Qualities of Language Teachers and its Implications to Teacher Orientation Program Development

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ABSTRACT

Anchored on the greater premise that students have preconceived ideas of qualities and characteristics of a good language teacher, this study investigates language teacher preferences of freshmen Thai learners and its implications to the development of teacher orientation programs. For this purpose, diaries of Thai learners enrolled in an intensive English program (IEP) were subjected to content analysis using explorative design to be able to formulate new category systems inductively. The result revealed seven major theoretical constructs that summed up the qualities expected by Thai learners from their language teachers: language proficiency, organization and communication skills, character and personality, pedagogical knowledge, socio-affective skills, IT/ICT skills, and cultural competence. On the other hand, an interview regarding the present teacher orientation program among 3 new teachers for the IEP course revealed that the present system was fairly addressing the concerns of the students with its limited topic, activity, and participation of teaching staff.

Keywords: Language teachers, learner diaries, qualities of teachers, teacher orientation program

INTRODUCTION

Teacher evaluation by students is crucial to any teaching-learning process. Where students highly evaluate their teachers, it reflects effectiveness on the part of the teacher and meaningful learning on the part of the students. There were times, however, where experienced teachers may be evaluated as ineffective, while less experienced educators may be given

an exemplary rating. This means that the evaluation can sometimes suffer from a lack of accuracy and reliability (Lama et al., 2015). In Thailand, language teachers have raised concerns over this issue as it significantly impacts their chances of promotion or renewal of employment contracts. Prior to their evaluation, no signs were suggesting that the students are dissatisfied with their performance. Many teachers who received low ratings claimed that their students had been mostly happy in their classes as evident in their frequent smiles and quite positive reactions in class. Confident with their performance and the good relationship they think they have established with the students, foreign teachers expect high ratings only to be surprised in some instances with an abysmal result.

Thailand is home to thousands of foreign English language teachers. In 2014, the Thai Immigration Bureau recorded 10, 053 English-speaking foreign nationals who filed for a teaching visa in Thailand (Perez-Amurao, 2019). From 2007-2015, the Teacher's Council of Thailand –*Khurusapha* also identified the top ten foreign English-speaking teaching personnel as coming from the Philippines, Great Britain, US, Canada, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, and France, respectively. The diversity of foreign teachers into the country requires a more personal understanding of Thai students' preferences and the qualities they seek from foreign-English teachers. Focusing on the characteristics valued by the learners because learners have

ingrained ideas of what good teachers are and these criteria are what they look for when evaluating teachers (Stronge, 2002). Additionally, the student's race or ethnicity significantly correlates to the student's rating of their teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012). These elements, together with several other factors, create the learner's distinctive "criteria" of what quality teaching and quality teacher is. It is in this context that this study was conceptualized.

a) What qualities do Thai learners look for in ESL/EFL teachers in Thailand?

b) How is the teacher orientation program conducted among language teachers?

According to Garrison (2005), teacher orientation program should include topics that will address the needs of the intended teachers. For instance, education in health care organization whose goal is to empower faculty members to be advocates for students in the areas of cultural competence, victimization, and professional development, should prioritize in their orientation program training for cultural competency, sexual victimization and student behaviors (Nelson et al., 2016). Also, a nurse orientation program may include topics such as communicating with individuals from diverse cultures, the use of social media in the workplace, health literacy, teaching strategies, and diverse activities (Green, 2016). This will provide teachers an immediate connection to the organization's aims and it will help build their confidence knowing that the organization is ready to

support and equip them with the necessary skills they need to realize their potential as new members of the organization. In this study, therefore, the researchers have identified the target teachers as the language teachers who are responsible for teaching the intensive English program (IEP) – a ten-week preparatory course for students who want to study a degree program in English. It is conducted during the semestral break (March-May) in many international colleges and universities in Thailand.

Teacher Characteristics

Teacher characteristics have long been noted to influence and affect the teaching-learning process; hence, it is not surprising that it has been the subject of many investigations in the field of education. In 2006, Park and Lee identified three major categories for effective English teachers as perceived by students and teachers. These qualities include English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. These major categories include constructs as follows: reading, speaking, grammar skills for English proficiency; preparing the lesson well, providing interesting activities and teaching tailored to students' proficiency levels for pedagogical knowledge; arousing students' motivation and self-confidence for socio-affective skills.

