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# Teaching change in response to Thai tertiary English language teaching reform

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**Teaching change in response to  
Thai tertiary English language teaching reform**

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of  
the requirements for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

from

University of Wollongong

by

Rattana Cheewakaroon

BA (English), MBA (International), MEd. (TEFL)

Faculty of Education

**2011**

## **Thesis Certification**

I, Rattana Cheewakaroon, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, Australia, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledge. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

Rattana Cheewakaroon

14 March 2011

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between research, policy and practice in the process of Thai education reform. Bernstein's model of the pedagogic device was employed to map the degree of consistency between national policy formulation, the curriculum design process at the institutional level and teaching practice at the classroom level. In Bernstein's terms, the main research question of this study is to explore the nature of the relationship between the knowledge production field, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field in Thai tertiary English language teaching. More specifically, this study is concerned with curriculum reform in the Thai EFL context to explore four contributing research questions: 1.) How is research theorising from the production field taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents? 2.) How do the educational institutions interpret and recontextualise the official policy documents? 3. How do teachers interpret and implement the official policy documents into their teaching practice? 4. To what extent are theory and research, government policies, and institutional curricula at various levels consistent with each other and with classroom practice?

A case study approach was employed to investigate a public university and two private universities. Qualitative research involving document analysis, interviews and classroom observation was conducted to provide methodological triangulation. The data consisted of the policy documents, including official policy documents and institutional curricula (including course syllabuses and lesson plans). Interviews were conducted with participants involved in policy designing at various levels: policy-makers, institutional executives and administrators, and teachers. Moreover, classroom practice was observed to find out how teachers interpret the policy within their teaching practice and what factors have an influence on the implementation.

The findings of this study reveal that in the Thai educational reform process, the many layers of interpretation tend to create ambiguity and hence resistance to change. The data also indicates that inconsistency between the policy and practice is caused by many factors, such as the lack of clear and detailed guidelines in the national policy and the

institutional curricula, the enduring focus on grammar knowledge rather than communicative practice, the difficulties of applying the new teaching methods, students' low competency in English, the lack of understanding of the underlying theories and principles, the difficulties in identifying and responding to individual learners' needs, the nature and expectations of Thai students and lack of consistency between the recommended teaching approach and exam-based assessment.

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## **Lists of Abbreviations**

BEC 2001 = The Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2544 (A.D. 2001)

NEA 1999 = The National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (A.D.1999)

OBEC = The Office of the Basic Education Commission

OEC = The Office of the Education Council

OHC = The Office of the Higher Education Commission

OPSE = The Office of the Permanent Secretary for Education

OVE = The Office of the Vocational Education Commission

SLA = Second Language Acquisition

TOEFL = The Test of English as a Foreign Language

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Understanding the meaning of change is essential for successful reform (Bernstein 1996; 2000; Fullan 2001; 2006). This study is designed to investigate the nature of change in relation to Thai educational reform in the area of the teaching of English in Thai tertiary institutions. In particular, it will examine the relationship between changes in policy and classroom practice during the process of reform and the degree to which there is consistency between policy and practice. Its purpose is to find out how official policy documents are formulated and interpreted at the national level and also at the institutional level, and how these policies are implemented by teachers. A major reform in Thai policy has been the introduction of learner-centred pedagogies as a principal teaching strategy, together with communicative language teaching. A main focus of this investigation is to observe how such initiatives are transformed into the institutional curriculum and how teachers of English are attempting to implement this change in tertiary English classrooms in Thailand.

In this chapter, the background to the study is described. Then, the purpose of the study and research questions are discussed. This introductory chapter also provides the context for the study through a description of policy reform in the Thai education system with particular attention to the history of policy reform, the history of English language teaching in Thailand, the Thailand education system and the rationale and goals of the educational reform. This overview includes government policy on education and the national policy formulation and interpretation process. Then, reform of teacher education is described, including the current status of teachers and the programs for teacher education in Thailand. In reviewing the institutional context, higher education reform, which is the focus of the study, is explained. At the implementation level, pedagogic reform in Thailand is then discussed. This is followed

by the significance of the study and an overview of the subsequent chapters. Overall, this chapter provides information which allows a deeper understanding of how Thailand promotes and fosters educational development through educational reform.

## **1.2 Background to the study**

The current Thai educational reform has been promoted by the government under the National Education Act (NEA) of B.E. 2542 (1999). This reform aims to develop Thailand into a 'knowledge-based society'. Learner-centred pedagogies are the focus of this reform along with other contemporary notions such as communicative language teaching. This is a contentious area, as these theories and principles are in opposition to the traditional teaching method or the teacher-centred approach. Nonkukhetkhong, Baldauf and Moni (2006) note that certain specific personal, social and contextual constraints in Thai educational systems have resulted in the entrenchment of traditional teaching methods and a lack of familiarity with effective learner-centred practices on the part of Thai university instructors. Because of the many constraints in applying the new teaching methods, these teachers persist in employing traditional teaching approaches that do not support effective policy implementation (Chorrojprasert 2005; Nonkukhetkhong et al. 2006; McDonough and Chaikitmongkol 2007). Constraints identified include inadequacies in teacher support and professional learning environments (Nonkukhetkhong et al. 2006; Mackenzie 2005) which would appear to render the policy goals unrealistic and impossible to achieve (Nonkukhetkhong et al. 2006).

Through case studies, this thesis investigates how the government reform policy is interpreted and implemented at a public university and two private universities. The study examines how instructors of English in these tertiary institutions respond to the reform agenda. In order to better understand the implementation of the policy, official policy documents are analysed to identify potential challenges posed in the implementation process. Institutional policy documents and curricula (including the course syllabuses and lesson plans) are also analysed. These analyses are supplemented by interviews with participants involved in policy design at various levels, namely policy-makers, institutional administrators and teachers. Classroom practice is also

observed with a view to examining consistencies between policy and actual classroom implementation.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

This study facilitates a deeper understanding of the Thai educational reform process. Power (2002) states that due to globalization in this '*knowledge age*', in many countries around the world the education system is considered to be the engine for economic development. In response to this, there has been continuous change and significant reform in the education systems of many countries (Power 2002). These educational reforms are more likely to achieve their objectives if they are based on related research and if research and evaluation studies are part of the reform process. Accordingly, issues of policy and practice must be grounded in educational research (Power 2002). Similarly, Asghar, Iran-Nejad and Pearson (1999, cited in Power, 2002) assert that studies of the relationships between educational research, policy and practice need to be developed. Power (1981) postulates that in educational research there is an imbalance caused by the separation of theory from practice. Maclean (2002) notes that much research into policy and practice issues is based on traditional research from Western countries. There is still inadequate research into policy and practice in Asia-Pacific countries (Maclean 2002), such as Thailand. In order to be able to respond to educational reform more effectively, more research on policy and practice that reflects the diverse cultural, social, economic and political contexts of Asia-Pacific countries must be undertaken (Power 2002). This study addresses this deficiency by researching the formulation of educational policy in Thailand and considering the implications of its implementation.

In terms of policy formulation, there have been several studies critical of the Thai National Education Act 1999 (Priebjariyawat 1999). However, it is noted that this is merely criticism of the management aspects without concern for substance of the documents and their implications for practice. To address this omission, this study analyses two Thai official policy documents – the National Education Act of B.E. 2542

(A.D. 1999) and the Basic Education Curriculum of B.E. 2544 (A.D. 2001)<sup>1</sup> together with institutional and classroom responses with a view to identifying the policy recommendations, how these are taken up in language teaching and those factors which have an influence on policy formulation and implementation process. Although recently there has been some research regarding perceptions of learner-centred pedagogy in Thai EFL classrooms, there is little research focusing on teacher learning and practices in Thailand in response to Thai policy. Accordingly, this study also emphasises the fundamental level at which the learner-centred pedagogy mandated by the policy is implemented in the classroom.

Ultimately, the study sheds light on how theories and principles are recontextualised as curriculum, which are further interpreted by teachers in classroom sites. At both stages, the theories and principles are reshaped in a context marked by specific cultural and social practices.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are framed within the context of Bernstein's pedagogic device, which can be usefully applied to educational settings because it seeks to explain the relationship between the field of knowledge production (concerned with research and theory building), the recontextualising field (concerned with the interpretation of knowledge to form the basis of policy), and the reproduction field (concerned with implementing the recontextualised knowledge in the classroom).

To attain the main objective of investigating policy and practice with regard to new innovations, such as learner-centred pedagogies in Thai EFL classrooms, the following research questions are proposed:

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as the National Act and the National Curriculum respectively.

**Main question:**

What is the nature of the relationship between the knowledge production field, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field in the Thai tertiary English language teaching?

**Contributing questions:**

1. How is research theorising from the production field taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents?
2. How do the educational institutions interpret and recontextualise the official policy documents?
3. How do teachers interpret and implement the official policy documents into their teaching practice?
4. To what extent are theory and research, government policies, and institutional curricula at various levels consistent with each other and with classroom practice?

**1.5 Educational reform in Thailand**

Bernstein's theory (1975; 1990; 2000) is employed as a framework to capture the process of change, as well as consistencies and inconsistencies at each level: policy formulation at the national level; curriculum design process at the institutional level; and teaching practice at the grassroots level. Furthermore, the study examines how the official policy documents draw on pedagogical research and interpret theory.

In this section, the Thai educational reform is explained with reference to Bernstein's pedagogic device: the knowledge production field, including research and theories of teaching and learning; the official recontextualising field, including the state government and its bureaucracies; the pedagogic recontextualising field, including the institutions that are responsible for teacher education and resources for teacher education; and the reproduction field, including classroom practice. Using Bernstein's framework, Thai educational reform can be seen as involving policy reform at the national level, higher education reform at the institutional level and learning reform at the teacher level. This is discussed in greater detail below. Taking the official

recontextualising field as the core of the change process, the Thai education system is explained in terms of the history of educational policy reform and history of English language teaching in Thailand. The Thai education system is then described. Current reforms are also discussed in terms of government policy in education and the national policy formulation and interpretation of the National Education Act 1999 for educational reform. In relation to the pedagogic recontextualising field, reforms in teacher learning in Thailand are then discussed. Furthermore, the reform of higher education in its institutional contexts is discussed. Finally, pedagogic reform in the reproduction field – with learner-centredness as the main focus – is canvassed.

### **1.5.1 Policy reform**

#### **1.5.1.1 History of policy reform in the Thai education system**

Traditionally, temples and royal institutions provided education in Thailand. As teachers, the monks taught basic education to boys at the temples. Weaving, cooking and sewing were taught to girls by their mothers and relatives. The court and governments in the provinces were the places in which children of the royal family and the nobility were educated (MOENet Thailand Service 1998; Walter 2002; Wech-O-sotsakda 2008).

The four main periods of educational reforms include:

1. From 1868-1910, during the reign of King Rama V, Thailand's government system was transformed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. Influenced by the British system, the modernization of the Thai education system was inaugurated with the 1898 Education Proclamation. There were two streams in this system: academic and vocational. Education was regarded as the crucial mechanism for developing the country so compulsory education was introduced.
2. In 1973, the principles of equity, unity and freedom of opinion were encouraged in educational reforms.
3. In the early and mid 1990s, due to globalization, educational reforms were directed towards economic change.

4. Due to the Asian economic crisis and the new constitution of 1997, the Thai government enforced various strategies and embedded educational policies in order to promote economic recovery.  
(Fry 2002; Wech-O-sotsakda 2008; Wasi 1998).

Due to its global significance, English language teaching was also developed through the Thai policy reform. Since English language teaching is the focus of this study, its history is discussed in the following section.

### **1.5.1.2 History of English language teaching in Thailand**

The significance of the English language for international communication has long been recognised in Thailand (Luanganggoon 2001). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there was competition for trade and power among the Dutch, English and French in Thailand. Because of the difficulty in communicating with the local Thai people, a seminary was established by French missionaries at Ayudhaya (the previous capital of Thailand in the reign of King Narai). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most English teachers in Thailand were foreign missionaries who were native English speakers. Their workplaces were denominational schools in which English language was taught at the primary level and sometimes at the pre-school level (Luanganggoon 2001).

In 1885, to avoid British colonial rule and be independent of Western imperial control, the Bowring Treaty, with the focus on industry and commerce, was signed voluntarily (Rujikietgumjorn 2000; Luanganggoon 2001). Some Western ways also had to be adopted. A wider and more formal education system was developed. Around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some general (Western style) education was used in the monasteries. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, English and French became the dominant second or foreign languages (Tinpan-nga 1997; Luanganggoon 2001).

In 1921, with an emphasis on the development of a national identity, compulsory education up to grade four was proposed. In 1937, state schools started teaching the English language officially. At that time, seven years of elementary schooling and five years of secondary schooling were introduced. English was viewed as significant as

any other subject and it was taught for all upper elementary and compulsory for all secondary students in both public and private schools (Luanganggoon 2001).

In 1978, there was the inclusion of English in the curriculum as an elective subject for the last two years of elementary school. English as a foreign language was initially taught to fifth grade students at the average age of ten since they believed that Thai students should be provided with the opportunity to master their native language before being taught to deal with a foreign language. As a consequence of a policy decision by the national government in 1996, English is currently taught to students at all grade levels. However, there are some exceptions for schools in some rural areas. English is now considered to be a main mechanism for developing human resources in the Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001) and hence is compulsory to be taught for higher English competence of students. English is also necessary for graduates to gain a better job. Its increasing significance imposes more pressure on educational institutions to improve English teaching (Luanganggoon 2001).

Given these policy reforms, the education system has had to respond and change. These changes are canvassed in the following section.

### **1.5.1.3 The Education System**

As stated by the Office of the Education Council (OEC) (2006), the change of the education system is one way of achieving the main purpose of Thai educational reform. Accordingly, it needs to be discussed here. Under the current Thai education system, learners are offered various types and methods of learning depending on their economic, social and cultural backgrounds. The educational approaches comprise formal, non-formal and informal programs which can be offered by educational institutions and learning centres managed by individuals, families, community or private groups, local administration organisations, professional bodies, religious institutions, welfare institutes and other social institutions (Office of the Education Council 2006).

The Thai education system has three forms:

1) Formal education based on compulsory curricula serves the majority of people. This is also consistent with Western educational patterns which include primary or

elementary school, secondary school, and university levels. Formal education services are primarily provided to students in the school system and can be categorised into basic and higher education.

2) Non-formal education is an alternative for those outside the school system, such as infants, pre-school children, the school-age population who have missed out on formal schooling, and the over-school-age population. The form of this education is normally school programs and short courses relevant to daily life problems and issues.

3) Informal education is a lifelong process in which individuals develop attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experiences. This entails formal, and non-formal education and any principles of learning utilizing divergent knowledge resources such as conversations, books, newspapers, television, radio and the Internet. In other words, informal education encourages learning with freedom through individuals, society, environment, the media and any other sources of knowledge.

Through this three-part system, credits can be accumulated and transferred so as to accredit learning not only from non-formal or informal education approaches, but also from vocational training or from work experience (Office of the Education Council 2006).

The transfer of credits is beneficial in that it can contribute to increasing levels of literacy. According to the Office of the Education Council (2008), there is a low level of literacy in Thailand (although it has been increasing rapidly in recent years). This appears to be the main barrier to encourage lifelong learning in Thailand, since literacy is considered as the main tool for developing lifelong learning in the education system (Office of the Education Council 2008). With regard to English, due to insufficient learning resources and less effective teaching in the rural areas, most students have a low level of English proficiency (Rappa and Wee 2006). Aksornkool (1981, p.6, cited in Rappa and Wee) adds that “*the level of English proficiency of entering university students is remarkably low*” (p.120). As Rappa and Wee (2006) point out regarding English language instruction in the heavily populated rural areas of Thailand, there are some difficulties in accessing educational media and resources, along with poorly qualified English teachers. The transfer of credits can help solve this problem since it

aims to encourage lifelong learning which is also one of the main goals of the Thai educational reform. These goals are discussed in the next section.

#### **1.5.1.4 The goal of current Thai educational reform**

According to the Office of the Education Council (2006), quality education for all, which is a main goal of educational reform in Thailand, is emphasised to develop Thai citizens. As a vision for Thai people in the year 2000, Kaewdang (1999), a senior politician of the Office of the Education Council, announces that the aim of education is to develop the Thai people in all aspects: *“physical and mental health, intellect, knowledge, morality, integrity, and desirable way of life so as to be able to live in harmony with other people”* (Kaewdang 1999, p.2). Kaewdang (1999) adds that the knowledge suited to learners’ needs and aptitudes must be encouraged in their learning. Students are also expected to learn happily and achieve a balanced integration of intelligence and integrity. Kaewdang (1999) also notes that to be intelligent, learners must acknowledge Thai wisdom together with modern or ‘Western’ knowledge. In line with the world of competition, learners must know how to search for information, how to think critically and how to find solutions. According to the Office of the Education Council (2006), to reach this goal, cooperation among all stakeholders and encouragement from government policy on education are regarded as the primary success factors in achieving this educational reform. Therefore, new education policies were required to be developed corresponding to the goals of educational reform (Office of the Education Council 2006).

The Ministry of Education announces 2006 as ‘The Year of Teaching-Learning Reform’ to enable Thailand to be transformed into a ‘lifelong learning’ society, and to increase its citizens’ potential in analytical thinking and self-learning accompanied by high moral values. In response to these targets, many activities have been conducted, such as increased research into learning innovation and pedagogic models, support for special populations of learners such as ‘talented’ learners and youth, models for instillation of moral and ethical values, incorporation of research into the learning process, and research and development studies of learner-centred models (Office of the Education Council 2006). These activities are being integrated into Thailand’s present educational provision, as specified in the government policy on education.

#### **1.5.1.4.1 Government policy on education**

As declared in the 15-year National Education Plan (2002 to 2016), the main focus is the incorporation of all quality-of-life aspects, comprising comprehensive and balanced human development, and the forming of a society based on morality, wisdom, and learning (Office of the Education Council 2004). Educational reform has been adopted by the Thai Government aiming to develop a knowledge-based society as a means to develop a knowledge-based economy. The purpose of reform activities is to provide citizens with equal access to lifelong education and training to increase production and income. Through this process, the principle promoted by the government is that “Education Builds the Nation, Empowers the Individual, and Generates Empowerment” (Office of the Education Council 2006, p.18).

Government education policy as specified in the Office of the Education Council (2006) is referred to as ‘Policy on Quality Human and Societal Development Building a Lifelong Learning Society’. In accordance with the four-year Bureaucratic Administration Plan (2005 to 2008), the enhancement of the country’s human resources is focused on such aspects as knowledge, morality and ethics, including readiness to follow the measures expected in order to lead to the nation’s development and competitiveness. To achieve the expected outcomes, various strategic goals and implementation strategies have been generated. The first strategic goal includes human development with an emphasis on knowledge, happiness, health, a loving family, a pleasant environment, and a peaceful and caring society. Secondly, Thailand is expected to be transformed into a knowledge-based society by having learners at the centre of learning and emphasising human value, capabilities, competitiveness, morality and ethics (Office of the Education Council 2006).

According to the Office of the Education Council (2006), as one of its strategies, the reform of education and the teaching and learning process has to be accelerated with the creation of an environment conducive to formal, non-formal, and informal education. The development and extension of access to lifelong learning opportunities have to be enhanced through a variety of systems and methods. Finally, systematic participation through networking among the public sector, private sector, and educational institutions needs to be developed in order to expedite the creation and development of a workforce

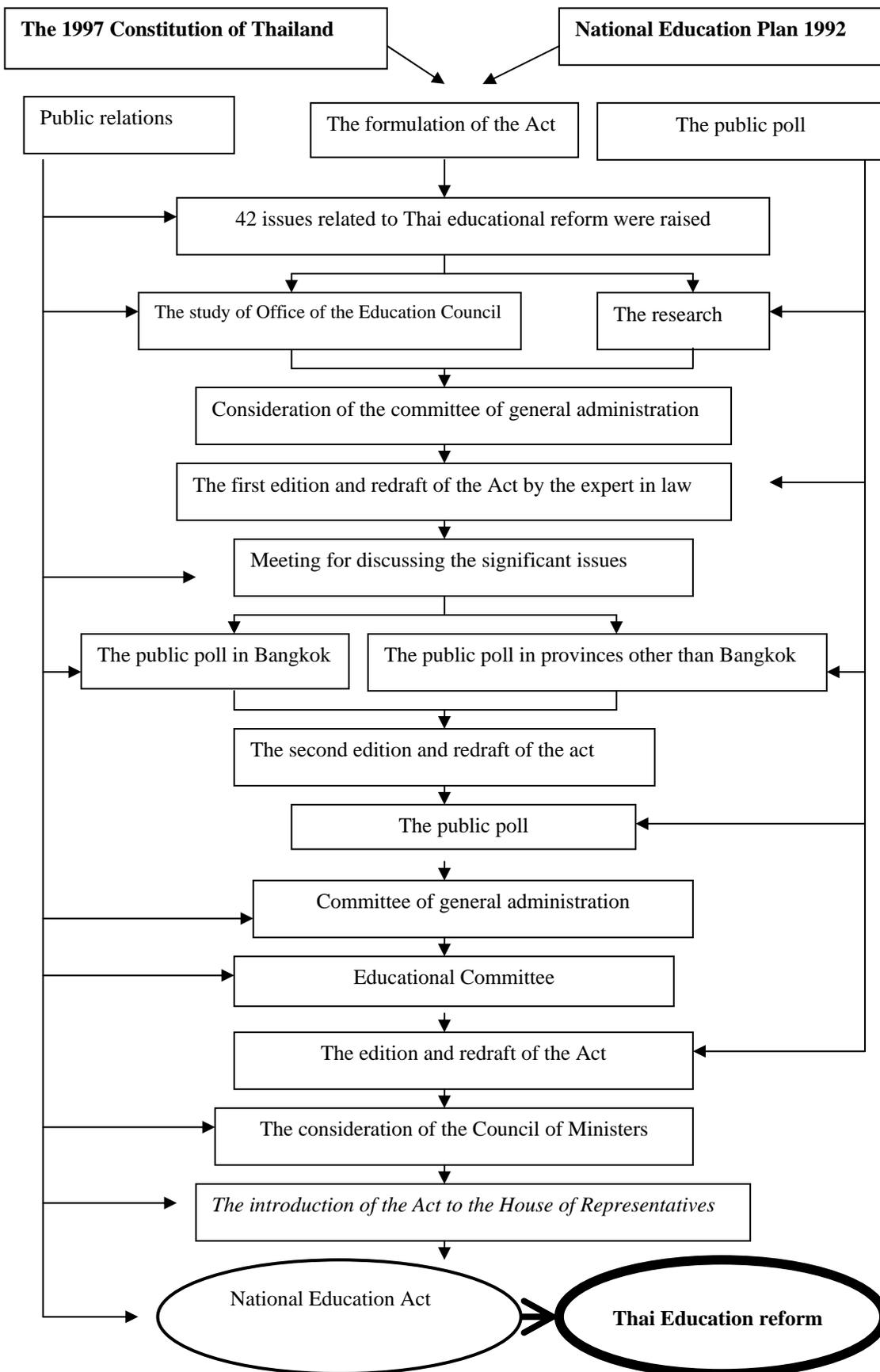
commensurate with the country's requirements, and to heighten the country's competitiveness (Office of the Education Council 2006). With regard to the main goals of Thai educational reform, Kaewdang (1999) also asserts that to enable the Thai government to revolutionize education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the components of the reform should involve teaching-learning reform, revitalization of Thai wisdom, empowerment of teachers and decentralisation. To serve this education reform, the National Education Act 1999 was formulated and disseminated to implementation level (Office of the Education Council 2006; Kaewdang 1999)

In the next section, the policy formulation of the National Education Act 1999 and the policy interpretation at the national level are explained.

#### **1.5.1.4.2 Policy formulation and interpretation at the national level**

##### *Formulating the National Education Act 1999*

The National Education Act 1999 – formulated for the purpose of educational reform – is discussed in this section. Towards this educational reform effort, the state government has attempted to encourage more co-operative relationships among the stakeholders in the education system. There is evidence of such participation by various stakeholders in the policy formulation of the Act. As demonstrated in Figure 1.1, the initial stage of formulation was in the hands of one group of authorities and staff, namely the group of top management or ministers, the heads of state departments and educators who dealt directly with the policy formulation process. This group had high positions and thereby more power in decision-making. Then, the draft of the National Act was subject to consultation in the form of group discussion and oral feedback and then returned to the group of authorities for approval. Therefore, it appears there have been opportunities for stakeholders to participate in policy formulation via a public poll (Poonakaseam 1999).



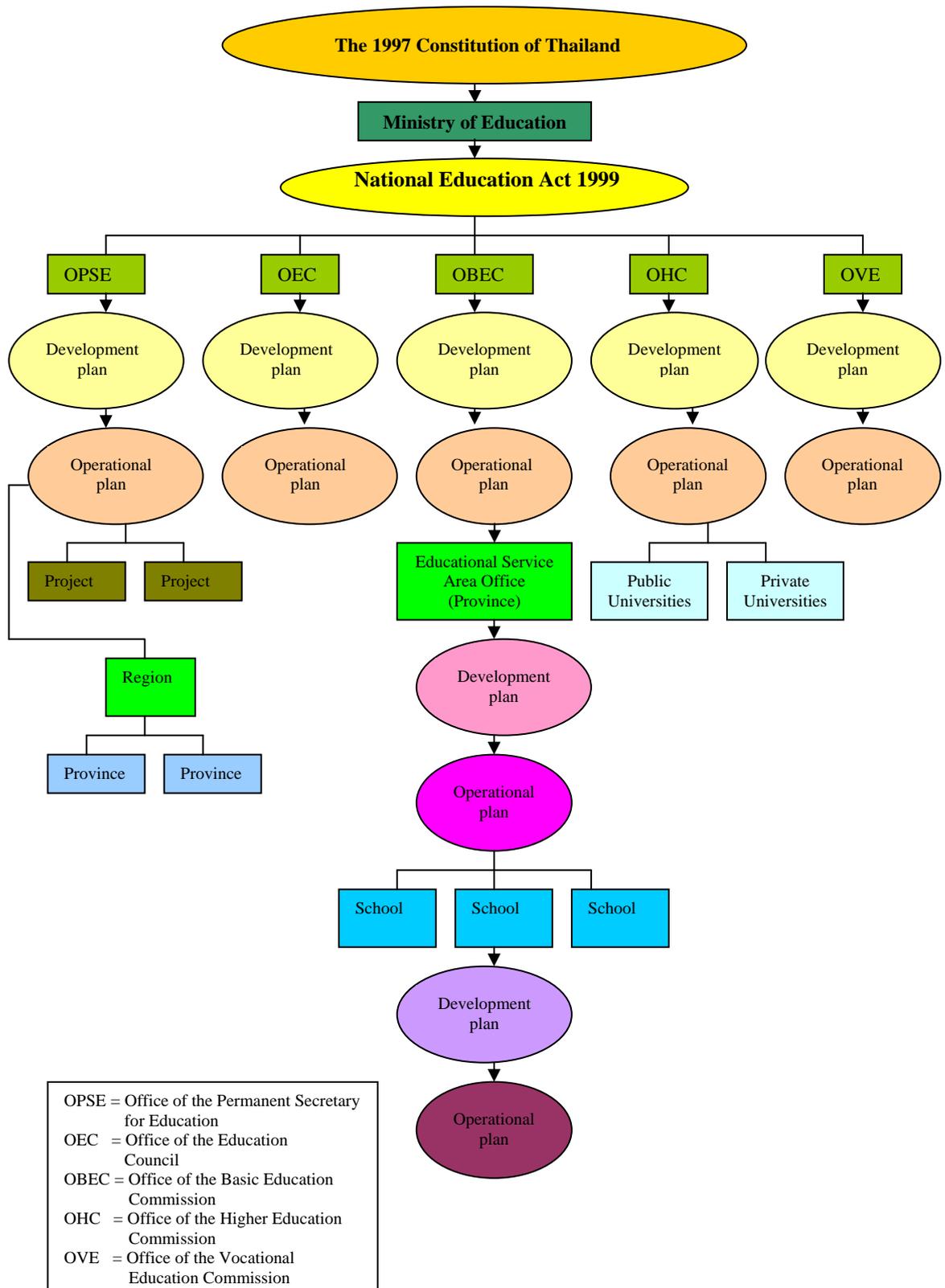
**Figure 1.1** - The process in drafting National Education Act (Adapted from Poonakaseam 1999, p.55)

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the Constitution has an influence on the policy formulation process with respect to a number of aspects. The Thai constitution is also implicated in the formulation of language policy. It is specified in the Thai constitution that individuals are encouraged to take part in legislative change ([www.moe.ac.th](http://www.moe.ac.th)). Poonnakaseam (1999) also noted in her study that according to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997, the provision and protection of a person's rights and liberties are encouraged by involving them in the process of change.

There is also evidence that in such a complicated process of formulating the National Act, a number of sources were used (Poonnakaseam 1999). Research was collected and conducted by the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC) and distributed to stakeholders in various forms. This research focuses primarily on administration and management work at the state level and institutional level, rather than theories of and research into teaching and learning. For example, research about general concepts concerning the education system is included, such as, *'Educational Duty and Responsibility of Individuals'*, *'Academic Freedom'*, *'Fundamental Educational Policy'* and *'Educational System'* ([www.onec.go.th](http://www.onec.go.th)). There is also research related to the education system management at all levels, namely, *'Basic Education'*, *'Higher Education'*, *'Special Education for the Handicapped'* and *'Education for the Under Privileged'* ([www.onec.go.th](http://www.onec.go.th)). Research related to the role of some educational organisations and stakeholders is also included, such as *'Family and Education'* and *'Community and Education'* ([www.onec.go.th](http://www.onec.go.th)). There is little research related to the teaching and learning process among that collected for circulation to the stakeholders.

With such recognition of the significance of change in both management and teaching pedagogies, the public and stakeholders at all levels were encouraged to participate in the policy formulation process of the National Act through public seminars and workshops (Kirtikara 2001).

In the next section, how the national policies are disseminated and interpreted in the Thai Education system, especially at the national level is discussed.



**Figure 1.2:** The policy formulation and implementation at the national level (Adapted from [www.moe.ac.th](http://www.moe.ac.th); interview data from Educator B of Organisation C)

*Interpreting the National Education Act 1999 at the national level*

As illustrated in Figure 1.2, the interpretation of the National Act is undertaken by all five main offices of the Ministry of Education. These offices create their own development plans and operational plans accordingly. The offices comprise: the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Education (OPSE) which is responsible for education in general, and both formal and informal education for the purpose of lifelong learning; the Office of the Education Council (OEC) which is responsible for formulating educational policies and plans in general; the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) which is responsible for the Basic Education from Kindergarten to High school levels; the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHC) which is responsible for the High Education levels, both public and private universities; and the Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVE) which is responsible for the vocational education levels ([www.moe.ac.th](http://www.moe.ac.th)).

As illustrated in Figure 1.2, basic development plans of each office are designed for a specific period: 5 years. This five-year development plan is then transformed into an annual plan for each institution. The annual plan of the five-year development plan includes many projects. Based on the same official policy documents, namely the Constitution and the National Act, the policies and plans created by these offices are supposed to be consistent with each other. Each of the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) and the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Education (OPSE) has its own educational region. Educational regions of the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Education (OPSE) cover schools in many provinces. The Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) deals directly with schools by directing the operational plans to the educational region in each province, which looks after its own schools in its own provinces. Each educational region has its own operational plan. The executives of each school take the operational plan of the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) as the basis for creating their own development plan and operational plan ([www.moe.ac.th](http://www.moe.ac.th)) (see Figure 1.2). This indicates that the dissemination of policy in the Thai education system is very complex.

Such complicated policy formulation and interpretation at the national level are discussed further in Chapter five and Chapter seven in terms of the roles and relations

among stakeholders and the government officials. Its impacts on the implementation level are also investigated. The next section explains how teacher development is encouraged.

#### **1.5.1.4.3 Reform of Teacher Education**

In terms of the development of *teachers and education personnel*, programs focusing on a combination of assessment of the teacher's professional competency and learner achievement have been instituted. These aim to enable teachers to improve their teaching and learning activities commensurate with curriculum standards. Recommendations have been made that there should be a reduction in teachers' workload with greater distribution of the academic budget to teachers for professional development. Also, there are a number of public and private teacher institutions for the development of teachers and education personnel, such as seventeen faculties of education in government universities formerly under the supervision of Ministry of University Affairs and thirty five faculties of education in private universities, colleges and institutes (Chanbanchong 2010). There is an attempt to develop a new teacher education curriculum covering continuation courses that aim to extend the qualifications of in-service teachers (Office of the Education Council 2006). It is also reported in the Office of the Education Council (2006) that concrete solutions to problems derived from a lack of basic education teachers should be provided, together with the relief of problems arising from teacher indebtedness.

The main aim of developing teachers in relation to teaching and learning practices is to encourage a change from teacher-centred to learner-centred teaching approaches. To achieve this, teachers are advised to play the role of facilitator and encourage students to develop active learning with freedom in thought, action, and problem solving within the scope of the ethical and moral values of the society (Office of the Education Council 2006; Fry 2002).

As described in the Office of the Education Council (2006), in line with the present reform measures, teachers are supported to attend training courses locally and abroad. Designed particularly for teachers and education personnel, a number of training initiatives are being conducted. Firstly, there is the development of the five-year Pre-

service Education Program requiring a five-year bachelor's degree with four years of coursework and another year for teaching practice. Graduates with a bachelor's degree in a field other than education have to take a one-year graduate certificate program in education. Secondly, there is training encouragement for teachers of English in various forms. For example, around Bht.300 million (around 9 million Australian Dollar) was allocated by the Ministry of Education between 2005 and 2006 to support about 20 projects with an emphasis on upgrading the English language proficiency of in-service teachers. These projects are intended to engage some 15,000 primary and secondary school English teachers in 80 educational service areas in 30 provinces. There is also an 'Intensive Course for ERIC 2006' which provides 180 qualified English teachers with training courses (Office of the Education Council 2006). These projects are operated by the Ministry of Education who works in cooperation with international organisations, such as the British Council and the Regional English Language Office of the United States Embassy, including the AUA Language Center and ERIC Centres. For training activities, indicators of achievement of the national standards for English language proficiency of teachers cover linguistic competence, communicative competence, knowledge of foreign language teaching theories and approaches, capabilities of managing learning commensurate with the syllabus, and continuing professional development. Thirdly, there are training activities to upgrade professional standards of teachers and education personnel. Its targets are the completion of a first round of training in 2006 and the implementation of continuing rounds in 2007 and 2008. Fourthly, in accordance with the National Education Act 1999, in-service teachers and school directors are required to have a teaching licence with a bachelor's degree in education. By the year 2007, it was expected that all in-service teachers gain a bachelor's degree in education. In addition, teachers with a bachelor's degree in fields other than teaching are supported to take part in in-service programs resulting in a postgraduate certificate or a master's degree in teaching. Moreover, educational institution administrators must have licences requiring at least a bachelor's degree or a postgraduate certificate in educational administration. A program for administrators to study for this certificate at their workplace was also offered during the period 2003 to 2007. Finally, administrators of educational institutions are supported to further their study towards a master's degree in the administrative field (Office of the Education Council 2006; Pillay 2002a).

Teachers and other education personnel have been supported in a range of ways. For example, there has been the establishment of an independent organisation for teacher development. To attract qualified teachers, special salary scales have been proposed with a four-year (2005-2008) strategic plan to solve the problem of teacher indebtedness. There are many training courses for the development of school principals and administrators. Recognition and rewards are also provided to outstanding teachers (Office of the Education Council 2006; Pillay 2002a).

However, teacher development in Thailand, according to Pillay (2002a), is marred by a number of problems. First, stakeholders at all levels do not have adequate essential knowledge and skills about new learning and teaching methods. Secondly, the recent teacher training and staff development proposed by many providers lacks accreditation. Thirdly, there is a lack of local experts to distribute the new knowledge and skills amongst the teachers. In addition, an appropriate alternative model for inservice training is not available. The teacher registration and/or teacher incentive framework are also insufficient. Finally, there is insufficient planning for national implementation and specification of support and commitment by the government (Pillay 2002a). The following section discusses higher education responses to the reform imperatives.

### **1.5.2 Higher education reform**

In relation to the institutional contexts, higher education reform, which is the focus of this study, is described in this section. The Office of the Higher Education Commission has responsibilities for overseeing the standards and quality of all higher education institutions in Thailand. Plans formulated for higher education institutions have to be consistent with the government's policies, National Economic Social Development Plan and National Education Plan ([www.moe.ac.th](http://www.moe.ac.th)). According to the Ninth Higher Education Plan (2002-2006), every higher education institution has to implement four major strategies: (1) generating the capacity of higher education institutions to meet quality at an international level on the basis of local Thai wisdom; (2) promoting and giving opportunities for sustainability of academic strengths in higher education; (3) establishing a network of higher education institutions to encourage stability in communities and localities; and (4) reformulating organisations of higher education

administration and management for quality and efficiency (Office of the Higher Education Commission 2007).

Currently, there are 163 higher education institutions in Thailand. These 163 higher education institutions can be divided into two categories. There are 96 institutions called 'Public Higher Education' and 67 institutions called 'Private Higher Education' (Sinthunava 2009). The primary goal of every higher education institution is "to produce Thai citizens who are of high quality both academically and professionally, equipped with knowledge and skills needed for national development" (Office of the Higher Education Commission 2007, p.9).

Higher education institutions are situated throughout the country. Only two provinces do not have higher education institutions. Nevertheless, there is still a great demand for higher education. Accordingly, increasing the role of the private sector in higher education and the effective use of information technology are required. Under the National Education Act 1999, participation of city-based and province-based organisations and even municipalities in higher education provision is specified. Financial resources for higher education can be provided by these city or province-based organisations and local government, together with direct funding from the central government (Kirtikara 2001).

The reform of higher education puts an emphasis on developing the structure and administrative system, and strengthening the mechanisms and administrative procedures for increasing the quality of education as well as improving teaching and learning research systems. This aims to enable universities to produce highly-qualified graduates commensurate with the demands of social, economic and natural competitiveness, and to act as centres for creating knowledge necessary for the shift to a knowledge-based economy and society. Finally, the competencies of higher education faculty staff and personnel are intended to be strengthened through support for continuing study and research activities (Office of the Education Council 2006).

At the end of the 1980s, the higher education reform was initiated when the first 15-year Higher Education Plan (1990 to 2004) was generated by the Ministry of University Affairs. There are many imperatives for higher education reform. Firstly, the higher

education system has been confronted with intrinsic difficulties and crises from an inefficient management structure with the limited management adaptability of the civil service which is responsible for the public higher education system. There was a 'brain drain' of quality manpower from public universities and the public sectors during the economic boom of the late 1980s and until the economic collapse of 1997. The ineffective use of resources is derived from uncoordinated performance, duplication of works and outdated programs impacting on reform efforts (Kirtikara 2001). There is also the low level of research and development work in Thai universities and hence the non-existence of meaningful technology transfer and flexibility in Thai industries. This is also caused by insufficient university-industry education co-operation. There are problems of equity and access to higher education. Forty-four percent of higher education institutions are located in and around Bangkok. Seventy percent of higher education students come from families with higher economic background. Rural and regional students are found to be uncompetitive because of the lower quality of regional schooling. To solve these problems, 30 new campuses were established throughout the country at the end of the economic boom with the wider use of IT in teaching and learning to solve the problem of the lack of quality lectures and to encourage equity in learning around the country (Kirtikara 2001). Information technology is thus viewed as a tool for developing education, particularly higher education, human development and lifelong education.

Kirtikara (2001) points out that to compound the difficulties, Thailand has faced a limitation of national resources for education because of the economic recession and hence declining budgets and public investment in higher education. This limitation coincides with the new policy for nine-year compulsory education and 12-year free basic education as a result of the National Education Act 1999, resulting in the greater demand for higher education. Therefore, the education and higher education systems with intrinsic weaknesses must find effective strategies to cope with this pressure. To encourage successful reform, the National Education Act 1999 has involved a reformulation of the higher education administrative system through the combining of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of University Affairs and the National Education Commission (NEC), and the establishment of the Ministry of Education, Religions and Culture. A national agency for educational quality assurance has been established for creating national educational standards and performing systematic

implementation of quality assessment. In addition, there has been the change in the direction of higher education towards societal cooperation, student-centred learning and lifelong learning (Kirtikara 2001) which is discussed in the next section as the pedagogic reform.

### **1.5.3 Pedagogic reform in Thailand**

It is specified by the National Education Act 1999 that there must be changes in the teaching and learning process in Thai schools and educational institutions. The key reform in relation to pedagogy has been the mandating of a ‘learner-centred approach’. Both Chamornmarn (1997) and Dechakup and Khammanee (1997) observe that the concept of a learner-centred approach has been in existence in Thailand for a long time. Despite this, however, teacher-centred pedagogy remains firmly entrenched as the dominant teaching practice of Thai teachers (Chorrojprasert 2005).

With the focus on learners as the centre of learning, section 22 of the National Education Act asserts that:

*... Education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development, and are regarded as being most important. The teaching learning process shall aim at enabling the learners to develop themselves at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality ...*

Kaewdang (1999) points out that the above statement assumes that each individual possesses learning potential and is recognised as the centre of teaching-learning activities. As described by the Office of the Education Council (2006), in adopting a learner-centred teaching approach, the educational institutions and agencies concerned have to design activities consistent with the learners’ interests and aptitudes, and with the recognition of individual differences. This contrasts with traditional practices in the Thai education system, by which students are not encouraged to display their capacities. In such traditions, the teacher is viewed as the centre of the learning process. Most teachers employ a traditional teaching style with everything happening around the teacher’s desk and the blackboard in the classroom. The ‘chalk and talk’ style relies merely on lectures and rote memorisation with limited subjects defined in the curricula and without available choices. As a result, the development of creativity and

individuality among students has been discouraged at all levels (Kaewdaeng 1999). The reform process has recommended that the education system become more diverse and flexible. The Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC) (2000) proposed the following for applying learner-centred teaching approach in the learning process: individual learners should be considered in organising teaching and learning activities; learners should be encouraged to learn from actual situations which will be useful in their real life; and learners should be enhanced to learn effectively from first-hand experiences with teachers as guides (Office of the National Education Commission 2000).

Attempts are being made to bring together the Western notion of learner-centred pedagogy and Thai traditional values. Kaewdang (1999) points out that Buddhism, which is the main religion in Thailand, is a religion of human development which focuses on the learning of each individual. Such an agenda is being promoted by many programs for educational reform. For example, supported by the Office of the National Education Commission, the research and development center for learning reform has been set up in schools, faculties of education, and other educational institutes working on the research and development needed for learning reform. The Office of the National Education Commission expects that the provision of this kind of research centre will be greatly expanded. The 'Learning Reform Fund' has also been established in order to support these research centres to support teachers to change their teaching method from 'teacher-centred' to 'student-centred' (Kaewdang 1999).

Concurrent with the emphasis on the learner, the reforms encourage a number of other pedagogical changes. Training must be provided to students to enable them to cope with various real-life situations and to solve problems in different environments. To enable learners to fully benefit from their studies, authentic situations must be assigned to them with practical work. Productive habits, such as reading, must also be cultivated in order to encourage their 'continuous thirst' for knowledge. Instructors are required to develop a balanced integration of subject matter, values and desirable attributes, such as integrity. Instructors are urged to create an ambience conducive to students' learning and to encourage students to become well rounded persons and to be able to make use of research as part of the learning process. Emphasis is placed on the role of new

instructional media and other sources of knowledge (Office of the Education Council 1999).

In summary, the reform process will require significant change on the part of teachers and students as they manage the shift from teacher-centred pedagogy to a learner-centred approach.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

As noted, Thailand is in a stage of considerable educational change and hence deeper insights into the process of change are required. As mentioned above, there is still little research on both policy and practice for educational reform in Thailand. This study addresses this need by evaluating and monitoring that change through the investigation of Thai policy reform and practice.

As indicated above, this thesis is organised around Bernstein's pedagogic device, with chapters dealing with the field of knowledge production, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field. This aims to provide an overview of Thai educational reform at all levels and the relationship between these levels. The first chapter deals with the background of the thesis, including the significant theme of change: policy reform, higher education reform and pedagogic reform. In Chapter two, perspectives on change are discussed in terms of the nature and meanings of educational change, and some features and factors influencing change. Chapter two also presents Bernstein's pedagogic device which is used as the main theoretical framework in this study. In addition, the chapter introduces the notions of classification and framing as tools to help describe educational reform in the Thai education system. Chapter three reviews the literature on change and reform, especially in Thailand, and research using the Bernsteinian framework. It also presents studies of pedagogic change. Chapter four deals with the research design, including the rationale for the selection of case studies as the main research methodology for this study. In Chapter five, the field of knowledge production is presented through an historical overview of language teaching research. The recontextualisation field is also discussed in Chapter five through the analysis of the relations between language teaching theories and principles and those specified in

the official policy documents. Chapter five also discusses the policy formulation and interpretation process at the state level. Then, the pedagogic recontextualisation field represented by the institutions that are responsible for teacher education is discussed. The discussion of the pedagogic recontextualising field, which is a secondary focus of this study, aims to examine how class instructors learn and develop their teaching practice. Chapter six describes the reproduction field and presents an analysis of three universities and three class instructors as case studies. Chapter seven discusses the findings of the study, its significance and contribution, and makes recommendations for further research.

Overall, this study aims to facilitate deeper insights into the Thai educational reform or change. As the main theoretical framework Bernstein's model of pedagogic device is applied to capture the overview of the above-mentioned process of change.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter surveyed Thai educational change with respect to the teaching of English in higher education and concluded that shifts in curriculum and pedagogy are necessary if the intentions of the reform are to be met. This chapter outlines the theoretical framework employed in this thesis to understand policy change, institutional responses and subsequent pressure on practice in Thailand. Since relationships and communicative practices between stakeholders in the process of change need to be strengthened for successful reform (Bernstein 1975; 1990; 2000; Fullan 2001; 2006), the nature of the relationships between people involved in the policy formulation and implementation is discussed in this study by using Bernstein's pedagogic device together with other theorists' perspectives on change. Accordingly, this chapter reviews these theories. It begins with general perspectives on change in educational contexts. Then, Bernstein's pedagogic device (1990; 1996; 2000) is described in some detail. The pedagogic device provides a means of describing the processes of curriculum development and implementation and of demonstrating how groups of individuals may have different involvement in the processes of reform with differing consequences for practice. The chapter also focuses on Bernstein's notions of classification and framing as they are useful for examining issues of power and control in relation to Thai curriculum reform.

#### **2.2 Perspectives on change**

Although there is increasing research on educational change, there is scant literature and theory to provide the principles for exploring and discussing the complexity of the process of change. In particular, there needs to be more research literature on change processes in the Thai context since change is contextually-based and the Thai culture is

distinct from Western culture (Luanganggoon 2001). A number of influential studies of educational change (Fullan 2001; 2006; Hargreaves 1989; 1994; Hargreaves, Shaw and Fink 1997) and teacher change (Hoban 2002; 2005) are employed as complementary perspectives to Bernstein's pedagogic device (1990; 1996; 2000). Accordingly, in this section, the nature and meanings of educational change, and some features and factors influencing change which are relevant to this study are discussed.

### **2.2.1 Educational change as a complex system**

Educational change can be viewed as involving a complex system (Fullan 2001; 2006; Hargreaves 1989; 1994; Hargreaves *et al*, 1997; Hoban 2002). In order to deal with such complexity, the concept of 'change frames' has been proposed as one way of thinking about how theories about educational change are interrelated (Hargreaves *et al*. 1997; Hoban 2002; Fink 2000) and how complicated the change in educational institutions is (Hoban 2002). 'Change frames' relate to the notion of "multiple foci or lenses for understanding the dynamic and interrelated nature of the change process" (Hargreaves *et al*. 1997; Fink 2000; Moore and Shaw 2000; Retallick and Fink 2000, cited in Hoban 2002, p.35). These change frames consist of many influences: the role and nature of leadership in supporting change; teachers' routine and work performances; the institutional culture; structure or changes within an educational institution; politics, including both external and internal, to an educational institution; context of the educational institution; and teacher learning available (Hoban 2002). Such factors will impinge on the process of Thai educational reform as the systems and teachers come to terms with change in practice.

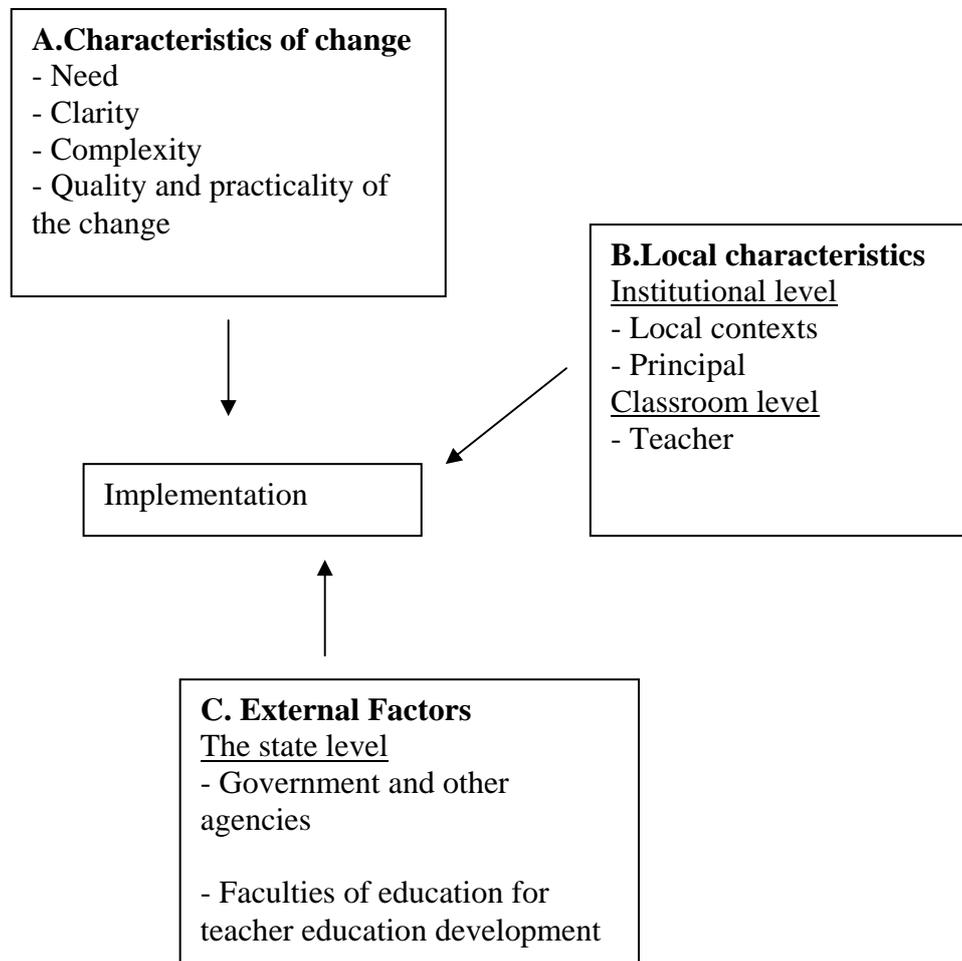
While this study recognises that curriculum reform begins with political action, it also acknowledges that change in practice is counted as the main goal of educational reform as well as change in management or policy. Such a focus on practice is the concern of much of the above research into change. The process of change is initiated from various sources and for different reasons. For example, based on numerous research studies, the National Education Act 1999 was formulated to respond to the educational reform with various goals, such as the shift from the traditional teaching approach to a more learner-centred approach. Fullan (2001) claims that there is a loosely coupled and interactive

relationship between initiation and implementation, which can result in either clarity or confusion, commitment or alienation. It is necessary to explore what relationship exists between the initiation process and the continuous implementation process, what other factors occur during implementation, and which changes really happen in practice (Fullan 2001). In this study, Thai educational reform is investigated from the initial stage to the implementation stage, namely the national policy formulation and interpretation process, the institutional curriculum design process and teaching practice.

