomous model of literacy is used to view literacy development, as shown by the reliance on international tests of literacy levels, and the equation of high levels of literacy with economic growth. However, there are many scholars in developed countries who view literacy ideologically and have urged that governments, policy makers, researchers, and teachers should not ignore the local circumstances of disadvantaged groups, indigenous people, migrants, or people in particular communities, who have race, language, religious, and other social and cultural differences from the mainstream, in order to increase citizens’ literacy performance and decrease the problem of oppression in society, especially in multicultural nations and multilingual societies (Camangain, 2011; Fehring & Nyland, 2012; Freire, 1998; Luke, 2003; Sharp, 2012). However, the autonomous model is still the view of the majority.

Thailand is a poor country, and similar to rich countries has disadvantaged people. In fact, most Thai people outside cities are poor, have little education. These Thais speak local languages and have their unique culture. In my opinion, Thailand has moved
forward to take more consideration in the ideological model of literacy which takes social and cultural differences into account, as we have seen, in Thai educational policies valuing local wisdom of local people in education is seen as a goal. Thailand actually has already signaled in policy to Thai people that the government cares for their specific cultures and values in their knowledge. Enhancing the recognition of the social and cultural differences in each particular context will provide more equity for all Thais.

To decrease the possibility of reproduction of inequities in being literate and gaining good quality of education, these are my suggestions: conceptualizing literacy by focusing less on comparing literacy achievements by test, but determine it based on individual group, local, social and cultural contexts. Local languages for communication in local communities should be valued explicitly along with Central Thai. Other foreign languages, especially English, should available to all as a tool for lifelong learning.

Providing students space for out-of-school literacies might be another good way to increase disadvantaged students’ literacy capital (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). By way of example, children might decide what they write about or bring artifacts from home to write about. Some scholars have suggested that school may create broad coalitions with other groups and organizations to alter “what counts as literacy” and cultural capital in the field (Carrington & Luke, 1997; Hamilton, Barton & Ivanic, 1994). In addition, parents of disadvantaged students need to be encouraged both to develop literacy in their children and to develop their own literacy practices themselves.

**Emerging Inequities**

Regarding the operational practices following from these two Thai educational policies and other recent policies, I would like to point some obstacles and the possibility of emerging inequities as a concern for Thai policy makers and educators. These issues suggest topics for further study.

*Timing:* The national policies have required many changes in Thai education, particularly in establishing jurisdiction for various agencies. For these agencies to attain their maximum efficiency and effectiveness, they will need time to develop procedures and policies that suit their local context. It would be interesting to assess over time how these various agencies are operating at the present time, especially those in local areas.
Lack of experience in educational administration of some organizations: Changing many roles and duties of educational authorities as well as establishing new organizations to administer education based on the concept of local control, may lead to less than perfect educational development. Officials in rural areas in particular may have little previous relevant experience in local control and this may contrast with the qualifications of others in urban areas. This may be a problem that needs attention.

There are many new problems arising from new directions in Thai education. These problems are well known and will require energetic efforts on the part of all concerned to solve. Applying new educational policy is another challenge for Thailand nowadays. Policy statements are important and policy makers who desire change must carefully consider how their message might be best communicated. Asking of new policy, “Does this policy contribute to reducing inequities in Thai education and society?” may be an important question to consider.

I began this thesis with a story about my sister and her children and how an English education was not accessible to them because the fees for such a program were prohibitive. I finish the thesis being hopeful about the many changes in Thailand’s literacy and educational development. I hope as a Thai educator that my study might be able to contribute to improving Thai educational policy in the direction of more equity for all in accessing good quality education.

Coda

In closing, I wish to observe that both educational policies would be more effective if they included more explanation and particularly if they explained more fully how they see collaboration between the Ministry of Education and other sectors. While I am aware that critical analysis of only two educational policies is not enough to represent Thailand’s literacy development and this is an important limitation of my study, I wish to suggest areas in which further explanation would be helpful. First, in both the National Education Act and the National Education Plan, mention is made of formal, informal and non-formal education, but there is little guidance as to how the three systems of education might be articulated with one another. Second, both policies focus more on formal education than adult learners in non-formal and informal education, and discussion of them would have been helpful. Third, while the philosophy of “Sufficient Economy” is mentioned many
times, especially in the National Educational Plan, there is neither description nor statement on how on this philosophy might be put into practice.

Perhaps more importantly, there is no clear statement in either of the policies about how to articulate educational provisions provided by other by other ministries and organizations with one another. For example, the NEA recommends the formation of an “Education Reform Office” (Section 75-77, p. 36-39) to be responsible for educational administration and management (Chapter 5), teachers, faculty staff, and educational personnel (Chapter 7), and resources and investment for education (Chapter 8), but it does not explain how participation and coordination with the educational provisions provided by other ministries and social organizations might be organized. As well, there are sections on educational administration and management by “local administration organizations”, which are under the Ministry of Interior, and by “private sectors” (Chapter 5, Part 2-3, p. 22-24), which the Ministry of Education has roles in coordination and promotion, but there is no section on other ministries and organizations. Therefore, the Ministry of Education needs to specify its roles in collaboration with other sectors.

Limitation

There are many educational policies in particular educational organizations and in the national level that help to move forward literacy development in Thailand such as the Basic Educational Core Curriculum Act, the Non-formal Education Commission Act, the National Economic and Social Development Plan, and other educational policies. In this study, two educational policies may not be enough to represent Thailand literacy development.

Future Research

I see the following as areas of important future research:

1. Study of the consistency and the completeness from the main policies in practice. Such work might be illustrative of how the main policy, strategic plan, action plan, outcome, and assessment are enacted in practice and provide important information for future policy.
2. Study of discourse around literacy communicated through various data sources such as the speech of leaders, newspapers, radio, and other sources. Studying the popular discourse around literacy in Thailand would also help policy makers to understand how to phrase policy most effectively.
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