In 2008, two more studies were conducted on the same subject. The first was the work by Nikitina and Furuoka (2008) which focused on the use of metaphors to elicit the characteristics of language teachers as perceived by Malaysian learners.

In their study, three major concepts of language teacher emerged: teacher as caretaker, teacher as giver, and teacher as essential elements were three most recurring themes in the students' descriptions of the language teacher. The second was the study on effective language teachers from the perspective of Turkish students by Arikan et al. (2008) which showed three principal aspects of language teachers which were held vital by the students -personal qualities, professional qualities, and pedagogical skills. Personal qualities essential to the students include being friendly, young, enthusiastic, creative, humorous, and fair. For professional qualities, Turkish students favor fluent Turkish English teachers and one who incorporates games and the formal teaching of the English language. For pedagogical qualities, effective grammar teaching is highly valued together with correct pronunciation and the ability to create a positive learning environment.

Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) explored the desirable characteristics of effective English language teachers as might be perceived by teachers and learners. The result showed that teachers put more weight on the pedagogical knowledge of teachers as more desirable qualities while students gave more importance to the personal characteristics of teachers. This study concluded that teachers had more informed preferences while the students were more realistic about their responses. Additionally, Wichadee (2010) added new dimensions of looking into the qualities of a good language teacher. Her study comprised

four categories of teacher characteristics that included English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, organization and communication skills, and socio-affective skills. In this study, organization and communication skills included constructs as preparing the lesson well, organized presentation, stress important points, use easy language, speak clearly, vary speaking speed and tone of voice, use of non-verbal behavior to get the attention of the learners. The socio-affective skills, on the other hand, included qualities as having an interest in students, a good sense of humor, able to alleviate students' anxiety, listens to students, approachable, friendly, helpful fair, and patient.

Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011) identified qualities of successful language teachers which were reflective of previous studies with new additional constructs that included: following syllabus tightly, sticking to administrative rules and regulations and teaching techniques, well -dressed, knowledgeable, more sociable, assign homework, teaching English in English, alleviating students' anxiety, provide learners with more opportunities to use English via meaningful tasks and activities and try to arouse the learners' motivation for learning English.

Mahmoud and Thabet (2013) explored the perception of good language teachers among Yemeni students. Their top ten characteristics were classified under four main categories: 1) subject knowledge (English proficiency), 2) pedagogical knowledge and skills, 3) management, organization and communication, and 4) socio-affective skills.

The most recent study by Zamani and Ahangari (2016) concluded that the most important points for language teachers were: the ability to develop proper relationships with students; build students' confidence; ability to maintain discipline in the classroom, ability to create an entertaining atmosphere to carry out the class activities; listen to students' points of view and opinions and let them express themselves; promote communicative language learning through activities and discussion; ability to make courses interesting and being smart to deviate the attention of students from everything else to the topic.

Studies conducted on language teacher characteristics from 2006 until 2016 showed a constantly evolving notion of what good language teachers should be. Overall, the qualities of a good language teacher can be classified into personal characteristics, English proficiency skills, pedagogical knowledge, socio-affective skills and management, organization, and communication skills.

Teacher Orientation Program

Teacher orientation is an integral aspect of a teacher in-service education program (Morin & Ashton, 2004). However, some hiring institutions have paid less attention to it due to time constraints, lack of financial resources, and limited staff to facilitate the program. If and when a teacher orientation program is organized, it is too shallow in terms of coverage, lacking in some areas, poorly organized, no or unknown objectives, and unhelpful in addressing the needs of

new faculty teachers (Garrison, 2005). Often, the topics only include introducing the institution to the new teachers primarily on the aspect of organizational structure and providing basic information regarding the school premises. The activities are also less engaging and do not reinforce to hold the participants' attention. Often, it includes presentations on the educational framework, course management, process of assessments and evaluation, school rules and policies as well as teacher standards (Hand, 2008). Diaz et al. (2009) also noted that faculty orientation depended mostly on non-faculty professionals as main speakers. Administrators and non-teaching staff often take a major role in the program and serve as primary resource speakers.