According to Fullan (2001), 'change in practice' can happen at many levels, such as the institutional level and the classroom level. In terms of change at the classroom or teacher level, he proposes three elements in implementing any new program or policy: 1) the application of new or revised curriculum materials, teaching resources or new technologies, 2) the application of new teaching strategies or activities, and 3) change of beliefs, such as theories underpinning specific new policies or programs. To encourage successful change, there must be changes in real practice along all three dimensions. The achievement also depends on the quality and suitability of the change. Some teachers may apply the new curriculum materials or technologies but they do not change their teaching practice. Some might utilize the materials and alter some teaching behaviors without gaining insights into the conceptions or beliefs underpinning the change (Fullan 2001). That is to say, these three dimensions are significant factors which are considered in this study. In the Thai context, to respond to educational policy reform, there is an attempt to change at the level of implementation, namely a change in teaching approach towards more learner-centred teaching and hence the need for rethinking of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, including the use of new technologies and resources.

Through case studies in different contexts, this study also explores the factors that have an influence on the change process. Fullan (2001) suggests that research findings from different contexts can assist implementers of change to gain more insight into planning and implementation strategies and to identify significant factors that have an influence on the change process. This is discussed in the next section.

### 2.2.2 Factors affecting the implementation process



**Figure 2.1:** Interactive factors affecting implementation (Adapted from Fullan 2001, p. 72)

As illustrated in Figure 2.1, factors affecting the implementation process are divided by Fullan (2001) into three primary categories: characteristics of change, including need, clarity, complexity and quality and practicality of the change; local characteristics; and external factors (Fullan 2001). These factors are investigated in this study.

According to Fullan (2001), priority *needs* are often ignored in many innovations. For example, teachers frequently do not see the importance of the need for change. It is also difficult to perceive need because they have to face the difficulty of meeting a variety of needs and a lack of clarity at the initial stage caused by the complex changes. Also, the interaction with the other factors can generate various patterns which can clarify or

obscure need at the implementation level (Fullan 2001). This study also investigates how needs are prioritized and identified in the policy documents and classroom practice.

*Clarity* is also viewed as one of the problems occurring in the change process (Fullan 2001; Hargreaves et al. 1997). Although some stakeholders see the significance of change, they are still unsure about how to implement it without clear guidelines. This lack of clarity is also caused by the complexity of change. Unspecified goals and unclear guidelines can become obstacles to change since they lead to confusion, frustration and hence resistance, to change among implementers. Another problem of clarity is termed 'false clarity' which happens when there is only a superficial interpretation of change. That is to say, people oversimplify the proposed change. For example, to achieve more successful change, some curricula are designed with more clearly specified goals and guidelines. However, without the recognition of existing teaching approaches and underpinning beliefs, the implementers might not be able to respond to the guidelines effectively. This causes a superficial change or false clarity which can lead to more problems (Fullan 2001). This study examines how stakeholders at all levels respond to educational reform and whether those changes are real or superficial. For example, whether teachers actually understand and implement the policy at the classroom level is explored.

Because of its complexity, change is difficult and complicated with conflict, unpredictability and instability (Jick 1993; Williams 1996; Fullan 1993). As our world becomes more complex and interdependent, change becomes increasingly non-linear, discontinuous and unpredictable (Gibson 1997, p.6). As Fullan (2001) points out, *complexity* involves the difficulty and the degree of change required for the implementers. That is, any change can be explored in terms of difficulty, skill required, and degree of change in beliefs, teaching approaches and use of teaching resources. This complexity generates problems for implementation. More complicated changes are challenging because of their difficulties and demanding requirements. However, they can generate more successful change than simple changes or superficial changes do (Fullan 2001). In the current study, the Thai educational change process is investigated in terms of difficulties and resistance occurring in the process at all levels.

Fullan (2001) also notes that another factor related to the nature of change is '*the quality and practicality of the change*'. Whether change can effectively be achieved depends on the other three above-mentioned factors (need, clarity, complexity) being evident. If the policy decision-making process is based only on the political factors without considering the implementation process at the classroom level, there may be insufficient allowance and time for implementation development. These decisions can result in insufficient quality and inadequate materials and other resources. To have more successful change, there needs to be development throughout the process of change from the policy decision-making to implementation (Fullan 2001). This issue is raised in this study through analysing whether there is change occurring in both policy and practice at all levels in Thai educational reform. This study also investigates implementation at all levels: the policy interpretation at the national level, the curriculum design process at the institutional level and the teaching practice at the classroom level.

Fullan (2001) proposes further argument that *the local characteristics* influencing change are the local contexts of each educational institution, the principals and the teachers at the institutional level. Such characteristics are investigated in this study, through case studies of diverse educational institutions. Since constraints of successful change are derived from the local contexts of each educational institution, a process of change which is successfully conducted in one institution might not be successful in others (Fullan 2001).

There are many reasons for resistance to change. Elliott-Kemp (1982) states that when change occurs, human beings are more likely to resist it. Resistance to change is classified by Plant (1987) into systemic resistance and behavioural change. As a cognitive resistance, systemic resistance is caused by the lack of suitable knowledge or information about change and the lack of skills to deal with it. Therefore, more effective information and communicative practice should be provided prior to and during the process of change. On the other hand, as an emotional resistance, behavioural change derives from the reactions, perceptions and assumptions of individuals or groups towards mandated change. This emotional resistance can be

lessened by encouraging trust among implementers (Elliott-Kemp 1982). At the same time, Yukl (1998) proposed nine reasons for resisting major change. First, if people do not trust the people who propose change, they are more likely to resist that change. Secondly, a change will be more resisted if that change is not obvious without clear guidelines. The third and fourth reasons are related to a lack of conviction that the change is necessary. If people are not convinced that the change is necessary, they tend to resist it. Yukl's fifth and sixth reasons deal with individual assessment and the personal investment in change. People will resist change which causes loss of income, benefits or job security. The last three reasons are based on people's belief in themselves and their place. They resist change since they fear the loss of their own power, autonomy and status (Yukl 1998).

To achieve more successful change, principals and teachers and their collaborative efforts need to be taken into account. Principals play a significant role in the change process at the institutional level since they have a great deal of power in controlling and supporting change. The teachers, in turn, are the crucial implementers in the change process. Therefore, their characteristics, experience, and habits of teaching and learning have to be considered in the process of change (Fullan 2001).

The current study explores the constraints occurring at the institutional level in the Thai educational reform. In addition, it examines how the educational institutions and the teachers are provided with independence and opportunities to take part in the curriculum design process; and how the teachers interpret and transform the policy into their teaching practice.

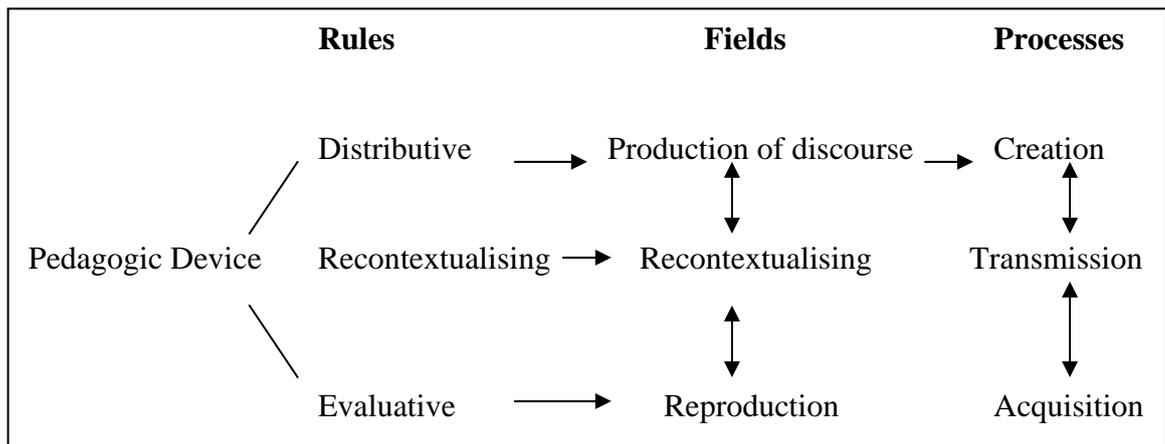
As far as Fullan (2001) is concerned, *the external factors* include the government, the ministry of education, the official departments, and faculties of education in which authorities, policy-makers and officials play a significant role in transmitting the purpose of change in the form of the national policy and supporting change through various programs. In most cases, the government agencies are concerned only with designing the policy at the initial stage of the change process without considering the implementation stage. They have not learned how to encourage relationships with each other and with agencies at other levels (Fullan 2001). In the Thai context, to encourage

more successful change, the national government has provided more independence to teachers and schools to be responsible for their own professional development programs. To have more effective professional development, information sessions should be encouraged in the provinces and regions in place of a top-down model (Luanganggoon 2001). The school needs to act as a change centre while a teacher acts as a change agent. Collaborative action by staff and participative management in the schools are also factors for successful change which need to be supported by leadership (Ministry of University Affairs 1998). The present study also investigates how the state government performs and conducts relationships with other stakeholders for the purpose of fostering successful change.

As noted, these perspectives on change are useful for and relevant to the present study. However, they cannot provide us with a coherent and comprehensive framework for investigating how policy is formulated, translated and implemented, and hence for exploring effective ways for teacher change and policy development in the Thai educational reform at all levels. Bernstein's theories of change are applicable for this study since they address the complexity of educational change at different levels.

## **2.3 The pedagogic device**

The pedagogic device is a construct through which Bernstein (1990; 1996; 2000) sought to explain the relay of curriculum knowledge and its impact on social relations. In this study, however, the researcher's interest is in curriculum reform – an area to which Bernsteinian theory has been usefully applied (e.g. Maton 2005; Martin 2007).



**Figure 2.2:** The device and its structurings (Adapted from Bernstein 1996; 2000)

Figure 2.2 adapted from Bernstein (1996; 2000) describes the basic characteristics of the pedagogic device. The pedagogic device provides a tool to examine the nature of curriculum reform at both the micro and macro levels. In this study, the pedagogic device is used to explore the complexity of the roles, relations and practices occurring in Thai educational change and the agencies through which these are affected.

As shown in Figure 2.2, Bernstein (1996; 2000) is interested in ‘boundary relations’ which occur between the different contexts. There can be the varying degrees of strengths of *the boundaries between the fields*, namely the field of knowledge production, the field of policy development or the field of recontextualisation, and the field of knowledge reproduction. Within each of these fields, three interconnected sets of rules, distributive, recontextualising and evaluative, operate respectively, with a hierarchical relation between them (Bernstein 1996; 2000).

Within *the field of production*, new knowledge is created and distributed. Distributive rules operate in this particular field. These rules control and distribute the knowledge to different social groups. These distributive rules also regulate the basic relation between power, social groups, forms of consciousness and practices (Bernstein 1996; 2000). In this study, Bernstein’s term, ‘knowledge production’ refers to the educational research which informs the new policy. In the case of Thai educational reform, the official policy documents have to be formulated in the official recontextualising field on the basis of the theories of teaching and learning and the research selected in the field of knowledge production. This research relates to the theories of teaching and learning

specified in the Thai official policy documents, namely the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching.

According to Bernstein (1990; 1996; 2000), there is tension between fields and within each field. The field of knowledge production has untidy and non-linear relations with the official recontextualising field. Accordingly, the ways in which these aspects of the field of knowledge production are taken up is of particular interest to how the official policy documents are formulated and what the official policy documents recommend for classroom practice. These factors, which are also explained in relation to the field of recontextualisation are discussed in the next section.

In *the recontextualising field*, the research ideas are selected, adapted and modified into educational knowledge. Recontextualising rules operating in this particular field are mainly regulated by the state government, which has the power to choose and transform the knowledge into a specific pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 2000). In relation to the present study, in the recontextualising field, theories of pedagogy and research constituted in the research into second language learning, or in Bernstein's terms - the field of knowledge production - are transformed into the educational policies specified in the Thai official policy documents.

According to Bernstein (2000), within the recontextualising field, there are two fields: the official recontextualising field and the pedagogic recontextualising field. Bernstein (1999; 2000) notes that the state government operates through *the official recontextualising field* which consists of the specific departments for the formulation of education policy, the local educational authorities, and the central or regional-decentralised systems of organisation order (Bernstein 1990; 2000). The state and its selected officials and ministries contribute to and dominate the official recontextualising field which transforms specialist knowledge through the development of syllabuses, curricula and assessment regimes. It deals with selecting and conforming to accepted rules or standards of what is learnt in educational contexts (Bernstein 1990; 2000). Maton (2005) also claims "... policy was directed to the question of who should have access to what and where ..." (p.692). In the case of Thai educational reform, the state government, ministry of education and the officials who deal with the policy

formulation play a significant role in transforming the disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge into specific educational policies, for instance, the national curriculum, assessment and standard for the educational institutions to follow. That is to say, the field of knowledge production is interrelated with the official recontextualising field. These educational policies are then communicated to different social groups or stakeholders involved in the process of change, such as officials, educational institutions, principals and teachers. In other words, these stakeholders have to implement the educational policies. Thus, Bernstein's framework suggests that there is a relationship between the research context, policy and practice. This relationship is explored in this study.

*The pedagogic recontextualising field* comprises such factors as the tertiary departments of education, professional journals, and publishers of educational books, along with their staff (Bernstein 1990; 2000). Simply stated, the pedagogic recontextualising field is related to teacher education, and professional and learning opportunities of teachers which are developed in various forms, such as training courses, programs and research. In the Thai situation, the pedagogic recontextualising field can be exemplified by the teacher colleges, the teacher training courses, textbooks and other programs for developing teacher learning which constitute educational reform.

Bernstein's (1990; 2000) writing in the UK context in the late 1990s notes that the state was trying to weaken the pedagogic recontextualising field through its own official recontextualising field, and thereby trying to weaken relative autonomy over the construction of the official discourse and over its social contexts. That is to say, the state seeks to develop control over the pedagogic recontextualising field. In the same way, in Thailand, there is an attempt by the state government to regulate teacher learning in various forms. Although the pedagogic recontextualising field is not the focus of the study, the institutions and other programs operated for developing teacher learning which make up the educational reform were described in general in Chapter one.

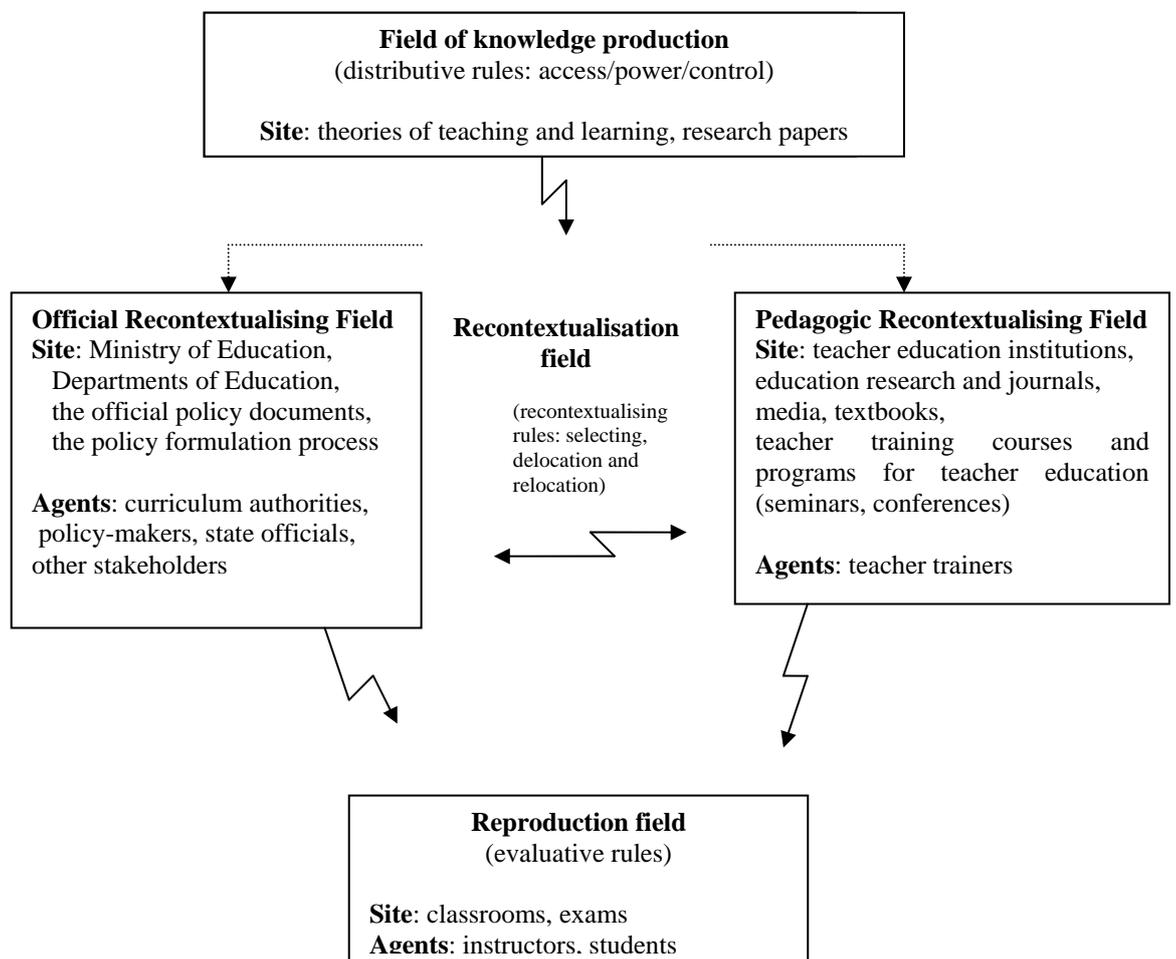
Within *the field of reproduction*, the process of learner acquisition or the pedagogic practice of teachers occurs. Evaluative rules are said to operate in the reproduction field as teachers generate criteria for the evaluation of students. That is to say, teachers have

to transform the relocated knowledge into their pedagogic practice (Bernstein 1990; 1996; 2000). Martin (2007) elaborates the reproduction field by saying that within a set of evaluative rules, the educational knowledge derived from the earlier rules is transformed further into a set of evaluative criteria which need to be achieved and against which individuals are measured and judged as more or less successful. In Bernstein's conceptualization, in the field of reproduction, pedagogic transformation and acquisition occurs (Martin 2007). That is to say, within the reproduction field, the knowledge is further transformed into classroom practice. Students' acquisition of knowledge and consciousness are also expected as a result for better learning outcomes.

Relevant to this study, it can be said that the learning reform which was explained in the previous chapter is implemented within the reproduction field. The educational institutions and teachers in various institutional contexts are investigated and discussed through the analysis of the institutional documents, including the institutional curricula, the course syllabuses and the lesson plans, together with teachers' interviews and classroom observations. This also aims to understand how the institutions interpret and transform the official policy documents into their institutional curricula. In other words, the reproduction field involves the institutional performances and teachers' teaching practices which are affected by the specific context of each institution and teaching practice of each teacher. The institutional policies are formulated in parallel with the official policy documents generated by the state government within the official recontextualising field. This study also aims to explore whether and how the educational institutions and teachers are provided with autonomy and independence in their decision-making and how teachers are supported by institutions and resources.

In summary, new intellectual knowledge is generated in the field of production. Then in the field of recontextualisation, this specialized knowledge is changed through a process of transformation to form educational knowledge. In the field of reproduction, this educational knowledge is interpreted and transformed by teachers into their teaching practice in the real classroom as actual pedagogic interpretation and implementation (Bernstein 1996; 2000). As illustrated in Figure 2.3, with this concept of the pedagogic device, the study explores, within the context of Thai educational reform, how intellectual knowledge in the form of theories of teaching and learning and research into second language acquisition and learning is transformed by the state

government into the official policy documents by the official recontextualising field. In relation to the pedagogic recontextualising field, how the teachers' learning is developed with reference to the policy change is also explored. Furthermore, in the discussion of the institutional context, how the official policy documents are interpreted and transformed into the institutional curricula, the course syllabuses, and lesson plans is investigated. Finally, in considering the field of reproduction, how the teachers interpret and transform the official policy documents into their teaching practice is examined.



**Figure 2.3:** The pedagogic device for the Thai context (Adapted from Chen and Derewianka 2009)

In Figure 2.3, jagged arrows represent points of potential conflict. This conflict can be caused by unstable power relations that can result in varying degree of boundary strength between agents, activities, texts and artefacts (Bernstein 2003). As noted, the

boundary relations within the pedagogic device include *agents* with hierarchical relations at all levels who generate *activities, texts and other artefacts*. Within each specific ‘field or arena’, there is pedagogic activity engaged in by human agents and agencies at all levels. For example, in this study, agents in the knowledge production field include academics and scholars who create and select knowledge in the area of second language acquisition and learning. Agents in the official recontextualising field include the officials and policy-makers at the level of the state and its bureaucracies who transform the chosen knowledge from the research into second language learning into educational policies. Agencies in the pedagogic recontextualising field include institutions which deal with teacher education and resources which are generated for the purpose of teacher learning, such as education research, media and textbooks. At the institutional level, agents in the reproduction field include executives, administrators and teachers who have to interpret and implement the policy. To examine the consistency between policy and practice, this study also investigates the boundaries between texts and other artefacts, such as the relations between the official policy documents created in the official recontextualising field, the institutional curricula at the institutional level, and the teaching practice conducted in the reproduction field or at the implementation level.

Bernstein (1990) describes the three fields of the pedagogic device as engaged in an ‘arena of struggle’ (1990, p.206). That is to say, within these three fields, groups of agents and agencies try to possess and manipulate the pedagogic device. Relevant to this study, complicated hierarchical relations between agents, agencies, activities and texts are prevalent in Thailand. Although the stakeholders in the Thai educational reform process make an attempt to respond to change, they have to face many constraints caused by this complexity. The current study examines the complexity of the Thai educational reform and explores the constraints caused by this complexity.

Although the pedagogic device as illustrated in Figure 2.2 appears to be clean and neat, in reality the pedagogic device can be very complicated because of many factors. In other words, the pedagogic device does not describe a singular process. It consists of different groups with multiple roles and agendas who can take multiple actions at various levels. Some of these groups are confronted with many limitations, such as the time constraints and the lack of professional knowledge. For example, some policy-

makers and institutional administrators are not expert in the field of teaching and learning. Studies such as the present one can reveal much about the processes of educational reform.

Relevant to this study, the power and control inherent in hierarchical relations that are dominant in the Thai educational reform can cause tensions in the process of change. For example, the friction between roles and communicative practice of stakeholders in the Thai educational reform, especially in the policy formulation process at the national level, is explored. Pearson (2004, p.223, quoted in Chen and Derewianka 2009) compares the policy formation as ‘the treacherous road from research to policy’. This means that the policy formulation is influenced by the limitations of the policy-makers, and external pressures from politicians, the media and the community. In the case of the Thai education reform, these influences also include political instability, moral and cultural beliefs, personal pressure and confidence, research, and criticism. It can be argued that power and control are influenced by such complicated hierarchical relations. The next section discusses Bernstein’s notions of classification and framing, used as a tool in this study for examining power and control respectively, including boundaries and conflict occurring at each level of pedagogic device of the Thai education reform process.

## **2.4 Classification and framing**

In this study, the concepts of classification and framing are used to investigate change in the Thai educational contexts from the development of policy to curriculum and its implementation. Bernstein (1996) offers these two concepts to explain the circulation of power and control. Classification concerns power, and power relations, while framing is related to control.

### **2.4.1 Classification**

Bernstein (1996) asserts that classification is related to ‘power’ and ‘roles and relations’. Boundaries are established by dominant power relations between agents, activities and texts which are called ‘categories’. These relations between categories are established by power. In other words, power maintains the insulation between the

categories of discourse which in turn preserves the principles of their social division of labour. With the insulation between categories, each category has its own distinct voice and unique identity (Bernstein 1996; 2000). Relevant to this study, for more successful educational reform, the Ministry of Education is required to decentralise power in educational administration and management in terms of academic matters, budget, personnel and general affairs administration, directly to the educational institutions (Office of the National Education Commission 1999). This decentralisation of authority can encourage more participation with wider ownership and autonomy among educational institutions and hence promote more successful curriculum renewal (Fullan 2001; Briggs 2003, cited in Bangkok Post 2003). However, it appears that in the Thai educational reform, the people who have greater power and authority in policy decision-making, such as policy-makers, still exert considerable control over school management. For example, the educational institutions assuming more power are still controlled by the state government in certain significant aspects (Chongcharoen 2008). These authorities also assign the specified duties of each category involved in the change process, such as state departments, educational institutions, principals and teachers. That is to say, this power has an influence on collegial relations within the decision-making processes at all levels.

Accordingly, classification can be used for explaining the process of transmission and acquisition in the change process in terms of power and power relations (Bernstein 1996). In this study, to what extent the stakeholders in the Thai educational reform are provided with power in policy formulation and interpretation process is investigated. In addition, the current study explores the degree to which theories of teaching and learning are afforded power over others by using classification of the relations between theories and principles of teaching and learning mandated in the official policy documents and the institutional curricula and of the relations between theories and principles of teaching and learning applied in the classroom practice.

Bernstein (1996) conceptualizes two fundamental rules to describe power relations in pedagogic settings such as education systems. When categories of agents, activities and texts are separated, they are said to be strongly classified. In contrast, with a relatively weak classification, categories are 'brought together' (Bernstein 1996). In the current study, the concept of classification is employed to examine relations between

categories, such as state government officials, institutional administrators and teachers; between discourses of policy and curriculum; and between teaching and learning practices at the classroom level.

***The relationships between stakeholders in the process of change***

The relationships between stakeholders are said to be crucial to successful reform (Bernstein 1975; 1990; 2000; Fullan 2001; 2006). Accordingly, this section discusses the use of the concept of classification to relationships between stakeholders in the change process, namely policy-makers, curriculum designers, institutional administrators and teachers in terms of classification.

<b>Classification (C)</b>	
C+ (Strong classification)	<i>“the relationships are stable and sharply distinguished, the functions well insulated from each other, and the agents not interchangeable”</i> (Bernstein 1990, p.50).
C - (Weak classification)	<i>“the relationships between agents are less sharply distinguished, there is reduced insulation between functions, and agents are more interchangeable between categories”</i> (Bernstein 1990, p.50).

**Table 2.1:** Bernstein’s classification (Adapted from Bernstein 1990)

As Bernstein (1990) conceptualizes it, classification of the relationships between the stakeholders can be either strong or weak, as shown in Table 2.1. Working relationships are said to be more integrated if they are more cooperative and group-based. On the other hand, working relationships will be less integrated if they are based on the individual working with less flexibility. In this study, Bernstein’s constructs of classification in terms of relations are applied to investigate the extent to which there is integrated work in the process of change at both national and institutional levels. If there is a high degree of relations between stakeholders within and across categories in these processes of change, these processes will have weakly-classified roles and relations among staff members. For example, if there are more frequent contacts or strong relationships between stakeholders within and across categories, such as the state officials within the Office of Higher Education or between those in the Office of Higher

Education and the staff in the educational institutions, there will be more weakly-classified roles and relations among staff members. Meanwhile, there will be more strongly-classified roles and relations among staff members in these processes of change when there are fewer contacts or looser relationships within and across categories.

In the study of Neves and Morais (2001), the implementation of science curriculum is investigated and discussed using classification and framing. Their criteria for classification and framing which are described in more detail in the next chapter are applied with some adaptation to this study.

In addition to the strength of classification boundaries between stakeholders, this study analyses the relations between theories and principles specified in the official policy documents; between theories and principles specified in the institutional curricula; and between theories and principles applied in the classroom practice which are important for successful reform. These relations are described in the following sections respectively.

***The relations between theories and principles specified in the official policy***

This study analyses the official policy documents: the National Education Act 1999 and the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 at the national level in terms of the relations between theories and principles specified in the official policy. Classification is employed to examine the nature of the theoretical basis advocated by the new policy.

<b>Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning specified in the official policy</b>	
C+ (Strong classification)	The official policy focuses exclusively on a particular approach to teaching and learning.
C- (Weak classification)	The official policy draws on a number of different theories of teaching and learning.

**Table 2.2:** Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning specified in the official policy (Adapted from Neves and Morais 2001, pp.232-233)

The criteria for analysis of classification are outlined in Table 2.2. With respect to classification, if the official policy documents focus exclusively on a particular theory of teaching and learning, such as the learner-centred teaching approach, they can be said to be strongly classified.

***The relations between theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum***

Similarly, classification is used to examine which theory or theories of teaching and learning are selected and how they are interpreted and transformed by the educational institutions into their institutional curricula. This study examines the consistency between the official policy documents and the institutional curriculum in terms of which theories and principles are specified in the official policy documents (including the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching) and how/whether these are taken up in the institutional curricula.

<b>Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning specified in the institutional curriculum</b>	
C+ (Strong classification)	The institutional curriculum focuses exclusively on a particular approach to teaching and learning (e.g. as specified in the national policy).
C- (Weak classification)	The institutional curriculum draws on a number of different theories of teaching and learning.

**Table 2.3:** Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning specified in the institutional curriculum (After Neves and Morais 2001, pp. 232-233)

As shown in Table 2.3, if the institutional curriculum focuses on a particular theory of teaching and learning, such as the learner-centred teaching approach designated by the national policy, then more strongly-classified relations between theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum is said to exist.

***The relations between theories and principles implied in the classroom practice***

This study examines how, and the extent to which, the theories of teaching and learning specified in the national policy and in the institutional curriculum are applied in the

classroom practice and the extent to which they are adopted as the sole informing theory or are merged with other approaches.

<b>Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning applied in the classroom practice</b>	
C+ (Strong classification)	The classroom practice focuses exclusively on a particular approach to teaching and learning (eg as specified in the institutional curriculum).
C- (Weak classification)	The classroom practice draws on a number of different theories of teaching and learning.

**Table 2.4:** Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning applied in the classroom practice (After Neves and Morais 2001, pp. 232-233)

As illustrated in Table 2.4, in terms of classroom teaching practice, a weak classification will be evident in the class if the teaching content and pedagogic tasks draw on a number of different theories of teaching and learning. For example, although some communicative activities are used to encourage greater student participation, a strong teacher role is still evident. In such a case, it could be said that the learner-centred teaching approach is applied together with a teacher-centred approach and hence the theories and principles applied in this class are weakly classified. Likewise, if there are mostly classroom activities conducted and controlled by students without much control from the teacher, theories and principles applied in this classroom can be described as more strongly classified with regard to a particular theory of teaching and learning – in this case, the learner-centred teaching approach. That is to say, in the current study, classification is used to explore the degree to which the certain theories of teaching and learning are afforded power over others.

### **2.4.2 Framing**

In this section, Bernstein's concept of framing is discussed. In contrast to classification, framing is related to 'control' and 'communicative practice'. According to Bernstein (1996), framing refers to the nature of control over: "(1) *the selection of the communication; its sequencing (what comes first, what comes second); (2) its pacing*

*(the rate of expected acquisition); (3) the criteria; and (4) the control over the social base which makes this transmission possible”* (Bernstein 1996, p.27). In other words, framing includes the form of control which regulates and legitimizes communication in pedagogic relations. Framing is concerned with who controls what (Bernstein 1996). If framing is strong, there has been explicit control by the instructor over the selection, sequence, pacing and criteria. If framing is weak, there has been more apparent control by the learner over the communication (Bernstein 1996). In other words, framing will be strong when the control lies with the one who has the power. There will be weak framing, if the control is shared among the categories and the agents who take part in the process of change, such as the teacher and the students at the classroom level (Bernstein 2000).

In the learner-centred pedagogy espoused by the national policy, issues of learner control and autonomy are important. In terms of classroom practice, Maton (2000) elaborates the notion of framing by explaining that the higher the degree of teacher control over teaching and learning, the more strongly-framed relations between the teacher and students in that class. On the other hand, the more involvement of students in the teaching and learning process, the more weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students in that class (Maton 2000). In the present study, with a loosely-framed learner-centred teaching approach as the main focus of the educational reform, framing is used to explore the extent to which the students are provided with autonomy as specified in the official policy document and the institutional curricula; and as evidenced in the actual classroom practice.

### ***The relations between the teacher and students suggested in the official policy documents***

Neves and Morais's (2001) criteria for framing are applied with some adaptation to this study. An important element of their study is the extent to which students are provided with autonomy as specified in the official policy documents. Similarly, this study explores teacher and student relations as specified in the Thai official policy. The criterion for analysis of framing is described in Table 2.5. With respect to framing, if the official policy documents value a higher degree of learner-centred teaching, the

official policy documents can be said to recommend weak framing of teacher and student relations.

<b>Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students suggested by the official policy</b>	
F+ (Strong framing)	The official policy includes statements focusing on the teacher to act as a director in the teaching and learning process. For example, the teacher is described as directing, ordering and prescribing the content of the subject. These would indicate a theory of teacher-centred instruction.
F- (Weak framing)	The official policy includes statements encouraging a higher degree of student intervention in the teaching and learning process. For example, the students are described as initiating and participating in independent activities and tasks or project works. These would show a valuing of a learner-centred teaching approach.

**Table 2.5:** Framing of the relations between the teacher and students suggested by the official policy (Adapted from Neves and Morais 2001, pp.232-233)

***The relations between the teacher and students specified in the institutional curriculum***

In this study, Neves and Morais's (2001) criteria for framing are also employed to examine the degree of student autonomy as specified in the institutional curricula as shown in Table 2.6. This analysis enables further examination of the consistency between the institutional curriculum and the official policy in terms of teacher and learners' relationships. If the institutional curriculum includes more statements that focus on the learner-centred teaching approach with higher degree of students' intervention and participation rather than the teacher-centred teaching approach, the institutional curriculum can be seen to encourage more weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students in that class.

<b>Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students specified in the institutional curriculum</b>	
F+ (Strong framing)	The institutional curriculum includes statements focusing on the teacher to act as a director in the teaching and learning process. For example, the teacher is describing as directing, ordering and describing the content of the subject. These show that the institutional curriculum values a theory of teacher-centred instruction.
F- (Weak framing)	The institutional curriculum includes statements encouraging a higher degree of student intervention in the teaching and learning process. For example, the students are described as joining in independent activities and tasks or project works. These show that the institutional curriculum values a learner-centred teaching approach.

**Table 2.6:** Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students specified in the institutional curriculum (After Neves and Morais 2001, pp. 232-233)

***The relations between the teacher and students in the classroom***

At the level of classroom practice, the criteria for framing are also designed to explore the extent to which the students are encouraged to be autonomous in the classroom. This also examines the relations between the teacher and students in the actual classroom practice as described in Table 2.7. When the teacher takes a higher degree of control over the teaching content and pedagogic tasks in the class, that pedagogy may be said to be strongly framed. Similarly, the classroom with a higher degree of student agency and participation rather than teacher control will have more weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students in that class.

<b>Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students in the classroom</b>	
F+ (strong framing)	The classroom practice provides evidence of the teacher acting as a director in the teaching and learning process. For example, the teacher ‘directs’, ‘orders’ and ‘mandates’ the content of the subject without reference to the interests and needs of the various class members. These indicate that the classroom practice is based on a theory of teacher-centred instruction rather than a learner-centred teaching approach.
F- (weak framing)	The classroom practice indicates a higher degree of student intervention in the teaching and learning process. For example, the students initiate and join in independent activities and tasks or project works. These suggest that the classroom practice is based on a learner-centred teaching approach.

**Table 2.7:** Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students in the classroom (After Neves and Morais 2001, pp. 232-233)

In summary, in this study, classification and framing are significant informing constructs. Classification can be used for investigating the roles and the relations possible in the processes of change in the Thai education reform. Framing can help examine how a major focus of the change – the nature of teacher and students’ roles in the classroom – is specified in the official policy and the institutional curricula and is taken up in actual classroom practice.

In sum, classification can be viewed as the principles of the relations between categories whereby framing can be seen as having the same relation to principles of communication. Thus, relations between categories can be regulated by strong or weak classification and principles of communication can be governed by strong or weak framing (Bernstein 1996; 2000). Relevant to this study, one way in which the notion of classification is used is for the purpose of describing the relations between two types of documents: the official policy documents and the institutional curricula. In the same manner, one way in which framing is used in this study is to describe what the official

policy documents and institutional curricula recommend in terms of classroom practice and the actual roles taken up by the teacher and students.

## **2.5 Bernstein's theories in relation to change**

Bernstein's theories can be used to understand change. Bernstein (1975; 1990) states that when classroom practice is consistent with that advocated by policy, the change process may be considered successful. He also argues that attempts to weaken or shift classification strength or even framing strength can be viewed as a threat to the stakeholder's identity and cause resistance to change (Bernstein 1975). In the case of the Thai educational reform with the focus on learner-centredness, the students are encouraged to take more prominent roles in the classroom. As this is a shift in traditional teacher-student relations, some teachers might be dissatisfied that they seem to lose power and control in the classroom (Holliday 1994; Yulk 1998). Therefore, they may be reluctant to adopt a learner-centred teaching approach, preferring the more familiar traditional approach or teacher-centred approach.

Bernstein (1975; 1990; 1996; 2000) also raises a problem that may occur in the process of change, 'apparent weakening', which refers to a tendency for some people to misunderstand that they have already changed. In the same way, 'false clarity' with superficial change is termed by Fullan (2001). 'False clarity', as mentioned previously, occurs when there is only a superficial interpretation of change or people oversimplify the proposed change. For example, with misinterpretation of the concepts of the learner-centred teaching approach, some teachers might encourage students' participation by merely assigning projects without a focus on the actual communicative practice in the classroom.

With regard to classification, if the things are intended to be changed, the relations between those things have to be changed or the insulation between those things has to be weakened (Bernstein 1990). As Bernstein (1990) notes, in the process of change, there is 'insulation maintenance' which generates, maintains, reproduces and legitimates borders. It can be argued that this insulation maintenance is operated by change agents who have the function of controlling the boundaries between categories. These change

agents can be exemplified as reproducers, repairers and surveyors who deal with constructing, polishing, clarifying, repairing and protecting boundaries. In the same way, Fullan (2001) terms supporters at all levels who take significant roles in creating change projects or enhancing change in the process as 'change agents'. In this study, change agents include policy-makers, leaders, principals and teachers, all of whom have function or power in controlling, weakening or strengthening relations within categories and/or across categories and in encouraging or discouraging consistency among documents generated in the process of change. Therefore, these change agents play a significant role in the process of change. For example, the executives and administrators have the power and function to design the policy and to weaken the boundaries by encouraging more stakeholders' participation in the institutional curriculum design process.

One factor of successful change is more cooperative work in the process of change. Bernstein is interested in the roles and the relations among agencies in the process of change. As Bernstein (1975; 1990) states, in terms of more weakly-classified roles and relations between entities, the more integrated work the organisation has, the more likely it will be that the organisation can achieve change. In the same way, Fullan (2001) also states that relationships are significant for successful change. Relevant to this study, it can be said that the more cooperative work among stakeholders along the process of change, the more likely it will be that the final products or practice are similar to what the policy intends. It can also be argued that all stakeholders should play a significant role in the change process as change agents.

In terms of classification, balancing the power relationship in the change process can also be viewed as one of the strategies for successful change (Bernstein 1975; 1990; 1996; 2000) relevant to this study. As Fullan (2001) suggests, to encourage change, there should be a balance of top-down and bottom-up change, as well as a balance of other factors for successful change. Fullan (2001) also recommends that both 'pressure and support' should be encouraged as the strategy for successful change during the process of change. In the case of Thailand, independence in designing one's own institutional curriculum is proposed. However, at the same time, there is pressure and control by the state government in the form of the system of education quality assurance

which aims to meet the quality of education and stakeholders' needs (Office of the Education Council. 2003).

In terms of framing, at the classroom level, Chen and Derewianka (2009) suggest in their study that teachers should know how to balance and manage the power relationship in the classroom, that is, when to weaken and strengthen their role or when to apply a more teacher-centred approach and a more learner-centred approach with the class. Correspondingly, this study also examines the nature of teacher and students' roles in the classroom or how the teachers balance their control in terms of framing of teacher and student relations.

In this study, Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device allows us to view the education system as a whole, which is consistent with a systems thinking approach proposed by Fullan (2001; 2006). To promote large scale reform, a systems thinking approach, which focuses on the whole pattern of change rather than isolated parts of the system has to be encouraged for long term and sustainable change. Accordingly, to achieve successful change, cooperation and interaction among stakeholders in the process of change are encouraged in various forms, such as networking in a professional learning community (Fullan 2001; 2006).

## **2.6 Summary of Chapter two**

In the current study, Bernstein's (1990; 1996; 2000) pedagogic device and his concepts of classification and framing are used to investigate the relationship between discourses, agents and activities at all levels in the Thai education reform or change. This relationship can provide insights into the change process that has occurred in the Thai education system. In Bernstein's terms, this study aims to explore the nature of the relationship between the knowledge production field, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field in the Thai tertiary English language teaching. The roles and the relations occurring in this process of change are examined and discussed in order to find the strengths and weaknesses of each level along the process of change: policy formulation and interpretation process at the national level; the curriculum design process at the institutional level; and the teaching practice at the fundamental level. This

study also examines the consistency between the policy and practice through investigating the consistency between the official policy documents, the institutional curricula and the classroom practice. This consistency is analysed by using Bernstein's concept of classification and framing. In addition, this study examines how classroom instructors of English attempt to implement the reform documents by identifying how the policy presents the new teaching theories and principles specified in the Thai official policy documents, such as the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching.

In addition, perspectives on change and theories of pedagogy are also employed as complementary theories for deeper understanding of the Thai education reform and ultimately exploring implications for future change for Thai education reform. In the review of literature in the next chapter, education reform is further discussed together with theories and principles specified in the Thai official policy documents, namely the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching.

# CHAPTER THREE

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described Bernstein's pedagogic device as the main theoretical framework applied in this study. This chapter reviews research relating to themes relevant to the Thai policy reform and pedagogical issues that impact on the teaching of English in Thai universities. It provides definitions and clarifies the significance of key terms specified in the Thai official policy documents. For successful change to occur, theories of change should be integrated with theories of pedagogy (Fullan 2001). Accordingly, the research related to change and reform in Thailand is discussed in this chapter, together with research which applies Bernstein's theories as the theoretical framework in a similar way to this study. This chapter also reviews studies related to pedagogical principles and approaches which are referred to in the Thai official policy documents, namely learner-centred teaching and communicative language teaching.

### 3.2 Change and reform

Change is specified in the Thai official policy documents with respect to such matters as policy reform, higher education reform, and learning reform (Office of the Education Council 2003). For example, in the section 'educational institutions curriculum management' of the Basic Education Curriculum 2001, it is stated that the education vision should foresee and meet social changes around the world:

*... Universal knowledge, keeping pace with **changes** and advancement in academic world, skills and potential for communication and technology management, adjustment of thinking and working processes to encounter changing situation;... (p.5)*

With respect to policy reform, the participation of stakeholders is believed to be one of the main factors for the reform to be successful. The means of achieving this in Thailand has been by public relations and public polls. As specified in the National Education Act 1999,

*...The drafting of the National Education Act was made on a number of significant bases, notably:...*

**3. Participation of all stakeholders** Meetings, seminars and public hearings were organized on a continuous basis for the benefit of government offices, educational institutions, private sector and general public both in Bangkok and in the provinces...

**4. Public relations** Services of a variety of media – radio, television, newspapers and publications – were availed of in order to disseminate information on the Bill to teachers, educational administrators, parents, students and general public.

**5. Public polls** The ONEC, in collaboration with the Suan Dusit and ABAC Polls, sounded public opinions on major issues on education in order to arrive at conclusions and consensus...(p.2)

Research conducted by Poonnakaseam (1999) provides evidence of such participation with a case study regarding the drafting of the Thai National Education Act 1999. Her qualitative study explored cooperation between the interest groups in public policy making through an investigation of the interaction process within the interest groups, as well as between the interest groups and the groups deciding on public policy. The interest groups included the stakeholders and those related to the provision of education, such as policy-makers and education providers. The public involved professional teacher organisations, private education professional organisations, parents, the disadvantaged and religious institutions. One of the findings was that the first stage of the policy formulation of the National Education Act 1999 was under the authority of just one decision-making group comprising senior educators and researchers. Feedback collected from other stakeholders was considered in the later stage through the public poll or by consultation. These stakeholders included representatives from various sectors, including teachers of educational institutions (Poonnakaseam 1999). The effect of this top-down decision-making process is discussed later in the current study.

Although Poonnakaseam's (1999) findings illustrate some of the issues surrounding change in the policy formulation process at the national level, there is no data related to change at the implementation level. As Maclean (2002) notes, there is limited research on the relationship between policy and practice in Asia-Pacific countries, including

Thailand. One example is the study by Prapaisit and Hardison (2009) which investigated the underlying policy and implementation of reform in English teaching in Thailand. They examined how the stakeholders in the Thai educational reform at all levels – from policy to practice – responded to change reform. Johnson's (1989) decision-making framework for a coherent curriculum was applied in their study. Johnson (1989) states that curriculum in education is the result of all related decision-making processes of all the stakeholders. The curriculum will be coherent if there are consistencies among decisions made at all levels. Johnson (1989) also points out that there are three main constraints on decision making. These are policy, pragmatic considerations, and participants and their interaction. Prapaisit and Hardison's (2009) study responded to this point by conducting interviews with teachers and observations of English classes (grades 5-6 with students aged nine to eleven years). The findings reveal that there was no evidence of communicative language teaching – as recommended in the policy – applied in those classrooms. Data collected from interviews reveals that teachers were confused with the reform's principles and their application. Teachers also felt a lack of confidence in their own English proficiency. They experienced inadequate training, insufficient resources and inadequate professional support. There were also interviews with four supervisors who commented that the reform's principles were inappropriate to English teaching. Prapaisit and Hardison (2009) concluded that the coherence of curriculum can be disrupted during the reform process.

How school teachers perceive and react to change was also examined in the research conducted by Luangangoon (2001). An action research approach was used to find out strategies for improving the teaching of English in many schools in Khon Kaen in Thailand. In the first stage of the major study, the researcher cooperated with two teachers to design and apply classroom activities for lower secondary students to practise English. In the second stage, in cooperation with a group of teachers, she designed a professional development program for twenty school teachers who were interested in improving their English language teaching. In the third stage, the data from the first two phases was applied in designing five innovative activities that were applied in classrooms by two teachers. The findings reveal that student interest and learning can be improved by collaborative work with school teachers as a mutually useful professional experience. In the first minor study, subject co-ordinators and

teachers were interviewed in the form of conversation to explore their perceptions towards English language teaching. The conversations covered the issues of detailed curricula and curricula frameworks, professional development, assessment, resources, and integration of English language with other subjects. It was found that the teachers recognised the improving English language teaching mandated in the national government's policies and accepted the need for change. However, ineffective preparation of teachers and inadequate resources were the main limiting factors which inhibited teacher effectiveness. In another minor study by Luangangoon (2001), the professional development experiences of English language teachers in Thai schools were examined. Most schools had consultative and administrative mechanisms to support professional development. Access to native speakers was viewed as an important factor. However, they did not have adequate funds to employ native speaker teachers. The findings from Luangangoon's work reveal that the use of interactive, participatory or student-centred pedagogies to teach English as a foreign language in Thai classrooms is feasible. Nevertheless, to achieve this, the teachers have to be convinced of the value of those pedagogies through a systematic and sustained program of professional development (Luangangoon 2001). In the current study, how the teachers interpret the national policy reform with the focus on learner-centredness is also explored together with some concern about the professional development for educational reform.

While of interest to the present study, the above research was conducted only at the primary and secondary levels in Thailand. Policy and practice at the higher education level, however, has had inadequate attention. There has, nonetheless, been some research of a general nature related to the response to change at the university level. For example, Kovitsomboon (2006) and Sinthunava (2009) investigated the response to change in Rajabhat universities, which had to face changing status from being teacher training institutions to universities. Although this research is not directly related to the change at the teaching level, it is interesting to review these studies to gain some insight into the response to change at the university level in terms of their recommendations regarding management level and policy.

Although some universities, such as Rajabhat universities, experienced many difficulties in changing status from teacher education institutions to a university, in

some universities in Thailand, some research studies indicate that a change in leadership style is crucial for successful change of status from institution to university. Kovitsomboon (2006) explored the strengths and weaknesses of the reform process in a Rajabhat institute as well as its development through a case study. The case study included two specific data sets, interviews and document analysis, together with personal observation and local knowledge as an 'insider' researcher. This qualitative research is related to the current study in its focus on specific aspects of reform of teaching and learning, specifically: the learner-centred approach; educational administration and management and the issue of academic freedom; institutional autonomy and accountability; development of educational quality; and more incentives for faculty and the varieties of resources required for the tertiary educational reform process with respect to change at the higher education level. The findings of Kovitsomboon (2006) are that globalisation has had a great impact on this reform movement. More effective ways of managing the problems arising from this reform are required with more efficient teaching and administration (Kovitsomboon 2006).

In a similar case study of six Rajabhat universities in Bangkok, Sinthunava (2009) explored the effect of the mandated changes upon one section of the higher education sector. According to the National Education Act 1999, all sectors of Thai education are required to provide more opportunities for all Thai people to access higher education. Responding to this Act, the Rajabhat University Act 2004 aimed to transform the status of Rajabhat institutes into universities with increasing autonomy and increasing responsibility for their own futures. The way in which these Acts transform policies, processes and practices in the six Rajabhat universities in Bangkok was investigated by conducting interviews with the presidents and vice presidents of each university to determine how they have responded in terms of management. The findings reveal that factors which have an influence on their organisational culture and management style include globalisation along with economic, political, legal and technological factors. In each university, change happened in complicated and unforeseeable ways (Sinthunava 2009).

A limitation of this above-mentioned research was that it only explored the response to change in one sector of Thai universities. The present study responds to this deficiency by exploring the process of change from policy to practice at the university level in both

public and private universities in different contexts and locations and by investigating the response to change at all levels, as well as the degree of consistency between policy and practice. One of the aims of the present study is to examine whether different contexts have a different influence on each university's performance.