METHODS

To answer problem 1, a qualitative content analysis research method was employed in this study. The objective was to systematically analyze texts for its content and the context of communication (Mayring, 2004). This means taking into consideration the learners, the content of their diaries, and the Thai socio-cultural background. The use of content analysis in research studies has many advantages (Babin & Zikmund, 2016; Kyngäs, 2019). First, it allows for a systematic description of research phenomena. Second, it provides meaningful characterizations, interpretations, and expressive descriptions of people's experiences and perspectives in the context of their personal life settings. Last, it can be applied to various types of documents such as diaries, speeches, interview transcripts.

Using convenient sampling, the researchers identified 2 sections during the IEP to be part of the study. Each section had 45 students; thus, it was expected that a total of 90 students will yield 90 diaries. However, upon initial inspection, some diaries were inadequate to be included in the study. For instance, some diaries were too short; others were difficult to comprehend because the writer lacked English skills, and; 2 students did not have written output from the assigned topics. As such, only 77 incoming freshmen students with their respective diaries became part of the study. Before the researchers had selected the participants, a request letter to conduct the study was made and approved by the dean of the faculty. The letters were then given to the teachers responsible for the two sections identified for the study. The letters were read to both classes prior to writing the first essay to inform students that their essays would be part of the study. Further to this, the students were given the option to inform their respective teachers if they were unwilling to participate in the study. For ethical considerations, all the information and personal details from the student participants in this study were treated with the utmost confidentiality.

In this study, the data was obtained from learner diary entries. Daily diary writing was an essential requirement among the incoming freshmen students during the IEP. Each day, a topic was given for the students to write in English. These topics were part of the syllabus prepared for the course. The written output from two topics, "My favorite

English teacher" and "Learning English," were utilized for the study as part of the research instrument. Three major stages of coding schemes were conducted. These crucial procedures include initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding (Sbaraini et al., 2011). Initial or open coding involves identifying statements that describe the nature, characteristics, and attributes of a language teacher. Focused or axial coding, on the other hand, is recognizing keywords or key phrases that sums-up the idea expressed within the statements. Lastly, selective coding - keywords and phrases were grouped, assigning theoretical constructs that the entire group of data represents (Table 1). Additionally, the explorative design was utilized to be able to formulate new category systems inductively out of the written diaries of the students (Mayring, 2014).

For problem 2, an informal interview was conducted among 3 new faculty members for IEP 2019. The interview revolved mainly on their experiences during the 2019 IEP orientation program for new lecturers. In the interview, open-ended questions were asked from the lecturers to elicit information about the following: the activities that they have participated in; the topics discussed during the event; and the organizers, speakers or staff and their respective roles during the orientation program. Probing questions were also used to explore the lecturers' feelings during the orientation.

RESULTS

Qualities of Language Teachers

Of the 77 diaries analyzed for this study, 207 relevant statements were identified for the initial coding. The analysis resulted in seven major theoretical constructs that sum up the qualities preferred by IEP learners from their language teachers. In most of these constructs, narrative descriptions revealed the state of learners as they seeked for more nurturing, friendly, and affectionate teachers and their apparent low self-esteem in the use of the target language.

English Proficiency. The students had highlighted two of the four major language skills (speaking, and writing) as essential components of a language teacher's proficiency. In speaking, for instance, "unclear pronunciation" and "strong accent" tended to impede their understanding while the ability to explain theoretical and practical underpinnings of assigned writing tasks motivated the students. They also emphasized grammar competence as they surmised that sufficient knowledge in

Table 1
Coding scheme process

Initial Coding (Statements from Student's Diary)	Focused Coding	Theoretical Coding
If a teacher is friendly, students will not be scared to tell him his ideas or opinions.	friendly	personality

English grammar was a key factor to succeed and an expert teacher would significantly improve their chance of acquiring the same skill. They also expressed the importance of the teacher's handwriting. As Thai learners were not taught and exposed to cursive writing, they struggled in decoding the words written by their teachers.