The above-mentioned research highlights the issue of the significant role of leaders in the process of change. This is also supported by Fullan (2001; 2006), who emphasises that the development of leadership in learning organisations is essential for successful and sustainable change. The research conducted by Martoo (2006) also raises this issue. Martoo (2006) conducted research into linking the notion of developing schools as learning organisations with the concept of encouraging learning leaders and building school capacity for the knowledge economy. The main focus of the research was on the relationships between teacher learning, teacher leadership and a professional learning culture as the mechanism for sustaining change and reform. It was recognised that to develop schools as learning organisations, the cooperative work of an organisation can result in strong and powerful learning with the leadership facilitating practitioners to work as a learning community. It was also suggested by many respondents in Martoo's (2006) study that, to enable capacity building leadership, energy and passion are required with the changed pattern of leadership from being top-down to becoming more democratic, with renovated learning relationships. Leaders who are enablers and capacity builders can perform as learning leaders and brokers to encourage other learning partnerships or alliances. It is also recommended by this study that to enable teachers to deal better with the demands of curriculum reform, schools should operate as learning organisations with teachers as learning leaders (Martoo 2006). In the same way, the present study examines the extent to which teachers are provided with autonomy in the curriculum design process by the leaders and how they react to change in their performances and teaching practice through the above-mentioned strategies, such as cooperative works.

Other research related to educational change in Thailand regarding leadership and culture suggests strategies for educational change appropriate to the Thai social context. For example, the research conducted by Hallinger and Kantamara (2000) examined the role of leadership in employing 'modern' systemic reforms through a case study of change leadership in a traditional Thai school. Their study also investigated multi-

cultural aspects regarding school leadership. The study applied a cultural analysis of the change process which questions the nature of the 'empowering' reforms in relation to the underpinning cultural norms of Thai society. In their study, focus group interviews with teachers in the three schools were conducted together with more extensive individual interviews with each of the principals. The findings reveal that there is some variance in the nature of educational change according to the social culture of the country. As the Thai cultural norm, the strong hierarchical power existing in both social and institutional culture was found to be a barrier to change (Sykes *et al.* 1997; Wheeler *et al.* 1997; Hallinger *et al.* 1999; Hallinger and Kantamara in press, cited in Hallinger and Kantamara 2000). Both collectivism and power distance, which are distinctive characteristics of Thai culture, can also inhibit change. Although power distance is seen to encourage compliance at the early stage more easily, it can become a limitation in the later stage of the implementation in which staff members are required to learn new skills. Their study also provides culturally sensitive recommendations for leading educational change in the East (compared to the West). It is recommended that to lead school changes in the Thai cultural context, support from the executives, which is believed to be significant for educational change, should be encouraged at the initial stage of change process. In addition, strategies that can address cultural barriers should also be applied by leaders to understand why staff members resist certain changes. In the process of change, leadership is seen as essential for cultural transformation. Using 'disarmament' strategies, leaders should be warm and friendly with staff so that staff members can discuss with them more openly and frankly. It is also suggested by three directors who participated in this study that the promotion of informal leaders should be cultivated to generate 'pressure and support' for change through social networks. To promote meaningful participation among staff, students and community members in successful change, the application of 'democratic' group processes is encouraged as a 'disarmament' strategy. Finally, a 'family' spirit of mutual responsibility and help should be engendered through organisational rituals such as study visits, fairs and celebrations. Such strategies would be in keeping with the Thai culture (Hallinger and Kantamara 2000).

Another example of research which demonstrates the significant role of leadership for successful reform in Thailand is provided by Chongcharoen (2008). The purpose of her study was to find out how Thai school leaders can respond to the educational reform

more effectively through building a capability development model. A qualitative methodology was employed through interviews, focus group and reviews of documentation. The findings reveal that there are several factors necessary for successful reform in Thailand. These factors include collaboration, participatory practices and leadership that use skills in involving staff, students and community. The findings also demonstrate that the specific roles necessary for Thai school leaders include educational strategic thinking, building and managing a collaborative school culture. The barriers for Thai school leaders' capability development include a culture of compliance to superiors and a culture of deference that makes participation difficult. Chongcharoen (2008) also asserts that bureaucracy and strong hierarchies have a significant influence on the educational culture.

As noted from the above research, there appears to be no research focused on the official policy documents and policy formulation at the national level together with the voice of teachers and their actual teaching practice at the university during the change process in Thailand. This kind of research can be exemplified by the research of Gao (2007) that aims to explore changes in tertiary English teaching in China and the perceptions and reactions of university English teachers, administrators and policy-makers to these changes. In her research, Gao (2007) applied Bourdieu's (1971; 1984) concept of 'field' and Bernstein's (1990; 2000) 'three message systems' as the theoretical framework to examine the expectations of English instructors as a consequence of changes in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The principles of temporality, autonomy and specialization (Maton 2004; 2005) were also used to diagnose teachers' and administrators' orientation to change, the degree of autonomy provided by the changes and the specialist knowledge required to respond to the changes. A qualitative inquiry approach was applied through: analysis of policy documents, university syllabuses, course designs, textbooks and assessment instruments; a survey; and interviews with teachers, administrators and policy-makers. The findings of this study reveal that there was inconsistency between policy and its theoretical basis. The universities did not take an adequate role in helping the teachers to interpret the national policy. English language instructors lacked pre-service training in the areas of English language teaching (ELT) curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. They also lacked adequate in-service professional development for understanding and implementing policy in their teaching. Teachers relied too heavily on textbooks and

external examination which can inhibit change. Furthermore, university English language instruction was observed to be passive and teacher-centred with confusion and uncertainty among English language instructors. Although it was mandated in the policy that autonomy in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment should be provided to universities, centralisation on the part of the state government was still evident. University English language instructors also lacked the essential background and experience in language education to encourage autonomy and reform in university (Gao 2007).

Although the process of change at all levels from policy to practice was explored in Gao's (2007) research, actual classroom practice was not observed in any depth. This deficiency is addressed in Chapter six of the present study. In the current study, the in-depth analysis of relationships and interaction occurring at all levels of the process of change is also included, as well as data relating to the perspectives of stakeholders in the Thai educational reform at all levels by using Bernstein' model of pedagogic device as the main theoretical framework together with his classification and framing as the main tools. In the next section, research using Bernsteinian framework is discussed in relation to the present study.

### **3.3 Research studies using Bernsteinian theory**

As outlined in Chapter two, Bernsteinian theory can be used to explain the process of educational change. As Chen and Derewianka (2009) point out, Bernstein's notion of the pedagogic device can provide a mechanism for examining divergent relationships between the fields of knowledge production, recontextualisation and reproduction, and generating points of innovative interaction. Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing can also help to describe relations between elements of the model (Chen and Derewianka 2009). Moreover, Bernstein's theory broadens the scope of the relationships studied and allows conceptualization at a higher level, without losing the dialectical relation between the empirical and the theoretical (Neves and Morais 2001). Despite a number of studies into the process of educational change using Bernstein's theories, as exemplified below, there is no empirical research regarding the Thai experience applying Bernstein's theories. This omission is also addressed in this study.

Various studies have drawn on Bernsteinian notions in investigating educational reform. For example, to explore the nature of the change process, Chen and Derewianka (2009) applied Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device as a framework for describing points of conflict and tension in the field of language education over the past few decades, specifically in the United Kingdom, USA and Australia. The interface between the field of knowledge production and how this has been recontextualised into curriculum policy were examined in order to explore both continuities and discontinuities. Chen and Derewianka (2009) argue that the pedagogic device provides a context for investigating how ideology intervenes both within fields and at the boundaries between fields. They conclude that policy should provide teachers with overall guidance and support while, at the same time, teachers should be provided with independence in deciding about the nature of content, activities, timing and pacing (Chen and Derewianka 2009). Chen and Derewianka (2009) also recommend that in the actual teaching practice, teachers should know how to balance the binaries. That is to say, teachers should know when to strengthen and weaken the framing or how to balance their control in their classroom at the appropriate time for improving students' outcomes. To achieve this balance, teachers should have high levels of specialist knowledge to be able to make such decisions (Chen and Derewianka 2009).

Similar to the current study, Bernstein's model of classification and framing was applied by Neves and Morais (2001) to analyse the language of Portuguese official science curriculum with regard to the variety of teaching-learning relations. These teaching-learning relations include interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary relations, school-community relations, and teacher-student relations. In their study, the science syllabus document was analysed with respect to 'the what' and 'the how' of pedagogic discourse or with respect to what is to be transmitted and how it is to be transmitted. The study also considered the recommendations of the Ministry of Education for teachers and textbook authors to follow as specified in the specific syllabus.

Neves and Morais (2001) analysed the percentage distribution of sentences in the science syllabus identifying a different degree of relation implied by each sentence. The relations were between the various knowledge fields on the one hand (classification) and between teacher and student on the other (framing). Three point scales of

classification (C++, C+, C-) and framing (F++, F+, F-) relations were employed (Neves and Morais 2001).

<b>Classification (C)</b>	
C++	<i>“the sentence omitted knowledge of other disciplines and referred exclusively to knowledge of the discipline under analysis”.</i>
C+	<i>“the sentence contained references to other curricular disciplines, although those references were vague or implicit”.</i>
C-	<i>“the sentence contained references to other curricular disciplines, pointing explicitly to relations between their knowledge and the knowledge of the discipline under analysis”.</i>

**Table 3.1:** The classification scale generated for analysing the relations between the various knowledge fields (After Neves and Morais 2001, p.232)

<b>Framing (F)</b>	
F++	<i>“the sentence contained statements which gave a clear emphasis to the directive role of the teacher in the teaching-learning process (for example, the teacher “tells”, “informs”, “explains”) or the sentence referred to cognitive and/or socio-affective competences which suggest little intervention by the student and indicate that the syllabus values a theory of instruction more or less exclusively centred on the transmitter”.</i>
F+	<i>“the sentence contained statements which emphasised the orientating role of the teacher in the teaching-learning process (for example, the teacher “guides”, “accompanies”, “appeals to the student’s participation”) or when the sentence referred to cognitive and/or socio-affective competences which suggest some participation of the student and indicate that the syllabus values a theory of instruction which, although centred on the transmitter, also considers student intervention”.</i>
F-	<i>“the sentence contained statements which emphasised a higher degree of intervention of the student in the teaching-learning process (for example, the student engages in “free activities”, “independent tasks”, or “project work”) or when the sentence referred to cognitive and/or socio-affective competences which suggest a higher degree of student autonomy indicating that the syllabus values a theory of instruction mainly centred on the acquirer”.</i>

**Table 3.2:** The framing scale generated for analysing the teacher-student relation and its implied theory of teaching (After Neves and Morais 2001. pp.232-233)

As demonstrated in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2, in accordance with these scales, if the relation is absent, the science syllabus under analysis can be considered as the highest value with very strong classification (C++) or very strong framing (F++). In contrast, if the relation is present, it can be described as having the lowest value with a relatively weak classification (C-) or a relatively weak framing (F-). If there is little explicit relation, it can be described as the intermediate values (C, F). For example, the scale generated for analysing interdisciplinary relations includes three degrees of classification specified in accordance with the criteria as shown in Table 3.1. In

parallel, Table 3.2 also shows that the scale generated for analysing the teacher-student relation and its implied theory of teaching entails three degrees of framing. That is to say, if there is mention of more participation by students in the teaching and learning process, more weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students is suggested. On the other hand, if there is specification of more control from the teachers in the teaching and learning process, there will be more strongly-framed relations between the teacher and students (Neves and Morais 2001).

In the current study, Bernstein's model of classification and framing is used to analyse not only the national curriculum but also the institutional curriculum and teaching practice. Based on Neves and Morais's (2001) work, the present study applies criteria of classification to analyse and examine the extent to which there are relations between theories and principles specified in the official policy documents and research in the field of knowledge production (see Table 2.2 in section 2.4.1 in Chapter two). In addition, in the field of reproduction, the relations between the theories and principles specified *in the institutional curricula* (including the course syllabuses and the lesson plans) are examined (see Table 2.3 in section 2.4.1) together with the relations between theories and notions applied *in the teaching practice* (see Table 2.4 in section 2.4.1). That is, the knowledge generated in the field of production is recontextualized by the official policy and further interpreted by the institutional curricula and transformed into the course syllabuses which have to be converted into lesson plans to be implemented in the classroom. In the same way, the criteria of framing is used to analyse the teacher-student relations and its implied theory of teaching as suggested by the official policy documents (see Table 2.5 in section 2.4.2 in Chapter two) and as specified in the institutional curricula (see Table 2.6 in section 2.4.2). Further, the criteria of framing is employed to analyse the relations between the teacher and students in the actual classroom practice (see Table 2.7 in section 2.4.2).

It is specified in the official policy documents that there should be a shift in teaching pedagogies towards a learner-centred teaching approach together with communicative language teaching. These theories and principles and relevant research are canvassed below.

### 3.4 Pedagogic reform

In this section, research relating to key features of the reform policy is reviewed in regard to pedagogic issues such as learner-centred principles and communicative language teaching.

The National Education Act 1999 focuses on the shift of teaching methods from teacher-centred to student-centred learning. Thai educational institutions have been advised to organise the learning process as follows:

*Section 24 In organizing the learning process, educational institutions and agencies concerned shall:*

- (1) provide substance and arrange activities in line with the learners' interests and aptitudes, bearing in mind individual differences;*
- (2) provide training in thinking process, management, how to face various situations and application of knowledge for obviating and solving problems;*
- (3) organize activities for learners to draw from authentic experience; drill in practical work for complete mastery; enable learners to think critically and acquire reading habit and continuous thirst for knowledge;*
- (4) achieve, in all subjects, a balanced integration of subject matter, integrity, values, and desirable attributes;*
- (5) enable instructors to create the ambiance, environment, instructional media and facilities for learners to learn and be all-round persons, able to benefit from research as part of the learning process. In so doing, both learners and teachers may learn together from different types of teaching-learning media and other sources of knowledge;*
- (6) enable individuals to learn at all times and in all places. Co-operation with parents, guardians, and all parties concerned in the community shall be sought to develop jointly the learners in accord with their potentiality.*

(Section 24, the National Education Act 1999)

As is evident from the above, the official policy document advocates several 'contemporary' teaching theories and principles as part of the educational reform.

These teaching theories and principles include learner-centred teaching and communicative language teaching. Although these reflect different theoretical bases, this study at times uses the term ‘learner-centred’ to cover all these principles, in line with Perera’s (2001) view that these theories and notions all emanate from a learner-centred approach.

With regard to TESOL pedagogy in Thailand, a number of surveys of the history of English language teaching (ELT) approaches and methods have been conducted. The findings of these surveys reveal that approaches and methods in language teaching are explicitly and implicitly characterised by divergent theoretical positions (Richards and Rodgers 2001). These various theoretical positions have been informed by developments in various disciplines, including linguistics, psychology, and education (Berns 1984). The current study is concerned with the consistency between the theories generated by the field of knowledge production, the official policy documents, institutional curricula and teaching practice in terms of specified new teaching methods that are encouraged in the Thai education system as part of the educational reform. This section discusses the literature regarding the pedagogical theories and principles which are primarily relevant to this study and which are specified in the Thai official policy documents. Those theories and principles include the grammar translation method, the communicative language teaching and learner-centred teaching respectively.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.4.1 The grammar translation method**

For some considerable time, foreign language learning in Thailand was aligned with the grammar translation method. As communicative abilities have not been the main focus of most standardized tests of English in Thailand, students have less motivation to go beyond learning grammar, doing translations and completing rote exercises.

Brown (2007) suggests that the appeal of this method is that it requires few specialized skills of teachers and can be applied by non-native English teachers, even those with low proficiency in English. It is also easy to design tests of grammar rules and of

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter five for a detailed discussion of historical approaches to TESOL.

translations which can be objectively marked. The grammar translation method is also predominant in Thailand for many reasons (Wat-aksorn 1999). Since English is taught as a foreign language in Thailand, students seldom have opportunities to practise English outside the classroom (Chen 2005; Yoopayao, nd; Trairat 2004). In a study conducted by Aksornkool (1985), it was reported by the EFL teachers in government schools at both elementary and secondary levels that their students seldom used English in their daily lives. The teachers themselves admitted that they used English only occasionally (Trairat 2004). As a consequence, Thai English teachers tended to use the grammar translation method in their classrooms (Wat-aksorn 1999), causing students to be less motivated and less confident to learn English.

As indicated in the Thai official documentation of the General Education Department (1985, cited in Trairat 2004), there has been inadequate proficiency in the communicative use of English by graduates from each level of education. They recognise that the grammar translation method fails to encourage learners' communicative skills in the target language. Therefore, there has been a shift from this traditional method towards more communicative or functional approaches to language as discussed in the next section.

### **3.4.2 Communicative language teaching**

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is a major objective of the Thai Educational reform. For example, 'communicative skills', a concept associated with communicative language teaching, is specified in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 in the section 'Language for communication' that:

*...Standard F 1.2 Possessing skills for language communication, for data, information and ideas exchanges; capable to apply technology to express feeling and manage learning processes appropriately...(p.26)*

This approach views language as a tool for achieving a range of communicative purposes (Knight 2001). The impact of the influences on communicative language teaching in Thailand is discussed through research studies.

With the use of communicative language teaching, authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks are increasingly applied in classrooms. The teacher acts as a facilitator with students as active participants in their own learning process. Learners are provided with more opportunities to express and negotiate meaning through communicative tasks. Learner-centred, cooperative, collaborative learning is also focused on in a communicative class (Brumfit 1985; Savignon 2002; Brown 2007). One of the most effective communicative teaching strategies is the use of small groups (Nunan 1988), increasing the potential for the individualization of instruction and encouraging a positive affective environment (Long and Porter 1985). Groupwork can improve students' motivation and lead to more collaborative works in the classroom (Long and Porter 1985; Ur 1996; Donna 2000, Nunan 2004a). It also provides learners with opportunities for production and contexts within which meaning can be negotiated (Nunan 1988; Ur 1996). Much research has found that opportunities to engage in conversational interactions in group and paired activities can result in greater fluency and ability to use the second language in more communicative ways (Lightbown and Spada 2006). It was found by Long, Adams, McLean and Castanos (1976) that small groupwork can provide students opportunity to practise using the target language in more various contexts than the whole class activities.

The benefits of such communicative activities were examined by the study of Galton, Hargreaves and Pell (2009). Galton et al. (2009) conducted classroom observation to compare the academic performance and classroom behaviour of students in cooperative groupwork with whole-class teacher-centred activity. The settings were classes of students aged 11 to 14 years in English, mathematics and science. The findings reveal that the students learning in groupwork with higher cognitive level interaction have better learning performance than the students learning as the whole class. It is also recommended that to have an effective groupwork, students are trained to work in groups and there is more time in debriefing after groupwork (Galton et al. 2009). In the present study, how teachers encourage the use of communicative activities as strategies for encouraging the application of communicative language teaching in the Thai EFL classrooms is also investigated.

Ur (1996) comments that most teachers are found to be reluctant to have groupwork in their classrooms since they fear losing their control, with the students making noise and

speaking only their mother tongue in groups. The situational contexts also have an influence on how effectively groupwork is conducted. To foster successful groupwork, interesting tasks which suit the students' abilities and good classroom organisation are required. If there is still strong control by the teacher without students' independence and opportunity to purposefully use the target language in their groupwork, the effectiveness of that groupwork is doubtful (Ur 1996).

Long and Porter (1985) found in their research that through groupwork, learners cannot provide each other with accurate grammatical and sociolinguistic input. They propose the argument that groupwork needs to be integrated with other teacher-centred activities to encourage more corrective feedback for accuracy through collaborative interaction (Long and Porter 1985). Since then there has been a great deal of research into the acquisition of language form through engaging students in collaborative work.

For example, Swain and her colleagues (Kowal and Swain 1994; Swain and Lapkin 2002, cited in Spada 2007) examined the degree to which young adolescent L2 learners can provide information about language and corrective feedback to each other through engaging in collaborative interaction. It was also revealed by the research conducted by Norris and Ortega 2000 and Spada 1997 (cited in Spada 2007) that, contrary to Long and Porter's findings, a focus on form can result in improvement in students' knowledge and their ability to apply that knowledge. Since then a number of studies have investigated the role of comprehensible input, pushed output, and focus on form in groupwork.

Focus on form in the Thai EFL classes was investigated in the research conducted by Muangkaew (2006) with the aim of examining whether an indirect explicit instruction approach can effectively improve students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English grammar. The setting was an English classroom of thirty-three students for sixteen two-hour weekly sessions. Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988, cited in Muangkaew 2006) action research cycle method was applied. The interviews were conducted together with students' self-assessment questionnaires. In addition, the journals of teachers and researchers and the diaries of students were analysed. The findings reveal that indirect explicit grammar teaching was effective in improving students' motivation and attitudes. The significant factors for the change of students'

learning behaviors included an effective learning atmosphere and cooperative learning. They were more enthusiastic in engaging in the learning process with more self-confidence and were more willing to take risks in learning English grammar. It is suggested that an indirect explicit approach be applied in the teaching practice. To achieve this, teachers should develop their own teaching materials in accordance with learners' needs and conduct action research to investigate problems arising from teaching practice (Muangkaew 2006). The current study also investigates how teachers might balance a focus on both form and meaning in their teaching practice.

Despite the benefits of communicative activities such as groupwork, Holliday (1994) cautions that it might not be a culturally-sensitive approach in some contexts and might need to be combined with strong teacher authority. This reflects the debate regarding strong and weak versions of communicative language teaching. In the former, language ability is claimed to be improved through 'real-life' activities which imitate target performance rather than language drills or controlled practice. In comparison, the weak version of communicative language teaching which is used more nowadays allows teachers to include both structural practice and grammar translation teaching in class (Nunan 1988; Nunan 2004b; Liu 2007). Syllabuses which are consistent with the weak version of communicative language teaching provide opportunities for learners to interact through activities such as groupwork and role play along with the adaptation of traditional exercises, such as drilling (Nunan 1988; 1991; 2004b). This study explores what kinds of communicative language teaching are encouraged in the classrooms under analysis by investigating their activities and the degree to which they adopt a strong or weak version of communicative language teaching. This addresses the research question of how teachers interpret the policy with the communicative purpose and transform it into their actual teaching practice.

In communicative language teaching, how to balance the use of L1 and L2 is also the subject of debate. Forman (2005) conducted an ethnographic study with the aim of exploring how L1 is used together with L2 in the Thai EFL classrooms for creating a distinctive bilingual pedagogy. The observation of ten English classes at a provincial Thai university was conducted together with interviews with nine teachers. Systemic-functional linguistics was used as the framework. This theory of 'language in use' was also integrated with a socio-cultural theory of mind, components of Second Language

Acquisition (SLA) and trans-disciplinary perspectives. The findings reveal that the Thai EFL context is different from the ESL context in that there are many aspects affiliated with foreign language teaching. These aspects include almost every characteristic of curriculum, methodology, student participation and teacher bilinguality. It is also found that the use of both L1 and L2 is evident in the Thai EFL context as a distinctive bilingual pedagogy. Forman (2005) asserts from his research that because English is taught as a foreign language in Thailand that means English is seldom used in the context outside class. Also, teacher training and textbooks are mostly produced in English-speaking countries and hence some of them are not appropriate for the Thai EFL context. To encourage more exposure to the target language, more native-speaking teachers need to be recruited and the use of L1 avoided in Thai EFL classes. However, the use of L1 is found to have both strengths and weaknesses. For example, it can be more effectively used in explaining meaning, especially with the students with low capacities in using the target language. L1 is also generally used to deal with some cultural issues. However, if L1 is overused, the opportunities for students to practise L2 will be lessened. Therefore, it is recommended that L1 be used together with L2 in the Thai EFL context (Forman 2005). The use of L1 and L2 will also be investigated in the current study to find out how teachers balance L1 and L2 in Thai EFL classes in different contexts.

Various research studies have been conducted on the issue of the application of communicative language teaching and its efficacy in the classroom. Here will be discussed some issues relevant to the current study. Nunan (1991), for example, conducted research for the purpose of rating thirty statements about learning preferences through questionnaires and follow-up interviews. It aimed to explore the top ten learning strategy preferences of 44 good learners of English as a foreign language. The findings reveal that conversation practice inside and outside the classroom and opportunities for activating English outside class are viewed to be the activities which most enhanced development. On the other hand, grammar drills were seen to be the least useful. Nevertheless, Nunan (1991) argues that the teaching of grammar should not be neglected. How to teach it should be the teacher's concern for the purpose of showing learners how grammar instruction is relevant to the success of communicative purposes. The present study also explores to what extent grammar knowledge is incorporated into communicative language teaching in Thai EFL

classrooms, along with strategies and techniques the teachers use for encouraging learners to apply their L2 outside the classroom. To achieve this purpose, Bernstein's classification and framing are applied as the tools to examine to what extent the teacher applies the principles of communicative language teaching, and how they balance their control in the classroom, respectively.

Some research outcomes regarding communicative language teaching suggest that the application of communicative language teaching might not be the best way in some situations (Brown 2007). For example, it fails to meet learners' needs when they are about to sit high-priority examinations such as TOEFL, causing a lack of motivation and hence a lack of cooperation from learners (Nunan 1988). In addition, non-native-speaking teachers who lack proficiency in English find difficulties in applying this approach in their classrooms. As a result, these non-native-speaking teachers are more likely to apply dialogues, drills, improvised exercises and discussions (in the first language) of grammatical rules which are seen to be easier. Using technology, such as television, audio CDs, the Internet, the Web and computer software in teaching can help teachers to solve this drawback (Brown 2007). However, it is found that many Thai teachers still have inadequate IT knowledge for teaching and learning (Office of the Education Council 2008) and therefore English language teachers at the higher degree levels require training in applying computer assisted language learning (CALL) (Promsiri, Prapphal and Vijchulata 1996; Thongsri 2004; Yoopayao, nd).

The above-mentioned constraints are also confirmed by Nunan (2003) who looked at the impact of global trends in ELT in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam. In some of these countries, he observes that communicative language teaching methods have become a recent philosophical orthodoxy (Education Commission 1990, cited in Nunan 2003) which is reflected in task-based language teaching and learner-centred teaching approaches to instruction. Documentary analysis was conducted together with various forms of interviews with people dealing with policy and teachers. The results reveal that although there is an attempt to encourage the new teaching methods identified in the official policies of these countries, teachers face many difficulties, arising from a lack of understanding, confusion, inadequate professional knowledge, and inconsistency at the level of policy. These problems are also derived from the varying ages of initial instruction in English, inadequate access to effective

language instruction, insufficiently trained and skilled teachers and a separation between curriculum rhetoric and pedagogical reality (Nunan 2003).

The feasibility of applying communicative language teaching and factors contributing to the successful application of communicative language teaching in the Thai social context were also explored in the research study of Weerawong (2004). In her study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis was used with the aim of exploring the actual practices, the consequences of teaching and learning behaviours, and the application of communicative language teaching in schools in Thailand. This study also aimed to investigate whether the teachers who are trained in communicative language teaching principles can implement these in their teaching practice and what factors contribute to successful and unsuccessful practices. The research involved classroom observations together with an interaction analysis. The findings reveal that problems in applying communicative language teaching are caused by the social contexts, and different interpretations and practices. The difficulties of applying communicative language teaching are also derived from conflicts between the cultural context of language teaching and the cultural context of the target language. It is also suggested that the effectiveness of approaches depends on how to use them appropriately. Further, principles generated from research and theory might not always be appropriate in the institutional culture because of many factors inhibiting the application of theory-driven principles (Weerawong 2004). Freeman and Richards (1996, cited in Weerawong 2004) point out that teachers' previous learning, knowledge and belief about teaching are significant factors influencing their perceptions and practices. In terms of teacher development, action research, seminars and workshops should be encouraged. Teacher development in Weerawong's (2004) study consists of the subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical expertise, self-awareness, understanding of learners, understanding of curriculum and materials, and career advancement (Weerawong 2004). In the current study, the factors contributing to the successful application of these theories and principles are also investigated through classroom observation, interviews and document analysis.

Low language proficiency levels are also an issue for students in implementing a communicative approach. Although there is encouragement of English studies in the Thai education system, Thai undergraduates still have such low levels of English

competency that they cannot effectively use English for communication (Thongsri 2004). According to studies of Promsiri, Prapphal and Vijchulata (1996), Thongsri (2004) and Yoopayao (nd), there are several student-related factors which discourage a communicative approach in Thailand. Firstly, English is viewed as a non-essential language which cannot be used in students' daily lives, social activity, and careers (Promsiri et al. 1996; Thongsri 2004; Yoopayao, nd). English is used in Thailand merely for business and international communication purposes. This leads to low proficiency in using English and the use of Thai English rather than the native-like English (Rappa and Wee 2006). In addition, students do not have the opportunity to use English outside class. Secondly, students see the main purpose of English study as being to pass the exam and gain a degree, so they do not take a communicatively-oriented approach seriously. Finally, students always think in Thai, so that it is difficult for them to be familiar with English as a foreign language and a foreign culture (Promsiri et al. 1996; Thongsri 2004; Yoopayao, nd).

Some researchers have focused on the appropriacy of using communicative language teaching in specific contexts. The research of Perera (2001) was conducted in the form of case studies of ESL classrooms that were claimed to use communicative language teaching in four different schools in Sri Lanka. These classrooms were observed and teachers were interviewed to understand the use of oral interaction in the classrooms observed. The findings reveal that the social context and cultural beliefs have a marked influence on the interaction observed and hence on the effectiveness of the new methods. Further, there were similarities and differences between the ESL situations across Sri Lanka. Thus, making generalisations regarding teaching ESL and prescribing teaching practices across cultures and within cultures might not be appropriate. Holliday (1994) suggests that what is believed not to be communicative in a Western culture might be communicative in some social contexts in developing countries in Asia. The research conducted by Perera (2001) also demonstrates that what is claimed to be effective for ESL in one culture, such as communicative language teaching, might not be effective in another culture, such as Sri Lanka (Perera 2001). The present study considers the degree to which communicative language teaching is culturally appropriate in the Thai context.

It has been found in many studies that the teachers are confronted with some difficulties and problems in applying communicative language teaching in English classes in Thailand (Trairat 2004). As noted in the study of Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004), from the surveys of 37 teachers and 655 students of English at the tertiary level, communicative language teaching was predominantly applied in their teaching. Nevertheless, various difficulties in applying communicative language teaching were also reported. These problems entail students' low level of English proficiency, their lack of readiness to be responsible for their own learning, and the inconsistency between communicative language teaching and their learning styles. Other difficulties include large class sizes, inadequate time of lessons and exam-based teaching and learning. It was concluded in their study that the context of teaching and learning is the main constraint for implementation of communicative language teaching rather than the understanding of teachers or the available teaching and learning materials or resources. It was also reported with regard to their learning preferences by most students surveyed that they are too shy to communicate, express their ideas and ask the teacher questions in class. This indicates that their learning preference is not consistent with what is required in communicative language teaching (Jarvis and Atsilarat 2004). Issues surrounding the application of communicative language teaching in Thai classrooms are taken up in the present study through document analysis, interviews with policy-makers, institutional administrators and teachers, and classroom observations.

In the Thai educational reform, alongside the communicative language teaching approach, a learner-centred teaching approach has been promoted by the state government. Research related to this issue conducted in countries other than Thailand and also in Thailand is canvassed respectively in the following sections.

### **3.4.3 Learner-centred teaching approaches**

A major theme in the policy reform in Thailand is the notion of learner-centred teaching pedagogies – a familiar concept in Thailand for some time (Chamornmarn 1997; Dechakup and Khammanee 1997). It is recognised by the National Education Act of 1999 that there must be changes to the teaching and learning processes in Thai schools and educational institutions. Learner-centred pedagogy is closely aligned with a constructivist paradigm. Hall (2002) explains the significant characteristics of

constructivist pedagogy as “*the active engagement of learners in knowledge construction based on prior learning, relevant and meaningful learning, some degree of learner choice and autonomy, and possibly multiple representations of reality*” (Hall 2002, p.32). This has involved a shift from the traditional or instructivist, teacher-centred approach to one that includes elements which encourage learners to construct knowledge and work collaboratively with their peers (Sotillo 2002, cited in Trairat 2004).

Many features of the learner-centred teaching approach, such as collaborative work, are consistent with communicative language teaching. Collaborative learning strategies and activities that place an emphasis on learners’ needs, styles, interests and goals are key characteristics of learner-centred teaching strategies (Cuban 1983; Nunan 1988; Nunan 1992). In learner-centred teaching, techniques that encourage students’ creativity, innovation, sense of competence and self-value are also employed. In terms of the teacher’s role, in learner-centred pedagogies, teachers act as guides who encourage learners to be more self-regulated, and as experts who share their knowledge with learners (Nunan 1992).

The Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC) (2000) proposed the following recommendations for applying the learner-centred teaching approach in the learning process. Firstly, individual learners should be considered in organising teaching and learning activities. Secondly, learners should be encouraged to learn from actual situations which are useful in their real lives. Finally, learners should be encouraged to learn effectively from first-hand experiences with a teacher as a guide. Chorrojprasert (2005), however, claims that the policy direction is in serious contrast with existing teaching practices of Thai teachers. Research has revealed that teachers still rely on the teacher-centred teaching approach in the classroom since they found difficulties in applying the new teaching approaches because of constraints such as time, exam-based teaching, inadequate teacher training, and the lack of resources (Chorrojprasert 2005). In the current study, the national policy, the institutional curricula and actual classroom practice are investigated to examine whether they are consistent with the above-mentioned characteristics of the learner-centred teaching approach.

### 3.4.3.1 General studies of learner-centred pedagogies

There is a variety of research studies relevant to the application of the learner-centred teaching approach and its efficacy. Some of those more closely related to the present study are discussed here.

Mesa and Guzman (2006) conducted a qualitative analysis of the classroom activities and journal entries of 13 teacher-participants in the Basic Education Curriculum core learning areas in the Philippines. It was found that teachers espouse a belief in a constructivist principles such learner-centred approaches as a key factor in students' learning achievement and hence attempt to follow constructivism in their teaching practices. However, their pedagogical practices are found to be more consistent with the traditional way of teaching or teacher-centred approach because of a lack of familiarity on the part of in-service and pre-service teachers with effective learner-centred practices. It is also recommended by Mesa and Guzman (2006) that to apply a learner-centred teaching approach effectively in the classroom, teachers must be resocialized into their new roles and must encourage their students to play more important active roles in the teaching and learning process. Unlike the research of Mesa and Guzman (2006), the current study also explores how other stakeholders in the process of change, including policy-makers and institutional administrators perceive the learner-centred teaching approach through interviews and document analysis.

The application of learner-centred pedagogies is a controversial area. For example, it is so difficult to design a course in accordance with the many needs of different learners that what teachers intend as the result might be mismatched with what learners derive from it in reality (Breen 1987, cited in Nunan 1992). Teachers often hesitate to apply learner-centred teaching strategies with classes since these strategies require more complicated organisation and cause stress among teachers (Ferry 1993). In addition, students have insufficient language proficiency in negotiating with teachers (Barlett and Butler 1985). It was also found that many adult learners are antagonistic towards classroom techniques and activities which can be widely classified as communicative and learner-centred. As a result, communicative language teachers who agree with learner-centred philosophy are faced with a dilemma when dealing with learners who

still have traditional attitudes and beliefs about what are suitable for classroom activities (Nunan 1988).

The mismatch between teachers' beliefs and students' beliefs is also raised by the research of Eltis and Low (1985) which was conducted in the form of a survey of teaching processes within the Australian Adult Migrant Education Program by asking 445 teachers questions about the benefits of applying a variety of teaching activities. The result indicated that those teachers were more inclined to favour communicative activities whereas students seemed to favour more traditional learning tasks. It can be noted from the research that this mismatch between teachers' and learners' expectations derives from different backgrounds and learning experiences of learners, which can have an influence on their perceptions of effective teaching strategies. Thus, these differences need to be taken into account for the development and application of teaching strategies (Eltis and Low 1985).

To avoid this dilemma, Nunan (1988) suggests that there should be broad consultation, negotiation and information exchange between the teacher and the learners. Teachers need to be trained for these new skills in the form of assistance and support in many areas such as needs assessment skills, course guidelines, course planning skills, bilingual help, continuity in the programme, educational counseling, conflict resolution, teacher role specification and vice versa. Brown (2007) also recommends that students are provided with a sense of ownership of their learning which can heighten their intrinsic motivation.

Similar issues to the above are canvassed in the present study, which examines how the learner-centred teaching approach is perceived by teachers through interviews, document analysis and classroom practice, and whether there is real change towards more learner-centred teaching in Thai EFL classrooms. It examines the feasibility and difficulties of applying a learner-centred teaching approach in the Thai EFL classrooms and how teachers balance their control with student autonomy.

The following section addresses research into the application of learner-centred teaching specifically in Thailand.

### **3.4.3.2 Studies of learner-centred pedagogies specific to Thailand**

In the previous section, general studies on learner-centred pedagogies were discussed. In this section, how learner-centred pedagogies are applied in Thailand is explained through various research studies conducted in Thailand in response to the educational reform towards a more learner-centred teaching approach.

The Education Act requires Thai schools to implement the new teaching approaches to learning (The Office of the National Education Commission 1999). To respond to this requirement, a national pilot study was conducted by Piya-Ajariya (2001) to introduce a new student-centred learning approach. An initiative of a school-based whole-school immersion approach to training was applied. The participants included 253 schools, 10,094 teachers, 224,471 students and 44 Research and Development (R&D) teams. The time line of this pilot project was about nine months. A major goal was to encourage the participants to play an active role of leadership in promoting the reforms specified in the Education Act. These leaders included master teachers, school administrators, students and R&D teams who undertook training in the new teaching and learning for educational reform during the conduct of this pilot project. It was found that they had insufficient training and knowledge in the underpinning principles of the student-centred approach, of action research for professional development, and of decentralised management and monitoring systems. Accordingly, new principles of student-centred teaching as specified in the Education Act were introduced to participants in various forms, such as face-to-face workshops and seminars. The outcomes of the project were satisfactory. Firstly, there was more recognition of the current education reform initiatives among all stakeholders. Secondly, a greater attempt at applying the new teaching and learning tasks was made by the teachers. Also, there was an awareness of their new roles of supporters and facilitators among administrators. Finally, more public debate was encouraged to raise awareness of the requirement for education reform, new teaching and learning methods and new management approaches (Piya-Ajariya 2001).

It is commented by Pillay (2002a) that although a project-based learning approach was introduced by this above-mentioned pilot project, the main concepts of the strategy were not explained in sufficient detail. The teacher educators were not capable of explaining

the new teaching principles in more practical ways for the teachers. It is assumed in this bottom-up immersion approach that knowledge and skills within the groups are adequate for encouraging the application for new practices. However, the Thai context might not be suitable with this approach because of many barriers. First, there are language barriers and a lack of expertise in the new notions. Secondly, knowing how to follow procedures without a deeper insight into the purpose of those actions might not help foster successful change. Finally, the school administrators might not be familiar with the new practices in terms of their new roles as supporters (Pillay 2002a).

It has been found in much research conducted in Thailand that there are many constraints which obstruct the effective use of the new teaching methods. Chorrojprasert (2005) conducted a survey of 485 teachers using qualitative methods and in-depth interviews with a group of nine teachers together with portfolio analysis. This aimed to investigate the use of new learner-centred strategies such as portfolios as a part of the mandated quality assurance requirements by teachers in secondary schools in Thailand and their impact on the teachers' beliefs about their practices in teaching and learning. The findings reported the difficulties of Thai teachers in terms of change or development. Most participants agreed that the overloading of work and additional responsibilities are their main constraints. Other constraints included the culture and the nature of Thai students. Although the need to reform Thai education is recognised, this reform seems to be incommensurate with Thai teachers' cultural and belief systems. According to Chorrojprasert (2005), most Thai teachers prefer to apply the teacher-centred approach. Chorrojprasert (2005) suggests that Thai teachers should be better informed of these new teaching approaches in order to implement them. To succeed in this, it was recommended that Thai teachers' educational belief systems need to be changed. The present study extends on the findings of the above research by conducting interviews not only with teachers, but also with other stakeholders to find out how they perceive and experience the application of new teaching methods. An in-depth analysis of documents is also conducted together with classroom observation in the current study.

Nonkukhetkhong, Baldauf Jr. and Moni (2006) conducted case studies of five in-service EFL teachers from contextually different public secondary schools in Udon Thani, Thailand. This research aimed to find out teachers' perceptions and implementation of the learner-centred approach to teaching English as a foreign language in Thai secondary

school contexts through interviews, classroom observations and teachers' self-reporting. The findings reveal that although the teachers attempted to implement learner-centred approaches in their teaching, they found themselves less confident about its underpinning theory. Accordingly, the degree of the implementation relied on how the teachers applied their comprehension of that theory in their practice within the contextual constraints (Nonkukhetkhong et al. 2006). This study explored how teachers at the school level apply the learner-centred teaching approach. However, there is little research investigating how teachers at the university level apply learner-centred teaching approaches. This deficiency is addressed in the present study in which Thai EFL classes at the university level are investigated to examine how teachers interpret policy through their teaching practices under various contextual constraints.

One such study was conducted by McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) relating to the new teaching methods at the university level by investigating the reactions of teachers and learners to a learner-centred and task-based EFL course in a Thai university. The syllabus which was designed by a group of Thai EFL teachers was piloted and revised before being implemented. Qualitative analysis of both oral and written data was undertaken to ascertain the teachers' and learners' impressions of the task-based EFL course during the pilot testing. Findings indicated that the task-based EFL course was believed to enable learners to be more independent and to meet their real world academic needs. In the task-based teaching approach, learners' needs should be met by employing authentic tasks (Long 2000, cited in McDonough and Chaikitmongkol, 2007). However, there is debate as to whether this approach can be effectively employed with learners who have little need to use the target language outside class (Sheen 1994, cited in McDonough and Chaikitmongkol 2007). McDonough and Chaikitmongkol (2007) assert from their research that EFL learners in academic contexts, especially at university level, will have immediate academic needs, and these needs can be considered as a real-world target. Therefore, this approach can be effectively applied. The present study extends McDonough and Chaikitmogkol's (2007) research by examining policy, curriculum and practice.

A main concern of the current study is to examine whether there is a relationship between the theories and principles specified in the official policy documents, namely the learner-centred teaching approach and related practices, and classroom teaching. It

thus builds on and extends the findings from studies such as the above. While research into the application of these theories has been canvassed here, the theoretical premises are dealt with in greater detail in section 5.2 in Chapter five which focuses more on the knowledge production field and its relationship to policy and practice.

### **3.5 Summary of Chapter three**

In response to official policies mandating sweeping reform of the Thai education system, a number of studies have addressed issues arising from the reform process – from the actual formulation of the policy in terms of decision-making procedures to the implementation of the policy in educational institutions. According to the literature, there are many social, cultural and political factors which can be barriers to encouraging Thai educational reform at all levels. For example, the strong control from the state government, and power distance, can obstruct the participation of all stakeholders in the policy formulation and implementation process. Various research studies have identified other critical factors which impact on the success of the reform agenda: the quality of leadership and educational administration; institutional autonomy and accountability; incentives for faculty; professional learning; and provision of support and resources.

In coming to an understanding of the ‘big picture’ of educational reform, several researchers have found Bernstein’s notion of the pedagogic device to provide a useful framework. Neves and Morais (2001), for example, investigated the degree to which theories of teaching and learning are specified in the syllabus by drawing on Bernstein’s concepts of classification and framing. The present study is located within this tradition, using Bernsteinian theory to trace the relationship between the field of knowledge production, the field of recontextualization where the knowledge is transformed into educational policy, and the field of reproduction in which the policy is interpreted and implemented at the level of the institution and classroom.

The official policy documents advocate the adoption of learner-centred principles and communicative language teaching. A review of research relating to these factors revealed a number of issues that have the potential to affect the achievement of policy

objectives: traditional Thai sociocultural beliefs and values that appear to be at odds with the assumptions underlying learner-centredness; practical constraints that inhibit the implementation of the reforms (e.g. a lack of teaching and learning resources, large class sizes, insufficient lesson time; minimal opportunities to use English in real-life contexts, the low English proficiency and motivation of students, antagonism towards new pedagogies, the impact of the examination system); and teacher-related issues such as their orientation towards change (preferring, for example, to stay with the known traditional methods), poor understanding of the theory behind the pedagogical initiatives, inadequate preservice and inservice preparation for implementing the reforms, workloads, and unfamiliarity with the potential of new technologies to support communicative and learner-centred pedagogies.

While studies such as those canvassed above provide useful insights into various aspects of the change process, the significance of the present study lies in its aim to provide a more comprehensive overview of the education reform process in Thai tertiary EFL contexts, investigating consistencies and inconsistencies between the theories and principles espoused in the policy documents and the interpretation of these in the process of implementation at the level of the institution and the classroom. The current study analyses a wide range of data sources, including Thai official policy documents and the institutional curricula together with interviews of policy-makers, administrators and teachers, and classroom observation. This variety of data sources facilitates a greater understanding of how Thai universities and instructors of English from a range of Thai universities are attempting to implement the change. In the next chapter, the methodology used in this study to explore the Thai educational reform and change is discussed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the research relevant to curriculum change and reform, and to theories of pedagogy specified in the official policy documents, was reviewed. This chapter discusses how the study was designed to address the research questions identified in Chapter one. The qualitative research methodology used in the case studies is discussed in terms of its appropriacy to the aims of the project. Then, selection of participants is explained, together with details of their qualifications and status. Ethical considerations and issues are also addressed here. Further, the data collection used in this study – methodological triangulation via document analysis, interviews and classroom observations – is described. Finally, the data analysis is explained.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate policy and practice in relation to Thai policy reforms in the area of tertiary English teaching in Thailand. In other words, it investigates how policies are formulated and interpreted and how these policies are implemented by teachers. With respect to change, the theoretical framework of Bernstein's pedagogic device, and classification and framing, are employed to analyse and discuss the interface among people involved in the process of change at all levels. These levels include the policy formulation and interpretation process at the national level, the curriculum design process at the institutional level and teaching practice at the implementation level. This study also investigates whether there is consistency between policy and practice by examining the relations between the official policy documents, the institutional curricula and teaching practice. To achieve this purpose, this study employs qualitative procedures, including policy document analysis, interviews and classroom observations in a case study approach. Stakeholders at all levels – policy-makers, institutional administrators and instructors - were interviewed. Three universities were investigated as case studies in terms of their curriculum design process,

and the relations between the official policy documents and the institutional curricula. How instructors were implementing policy and their reaction to the policy are also investigated in these case studies which are discussed in the following section.

## **4.2 The case study research design**

As mentioned above, the research design is framed by the research questions:

- 1.) how is research theorising from the production field taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents;
- 2.) how do the educational institutions interpret and recontextualise the official policy documents?;
- 3) how do teachers interpret and implement the official policy documents into their teaching practice?;
- 4.) to what extent are theory and research, government policies, and institutional curricula at various levels consistent with each other and with classroom practice?

The case studies capture the ‘broad’ picture of the process of education reform in Thailand, that is from policy to practice. Case studies are appropriate to this study in many ways. Nunan (1992) points out that in case studies, a variety of methods is applied for collecting and analysing data. To achieve this, the current study employs several methods, namely document analysis, interviews and classroom observation.

According to Burns (2000), a case study approach includes the observation of an individual unit, such as a student, a family group, a class and a community. This is used to gain deeper insights into the matters investigated by emphasising the process rather than the outcome, and on discovery rather than confirmation. Through case studies, an in-depth exploration of the activities of the group can be explained (Cresswell 2002). Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) state that through case studies, specific events related to a case are investigated and researchers immerse themselves in the case. Burns (2000) also suggests that a case study is a useful research strategy in which when, how, who, why or what questions are being asked to investigate some characteristics of real-life situations. In the current study, case studies of universities in different contexts are conducted to explore and understand what really happens in those institutions with

respect to curriculum reform. This provides deeper insight into how universities interpret the national policy into their curricula and performances and how teachers interpret and transform the policy into their actual teaching practice.

Nunan (1992) points out that in case studies, a variety of methods is applied for collecting and analysing data. Multiple cases are also explored to gain deeper insights into how various factors influence the universities' and instructors' practices. The use of case studies also enables a deeper understanding of the different contexts of each case. These contexts include a range of variables, such as the teacher's experience and preparation for teaching English, and the opportunities provided in the school for learning English (Nunan 1992). In this study, the selection of three universities in different contexts allows comparison across cases. The use of the multiple cases assists the researcher to analyse both within and across cases (Punch 1998).

In each case, a wide range of data collection sources was employed. The significant data collecting techniques were non-participatory observation with video-recordings of classroom activities. Document, interview data and fieldnotes were analysed to examine how teachers interpret policy within their teaching practice and what factors influence implementation. These various sources of evidences provide triangulation of data.

Van Lier (1988) contends that the use of a single observation scheme could be more effective if it is employed in combination with other various tools, such as lesson plans, fieldnotes and interviews. In the current study, as observational tools, the Thai Education Reform Checklists for classroom observations which will be described in more detail later in section 4.6 were used together with fieldnotes and interviews; all of which can provide considerable insight into the classroom activities within each case and across cases. They also permit the researcher to describe a variety of classroom activities in diverse contexts.

Data collection procedures are described in terms of procedures employed and their relationships to research questions in Table 4.1.

<b>Data collection and research questions</b>		
<b>Main question:</b> What is the nature of the relationship between the knowledge production field, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field in the Thai tertiary English language teaching context?		
<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Data collection method</b>
1. How is research theorising from the production field taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents?	- The official policy documents - Documents related to policy	- Policy document analysis
	- Policy-makers - Government officers dealing with policy decision-making	- Interviews
2. How do the educational institutions interpret and recontextualise the official policy documents?	- Institutions' curricula (including course syllabuses and lesson plans) - Institutional professional development programs	- Document analysis
	- Administrators/ Curriculum Leaders - Teachers' views on institutional curricula and performances	- Interviews
	- Classrooms materials, e.g. course syllabuses and lesson plans	- Document analysis
3. How do teachers interpret and implement the official policy documents into their teaching practice?	- Institutional curricula - Course syllabuses - Lesson plans - Classroom materials, e.g. textbooks and sheets	- Document analysis
	- Teachers' views on a learner-centred approach and other teaching approaches	- Interviews
	- Classroom practice	- Classroom observations
4. To what extent are theory and research, government policies, and institutional curricula at various levels consistent with each other and with classroom practice?	This question requires consideration of all of the data analysis and interpretation described above.	

**Table 4.1:** Data collection and research questions

As illustrated, the research questions investigate how policy is formulated, interpreted and implemented at the national level, the institutional level and the teaching level respectively.

## **4.3 Method of data gathering and analysis**

### **4.3.1 Settings**

Since this study investigates policy and curriculum change in Thai education reform, the settings related to the broad policy and curriculum context, as well as the practice, are examined. At the state policy level, the national policy documents are analysed, together with interviews with policy-makers and officials. At the institutional level, the institutional curricula are analysed, together with interviews with some institutional executives and administrators, and teachers. At the implementation level, the settings are EFL classrooms in Thai universities. The aim is to investigate how learner-centred pedagogies, as identified in the policy, are interpreted and conducted in various Thai institutional contexts. Two private universities, University A and University B, are investigated in comparison with a public university, University C, to examine different variables that have significant influences on policy implementation. For example, it could be assumed that with a greater budget and better organisational systems, some private universities are likely to have more effective teaching and learning resources and environments, and as a result more positive dispositions and understandings towards the education reform. Thus, certain universities selected for investigation were identified to the researcher by reports from participants at various levels: administrators and teachers as being suitable and willing to participate in the study.