> *Accent is hard for me. Sometimes I know the word but I hear different word.*
> **Extract 1**

> *I like teachers that explain grammar very well. I think my writing will improve if I understand the grammar.*
> **Extract 2**

> *The teacher wrote many things in my diary but I do not understand it because the writing is cursive.*
> **Extract 3**

Organization and Communication Skills. Students feel "stressed" learning with English as the medium of instruction; hence, the need for language teachers to be "systematic". Creating a system enables students to focus and prepare for their lessons adequately. The students feel overwhelmed by the workload each semester and a systematic teacher will be valuable to guide them. Also, they find language teachers who can "teach clearly" and "explain the lessons well" effective and highly motivating. They feel more confident to participate in class activities and commit to the accomplishment of assigned classroom tasks. On the contrary, classes that are too difficult discourage them to submit their output on time. The "use of relevant examples" also appeared crucial among students. For them, the simplicity of lectures that were grounded on local ideas and information would make the lessons interesting and fun to learn. Lastly, the students cited "non-verbal means to convey meaning" as valuable. Students had lauded teachers who went to the extent of using hand gestures, facial expressions, and bodily movements or acting to explain topics to their students.

> *There is so much homework in English class. But my English teacher guides us well so we can finish them all on time.*
> **Extract 4**

> *My teacher speaks of the universe but I know only the earth. I do not understand her examples because I did not go to other countries. I know only Thailand.*
> **Extract 5**

> *We do mime game with my favorite teacher so we can learn English words.*
> **Extract 6**

Character and Personality. Students in the intensive program were impressed by the diversity of teachers in their school. While foreigners are a common sight in Thailand, the students remained distant and reluctant whenever they met foreigners. Consequently, students looked for "humorous" more than strict disciplinarian teachers. Humorous teachers lighten up the tension in the learning environment. Initial

coding under this category yielded keywords as "fun," "comedy," "jokes," "enjoyable," and "lively." They also prefered teachers who were "understanding," "kind," and "good-hearted" as these characteristics provided a feeling of comfort and a sense of security while the students adjusted to their new environment away from their homes. "Flexibility" and "patience" were also mentioned as critical for when the students committed mistakes or fail to grasp the lessons in class. This was evident in the students' anticipation of problems and challenges even at the very start of the intensive program. Finally, "enthusiastic," "passionate," and "responsible" teachers had been noted to develop a sense of confidence among the learners.

In my class, we have many funny jokes and short comedy videos to watch. It is good because our class is very long.
Extract 7

I like my English teacher. I think she is very kind. She does not get angry if we do not know the answer.
Extract 8

In English class, the teacher is very happy all the time. She smiles to everyone and she likes English very much. I like her a lot.
Extract 9

Pedagogical Knowledge. Included in the pedagogical knowledge are six focused responses. First, students identified "effective methods and strategies in teaching" which accordingly can be obtained if teachers attend seminars and conferences on a regular basis to be informed of salient issues and current practices in the teaching profession. Students have also expressed their worries when classes are conducted mostly through lecture type and teacher-centered approach where students are mainly expected to listen. While listening is relatively one skill they hope to acquire, so do the other language skills. They consider sufficient practice and exposure in the four macro-skills beneficial. Also, teachers must have a "clear purpose" in teaching and "specific goals" for their lesson. Students gave an example for when they were in elementary school where the goals of the lesson were outlined on the board. The practice enabled them to focus their attention according to the objectives of the lesson. Another concern was "giving clear directions" in written examinations, performance tests, or simply instructing students in classroom tasks because they felt anxious when they could not follow the class and they cannot answer the questions correctly. In their experience, some teachers tend to be too verbose causing low performing students to rely heavily on their peers for further explanations and guidance. Lastly, teachers need "management skills to conduct classroom activities effectively." Students claim that many teachers have great ideas for classroom activities but fall short in implementing their ideas effectively. Reasons for such incidents vary from big classroom sizes to misbehaving students including lack of training and confidence on the part of the teacher.

I learned English by watching Youtube. It is good and easy. Maybe teacher can use same style in class to teach English.
Extract 10

We do a lot of listening in class. But I like to practice speaking more because I need it for my job in the future.
Extract 11

I think the exam in English is very hard. The instruction is long and many difficult words.
Extract 12

Last time, we had role play. The class was very noisy so I did not enjoy it.
Extract 13

Socio-affective Skills. Majority of the students regard a "friendly" teacher as key to developing a calm and stress-free learning environment. It is this quality that gives some students the courage to express their feelings and be open with their opinions and ideas in class. The next responses described the teacher on a more personal level. Teachers who "take care" of the students on and off-campus, or "help" them and "extend support" whenever needed were crucial qualities learners look for in a language teacher. As an incoming freshmen students, they also hoped for teachers who would not only focus only on the content of the lessons but also showed concern over the well-being of their students; hence, the students' preference for teachers who also "give advice" or "counsels" their students in difficult and troubled times in their lives. When students made mistakes or poor choices, the preferred teacher was someone who was "compassionate" and "empathetic."

I enjoyed learning English because foreign teachers are friendly. I like talking to them in English.
Extract 14

It is very hard to learn in English but my favorite teacher advised that I continue and not give up on my studies.
Extract 15

I did not like English at first but I got inspired when my English teacher helped me to write my speech for a contest.
Extract 16

IT/ICT Skills. In the respondents' compositions, language teaching has been viewed as effective when teachers are able to utilize interesting and meaningful IT/ICT applications in class. This was apparent in the students' narrative description of their favorite teacher showing videos in class, using social media for project submissions, online voice recording for pronunciation classes, and even online assessment of work output.

I hope teacher can give work online because I usually use computer.
Extract 17

My favorite teacher use online quiz for vocabulary. I like it very much. I learned many words and I can remember them more.
Extract 18

Cultural Competence. Having been enrolled in an international college, the respondents were highly sensitive to cultural diversity and differences. Initially, they found foreigners confusing and obviously different from them. But as time goes by, they realized that differences were not always hindrances to understanding each other, but a way to celebrate uniqueness amidst diversity. Hence, they held the idea that an "open-minded" teacher was very important in classroom discussions where they had to share their personal experiences as Thai learners. Subsequently, they favored teachers who had experience teaching Thai students or someone who had stayed in their country for a certain period of time. It was their belief that teachers with this background were "familiar with Thai culture" and would understand them better than someone new in the country. They also prefered "teachers who can speak Thai" to some degree. They believed that if a teacher could translate some aspects of the lesson for them, they would have less difficulty understanding the lessons in class. Similarly, the teacher would be able to understand them in cases where they could not express their ideas in the target language.

> *Several teachers in my college know many things about Thailand. They stayed here long time so they use many stories that we know very well.*
> **Extract 19**

> *My English is not good. I am scared because I do not understand many things. If the teacher can explain in Thai, I can understand.*
> **Extract 20**

> *Sometimes I use Thai words when I speak in class because I do not know the English word. Before, I am worried if I do that. But now, it is ok because my teacher can understand some Thai words.*
> **Extract 21**

Present Orientation Program

The institution where this study was conducted holds teacher orientation programs for every new lecturer. The orientation program is held in a designated room for one day from 8:00 am to 5 pm. From the informal interview conducted among 3 new faculty members for IEP 2019, they described their experience in the orientation program as follows:

All three lecturers recalled being welcomed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs to the institution. She was assisted by the Head of the Human Resource Office. When asked about the topic they could remember from the morning session, they mentioned the following topics: an introduction of the school administrators and staff, and explanation of the institution's academic policies, and rules and regulations to be observed by lecturers as member of the institution. To the new lecturers, the morning session was something they were familiar with having attended faculty orientation programs in their previous schools back in their respective countries.

Another activity worth mentioning was listening to a talk by a representative from the Human Resource Office. Although the talk was brief, they felt more excited about the topics as it concerned mostly practical information regarding working in Thailand. They remembered the talk about Thai culture, practical guide to living in Thailand, visa matters, and applying for work permit in Thailand. As all three teachers were new in Thailand, they found the topics from this session very useful and informative.