Two private universities and a state university were investigated in this study. University A, a private university, is located in a province near Bangkok. University B, another private university, is an international university located in Bangkok. University C, a state university, is located in Bangkok. This study observed high English competency of instructors and students in the classes observed in University C. In addition, English is the main language used in classes observed as the teaching medium. In University B, students study in the English language medium in most subjects. In University A, most undergraduates come from the lower-middle class families in the

countryside and it is noticeable that Thai language is applied as the main teaching medium in English classes observed in this university.

As can be seen, the universities explored in this study have diverse contexts. This is of benefit in determining how different factors in different contexts have different influences on policy and practice.

### **4.3.2 Participants**

As demonstrated in Table 4.2, all participants are stakeholders at the three levels in the policy process, including eight policy-makers, three institutional administrators and seven instructors of six universities.

<b>Government officers who deal with designing national education policies</b>	
<b>Public Organisation A</b>	
Director A	Director of Bureau A
Director B	Director of Bureau B
Director C	Director of Bureau C
Chief D	Chief of Bureau D
Educator A	Educator in Bureau H
<b>Public Organisation B</b>	
Director E	Director of Bureau E
Chief G	Chief of Bureau G
<b>Public Organisation C</b>	
Educator B	Educator
<b>Educational Institutions Three case studies</b>	
<b>1. University A (Rural) (Private)</b>	
Administrator A (Female)	Dean's academic assistant
Instructor A1 (Male)	English instructor
Instructor A2 (Female)	English instructor
<b>2. University B (Bangkok) (Private)</b>	
Administrator B (Male)	Chairperson of English Department
Class Instructor B (Female)	English instructor
<b>3. University C (Bangkok) (Public)</b>	
Administrator C (Female)	Assistant Dean of School of Liberal Arts
Instructor C (Female)	English instructor
<b>Educational Institutions Other universities</b>	
<b>4. University D (Bangkok) (Public)</b>	
Instructor D (Female)	English instructor
<b>5. University E (Rural) (Public)</b>	
Instructor E (Male)	English instructor
<b>6. University F (Rural) (Public)</b>	
Instructor F (Female)	English instructor

**Table 4.2:** List of participants

Responses to the research questions were obtained from three levels in the policymaking and policy implementation process. As shown in Table 4.2, the first group of participants includes eight government officers who take part in policy decision-making. They were selected from three state organisations: Organisation A which is responsible for designing national policies and plans, Organisation B which is responsible for the higher education levels and Organisation C which has the responsibilities in designing the plans for schools in one province. Participants selected from Organisation A include three directors (Director A, Director B and Director C) of three different bureaus (Bureau A, Bureau B and Bureau C respectively), one chief (Chief D) of Bureau D and

one educator (Educator A) of Bureau H. These bureaus in Organisation A have different responsibilities. Two policy-makers were selected from Organisation B, including one director (Director E) of Bureau E and one chief (Chief G) of Bureau G. Also, one educator (Educator B) was chosen from Organisation C. Their interview data responds to the research question of how research theorising from the production field is taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents.

At the policy implementation level, six universities (University A, University B, University C, University D, University E and University F) were initially included in the original study. Due to the constraints of this study relating to scope and feasibility, only three of them (University A, University B and University C) were selected for more detailed study.

The second group includes staff members or administrators who deal with the policy translation into institutional curricula, including two institutional administrators (Administrator A and Administrator B) in two private universities (University A and University B respectively) and an institutional administrator (Administrator C) in a state university (University C). Responses from this group address the research question of how these institutions interpret and transform the policy.

The third group involves seven instructors from the above-mentioned six universities who were considered to take a significant role in interpreting and then implementing the policy into their teaching practice (Fullan 2001). All of them (Instructor A1 of University A, Instructor A2 of University A, Instructor B of University B, Instructor C of University C, Instructor D of University D, Instructor E of University E, and Instructor F of University F) were interviewed. These instructors include three class instructors in three case studies whose classes were observed. These class instructors include one male (Instructor A1 of University A) and two female instructors (Instructor B of University B and Instructor C of University C). For each of these class instructors, approximately one lesson was observed. These were selected with the help of the heads of department. The above-mentioned seven instructors include instructors with little teaching experience (less than 10 years), teachers with standard training experience (11-20 years) and teachers with extensive experience of training and professional development in learner-centred pedagogies (more than 21 years). Such varying

experience is useful in this study since experience is a major factor to be considered in examining the degree of success of teacher change and policy implementation (Fullan 2001). Responses from this group address the research question of how the instructors interpret and implement the policy.

#### **4.4 Ethical considerations and issues**

The present study met the ethical requirements of the University of Wollongong. Three class instructors provided their written consent to have their lessons recorded on both video recorder and audio tapes and to be interviewed (See copies of consent forms in Appendix 1). Other participants, including four instructors, eight policy-makers and three administrators provided their written consent to be interviewed and have their interviews recorded on audio tapes.

In terms of ethical issues, compromise and sensitivity were required in this study. For example, participants were interviewed for general details and anonymous notes written by the participants were used to respond to more sensitive questions. This also allowed the researcher and participants to be more confident that the research was conducted in a cooperative way. This confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed to those people involved in observation and interviews. As recommended by Burns (2000), the interviewer promised not to disclose information about the participants' identities through the use of code names and de-identified data. These measures helped to facilitate the research process.

#### **4.5 Data collection**

The research approach adopted points to the need to examine perceptions and reactions of those involved in the policy process, as well as the interplay between government policy and teachers as implementers (Brown 1997). This research applies methodological triangulation via document analysis, observation and interviews with informants. These three techniques of triangulation design can lead to greater reliability in description of the policy formulation and implementation process, and practice. It aims to continually collect and merge various research methods, and use the results to

understand research problems. This allows results of various methods to be gathered and comparatively interpreted and analysed (Creswell 2005). In all, information collected from multimethods has been used to capture the best possible picture of the Thai education reform through the policy process in relation to the teaching and learning characteristics within Thai EFL classrooms.

#### **4.5.1 Documents**

As O'Mullane (1994) states, documents are the permanent evidence and record of decision-making. Both published and unpublished documents were analysed in the present study. The published documents include the Thai Educational Act, policy articles, books and textbooks. The unpublished documents include the institutional curricula, the course syllabuses, the lesson plans, teaching materials, textbooks and supplementary sheets. These documents also include detailed data from three organisational levels in the process of education reform. First, policies, policy statements, and any documents related to policies, produced by the public organisations and controlled by the state government, were collected and analysed. Secondly, institutional policies or the institutional curricula and the course syllabuses produced by the educational institutions in response to public policies were analysed. Finally, lesson plans written by teachers at the implementation stage were taken into account. The English versions of these documents were collected and analysed. One of the important aims of this document analysis was to examine consistency between the policy and implementation process.

#### **4.5.2 Interviews**

Weller and Romny (1988) assert that interviews are effective data collection techniques for research. According to Brenner, Brown and Canter (1985), the interview can provide both parties with opportunities to explore the meaning of questions and answers, since it allows for negotiation of understanding and the clarification of questions and answers which can be misinterpreted.

The survey data sheets and interview questions for policy-makers, institutional administrators and instructors are shown in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 respectively. In

order to be confident with the quality of interview questions, the researcher conducted four pilot interviews with a policy-maker, two Thai English instructors and an Australian instructor whose English classes were also observed as the pilot classroom observation. These pilot interviews provided the researcher with useful feedback. Firstly, it was found that some questions were repetitive and could be deleted. Secondly, some questions were not clear and needed more clarification. Finally, some questions were not relevant or unnecessary and could be deleted.

All participants at the three levels in the policy process were interviewed in the Thai language (except an interview with Administrator B of University B which was conducted in the English language). As expected, these participants provided both official and personal observations about public and institutional policies, and their works relevant to those policies and practice. The content of the interview questions (see Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and Appendix 4) was set up in relation to the research questions with an emphasis on the facts and perceptions of the participants about policy formulation, interpretation, implementation or teaching practice and other variables relevant to these. In all interviews, respondents provided other related issues about policy areas in which they took part. The institutional administrators and instructors of three case studies were also interviewed with questions related to their institutional curriculum design process and the characteristics of institutional curricula. Interviews were conducted in the Thai language for one hour, before and/or after the classroom observation with class instructors to gather perceptions and experiences when implementing policies through their teaching and classroom practice. These interviews took place at the participants' respective universities. Importantly, a number of issues related to policy were clarified by participants to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Then, the interview data was simultaneously transcribed and translated into English by the researcher.

### **4.5.3 Observation**

Pilot classroom observations were conducted with one Australian teacher in an Australian college which teaches English language to international students, including Thai students. This pilot was beneficial in that the researcher learnt how to manage time while recording, observing and doing the field notes simultaneously. The researcher also

learned how to cope with the problems occurring during classroom observation, such as technical problems with the video recording. In other words, the researcher became more accustomed to the tools designed for classroom observations later. More importantly, the Thai Educational Reform Checklist as a tool of classroom observation was tried out in this pilot classroom observation. This also provided the researcher with feedback, in that this checklist was revised and modified to be more concise and compact.

O' Mullane (1994) recommends that since many practices and implementation policies are not documented, they can only be investigated through observation. In this study, the policy interpretation and implementation in institutional organisations were investigated through observation of classroom practice. For the policy implementation, three class instructors were observed in terms of their classroom practice and teaching and learning environment. Since instructors can be viewed as key agents of recontextualisation as they operate between the official and local pedagogic contexts (Jones 2005), the analysis of their perceptions through interviews and observation of their teaching practices (materials, teaching approach) in the classroom are crucial. Fullan (2001) states that 3 aspects of change (materials, teaching approach and beliefs) at the classroom level should be considered when looking for evidence of change. Accordingly, educational texts, tools and activities of the three universities under analysis within various contexts have been explored. Coursebooks and textbooks which have great influences on the teaching content and pedagogic tasks or how these instructors perform in their classroom were also investigated.

In keeping with nonparticipant research, the classroom practice was recorded by using video recorder, tape recorder and fieldnotes. The Thai Educational Reform Checklist for classroom observation was also used. The data was analysed in order to see how teaching and learning activities were organised and to what extent these activities were consistent with the principles espoused by the national policy and institutional curricula. The use of participant structures, such as pairwork, groupwork, role play and discussion was noted in order to more closely examine students' and teacher's roles. For example, group discussion taking place in the classes observed was captured through audio-recordings. The reasons for decision-making by the instructor were clarified in the

interview after the class. The data analysis will be described in more detail in the next section.

## **4.6 Data analysis**

Detailed analyses of the documents, interviews, and classroom observation were conducted to map out the complicated nature of the process of Thai educational reform and Thai tertiary English language teaching, and to answer the research questions. To help interpret the data, the national policies were initially analysed by using a thematic approach. The thematic analysis involved identification of themes or repeated patterns of meaning that are significant for describing the phenomenon from the collected data (Daly, Kellehear, and Gliksman 1997; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006; Braun and Clarke 2006). The main aim was to explore what theories and principles of teaching and learning are specified in the official policies. These theories and principles, namely the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching, were applied to the content of three Thai Education Reform Checklists for analysing the official policy documents, the institutional curricula and classroom observation, as shown in Table 4.3, Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 respectively. The information from various sources were then categorised and coded in these checklists.

As a supplementary tool, three Thai Education Reform Checklists as demonstrated in Table 4.3, Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 were created using key concepts associated with the teaching and learning approach advocated by the official policy documents.

Language Teaching concepts created in the area of second language acquisition and learning	Policy documents	
	National Education Act B.E. 2542 (A.D.1999)	Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2544 (A.D.2001)
<b>1.) Learner-centred teaching approach</b>		
- Learners' needs/interests		
- Teachers as facilitators		
- Self-development		
<b>2.) Communicative language teaching</b>		
- Communicative purpose/context		
- Authentic tasks		
- Integrated skills (reading/writing/listening/speaking)		

**Table 4.3:** The Thai Education Reform Checklist for analysing official policy documents

The first Thai Educational Reform Checklist as shown in Table 4.3 is used to compare what is specified in the official policy documents with the dominant theories and principles associated with the learner-centred teaching approach, which are created in the area of second language acquisition and learning, to examine their relationship.

As demonstrated in Table 4.4, the second Thai Education Reform Checklist is designed for analysing the institutional curriculum of each case study to examine their relationship with the official policy documents.

	University
Learner-centred teaching approach (Learners' needs and interests, self development)	CC= core curriculum C=curriculum, course description S= course syllabus Page number/number/line
Communicative language teaching (Authentic tasks and texts, integrated skills, communicative purpose, collaborative works)	
Activities	
Aspects of language	

**Table 4.4:** The Thai Education Reform Checklist for analysing institutional curricula

This checklist includes theories and principles drawn from the Thai official policy documents, namely the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language

teaching. In addition, the institutional curricula are analysed in terms of pedagogic activities described in the documents and aspects of language deemed important.

As shown in Table 4.5, the third Thai Education Reform Checklist is used in classroom observation.

<b>Key theories and principles specified in the official policy documents</b>	<b>Guiding questions</b>
Learner centred teaching approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the instructor focus on learners' needs and interests?</li> <li>2. Does the instructor give students opportunities to take initiatives in their learning?</li> <li>3. Does the instructor encourage students to be independent in their learning?</li> <li>4. Does the instructor encourage students to think about and reflect on their learning?</li> </ol>
Communicative language teaching approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does an instructor encourage students to experiment with language in different contexts?</li> <li>2. Do students attempt to use the target language with peers and teacher?</li> <li>3. Do students engage in collaborative activities with others?</li> </ol>
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the instructor assign (1.) project (2.) presentation (3.) individual work (4.) pairwork (5.) groupwork ?</li> <li>2. Do these activities involve purposeful language use?</li> </ol>
Teaching materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the instructor use only textbooks?</li> <li>2. Does the instructor use materials other than textbooks ? (sheets or other materials) What?</li> <li>3. Does the instructor assign exercises to students? What type?</li> </ol>
Aspects of language	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which language do the teacher and students use in the class?</li> <li>2. Which skills do students practise in the class?</li> <li>3. Does the instructor include experiences other than the textbook content?</li> <li>4. Do students apply language in different contexts?</li> <li>5. What is the balance between fluency and accuracy?</li> </ol>
Various methods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learner-centred approach (%) (Why?)</li> <li>2. Communicative language teaching (%) (Why?)</li> <li>3. Teacher-centred approach (%) (Why?)</li> <li>4. Others (What?) (%) (Why?)</li> </ol>

**Table 4.5:** The Thai Education Reform Checklist for analysing classroom observation

This checklist includes questions for the researcher to attend to during and/or after the classroom observation. These questions are mostly drawn from the theories and principles specified in the official policy documents. For example, the questions are used to justify whether an instructor encourages students to be more independent in

their learning in the class observed. Questions in terms of teaching materials and various methods are also included.

Insight into the theories and principles specified in the national policies and institutional curricula was important since one of the main purposes of this study was to investigate the relationships between the official policies, the institutional curricula and the teaching practice, and to identify implications for teachers of English in tertiary settings in Thailand. To gain further understanding of the theories and principles outlined in the policy documents - namely the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching - the works of key theorists in the field were consulted as discussed in Chapter three and Chapter five. There followed an examination of the extent to which the policy documents provided a clear and informed explication of the theoretical bases of the recommended approaches and pedagogies, as detailed in Chapter five. In Chapter six, the extent to which the institutional curricula take up the recommendations of the national policy in relation to teaching and learning theories is analysed. Finally, how they are applied in the classroom practice is investigated and discussed. Through this analysis, issues regarding the interpretation and implementation of the theories and principles mandated in the official policy documents were identified as potential barriers faced by teachers in promoting the educational change toward more learner-centredness and communicative practices.

The analysis of interview data was guided by the interview questions as described above in this chapter (see Appendices 2, 3 and 4). These interview questions were mainly framed by the theoretical framework in terms of policy formulation, interpretation and implementation in relation to Bernstein's (1990; 1996; 2000) pedagogic device: the knowledge production field, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field. A thematic approach was also applied for analysing the interview data. This approach involves themes derived from the informants' talk being brought together to capture a comprehensive picture of their collective experience (Aronson 1994). Themes are identified through careful reading of the data (Rice and Ezzy 1999; Braun and Clarke 2006) and then are used as the categories for analysis (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). In the current study, the interview data was initially transcribed into written form in Thai and then translated into English. To analyse the interview data, how informants talked about the main themes of this study was investigated through reading

and re-reading transcripts of audio-recordings. Based on the interview questions, all interview data was initially coded and collated. This stage of analysis is called the process of coding, in which the data is categorised into meaningful groups (Braun and Clarke 2006). Then, the different codes were organised into potential themes, and all extracts of interview data were matched with these classified themes. Following that, themes and subthemes were refined, based on the research questions. There are many core themes that capture the process of Thai education reform, such as policy formulation, institutional policy implementation, curriculum development, teacher development, teaching concepts and teaching practices. Each of these themes encompasses many subthemes. For example, teaching concepts include the learner-centred teaching approach and its appropriateness to the Thai social context. In this way, similarities and differences between separate groups of data, demonstrating areas of consensus and areas of potential conflict in response to the research questions, were identified (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006).

The analysis of each case was focused on one to two observed lessons. Ideally more lessons would have been observed in order to see a range of teaching practices across a series of lessons. However, the fact that the researcher had limited time for data collection during the field visit to Thailand precluded this. The classrooms of three class instructors were observed in order to document their teaching practice and to explore how they interpreted and implemented the institutional curriculum. They were observed through video recorder and audio-recorder. Each lesson was examined based on field notes, transcripts of video-recordings and transcripts of audio-recordings of group discussions. The data from classroom observations was transcribed into Thai language first and then translated into English. Each lesson was described by using the Thai Educational Reform Checklist for classroom observation (see Table 4.5 in this section) in terms of learning activities (sequence, pacing, time and the nature of teacher's role and students' role), teaching materials, aspects of language and theories of instruction (learner-centred teaching approach, communicative language teaching and teacher-centred teaching approach). Each description was preceded by information regarding the type of lesson, classroom organisation, and its objectives as specified in the institutional curriculum and as stated by the teacher. The teaching practice of each teacher was then summarized and compared with the theories and principles specified in the national policies. To finish, the analysis of all classes observed and the interview

data were synthesized to compare theories of instruction and teacher's role and students' role. Also, a comparison between case studies was also conducted to identify their similarities and differences, and the feasibility of applying the new teaching methods, the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching, as recommended by the national policies in each institutional context.

#### **4.7 Transcription and translation concerns**

The interview questions were first written in English. They were then translated into Thai and then translated back into English by both the researcher and the professional translator who is expert in both Thai and English. If there was agreement between the translation and the original, they were considered ready for the pilot test (of the interview questions). On the other hand, if there was still disagreement, there would be further revisions. Finally, the final draft of interview questions was examined by my supervisors who are native speakers of the target language. This forward and back translation process encourages more accuracy and reliability of the translation (Cull, Sprangers, Bjordal, Aaronson, West and Bottomley 2002).

In the current study, the interview data was initially transcribed into written form in Thai and then translated into English. Before translating it into English, each of the transcriptions in the Thai language was checked by participant to see whether there were any misunderstandings. This allows the participants control over the data as interpreted by the researcher. This also ensures the trustworthiness and authenticity of the material. It is acknowledged that words from the interviews sometimes possess a different meaning when a common language is used (Patton 2002). To avoid language differences and misunderstanding in the data transcriptions and translation, they were revised by the professional translator who is expert in both English and Thai.

To ensure that the quality of translation was accurate and meaningful, as mentioned before, each interviewee and class teacher were sent a copy of the transcription and translation for approval. That means the interview texts were directly revised many times by participants in English. Also, along the process of transcription and translation, there was an attempt to capture the complexities of interaction and

emotions. While all quotes are presented in English in the report, participants' words in Thai would be directly quoted in interviews transcripts in recognition of the fact that to find equivalent words or phrases in English is often impossible (Maxwell 2005). In addition, the English translation of interviews transcripts and transcripts of video- and audio recordings of group discussions were examined by my supervisors throughout the data analysis stages. They were also checked again by my supervisors in the process of the thesis writing.

## **4.8 Summary of Chapter four**

Overall, the research methodology is presented in this chapter. This includes the case study research design, method of data gathering and analysis, ethical considerations, data collection and data analysis. The data was collected through various methods: document analysis, interviews and classroom observation. This triangulation through multiple data sources allows confidence in the reliability and validity of the research. Pilot studies for interviews and classroom observation were conducted in Australia. These pilot studies help to improve the instruments for collecting the data. The instruments include questions for interviews and Thai Educational Reform Checklists. The Thai Educational Reform Checklists were applied at all stages of the policy implementation process together with document analysis (Thai Educational policies, institutional curricula, textbooks, classroom materials) and interviews, and with observation of classroom practice to explore how consistently the institutions reflect the official policy documents.

The next chapter examines the data relating to the knowledge production field and the recontextualisation field which includes the official recontextualising field and the pedagogic recontextualising field. The official recontextualising field is investigated through the examination of the relationship between language teaching theories and principles generated in the knowledge production field (e.g. through research into second language learning), and those mandated in the Thai official policy documents. Furthermore, how the official policy documents are formulated and implemented at the level of the state and its bureaucracy - or in Bernstein's terms, the official recontextualising field - is investigated. This chapter also considers how the pedagogic

recontextualising field prepares teachers to deal with the requirements of the official recontextualising field's policy statements.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **THE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION FIELD AND RECONTEXTUALISATION FIELD**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the field of knowledge production (Bernstein 2000) in which theories and principles specified in the official policy documents and briefly discussed earlier (see section 3.4 in Chapter three) have been generated and developed. The chapter then tracks how these theories and principles have been interpreted as policy in the official recontextualising field at the national level. Finally, the chapter considers the other site of recontextualisation – the pedagogic recontextualising field – to investigate how theories of language and learning are recontextualised in pre- and in-service professional development programs.

### **5.2 The knowledge production field**

Bernstein (2000) states that, in the field of knowledge production, the production of various forms of intellectual knowledge and the distribution of such knowledge to various social groups are regulated by distributive rules which include access, power and control. These distributive rules can work through research papers, conferences and labs (Bernstein 2000). The knowledge production field is analysed in this study in order to gain deeper insight into the basis on which decisions are made in the official recontextualising field. Similarly, such an understanding is necessary for interpreting the teachers' implementation of policy in Chapter six - or in Bernstein's terms, the reproduction field in which teachers as implementers are required to understand the theoretical basis underpinning the policy in order to effectively implement policy directives.

This chapter reviews relevant theories and principles generated through research into second language learning and how they have been transformed and disseminated through official policy documents. To this end, the chapter then reports on the findings of the document analysis supplemented by data collected from the interviews with policy-makers, administrators and teachers.

### **5.2.1 An historical overview of knowledge production in the field of second language learning**

In the current study, the origins of the theories and principles informing the curriculum reform are investigated through the lens of Bernstein's sociocultural theory of education. Bernstein was interested in the sociology of knowledge, including why things happen and how they happen depending on the social and cultural context. Accordingly, approaches to language teaching are explained in this section in terms of sociological reasons for change and outcomes. The field of second language learning draws on a range of fundamental disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, sociology and education (Richards and Rodgers 2001; Krashen and Terrell 1983). As Bernstein (1975; 1990; 1996; 2000; 2003) observed, the boundaries of disciplinary knowledge have become more permeable. With this permeability, however, the combative nature of the knowledge production field has become more evident. As Bernstein (2000; 2003) notes, conflict involving power and ideology operates throughout the pedagogic device – both internally to each field and between fields. The seeds of change are sown in the contradictions, ambiguities, cleavages and dilemmas created in the process of the distribution of power and social relations (Bernstein 2003, p.20). That is to say, there are conflict and competition within each field and between fields. Relevant to this study, the knowledge production field can be compared with a battlefield of ideas in which agents, namely scholars and researchers in the language learning field, are competing with each other for conceptual dominance. It is from this field of contestation that Thai policy developers must make decisions, so it is necessary to understand the nature of this field.

This section provides an historical account of the evolution of disciplinary knowledge in the language learning field, especially the teaching approaches and principles relevant to the current study, namely the grammar translation method, the structural/audiolingual

approach, communicative language teaching and learner-centred pedagogy. A broad overview of struggles over time between these theories and approaches will help to explain how institutions and teachers have responded to the reform policy.

### **5.2.1.1 The grammar translation method**

For several centuries in the Western world, foreign language teaching in schools was dominated by the Latin-based classical method which emphasised learning grammatical rules, memorising vocabulary, being familiar with various declensions and conjugations, translating texts, and doing written exercises (Brown 2007, p.18). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as other languages gained prominence in educational institutions, the classical method was applied as the main method for teaching foreign languages. In sociological terms, the classical method was employed in the context of educating the elite in scholarly grammar schools. The focus of learning was on gaining higher reading proficiency rather than learning for oral/aural communication (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Brown 2007).

The grammar translation method, based on the classical method, focuses on grammatical rules as the foundation for translating from the second to the native language and vice versa. With the grammar translation method, the mother tongue is primarily used in the classroom as the language of instruction with little use of the target language. Lists of isolated words are used for teaching vocabulary along with the rules of grammar and the grammatical analysis of texts (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Brown 2007).

In terms of the relations between the teacher and students, the teacher's role as a director and provider of input is dominant without much active student involvement. For example, there are more talk and questions from the teacher than from students in the classroom. There is also more whole-class instruction where all students face the board and teacher's desk, and a great reliance on textbooks as a source of information (Cuban 1983). In Bernsteinian terms, these characteristics indicate strongly-framed relations between the teacher and students, in which the teacher acts as a director in the teaching and learning process. For example, the teacher 'directs', 'orders' and 'describes' the content of the subject. This traditional approach is also consistent with

what Bernstein (1996; 2000) terms ‘performance models’ in which there is less control by acquirers/students over selection, sequence and pace. In addition, formal accuracy is emphasised over meaning in this model.

For centuries, there was little theoretical foundation for language learning upon which to base teaching methodologies. It is argued that there is no empirical research basis for the grammar translation method (Richards and Rodgers 2001). In the same way, this method is viewed as ‘theoryless’ (Brown 2007). Despite this, many practices of the grammar translation method still persist in many Thai classrooms, even though these are not endorsed by the national policy.

### **5.2.1.2 Structuralism and the beginnings of theory**

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, language learning had become increasingly important in society because of many sociological factors, such as a larger number of people wanting to travel, students undertaking overseas study and missionary service. The ability to communicate with people of other cultures was more important than the ability to use grammar accurately. During the Second World War, there was a need for large numbers of fluent translators and interpreters. This highlighted the failure of graduates from grammar translation courses in communicating with others in the target language. It was found that the reason for this failure was the lack of engagement of learners in applying the target language in the classroom and contexts outside class. In reaction against the grammar translation method, the audio-lingual method was created by American linguists with the aim of enabling students to learn to communicate in real-life situations avoiding translation and the use of the native language in learning. This method, along with similar ones such as the direct method, became widely used in the United States, resulting in heated debate between adherents of the grammar translation method and those favouring the more ‘modern’ scientific methods.

The audio-lingual method was generated by the combination of structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Spada 2007; Brown 2007). Structuralism was derived from the fledgling field of linguistics. Responding to the emerging empiricist agenda, everything had to be scientific and supported by evidence. In the linguistics field, with increasing use of new technological devices such as tape

recorders, there began the scientific analysis of real language, particularly with people with whom missionaries were working. Through such work, linguists developed the new linguistic theory of structuralism, based on the researched actual structure of language, describing language in terms of the components of the linguistic system rather than relying on rules often derived from the study of classical languages. At the same time, there was the fledgling discipline of psychology which was also determined to demonstrate that it was 'scientific' by developing a learning theory – 'behaviourism' – based on research (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Brumfit 1985; Brown 2007). Behaviorists were interested in how and why human beings behave, so that their reactions could be controlled. They also believed that people do not learn by learning and applying rules but by rote learning. The main principles of behaviourism include drilling, repetition and habit formation. Behaviourist learning theory emphasises the mastery of basic units before moving on to larger or more complex units (Watson 1930). It was therefore natural that behaviourist learning theory would be attracted to structural linguistics, resulting in such teaching methodologies as audio-lingualism.

At the beginning of World War II, military personnel of the United States were required to take language training in many languages through the audio-lingual method, which emphasised the inductive method of learning through repetition, practice, memorisation of situational-based dialogues, and the oral drilling of sentences demonstrating the main syntactic patterns of the language. Conversation sessions with dialogues in real life situations were conducted with native speakers (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Spada 2007).

However, there was severe criticism of the structuralist/behaviourist theories of language and learning, particularly in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) which deals with how language is acquired through the activation of an internal linguistic system rather than through external stimuli (Van Patten 1999). As Chomsky (1965) famously argued, drilling of structures cannot provide students with the capability to create novel utterances and hence real communication. To support his argument, Chomsky proposed a combination of cognitive psychology and transformational grammar which resulted in the cognitive code method. In place of inductive learning, central to the audio-lingual method, the method proposed by Chomsky was based on deductive learning principles relevant to hypothesis testing.

Rather than learning grammar rules (as in the grammar translation method) or being drilled (as in behaviourism) in structures, learners were immersed in the target language and expected to hypothesise ‘tendencies’ from their exposure to language in use (Chomsky 1965). This was the beginning of a more communicative, ‘top-down’ approach to language learning (Brumfit 1979; Johnson 1979; Berns 1984).

### **5.2.1.3 Communicative language teaching**

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was an increasing awareness that both grammar translation and audio-lingual methods failed to enable learners to interpret, express and negotiate meaning. Learner motivation also emerged as an issue (Savignon 2002). There followed a flourishing of various communicative methodologies (Richard and Rodgers 1986; Brown 2007).

In North America, Chomsky’s criticism of behaviorism had a great impact on the development of communicative language teaching in SLA. To support his criticism, Chomsky contributed a framework for a more learner-centred approach. He argued that language acquisition, which is an internal process, cannot be encouraged through drilling and imitation. He hypothesised that learners are equipped with an innate internal mechanism, called the ‘language acquisition device’. This device enables learners to discover the ‘rules’ through exposure to comprehensible input (Chomsky 1965; 1975).

Following Chomsky’s lead, Krashen developed the ‘natural approach’ on the basis of the notion of exposing learners to ‘comprehensible input’ for language acquisition. The natural approach is also based on the assumption that a second language is learnt in a similar fashion to a first language, where learners ‘pick up’ the language without grammatical instruction (Krashen 1985; Krashen and Terrell 1983). Accordingly, Krashen (1982) hypothesised that L2 learners have to be exposed to useful and interesting input that is slightly more challenging than the learner’s current linguistic competence level which, however, is still comprehensible for the learner (Krashen 1985). The natural approach was grounded in psycholinguistics, an interdisciplinary field which investigates various ways in which human mental abilities and operations are implicated in language acquisition. It can also be viewed as a subset of cognitive

science which includes neurolinguistics, artificial intelligence and formal linguistics. Within psycholinguistics, second language acquisition became a new area of research in which the variables that influence the acquisition of a second language are explored (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Liu 2007; Brown 2007; Benati 2009). Krashen's work has had a great influence on the development of communicative language teaching, particularly in North America. It promotes the notion of communicative language teaching as a learner-centred teaching approach, focusing on the individual learner and his/her mental activity and affective state. Accordingly, teachers are expected to facilitate students' discovery learning as students engage with the L2 in an emotionally supportive environment (Spada 2007).

The 'natural' approach to communicative language teaching is often referred to as 'constructivist'. Constructivists view 'active engagement' as the main factor in successful learning. The teacher acts as a facilitator with students as active participants in their own learning process (Brown 2007). Brumfit (1985) lists many major characteristics of communicative language teaching. For example, the analysis of learners' needs is required to determine what kinds of language use are the most important for them. Students' feelings, interests and needs should also be taken into account in language teaching. Materials are organised around the topics or functions of language which students can use for expressing themselves. To encourage students to use language more fluently, they have to be provided with opportunities to practise the target language without fear of correction (Brumfit 1985). In Bernsteinian terms, communicative teaching involves weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students in which there is more student involvement in the teaching and learning process with the teacher acting as a facilitator. It is here that the communicative approach makes a connection with learner-centred, cooperative, collaborative learning – another major concern of Thai policy (see following section). Learner-centredness is more consistent with the US school of communicative language teaching (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Savignon 2002), with its emphasis on psycholinguistic notions of the individual, cognition, and motivation.

Krashen's work was later challenged by the proponents of the 'interactionist hypothesis' (Long 1983; 1996) who argued that second language acquisition involved more than 'comprehensible input' and required interaction among learners in problem-solving

activities and tasks that need collaboration and dialogue. Students act as negotiators who learn by doing. They express their ideas and are responsible for their own learning, control their progress and take risks. This interaction goes beyond comprehensible input to interaction, leading to acquisition.

To broaden Krashen's view of 'comprehensible input', Swain (1985; 1993; 1995) suggested the 'comprehensible output hypothesis'. Krashen (1982) noted that comprehensible and modified input is necessary for learners to internalise the grammatical properties of a target language. It was argued by Swain (1995) that comprehensible input might not be adequate for learners to develop native-like grammatical competence, and hence comprehensible output is also needed. 'Pushed output' is required for learners in both spoken and written forms that will force learners to produce language in appropriate ways. Language production can also help learners to create new knowledge and extend their existing knowledge. As Swain (1995:249) states, 'producing the language might be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning'.

This above-mentioned Input-Interaction-Output model of language learning has become an influential area of research in SLA (Block 2003).

Long (1991) proposed a further argument that an emphasis on form can facilitate learners to notice and process a specific form and hence accelerate language acquisition more effectively. It aims to focus on meaning with some consideration of grammatical awareness. Doughty and Williams (1998) defined 'focus on form' as an instruction which focuses learners' attention on both meaning and form in the context of using language. Some experimental research reveals that grammar instruction is beneficial in that it can facilitate form-meaning connections crucial for acquisition (Van Patten 2004). It also helps learners to notice some aspects of the linguistic system and hence to process them more quickly (Long 1991; Doughty and Williams 1998). Doughty and Williams (1998) described the difference between reactive and proactive approaches to focus on form. In a proactive approach, grammar tasks can be consciousness-raising, which aims to provide learners with opportunities to focus on problematic forms, and at the same time to understand and communicate a message. On the other hand, in the

reactive approach, a technique such as recasting is used to draw learners' attention to errors without interfering with effective communication.

As noted above, even within the psycholinguistic field, several different approaches to second language acquisition and communicative language teaching have been generated in response to Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence. Such complexity in the field has implications for decision-making by Thai policy-makers and teachers.

To complicate matters further, while the researchers above were working within the psycholinguistic tradition, others reacted against Chomsky's emphasis on cognition and grammatical competence. Sociolinguists such as Hymes (1972) and Widdowson (1978) argued for recognition of other aspects of language learning, such as its social use and communicative purpose. In the 1970s, Hymes proposed his theory of 'communicative competence' in which the use of language appropriately in different contexts was encouraged. Hymes theorised that knowing a language included not only 'linguistic competence' but also the ability to apply language in different social contexts with a view of language as social behavior (Brumfit 1979; Johnson 1979; Berns 1984).

Following Hymes, other North American researchers proposed different models of communicative competence, which assumed that language proficiency included a greater range of elements: linguistic competence, such as grammar, phonology and lexis; pragmatic competence, such as cohesion and coherence; sociolinguistic competence, such as formal and informal registers; and strategic competence, such as compensatory strategies (Canale and Swain 1980; Savignon 2002; Spada 2007). Such notions became the theoretical groundwork for an expanded view of communicative language teaching (Brumfit 1979, Johnson 1979; Berns 1984).

In the UK, influenced by sociolinguists such as Firth (1957) and Halliday (1973), the emphasis turned to the functions for which learners need to use language as the basis of a communicative syllabus (Wilkins 1974; 1976; Munby 1978). This gave rise to the 'notional-functional' syllabuses which reflected a shift from a focus on language forms to the specification of meanings and functions in context. In the European context, with larger numbers of guest workers and tourists, there was a need for communicative language teaching which enabled learners to transfer knowledge and skills developed in

the classroom to the real world context outside class. Syllabuses consistent with communicative language teaching provided the linguistic input together with more opportunities for the learners to interact through activities such as groupwork and role play (Nunan 1988; 1991). Brumfit (1985), Johnson (1982) and Littlewood (1981) are key scholars of the time who attempted to create guidelines and procedures for communicative language teaching, which focused on both form and meaning being inseparably linked (Spada 2007).

While the various versions of communicative language teaching outlined above all adhere to a set of core principles, in the reality of the classroom, such principles have proven to be problematic – particularly in contexts with different cultural traditions and where English is not the L1, such as Thailand. To deal with this, strong and weak versions of communicative language teaching have been proposed. In the strong version, activities are designed to encourage real-life target performance, with lessons conducted in the target language and no drills or controlled practice. In comparison, the weak version of communicative language teaching allows teachers to incorporate both structural practice and grammar translation practices into the communicative curriculum. It allows an emphasis on both communicative skills and linguistic knowledge, and on fluency as well as form (Nunan 1988; Nunan 2004b; Liu 2007). This reflects Bernstein's notion of strong classification (in which firm boundaries maintain the integrity of an approach such as communicative language teaching) and weak classification (in which boundaries are permeable and can allow for a 'mingling' of perspectives, theories and principles).

This is a significant distinction with regard to the present study. In referring to 'communicative language teaching', for example, does the Thai policy intend the strong or the weak version? This also has implications for the research questions of how teachers interpret the policy and transform it into their actual teaching practice. If the strong version of communicative language teaching is implied, this means a radical shift in teaching practices in Thailand towards an approach that might not fit easily with Thai tradition, culture and current practice. If the weak version of communicative language teaching is suggested in the Thai policy, there are implications for how teachers might draw on a variety of complementary theories and approaches without succumbing to

uninformed eclecticism. Such issues are taken up in Chapter six, which deals with the translation of theory and policy into classroom practice.

In the next section, another major focus of Thai educational reform – learner-centredness – is discussed along with its relationship to second language teaching.

#### **5.2.1.4 Learner-centredness**

A more learner-centred teaching approach is explicitly mentioned in the National Education Act 1999 as a main concept of education reform in order to encourage a shift from the traditional way of teaching (Pillay 2002a). Learner-centredness is grounded in the assumption that students actively construct their own meaning. The notion has been employed to refer to such concepts as active learning, learner-readiness, self-directed learning, autonomous learning and authentic learning (Sparkes 1999; Pillay 2002b; Murray 2007). As Kaewdaeng (1999) states, in Thailand, learner-centredness has been the main focus of learning reform and teacher education development. However, it is difficult to define what is meant by ‘learner-centredness’ in today’s context.

Early versions of learner-centred teaching focused on students’ needs and interests in the learner-centred curriculum. The students were encouraged to make decisions on what they wanted to learn and do in class (Darling 1994). This stance draws on the child-centred education expounded by Jean Jacques Rousseau in *Emile* in 1762 in which Rousseau states that ‘Nature provides for the child’s growth in her own fashion, and this should never be thwarted’ (Rousseau 1762, p. 50). The child is viewed by Rousseau (1762; 1973) as an individual interacting with the natural environment. Learning was seen to be ‘natural’, with the child ‘blossoming’ with freedom and independence within a conducive environment. Rousseau views education as the management of opposites with the aim of developing an autonomous or self-reliant freedom (Soëtard 1994). In a Thai published document, the version of learner-centredness as defined by Jean Jacques Rousseau is used as an explanation of learner-centred teaching specified in the Thai official policies (Kaewdang 1999). This indicates that the learner-centredness referred to in the Thai policies is more likely consistent with a romantic version of learner-centredness.

Many of Rousseau's views were later echoed in progressivist education of the twentieth century. In designing the curriculum, educators were invited to place an emphasis on the child's needs, interests and freedom from constraints. Independence and self-motivated learning were encouraged within a relaxed atmosphere with the children taking charge of their own learning (Darling 1994). In applying progressivist principles of learner-centred education, a greater understanding of variations in students' learning styles, beliefs, and learning preferences is required (Pillay 2002b). The planning, implementation and evaluation of learner-centred curricula are developed in consultation with students and do not assume goals beforehand (Brown 2007).

In relation to second language acquisition, the above version of learner-centredness was encouraged through the 'natural approach' promoted by Krashen (Krashen and Terrell 1983). Drawing on Chomsky's notion that learners have an inbuilt language acquisition device that simply needs exposure to language-in-use (Chomsky 1965; 1975), Krashen proposed that the teacher engages the learners in motivating language experiences, taking on the non-interventionist role of facilitator (Krashen and Terrell 1983). Such an approach focuses on strategy training and collaborative work in the classroom (Brown 2007). It involves techniques that place an emphasis on learners' needs, learning styles, and goals as well as creativity, innovation, students' sense of competence and self-value. Classrooms applying the learner-centred teaching approach usually include smaller groups of students, more varied teaching materials, more student involvement in choosing the content of learning, and classroom rules which aim to encourage students to work collaboratively. In learner-centred teaching approaches, there are usually also more talk, questions from students and more individual instruction (Cuban 1983). Accordingly, some characteristics of the learner-centred teaching approach are consistent with communicative language teaching, collaborative language teaching and task-based language teaching approaches (Perera 2001).

This version of learner-centredness is consistent with what Bernstein (1996; 2000) terms as 'competence models' in which there is the strong control from the acquirers or students over selection, sequence and pace. In addition, in this model most activities are in the form of projects and groupwork. In Bernsteinian terms, the relations between the teacher and students in this version of learner-centredness can also be described as very weakly-framed in that students are urged to engage in the learning process independently

without a great deal of control from the teacher. According to a study on learner-centred teaching in Thailand conducted by Pillay (2002a), learners tend to be encouraged to experiment and discover. Attempts are made to shift the student-teacher relationship from a hierarchical one to one of ‘partners in learning’. The teacher is advised to change the role from the expert to one who encourages more learner involvement in their own learning. Group work and project work are also promoted in the classroom to stimulate more learner interaction (Pillay 2002a).

Nevertheless, there have been many difficulties in applying this version of learner-centred principles – particularly in countries such as Thailand – often resulting from misinterpretation (Darling 1994; Soëtard 1994). Problems include the perception that students’ individual needs and wishes are central to curriculum development and a perceived threat to the teacher’s classroom control, resulting in a sense of incompetence. As one South African teacher reported in a seminar, “*learner-centredness has been quite misinterpreted. WE felt guilty to stand up in front of the class*” (Holliday 1994, p.176).

The ‘laissez faire’ variety of learner-centred instruction was challenged by Russian scholars such as Vygotsky (1962), and Luria and Yodovich (1971). Rather than locating learning within the individual whose inherent learning potential matures through involvement in motivating activity, Vygotsky sees learning as a social act with a much more defined role for the teacher. According to Vygotsky, learning happens optimally within the ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ (ZPD) – the distance between what the learner can currently achieve independently and what the learner can achieve under adult (or ‘expert’) guidance in the context of goal-directed, problem-solving activities. Learning is seen not simply as the unfolding of an innate potential in the individual’s brain but as the active social construction of meaning, with the teacher playing a very deliberate role in guiding the students towards autonomy.

Related to the ZPD is the notion of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross 1976; Gibbons 2002) which can be used as a technique to foster learning in classroom practice. From a socio-cultural perspective on learning, scaffolding involves the teacher and learner in interactive exchange with the main focus on the role and quality of teacher talk (Schinke-Liano 1993). It is described as explicit teaching to help learners to develop new skills

and understanding to achieve something in collaboration with a more experienced other so that they can perform it by themselves in the future (Wells 1999; Maybin, Mercer and Stierer 1992; Gibbons 1999). The quality of teacher intervention and the role of the teacher as a guide are the main factors in developing such a capacity in students (Schinke-Liano 1993).

In such an approach, the roles of the teacher and the students are not static, but vary according to the nature of the activity at the time. At certain stages the teacher will take the role of an expert to provide input to students. Sometimes the teacher will act as a guide, tutor, facilitator, learning partner or co-researcher. In Bernsteinian terms, both strongly and weakly-framed relations between teachers and students are adopted depending on the learning needs at the time, with more strongly-framed relations between the teacher and students at those points where the teacher provides expert knowledge and more weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students when the students are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Such an approach would pose serious challenges to teachers who are accustomed to a teacher-centred classroom. To apply such an approach, teachers need considerable skills to balance the framing of roles in the class. To achieve this goal, teachers are required to have high levels of professional competence (Hutchinson and Waters 1987).

In the field of second language acquisition, Vygotskian principles have been taken up by scholars such as Lantolf, Donato and Thorne. Lantolf (2000) proposed a sociocultural theory of second language acquisition. Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) criticized the 'acquisition' construct underpinning much of SLA. They suggested a 'participation' metaphor concerned with social processes as a complement to 'acquisition' which is concerned more with the cognitive process of language learning. The main notions of sociocultural approaches to second language development are student collaboration and an increase in learning through work within an individual's Zone of Proximal Development.

As noted above, there are different versions and interpretations of learner-centred teaching. This is another indication of the complexity of contemporary theorising of language learning, which can cause misinterpretation, confusion and resistance to change. The current study investigates which version of learner-centredness is suggested

by the national policy and institutional curricula and which is applied in actual classroom practice. Is it the more progressivist psychological model or the more interventionist sociocultural model? Such a choice has very definite consequences for the teacher's role in the learning process. As above, there is also the issue of whether to adopt a strong or a weak version. With a strong version of the learner-centred teaching approach – or in Bernstein's terms, with a relatively strong classification between theory and policy – the teachers are expected to apply exclusively the learner-centred teaching approach in the classroom. On the other hand, with a weak version of learner-centredness – or in Bernstein's terms, with a relatively weak classification – teachers are allowed to incorporate other teaching approaches. It is challenging for teachers to apply the strong version of learner-centred teaching since it is totally different from what Thai teachers are familiar with, especially in terms of teacher and student roles. If a weak version of learner-centredness is implied, how are teachers to balance their different roles in a principled way? The difficulties in applying either strong or weak classification of learner-centred teaching approach are also investigated in the next chapter in relation to actual teaching practice.

#### **5.2.1.5 Summary**

Bernstein's notion of the knowledge production field can be used to describe theory production in relation to learning, and particularly language learning. As we have seen above, language learning and teaching represents a very complex field involving a great number of interdependent factors (Takara 1984). Different theories and methods of teaching and learning continue to emerge and evolve in the knowledge production field, drawing on disciplines, such as linguistics, psychology and sociology. Many of them develop from their predecessors while others have arisen through radical reconceptualisation of learning.

The knowledge production field can be viewed as a site of power struggles among various theorists and researchers in different disciplines, and a site of the contestation of ideas, such as between accuracy and fluency and between control and creativity. As noted, over the last century, a major issue in relation to language teaching is how to balance grammar instruction with communicative practice. On the one hand there are some language teaching approaches, such as grammar translation, the direct method and

the audio-lingual method, which emphasise a set of target linguistic features and structural forms, and include translation, error correction and memorisation. On the other hand, there are other language teaching methods, such as the natural approach and communicative language teaching, which encourage natural learning experiences and meaningful communication (Larsen-Freeman 1995; Liu 2007).

Even within fields, such as communicative language teaching and learner-centred teaching, there are quite distinct – even opposing – theories. This represents a challenge for those developing policy and ultimately for those implementing the policy. The next section outlines how the recontextualisation field draws on the field of knowledge production in framing policy.

### **5.3 The recontextualisation field**

In this section, the process of recontextualisation (Bernstein 2000) is analysed. This section answers the research question of how research theorising from the production field is taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents. The theories and principles generated by research into second language learning are investigated, together with their recontextualisation as policy. Finally, this section examines how instructors, at the implementation level, are prepared for the process of introducing the policy reforms into their teaching.

As described earlier, Bernstein (2000) points out that the recontextualisation field consists of the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF). The official recontextualisation field (ORF) involves Ministry officials and administrators who have the power to make decisions in designing policy and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) involves teacher education, textbook writers and consultants (Bernstein 2000). Bernstein sees tensions existing within these two fields, and between each field and the field of knowledge production.

### 5.3.1 Official recontextualising field

As mentioned before, the state officials and administrators who have the power in designing the policy are the main agents in the official recontextualising field. Relevant to the Thai educational system, the state government officials who deal directly with designing the policy are the main group of individuals who select the theories of teaching and learning for recontextualisation. To explore this knowledge transformation, the roles and relationships of people in the process of change should be taken into account for change to be successful (Fullan 2001).

As explained in Chapter one (see section 1.5.1.4.2), the National Education Act 1999 was designed with the main aim of serving educational reform. To gain deeper insight into the Thai educational reform, the roles and relations among stakeholders in the policy formulation process are discussed further here. The early stage of formulating the National Education Act 1999 was in the hands of the group of people who were assigned to design the National Act with some consultation with other stakeholders through a public consultation and seminar at the later stage before approval from the authority ([www.onec.go.th](http://www.onec.go.th); Poonnakaseam 1999). The involvement of stakeholders at all levels in the policy formulation process of the National Act is also confirmed by some policy-makers who had actually experienced the consultation process. For example, Director B, who has the responsibility for research and evaluation at the national level in Organisation A, states that:

*People from various sectors took part in formulating the National Education Act 1999 and 15 year plan (2002-2016). They were the amazingly biggest meetings, including students ... Then, the Act is evaluated through the public poll.*

(Interview, Director B of Bureau B in Organisation A)

Educator B, who has the responsibility for national policy setting, discusses this along the same lines:

*...In designing the National Act, the Ministry of Education organised the consultation in the form of a public consultation for viewing the first draft of the National Act. This public consultation consists of senior educators, researchers*

*and representatives from various sectors or stakeholders, including teachers of educational institutions...*

(Interview, Educator B of Organisation C)

Such broad participation in the form of consultation encourages collaborative relationships and communicative practices by means of the focus groups among most stakeholders in formulating the National Act.

The roles and relations among stakeholders in the policy formulation of the National Act process can be explained in terms of classification as follows. Since only a small group of authorities had drafted the National Act, the boundaries between them and the professional community who were responsible to implement it were very strongly separated. However, when the draft had been processed through the consultation, there was a weakening of classification in terms of roles and relations of stakeholders in the national policy formulation process. To put it another way, the boundaries between the authorities and the community, which were strongly enforced at the initial stage, were later weakened under this process of consultation. There were more strongly-classified roles and relations of stakeholders in the national policy formulation process again when the draft had to be approved by the same small group of decision-making authorities at the final stage.