The last activity the lecturers experienced during the orientation program was a brief lecture by a representative from the IT Department. All three lecturers did not expect this part of the orientation program. They said this is the first time they experienced a teacher's orientation program with IT personnel as main speaker. In their respective countries, they often experience this kind of talk in a special IT seminar or workshop. They recalled the bulk of the presentation was on the use and features of the school's Management Information System (MIS) and how to accomplish Thai Qualification Framework 3 (TQF) forms online. For them, this part of the orientation was the most challenging not only because it requires the use of computer but also because of the new concepts they needed to learn in the process. Overall, the three lecturers found the event well organized but somewhat tedious due to the long talks and the lack of more engaging activities, especially in the morning session.

DISCUSSIONS

Results of the analysis are similar to previous studies conducted on language teachers where English proficiency, organization and communication skills, character and personality, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills are qualities valued by IEP students (Arikan et al., 2008; Mahmoud & Thabet, 2013; Nikitina & Furuoka, 2008; Park & Lee, 2006; Wichadee, 2010; Zamani & Ahangari, 2016). This implies that teachers are no longer just a provider of knowledge but they are also regarded as a friend, a nurturer, entertainers, storytellers, and joke tellers (Farrell, 2011; Torghabeh et al., 2009). In these new roles, they are expected to listen, empathize, and give advice to the students on matters of academic or personal concerns at the same time lighten up the tension in the learning environment with their sense of humor. Aside from new roles, there are greater expectations from the language teachers. The pedagogical factors imply that language teachers need to continually upgrade themselves by attending seminars and conferences on a regular basis to be informed of salient issues and current practices in the teaching profession. This response is indicative of the students' higher consciousness and level of awareness with reference to the constantly evolving and changing educational milieu. Additionally, they are expected to be proficient in the English language. This corroborates the findings of Wiriyachitra (2002) which considered teacher's English skills as a key factor in English teaching. In this study, the students found English proficiency of

the language teacher a prime concern for they strongly believed that the teacher's ability correlated to effective teaching and better learning. Some teachers are aware of this reality and they sometimes feel less competent in their teaching skills (Yilmaz, 2011). To this date, existing literature has still to confirm the direct relationship between effective teaching and language proficiency (Van Canh & Renandya, 2017). The study further introduced cultural competence and IT/ICT skills as new qualities preferred by the learners. In earlier studies, the IT/ICT skill was subsumed under the pedagogical skills; however, as a great percentage of the student values this skill, a separate categorization is deemed necessary for this study. Furthermore, the relevance of technology in language teaching is continuously growing and becoming a significant part of the contemporary language teaching for purposes of fun, student motivation, collaboration, and classroom explorations (Meighan, 2019; Poláková & Klímová, 2019; Silviyanti & Yusuf, 2015). On the other hand, cultural competence is vital in addressing the growing diversity in education. Teachers will need to work with students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Cultural competence, therefore, will enhance communication and help in building a good relationship in the classroom despite differences in value systems and beliefs (Colombo, 2007; He, 2013; Keengwe, 2010).

As regards to the faculty orientation program, the result showed that the current program was fairly addressing the concerns of the students. First, the topics are limited and barely sufficient to equip teachers with the necessary skills expected by the IEP learners. As experienced by the new teachers, there were only three primary sections of the present orientation program: the general orientation, the HR orientation, and the IT orientation. This implies a need for developing a new program that includes topics that are highly valued by IEP learners such as: English language proficiency, classroom management and organization, and language teaching methods and approaches. Although IT Department had initiated steps to introduce the use of MIS and online TQF forms to new teachers, this is not enough because the students are more focused on the use of technology in the classroom rather than for documentation purposes. Similarly, the HR Office can provide training not just on culture but other subjects such as personality development, managing organizational communication, and socio-affective strategies for teachers in Thailand. Second, the activities in the present orientation program focus on formal talks and presentations. The teachers mentioned mostly of "talks", "speech", or "lecture" as activities they had in the orientation program. In this regard, institutions can provide more practical, interactive, and engaging activities for the new lecturers. For instance, instead of an IT/ICT lecture, the IT Department may hold a hands-on IT/ICT training in the computer laboratory. Lastly, the teachers identify three active departments in the conduct of the orientation program: the administration as represented by the Vice President on

Academic Affairs, the HR Office staff, and the IT department staff. As there are more topics expected to be explored during the orientation program, there is a need to involve the active participation of the different departments in the institution such as the library section, the research office, including the language teaching staff. The different offices can also find ways to collaborate and work hand-in-hand in training new teachers. For instance, the IT Department and HR Department may use digital media to build an understanding of Thai beliefs and practices. Most importantly, language course coordinators should take a lead role to impart their knowledge and skills in teaching English to Thai learners. Although new teachers may have had extensive experience from teaching in other countries, Thailand has its own unique challenges and the best way to navigate the journey is to learn from senior lecturers that have learned to adjust their teaching styles according to the Thai context.

CONCLUSION

Thai learners in this study have identified the qualities and characteristics of language teachers they admire and would most likely to study with. The study revealed seven major theoretical constructs that sum up the qualities expected by Thai learners from their language teachers. These constructs include language proficiency, organization and communication skills, character and personality, pedagogical knowledge, socio-affective skills, IT/ICT skills, and cultural competence. In most

of these constructs, narrative descriptions revealed the state of learners as they seeked for more nurturing, friendly, and affectionate teachers. Moreover, they had apparent low self-esteem in the use of the target language which was revealed through their narrative descriptions and discussions during the focus group. The current faculty orientation program is limited in terms of scope and topics as well as a variety of activities. Additionally, organizers include mostly administrators and non-teaching staff.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the above qualities expected of Thai learners from language teachers and the current state of the teacher orientation program, a proposed orientation program was developed. It included: two more major sections (language teaching and campus tour); more relevant topics; more engaging activities; and a lot of collaborative work from the different departments in the institution. Each of the programs may be conducted for 2-3 hours for a one-day orientation program to a whole-day event for a week-long orientation program.

a) *General Orientation program* to be conducted by school administrators to welcome new lecturers. Topics to cover include the organizational orientation that includes the introduction of the school administrators and staff, school mission and vision, academic policies, rules, and regulations of the institution including job orientation and expectations.

b) *Human Resource Office Orientation* will address concerns on character and personality, socio-affective skills, and cultural competence. Topics to be covered may include talks on personality development; film showing and brief talks on topics related to cultures such as morality and ethics, cultural competence, Thai culture, practical guide to living in Thailand, visa matters and other pertinent documentation required for working in Thailand (collaboration with IT Department); and socio-affective training through community engagement. It may also last for several hours to days depending on the duration of the orientation planned.

c) *Information Technology Orientation* would be conducted by the Information Technology Department (IT) to train teachers to enhance their IT/ICT skills. Lecturers will be going to the computer laboratory for hands-on practice in using MIS and accomplishing TQF3 online followed by a workshop on the use of IT/ICT tools such as SmartBoard or Smart Classroom and online sources and other teaching technologies for IEP teachers (collaboration with language teacher coordinators).

d) *Language Teaching Orientation* may be conducted by language program course coordinators to respond to the issues on organization and communication skills, English proficiency, and pedagogical knowledge. Specifically, this orientation is aimed at sharing experiences by senior lecturers on topics such as materials for teaching the course, effective strategies, and methods of teaching including appropriate disciplinary actions for misbehaving learners.

e) *Campus tour* is intended to familiarize teachers with the school grounds and facilities available within the school campus. This is also to develop the new teacher's socio-affective skills as they interact for the first time with their fellow lecturers and the Thai staff during the tour.

This study is not without its limitations. First, the sample size is not sufficient to make a generalization of the qualities of language teachers according to Thai learners. It also included a single teacher orientation program from one educational institution in Thailand. Future studies should include a greater number of respondents and observation of teacher orientation programs in different schools in Thailand. Second, it utilized only content analysis of learner diaries. Researches may consider triangulation to further enrich the discussion and analysis of future studies. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study reports essential preliminary data regarding the qualities of language teachers and their impact on teacher orientation program development.

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