According to the policy interpretation of the National Act at the national level described in Chapter one (see section 1.5.1.4.2), after the National Act had been promulgated, it became the responsibility of each state education department to incorporate those directives into their own operational plans. They also improved their own plans in the cyclical process. Thus, the classification of roles and relations among stakeholders in the policy formulation and interpretation process at the national level varied each time. In responding to the question of how the government formulates and designs the national policy, Educator B, an official in the national policy setting, points out:

*...in interpreting the National Act at the national level, the Constitution and the National Act are applied by all Ministries as the core law to follow in designing their own policies and plans...*

(Interview, Educator B of Organisation C)

Educator A, who works in the national policy setting, discusses this issue in a similar vein:

*...The strategic plan (The national plan) is transformed into operational plans of each subsection and the outcomes of these operational plans will then be transferred into the feedback or data for improving the next strategic plans and operational plans in another cyclic process...*

(Interview, Educator A of Organisation A)

In other words, it is each Ministry's duty to interpret and transform the National Act and to transfer the knowledge into its own regulations and action plans. For example, the Office of the Education Council, as one of five core sections of the Ministry of Education, designs the National Act and action plans, including the National Education Act 1999 based on the Constitution for all departments of the Ministry of Education to follow in designing their own action plans (see Figure 1.2 in Chapter one) ([www.moe.ac.th](http://www.moe.ac.th)). This National Education Act 1999 is also analysed in this section to explore how research theorising from the production field is taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents.

### **5.3.1.1 Recontextualising knowledge as policy**

The present study investigates how intellectual knowledge produced by research into second language learning, as described in the preceding section, is recontextualised into educational policies in the official recontextualising field. This section discusses what is referred to as the learner-centred teaching approach and associated principles specified in the official policy documents, such as communicative language teaching. These principles are analysed in terms of classification and framing through policy document analysis.

In the Thai context, the national government is the key agency in the official recontextualising field. This agency, which exercises power and control over educational decisions, selects the educational knowledge produced by scholars, which is then transformed into educational policies in the form of official policy documents. The documents refer to a number of principles which teachers are urged to use. These

principles are analysed using Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing as shown in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2.

<b>Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning specified in the official policy</b>	
C+ (Strong classification)	The official policy focuses exclusively on a particular approach to teaching and learning.
C- (Weak classification)	The official policy draws on a number of different theories of teaching and learning.

**Table 5.1:** Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning specified in the official policy (Adapted from Neves and Morais 2001, pp.232-233)

<b>Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students suggested by the official policy</b>	
F+ (Strong framing)	The official policy includes statements focusing on the teacher to act as a director in the teaching and learning process. For example, the teacher is described as directing, ordering and describing the content of the subject. This would indicate that the official policy favours a theory of teacher-centred instruction.
F- (weak framing)	The official policy includes statements encouraging a higher degree of student involvement in the teaching and learning process. For example, the students are described as joining in independent activities and tasks or project works. These show that the official policy values a learner-centred teaching approach.

**Table 5.2:** Framing of the relations between the teacher and students suggested by the official policy (Adapted from Neves and Morais 2001, pp.232-233)

As shown in Table 5.1, the theories and principles specified in the official policy documents can be described as having a relatively strong classification if they focus on a particular theory of teaching and learning, for example, referring exclusively to the learner-centred teaching approach or communicative language teaching. If, however,

they draw on a number of different theories of teaching and learning they can be described as having a relatively weak classification (see Table 5.1). Further, with respect to teacher-student relations (see Table 5.2), the relations between the teacher and students suggested by the policy will be strongly framed if the policy includes statements encouraging the teacher acting as the director with the application of a teacher-centred teaching approach, or more loosely framed if the policy includes statements encouraging a higher degree of student involvement in the teaching and learning process, thus valuing a more learner-centred teaching approach. This analysis examines the extent to which particular theories and principles are specified in the policy documents regarding teaching/learning approaches, together with recommendations on the role of the teacher and of the learner. Two major policy documents – the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (A.D.1999) (NEA 1999) and the Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2544 (A.D. 2001) (BEC 2001) – are analysed and discussed using the checklist for policy document analysis (developed by the researcher) as demonstrated in Table 5.3.

Language teaching concepts created in the area of second language acquisition and learning	Policy documents	
	National Education Act B.E. 2542 (A.D.1999)	Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2544 (A.D. 2001)
<b>1.) Learner-centred teaching approach</b>		
- Learners' needs/interests	√	√
- Teachers as guides		√
- Self development	√	√
<b>2.) Communicative language teaching</b>		
- Communicative purpose/context		√
- Authentic tasks		√
- Integrated skills (reading/writing/listening/speaking)		√

**Table 5.3:** The Thai Educational Reform Checklist for the policy document analysis

This checklist indicates those language teaching concepts drawn on by the Thai policy documents: the National Act and the National Curriculum, namely the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching. The National Act is

concerned with policy administration and management, the regulations stipulated about educational concerns and national education guidelines, which relate mainly to policy administration and management at the policy formulation stage. In contrast, the National Curriculum focuses on guidelines for management at the institutional level and teaching and learning processes at the policy implementation stage. Accordingly, most theories and principles are referred to in the National Curriculum rather than the National Act. Those principles are discussed in the next section in relation to how they are specified in the Thai official policies.

### 5.3.1.1.1 Learner-centred teaching approaches

Kaewdang (1999), a senior politician of the Office of Education Council, states in a published document that the core of the education reform is the transformation of learning. Its main purpose is to encourage the shift from the traditional Thai educational norms, such as lecturing and rote learning, towards more learner-centred teaching principles (Kaewdang 1999). As discussed above, the roles of the teacher and students are central to the learner-centred approach, with the progressivist version valuing techniques that encourage individual students' creativity, innovation, sense of competence and self-value (Cuban 1983). In contrast, in the sociocultural version, learners are urged to actively construct meaning through social interaction (Vygotsky 1962) with the teacher acting as a guide who encourages learners to be more self-regulated and as an expert who exchanges knowledge with learners (Nunan 1992).

Learner-centredness is explicitly mentioned in the National Act as recommendations for instructors of all subjects, including English, to follow. For example, in the National Act, it is specified that implementation of learner-centred pedagogies is the main aim of educational reform. This appears in the final section, 'Reform of education in Thailand', as follows:

*... 1. Learning reform which will follow the guideline [sic] and spirit of the provisions in the Act by **attaching highest importance to learners**. The ONEC has conducted research and development on learner-centred teaching-learning process, **allowing learners to develop at their own pace and in accord with their potential**. Steps have been taken to identify model teachers who have accordingly been given their due honour and support. Results of the pilot projects*

*implemented have also been disseminated for nationwide multiplication in the future ...*

(National Education Act 1999, p.19)

In the Basic Education Curriculum 2001, a section on ‘learning management’, recommends that:

*... teachers, instructors and administrators **must change their roles from guiding and knowledge transferring to helping, promoting and encouraging learners in acquiring knowledge from various media and learning centres.** They shall provide correct information to learners for use in creating their own knowledge ... (p.28)*

To encourage learner-centredness, the teacher is also required to encourage an atmosphere conducive to learning (Pillay 2002a; Talbot 2009) though the learning environment is mentioned only once in the preamble of the Basic Education Curriculum 2001:

*... the promotion of the effective management of the learning environment, ... (p.2)*

In learner-centred instruction, students are encouraged to be self-regulated (Nunan 1992). Accordingly, *self-development*, which is also specified in the Thai official policies, is a concept frequently associated with learner-centred approaches to pedagogy. It is defined as a process in which learners analyse their learning needs, form goals, identify human and material resources, and assess their own learning results. This may be conducted with or without others’ assistance (Knowles 1975; Iwasiw 1987, cited in Saha 2006).

Although self-development is specified frequently in the Thai policies, there is no clear definition or statement of significance and strategy. For example, it is stated in the preamble of the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 that:

*... Every one is capable of learning and **self-development**, learners shall be encouraged to develop themselves in line with **their natural inclinations, and to fully realise their own potential.** The following subjects are considered very important: - i.e. **knowledge about self, relationship between self and society, family, community, country and the world ... (p.3).***

In addition, self-development is specified in the ‘foreign language’ section of the National Curriculum, noting that to design a core curriculum for foreign language learning, educational institutions have to create suitable subjects and learning process arrangements as follows:

*... Substance 3: Language and other subject groups relationship*

*Standard F 3.1 Utilizing foreign languages for studying other subjects; **own self-developing and broadening the world view on language bases** ... (p. 26-27)*

Learners’ needs, which are the main focus of the progressive version of the learner-centred teaching approach, are referred to frequently in the Thai policy documents. For example, it is specified in the National Education Act 1999 that:

*... The contents and curricula for non-formal education shall be appropriate, respond to the requirements, and **meet the needs** of individual groups of learners ... (Section 15)*

It is also prescribed in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 in the section ‘Curriculum design and building’ that:

*... Educational institutions may create additional subjects to form a new learning unit, or variety of intensive courses for learners to select those to satisfy their **inclination, interest, needs and individual difference** ... (p.11)*

and that:

*... Due consideration shall be given to **learners’ and communities’ interest, aptitude, needs, potential and competency**. ... (p.43)*

Apart from the above quotations, meeting *learners’ needs and interests* is also referred to in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 in other sections, such as ‘structure’ (page 6), ‘management of learning time frame’ (pages 13-14), ‘education management for special target group’ (page 14), ‘learning substance and standards’ (pages 15-27) and ‘learning materials’ (pages 31-32).

With the emphasis on learners’ needs, interests, learning styles, inclinations and individual differences, and a downplayed role for the teacher, it might be assumed that a more progressivist version of learner-centredness is being implied in the Thai policy documents. In Bernsteinian terms, this indicates a relatively strong classification in

which official policy documents focus on a particular theory of teaching and learning – in this case, a learner-centred teaching approach, assuming relatively weak framing of the relationship between the teacher and students, encouraging a higher degree of student initiative in the teaching and learning process. Such a view tends to ignore more recent sociocultural approaches to learning, with their more fluid teacher/student roles, and involves a dramatic change in current practices, with little guidance as to how such an approach might be implemented in practical terms.

The lack of clear and detailed explanations of teaching and learning principles specified in the Thai official policies can cause misunderstandings and confusion among policy interpreters and implementers, including teachers, about the roles and relations between teachers and students. These misunderstandings are also borne out in interviews with participants in the present study. On the question of the appropriateness of the learner-centredness to the Thai social context, although no teacher raises the issue of misconception about the learner-centredness, three policy-maker-interviewees raise this issue. For example, an executive who is responsible for research and evaluation conducted in Organisation A points out:

*... The application of learner-centred teaching approach will be effective if instructors know students individually so well that they can apply the right method to the right student. However, there are some problems on misconception, overloading works of teachers and the class size which make it impossible to apply learner-centred instruction more effectively ...*

(Interview, Director B of Bureau B in Organisation A)

This issue is also raised by one director who has the responsibility for the research development in Organisation C. She remarks:

*... With the misconception, some teachers leave students to learn and study by themselves without guidance. Some parents and students also disagree with the application of the learner-centred teaching. They misunderstand that in the learner-centred classroom, teachers did not teach much as they were expected. For example, the teacher just assigned some more works to students to do instead of giving the lecture ...*

(Interview, Director C of Bureau C in Organisation C)

On the question of barriers to change towards learner-centredness, Director B who is an executive in Organisation A agrees on the same point, saying:

*... There are problems occurring at the implementation level. For example, there is some misconception of learner-centred instruction among instructors who are the implementers. There are also various interpretations on learner-centredness which cause some confusion among teachers ...*

(Interview, Director B of Bureau B in Organisation A)

Instructor E, who is an administrator and an English instructor in University E, gives his views on the appropriateness to the Thai context of the new teaching methods:

*... Instructors cannot catch up the new teaching methods, such as the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching. In these methods, instructors need to work harder since they have to prepare various authentic materials and contexts for students to practise, ...*

(Interview, Instructor E of University E)

The following section explores the teaching approaches referred to in the Thai official policy documents, particularly communicative language teaching.

### **5.3.1.1.2 Communicative language teaching**

Although the term ‘communicative language teaching’ and ‘communicative approach’ are not used in the Thai policy, their practices such as communicative tasks and activities are referred to. As discussed above, communicative language teaching involves negotiation of meaning, the use of authentic sources, creative use of language and opportunities to practise real life communicative tasks. A number of characteristics of the learner-centred teaching approach, such as collaborative work and active engagement, are consistent with communicative language teaching (Brumfit 1985; Johnson 1979; Berns 1984; Nunan 1992; Brown 2007; Cuban 1983). It is also suggested that problem-solving tasks are important in the communicative classroom (Berns 1984; Nunan 1992; Brown 2007). These fundamental principles of communicative language teaching are also referred to in the Thai policy. For example, the section ‘Learning management’ of the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 prescribes that:

*... forms and methodologies shall be applied in each level of learning management, emphasizing **actual teaching-learning situation, self learning, group learning, and learning from nature, from actual practice, and integrated learning** ... (p.28)*

This National Curriculum also suggests that:

*... Educational institutions must apply these subjects groups to build foundation for **thinking process, learning and problem solving** ... (p.11)*

In terms of *activities*, communicative language teaching is grounded in the assumption that students will learn better through collaborative work in the classroom, such as group work and strategy training (Brumfit 1985; Johnson 1979; Berns 1984; Nunan 1992; Brown 2007). Such activities and tasks or project works are also recommended in the Thai policy. For example, it is mandated in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 in the section ‘management of learners development activities’ that:

*... Arrangements shall be made for every learner to take part **in learner development activities**, in appropriation with age, maturity and individual difference. Considerations shall be given to the following factors:-*

*1) Development activities aim at supporting learners to acquire experience in different forms of learning methodologies such as **project oriented**, and to gain body of knowledge in all subject groups. ... (p.43)*

Another example of the influence of communicative language teaching is the focus on authentic tasks and situations. Teachers are encouraged to provide learners with opportunities to practise real-life tasks (Berns 1984; Brumfit 1985; Nunan 1992; Brown 1991; 2007). This principle is taken up in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001:

*... Educational institutions are responsible for administering learning development which emphasizes thinking processes, management and **confronting real situations** and the application of knowledge for preventing and solving problems; organizing activities to enable learning from **actual experience**; arranging practical exercises to enhance skills in doing, critical thinking and satisfactory achievement ... (p.4)*

With regard to *aspects of language*, it is also expressed in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 about skills under the topic of ‘foreign language as language for communication’ that:

... *Possessing skills for language communication ... (p.26)*,

and

... *Understanding listening and reading processes, ... (p.26)*.

As noted, various activities and terms which resonate with communicative language teaching are referred to in the Thai official policies. However, there are no detailed explanations of their definitions and strategies to achieve them. Therefore, it is not clear which version of communicative language teaching is referred to in the policy. With this lack of detailed guidelines, teachers who are not equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with this pedagogy might misinterpret it or resist the innovation (Plant 1987). There are many constraints in applying both strong and weak versions of communicative language teaching. For example, in the strong version of communicative language teaching, there are requirements which many Thai teachers are not familiar with, especially the changing role of teachers and students. As discussed previously, some teachers believe that in applying communicative language teaching, they have to give up authority and hence they are more likely to resist the change. The weak version of communicative language teaching is also difficult to apply since the teachers need adequate knowledge and skills in balancing many teaching pedagogies in an effective way.

In terms of curriculum theory, the official policy and the syllabus do not have to address matters of pedagogy (Taba 1962; Kelly 1983). However, insufficient guidelines can cause misconceptions and misinterpretation and hence resistance among implementers (Fullan 2001; Yukl 1998). Such a view was expressed by respondents to this study, especially teachers and institutional administrators who felt that there should be more details on teaching pedagogies or how to implement those recommended theories and principles. For example, Instructor F, an English Instructor in University F, gives her views on the weaknesses of the current national policy:

... *The official policy documents should have more details on teaching pedagogies which are introduced in the policy. Actually, they should be more clearly specified with more direction. They are introduced to such an abstract idea that it*

*is hard for implementers to understand, interpret and implement. Even I myself have learned these concepts before still not sure how to implement them and sometimes have to study and learn more about that ...*

(Interview, Instructor F of University F)

Agreeing with the above, Administrator C who has responsibility for institutional curriculum design of University C notes:

*... The national policy seems not to be practical. Also, there is no consistency among the policies for primary school, secondary school and universities ... I'm not sure that some national policies can be really implemented ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

Instructor C, an English instructor in University C, discusses this along the same lines:

*... There is not much detail for implementation specified in the national policy. There is only some recommendation on what and why some teaching and learning methods should be conducted in the classroom ... Therefore, there needs to be some more guidelines and study for the real implementation...*

(Interview, Instructor C of University C)

On the question of their perceptions towards the current national policies, some state officials, who have the responsibility for national policy setting, provide a counter argument that official policy documents contain sufficiently useful information for the educational reforms. It is also pointed out that teachers are required to interpret them in an effective way. As one educator who is responsible for designing the policy in Organisation C states:

*... The National Education Act 1999 is designed according to the Constitution 2007. There are also many amendments. The National Education Act 1999 covers all subjects as a whole, not only English ... For the teaching concepts, it is*

*the duty of teachers to interpret from the institutional policy which is consistent with the official policy documents ...*

(Interview, Educator B of Organisation C)

Another executive, who is responsible for designing the policy in Bureau D in Organisation A, argues in a similar vein:

*... The policy gives the general idea for the implementers to follow. It is the duties of implementers to interpret and design their own practice consistent to the ideas specified in the policy. This is one way of providing implementers with independence in interpreting and implementing the policy ...*

(Interview, Chief D of Bureau D in Organisation A)

Chief D also argues that the National Act provides adequate guidelines for implementation. For example, the official policy documents include guidelines on various aspects, such as funding for teaching and learning, investment for teaching and learning, and the educational management in local areas as the decentralisation, quality assurance, professional development, technology and the resources. Therefore, she is very confident of the positive aspects of the Thai policy and contends that the policy is very clear in most aspects. This indicates that different agents have varying perceptions of change because of their different positions and responsibilities.

As Bernstein (1990; 1996; 2000) states, there is tension between fields and within each field. In the official recontextualising field, there are struggles among policy-makers and Thai educators in attempting to design effective policies for teachers to follow. As we have seen, language teaching is complicated because there is the contestation of ideas. This complexity can also cause confusion among teachers if clear guidelines are not provided. For example, it is not clear which version of communicative language teaching is referred to in the Thai official policies. There are many constraints in developing such guidelines. For example, there are inadequate studies of Thai ELT published in English (Forman 2005) which can help policy-makers and teachers to develop their knowledge and skills in language teaching to deal with appropriate language teaching methods in the Thai context. At the same time, there is insufficient current international literature in learning and teaching (Pillay 2002a) necessary for clarifying those teaching principles in more practical ways. This results in unclear

definitions of principles specified in the Thai policy documents. As previously explained in Chapter one, there is also the lack of a research base for the reform. Despite the references to research in the document, there is very little overt mention of research relevant to the teaching and learning methods. Concepts such as lifelong learning are introduced but without citation. References to research also tend to be loose references to best practice. As a result, these constraints cause confusion and misinterpretation.

### **5.3.1.1.3 Summary**

In summary, the emphasis on the student-centred teaching approach specified in both the National Education Act 1999 and the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 indicates a relatively strong classification between theories of teaching and learning and the approach mandated in the national curriculum. It is also suggested in these national policies that teachers adopt a weakly-framed instruction with a higher degree of student autonomy in the teaching and learning process. However, the lack of explanation of the cluster of ideas around learner-centred teaching approaches and communicative language teaching can be seen as a problem for educational institutions and instructors when trying to interpret and implement the policy effectively and accurately.

It can be concluded in this study that the knowledge production field is rife with competing and contradictory theories of learning and, more specifically, language learning. Even within the same area such as communicative language teaching or learner-centredness, there are quite divergent views. Policy-makers concerned with developing the national policy are not specialists in English language teaching and do not necessarily have an in-depth understanding of the complexities of the field. While broad principles to be followed in relation to a 'communicative' and 'learner-centred' approach to teaching are specified, no support is provided in terms of how these are to be interpreted and implemented in the Thai context.

In the absence of such support, it is the pedagogic recontextualising field that takes on the task of clarifying and elaborating on the theoretical assumptions underpinning the policy as it prepares teachers to implement the reforms.

### 5.3.2 Pedagogic recontextualising field

According to Bernstein (2000), the official pedagogic discourse is processed and recontextualised through the operation of the pedagogic recontextualising field. In the pedagogic recontextualising field, there is an attempt to disseminate specialist knowledge to various groups of people who deal with pedagogic discourse through a process of selection, distillation and synthesis. In the Thai educational situation, subjects involved in the pedagogic recontextualising field include the teacher education institutions, educational researchers, professional journals, textbook writers, professional associations and professional development providers (Bernstein 2000).

As described in Chapter one, there are implications for the pedagogic recontextualising field from the state policy documents. Through the policy document analysis, there is evidence of an awareness of institutions' and teachers' needs in the policy implementation process. The state management agenda includes 'development of teachers and education personnel', 'development and promotion', and 'maintaining professional standards' (Office of Education Council 2006). Teacher change and teacher learning are also included in both the National Education Act 1999 and the Basic Education Curriculum 2001. For example, the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 specifies that there should be training programs for instructors on curriculum development and management of basic education learning procedures.

In this section, what instructors or implementers learn from their professional development and the source of their knowledge for implementing policy is explored. The interview data reveals that class instructors learn about new teaching methods and develop their teaching practice from various sources: learning from media, training courses, their educational background, their teaching experience and peer learning. It was also found that all universities encourage training courses for their instructors' professional development. However, it depends on the budget of each university. Most instructors are also interested in taking training courses, though time is a factor. Demographic data from the interviewees reveal that few instructors possess many attributes necessary for implementing policy initiatives, such as extensive teaching experience, good educational qualifications and learning habits, a positive attitude towards new teaching practices and participation in training courses for developing their

teaching performances. For example, Instructor C of University C who states that with her 25 years' teaching experience, she has regularly changed or adapted her teaching practice according to the trends in Western teaching methodology. As she states:

*... At the first stage of my teaching, I used to focus much on students' skills, and then applied communicative language teaching in which students need to be encouraged to communicate. Currently, task-based learning is mainly applied ....*

(Interview, Instructor C of University C)

Instructor C also observes that in University C, each instructor has his or her own budget for developing their teaching and learning. For her own professional development, she always takes seminars, workshops, and training courses, and presents papers to update her knowledge at least once a year.

In comparison, Instructor D of University D notes that:

*... I never learn teaching methods. However, I like to learn English by different media, such as games to practise English since I was young ...*

(Interview, Instructor D of University D)

Instructor D has learnt how to design activities from her teaching experiences and some class observations. Most activities are designed and created by herself based on students' abilities and needs (from interview with Instructor D of University D). Therefore, it could be said that teachers' learning strategies and practices are also significant, as well as their teacher educational backgrounds. In other words, if instructors' practices are consistent with the new teaching methods, it is more feasible for teachers to apply the new teaching methods in their classroom.

Some interviewees come to know and learn how to use new teaching methods through media such as TV, radio, published books and newspapers. Only a few instructors are interested in learning how to apply the new teaching methods through peer learning and classroom observation. For example, Instructor D of University D mentions that:

*... I sometimes ask for suggestions from other teachers who are experts at using the media in developing teaching and learning ...*

(Interview, Instructor D of University D)

Some instructors, however, do not learn through peer learning or class observation because of cultural beliefs. For example, Instructor C of University C mentions that:

*... I seldom learn from peer reflection since instructors here seem to respect each other so that no one gives comment to each other ...*

(Interview, Instructor C of University C)

Most interviewees regarded consideration of students' needs and competency as a significant factor in the teaching development. For example, Instructor D of University D notes that:

*... because of more teaching experience, I have developed the archive of exercises and activities at the earlier stage which takes a lot of time so that they can easily be used later. I always develop and modify those to suit the students' abilities and needs. Some contents or activities are also changed or modified based on students' abilities and needs since I found that learning abilities of each student are different ....*

(Interview, Instructor D of University D)

Instructor D reports that she feels her teaching practice is more developed since she became more confident in teaching.

In the same way, Instructor A1 of University A expresses that:

*... I have to adapt my plan and my expectation according to my students' abilities in learning English which seem to be lower than what I expect ...*

(Interview, Instructor A1 of University A)

To respond to the different student backgrounds, Instructor A1 of University A adds that:

*... the different perception and background of students must be taken into consideration as well. For the literature course, at first I thought I could use totally learner-centred which I later found that it seems to be impossible. Therefore, I have to use approximately 25%-30% as teacher-centred teaching together with learner-centred teaching ...*

(Interview, Instructor A1 of University A)

From the above interview excerpts, it can be seen that teachers draw on a number of sources in interpreting policy and integrating it into their actual teaching practice, including teaching experience, learning background and learning habits, and training courses for developing their teaching performance. The context of each participant university, such as those aspects of context related to cultural beliefs, and students' needs and English proficiency, also has a great impact on teaching practices.

Despite such attempts at self improvement, there appears to be little intensive, sustained professional development to prepare teachers to implement the reform agenda. The literature review found a general lack of knowledge of language teaching theories and lack of English competency on the part of Thai EFL teachers (Forman 2005; Luangangoon 2001). As Pillay (2002a) comments, the organisations which are responsible for teacher training and development in Thailand do not have adequate investment in education and lack essential leadership in gaining greater understanding and implementing educational reform and teacher development. They do not usually take part in international 'learning communities' or in current research into teacher development. In addition, most institutions seldom agree to participate in the quality assurance process since they fear losing face. This suggests that teacher training and development in Thailand has been neglected and as a result, the knowledge and skills of teachers have deteriorated along with the standard of learning among Thai students (Pillay 2002a).

In total, the state government specifies teacher preservice and inservice professional development programs in order to prepare teachers to implement the Thai official policy documents. There is an increasing budget for teacher training, and more involvement of stakeholders in the policy formulation process and quality assurance. However, there is still a lack of expertise with the necessary knowledge and skills in the theory and practice of language teaching and inadequate research into how to interpret policy to suit the Thai context. Perhaps more pressingly there is no sustained program to investigate the choices teachers make as they implement the reform in their classrooms.

## 5.4 Summary of Chapter five

This chapter has drawn on Bernstein's notion of the pedagogic device in an attempt to understand the development of Thai educational policy as it relates to the teaching of English in tertiary institutions. A broad overview of the knowledge production field revealed a complex picture of competing and contradictory theories, with power struggles among various theorists and researchers in different discipline areas, such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, where opposing views on the nature of learner-centredness and communicative language teaching are found.

In terms of the relations between theories and principles developed in the production field and those specified in the official policy documents, it is found in this study that the official policy documents recommend a single theory of teaching and learning, the learner-centred teaching approach. They also suggest relatively weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students in which the students' involvement is more encouraged in the classroom. Although a number of learner-centred associated principles are referred to, they lack clear explanation. The official policy documents tend to provide more autonomy to the interpreter but their lack of guidelines can cause confusion and misinterpretation among the implementers, especially teachers. This lack of detailed guidelines, which is found to be another barrier to change towards the new teaching approaches, is caused by the complexity of the language teaching field and the Thai educators' constraints in dealing with this complexity. It is also borne out in this study that this misinterpretation causes resistance towards the application of new teaching methods. There is neglect of examining the appropriateness of theories of teaching and learning used in Thai social contexts. For example, the Western theories of teaching and learning, which are mainly drawn from research in second language learning, might not be suitable to be applied in the Thai social context, in which English is used as a foreign language, not a second language. Also, there is little research claimed to be used in designing the official policy documents relevant to the theories and principles of teaching and learning, which can be used as guidelines for teachers in their teaching practice.

To achieve more successful change, cooperative work among stakeholders in the policy formulation and interpretation process should be encouraged (Bernstein 1975; 1990; 2000; Fullan 2001; 2006). The findings of this study also reveal that in terms of roles and relations occurring in the Thai policy formulation and interpretation process, there has been some attempt to encourage educational reform through more involvement of stakeholders in the policy formulation process. In addition, many factors for successful change, such as more decentralisation and professional development (Fullan 2001; 2006) are encouraged.

In terms of teacher education, or in Bernstein's terms, the pedagogic recontextualising field, the institutions which are responsible for teacher education, including the state government and the educational institutions, have created many programs and training courses for teacher education which address the reform. Nevertheless, the problems occur when there are insufficient budgets, resources and experts in developing teacher education for more successful educational reform. Successful implementation of the curriculum can lead to further teacher learning through the development of teaching materials, exemplars of practice, textbooks and other useful resources. This may be seen as a source of tension within the pedagogic recontextualising field. Analyses of the interviews revealed that teachers acquire knowledge about new teaching methods and develop their practice from various sources: learning from media, training courses, their educational background and their teaching experience. However, perhaps because of professional and cultural traditions, they seldom learn through collaborative peer learning or classroom observation of other teachers. The next chapter includes a detailed analysis of how the Thai tertiary educational institutions encourage education reform through their institutional curricula, and how the teachers interpret and implement the policy as their teaching practice.

## CHAPTER SIX

# THE FIELD OF REPRODUCTION: INSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the complex nature of the field of knowledge production and the challenges this poses for the translation of theory into policy by the official recontextualising field and for the preparation of English teachers by the pedagogical recontextualising field. There are further transformations of policy, however, at the level of the institution. This chapter includes a substantial data analysis derived from three separate case studies with the purpose of tracing policy formulation and implementation through examining the curriculum design process, the institutional curricula and teaching practice at the level of the individual institution. The data analysis in this chapter answers the following research questions:

- how do the educational institutions interpret and recontextualise the official policy documents into their institutional policies?
- how do teachers interpret and implement the official policy documents into their teaching practice?

To achieve this purpose, Bernstein's (1990; 1996) pedagogic device has been expanded upon, introducing a distinction between 'the institutional recontextualising field' and 'the institutional reproduction field'. Whereas, in Bernstein's model, the recontextualisation process is seen to occur primarily at the level of policy-makers at the state level, here it will be suggested that processes of recontextualisation and interpretation continue to occur at the level of the institution through the development of institutional curricula, course syllabuses and teachers' lesson planning.

### **6.1.1 A Bernsteinian perspective on the curriculum design process**

To respond to the first question of how the educational institutions translate the official policy documents into their institutional policies, the interview data is analysed in terms of the curriculum design process of the three universities under analysis, drawing on the classification criteria generated by Bernstein's model (1990). Relationships between stakeholders are viewed as critical factors for successful change (Fullan 2001; 2006). Bernstein (1975; 1990) also notes that if there is more integrated work among stakeholders in the process of change, the implementation will be more consistent with what the policy suggests for more successful change. Bernstein's notions of classification are useful for exploring the roles and relations among staff in the curriculum design process. As shown in Table 6.1 below, for example, strong classification results in relationships among staff members in the curriculum design process that are clearly defined with strong boundaries. Weak classification, on the other hand, involves relationships in which the boundaries are more permeable with greater interchangeability between roles. Relevant to this study, as detailed in Table 6.1, if there is increasingly integrated work across agents (namely executives, administrators and instructors) with a higher interchangeability of skills and roles, the curriculum design process of that university will have more weakly-classified roles and relations among staff members in the curriculum design process, whereas more strongly-classified roles and relations among staff members in the curriculum design process will be the characteristic of those universities whose curriculum design process is characterised by a less integrated process by agents with inflexible roles (Bernstein 1990).

<b>Classification (C)</b>	
C+ (Strong classification)	<p><i>“the relationships are stable and sharply distinguished, the functions well insulated from each other, and the agents not interchangeable”</i> (Bernstein 1990, p.50). In this context, the strong classification means relationships between executives, curriculum designers and teachers are stable and not interchangeable. For example, each department has its own duties. They are responsible only for their own work. The teachers do not have a role in the curriculum design process. Only a small group of executives, administrators and/or curriculum designers takes part in the curriculum design process.</p>
C - (Weak classification)	<p><i>“the relationships between agents are less sharply distinguished, there is reduced insulation between functions, and agents are more interchangeable between categories”</i> (Bernstein 1990, p.50). The weak classification means roles are flexible and interchangeable. Some have multiple roles. For example, some teachers are also curriculum designers who take part in the curriculum design process. The needs of each department are also taken into account in the curriculum design process.</p>

**Table 6.1:** Bernstein’s classification criteria (Adapted from Bernstein 1990)

### **6.1.2 A Bernsteinian perspective on coherence between policy and curriculum**

Data collected from an analysis of policy and curriculum documents, along with interview data of the institutional executives, administrators and instructors is analysed to investigate the extent to which the theories and practices inherent in the institutional curricula of these universities coincide with the theories and practices endorsed in the official policy documents.

The institutional curricula of three universities are analysed by means of the Thai Education Reform Checklist (developed by the researcher – see Table 4.4 in section 4.6

in Chapter four) together with Bernstein's constructs of classification and framing. As has been seen, this checklist is informed by theories and principles drawn from the Thai official policy documents, in particular with reference to the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching. The institutional curricula and English course syllabuses of these universities are analysed in relation to the official policy documents, with the aim of finding out how these universities interpret the official policy documents – the National Education Act 1999 and the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 – as curricula and course syllabuses.

Based on Bernstein's classification and framing, a set of criteria has been created for analysing the relationships between the content of the official policy documents and the institutional curriculum of each university. The notions of classification and framing as applied by Neves and Morais (2001) (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 in section 3.3 in Chapter three) are adapted for analysing the consistency between the official policy documents and the institutional curriculum of each university as shown in Table 6.2 and Table 6.3. In particular, the analysis focuses on the extent to which learner-centredness – a major concern of the official policy – is taken up in the curriculum documents of the various institutions. With regard to classification, the analysis looks at the degree to which the boundaries between theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum are permeable or insulated, and the degree to which the theory of learner-centredness is promoted in both sets of documents. In relation to framing, the analysis looks at the degree to which the practices suggested in the curriculum document reflect the roles of teacher and of students in the learning process.

<b>Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning specified in the institutional curriculum</b>	
C+ (Strong classification)	The institutional curriculum focuses exclusively on a particular approach to teaching and learning.
C- (Weak classification)	The institutional curriculum draws on a number of different theories of teaching and learning.

**Table 6.2:** Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning specified in the institutional curriculum (Adapted from Neves and Morais 2001, pp.232-233)

As shown in Table 6.2, if the institutional curricula have strong boundaries established between theories and principles, with only the learner-centred theories advocated, they can be described as having strong classification. On the other hand, if there are more permeable boundaries established between theories and principles, with a number of different theories and principles, they can be described as having weak classification.

<b>Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students specified in the institutional curriculum</b>	
F+ (Strong framing)	The institutional curriculum includes statements focusing on the teacher to act as a director in the teaching and learning process. For example, the teacher is described as directing, ordering and describing the content of the subject. Such an approach would show that the institutional curriculum values a theory of teacher-centred instruction.
F- (Weak framing)	The institutional curriculum includes statements encouraging a higher degree of student participation in the teaching and learning process. For example, the students participate in independent activities and tasks or project works. They would take greater responsibility for their learning and would be given greater autonomy in the sequencing and pacing of learning activities. Such an approach would suggest that the institutional curriculum values a learner-centred teaching approach.

**Table 6.3:** Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students specified in the institutional curriculum (Adapted from Neves and Morais 2001, pp.232-233)

In the same way, teacher and students' roles in the learning process, as proposed in the documents, are taken into account in terms of framing. The degree to which student and teacher roles and responsibilities are specified in the documents will determine the extent to which the framing is strong or weak. As demonstrated in Table 6.3, the institutional curriculum with the specification of a higher degree of student participation in the teaching and learning process can be described as advocating weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students. If the institutional curriculum includes more statements that focus on the teacher's role rather than the students' role, the institutional curriculum will favour more strongly-framed relations between the teacher and students.

### 6.1.3 A Bernsteinian perspective on classroom implementation

In relation to the research question of how instructors interpret the official policy documents through their teaching practice, the teaching practice of four class instructors is explored and analysed in order to identify the relationship between what is specified in the institutional curricula and the teaching practices of each class instructor. The classroom observations were conducted together with the investigation of the educational texts, tools (transparencies and whiteboard) and activities used by the instructors. This aims to explore the factors that have an influence on the teaching practice of teachers in different contexts.

The Thai Educational Reform Checklist for the data analysis of classroom observation (developed by the researcher - see Table 4.5 in section 4.6 in Chapter four) was used to determine how instructors adapt the new teaching methodologies in their teaching practice. The checklist displays features associated with a learner-centred teaching approach and with communicative language teaching.

The analysis is also conducted by using Bernstein's model of classification and framing adapted from Neves and Morais (2001) (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 in section 3.3 in Chapter three). This examines whether the teaching content and pedagogic tasks reflect the theories and principles specified in the official policy documents.

<b>Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning applied in the classroom practice</b>	
C+ (Strong classification)	The classroom practice focuses exclusively on a particular approach to teaching and learning.
C- (Weak classification)	The classroom practice draws on a number of different theories of teaching and learning.

**Table 6.4:** Classification (C) of theories and principles of teaching and learning applied in the classroom practice (After Neves and Morais 2001, pp. 232-233)

As outlined in Table 6.4, if the classroom practice reflects a particular approach to teaching and learning, such as the learner-centred teaching approach, it can be said that there is very strong classification. Alternatively, if the classroom practice draws on a

number of different principles of teaching and learning, the classification in terms of classroom practice can be said to be weak.

<b>Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students in the classroom</b>	
F+ (Strong framing)	The classroom practice emphasises the teacher as a director in the teaching and learning process. For example, the teacher 'directs', 'orders' and 'describes' the content of the subject. There is minimal students' intervention and collaborative work in the classroom. Students seldom have opportunities to, or cannot practise English as much as possible. This would indicate that the classroom practice is based on a theory of teacher-centred instruction rather than the learner-centred teaching approach.
F- (Weak framing)	The classroom practice includes a higher degree of student control of the teaching and learning process. For example, the students participate in self-determined activities and tasks or project works and set their own goals, pace and sequence. This would indicate that the classroom practice is based on a theory of learner-centred teaching approach.

**Table 6.5:** Framing (F) of the relations between the teacher and students in the classroom (Adapted from Neves and Morais 2001, pp.232-233)

In the same way, framing is used to refer to the extent to which teachers and students control the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and acquired in the pedagogical relationship (Bernstein 1975; 1990; 1996; 2000). As with many of Bernstein's 'binaries', however, it is not a matter of one or the other. In most classrooms, there will be a continuum of practice from high teacher-control to lower teacher control. As demonstrated in Table 6.5, with respect to classroom practice, when the teacher takes a higher degree of control in the class, there will be more strongly-framed relations between the teacher and students in terms of classroom practice. On the other hand, if a higher degree of student participation is encouraged, rather than teacher control in the classroom, there are weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students in that class. It is also acknowledged, in this study, that teacher practices vary in terms of framing in accordance with many factors influencing classroom

implementation. This is consistent with Cazden (2006, 2011)'s concept of 'weaving'. By providing an example of curriculum 'weaving', Cazden (2006, 2011) explains the power of moving backwards and forwards between various kinds of learning activity. 'Weaving' acknowledges that control of classroom discourse varies throughout the lesson. In other words, 'weaving' can capture the conscious and deliberate nature of difference and change in this phenomenon (Cazden 2006, 2011). Due to the limitation of this study, only one single snapshot of their teaching practices was observed, with the intent of seeing how the teacher's practice is aligned with the national curriculum.

## **6.2 University A**

In this section, the data from University A is analysed in relation to classification and framing in terms of the curriculum design process, the relations between the institutional curriculum and the official policy documents, and the teaching practice of Instructor A1 of University A.

### **6.2.1 Curriculum design process of University A**

A significant factor in curriculum design is the degree to which agents or staff members' roles operate autonomously or are insulated from each other. The curriculum design process of University A can be described in terms of a relatively weak classification of roles and relations among staff members in the curriculum design process. As shown in Table 6.1, with a relatively weak classification, "*the relationships between agents are less sharply distinguished, there is reduced insulation between functions, and agents are more interchangeable between categories*" (Bernstein 1990, p.50-51). In University A, the relationships between executives, administrators and instructors are integrated and interactive, to the extent that some of them have multiple positions and roles. For example, in addition to taking the executive role of the dean's assistant, Administrator A also teaches English subjects as an instructor. Instructor A2 had also experienced the executive work. In another example of such flexibility, Instructor A2 was formerly the head of the English department. In addition, Instructor A1, an English instructor, mentions that he is the manager of 'English 1' and has the responsibility to design its course syllabus and lesson plan.

With the above-mentioned multiple positions and roles of staff, more opportunities are provided for administrators and instructors to be involved in the curriculum design process in a cooperative way. For example, faculty representatives are assigned to take part in the curriculum design process. These representatives include staff at various levels: executives, administrators and instructors. As Administrator A, who is an administrator and an English instructor, responds when asked about how the institutional curriculum of her university is developed:

*... The instructors are encouraged to take part in the curriculum design process...*

and

*... At the departmental level, the institutional curriculum has been modified by the department in cooperation with the executives of the university ...*

(Interview, Administrator A of University A)

Responding to the same question, Instructor A2, an English instructor, describes the process similarly:

*... The questionnaires are distributed to teachers in each department to ask about their opinion on the institutional curriculum and management. The representatives of each department will take part in the meeting on curriculum design ...*

(Interview, Instructor A2 of University A)

Such practices suggest that each department is provided with opportunities to take part in the curriculum design process in the form of cooperative work.

There is also some evidence of the consideration of learners' needs and interests in curriculum design. Feedback from students is collected as data for designing and improving the institutional curriculum. On the question of how the institutional curriculum of University A is developed, Instructor A2 remarks:

*... The institutional curriculum is developed in accordance with the learning outcomes of students and the needs analysis of students ...*

(Interview, Instructor A2 of University A)

In summary, in the curriculum design process of University A, with a relatively weak classification of the roles and relations among institutional staff members, there is

some attempt at encouraging the involvement of staff at different levels, namely executives, administrators, instructors and students in a more cooperative and group-based way because of the overlapping and multiple roles. As Bernstein (1975; 1990; 1996; 2000) states, more cooperative work among staff with a weak classification can lead to more successful change. Accordingly, with the integrated work among staff in University A, they are more likely open to change.

### **6.2.2 The relations between the institutional curriculum of University A and the official policy documents**

The relation between the institutional curriculum of University A and the national policies is discussed and exemplified in terms of the theories and principles specified in the official policy documents, with particular emphasis on the teaching methodologies recommended, the learning activities advocated and the aspects of language under focus.

With regard to the relations between theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum in terms of *teaching methodologies*, there is reference in the institutional curriculum of University A to the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching as teaching methodologies specified in the National Education Act 1999 and the Basic Education Curriculum 2001. For example, as has been seen in Chapter five, the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 suggests that the curricula have to respond to the individual *needs and interest of learners*. In the same way, learners' needs and interests are specified in the institutional curriculum of University A as:

*... current interesting issues ... (p.29)*

and

*... for further study in the High Education ... (p.28)*

With regard to '*self development*', a notion associated with learner-centred instruction as suggested in the section 'foreign language' of the Basic Education Curriculum 2001, one of the curricular objectives in the institutional curriculum of University A specifies that:

*... To produce the graduates equipped with self-development for their lifelong learning ... (p.1).*

Consistent with *the communicative language teaching*, the use of *the variety of authentic tasks and texts* is encouraged in the National Education Act 1999 in section 24. Similarly, the use of authentic tasks and texts is advocated in the institutional curriculum of University A as ‘communication in daily life’, ‘real life situation’ and ‘application in various careers’. There are a number of statements related to English for communication in real-life situations, such as ‘communicative English structure for communication in daily life’. In addition, there are various ESP courses specified in the institutional curriculum, such as ‘English for Hotel’ and ‘English for Tourist Guides’ which can encourage authentic sources for various fields and hence meet the students’ needs and interests.

With regard to *learning activities*, as discussed earlier in Chapter five, learner-centred associated activities, such as presentations, group learning, projects and problem-solving tasks are mandated in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001. Correspondingly, in the institutional curriculum of University A, activities which are consistent with learner-centredness are exemplified in the course descriptions of some subjects, such as ‘having presentation and report’, ‘discussion’ and ‘negotiation’. For example, it is specified in ‘Business Presentation and Report’ that:

... *the practice of presentation, discussion, including selecting the topic for presentation ... (p.37).*

Consistent with the communicative language teaching and learner-centred approaches, the teaching methodology that is specified in the course syllabus of ‘English 1’ has headings such as ‘problem-solving’, ‘brainstorming’ and ‘practice’ for its activities. Similarly, the teaching methodology specified in the course syllabus of ‘Critical Reading’ has headings for its activities such as ‘problem-solving’, ‘brainstorming group’, ‘practice’ and ‘demonstration’.

With regard to *aspects of language*, the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 states that practical skills and skills for communication, which are associated with communicative language teaching, should be encouraged in the classroom. Corresponding to the official policy document, the institutional curriculum of University A contains some subjects with the focus on various skills which are consistent with communicative language teaching. For example, communication skills are extensively specified in

course descriptions of many subjects. Communication of ideas, communication for daily life and communication for meaning are also identified in course descriptions of some subjects.

Therefore, the institutional curriculum of University A can be said to be closely aligned with the official policy; that is to say there is a relatively strong classification of teaching theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum. In endorsing the learner-centred approach of the official policy, the institutional curriculum of University A can also be described as advocating a weak framing of the relations between the instructor and students. In this way, it can be argued the institutional curriculum of University A suggests the strong version of learner-centred teaching approach and the strong version of communicative language teaching.

Some evidence demonstrates that the teachers in University A are required to design their own lesson plans on the basis of the institutional curriculum, and students' needs and abilities. When being asked about the curriculum development and the theories underpinning the institutional curriculum of University A, Instructor A1, an English instructor expresses:

*... I design my own lesson plans in accordance with the institutional policy and the institutional curriculum which focus on the student-centred principles, communicative purposes, the real life simulation and the use of daily life English. In designing the course syllabuses and lesson plans, students' needs and abilities are also taken into account ...*

This also suggests that instructors have some autonomy in designing the course syllabuses and lesson plans.

There is also the evidence of close relations between the institutional curriculum of University A and the official policy documents. In terms of curriculum development, Administrator A, who is both administrator and English instructor, observes the consistency between the institutional curriculum of University A and the national policy:

*... The institutional curriculum is designed on the basis of the national policy ...*  
(Interview, Administrator A of University A)

The same administrator gives her views on the independence of the institution to design its own curriculum that:

*... The university is independent in designing its own institutional curriculum but within the framework of the official policy documents since it has to be approved by the executives and the external committees ...*

(Interview, Administrator A of University A)

In other words, the institutional curriculum must correspond to the official policy documents since the university's curriculum and institutional policies are assessed by the internal and external quality assurance committees.

To assist curriculum implementation, a number of meetings and projects are organised for the purpose of encouraging further understanding and application of the learner-centred teaching approach. For example, Administrator A responds to the question of how the curriculum is developed for more successful change as follows:

*... There are always the meetings and seminars on developing the teaching techniques about 2-3 times a year. The meetings and seminars on the issue of learner-centered approach are also organised in various topics ... Also, University A creates many projects and learning resources to encourage the learner-centred teaching approach specified as the main focus of educational reform in the official policy documents in teaching and learning process ...*

(Interview, Administrator A of University A)

Instructor A1 responds in a similar vein to the same question:

*... Also, the executives always organise meetings on the issue of self-center to promote the student-centred instruction or to encourage students to learn by themselves. Students are also required to access the self access center ...*

(Interview, Instructor A1 of University A)

Instructor A2 also confirmed this statement and said:

*... There are regularly the annual meetings on the institutional policy in which the executives talk about the focus of the institutional policies ... including the educational reform ...*

(Interview, Instructor A2 of University A)

There is also evidence of support from executives. For example, as Instructor A1 states, when he asked for the learning resources for self-directed learning from the executives, he received a very good response and support.

These above-mentioned initiatives help foster positive relationships between teaching staff, executives, administrators, instructors and students, thus laying the groundwork for more successful curriculum renewal.

### **6.2.3 Classroom practice of Instructor A1 of University A**

In order to investigate the impact of the reform in practice in University A, the following section presents a snapshot of one teacher's practice in one lesson. The lesson is first presented then described using the categories of learning activities (and teaching materials), aspects of language and implied theory of instruction. The practice is then analysed using Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing.<sup>3</sup>

The teaching practice of Instructor A1 was observed during a class in a course called 'Preparatory English'. The goals of this subject are expressed as:

*... The study and practice of the basic grammar rules with basic English for communication for preparing students for further study in the high education ...*

(from curriculum of University A)

Instructor A1 pointed out that this subject was designed for the first year students who have low English proficiency. His aim for this lesson was also to assist students to pass their forthcoming mid-term exam which mainly focuses on reading, writing and grammar knowledge (from interview with Instructor A1).

There were 50 first-year students from different faculties across the university enrolled in this class. There were 30 students when the lesson observation began. However, the average attendance was about 40 students – other students joined the class individually during the observation period. The duration of the lesson was approximately two-and-a-half hours.

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<sup>3</sup> Discussion and analysis of the remaining three lessons are approached similarly.

Throughout the lesson, students were seated in rows facing a whiteboard. Most students had their own copy of the textbook on their desks; a few shared a copy with their friends. The instructor was standing at the front of the class, holding a microphone. He also had the textbook on his desk. For the majority of the class time, the instructor and students used the Thai language.

12:00	<p><u>Explicit Grammar Instruction</u></p> <p>Instructor A1 greeted the students with a smile. He began the lesson with an explanation of grammar rules for the present continuous tense in Thai, e.g. “The verb form for the present continuous tense is verb to be followed by present participle or verb+ing”. To begin he wrote the grammar rule on the whiteboard, e.g. ‘Present continuous tense = V. to be + V.ing (Present participle)’.</p> <p>Then, the whole class was asked to answer orally the questions included in the textbook exercise. These exercises were related to the present continuous tense, e.g. ‘Read this composition carefully. Then use the Simple Present Continuous form of the verbs in brackets to fill in the blanks.’ Students could answer most questions. The instructor corrected some mistakes by writing the correct answers on the whiteboard.</p> <p>After that, the instructor explained the past simple tense in the same way, e.g. “Past participle is used in past simple tenses” (in Thai). He also wrote some past participle forms on the whiteboard, e.g. ‘invited’ and ‘located’. The instructor asked students to pronounce some past participle forms. He stopped once to ask one student to write the answers in relation to the past participle on the whiteboard.</p>
12:24	<p><u>Group task</u></p> <p>Instructor A1 gave instructions for group work. The task required students to compose English dialogue for the role plays using three different tenses – present simple tense, present continuous tense and past continuous tense. The role plays were to reflect a range of different contexts, e.g. tourism, travelling and shopping.</p> <p>Students worked in groups of 3-4 with individuals seated near them. There</p>

	<p>were about 10 groups or 10 role-plays to be performed in this class. The instructor stopped the group work once to teach the whole class how to pronounce some past simple verbs, such as ‘begin began begun’ and asked students as a whole class to read these words aloud. Then, students continued their group work using their own pen and paper. They spoke mostly Thai in this group work. The instructor moved around the class to answer students’ questions and check their dialogue. Most groups copied the dialogues from the textbook on to their blank paper for the presentation. Instructor A1 stopped the group work and asked a few students to entertain their friends by dancing at the front of the class for about six minutes. Then, students continued their group discussion.</p>
12:58	<p><u>Role Plays</u></p> <p>Instructor A1 invited the first group to present their role play. The students from this group came to the front of the class and read their written dialogue from the sheet of paper which they had written down in the group discussion, e.g.</p> <p>“...  Student 1: What did you do yesterday?  Student 2: I was at home yesterday.  Student 1: Really?  Student 2: Yes. I was very tired yesterday. What did you do yesterday?  Student 1: I went to the cinema with my girl friend ...”</p> <p>The instructor provided feedback on the role-play of the first group, e.g.  “It is correct to form the question in the past simple tense with the verb, ‘did’ in this question: ‘Where did you go yesterday?’...” (in Thai). Then, the three other groups performed their role-plays at the front of the class in similar fashion to the first group. The dialogue covered various situations; for example, a conversation with the hotel receptionist and the greeting with friends, e.g.</p> <p>Student 3: Have you reserved the room?  Student 4: No, I haven’t. Do you have any empty rooms?  Student 3: Single room or double room?  Student 4: Single ...</p>

	The instructor gave feedback to each group in terms of vocabulary, grammar rules, and pronunciation (mostly in Thai). Each role-play took about 2-3 minutes.
13:35	<p><u>Reviewing Grammar Rules</u></p> <p>Instructor A1 revised different tenses by drawing a timeline on the whiteboard. These tenses included present simple tense, present continuous tense, future simple tense, past simple tense and present perfect tense. In addition, he explained how to form positive sentences, negative sentences and questions in different tenses. This grammar explanation, which took about 15 minutes, was in Thai. During this time, students were listening to the instructor and took notes in their own books.</p> <p>Then, students were asked to answer the questions included in the textbook exercises again. These exercises were mostly related to previously explained grammar rules, e.g. ‘Change these sentences into present simple, present continuous, past simple or present perfect’. Students were then asked to answer questions included in the exercises related to adverbs and verb forms, e.g. ‘Which prefixes form the opposite of these verbs?’ A whole class and sometimes individuals were asked to answer the questions orally. Sometimes, individual students were asked to write the answers on the whiteboard.</p>
14:44	At the end of lesson, the instructor told students that presentations of the remaining role-plays would continue in the next class. Further exercises in the textbook were assigned as homework.

**Table 6.6:** Classroom practice of Instructor A1 of University A

In terms of *learning activities*, the lesson above comprised four distinct activities: explicit grammar instruction, a group task, role-plays and a review of grammar rules. The first activity – the explicit grammar instruction – occupied approximately 24 minutes with teacher fronted activities and students sitting in rows. This activity was tightly controlled by the instructor. Student participation was restricted to opportunities to either respond to questions or read from the textbook, or to respond to questions about the textbook contents. Accuracy was emphasised during this exercise, in which considerable time was allocated to discussion of grammatical explanations and vocabulary. Such an activity with the prominent use of the textbook can be seen to be

consistent with the teacher-centred instruction in which there is more talk and questions from the teacher, with less student participation in the learning process. As well, whole class instruction is evident, with the teacher standing at the front and students facing the board and teacher's desk (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Cuban 1983; Brown 2007).

In contrast to the teacher controlled activity mentioned above, students were provided with opportunity to practise English use through the second activity, a group task which took about 28 minutes. Group work is said to provide learners with opportunities to practise using the target language in more varied contexts than the whole class activities (Long et al. 1976; Nunan 2004a). More student freedom was evident in this activity; students were observed to assist each other independently of teacher-direction. Students also had more control over what they talked and wrote about. Their task required them to write a short dialogue for the role plays in various contexts. In this way, the group task aligns more closely with communicative language teaching practices in which students have more opportunities to practise all integrated skills with the target language through collaborative tasks (Brumfit 1985; Brown 2007).

The third activity – the role-play – saw a return to a more formal classroom organisation in which selected students reported on the outcomes of their group discussion to the remaining students and instructor. The instructor gave the feedback mainly about grammar rules. In addition, the instructor retained a good deal of control over the activity through the allocation of turns, questioning of students and prominence of the textbook throughout the lesson. Such activities have features of traditional classrooms in which, with the dominant role of the teacher, the grammar rules are focused rather than what is done in communicative practice (Nunan 1988; Lamie 2005; Brown 2007). However, it may be argued that the emphasis on student language use is also associated with more contemporary communicative classrooms.

In the final stage of the lesson – the review of grammar rules – there is stronger control from the instructor through grammar explanation with teacher-centred activities. For example, the instructor stood at the front of the class with students sitting in rows. Students spent most of this time listening to the teacher talk in Thai. The instructor controlled the lesson through questioning students and following grammar exercises from the textbook. Accuracy was emphasised during this exercise, in which

considerable time was allocated to grammatical explanations. Therefore, it can be pointed out that this task aligns closely with the grammar translation approach, in which there is more focus on the rules of grammar (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Brown 2007). In terms of the relations between the teacher and students, the instructor takes the dominant role as a director and provider of input without much student interaction. For example, there are more talk and questions from the instructor than from students in the classroom. There is also more whole-class instruction with students facing the board and instructor's desk, and a great reliance on textbooks as a source of information (Cuban 1983).

With respect to teaching materials, Instructor A1 followed most of the exercises given in the issued textbook. Instructor A1 revealed that this textbook was designed to support preparation for the examination, which focuses heavily on English grammar knowledge, and reading and writing in English. Instructor A1 also asserted that the textbook was a set of coursenotes that he had compiled to suit the student level of English proficiency (from interview with Instructor A1). This textbook included explanations of grammar rules, mostly about different tenses (in English). That means this material hardly provided opportunities for students to apply language in different contexts. Furthermore, the grammar explanations were all in English so that it would be difficult for students with low proficiency in English to learn through this book by themselves. Therefore, teacher support to read the text was critical since most students in this class had low proficiency in English. With its emphasis on grammar exercises, and with few communicative activities, the textbook can be described as focused on accuracy rather than fluency.

Students in the class of Instructor A1 spent a good deal of time completing exercises from the textbook; thus their language was restricted to the contexts provided by the text. In this way, it may be claimed that the textbook had a significant influence on the teaching practice of Instructor A1 and shaped relations between the instructor and students in that the instructor and textbook controlled classroom practice, with only minor acknowledgement of the students' role in the learning process. Because of this textbook-based teaching, this lesson is more consistent with the traditional approach, with strong control from the instructor and much reliance on the textbook.

The presence of the microphone and whiteboard is evidence of the importance of whole-class teaching in this teaching practice. However, that the microphone was available for student use in their presentations suggests that in this classroom students too are encouraged to take up positions of authority with respect to some aspects of classroom activity from time to time. The use of the blank paper to support students' group discussion can be seen to be fostering independent responses from the students. However, because their responses would be directed by the questions in the textbook, it can also be argued that the instructor was maintaining relatively strong control of the discussion vicariously through the textbook.

With regard to *aspects of language*, both Thai and English were used in the lesson observed: English as the target language and Thai as the language of instruction. Most of the teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions in this lesson, and the teacher explanations and instruction, were in Thai. Thus, the amount of time for practising listening and speaking in the target language was reduced. Students had little opportunity to participate outside those teacher-directed activities, such as reading extracts from the textbook and listening to the teacher talk. In terms of the pedagogical focus, accuracy was emphasised over fluency, since grammar practice was more evident than the practice of integrated skills for the most part of the lesson. These features of the lesson are consistent with a traditional teaching or teacher-centred teaching approach rather than the new teaching methods advocated by the curriculum reform (Nunan 1988; Lamie 2005; Brown 2007).

However, students were also provided with the opportunity to use the language form taught through meaning-focused activities: the group discussion and the role-play. For example, in the group activity, the students were expected to read, discuss in the groups and find the answers to the questions. Students were given freedom to create their own scripts about any topics by using different tenses. They could also apply language for different purposes, such as greeting, chatting with a friend and booking a hotel room. Nevertheless, students simply copied the conversation as it appeared in the textbook, and the discussions took place mainly using Thai. The instructor did not force them to speak only English in the group. The use of Thai assisted the students to produce the work required of them; that is, a written English response. Although use of L1 is not encouraged in strong versions of communicative language teaching, here the task was

not structured in such a way as to encourage student use of spoken English. If the exam for which the instructor wishes to prepare the students demands a written English response like this, the relatively loose teacher control over activities has been effective. If, however, the instructor wishes students to use spoken English, then it has not been effective. While the group task did not necessarily foster students' use of spoken English, it did provide opportunities for writing and reading English. The written English required students to write English dialogue for the role plays using three different tenses – present simple tense, present continuous tense and past continuous tense, while engaging students in group discussion. In addition, the role plays were to reflect a range of various contexts. If group tasks and role-plays allow students to practise using grammar as well as the integrated skills through engaging in real-life and authentic language, it could be argued that these activities focus on both form and meaning. On the other hand, if students are encouraged to learn grammar through language drills without practising integrated skills through real-life activities, it could be said that these activities focus only on form (Nunan 1988; Lamie 2005; Brown 2007).

In the role-plays, students read short scripts of about 10 lines within a short time, rather than improvise it. Most students also found it difficult to do the role play without the script. It can thus be said that in this activity, students mostly learned from memory and did language drill rather than construct meaning from information and experience. In addition, reading skills were more prevalent than oral communicative skills in this activity. Thus, it can be pointed out that such activities have features of traditional classrooms in which, with the dominant role of the instructor, reading and writing skills are emphasised (Nunan 1988; Lamie 2005; Brown 2007).

With respect to *the implied theory of instruction*, there is much evidence of a teacher-centred teaching approach with some concessions toward a learner-centred teaching approach. As has been seen, half of the class time was devoted to textbook activities; students completed exercises related to grammar rules – first individually, then as a whole class with some students writing answers on the whiteboard. Linguistic criteria focused on grammatical rules rather than learners' needs and interests, reflecting a grammar translation approach. In addition, students were involved in memorisation and drilling, reflecting behaviourist theory. Accordingly, such activities were consistent with the 'traditional' approach rather than the communicative approach (Nunan 1988;

Lamie 2005; Brown 2007). However, approximately 70 minutes out of two-and-a-half hours, or half of the class time, were spent on communicative tasks: a group task and role-plays, which are consistent with communicative language teaching. Thus, it could be argued that Instructor A1's teaching approach combines aspects of teacher-centred approaches with those of more student-centred. It is a 'weaving' of approaches.

With respect to the role of the instructor, strongly-framed relations between the instructor and students are evident for the most part. Bernstein (1975) points out that with strong framing of the teacher's and students' roles, options for students will be reduced. In other words, the students have little control over the organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship. In the class of Instructor A1, the framing of the relations between the instructor and students varies depending on the activities conducted. For example, for about half of the lesson, Instructor A1 strongly controlled the tasks undertaken by students, who were frequently assigned to complete exercises from the textbook. He explained some grammar rules, together with answers of those exercises, to students, with minimal student involvement. In another half of the lesson, framing was relaxed through communicative activities with less control from the instructor. However, the strong control held by instructor and the dominant use of the textbook, reveal an overall pattern of strongly-framed relations between the instructor and students, associated with a teacher-centred approach. As Bernstein (1975) points out, more strongly-framed relations between the teacher and students can be caused by the textbook-based teaching and learning (Bernstein 1975).

Instructor A1 also identified the challenges to the application of the new teaching approach, as large class sizes, the textbook-based and exam-based teaching, and the low proficiency in English of the students. As stated by Holliday (1994), it is difficult to apply the communicative approach in a large class. Instructor A1 relied mainly on the textbook with the focus on grammar knowledge rather than the practice of communicative skills. This textbook was published by Instructor A1 to suit students who have low English proficiency in the belief that it can improve their English proficiency (from interview with Instructor A1). It contained only fixed grammar rules with exercises from the textbook which causes more textbook-based and exercise-based teaching and learning in this class. Instructor A1 states that the aim for the lesson was

to help students to pass their examination. This resulted in exam-based teaching. Also, in communicative tasks, such students with their low English proficiency were not able to practise English as much as possible. Such constraints also prevent Instructor A1 from implementing the curriculum reform which advocated more student involvement in the classroom.

## **6.3 University B**

This section responds to the research questions of how University B interprets official policy documents into its institutional curriculum (in terms of the curriculum design process and the consistency between the institutional curriculum and the official policy documents); and how the instructors in University B interpret and implement the national policies.

### **6.3.1 Curriculum design process of University B**

In this section, the curriculum design process of University B is discussed in order to examine how University B transforms and interprets official policy documents into its institutional curriculum. From an analysis of the interviews, it can be inferred that the administration of University B has strong control of the curriculum design process.

In the case of University B, with a relatively strong classification with the rigid boundaries between subjects/agents and their functions or activities (Bernstein 1990), there are rigidly specified duties and responsibilities of executives, administrators and instructors that result in clearly delineated roles. As Administrator B of University B expresses his view on curriculum development:

*... The institutional curriculum of University B is designed by course coordinators or executives while instructors take no major role in designing the curriculum, though some notice might be taken of feedback from instructors and students ...*

(Interview, Administrator B of University B)

Similarly, when Instructor B, an English instructor, was asked whether she takes part in formulating the curriculum, she answered that:

*... No, I don't. This must be the executives who deal with it. The instructors who are not executives will not be involved in designing curriculum. Only executives will take part in designing the curriculum with the specific section which is responsible for quality assurance ...*

(Interview, Instructor B of University B)

From such evidence, it can be inferred that the relationships between categories in University B are strongly classified with little flexibility. That means “*the relationships are stable and sharply distinguished, the functions well insulated from each other and the agents not interchangeable*” (Bernstein 1990, p.50-51). In this case, the curriculum design process is mainly the responsibility of the group of top management or administrators and course coordinators who deal directly with the curriculum design process and who have greater power in decision-making. Also, individual roles are strongly delineated and staff members are responsible only for their own jobs.

The institutional curriculum of University B is quite rigid without much change. As Administrator B gives his views on curriculum development:

*... University B has used nearly the same curriculum for 10 to 11 years without much change. Although there are some small changes in the institutional curriculum, there is no change in the core curriculum ...*

(Interview, Administrator B of University B)

Despite strong control from top management, there are some factors which promote change in University B. One of these factors includes the collection of instructors' and students' feedback for the curriculum design. As Administrator B responds when asked about curriculum development:

*... The institutional curriculum is designed based on the Faculty of Arts' vision and mission and English team vision and mission. The requirement of students or other stakeholders, such as employers is also considered in designing the curriculum. In addition, the objectives of university have to be in line with students' needs ...*

(Interview, Administrator B of University B)

Instructor B also confirms this issue and expresses that the feedback from students has to be randomly collected in each semester. On the question of how the curriculum is modified, Administrator B also notes that requirements of other departments are also taken into account for the curriculum design:

*... Although each department has to develop the institutional curriculum independently, some changes can be made according to the requirements of students and other departments. Exercises, assignments and activities specified in the institutional curriculum can be modified to fit those needs ...*

(Interview, Administrator B of University B)

### **6.3.2 Relations between the institutional curriculum of University B and the official policy documents**

This section responds to the research question of how the educational institutions interpret and recontextualise the official policy documents into their institutional curricula. This is discussed in terms of the teaching methodologies recommended, the learning activities advocated and the aspects of language under focus.

In terms of *teaching methodologies*, some notions associated with learner-centred instruction as advocated in the national policy are specified in the course descriptions specified in the institutional curriculum of University B for instructors to follow, such as learner's needs and interests, self-development and freedom of expression.

Interestingly, a learner-centred concept, '*learner's needs and interests*' which is specified in the National Education Act 1999 and the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 is also referred to in the institutional curriculum of University B. For example, learners' needs and interests are identified in the course description of one subject, 'Academic Writing', as follows:

*...This course analyses the various forms of academic writing and provides practice in writing for academic purposes, such as reports, term papers and theses as required in the different field of study ... (p.301)*

As discussed before in Chapter five, it is specified in the National Education Act 1999 in the section 'Next Steps: Reform of Education in Thailand' that '*self-development*', an

associated learner-centred notion, should be encouraged in students' learning. In the same way, one of the behavioural objectives specified in the institutional curriculum of University B, is to enable students to '*appreciate freedom of expression*'. That means students are encouraged to learn and to develop themselves through expressing their own opinions. Special projects, in which students are encouraged to learn by themselves through conducting their own enquiries based on their needs and interests, are also prescribed in the course syllabuses of 'English I' and 'English II'.

Corresponding to *the communicative language teaching* suggested in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001, the use of *authentic tasks and texts with various fields*, such as 'everyday life', 'social economic developments and humanitarian issues' can also be noted in the course descriptions of some subjects. Various media and a variety of knowledge with an extensive range of information sources are also specified. Attention is also paid to context – a key feature of communicative pedagogy. Many English subjects are ESP courses, especially in the field of business, since these English subjects are mainly taught with students in the Faculty of Business Management.

The institutional curriculum of University B also specifies some concepts associated with communicative language teaching, such as 'up to date methods and techniques', 'communicative approach' and 'creative and communicative learning environment'. Such activities are described in some detail in the document, indicating a familiarity with the principles and providing guidance for the instructors. For example, conducting communicative activities is prescribed as one of the objectives in the course syllabus of 'Basic English' as follows:

*... After completing the course satisfactorily students will be able to:*  
*... speak English confidently and employ communication strategies to get their message across in conversations ... (p.1)*

In addition, one of the objectives of 'English IV (Business)' is specified in the course syllabus as:

*... At the end of the course, students will*  
*1. be familiar with the theory and concepts of the communication process and its application in business research and reporting ...*

5. *be proficient in making oral presentations and participate effectively in group discussions.*
6. *have improved communication skills through listening-speaking activities ... (p.1)*

Administrator B questions the communicative language teaching that is specified in the national policy. For example, he comments that the communicative teaching approach is an outdated teaching method which is more related to listening and speaking activities for communication practice. Administrator B's perception indicates the inconsistency between what the implementer perceives and what the policy intends.

*Learning activities* associated with a learner-centred approach, such as projects and problem solving for more collaborative works are occasionally suggested in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001. Correspondingly, in the institutional curriculum of University B, there are details of various recommended activities, including communicative tasks that should be conducted in some courses, such as problem-solving, discussion, conversation, simulation and special projects. For example, it is stated in the course description of 'Conversation and Discussion':

*... This course is designed to train students to speak freely or according to a given pattern, to **discuss in groups** about a given topic and to analyse proposed **problems** ... (p.297).*

Likewise, in the course syllabuses of most subjects, many tasks or activities include class participation and oral presentation. Students are also expected to engage in independent tasks, such as discussion, presentation and project work, as assessment activities.

In terms of *aspects of language*, it is stated in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 under the topics 'Foreign language' and 'Language for communication' that students should acquire skills for language communication. In the same way, as noted in the institutional curriculum of University B, fluency for effective communication is emphasised. While a few subjects focus on structure, most subjects encourage communicative skills practice and interactive practice, such as skills for debating and

understanding. For example, the course description of 'Reading in English Newspapers' specifies that:

*... This course analyses the various forms of journalism, such as headline news, column, editorial ... The reading of current news serves to enhance **skills in understanding and debating articles** ... (p.299).*

Practical exercises to develop fluency and 'language in use' are also specified in some subjects. The practice of all four integrated skills and thinking skills is specified in the course description of 'English I':

*... The English I course is a 60-hour Academic English course meant to train students to improve their five language skills in English, namely, reading, writing, listening, speaking, and last but not least, thinking ... (p.1).*

The practice of English skills for learning and oral application is also identified in some subjects. When asked about how she designs the class activities, Instructor B, an English Instructor, points out that:

*... all four integrated skills are taught and practised in class. They are not taught in isolation. The frequency of doing listening and speaking activities will be more specified in the course syllabuses ...*

(Interview, Instructor B of University B)

Thus, it can be said that there is a focus on the integration of skills in the institutional curriculum of University B.

This shows a degree of consistency between the theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum of University B and those specified in the official policies with relatively strong classification. That means both official policies and the institutional curriculum of University B focus strongly on the learner-centred teaching approach. As Administrator B, who is also an instructor, gives his comment about the theories underpinning the institutional curriculum of University B:

*... there is no explicit use of the word 'learner-centred' in the institutional curriculum. Instead, there are some statements about activities which are consistent with the learner-centred approach, such as a pair work, presentation and special projects ...*

(Interview, Instructor B of University B)

The institutional curriculum of University B provides explicit specification in great detail of a communicative approach with learner-centred principles. The course syllabuses also include clear details about activities, tasks and indicative time for instructors to follow. Accordingly, the instructors can use the institutional curriculum and the course syllabuses as useful guides for the application of the new teaching methods. It can also be said that with regard to the relations between the institutional curriculum and official policy documents, the institutional curriculum of University B has the characteristic of relatively strong classification of teaching theories and notions mandated in the institutional curriculum with a high level of focus on a learner-centred teaching approach. In endorsing the learner-centredness of the official policy, the institutional curriculum of University B can be described as advocating weakly-framed relations between the instructor and students. In this way, it can be argued that the institutional curriculum of University B recommends the strong version of the learner-centred teaching approach and the strong version of communicative language teaching.

Through document analysis, interview and institutional visits, it can be noticed from the findings that there are many positive factors in University B which facilitate curriculum implementation. One of these factors is the clearly-specified detail in the institutional curriculum and the course syllabuses. In addition, University B is a reputable international university with the English language as the medium of instruction. As a member of an international consortium of universities, University B encourages English-medium instruction so that the English language is the main language for teaching in every faculty. As noted in the institutional curriculum, there is an intensive course policy to improve English skills of students in every faculty.

It is also found that, with positive attitudes towards the institutional curriculum, instructors accept and agree to follow the institutional curriculum in broad terms. For example, Administrator B, who is also responsible for the curriculum design process in that university, gives his views on the theories underpinning the institutional curriculum of University B, stating that it is effective enough to lead the change towards the new

teaching methods, such as the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching.

When asked about typical activities used in her classroom, Instructor B, an English instructor, responds that:

*... the instructors have to follow all activities specified in the course outline. However, the instructors have the freedom in designing their own lesson plans and activities which, however, have to cover and be consistent with the scope in course outline provided by the university ...*

(Interview, Instructor B of University B)

Administrator B, who is also an English instructor, also confirms this point when asked about factors that result in the policy implementation success:

*... Although the main curriculum is important for each course and needs to be followed by all instructors, instructors have the freedom and expertise in designing their activities, albeit based on the institutional curriculum ...*

(Interview, Administrator B of University B)

In addition, instructors do not have to deal with administrative work so that they have more time for preparing their lessons and improving their teaching performances. As Instructor B responds when asked about the policy implementation development in University B:

*... In order to have more efficient teaching and learning, most instructors will teach only 1 or 2 subjects in each semester so that they can have more time to spend preparing their lessons and developing their own performances for their professional development ...*

(Interview, Instructor B of University B)

All of these above-mentioned factors can promote change for successful curriculum renewal, including more feasibility of applying the new teaching methods, which are canvassed in the next section.

### 6.3.3 Classroom practice of Instructor B of University B

In this section, the classroom of Instructor B was observed in order to ascertain her actual teaching practice and to explore how she interprets and implements the institutional curriculum. Her teaching practice was observed during one class in a course called 'English I'. The goals of this course are expressed as:

*The English I course is a 60-hour Academic English course meant to train students to improve their five language skills in English, namely, reading, writing, listening, speaking, and last but not least, thinking. All of these skills are integrated in every class meeting in a creative and communicative learning environment. 45 hours is devoted to the primary skills – reading and writing, and 15 hours to the secondary skills – listening and speaking.*

(from course syllabus of English I)

Responding to the question of how she designs the class activities, Instructor B expresses the aim for the lesson as being to encourage students to practise integrated skills which are specified in the course syllabus of the subject (from interview with Instructor B).

There were 2 lessons of 'English I' in each week. While the length of classroom observation time was similar for both Instructor A1 and Instructor B, the observations were distributed over 2 lessons in Instructor B's classroom. There were 20 students enrolled in this class – all first-year students of the faculty of law. There were 20 students when the lesson observation began.

At the beginning of the lesson, students were sitting in rows facing the whiteboard. Then, they sat in groups for group discussion. Most students had a copy of the textbook open on their desks. A few students shared textbooks with their friends. The instructor was not only standing at the front of the class. From time to time, she moved around the class with the textbook, questioning individual students while explaining the reading article to the class. She also moved around the class during the group work. She used only English in class and encouraged students to speak only English in class, especially in the group work.

Lesson one (11:00 – 11:55)	
11:00	<p><u>Reading Task</u></p> <p>Instructor B commenced the lesson with a reading activity. She read the short story entitled ‘The big blue shirt’ in the textbook to the class. Students followed the lesson. During this time, Instructor B moved around the class, asking students questions about the story occasionally. Questions were also directed at the whole class in English from time to time. Students could answer most questions. Then, Instructor B used transparencies to explain vocabulary items (in English). Students made notes in their own books.</p> <p>Instructor B asked questions related to the story to the whole class by referring to students’ experience, for example, “Have you ever been followed by anybody?” and “What would you do?” (in English). Some students responded, e.g. “I might be nervous” (in English). She also questioned the class, e.g. “Look at the first paragraph. Which words make you see the image of the girl” (in English). The whole class answered the questions: “not pretty” (in English).</p>
11:21	<p><u>Vocabulary Explanation</u></p> <p>Instructor B told students how to write descriptive paragraphs by using adjectives to describe quality, shape and style (in English), writing on the transparency, e.g. ‘A good paragraph must consist of a topic sentence, a controlling idea or main idea, supporting details and a concluding sentence’ (In English). Then, she asked students to practise how to describe the character of someone through an activity suggested in the textbook: ‘Instruction No.1- Analyse the character of the narrator by using adjectives’.</p> <p>Instructor B gave the definitions of some vocabulary items from the story through transparencies, e.g. ‘observant (adj.) = noticing everything that happens’ (in English). At the same time, Instructor B moved around the class and asked students some questions related to those vocabulary items (in English) while students made further notes. Most questions were directed to the whole class. Sometimes the instructor approached an</p>

	<p>individual student to question him or her. She also gave examples of sentences using those vocabulary items. For example, in order to explain 'sensitive', she said "Supposing you are sitting in the class with your friends and you just had a new hairstyle and your friend may say 'Oh look at you. Your new hairstyle looks really like a cockatoo'...and you may get so angry and may cry. It means you are too sensitive in that case and it is not good" (in English).</p>
11:34	<p><u>Group Task</u></p> <p>The instructor moved on to a textbook activity: a group task: 'Choose some of the adjectives from the list that you think would reflect the character or personality of the narrator. Also give your reasons or evidence from the passage to support your opinion.' Instructor B gave instructions for group work, in English. She asked students to form groups of four and work with friends to analyse the character of the narrator by using at least two adjectives with some reasons or evidence. Students were allowed 15 minutes to do this and then were expected to read their answers to the class.</p> <p>Students worked in these groups to discuss the story from the textbook with their friends. All the students appeared to be involved in the task and worked together to form sentences describing the character of the narrator. The instructor announced to the class that: "Try to use English with your friends. All right?" (in English). Students appeared to try to speak only English in their group discussion, especially when they discussed the content of the lesson, e.g. "Are you OK with its meaning?" and "I think this sentence is good because ..." (in English). However, they sometimes spoke Thai when they did not really know how to explain something in English or when they wanted to make a joke with their friends.</p> <p>Instructor B visited each group to check the answers and answer students' questions (in English), e.g. "He is observant. That is correct but you might find more examples. Tactful is correct because of what?"</p>
11:47	<p><u>Student Presentations</u></p>

	<p>Instructor B stopped group work and asked each group to present their answers.</p> <p>One student from each group came to the front of the class and read their group answers from the paper, e.g. “The narrator is tactful. According to four paragraphs of the story, the narrator said I had to be tactful with that girl, ‘May I ask a question?’ That shows that the narrator is tactful. And he is possessive because he wants to get his shirt back” (in English).</p> <p>After each group’s presentation, other students applauded. The instructor gave feedback to each group. The instructor commended all groups, e.g. “OK. All right. Very good. So this group directs the word ‘tactful’ and ‘possessive’” (in English). Then, the four other groups presented at the front of the class in a similar fashion to the first group.</p>
11:53	<p>Instructor B signalled the end of the lesson by assigning homework: exercises in the textbook.</p>
Lesson two (11:00- 12:00)	
11:00	<p><u>Group Task</u></p> <p>Instructor B commenced the lesson by giving instructions for a group task and a role play (in English). This activity was suggested in the textbook as: ‘Together with another student, write a full script that the narrator and the girl might have spoken from the beginning to the end of the scene in a dialogue format. Then act out your dialogue in front of the class.’</p> <p>Students were asked to form groups of four to prepare the dialogue for the role-plays. This dialogue had to be composed based on the story they had discussed in the previous lesson, ‘The big blue shirt’. The students were told they could take only 15 minutes to discuss and after that they could act the dialogue.</p>
11:17	<p><u>Role Plays</u></p> <p>The instructor stopped the group work to invite each group to present their role-play. Each group performed the role-play without reading the script, e.g.</p> <p>“Student 5: Excuse me. Is this shirt from the Salvation Army? It is mine, my favorite shirt. I want it back.</p>

	<p>Student 6: I think you misunderstood because this is my father's shirt.</p> <p>Student 5: It's mine. I want mine back.</p> <p>Student 7: Hey! Are you mad? I will call the police.</p> <p>Student 5: It's mine. That is my favourite shirt ..." (in English).</p> <p>After each group's role-play, other students applauded. The instructor gave the detailed feedback to all groups at the end, e.g. "I think every group can do very well ... And I really like some groups' presentation story because they are very creative ... Anyway there are some points, you may adjust yourself a little bit and your presentation will be very much better. For example, for some groups, you should speak louder, probably something about your tone of voice ..." (in English).</p>
11:35	<p><u>Vocabulary Exercises</u></p> <p>Instructor B asked the whole class to orally answer the questions in the textbook (in English), e.g. 'Further practice with characterisation: Here are twenty adjectives to describe a person's character or personality. Complete the sentences below with a suitable adjective from the list. Use each word once only ...' The questions were mostly directed at the whole class. Students could respond to most questions (in English). She also explained the meaning of vocabulary items by giving some examples from real life situations, e.g. "The word 'bossy' is negative ... For example, if your friend keeps on telling you the same thing many times, he will be a bossy one and you will be very bored by him ..." (in English).</p> <p>Then, other exercises on the textbook related to characterisation were assigned as homework.</p>
11:45	<p><u>Reading Task</u></p> <p>Instructor B provided students with a few minutes to skim through a descriptive poem entitled 'Coat' on another page of the textbook.</p> <p>Instructor B then read through the poem and explained its meanings (in English) to the class. During this time, students made notes in their own textbooks. The instructor moved around the class and questioned the</p>

	<p>students (in English) as a whole class. Sometimes she approached individual students to question him or her. Students could answer most questions (in English).</p> <p>Instructor B also gave some examples from her own experience (in English), e.g. “The narrator of this poem wants to show the value of love of people around us ... the value of time ... I tell you one real example ... I used to have one student, a boy; everyday when he came to study, he was very talkative. But one day he looked very quiet, he looked so sad. I asked him what happened and he said his mum had got the last stage of cancer and had only three months left to live. He said, in the past he had quarreled with his mum everyday ... Sometimes he felt bored. After that one month only, he told me that his mum had already passed away. So this is another real life example to make you see the value of people who stay around you” (in English).</p>
11:55	<p>At the end of lesson, Instructor B assigned students to read some parts of the textbook as homework.</p>

**Table 6.7:** Classroom practice of Instructor B of University B

With respect to *learning activities*, the first lesson comprised four distinct activities: a reading task, vocabulary explanation, a group task and student presentations, each of which occupied approximately a quarter of an hour. The second lesson included four distinct activities: a group task, role plays, vocabulary exercises and a reading task. In this lesson, communicative activities: a group task and role-plays occupied about 35 minutes or more than half of the class time. The classroom events that took place in both lessons showed a range of participation structures: whole class, group and individual.

The activities done during both of these lessons facilitated teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction in the class. In the first stage of the first lesson – a reading task, Instructor B explained the reading passage in the form of interacting with her students. This reading task was spent mostly in whole-class participation. However, the students were not

only the audience listening to the instructor but also responded to the instructor individually and as a group. This reading task took about 10 minutes.

In the second activity of the first lesson – vocabulary explanation, which took approximately 13 minutes – the instructor helped the students to understand the meanings of some vocabulary items in the reading article by asking the students questions and giving some examples in relation to their real-life situations. This aimed to assist the students to be able to write the descriptive paragraph with the use of different vocabulary, for the next activity – a group task.

As noted, these first two tasks were teacher-fronted activities with teacher control more consistent with traditional teaching. However, through questioning, the instructor also involved students in relation to their real-life situations which is consistent with a communicative language teaching approach in which students have to be provided with more opportunities to apply the target language with the topics related to their real-life situations (Brumfit 1985). That suggests there is a ‘weaving’ of approaches operating in Instructor B’s classroom.

In contrast to the teacher-led activities mentioned above, students were provided with more opportunity to practise English use through the third activity of lesson one - a group task – which occupied approximately 13 minutes. In this activity, students were asked to form small groups for discussing and writing a description of the character. During the group work, the students interacted with each other as well as with the instructor, and in addition the instructor encouraged the more proficient students to help others. This resulted in all the students being involved in the lesson.

After that, in the fourth stage of lesson one – student presentations – the representatives of each group presented their output to the whole class by reading a descriptive paragraph. The instructor provided feedback to each group. This presentation took about six minutes.

Fluency was emphasised during these last two communicative activities of lesson one: a group task and student presentations in which considerable time was allocated to the practice of integrated skills. More student freedom was also evident in these activities.

Thus, it can be argued that these activities are more consistent with communicative language teaching in which students have to be provided with more opportunities to apply the target language through collaborative work and to express themselves about topics related to their real-life situations (Brumfit 1985).

The group discussion and role-play in lesson two allowed students to practise the words taught in lesson one. In the first activity of lesson two – a group task, the students were provided with about 17 minutes to write the new dialogues, drawing on the reading passage studied in the previous lesson. This activity is specified in the textbook. According to observations, the group discussion encouraged more interaction and co-operation among students in helping each other without the instructor requesting them to do so. During group work, the instructor moved around the class and interacted with the students. This also resulted in the majority of students being involved in the lesson. There were also more opportunities for the instructor to provide feedback and error correction.

In the second stage of lesson two – role-plays that took about 18 minutes – the students used their self-designed scripts for doing the role-plays. They also performed the role-plays without a written script. Observation reveals that students did not have difficulty in practising English since they had high English proficiency. This resulted in more opportunities for them to practise the target language.

In these first two communicative activities: a group task and role-plays, fluency was emphasised since a great amount of time was allocated to the practice of integrated skills. Students were observed helping each other independently of teacher-direction. Thus, it can be argued that such activities align more closely with communicative language teaching. As Brumfit (1985) points out, to apply communicative language teaching more effectively, students have to be provided with more opportunities to practise the target language through collaborative work.

In the third activity of lesson two – vocabulary exercises, Instructor B spent about 10 minutes talking about exercises related to vocabulary included in the textbook. She posed the questions in those exercises in such a way as to encourage maximum

interaction. For example, from time to time, Instructor B approached an individual student for the answers.

Another 10 minutes were spent on the last stage of lesson two – a reading task. For this activity, students were provided with a few minutes to skim a poem individually.

Observations in the class demonstrate that during the teacher-led activities: vocabulary exercises and a reading task, she interacted both with individual students and the whole class. Sometimes she questioned the students and nominated who should respond. These questions were mostly related to students' real-life situations. There were individual student responses as well as students responding as a group. This suggests that, although in these activities the teacher's role was evident, students' involvement was also encouraged; thus indicating a teacher-centred teaching approach was applied together with some elements of a learner-centred teaching approach.

With respect to teaching materials, the textbook contained activities for practising writing and reading skills with some communicative activities. As Instructor B of University B states:

*... The textbook is published in house. It is mainly about writing and reading practice. There are not many activities specified and not much detail on activities in the textbook when compared with some commercial books ... The scope of activities is much more specified in the institutional curriculum. The supplementary sheets and supplementary exercises which are consistent to what the university requires are also applied ...*

(Interview, Instructor B of University B)

Instructor B used this textbook as her planning guide and the course syllabus. As a result, it can be argued that the teacher and student roles are strongly shaped by the textbook. For example, Instructor B followed only the activities and leading questions specified in the textbook. She used the questions from the text before reading the passage and after reading the passage to motivate students' interest and to encourage students to think more critically. Examples of such questions included: "You are going to read a very short story entitled 'The Big Blue Shirt'. Considering the title, can you predict what the story is about?", and "How would you feel when you found out that a

stranger was following you in a shopping mall? What would you do? Would you run away from him or confront him?"

The textbook also included some communicative tasks and activities with clearly identified instructions. These communicative activities also involved students in practising integrated skills. For instance, one activity was specified as part of a writing activity:

*... Pair work*

*Most of you have previously studied some effective methods to improve your reading skills. Discuss with your partner how much you remember. Then, read this passage to know more about how to read efficiently ... Now, using the information in the passage, write a process paragraph on the topic "How To Read Efficiently" in an appropriate style ... (p.23)*

Almost one half of the textbook contained specific grammar explanations with some exercises. However, all grammar explanation was in English so that further explanations would be necessary for students with low proficiency in English. This could lead to a more traditional teaching approach with a dominant teacher presence and a strong focus on grammar knowledge. However, more student involvement was also encouraged through various communicative tasks suggested in this textbook. This was assisted by the teacher's skill in further encouraging interactivity around those tasks. This indicates the combination of communicative activities with a complementary focus on grammar knowledge in this in-house textbook.

It could also be pointed out that the variety of contents in this textbook with various communicative activities can create more opportunities for students to practise all four skills in various contexts outside class. These features align closely with the characteristics of materials used in the communicative language teaching; that is the use of various real-life tasks and materials. Such tasks and materials also need to be organised around topics or functions of language which students can apply for expressing themselves (Brown 2007; Nunan 1988; Brumfit 1985). In the same way, various stories and exercises in the textbook used in the class of Instructor B helped students to be able to apply language knowledge in different contexts. For example, Instructor B encouraged and taught students how to describe the characters of people. It

can also be claimed that the textbook had a significant influence on the teaching practice of Instructor B. However, she did not limit the lesson to the contents of the textbook, using her own experience to explain the story and some vocabulary. She also asked questions related to students' real-life situations.

The presence of the whiteboard and transparencies is evidence of the use of whole-group teaching in this classroom. The use of the blank paper in the group task encouraged more students' freedom in talking and writing responses. However, their responses were controlled by the questions in the textbook. That suggests a teacher-centred teaching approach was applied with some concessions toward a learner-centred teaching approach.

In terms of *aspects of language*, the students spoke with each other as well as with the instructor, in English. The students also used mostly English in their discussion groups, although L1 was used sometimes by students in group work for clarification. It is specified in the course syllabus that about seventy-five percent of the class time has to be spent on reading and writing skills as primary skills, while twenty-five percent of class time has to be spent on listening and speaking skills, as secondary skills. Corresponding to the course syllabus, the in-house textbook included mainly tasks for reading and writing practice, with some content and tasks for listening and speaking practice. The practice of all four skills with the focus on both fluency and accuracy is also suggested in the introduction of the in-house textbook that:

*... with a pronounced focus on the integrated-skills approach ... numerous activities that involve reading, writing, listening and speaking have been included. Another highlight of the book is that it contains communicative activities and tasks, which foster both fluency and accuracy in language usage...*

Observations reveal that Instructor B followed the activities suggested in the in-house textbook and provided the students with opportunities to practise the integrated skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. For example, during the reading tasks, the instructor questioned the students, which may have helped the students to practise listening and speaking skills. In addition, in the group discussion about the adjectives used for explaining the character of the narrator, students could practise reading the article, writing the descriptive paragraph, and listening and speaking with their friends

in the group. In other words, the adjectives were taught through meaning-focused activities, such as group discussion. Thus, the lesson focused on both form and meaning. Students could also practise integrated skills in these tasks with a focus on accuracy as well as fluency. It could be observed that although the task and hence the content were selected by the teacher, this was indirectly controlled by the students.

In terms of *the implied theory of instruction*, in 'English I', which focuses on all 4 integrated skills, communicative language teaching was applied together with a teacher-centred approach. For example, the instructor, standing at the front of the classroom, gave the lecture and controlled students' activities. Such practices would appear to favour teacher-centred instruction. However, some aspects of the learner-centred teaching approach with some student participation were also encouraged in the classroom. For example, there were some communicative activities in which students could practise English in this class. The instructor also gave opportunities to students to work individually and to be responsible for their own work. To motivate students, Instructor B also used a variety of interesting topics based on the textbook, such as the poem entitled 'Coat'. That is to say, learner's needs and interests were also taken into account. As well, there was the use of authentic materials and tasks. That means the communicative approach was applied as well as elements of the traditional approach (Brumfit 1985; Nunan 1988; Lamie 2005; Brown 2007).

Although some parts of the lesson were spent on reading and writing practice, these tasks can also be classified as tasks consistent with the weak version of communicative teaching, which allows teachers to include both structural practice and the grammar teaching in class. In other words, the collaborative work is conducted not only to encourage students to communicate with each other, but also to encourage students to learn language input, such as grammar knowledge (Nunan 1988; 2004b). Instructor B also applied the weak version of learner-centred instruction in which teachers are allowed to incorporate other teaching approaches. In Bernstein's term, this weak version of communicative teaching and weak version of learner-centredness are consistent with weak classification with weaker boundaries between theories and principles, in this case - communicative language teaching and teacher-centred teaching approach.

As Bernstein (1975) states, framing has to do with sequence, selection, content and pacing. More strongly-framed relationships between the teacher and students can be fostered by the textbook-based teaching and learning. In the class of Instructor B, the framing of the relations between the instructor and students varied depending on the nature of the activity. With a relatively strong framing, Instructor B followed most of the activities specified in the in-house textbook in terms of sequence, selection, content and pacing. In addition, the instructor took major responsibility for the decisions in relation to teaching and learning, and controlled the sequencing and pace of lessons. However, some activities indicate that there was also an attempt in applying a learner-centred teaching approach, which causes more weakly-framed relations between the instructor and students. For example, there were various communicative activities, such as group work, role-play and discussion, in which students' involvement was more encouraged. It can also be noted that the encouragement of various communicative activities and teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction in this class of Instructor B was greater than that in the preceding lesson observed of Instructor A1. That suggests the class of Instructor B has more weakly-framed relations between the instructor and students than those in the class of Instructor A1.

It can also be assumed that with the encouragement of teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction in most activities, the learner-centred teaching approach applied in the classroom of Instructor B is closely aligned with a more socio-cultural model in which students are urged to actively construct meaning through social interaction (Vygotsky 1962). In such an approach, the roles of the teacher and the students vary depending on the nature of the activity at the time. At some stages, the teacher will play the role of the expert to provide input to students. Sometimes the teacher will act as a guide, tutor, facilitator or peer. This version of learner-centredness is sometimes referred to as a 'learning-centred' approach in which not only learners but also other factors influencing the implementation are taken into account.

In University B, there are many factors influencing the feasibility of applying the new teaching methods with more weakly-framed relations between the instructor and students than the lesson of Instructor A1 discussed above. These factors include a 'weaving' of approaches applied in the classroom practice, an institutional curriculum

with more detailed guidelines, higher English proficiency of students, smaller class sizes and the exclusive use of English as the media of instruction.

Liu (2007) notes that the English proficiency of students has a great impact on the effective use of communicative tasks in the classroom. As noted in the group discussion in the class of Instructor B, negotiating meaning with their peers was encouraged. In addition, while they did the role play, with their high proficiency in English, they could speak naturally and fluently without holding and reading the script. This is referred to as the 'Matthew effect' (Stanovich 2000), which proposes that students who have high proficiency are able to engage more readily in activities that lead to ever-increasing proficiency while those with less proficiency tend to fall behind because they cannot actively participate in meaning-making activity. At the same time, in this small class with twenty students, the instructor could support students' activities and interact with individual students more effectively. In addition, the instructor spoke only English so that students could practise listening and speaking by listening to the lecture and interacting with the instructor.

The progressivist version of the learner-centred approach advocates that, because each learner has his or her own style of learning, various teaching strategies need to be applied in accordance with students' needs, interests and the context (Spada 2007; Luanganggoon 2001). The classroom practice of Instructor B demonstrates an effort at combining ideas from different teaching approaches into the teaching practice to suit her own context. As Administrator B expresses his views on theory underpinning the institutional curriculum:

*... We cannot use only teacher-centred approach ... We use skill-integrated approach, a mix of teacher-centred and learner-centred approach and communicative approach ...*

(Interview, Administrator B of University B)

That means the combination of teaching approaches can make the change towards the new teaching approaches more feasible and less threatening at the implementation level.

Brumfit (1985) states that the communicative tasks will be effective if students are provided with more opportunities to practise English. As noted, the teaching practice of Instructor B is consistent with the course syllabus and textbook which include clear objectives, detailed guidelines and a variety of communicative activities. With this guidance, the instructor could manage the class with various communicative tasks for students to practise the target language in a principled way. At the same time, the instructor has some autonomy within the scope of this detailed institutional curriculum. Simply stated, these above-mentioned factors help ensure the feasibility of applying learner-centred instruction and communicative language teaching in this classroom.

## 6.4 University C

As with the previous sections, this section answers the research question of how University C interprets official policy documents into its institutional policies in the curriculum design process. Furthermore, to what degree the institutional curriculum is consistent with official policy documents is examined. As well, the teaching practices are investigated to identify how Instructor C in University C interprets and implements national policies.

### 6.4.1 Curriculum design process of University C

This section aims to assess the research question of how University C interprets and transforms the official policy documents into an institutional curriculum. The curriculum design process of University C has the characteristics of a relatively weak classification of roles and relations among staff in the curriculum design process in which “*the relationships between agents are less sharply distinguished, there is reduced insulation between functions, and agents are more interchangeable between categories*” (Bernstein 1990, p.50). As Administrator C of University C, who is also an English instructor, expresses her views on curriculum development:

*... Since some instructors also work as the executives, they also take part in designing the institutional curriculum ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

With these multiple roles of staff, the classification of roles and relations among staff in the curriculum design process can be weakened. These multiple roles of stakeholders in the curriculum design process also indicate the integrated hierarchical features of the curriculum design process. That means there is co-operative work among institutional staff at all levels, including teachers in the curriculum design process of University C, a factor which can facilitate successful curriculum renewal.

In terms of the nature of their work and autonomy, administrators and instructors in University C are provided with more opportunities to take part in the curriculum design process in more cooperative ways through various forms, such as meetings, seminars, training courses, internationalisation programs, the collection of staff and students' feedback, and the use of technology. For example, some evidence indicates an integrated relationship between agents who are members of a variety of teams, namely executives, administrators and instructors. At the early stage of curriculum design, they participate in meetings, seminars and other programs for improving curriculum design. For example, when asked about the curriculum design process, Administrator C remarks that her faculty is responsible for all English courses. Each faculty designs its own curriculum as part of the core curriculum of the university. There are also teams for revising the institutional curriculum. In designing the institutional curriculum, representatives of each faculty took part in the meetings on curriculum. In this way, the needs of each faculty are also taken into account (from interview with Administrator C).

Staff and student needs are also taken into account in the form of meetings, cooperative networks, and projects within and across departments and faculties. The significance of the English language is recognised by all departments and faculties. This is also promoted through projects for internationalisation. As Administrator C gives her views on curriculum development, she describes attempts to internationalise the university by using English as the medium to teach most subjects; not only English subjects, but also subjects which have to use English as the medium of instruction. There are also some bilingual projects which use both English and Thai. The Faculty of Engineering also has its own self-access center in which English is used as the medium for a number of activities. Examinations are frequently undertaken in English (from interview with Administrator C).

In University C, there is concern about technology use in teaching and learning and indirectly in curriculum reform. As Bernstein (1975) states, the use of technology can encourage more successful change. Administrator C of University C remarks that:

*... in the last two years, the former president was interested in teaching and learning English with the assistance of the internet. Attempts are made to incorporate English language media e.g. English radio and TV broadcasts into curriculum ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

Teacher learning is also recognised as important in University C. For example, it is compulsory for staff to learn English, which can affect their work promotion (from interview with Administrator C). As Yukl (1998) points out, people are more likely to change if they can gain benefits from that change. Administrator C also gives a suggestion on curriculum development that:

*... it will be easier to change the environment if instructors and staff agree with that change ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

The above-mentioned integration of agents, activities and communication media helps foster positive relationships between staff at different levels: executives, administrators, teachers and students, thus resulting in more successful curriculum renewal.

#### **6.4.2 The relations between the institutional curriculum of University C and the official policy documents**

In this section, how University C interprets and recontextualises the official policy documents into the institutional curriculum is discussed in terms of the theories and principles specified in the official policies, with a particular focus on the teaching methodologies recommended, the learning activities advocated and the aspects of language under focus.

When compared with those of other universities under analysis, the institutional curriculum of University C contains the greatest number of explicit references to the communicative approach along with learner-centred concepts, and in great detail. In

terms of *teaching methodologies*, there is reference in the institutional curriculum of University C to a learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching as teaching methodologies specified in the official policy documents. For example, the institutional curriculum of University C includes many teaching concepts which are consistent with the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching, such as ‘self-access-based tasks with resourcing tasks and interactive tasks’, and ‘language learning strategies for ongoing autonomous learning’. A variety of training strategies associated with a learner-centred base are also explicitly stated, including ‘basic skills-oriented strategy training’, ‘meta-cognitive strategy training’, and ‘self-access-independent learning with further strategy training through English medium tasks’. With respect to instruction, ‘teacher-guided self-instruction’ is also explicitly specified in the course description of one subject. In addition, various teaching and learning techniques and methods associated with a learner-centred teaching approach such as ‘self access learning’, ‘research methods’ and ‘individual tutorials’ are also directly identified in the course descriptions of many subjects.

When asked about the theory underpinning the institutional curriculum, Administrator C responds that task-based teaching and learning has been applied in University C for seven years. For example, task-based teaching and learning with a learner-centred base is applied in ‘ENG 103’ with various tasks and the focus on writing. Also, a task-based teaching approach is applied together with a skill-based teaching approach through a focus on integrating the four macro skills with the use of the internet (from interview with Administrator C).

This application of technology to the teaching and learning process corresponds to what are specified in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001:

*... Based on the State’s vision which confirms education policy in building up quality manpower ... strengthening the nation through basic education, revising the education infrastructure and systems, emphasising quality, effectiveness and equality, **applying education technology** ... (pp.2-3)*

Task-based learning, which is also associated with a learner-centred teaching approach (Nunan 2004b), is widely used in University C. At the implementation level, Instructor C of University C comments on curriculum development of University C as follows:

*... the institutional curriculum uses the model of task-based learning with various activities, such as group work, pair work and presentation in order to encourage productive skills which students need to apply in their real world, such as reading magazines, website and vision reports ... Task-based curriculum is also the process product which focuses on the process of each skill without the focus on grammar points ...*

(Interview, Instructor C of University C)

*Learners' needs and interests*, a learner-centred notion suggested in the national policy, is also specified in the course descriptions of many subjects appearing in the curriculum of University C as '... their own specific needs ...'; '... students' needs and students' difficulties ...'; '... where students are weakest and need most improvement ...'; '... real world and academic occupational needs ...'; '... meet the needs of specific audience, purpose or subject ...'; and '... a subject of students' own choice ...'. It is also noted that students' confidence and motivation in using English are specified in the course descriptions of some subjects.

With regard to '*self-development*', another learner-centred concept, it is specified in the National Education Act 1999 under the topic of 'Next Steps: Reform of Education in Thailand' that students should be encouraged towards self-development goals. 'Self-development' is also directly specified in the course descriptions of many subjects in the curriculum of University C, such as '... students find their own resources from the self-access learning center ...'; '... autonomous learning skills ... learn independently using the self access learning center, e-mail, internet and library resources ...'; '... independent learning ...'; '... self-access-based tasks ...'; '... self-directed learning and improve their language and skills autonomously ...'; and '... language learning strategies for ongoing autonomous learning ...'. As prescribed in the course syllabus of 'English for employment', individual project or self-study is specified as one of assignments of this subject.

Administrator C, who has the responsibility for curriculum design in University C, argues that many programs of University C are consistent with learner-centred teaching. For example, the model for which she is currently responsible is adapted for electronic teaching and learning. Recently, there have been some programs in which instructors

prepare electronic presentations and materials and then embed them in existing programs. Administrator C also points out that instructors require further training. Self-study is also encouraged by assigning students to do portfolios and learn through self-study centres. Most English subjects include a self-study component weighted by at least 10 percent of the total score (from interview with Administrator C).

Consistent with *the communicative language teaching and the learner centred teaching approaches*, the use of various authentic tasks and texts is recommended in the national policy. Similarly, the use of authentic tasks and texts is specified in the course descriptions of some subjects, such as ‘... occupational and academic English ...’; ‘... authentic content ...’; ‘... real language problems ...’; ‘... situations, likely to be met by students ...’; ‘... study skills both inside and outside the classroom ...’; ‘... speaking in daily life ...’; and ‘... occupational purposes ...’. The use of various contexts is also extensively and explicitly specified in the course descriptions of some subjects, such as ‘... various situation in job employment skills for professional environment ...’, ‘... real language demands in the international program ...’ and ‘... skills for professional environment ...’. In addition, it is expressed in the course description of one subject that ‘real communication’ is emphasised over classroom drill and practice. It is also specified in the course syllabus of ‘English for employment’ that speaking skills in the occupational environment (e.g. expressing opinions) are included, as well as learning about etiquette and having harmonious relationships with their colleagues. On-the-job training is also one of the assignments of this subject.

As discussed above in Chapter five, with regard to *learning activities*, it is expressed in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 that activities should be designed based on individual differences with the aim of enabling students to practise real life skills and to have opportunities for self-development. These activities include project works and practical exercises related to real-life situations. Similarly, various activities for the practice of real-life skills are explicitly stated in the course descriptions of most subjects for the instructors in University C to follow. These include ‘oral report’, ‘simulation’, ‘self-access-based tasks and international e-mail and internet based interactive oral projects’ and ‘having presentation’. As well, ‘socializing’, ‘negotiating’, ‘report writing’, ‘written communication’, ‘decision-making’ and ‘problem-solving’ are identified in the course descriptions of some subjects. There is also explicit

identification of tasks in the course descriptions of some subjects, such as ‘doing large scale projects’, ‘project-focused’, and ‘preparing and presenting research project-based writing and related students’ course’.

In terms of *aspects of language*, it is stated in the Basic Education Curriculum 2001 that students should be provided with opportunities to practise skills for language communication. Similarly, an explicit aim stated in the course descriptions of many subjects is to encourage students to communicate effectively. In other words, communication is emphasised over grammatical patterns in most subjects. For example, it is directly stated in the course description of ‘Insessional English Course for Post Graduate Students’ that language use, rather than language usage, is focused on. In addition, it is explicitly specified in the course description of ‘Foundation English for International Programs’ that real language demands, particularly reading and writing skills are emphasised over grammar knowledge. Furthermore, it is directly suggested in the course description of one subject that classroom participation is encouraged without too much concern about making mistakes. These factors are evidence that University C favours fluency over accuracy during oral interaction.

It is also specified in the institutional curriculum of University C that students are encouraged to attend to meaning with ‘moderate’ skill concern. Most English subjects focus on meaning rather than the instruction of isolated skills. These subjects include, for instance ‘Fundamental English I’, ‘Content-based Language Learning I’, ‘Advanced academic skills’ and ‘Basic English for Vocational Graduates’.

As noted, unlike the basic English courses specified in the institutional curriculum of other universities under analysis, it is noted that thinking skills, other than the four basic skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are also included in the course description of ‘English 1’ of University C. Furthermore, various skills, other than the four basic skills are specified as the target in the course descriptions of many English subjects. These skills include ‘autonomous learning skills’, ‘cognitive skills’, ‘skills of thinking and problem-solving’, and ‘skills necessary for undertaking some other courses and raising students’ confidence’. Additionally, various skills for more practical purposes are explicitly specified in the course descriptions of some subjects, such as ‘Thesis and Article Writing skills’, ‘skills for professional environment’, ‘language

skills for mature students', 'practical skills base', 'language skills for international graduate programs', 'skills for gaining employment and skills required in the workplace' and 'speaking skills in occupational environment'. This also indicates that the practice of integrated skills is heavily focused in the institutional curriculum of University C.

Overall, the institutional curriculum of University C can be said to be closely aligned with theories and principles specified in the official policy documents. It is unique among those of other universities under analysis in that it includes the most explicit detailed contents about various activities together with teaching and learning methodologies and strategies associated with a learner-centred teaching approach in most subjects. For example, there are time specifications for teaching approaches used in the course descriptions of some subjects, such as 'two-minute lecture on a subject' and '3 minutes interview, 5 minute lecturette'. In endorsing the learner-centred teaching approach of the official policy documents, the institutional curriculum of University C can be described as advocating a relatively strong classification of teaching theories and notions suggested in the institutional curriculum. At the same time, most activities specified in the institutional curriculum of University C encourage students' role in class rather than the teacher's role. Therefore, this institutional curriculum can be described as suggesting a relatively weak framing of the relations between the instructor and students in which the institutional curriculum values a learner-centred teaching approach with more students' involvement. In this way, the strong version of learner-centredness and the strong version of communicative language teaching are suggested in the institutional curriculum of University C.

There are many positive factors which contribute to the consistent relationship between the institutional curriculum of University C and the official policy documents. Such a relationship is important in achieving curriculum reform. These factors include the concern for teacher learning, the use of technology in teaching and learning, the use of English as a teaching medium and the cooperative work of staff. These factors are also specified in the institutional curriculum of University C. As Administrator C, who is also an English instructor, expresses her views on activities and programs for promoting educational reform in an interview:

*... University C is the center of the teacher training with the extensive use of technology in teaching and learning for encouraging the greater degree of learner autonomy ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

It is also stated in the course description of 'Fundamental English II' that:

*... use technology in teaching to encourage learner autonomy ...*

In addition, as stated in the course descriptions of a few English subjects, an 'English medium environment' is encouraged. The cooperation of staff across faculties is also one of the positive factors for designing effective institutional curriculum. As noted in the course description of one subject: 'Content-based Language Learning I', it is stated that:

*... cooperation with staff from other faculties ... a simulation of a content course from another faculty ...*

That is to say, these above-mentioned factors can promote change for curriculum implementation.

### **6.4.3 Classroom practice of Instructor C of University C**

In this section of this research, the classroom of Instructor C was observed in order to ascertain her actual teaching practice and to explore how she interprets and implements the institutional curriculum. The teaching practice of Instructor C was observed during one class in a course called 'English for employment'. The goals of this course are to train students to communicate effectively in English for their future career, including being successful at job applications and interviews (from curriculum of University C). Instructor C also remarks that a further aim for the lesson is to provide students with opportunities to practise English communicatively (from interview with Instructor C).

This class took approximately two hours and thirty minutes. There were 12 students enrolled in this class; of whom all were fourth-year students of the Faculty of Engineering. In this class, Instructor C spoke only English. Students sat in groups throughout the lesson while the instructor moved around the class, listening and

providing feedback (in English) to each group. Most students had their own notebooks on their desks. There was no textbook used in this class.

13:30	<p><u>Reflecting on Video Recorded Presentations</u></p> <p>Instructor C and students watched video recorded presentations on their projects performed in the previous lesson. The instructor asked students to reflect upon their performances and then gain feedback from the instructor and their friends in English. Instructor C gave feedback to all students in terms of fluency and accuracy in speaking, and body language, e.g. “I think you should speak slower and louder with clear pronunciation.....The use of correct tense is also significant for telling the story ... However, you shouldn’t be concerned too much on grammatical points ... The tone of voice should be adjusted ... Sometimes, you can use gesture to clarify what you said ...” (in English).</p>
13:49	<p><u>Group Discussion</u></p> <p>Instructor C asked students to form into groups to further discuss their own topics, which were already developed through online chatting. Students used mostly English in their group discussions, e.g.</p> <p>“Student 8: What did you chat about with your friends online? Student 9: We talked about our favorite music ... How about you? ...” (in English).</p> <p>The instructor moved around the class. She exchanged pleasant conversation about online chatting with students in English with a smile.</p>
14:18	<p><u>Board Games</u></p> <p>Instructor C stopped the group discussion to move to another activity: playing board games related to job interview questions. She gave instructions for the board games (in English), e.g. “... You have learned how to write a job application letter and a job resume ... Today, we will prepare for job interviews for next Wednesday. Let’s play the game of job interview questions” (in English). The instructor distributed dice</p>

	<p>and a game board with colorful laminated cards to each group. These cards included interview questions, e.g. ‘When can you start this job?’ and ‘Have you ever worked in other companies?’ The game board contained information related to job etiquette, e.g. ‘You arrive early, move on two places.’ She continued giving instructions (in English), e.g. “Roll the dice and then open the card and see how many points you got. Then ask other people the job interview questions appearing in the card you open” (in English).</p> <p>The instructor exchanged the conversation about job interview with the students (in English). Instructor C also encouraged the competition and incentives by saying: “... Who ever finishes first will get the job? There will be only the one winner...” (in English).</p>
14:56	<p><u>Brainstorming</u></p> <p>Instructor C asked students to work in groups to brainstorm interview questions. During this group work, students used mostly English while the instructor went around checking what the students were doing. During this time, some students wrote down the answers on their sheets of paper.</p>
15:25	<p><u>Simulation of a Job Interview</u></p> <p>Instructor C put six posters of job advertisements on the wall for simulation of a job interview. She gave instructions for the simulation: “... Let’s do an activity. I will select six people to be owners of these companies (six companies whose posters of job advertisements were placed on the wall). Others view the job advertisements on the wall and then write down the name of the company which you want to apply for with the required position ...” (in English). The instructor also suggested to students acting as owners of companies that: “... The owners of these six companies have to prepare questions for asking interviewees with some reasons ... You also need to follow up after you ask them questions ...” (in English).</p> <p>While students enthusiastically responded and endeavoured to use English, the task varied for different students. Some students tried to find someone to practise an interview. Pairs of students helped each</p>

	<p>other to correct and speak English, taking turns to have an interview with different friends who acted as interviewers. The instructor did not monitor students too closely and no time limits were imposed. Instructor C also joined in a simulation of a job interview by acting as an interviewee. Eventually, the students who acted as the owner in each company selected one candidate whom he or she thought was the most interesting and suitable for the job, and gave the reasons for choosing that candidate.</p> <p>To finish, Instructor C asked the questions of the whole class in English, e.g. “What questions do you like and dislike about interviews?” (in English). Students could answer most questions (in English). She talked about some grammar rules related to the job interview, e.g. “We use present simple tense for explaining the job”. Then, she talked about good manners in the job interview (in English). She also recommended that students should be aware of body language, problem-solving skills and other desirable characteristics for succeeding in a job interview (in English).</p>
16:00	<p>Instructor C signalled the end of the lesson, telling students that the simulation of a job interview would continue in the next class.</p>

**Table 6.8:** Classroom practice of Instructor C of University C

In terms of *learning activities*, the above lesson comprised five distinct activities: reflecting on video-recorded presentations, group discussion, board games, brainstorming and the simulation of a job interview. In terms of classroom organisation, students worked in pairs or small groups throughout the lesson.

The first 20 minutes of the class were devoted to reflecting on video-recorded presentations. The instructor provided students with feedback in English in terms of their performances, tone of voice and grammatical correction. Students gave feedback to each other in English in terms of their presentation performances. In this activity, the teacher’s role was evident as well as students’ roles, with the focus being on both fluency and accuracy. Thus, it could be observed that this activity aligns more closely with communicative language teaching practices.

In the second activity – the group discussion which occupied approximately 30 minutes – students helped each other independently of teacher-direction. The instructor visited each group and listened to each student at least once. This kind of group work can maximize the chances for learners to practise language and motivate students to learn within a positive affective environment (Long and Porter 1985; Nunan 1988; Ur 1996; Nunan 2004a). Such an activity can be seen to be consistent with communicative language teaching practices.

After the group discussion, another 37 minutes were spent on the third activity - playing board games related to job interview questions. Awarding of points for correctly answering interview questions motivated the students to participate in the activities and provided more opportunities for the students to practise speaking and listening in English and for the instructor to correct errors. In this task, students were provided with independence in that they had to control the game of their own group with the instructor as an adviser who moved around the room. Students also had a measure of independence in what they talked about. They seemed to find this lesson interesting. This social environment encouraged them to initiate dialogues in the manner consistent with a learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching.

In the fourth stage of the lesson – brainstorming – students were assigned to group discussion for about 30 minutes. This too resulted in a good deal of collaboration in which students helped each other without much control from the instructor. The instructor had more opportunities to provide feedback and error correction and at the same time interacted with all the groups. This group discussion allowed students to practise the interview questions and dialogue taught. Such activity resonates with communicative language teaching practices.

Then, approximately 30 minutes of the class were spent on the fifth activity – simulated job interviews. In this activity, students could practise speaking and listening in English for job interviews with their friends and the instructor. According to Richards (1985), the simulation has many benefits in the teaching and learning process: students are provided with opportunities to practise strategies for opening, progressing, and ending a conversational meeting; students are required to enhance meaning collaboratively; students are involved in various types of roles; the use of various styles of speaking is

necessitated; and negotiated completion of tasks and information sharing are involved, with a high degree of learner participation (Richards 1985, p.83). Observations revealed that in the simulation of a job interview, students took responsibility for their own learning in that they could control the sequencing, pacing and timing of learning activities. For example, they could decide which questions to use in a job interview, with whom to practise English and when to take turns to have an interview with their friends. The instructor took part in this activity by being one of the interviewees. This resulted in more student participation and more teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction. Without the strong control from the instructor, students were independent in speaking and listening. They could practise speaking English without the script and choose the partners to talk to. Therefore, it can be said that although the task and therefore the content were chosen by the instructor, this was indirectly controlled by the students. This indicates that students' interactivity was encouraged. During the last 5 minutes of this activity, Instructor C talked about good manners in the job interview. She also pointed out some grammar rules used in the job interview questions. During this time, the instructor regularly questioned the class in English. Students could answer most questions (in English). In this way, this activity aligns more closely with communicative language teaching practices.

It can be pointed out that the communicative activities done during this lesson facilitated teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction in the class. In the above communicative tasks – reflecting on video-recorded presentations, group discussion, board games, brainstorming and the simulation of a job interview – fluency was emphasised, since considerable time was allocated to the practice of integrated skills. Additionally, student freedom was evident in these activities; students were observed to assist each other independently of teacher-direction. Students also had more control over what they talked and wrote about. Thus, it can be noted that these activities align more closely with more communicative language teaching in which learners need to be provided with more opportunities to practise using the target language through real-life tasks in which students can express themselves. Learners' feelings, interests and needs should also be taken into account in language teaching (Berns 1984; Brumfit 1985; Nunan 1992; Brown 1997; 2007).

According to Brumfit (1985), in communicative language teaching, materials are organised around the topics or functions of language which students can apply in expressing themselves. In terms of teaching materials, in the class of Instructor C, there was no textbook used. Instead, she used various teaching materials: board games, dice, posters and colorful laminated cards cut from a photocopiable commercial book. High technology was also applied as the instruction media. For example, the instructor assigned students to do online chatting with friends as homework for the discussion in this class. These authentic materials and contents in relation to job interviews could help motivate students to learn and practise using English more effectively through communicative tasks. Use of these various teaching materials also resulted in more student involvement in the lesson. Unlike the classrooms described earlier, there was no evidence of presentation tools such as the interactive whiteboard and microphone, thus suggesting whole-group instruction was not a significant feature of this instructor's practice. The use of blank paper to support students' group discussion can be seen to be fostering independent responses from the students. This is consistent with the characteristics of communicative language teaching in terms of teaching materials that need to include various contents related to various real-life contexts (Brumfit 1985; Nunan 1988; Brown 2007).

Although no textbook was used in this class, objectives and course description of the subject were explicitly demonstrated in the course syllabus, distributed to each student. Various interesting topics related to the job interview were also identified in the timetable of the course. Instructor C also generated informal lesson plans for this subject in a written form which included the detailed process of doing tasks or activities in each class as her own teaching plan and guideline (from interview with Instructor C).

In terms of *aspects of language*, the content of the lesson was a job interview aimed at improving oral skills. The observations indicate that the majority of the class time was spent on involving students in speaking and listening in English in various communicative tasks, such as group discussion and simulation of a job interview. Instructor C also interacted with students, mainly in English. Students were confident in speaking English. They were keen to speak English and practise English in groups. This may be because the students had quite high proficiency in English. The students were also provided with opportunities to practise integrated skills, especially

communicative skills through meaningful situations. For example, during the group discussion of a job interview, students could practise reading and writing the job interview questions and at the same time practise listening and speaking skills with their friends in the group.

Learning for communication is the focus in this classroom rather than learning grammatical patterns. For example, no detailed correction was provided for grammatical errors since most of the class time was spent on the conversation with speaking and listening practice. Only five minutes of the class time was spent on the grammar explanation. Fluency was more of a focus than accuracy. For instance, no detailed correction was provided for pronunciation. As well, learning for the real-life situation was also the main focus in this class, together with the focus on learners' needs and interests. As Holliday (1994) states, university students have more motivation to learn since they have to apply that knowledge in the immediate future. The content of the subject, related as it was to job application, can motivate senior students since it is related to their foreseeable needs.

As Nunan (1988) suggests, in current approaches, learners should be encouraged to take part in some class activities which are conducted outside class. In the class of instructor C, students were also encouraged to apply language in different contexts, such as real-life simulation of a job interview with various companies. Instructor C sometimes talked about experiences other than content related to the job application. For example, she talked about how to speak English confidently like native speakers do by not being too concerned about grammar. It can also be said that the content of the lesson was meaning-oriented without explicit focus on language forms.

With regard to *the implied theory of instruction*, the practice of Instructor C suggests that she favours a learner-centred teaching approach. For example, in this class, ninety percent of the class activities were consistent with a learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching, which encourage more students' involvement. Instructor C spent solely five minutes, or ten percent of the class time, explaining grammar rules at the end of the lesson. Thus, various communicative contexts were under focus rather than a fixed grammatical pattern. Students were also encouraged to construct meaning from information and experience rather than to learn from memory

and do language drills. For example, students were not provided with the scripts to memorise. They were assigned to create scripts and practise using them in real simulations. Criteria for success included more effective communication rather than error correction. These features are consistent with a learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching (Nunan 1988; Lamie 2005; Brown 2007).

It can be pointed out that the strong classification of theories and principles applied in this classroom practice indicates the strong version of a learner-centred teaching approach. This characteristic is also consistent with the strong version of communicative language teaching which is closely aligned to the learner-centredness advocated by the curriculum reform. In this kind of communicative approach, the students are encouraged to communicate with the instructor and with each other through involvement in authentic tasks without drills or controlled practice. As well, the use of L2 is encouraged as the teaching medium (Nunan 1988; 2004b).

According to Bernstein (1975), with weak framing of the relations between the instructor and students, more options for the instructor and students will be provided. In other words, the teacher and students have more alternatives, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship. It is revealed that with relatively weakly-framed relations between the instructor and students, Instructor C had the freedom in designing the tasks and activities. At the same time, students in the classroom of Instructor C were provided with independence in that they had to control the game of their own group with the teacher as a guide. Additionally, teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interactions were encouraged through various communicative activities. For example, students interacted with each other in groups. Instructor C always checked students' understanding by moving around the class to interact with every group and to check students' answers. There is an absence of reliance on the textbook, causing a relatively weak framing in terms of the teacher's and students' roles in which the classroom practice includes a higher degree of student control of the teaching and learning process. As Bernstein (1975) notes, to gain the potential benefits of weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students, the teacher should not rely much on the textbook.

Since teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction is encouraged through various communicative tasks for the majority of the class time, the learner-centred teaching approach applied in the classroom of Instructor C is consistent with a more socio-cultural model in which students are encouraged to actively construct meaning through social interaction (Vygotsky 1962). Also, Instructor C balanced different roles in a principled way as an expert to provide input to students, guide, tutor, facilitator and learning partner. In such a learning-centred approach, learners are taken into account as well as other factors concerned with the implementation.

There are a number of factors which suggest that more successful curriculum renewal has occurred in the class of Instructor C. The institutional curriculum includes sufficiently detailed guidelines for the teacher to follow in their teaching practice. The nature of this subject with its communicative purpose also has an influence on the feasibility of encouraging a learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching in this class. These new teaching methods can be effectively applied in this class because the class size is small enough for the instructor to include group activities. As Nunan (1988) notes, the small groups of learners are also the most effective way of grouping learners for communicative language tasks. As well, Instructor C has high professional knowledge and experience, and positive attitudes towards the new teaching methods. As evidence of her high professional knowledge and experience, Instructor C teaches postgraduate students in a teacher-training course (from interview with Instructor C). In addition, she is very positive about the new teaching approach as she expresses her positive view on learner-centred instruction that:

*... I totally agree with learner-centredness ...*

(Interview, Instructor C of University C)

Instructor C always spoke English in class, so that she could provide students with more exposure to the target language and more opportunities to practise listening and speaking English. Students in this class had quite high proficiency in English since they were fourth-year students who were able to learn and practise English with Instructor C for many years (from interview with Instructor C). Students were therefore confident in using English and keen to practise more. As Spada (2007) points out, to have an effective communicative language-teaching classroom, students are required to have high English proficiency for them to be able to practise using the target language.

There is also evidence of effective use of teaching materials. When Instructor C was asked about teaching materials used in her class, she expressed that the in-house textbook had been adapted by adding some supplementary materials, such as games to meet teachers and students' needs in some contexts. Instructor C added that University C provides various facilities for teaching and learning, such as a video recorder and television (from interview with Instructor C).

In total, these factors offer more affordances to apply the new teaching approaches with weakly-framed relations between the instructor and students in the class of Instructor C.

## **6.5 Summary and discussion of Chapter six**

In this section, the findings of this analysis chapter are summarised and discussed in terms of the reproduction field, including the institutional context and classroom practice. This answers the research question of how institutions interpret the policy in the form of their curriculum design process and their institutional curricula. The analysis in this chapter also answers the research question of how teachers interpret and implement the policy into their teaching practice in the reproduction field.

### **6.5.1 How does the institution interpret the policy?**

#### *The roles and relations among staff in the institutional curriculum design process*

According to data collected from both institutional documents and interviews, the curriculum design process of three universities can be analysed in accordance with Bernstein's concept of classification (Bernstein 1990). This includes the extent to which autonomy is provided in designing institutional policies. In terms of the curriculum design process in accordance with the Thai educational reform, Thai educational institutions are decentralised by being provided with autonomy in designing their own policies and curricula. Teachers are in turn provided with independence in designing their own course syllabuses and lesson plans. They are advised to consider how to teach and choose teaching pedagogies which suit their school contexts, and students' needs and capacities (Office of the Education Council 2006; Pillay 2002a).

The results of this study also reveal that the roles and relations among staff in the curriculum design process of three universities under analysis vary across the contexts and hence the degree of autonomy possible. The roles and relations can be described as follows: University B, with strong classification of roles and relations among staff members in the curriculum design process; University A, with more weakly-classified roles and relations among staff members in the curriculum design process; and University C, with the weakest-classified roles and relations among staff members in the curriculum design process. More weakly-classified roles and relations of individuals in the curriculum design process means the higher participation of staff at all levels, including executives, administrators and teachers in the curriculum design process.

In some universities, with multiple roles available to both executives and practitioners, instructors are also involved in the curriculum design process. Such integration seems to enable more effective implementation. This can be viewed in the curriculum design process of University A and University C.

With a relatively weak classification of roles and relations among staff in the curriculum design process, the relationships between agents in University A and University C “*are less sharply distinguished, insulation between functions is reduced and agents are more interchangeable between categories*” (Bernstein 1990, p.50). That is to say, in University A and University C, the relationships between executives, administrators, curriculum designers and teachers in the curriculum design process are flexible and interchangeable. Some of them have multiple roles. For example, some teachers are also the curriculum designers who take part in the curriculum design process. As well, in University A and University C, the group who deals at the early stage of the curriculum design process is relatively co-operative and group-based. There are opportunities for the staff at all levels, especially the teachers, to take part in designing and adapting the institutional curriculum. In this way, the institutional curriculum is improved regularly and can be flexible for the teachers to follow. That means the teachers have more autonomy in their teaching performances. The needs of students and each department are also taken into account in the curriculum design process.

It can also be said that the curriculum design process of University A and University C tend to encourage instructors of various subjects to consult with each other. Such relationships will foster a shared and co-operative educational task (Bernstein 1975). Bernstein (1975) states that this kind of relationship among instructors may be able to weaken the separate hierarchies of agents and hence cause further cooperative work. These new work-based horizontal relationships between instructors may change both the structure and distribution of power. In this way, the classification of the administration and specific performances of teaching tend to be weakened towards realising change (Bernstein 1975).

For example, University A is the new, smaller, private university, so there is greater feasibility to have more weakly-classified roles and relationship of the individuals in the curriculum design process. This might be because with a small number of staff, it is possible for leadership to reach and involve most staff members in the curriculum design process and in other programs for the educational reform. This enables the involvement of practitioners in designing the institutional curriculum which demonstrates weakened classification with the permeable boundaries among agents or staff members in the curriculum design process. However, it should be noted that appropriate support should be provided to teachers in order to gain expertise sufficient to participate in curriculum design.

On the other hand, the findings of this study reveal that among the universities under analysis, the strong boundaries between hierarchical relations are most evident in University B. For example, there is strong control from the superordinates or executives and the institutional curriculum. Nevertheless, with the explicitly-defined institutional curriculum of University B, instructors are provided with some independence in their teaching practice as long as it is consistent with what is specified in the institutional curriculum.

#### *Recontextualising the official policy documents to the institutional curricula*

In terms of relations between theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum, the findings reveal that all universities under analysis, University A, University B and University C, have institutional curricula with strong classification

and weak framing. With relatively strong classification, their institutional curricula focus on a particular theory of teaching and learning, in this case, the learner-centred teaching approach. With the focus on the learner-centred teaching approach, their institutional curricula suggest loosely-framed relations between the teacher and students in the classroom in which the students' involvement is more encouraged. In this way, it can be argued that all institutional curricula under analysis recommend the strong version of learner-centred teaching approach and the strong version of communicative language teaching. That means institutional curricula are closely aligned with the official policy documents which also have the characteristics of strong classification and weak framing, with statements focusing on more students' initiative in the classroom. This demonstrates that there have been some attempts by the universities under analysis to design their institutional curricula to be consistent with the official policy documents. However, as has been seen there is unevenness in the level of detail with which the documents describe this.

For example, the institutional curricula of University B and University C contain in-depth accounts of the theories and principles associated with a learner-centred teaching approach. This kind of curriculum can be used as an effective guideline for classroom practice as long as those institutional curricula are seen and believed by instructors to be useful and efficient guidelines. This demonstrates that 'pressure and support' (Fullan 2001) are used as the strategies for successful change in these universities. In comparison, the institutional curriculum of University A includes a smaller number of details on how to teach, with only some references on the purpose of encouraging students' self learning, creativity and enjoyment in learning.

### **6.5.2 How do the teachers interpret and implement the policy?**

Classification and framing offer useful theoretical concepts for comparing systems (South African Institute for Distance Education 2010). However, it is found in this study that teaching practice is too complicated to be simply judged as either strong or weak classification and framing.

Among all universities under analysis, University A, which is not in the capital city has the strongest-framed relations between the instructor and students in the classroom.

Therefore, it may be assumed that the distance also has an influence on the degree of alignment between official curriculum and practice (Jones 2008). As Instructor A1, who is an English instructor in University A, responds to the question about teaching materials used in his class:

*... Because of the distance, University A has incoming students who mostly come from the countryside and hence have lower English competency with less motivation in learning English. Thus, I have to use various teaching materials to motivate them ...*

(Interview, Instructor A1 of University A)

In terms of relations between theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum, with relatively strong classification and relatively weak framing, the institutional curriculum of University A includes statements encouraging the teacher to act as a facilitator who encourages the students' participation in the teaching and learning process. This indicates that the institutional curriculum of University A values a theory of student-centred instruction. However, the classroom practice of Instructor A1 is found to have strongly-framed relations between the instructor and students. The teaching content and pedagogic tasks emphasise the teacher as a director in the teaching and learning process. This contradictory framing is caused by many factors, such as the institutional curriculum with inadequate guidelines, the nature of subjects with more focus on grammar knowledge, the large class sizes, students' low competency in English and an exam-based and textbook-orientated teaching approach.

The nature of the English program can affect the degree to which the teachers take up learner-centred approaches. In the class 'Preparatory English', Instructor A1's practice was shaped by the institutional curriculum in which reading and writing skills are emphasised over oral communicative skills. His aim for this lesson was to help students to pass the examination which mainly focuses on reading, writing and grammar knowledge (from interview with Instructor A1). The in-house textbook, which Instructor A1 mainly relied on in 'Preparatory English', was mostly related to grammar knowledge in the form of grammar exercises rather than any communicative activities. As a consequence, most of the class time of 'Preparatory English' was spent on the exam-based and textbook-orientated teaching and learning, resulting in more strongly-

framed relations between the instructor and students, which are more consistent with the teacher-centred teaching approach than the learner-centred approach.

There is also evidence of a teacher-centred approach with some concessions toward a learner-centred teaching approach in the class 'Preparatory English' of Instructor A1 of University A and the class 'English I' of Instructor B of University B. This can be classified as the weak version of communicative language teaching practice, which allows teachers to include both structural practice and grammar teaching in class. In other words, the weak version of the communicative approach is used in their classes for encouraging the students to communicate with the instructor and with each other to practise the language form (Nunan 1988; 2004b). In Bernstein's terms, this weak version of communicative teaching is consistent with weak classification with weaker boundaries between theories and principles: in this case, communicative language teaching and the learner-centred teaching approach as well as structural grammar drills, behaviourist practices, and the traditional learning of grammar rules. However, Instructor B appears to apply both teacher-centred and learner-centred teaching approaches in a more balanced way, with more communicative activities and student interactivity in her class, resulting in more weakly-framed relations between the instructor and students than those in the class, 'Preparatory English' of Instructor A1.

In comparison, only the class of Instructor C of University C provides evidence of strongly-classified theories and notions – in this case, the learner-centred teaching instruction. At the same time, among all classes observed, this class exhibits the weakest-framed relations between the instructor and students; that is to say, a high degree of student initiative is most evident in the teaching content and pedagogic tasks in this class.

It was also evident that among the universities analysed, the institutional curriculum of University C has the most explicit and direct explanation of language teaching theories and principles specified in the official policy documents. Correspondingly, the learner-centred teaching approach is consistently applied in the teaching content and pedagogic tasks in the class of Instructor C of University C. Thus, it can be assumed that this strong classification and weak framing in terms of the relations between theories and principles specified in the institutional curriculum of University C with detailed

guidelines has some influence on the classroom practice of Instructor C. Her classroom practice is also affected by the nature of the subject – ‘English for employment’ – which requires more practice in communicative skills. The data also indicates the high professional knowledge of teachers and the high English competency of students. It also appears that Instructor C was more confident in using English in her class than Instructor A1 was, and hence suggests more feasibility of applying the new teaching approach. That is to say, these factors contribute to the conditions which foster the implementation of the reform in Instructor C’s classroom.

It is also found that in the classes of Instructor B and Instructor C learners were urged to actively construct meaning through social interaction with the teachers taking different roles. At some stage, the teachers acted as an expert to provide input to students. At various times, they played the role of a guide, tutor, facilitator or peer. Thus, it can be assumed that a more socio-cultural version of learner-centredness was being applied in these classes. In contrast, a more progressivist version of learner-centredness is implied in the Thai policy documents, suggesting the teacher taking the non-interventionist role of facilitator with the focus more on learners’ needs, interests and freedom (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Darling 1994). Additionally, the planning, implementation and evaluation of learner-centred curricula are developed on the basis of students’ needs and interests through consultation with students (Brown 2007). Thus, it can be argued that these instructors have adopted an interventionist socio-cultural model of learner-centredness rather than a progressivist version of learner-centredness.

It is argued by some scholars that although in a communicative language teaching classroom learners take part in activity, they may not learn and may not be cognitively active (Spada 2007). There is some attempt to apply the new teaching method in the classroom of Instructor A1 by encouraging some communicative activities in his classroom, such as group work, discussion and role-play. However, because of their low English competency, students in his class did not feel confident in doing the tasks and hence avoided practising English by speaking mostly Thai in the tasks. Most students learned and conducted activities through memorisation. For example, students tried to memorise the scripts or even read the short scripts for the role-play. According to Spada (2007), to have an effective communicative language teaching classroom, students are required to develop high English proficiency for them to be able to practise

the target language. Therefore, the actual implementation of communicative language teaching with students with low competency in English in the class of Instructor A1 is questionable.

Good communicative language teaching practice allows for L1 being applied together with L2 to suit different contexts. For example, in a class with more students with low English proficiency, L1 can be effectively applied to enable students to understand the lesson (Spada 2007; Forman 2005). This is consistent with the weak version of communicative language teaching in which the mother tongue can also be applied in class (Nunan 1988; 2004b). However, in the strong version of communicative language teaching, students are required to practise using L2 rather than L1 (Spada 2007). To be more ensured that students could understand the lesson, Instructor A1 mostly spoke Thai in his class, resulting in fewer opportunities for students to practise English in class. This indicates an ‘apparent weakening’ where there is merely a superficial change (Bernstein 1975; 1996; 2000).

It is borne out in this study that there are misconceptions and therefore some resistance to the reform because of the many difficulties of applying the new teaching methods in Thai EFL classes. On the question of the difficulties of applying the learner-centred teaching approach, most participants of this research, including policy-makers, institutional administrators and teachers agree that there are problems in applying the student-centred instruction in the implementation stage. The data also indicates that there are many factors which cause the difficulties in applying the new teaching methods since the effective use of these methods requires a small class size and a focus on the individual learner’s needs. As a result, the teachers are required to work harder to apply these new teaching methods. This requirement and the heavy workloads cause stress among teachers. The exam-based teaching and learning also causes resistance by students towards these approaches.

*The class size* can cause problems in applying a learner-centred teaching approach since the class size should ideally be smaller (Cuban 1983). Most English classes in Thai universities have about 40 students. Some instructors also noted that a big class is a barrier to applying the new teaching methods. A comment below on the issue of

barriers to change towards more learner-centredness comes from Instructor E, who is an administrator and an English instructor in University E, saying:

*... The class size and students' interest are the barriers ... We have insufficient number of instructors when compared with the number of students. Therefore, the heavy preparation load is also another barrier (15-19 hours per week) ...*

(Interview, Instructor E of University E)

This idea is supported by Instructor F, an English instructor in University F, saying:

*... The large class size inhibits the application of the new teaching method. Most English classes contain 50 students. Sometimes two classes have to be combined in one section, like 100 students in class ...*

(Interview, Instructor F of University F)

Administrator C, who was involved in designing the institutional curricula in University C, discusses this along the same lines:

*... The large class size is also the problem in applying learner-centred teaching approach in which the class size should be small. Most English classes in this university have about 40 students ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

A few participants state that it is difficult for the teacher to design a course which can meet the *different needs of all students*. Breen (1987, cited in Nunan 1992) has also commented on the application of the student-centred instruction in designing learning tasks, pointing out that it is difficult to design the course in accordance with many learners with different needs. What teachers intend as the result might be mismatched with what learners derive from it in reality. As Administrator C, who is an administrator and an English instructor in University C, in her interview, raises this issue and suggests:

*... In applying the learner-centred teaching approach, instructors have to work harder since they have to look closely to every individual student by giving the consultation, checking more homework ... we give students more choice and independence to choose the topics ... Therefore, some instructors might resist the change and remain using the traditional method which they think it is easier for them to apply ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

She also suggests that to solve this problem, the policy-makers should identify strategies to encourage greater application of new teaching approaches:

*... the policy-makers should have the good tactics in introducing the change by gradually changing from the traditional method into the new methods. It is also important that the policy-makers need to know very well about these new teaching methods before introducing them to the implementers ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

Agreeing with the above, Instructor A1, an English Instructor of University A, gives his comment on the concept of learner-centred instruction that:

*... In the learner-centred teaching approach, the teachers have to work harder since they have to spend more time in preparing more teaching materials and tasks ...*

(Interview, Instructor A1 of University A)

A few participants in this research also agree that teachers have some problems in changing towards the new teaching approaches because of their *heavy workloads*. Nunan (1988) notes that in the learner-centred classroom, teachers need to work harder since they have to consider each individual's interests and needs. These heavy workloads and difficulties in meeting different students' needs also cause *stress among teachers and students*. As Bartlett and Butler (1985) argue, a learner-centred curriculum causes stress among teachers. Ferry (1993) states that teachers often hesitate to apply this new teaching approach since to do so requires more complicated organisation of classroom tasks and activities, which might cause a greater risk of ineffective use of those communicative tasks and activities. When asked about the barriers to change, Administrator C, who is both an executive and an English instructor in University C, argues on this issue in a similar vein:

*... The lack of teachers and the overloading works of teachers are the barriers to change towards more learner-centredness ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

Instructor A1, an English instructor of University A, also comments on this issue:

*... The teachers sometimes have to teach about four subjects in one semester so that they have the overloading works and hence do not have sufficient time in preparing the teaching materials ...*

(Interview, Instructor A1 of University A)

The findings from the interview data also demonstrate that, in the case of Thailand, some students resisted change toward more learner-centred pedagogy because they felt they do not learn much of what really mattered for their *examinations*. They reported that they did not know the purpose of spending the time on practising speaking and listening skills or spending a lot of time on ‘meaningless’ activities unrelated to exam needs. Some are more interested in learning by rote and spoon-feeding. Director B, who has the responsibility for the national policy setting in Organisation A, gives her comment about the resistance to the learner-centred instruction among students:

*... Some students complain that with the application of learner-centred teaching approach, they are assigned to do overloading homework and assignments while the teachers do not teach much ...*

(Interview, Director B of Bureau B in Organisation A)

The same director notes that the exam-based teaching is one of the barriers to educational reform:

*... Some students, especially the good students, are bored with the learner-centred teaching approach. Such students want teachers to teach directly what will be focused in the exam ...*

(Interview, Director B of Bureau B in Organisation A)

This indicates that more strongly-framed relationships between the teacher and students at the classroom level seems to sit well beside the exam-based principles of most educational institutions. It also suggests curriculum reform should be accompanied by assessment reform.

The problem of the mismatch between curriculum and assessment was raised by one director, who is responsible for designing the teaching media at the national level in Organisation B, with the comment that:

*The problems are mainly in an implementation stage since applying the learner-centred teaching approach is difficult to be implemented. Since Thai education system still focuses on the exam-based teaching and learning where students want to pass an exam and entrance exam as their main purpose. Therefore, students seem to ignore and do not see the usefulness of applying the learner-centred teaching and learning where they mostly have to learn something which cannot be used for passing the exam.*

(Director E of Bureau E in Organisation B)

Director E also suggests that the form of exam should be changed in order to be consistent with the learner-centred teaching approach.

It is borne out in this study that the barriers to applying the communicative language teaching include the exam-based teaching and learning with the focus on accuracy rather than fluency. Most examinations, especially those related to university entrance, focus mostly on English reading and writing skills rather than speaking and listening skills, which tend to be the focus of communicative language teaching. Agreeing with the above issue, Instructor E, who is both an executive and an English instructor in University E, mentions:

*... The exams mostly cover reading and writing skills. Speaking skill is tested in class, mostly only in the form of presentation. Listening skill is seldom tested. Some students misunderstand that the main purpose of learning is to practise mainly on reading and writing skills for passing the exam. By this way, they ignore the significance of how they can practise the knowledge for their real life and their future career through communicative skills, such as speaking and listening skills ...*

(Interview, Instructor E of University E)

The entrance examination also encourages a textbook-based and exam-orientated teaching and learning. As Bernstein (1975) points out, the requirements of the university may have strong control over the secondary school curriculum and assessment. For example, the centralised Thai university entrance examination influences the content of the institutional curriculum, the course syllabus and the teacher's role in the class, and hence results in exam-based teaching. In the exam-based

teaching, the content to be tested is emphasised and students are concerned about how to pass the examination (Bernstein 1975). This kind of examination can also affect the early stage of the Thai education system; thus instilling the traditional or teacher-centred approach from an early stage of the children's learning. As a result, it can be difficult to encourage the new teaching methods. In summary, student readiness for curriculum reform is shaped by socio-cultural traditions and expectations and the success of reform will depend on student engagement in learning.

As Bernstein (1975) points out, it is impossible to suddenly change students' and parents' attitudes towards the new teaching approaches at the university level. Resistance can occur particularly as a result of misconceptions. In interviews conducted in this research, when Instructor B, an English instructor of University B, was asked about the appropriateness of learner-centredness to the Thai social context, she recommended that:

*... The new teaching approaches, such as the learner-centred teaching and communicative language teaching, should be encouraged and instilled at the earlier stage of students to avoid misconception and thereby resistance to this change at the later stage ...*

(Interview, Instructor B of University B)

In this study, it appears that in the Thai EFL classroom, there is a problem with focusing on fluency at the expense of accuracy. As Littlewood (1981, cited in Nunan 1988) argues, the communicative purpose might not be sufficient for language learning since in some situations what is used for communication is not congruent with linguistic rules which need more clarification. In the same way, Nunan (1991) argues that the teaching of grammar is significant. How grammar instruction is relevant to the success of communicative purposes should be pointed out by the teacher to learners. At the same time, Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1997) argues that some communicative language teaching characteristics, such as engaging in real-life and authentic language in the classroom, should not be overemphasised in the classroom without the concern on efficiently manipulating useful exercises, grammatical pointers and other analytical tools; or simulating the real world but omitting interfering in the continuing flow of language. Responding to the question about the barriers to change towards more

communicative approaches, Instructor B, an English instructor in University B, also raises this issue and discusses in a similar vein:

*... The communicative language teaching is applied in some Thai contexts with the focus on communication without an emphasis on structure or grammar ... Communication will be much more encouraged in the communicative classroom in which students can practise speaking, listening and reading skills ... Some schools currently emphasise and use the word 'communication' so much that they ignore grammar learning and hence cause the lower efficiency in using grammar in their writing and reading ...*

(Interview, Instructor B of University B)

However, it is found in this study that there are many significant factors which assist change in teaching methods in Thai EFL classrooms. These factors include the extent to which the content of the subject lends itself to communicative practice and real-life use, high student English competency and motivation, and high instructor professional knowledge, teaching experience and positive thinking towards the new teaching method. Other factors include the use of English as the main teaching medium; the effective use of course books and textbooks; and the availability of various facilities for teaching and learning, such as self-access centres, microphones and computers. As discussed above, effective institutional curriculum with explicitly detailed guidelines of teaching and learning practice is also a significant factor in ensuring consistency between their institutional curricula and teachers' practices. This can be exemplified by the institutional curricula of University B and University C.

It can be said that the important characteristics of the institutional curricula and the classroom practice of both University B and University C also derive from the advantaged contexts of these universities such as their specialised knowledge in teacher training, the extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, and the support from the executives towards the educational reform as specified in the official policy documents. For example, a foregrounding of technology for teacher training and professional development is distinctive in University C. University C offers regular seminars and training courses, including professional networks for enabling teachers from all over the country to exchange their opinions and experiences (from interview with Administrator C of University C). This also demonstrates that University C

recognises the significance of the learning from others' success and failures in the form of professional networking and peer learning. As Administrator C, who is both an administrator and an English instructor of University C, gives her views on the strength of Instructors in University C:

*... Most instructors in university are open-minded, ready to learn and exchange their opinion with their colleagues and welcome others to observe their class in order to improve their performances ...*

(Interview, Administrator C of University C)

The findings also reveal that due to the support from leaders, the encouragement of cooperative work and professional development, and the high professional knowledge of Instructor C, the institutional curriculum of University C and teaching practice of Instructor C are closely aligned with learner-centredness as specified in the official policy documents towards the educational change. In the next chapter, the findings of this study are canvassed in greater detail together with the significance and contribution of the study, and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the constructs of classification and framing were used to analyse: the institutional curriculum design process; the relations between the official policy documents and the institutional curriculum; and the teaching practices of instructors in three universities attempting to implement the reforms.

This chapter discusses the findings reported in the previous chapters and draws conclusions regarding implications for reform of the teaching of English in tertiary institutions in Thailand. The chapter begins with a summary of key findings in relation to the research questions. It then considers the usefulness of the pedagogic device as a theoretical framework together with other complementary theories of educational change. The major part of the chapter is then directed at addressing issues arising from the analysis of the data in the previous chapters in the light of the research questions guiding the study. Suggestions for successful change are then discussed along with the significance of the study and recommendations for further research.

#### 7.2 Summary of findings in relation to the research questions

The following research questions were identified for this study:

**Main question:**

What is the nature of the relationship between the knowledge production field, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field in the Thai tertiary English language teaching context?

**Contributing questions:**

1. How is research theorising from the production field taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents?
2. How do the educational institutions interpret and recontextualise the official policy documents?
3. How do teachers interpret and implement the official policy documents into their teaching practice?
4. To what extent are theory and research, government policies, and institutional curricula at various levels consistent with each other and with classroom practice?

Bernstein's pedagogic device (1976; 2000) has been used as the theoretical framework to explore the relations between the various domains in the Thai educational reform process: the field of knowledge production; the various layers of recontextualisation; and the site of reproduction. Table 7.1 summarises the relationship between these fields and the research questions, the agents involved in each field, and the data collected to address the questions.

Field	Research questions	Data collected
<b>The knowledge production field</b> (researchers, scholars)	Contributing question 1	Contributing question 4
<b>The official recontextualisation field</b> (the state government, policy-makers ) <b>The pedagogic recontextualisation field</b> (teacher education institutions, textbook publishers, inservice providers)	Contributing question 1	
<b>The institutional recontextualisation and implementation field</b> (executives, administrators, teachers, curriculum designers, policy interpreters)	Contributing question 2	
<b>The reproduction field</b> (teachers)	Contributing question 3	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published research</li> <li>• The official policy documents</li> <li>• Interview data</li> <li>• Institutional curricula and policies</li> <li>• Interview data</li> <li>• Institutional curricula and policies, course syllabuses, and lesson plans</li> <li>• Classroom observation (Interaction between the teacher and students)</li> <li>• Teaching materials</li> <li>• Interview data</li> </ul>

**Table 7.1:** The relationships between Bernstein's pedagogic device and research questions of this study

As shown in Table 7.1, the knowledge production field has been investigated in order to answer the research question about how research theorising from the production field is taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents. To answer the first contributing question, the recontextualisation of theory and research into policy formulation at the level of the state and its bureaucracy (or in Bernsteinian terms, the official recontextualising field) has been explored. Subsequently, to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between the official recontextualising field and the reproduction field, the content of institutional curricula has been analysed in relation to the official policy documents. This investigation of the relationship between the official recontextualising field and the reproduction field (including the institutional recontextualising field) responds to the second contributing question of how the institutions interpret and transform the official policy documents into their own

institutional curricula. The institutional curricula can be viewed as mediating how the educational knowledge is recontextualised by the state educational authorities and how teachers interpret and transform the educational knowledge generated by the production field. To answer the third contributing question, this study has reported on how teachers interpret and implement the institutional curriculum into their actual classroom practice. The fourth contributing question draws on all the data sources to examine the extent to which theory and research, government policies, and institutional curricula at various levels are consistent with each other and with classroom practice.

The following section summarises the findings in relation to the research questions.

### **7.2.1 Main question:**

**What is the nature of the relationship between the knowledge production field, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field in the Thai tertiary English language teaching context?**

While other studies have investigated the Thai reform process, they have dealt with it only at a specific level. This is the only study to take a comprehensive approach, examining the interactions between different levels of policy development and implementation, fleshing out the multilayered complexity of the process of change.

The findings of the study reveal that the Thai educational reform process is more complicated than what Bernstein conceptualises in his pedagogic device model. The many layers of interpretation and the multiple levels and stages in the Thai educational reform process make it more multifaceted than the three fields of the pedagogic device would suggest. The analysis shows the knowledge production field to be a contradictory tangle of theories of language and language learning. In making sense of these theories, several different agencies are involved in the recontextualisation process, within both the official recontextualising field and the pedagogic recontextualising field. Official policy documents undergo a process of further transformation as they move to regional authorities and to individual institutions. Institutional policy is then translated into course syllabuses, curriculum documents, teacher programs and lesson plans. These multiple levels indicate the *complexity* of the Thai educational reform process.

Every time the pedagogic discourse is interpreted and transformed, it can lead to greater ambiguity and lack of stability.

To compound the complexity, it was found that the *hierarchical relations* in each of these multiple levels often result in a high degree of power and control resting with the small group of people in authority, causing stronger boundaries between the levels and leading to differing policy interpretations. With a lack of consultation and communication, there is greater likelihood of inconsistency between policy and practice. The study finds, however, that there is evidence of some permeability in which some agents can move between boundaries through more cooperative work for more successful curriculum renewal.

### **7.2.2 How is theorising from the production field taken up by the recontextualisation field in the official policy documents?**

In terms of educational reform and pedagogic practice in English programs, an analysis of policy documents found an emphasis on a learner-centred teaching approach, suggesting a relatively weakly-framed pedagogic relationship between the teacher and students in which the students' initiative and autonomy is encouraged in the classroom. In terms of English teaching in particular, communicative principles were espoused. While frequently mentioned in the documents, the underlying theories and principles were not spelt out in any detail. On the one hand, this could be seen as providing greater autonomy to the interpreter. On the other, however, the lack of a clear explanation can result in confusion, misinterpretation and hence resistance (Yukl 1998) among the implementers, especially the teachers. As outlined earlier, there are quite different views of what is meant by 'learner-centred' and 'communicative', depending on whether a progressivist, psycholinguistic position is intended or a socio-cultural position. The adoption of one or other of these approaches has significant implications for classroom practice and for the culturally sensitive adaptation of theory to Thai classroom practice.

Along with the lack of clarity in the policy documents in the official recontextualising field, the pedagogic recontextualising field left interviewees feeling unprepared to implement the recommended approaches. In terms of teacher development, the present

study found that class instructors familiarise themselves with the new teaching methods and develop their teaching practice from various sources: learning from the media; training courses; their educational background; their teaching experience; and peer learning. The interviews with many participants in this research, including policy-makers, institutional administrators and teachers, however, supported Pillay's (2002a) findings that there are many limitations to the design and delivery of teacher development programs.

### **7.2.3 How do the educational institutions recontextualise the official policy documents?**

Educational institutions provide an intermediate level of recontextualisation, interpreting the official policy documents in the light of their specific context. The findings of this study reveal that in some universities, some instructors have multiple roles as being both executives and practitioners, so that they can take part in the curriculum design process. With these multiple roles, there tends to be greater participation in designing the institutional curriculum, making for more effective implementation. Strong control from the executive and the institutional curriculum, results in strong boundaries between the hierarchy and the instructors and less opportunity for the instructors to become involved in curriculum design. However, even with strong control from the executive and the explicitly defined institutional curriculum of some universities, instructors are provided with some independence in their teaching practice as long as it is consistent with what is specified in the institutional curriculum.

With regard to the relations between the theories of learning and language development referred to in the official policy and the principles specified in the institutional curriculum, the institutional curricula of all universities promote a learner-centred teaching approach, some with a great number of clarified details and others with less-clarified detail. All of them include statements encouraging a high degree of student involvement in the teaching and learning process. For example, the students are urged to join in independent activities and tasks or project works. That would seem to indicate that the strong version of the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching are suggested by all the institutional curricula of all

universities under analysis inasmuch as they focus only on a single approach and do not encourage the incorporation of other approaches. This demonstrates that there are some attempts by all universities under analysis to design their institutional curricula to be consistent with the official policy documents.

#### **7.2.4 How do teachers interpret and implement the official policy documents into their teaching practice?**

The present study found some attempts at applying the new teaching methods in the classes observed, however with differing degrees of success.

The findings also reveal that the consistency between the official policy documents and the institutional curriculum can foster greater consistency between the policies and the teaching practice, particularly if the institutional curriculum provides more detailed guidelines regarding the implications for practice of the underlying theory. For example, the institutional curricula of some universities under analysis were found to be consistent with the official policy documents in terms of specifying a learner-centred teaching approach, though a greater level of detailed guidance was provided. Correspondingly, their teachers' practices were observed to be very consistent with: a learner-centred teaching approach, with its weakly-framed relations between the instructor and students, evidenced by a greater focus on learner autonomy than teacher control in the classroom; the aim of communicative practice and real-life use; the effective use of authentic teaching materials and tasks; and the use of English as the teaching medium. The successful implementation of the reform in these classrooms was assisted by: the high professional knowledge and teaching experience of the teachers, the high English proficiency of students, the availability of facilities for teaching and learning, and the support of teacher training from the institution.

#### **7.2.5 To what extent are theory and research, government policies, and institutional curricula at various levels consistent with each other and with classroom practice?**

As indicated in the previous sections, the findings suggest unevenness across fields.

The relationship between the knowledge production field and the official recontextualising field is tenuous. References in the policy documents to theories of learning are sparse, unelaborated and uncritically adopted from Western theorists, with no acknowledgement of the complexity inherent in the field.

The relationship between knowledge production field and the pedagogic recontextualising field which is responsible for teacher education is also problematic. The findings of the current study reveal that teacher training programs and various state government authorities have organised programs and activities to promote change towards more learner-centredness. However, there are many constraints which can cause confusion and resistance to the new teaching approaches among implementers. One of these constraints includes the lack of expertise in the new knowledge and skills to deal with the mandated teaching and learning theories. According to Bernstein (1996; 2000), the knowledge produced in the knowledge production field has to be transformed through a process of translation. It is the role of the pedagogic recontextualising field to interpret and make accessible the new teaching methods, such as the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching. Yet there is little evidence of research by teacher educators into what such approaches might look like in various Thai educational contexts.

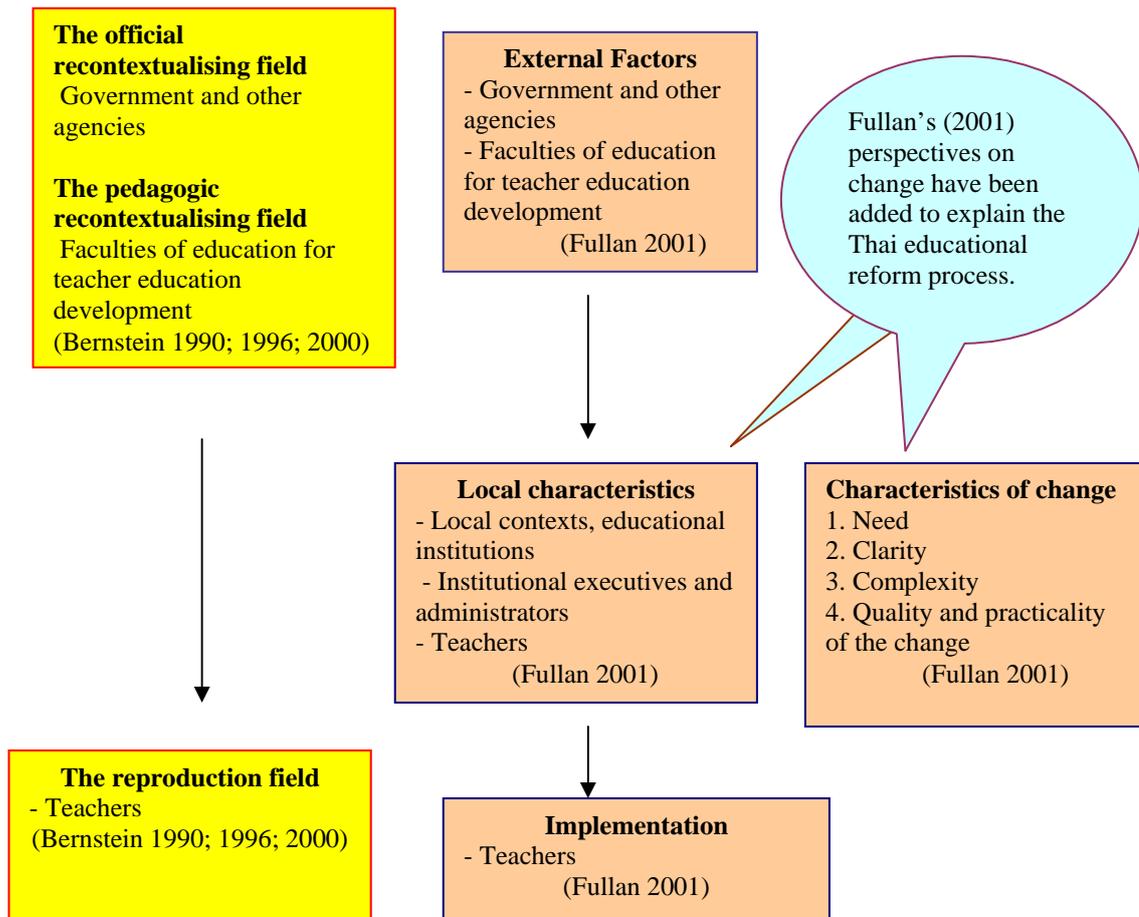
The relations between the official policy documents and the institutional policies varies depending on the institution, with some simply paying lip service to the policy and echoing its recommendations, while others proactively embrace the reforms, providing guidance on what a learner-centred, communicative approach in the classroom actually looks like.

With regard to the relationships between the recontextualised policies and classroom practice, the findings of this study suggest that there are significant differences between what policy suggests and what teachers do. As mentioned above, all of the institutional curricula under analysis are consistent with the official policy documents in stipulating a learner-centred teaching approach with more weakly-framed relations between the teacher and students and more student involvement in the classroom. On the other hand, the classroom practice under analysis, when observed in depth, revealed a good deal of variation in implementing the policy.

These inconsistencies between theory and research, government policies, institutional curricula at various levels and classroom practice can result in superficial change, or in Fullan's (2001) term, 'false clarity', which can lead to failure in sustainable change. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

### **7.3 Revisiting the theoretical framework**

Bernstein's pedagogic device (1976; 2000) has been used as the theoretical framework to explore the relations between the various domains in the Thai educational reform process: the field of knowledge production; the various layers of recontextualisation; and the site of reproduction. This section elaborates Bernstein's pedagogic device together with some other perspectives on change. This study has found Bernstein's theories to be a useful framework for describing change. In addition, other theorists' perspectives on change which are related to educational contexts have been employed to capture the complexity of the educational reform in Thailand. The complementary nature of Bernstein's theories and other theorists' perspectives on change, offers researchers a useful approach to explain the process of educational change in greater detail, as indicated in Figure 7.1.



**Figure 7.1:** The correspondence of the pedagogic device (Bernstein 1990; 1996; 2000) with interactive factors affecting implementation (Fullan 2001)

For example, Bernstein's pedagogic device is congruent with the interactive factors affecting implementation, as specified by Fullan (2001). As noted in Figure 7.1, Fullan's (2001) external factors, which include the government and other agencies, correspond to what Bernstein (1975; 1990; 1996; 2000) terms as agencies in 'the official recontextualising field'. At the same time, faculties of education responsible for developing teacher education – another external factor specified by Fullan (2001) – can be called in Bernstein's terms, the agencies in 'the pedagogic recontextualising field'. Local characteristics specified by Fullan (2001) include the context of educational institutions and executives. This study interprets these agencies and agents (i.e. Fullan's (2001) local characteristics) in terms of Bernstein's 'institutional recontextualising field'. Teachers, another local characteristics specified by Fullan (2001) are also significant agents at the implementation level or, in Bernstein's term, 'the reproduction field'.

While there is congruence between Bernstein and Fullan at the broader level, there are aspects of Fullan's theory of educational change that can be drawn on to enhance the model. The detailed characteristics of change provided by Fullan (2001) are used to explain the process of Thai educational reform in this study. These characteristics of change have also been discussed in the theoretical framework of this study (see section 2.2.2 in Chapter Two). Fullan (2001) notes that priority needs have to be clarified and taken into account at the initial stage for successful change. With respect to clarity, specified goals and clear guidelines are required for implementers to follow in order to avoid confusion and misinterpretation that can cause superficial change (Fullan 2001). This study reveals something of the extent to which implementers at all levels are provided with sufficient guidelines for change and whether those changes are real or superficial. Fullan (2001) also points out that the process of change is complex, which causes difficulties at the implementation level. The current study demonstrates the complexity of the Thai educational reform process and sheds light on factors that cause difficulties and resistance to change.

These two complementary theories of change enabled the study to capture the macro level processes of the Thai reform process, as well as that of the micro level in the form of the enacted curriculum. This theoretical framework makes a significant contribution to the outcomes of this study, which are canvassed in the next section.

## **7.4 Issues arising from the study**

In terms of the characteristics of change, Bernstein (1975; 1990; 1996; 2000) explains change as a complicated process. This view is consistent with the explanation of other theorists of change, Fullan (2001; 2006), Hoban (2002), Hargreaves (1989; 1994), and Hargreaves, Shaw and Fink (1997). Insights from Bernstein and other change theorists into the complexity of the reform process are utilised in discussing the following issues arising from this study, around which this section is structured:

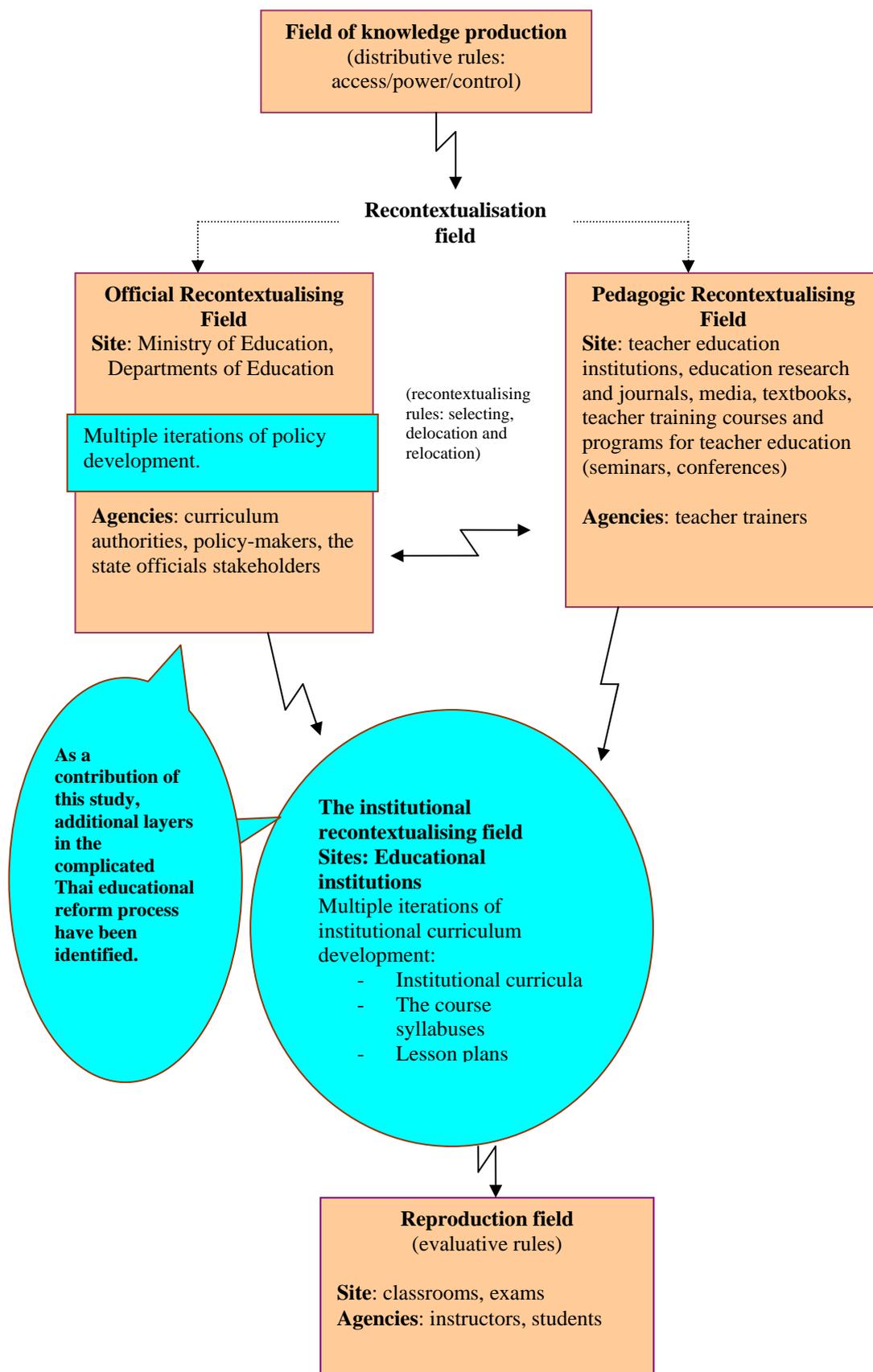
- the complexity of relationship between and within fields
- the hierarchical relations of people or agents in each field
- the boundary strengths between agents
- the degree of autonomy

- application of the theories and principles associated with the learner-centred teaching approach in actual classroom practice

#### **7.4.1 The complexity of relationship between and within fields**

As noted, this study has explored the nature of the relationship between the knowledge production field, the recontextualisation field and the reproduction field in Thai tertiary English language teaching. This study has revealed the numerous layers of interpretation, with multiple levels and stages in the reform process, which are more complicated than the three fields of the pedagogic device would suggest. As Bernstein (1996; 2000) states, the process of his pedagogic device proceeds linearly from the knowledge production field to the recontextualisation field and finally to the reproduction field. In contrast, the educational reform process is much more complicated, as exemplified in the Thai experience.

As illustrated in Figure 7.2, the application of the theory here involves at least five fields: the field of knowledge production; the official recontextualising field; the pedagogic recontextualising field; the institutional recontextualising field; and the reproduction field (the classroom).



**Figure 7.2:** Bernstein's pedagogic device applied to explain the Thai educational change in the current study (Adapted from Chen and Derewianka 2009)

In Bernstein's terms, in *the official recontextualising field*, not only the initial policy formulation process performed by the state government, but also other stages of policy formulation, such as the consultation and revision processes and at times the reformulation at regional level, have to be taken into account. Further, the broad policy developed at the state level is then interpreted and transformed by various departments and sections of the state government. That means there are multiple iterations of policy development.

Beyond the many layers and phases of interpretation at the level of the official recontextualising field, the process of recontextualisation continues at the level of each institution, where the official policy is interpreted and transformed initially by the institution as a whole and then by the various departments within the institution. The study also posits this further layer which is termed by the researcher 'the institutional recontextualising field'. This field functions as a transitional mechanism to transform the official policy documents into the institutional curricula, which have to be interpreted and followed by the teachers in the next stage, the reproduction field. This process is illustrated in Figure 7.2. The jagged arrows represent the potential for misinterpretation at each stage in the process.

On the surface, it appears that there is a strong relationship between recontextualisation policy and teacher practice. However, when observed in depth, it is found that the implementation process is so complicated that practice cannot be qualified as having either strong or weak boundaries in some cases. This is because the implementation at the classroom level is more complicated than that on other levels, since there are many interactive factors affecting its implementation. Accordingly, it is burdensome for some teachers to implement a singular policy intent when their pedagogic practices are impacted by a variety of external factors and shaped by a number of informing beliefs, traditions and experiences.

According to Bernstein (1996; 2000), pedagogic transformation and acquisition occurs in the field of reproduction. In the present study, it is proposed that 'acquisition' occurs throughout the multiple levels of transformation, namely, by the policy-makers at the national level, the executives and administrators at the institutional level, and the teachers at the implementation level. This is because all of these people have to come

to an understanding of the knowledge as they attempt to interpret and transform it for the acquirers at the next level. For example, the policy-makers, as acquirers, have to understand the knowledge created in the knowledge production field (in the present case, for example, the research into second language learning). Then, these policy-makers, as transmitters, have to transform the knowledge into specific educational policies for the acquirers at the next level, the institutional executives and administrators, retaining the integrity of the theory but making it accessible and pragmatic. Similarly, the institutional executives and administrators also act as the interpreters who transform the national policies into the institutional curricula for the teachers, who are also the acquirers at the implementation level. As the transmitters, the teachers have to interpret and transform the policy and knowledge into their teaching practice for the students who are the acquirers at the classroom level.

These multiple levels reflect the complexity of Thai educational change, where every time the pedagogic discourse is interpreted and transformed, there is the risk of less clarity and less coherence. That is to say, knowledge outcomes have been interpreted and transformed by many sections and agents before the stage of the actual implementation at the classroom level, so there are numerous opportunities for the policies to be misinterpreted. This can cause confusion and misconceptions at the final stage of the teaching practice if there is not a clear understanding at each level of the theoretical principles informing the reforms.

#### **7.4.2 The hierarchical relations of people or agents in each field**

A major complicating factor in the process described above is the existence of strongly hierarchical relations within each of the multiple levels in the Thai context: the official recontextualising field, the pedagogic recontextualising field, the institutional recontextualising field and the reproduction field. The power exerted by the dominant group or groups tends to create stronger boundaries between the various levels, leading, as a result, to different interpretations. This is consistent with Bernstein's discussion of the effect of strong boundaries.

However, here too there is greater complexity than what might appear on the surface. Notably, with reference to the *official recontextualising field*, the National Education

Act 1999 was initially drafted solely by one group of authorities, namely the group of top management or ministers, the heads of state departments and educators who dealt directly with the policy formulation process. This group held high positions and thereby more power in decision-making. One might therefore assume a top-down process. Subsequently, however, the draft of the National Education Act 1999 was subjected to consultation in the form of group discussion and oral feedback before being returned to the group of authorities for approval (Office of the National Education Commission 1999; Poonnakaseam 1999).

This attempt to encourage the participation of stakeholders at the grassroots level, namely teachers and students, in the policy formulation process, can partly weaken the classification in terms of roles and relations among stakeholders in the national policy formulation process, with such people potentially providing some useful feedback on the teaching practices stipulated in the policy contents. In other words, with this encouragement, more effective policy rather than idealistic policy could be generated.

Although there is some encouragement of the participation of other stakeholders in the process, the process is still controlled by one group of authorities and certain people who directly deal with policy formulation. The actual participation of stakeholders and its effectiveness is open to question.

Following the broad policy formulation process of the National Education Act 1999, each state education department adapted the general principles into their own more specific operational plans. It was also found that each department has highly specified duties and responsibilities in terms of policy development. When asked about the role of his organisation, Chief G responds:

*... The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment is responsible for quality assurance. Organisation B doesn't deal with it ...*

(Interview, Chief G of Bureau G in Organisation B)

We thus see that the strength of the classification in terms of roles and relations among stakeholders in the policy formulation process at the state level changed throughout the process of development and interpretation of the National Education Act 1999. It needs

to be seen as a recursive process, with different degrees of classification in terms of roles and relations among stakeholders at different points in the national policy formulation process or with varying hierarchical relations of stakeholders in the field.

In *the institutional recontextualising field*, the curriculum design processes of University A and University C tend to encourage instructors of various subjects to have collegial relationships with each other. Such social relationships result in cooperation and shared educational tasks (Bernstein 1975), with a weakening of hierarchical control. In addition, Bernstein (1975) points out that these work-based horizontal relationships between instructors may change both the structure and distribution of power, making change more feasible.

Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing reflect his emphasis on the exploration of relations and the communicative practices occurring in the process of change. This is found to be the crucial factor for change (Bernstein 1990; 1975; Fullan 2002; 2005; Hoban 2002; 2005). Bernstein (1990; 1975) also states that, in terms of weaker classification and framing related to relations and communicative practices respectively, the more integrated the work of the organisation, the more likely the final product or practice is to be similar to what the policy intends.

The hierarchical relations occurring in the curriculum design process also have an influence on the relations between the official policy documents and their institutional curricula. For example, in University C, the relationships between staff members in the curriculum design process are interactive since there is greater teacher involvement in the curriculum design process. This cooperative work can result in a sense of ownership among staff members and hence greater uptake in the interpretation and implementation. For example, their institutional curriculum is consistent with the official policy documents. That means the more integrated the work among agents in the curriculum design process, the more relations there are between the official policy documents and their institutional curricula, with more focus on learner-centredness.

Nevertheless, some cases do not follow the above assumption because of many factors. Despite the strong control from the top management and the institutional curriculum, instructors in University B are agreeable to follow the institutional curriculum since

with their positive attitudes towards the new teaching methods, they have faith in their institutional curriculum.

### **7.4.3 The boundary strengths between agents**

As does Bernstein (1975; 1996; 2000), Fullan (2001) raises the issue of cooperative work among stakeholders for successful change. 'Insulation maintenance' is raised by Bernstein (1975; 1990; 1996; 2000) to refer to the degree to which there are productive relations and communicative practices among agents in the process of change. In the same way, Fullan (2001) uses the term 'change agents' to refer to supporters who encourage change or enhance more communicative practice in the change process. They both recommend that the closer the relationships and the more communicative the practices among agents, the weaker the insulation of boundaries between agents, leading to more successful change.

In this study, there is evidence of some permeable boundaries in which some agents can move between boundaries. For example, in *the official recontextualising field*, the consultation organised by the state government allowed the stakeholders at all levels to take part in the decision-making of the policy formulation of the National Education Act 1999. Additionally, there was more encouragement of stakeholders' participation at all levels. For example, in *the institutional recontextualising field* and *the reproduction field*, quality assurance can also promote greater cooperation between the state government and the educational institutions, and within the educational institutions themselves. Quality assurance can also be viewed as one of the strategies for successful change, expressed as 'pressure and support' (Fullan 2001; Hallinger and Kantamara 2000). In this case, policy-makers and leaders of the institutions, including teachers, act as change agents who take a significant role in controlling insulation maintenance. In other words, these change agents can act as change prohibitors who stop change happening or alternatively, they can be change facilitators who weaken the boundaries between the fields by allowing more participation and cooperative work between stakeholders at all levels for the purpose of successful change. For more successful change, these change agents are required to have more training in change management. In addition, to encourage more cooperative work – or in Bernstein's terms - to weaken the insulation boundaries between agents – more fluid relationships and communicative

practices can be encouraged by using ‘disarmament’ strategies, as proposed by Hallinger and Kantamara (2000), in which leaders have to disarm their power and be open to other staff members’ opinion.

As discussed previously in section 2.2.2 in Chapter two, in the Thai context, it appears that with the greater independence provided by the state government, teachers and educational institutions have to be responsible for their own professional development. This indicates that the educational institutions in Thailand have distinct responsibilities in both the pedagogic recontextualising field (dealing with teacher education) and the reproduction field (dealing with the interpretation and implementation of the policy). Therefore, it can be said that this autonomy and decentralisation supported by the state government can lead to weaker boundaries between the pedagogic recontextualising field and the reproduction field, in which there are more flexible responsibilities and hence more relationships of stakeholders in these fields.

Bernstein points to the phenomenon of ‘apparent weakening’ (Bernstein 1975; 1990; 1996; 2000) in which there seems to be change but in fact the change is merely superficial. This study found that the ‘apparent weakening’ occurs in all fields in the Thai reform process. For example, in *the official recontextualising field*, the encouragement of participation in the policy formulation process of the National Education Act 1999 only causes what Bernstein (2000) terms as ‘*apparent weakening*’. This ‘apparent weakening’ occurred, for example, when stakeholders were ‘consulted’ even though there was still domination by the group of authorities and educators who had the power to influence policy formulation and to selectively respond to feedback.

In *the institutional recontextualising field*, multiple roles of agents can lead to greater participation by teachers in the curriculum design process. Nevertheless, teachers’ practices are still largely controlled by the curricula, course syllabuses, textbooks and examinations which are chosen by the small group in authority. This control can also cause ‘apparent weakening’ whereby teachers appear to be provided with opportunities to take part in the curriculum design process and to exercise greater autonomy, but in fact they are still manipulated by the authorities.

The ‘apparent weakening’ also occurs in *the reproduction field* or the classroom level. Although there is an attempt to apply the new teaching methods, such as the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching, the actual implementation of these communicative activities is doubtful in some classes under analysis. The adoption of a strong version of the learner-centred approach requires a complete rethinking of current practice. It is not simply a matter of inserting the occasional interactive activity but of changing beliefs and behaviours of teachers and students. This was evident in the classroom of Instructor A, who made some attempts to apply the new teaching methods by encouraging some communicative activities such as group work, discussion and role-play. However, because of their low English competency, students in those classes lacked confidence in doing the tasks and hence avoided practising English by speaking mostly in Thai. Most students learned and conducted activities through memorisation. At the same time, to be assured that students understood the lesson, Instructor A1 mostly spoke Thai in his classes, which resulted in less opportunity for students to practise English in class. Therefore, the actual change is called into question. This is because Instructor A1 was confronted with many constraints, such as large classes, the institutional curricula and textbooks with a less communicative focus, time constraints, and textbook-based and an exam-orientated structure. Even if he had wanted to, Instructor A1 would have found it hard to implement the strong version of learner-centred and communicative theory, together with the profound change in beliefs and practices and boundary weakening that this requires. This indicates ‘apparent weakening’ in which there is some indication that there was some change but in fact it was merely superficial change (Bernstein 1975; 1996; 2000).

#### **7.4.4 The degree of autonomy**

Closely related to the above, the findings of this study reveal that more autonomy in various forms appears to be provided to stakeholders at all levels, from decentralisation at the state level to learner autonomy at the classroom level. One issue that arises, however, is the potential tension between the detail and prescription of the policy documents and the freedom of teachers to make their own decisions. As with students in the classroom, however, it can be argued that true autonomy is not a matter of simply conferring freedom but results from a process of careful support and scaffolding. For

example, the explicit guidelines in the official policy documents and the institutional curricula, which could be seen to provide less autonomy to the implementers, can also be beneficial in some cases. As is borne out in this study, some teachers prefer to have more detailed guidelines in the official policy documents, particularly in the early stages of implementing a syllabus mandating radical changes in practice.

The official policy documents, as has been discussed in section 5.3.1.1 in Chapter five, are very explicit with respect to specifying particular language teaching theories and approaches. However, the recommendations for practice are lacking in clarity and detail. Rather than empowering teachers and conferring autonomy, such imprecision can simply lead to confusion and lack of confidence. Many Thai educators and teachers do not understand the underpinning principles of the new teaching and learning approaches, and hence they find difficulty in interpreting and implementing them (Piya-Ajariya 2001; Pillay 2002a). This study shows that more detail in the official policy documents about how theories and principles work in practice can facilitate implementation and ultimately allow the teachers to be more autonomous as their decision-making will be based on firmer ground.

For example, the findings show that the curriculum of University C, which provides considerable detail about the learner-centred, communicative approach to be implemented, can be effectively applied by Instructor C of University C due to factors such as detailed teaching guidelines, the explicit communicative objectives of the subject, the high professional knowledge and teaching experience of the instructor, the availability of teaching and learning resources, and the support of leaders. Similarly, despite the strong control from the authorities and the institutional curriculum, Instructor B still has considerable independence to design a communicative teaching program because the institutional curriculum has provided detailed teaching guidelines. Conversely, more autonomy provided by less detail in the curriculum does not necessarily help the application of learner-centred teaching, as in the case of Instructor A. Well-informed, practical and on-going professional development should also be encouraged in order to develop teachers' professional expertise and hence the possibility of autonomy in decision-making. These measures would allow change to be more sustainable and successful.

This study also shows that the lack of guidelines in the official policy documents can cause confusion and misinterpretation among the implementers, and hence resistance to the application of the new teaching methods (Yukl 1998). This misinterpretation and resistance is discussed further in the next section.

#### **7.4.5 Application of the theories and principles associated with the learner-centred teaching approach in actual classroom practice**

In Chapter six, the data collected from the classroom observation of class instructors in various contexts was discussed in order to answer the research question of how teachers interpret and implement the official policy documents into their teaching practice. It was found that there are different interpretations and implementations along the recontextualisation process. The data indicates that learners' needs, interests, learning styles, inclinations and individual differences, along with a downplayed role for the teacher, are frequently specified in the Thai official policies. Thus, it can be assumed that a more progressivist version of learner-centredness is being implied in the Thai policy documents. Such an interpretation of learner-centredness, however, is a radical departure from current practice and traditional Thai values for many teachers and students. In University A, for example, Instructor A1 obviously could not cope with such expectations given the large class size, the content of the subject, the students' lack of English proficiency and the lack of explicit guidance in the institutional curriculum. He therefore retreated to the familiar teacher-centred approach, relying on the textbook to prepare students for the examination.

Instructor C of University C, on the other hand, adopted a more interventionist, sociocultural version of learner-centred, communicative teaching, with more flexible roles for the teacher and students. The factors fostering her willingness to accept the new teaching approach include the explicit institutional curriculum, the nature of the subject with a more communicative focus, smaller class size, her extensive professional knowledge and teaching experience, the high English proficiency of the students, the use of English as the teaching medium, the availability of facilities of teaching and learning, and the support of teacher training from the executive.

Meanwhile, Instructor B of University B applied a weak version of the learner-centred teaching approach in which the instructor is allowed to incorporate other teaching approaches. In this case, Instructor B applied both the teacher-centred teaching approach and learner-centred teaching approach in a more flexible way depending on the demands of the particular phase of the unit of work. She balanced her different roles in a principled manner, sometimes acting as an expert who provided input to students and sometimes playing the role of a facilitator and a guide. Along with collaborative and interactive activities to encourage learning through engagement with others, she also included both structural practice and grammar teaching at appropriate points (Nunan 1988; 2004b). Thus, it could be suggested that a more interventionist sociocultural model of learner-centredness was applied by Instructor B, since students were urged to participate in active meaning-making with each other and the teacher as they gradually assumed greater responsibility for their learning (Vygotsky 1962). However, the teacher was maintaining strong control in the class. In Bernstein's term, this version of the learner-centred teaching approach and communicative language teaching is consistent with weak classification, with weaker boundaries between theories and principles. For example, students are provided with the opportunity to learn grammar through interactive work, with the practice of integrated skills.

Although both Instructor B and Instructor C applied the learner-centred instruction and communicative language teaching as specified in the national policy, they applied a more interventionist sociocultural model of learner-centredness, which is inconsistent with the more progressivist version of learner-centredness implied in the Thai policy documents. Thus, it could be surmised that a sociocultural model of learner-centredness, in which teachers can take more flexible roles, including teacher-fronted input where appropriate, might be less threatening and more practical than a progressivist version of learner-centredness along with the strong version of communicative language teaching. This is because in the progressivist version teachers might feel overwhelmed in trying to meet the individual needs of students in large classes, conduct the class solely in L2, and take on the role of facilitator of 'interesting activities' when students might have more pressing needs requiring a range of activity types.

The failure of the national policy to distinguish between the progressivist and the sociocultural versions of learner-centredness could result in teachers attempting to implement unrealistic and inappropriate ideals and being met with frustration and lack of success. The weak version of learner-centred, communicative teaching with a more interventionist, sociocultural basis might prove to be more effective in the Thai context. That is not to say that the weak version is simply a matter of randomly combining a variety of activities based on different theoretical constructs. Rather, it involves the principled selection of complementary approaches and the flexible adoption of teacher and student roles with the overarching intent of supporting the students in becoming active, independent meaning-makers. The teaching of points of grammar or the reinforcement of vocabulary knowledge through practice would not be an end in themselves, but would contribute towards greater competency in supporting students to achieve certain communicative outcomes.

In the next section, some strategies for successful change are canvassed.

## **7.5 Strategies for successful change**

The complexity of the change process causes many difficulties in achieving change (Fullan 2001; 2006; Hargreaves 1994; 1997). There are strategies to cope with this complexity and hence achieve successful change, such as strategies for curriculum and assessment reform, flexibility within the implementation process, a strong professional cultures and a process involving the whole system. These strategies are discussed in this section.

With regard to *curriculum and assessment reform*, teacher participation, collaboration and collegiality in the decision-making process are significant for effective change. Teachers can develop a sense of ‘ownership’ by working with colleagues on the development and implementation of the institutional curriculum. This promotes a better understanding of the rationale for the changes and a willingness to attempt unfamiliar practices, resulting in a greater consistency between policy and practice. In the same way, in relation to the weakening of boundaries between policy and practice, Bernstein (1990) observes that the more cooperative the work among stakeholders during the

process of change, the more likely the organisation can achieve change. That is to say, there should be more cooperation among stakeholders in the process of change for change to be successful. To promote effective cooperative practice at the management level, there should be a balance of top-down and bottom-up change (Fullan 2001). In addition, Western ideas on educational reform would need to be localised into Thai contexts. For example, some Thai cultural beliefs, such as seniority, need to be adapted in accordance with strategies for successful change, such as ‘disarmament’ (Hallinger and Kantamara 2000) and ‘pressure and support’ (Fullan 2001), which are discussed earlier in this chapter. There also needs to be consistency between the recommended learning theory, student expectations and the assessment system. If the assessment practices are in conflict with the proposed teaching practices, then it is unlikely that students will accept the innovation. Therefore, assessment procedures more consistent with the mandated learning approach need to be encouraged (Hargreaves 1989).

There needs to be *flexibility within the implementation process*, whereby teachers can adapt programs to suit the particular context they are working in. Fullan (2001) notes that a significant factor that interacts with and has an influence on the process of educational change is the uniqueness of the individual setting. What is effective in some contexts might be ineffective in others. It is suggested that research findings from different contexts should be made available to implementers in order to gain more insights into planning for different situations and student populations (Fullan 2001). As Bernstein (1996) notes, the teaching practice of the teacher might vary depending on the constraints faced by students to meet the required standard. Insistence on a strongly-classified, progressivist version of learner-centredness might not be productive of effective change.

Teachers are the most significant agents in educational reform and *a strong professional culture* (Hargreaves et al. 1997) needs to be developed to support them in the change process. They need to be provided with the knowledge and experiences required for responding to education reform (Savignon 2002). In the Thai context, it has been found that most Thai EFL teachers are not equipped with the necessary knowledge of language teaching and adequate English competency to deal with the complexity of language teaching (Forman 2005; Luanganggoon 2001) – a view consistent with the findings of this study. At the pre-service level, teacher educators need to be familiar

with the requirements of the national policy and to understand the underlying theoretical rationale in order to better prepare trainee teachers for the new curriculum. At the in-service level, teachers need substantial professional development and support in a number of different ways such as mentor systems and peer coaching.

To have more effective professional development, information sessions should be encouraged in the provinces and regions in place of a top-down, centralised model (Luangangoon 2001). The reformers need to integrate the profession of teaching and the expertise of educational research. Teacher learning development aims to bridge the gap between intent and practice and between knowledge and outcomes, which should be taken into account by teacher educators and supervisors for both pre-service and in-service teacher education, for the purpose of actual, not illusory, curriculum reform (Nonkukhetkhong et al. 2006). There should be training courses for the knowledge producers, policy-makers and institutional leaders, as well as teachers for more successful change at all levels. As well, there should be more consideration of the appropriateness of those theories and principles in the Thai context. There should also be empirical evidence to show the effectiveness of those concepts and to demonstrate to teachers how to localise and implement them in their own contexts and in a more practical way. In addition to an understanding of the theoretical principles, all stakeholders need to have an understanding of the nature of change and the rationale behind the change for successful reform to occur (Fullan 2001).

At a broader level, this study has demonstrated the need to consider change as *a process involving the whole system*, from policy developers through to classroom implementers. It is recommended by Fullan (2006) that to promote large scale reform, a systems thinking approach which focuses on the whole pattern of change rather than on isolated parts of the system has to be encouraged for in-depth solutions and hence for long term, sustainable and in-depth change. To achieve this, cooperation and interaction with others in various forms should be enhanced. Within the system, efficient leadership is the most significant factor for sustainable change (Fullan 2006). Collaborative action and participatory management are also factors in successful change, which needs to be supported by leadership in the schools (Fullan 2006; Hargreaves 1994; 1997). Therefore, there should be more leadership training and opportunities for teachers to participate in leadership roles. According to Holmes, Leithwood and Musella (1989),

with the introduction of a new curriculum, the relationships within the system may be shifted and hence facilitate the change if there is positive leadership, teacher involvement and infrastructure for teacher learning, consistent with the innovation.

## **7.6 Significance and contribution of the study**

This thesis bridges the gap between policy and practice. It also makes a contribution to the theory of change and the theories of policy and practice. Bernstein's pedagogic device provides a useful framework which can be applied in different contexts. This study also includes insights from other perspectives on educational change to enable the researcher to explain the complexity of the educational context in greater detail. The bringing together of complementary theories (Bernstein's pedagogic device and other theorists' perspectives of change) is thus offered as a contribution to the theory of change in this study.

The pedagogic device is extended to demonstrate the complexity of different layers. That is to say, a contribution of this study is to reveal the numerous layers of interpretation with multiple levels and stages in the reform process which are more complicated than originally outlined. One of the contributions is the identification of multiple iterations of policy development in which the core policy is interpreted and transformed by different state organisations and departments. Rather than a purely linear process, policy development can be seen as a recursive process. Another contribution is the introduction of another layer that the researcher has termed 'the institutional recontextualising field' in which how the educational institutions interpret and transform the policy has to be taken into account in the process of change.

A further contribution is to identify the complexity within each field. For example, in the knowledge production field, there are simultaneously a number of theories of language and learning derived from research in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, linguistics and education. Many of these theories are contradictory and even within a theory, there are different 'schools'. This complexity leads to misconceptions and misunderstanding among Thai educators and policy-makers who, with many

constraints, do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with these innovative teaching theories (Pillay 2002a).

Furthermore, this study also contributes to the knowledge of policy and practice in that to have successful change, there should be consistency between policy and practice. More effective implementation can be achieved by attending to various factors for successful change, for instance, more encouragement of stakeholders' participation, especially teachers, in the policy decision-making process (Fullan 2001; Bernstein 1975; 1996; 2000), the promotion of more flexible approaches to teaching and learning informed by contemporary theory, and the provision of substantial, on-going professional development that draws on research in the Thai context.

The above contributions of the present study can be useful to indicate areas in need of further research, which are discussed in the following section.

## **7.7 Recommendations for further research**

This section will now make recommendations for further research based on the findings of this study.

The findings of the present study provide significant implications for the encouragement of greater consistency between policy and practice for more successful Thai education reform. The study has also shown that there is an urgent need for research into the theories of pedagogy and theories of change, especially in the Thai context.

The following questions are offered for researchers, policy-makers, administrators and teachers who are interested in pursuing issues raised by the present study.

1. What kinds of stakeholders' participation can generate greater consistency between policy and practice?
2. What factors promote real reform in Thai education as opposed to superficial change?
3. How can consistency of learning approach be maintained while still allowing flexibility to cater for different Thai EFL contexts?

4. What is the impact on student outcomes of the application of the new teaching approaches as specified in the policy in Thai EFL classrooms?

Such questions are but a few thrown up by the present study, suggesting that even though the reform process has been in progress now for some time, there is still a long way to go in coming to an understanding of appropriate and effective ways of implementing change in English language teaching.

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**APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX 1 Consent forms</b>
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University of Wollongong

### CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

**RESEARCH TITLE :** Teacher change in response to Thai tertiary English language teaching

**RESEARCHER'S NAME:** Miss Rattana Cheewakaroon

I have been given information about teacher change in response to Thai tertiary English language teaching and discussed it with Miss Rattana Cheewakaroon who is conducting this research as part of a Doctoral degree in TESOL. The research is supervised by Prof. Beverly Derewianka and Dr. Pauline Jones in Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask Miss Rattana Cheewakaroon any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my treatment in any way, my relationship with the Faculty of Education or my relationship with the University of Wollongong.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Miss Rattana Cheewakaroon, the researcher, Prof. Beverly Derewianka, or Dr. Pauline Jones, or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on 4221 4457.

By signing below I am indicating my consent to:

- Having audio-recorded interviews for 60 minutes with the researcher asking me about my work and learning experiences.
- Having video-recorded classroom observation for observing my teaching practice according to learner-centred pedagogies.
- Having copies of my work and teaching materials taken as work samples demonstrating the use of the learner-centred approach

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for developing the research instruments for the real implementation stage, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

**Signed**

**Date**

.....

...../...../.....

Name (please print)

.....



## **PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS**

**TITLE:** Teacher change in response to Thai tertiary English language teaching

### **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

This is an invitation to participate in a study conducted by the researcher at the University of Wollongong. The purpose of this study is to investigate policy and practice in relation to Thai policy reforms in the area of tertiary English teaching in order to find out how policy is formulated and interpreted and how these policies are implemented by teachers. In particular, this study aims to investigate whether there is consistency between policy and practice.

### **INVESTIGATORS**

Miss Rattana Cheewakaroon  
 Research student  
 Faculty of Education  
 University of Wollongong  
[rc117@uowmail.edu.au](mailto:rc117@uowmail.edu.au)

### **METHOD AND DEMANDS ON PARTICIPANTS**

If you choose to be included, you will be invited for an interview. The researcher will conduct a 60-minute pre- and post-observation interview that will be audiotaped to ascertain how you interpret and implement the policy reform or apply the learner-centred pedagogies in your teaching practices. Typical questions in the interview include: What concepts do teachers place an emphasis on in lesson plan/ teaching practice? What personal, social, contextual factors have or should be identified in developing lesson plans and teaching strategies? How do you as a teacher interpret and design your own lesson plans and teaching practice? What particular model of planning is used? How were they developed and changed? What decisions were made? What do you believe/ feel/ think of learner-centred pedagogies? Does the policy affect your teaching practice? In what way do you experience the policy? What and how did you learn from the policy? How did the policy fit into your teaching practices? We also request your permission to observe your classroom teaching for one hour if you are implementing ideas from learner-centred pedagogies. We also wish to collect work samples that represent your application of learner-centred pedagogies.

### **POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVENIENCES AND DISCOMFORTS**

Apart from the 60 minutes of your time for the interview, we can foresee no risks for you. Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation from the study at any time and withdraw any data that you have provided to that point. Refusal to participate in the study will not affect your relationship with the University of Wollongong. In addition, pseudonyms are used for all participants' names, universities' names, cities and districts.

### **FUNDING AND BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH**

This research will provide a basis for future decisions on the development of policy reform and policy implementation in Thai EFL classrooms. As a pilot study, findings

from the study will be applied and adapted further in the implementation stage. Therefore, confidentiality is assured, and the school, you and the students will not be identified in any part of the research.

#### ETHICS REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS

This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted, you are welcome to contact the UOW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 4457.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

**APPENDIX 2: Survey data sheet and interview questions for policy-makers**

**Survey data sheet for policy-makers or government officers**

**1. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Education experiences**

**When**

**Where**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**5. Work experiences**

**When**

**Where**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**6. Have you ever set up or designed a training course or seminar for teachers?** \_\_\_\_\_

**7. If yes, please specify the topic of those courses and seminars?**

**When**

**Topic**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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## **Interview questions for policy-makers and government officers**

### **Management and administration**

1. Do you take part in policy making? What part? How?
2. What policy has been developed or is being developed for your area of responsibility?
3. If change is decentralised, who can be held accountable for improvement?
4. Should policy process be centralised or decentralised? Why? How?

### **Policy Formulation**

5. What is the main reason for designing policy?
6. What concepts does the national policy place an emphasis on?
7. What personal, social, contextual factors have or should be identified in developing policy?  
How have you fostered/applied/adjusted these factors for more efficient outcomes?
8. Has there been any change in the intentions of the government policy since the concept was first indicated? How often? Explain?
9. How will the policy be evaluated?
10. In your opinion, what development should be encouraged for more effective policy reform implementation? Why? How?
11. How does the government formulate and design the national policy? What particular model of planning is used? How were they developed and changed? What decisions were made? Who makes the decisions?
12. What do you think about the current policy? (e.g. its strengths and weaknesses)
13. To what extent is Thai/ organisational culture a barrier to change? Is it controllable?
14. What is the most significant factor for teacher change, according to policy reform?
15. What research has been conducted particularly by the government to develop the policy reform?
16. What activities and programs have been conducted particularly by the government to encourage the policy reform?

### **Teaching concepts**

17. According to educational national policy, LCP is specified as the main teaching approach that needs to be implemented in the classroom.  
Have you ever heard about LCP?  
- If so, what do you think that term means?  
- Is LCP suitable to the Thai social context/ your school context?
18. Have you ever heard about learner autonomy?  
- If so, what do you think that term means?  
- Is learner autonomy suitable to the Thai social context/ your school context?
19. Have you ever heard about CLT?  
- If so, what do you think that term means?  
- Is CLT suitable to the Thai social context/ your school context/ your style of teaching?

LCP = Learner-centred pedagogies

CLT = Communicative language teaching

**APPENDIX 3: Survey data sheet and interview questions for institutional administrators**

**Survey data sheet for institutional administrators dealing with designing curriculum in educational institutions**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Position: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Department: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Education experiences**

**When**

**Where**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**5. Work experiences**

**When**

**Where**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**6. Have you ever set up or designed a training course or seminar for teachers? \_\_\_\_\_**

**7. If yes, please specify the topic of those courses and seminars?**

**When**

**Topic**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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## **Interview questions for institutional administrators dealing with designing curriculum in educational institutions**

### **Management and administration**

1. What part do you take in designing curriculum? How?
2. What do you see as the relationship between the national policy and institutional policy?
3. How was it developed? Who was involved? How was it structured?
4. How does the institution formulate and design the curriculum? What particular model of planning is used? How were they developed and changed? What decisions were made? Who makes decisions? Who takes part in them?
5. Are the educational institutions in a position to develop their own institutional policies independently? How? What should be the key goals? What factors should be taken into account?

### **Policy implementation**

6. Are national policies factors for designing your institutional policies?
7. Apart from national policies, what factors that affect the policy implementation's success should be considered?
8. What personal, social or contextual factors have or should be identified in developing curriculum?  
How have you fostered/applied/adjusted these factors for more efficient outcomes?
9. Apart from the national policy, what other policies and variables affect the development of your organisational curriculum?
10. What development should be encouraged for more effective policy reform implementation? Why? How?
11. Can organisational policies be modified? Explain.
12. How do organisations propose to evaluate their own curriculum?
13. Have the goals of the institutional policy been reached?
14. In your opinion, to what extent is Thai organisational culture a barrier to change? Is it controllable?
15. What do you think about your institutional curriculum? (its strengths and weaknesses)
16. Is there any reference to implementation in the policy document and your institutional curriculum?
17. Is there any reference to classroom practice in the policy document and your institutional curriculum?
18. Is there any reference to teacher learning in the policy document and institutional curriculum?
19. What research has been conducted, particularly by your institution, to encourage policy reform?
20. What activities and programs have been conducted, particularly by your institutional curriculum, to encourage policy reform?

**Teaching concepts**

LCP is specified as the main teaching approach that needs to be implemented in the classroom.

21. Have you ever heard about LCP?

- If so, what do you think that term means?

- Is LCP suitable to Thai social context/ your school context/ your style of teaching?

22. Have you ever heard about learner autonomy?

- If so, what do you think that term means?

23. Have you ever heard about CLT?

- If so, what do you think that term means?

- Is CLT suitable to Thai social context/ your school context/ your style of teaching?

LCP = Learner-centred pedagogies

CLT = Communicative language teaching

**APPENDIX 4: Survey data sheet and interview questions for instructors**

**Survey data sheet for teachers as practitioners**

**1. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Surname:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Education experiences**

**When**

**Where**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**5. Work experiences**

**When**

**Where**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**6. Have you ever taken the training course or seminar for teachers?** \_\_\_\_\_

**7. If yes, please specify the topic of those courses and seminars?**

**When**

**Topic**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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## Interview questions for teachers as practitioners

### Teacher practices

1. Tell me about activities that you typically use to teach?
  - What are you doing in the classroom, particularly learner-centred pedagogies?
  - Do you use the textbook?
  - How do you work out what to teach in your classroom?
 (To what extent you have designed or just followed the institutional guideline or textbooks)

### Curriculum

2. Does your department have the curriculum for the English program?
  - If yes, how was it developed? Who was involved? How was it structured?
  - Is that a teacher-centred or learner-centred model or communicative language-teaching model?
3. Do you take part in designing institutional curriculum? What part? How?
4. Do you have your own program?
  - If yes, do you design your own program?
  - How do you develop your own classroom program?
  - Is it based on course description or any policy?
5. Is there any relationship between what you believe and what you do in the classroom?
  - What are you doing in terms of the relation between classroom and policy?
6. How do you identify what your learners want to know?  
Do you use the needs analysis?

### Policy interpretation (Teacher understanding of the reading policy)

7. Do you know whether there is National Policy?
8. Are you familiar with the institutional policy?
  - Are you familiar with the English policy?
  - Can you see a relation between the national policy and the institutional policy?
9. Does the policy effect your teaching practices?
10. How does your organisation interpret and design your own policy or curriculum?  
Is it in teacher-centred or learner-centred and communicative language teaching model? How were they developed and changed? What decisions were made?  
Who made the decision?

### Teaching concepts according to National policy reform

LCP is specified as the main teaching approach that needs to be implemented in the classroom.

11. Have you ever heard about LCP?
  - If so, what do you think that term means?
  - Is LCP suitable to Thai social context/ your school context/ your style of teaching?
12. Have you ever heard about learner autonomy?
  - If so, what do you think that term means?
13. Have you ever heard about CLT?
  - If so, what do you think that term means?
  - Is CLT suitable to Thai social context/ your school context/ your style of teaching?

14. What do you think is the difference between LCP and CLT?

**Practice change**

15. Have your practices changed at all? Why do you change?

- What makes you change?
- What is it to do with, some policy, curriculum and training?
- Have you ever taken any training courses?

LCP = Learner-centred pedagogies

CLT = Communicative language teaching