Native Speakerism Ideology Underlying English Education Policy in Thailand

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Abstract

Language policy is known to embody language ideology. Previous studies have argued that language policy in Thailand is grounded in native speakerism, an ideology that positions native speakers as better role models than non-native speakers. Since native speakerism is a prevalent ideology, this research aims to investigate its origins in the discourse surrounding English education policy in Thailand, with a focus on the evolution of relevant policy discourse since 1898. A qualitative research method is employed in this study, which involves analyzing English educational policy discourses. An iterative framework was created to facilitate ongoing meaning-making and focused analysis. The findings indicated that native speakerism became ingrained in education policy after changes in the political system and persisted during the 1999 educational reform era. Today, the globalization era does not explicitly reflect native-speaker standards in policy, but it still appears in practice.

Keywords: English education policy discourse, language ideology, native speakerism

Introduction

The policy concerning English education within the Thai education system places significant emphasis on Native English Speakers (NES) models, meaning that NES are positioned as better role models than Non-native English Speakers (NNES) (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). The policy has been in place for over a century and is deeply ingrained in Thai society. It is widely recognized that the prevailing attitude towards native norms and the reinforcement

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of native English standards in education have promoted the ideology of native speakerism. The term "native speakerism" was coined by Holliday (2006) and describes a dominant ideology prevalent within English teaching methodology and practice. This ideology is characterized by the belief that 'native speaker' teachers embody a 'Western culture,' which informs both the principles of the English language and the methodologies employed in English Language Teaching (ELT). Native speakerism is perceived as a divisive force stemming from specific educational cultures in the English-speaking West. The acceptance and resistance to the native speakerism ideology oscillate to varying degrees across the global English-speaking community. The ramifications of native speakerism are evident in numerous facets of professional life, including employment policies and the perpetuation of regional or religious cultural stereotypes. The perspective of native speakerism negatively portrays and confines 'nonnative speaker' cultures as dependent, hierarchical, collectivist, reticent, indirect, and passive (Holliday, 2005).

English education in Thailand, encompassing both formal and informal systems, as well as the assessment and evaluation of English proficiency, is fundamentally grounded in NES models (Todd & Keyuravong, 2004). Due to the impact of English education and its evolution within Thailand's historical context, norms established by native speakers have become ingrained in Thai attitudes. ELT in Thailand is deeply rooted in the ideology of native speakerism, which holds that native English speakers are better role models than non-native English speakers. The widespread prevalence of native speakerism was attributed to its embeddedness in policy discourse.

Researchers conducted studies on the ideology of native speakerism to examine the existence of native norms in English education in Thailand. The research showed evidence of preference for native norms in Thailand. For example, a study of Thai students' preferences found that Thai students regarded native English teachers as ideal models for learning English (Comprendio & Jindapitak, 2025; Phothongsunan, 2016). Besides, the study on native norms in Thailand regarding Thai students shows a highly positive view of American and British English pronunciation models and an entrenched native ideology (Phusit & Suksiripakonchai, 2018). These examples of research on native speakerism ideology indicate that the native speaker norm in Thailand is deeply embedded in social and educational contexts.

Nonetheless, the manner in which native speakerism has been ingrained in Thai society since the reign of Rama V remains unclear, as does how 'native speakerism' has been reproduced to the present day. This study aims to enhance the understanding of the historical context surrounding the preference for native norms in Thailand.

Literature Review

1. Language Ideology

The study of ideology pertains to the foundation of Marxist theory concerning ideology, which is linked to scientific knowledge, literature, religion, and ethics (Volosinov, 1973). It is

articulated that language functions as a sign; in the absence of signs, no form of ideology can represent, depict, or symbolize anything external to itself. Language constitutes a form of actual ideology and can be regarded as a social practice. Additionally, Silverstein (1979) characterized language ideology as a collection of beliefs about language, articulated by users as rationalizations or justifications of perceived language structures and usage. Woolard (1994) further explained that language ideologies are understood as socially shared beliefs, feelings, and conceptions concerning language that relate to social issues. These language ideologies underpin language use, which in turn influences and is shaped by language ideologies, thereby serving social objectives.

The purpose of language ideologies is not primarily linguistic but rather social aspects. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) stated that language ideology was analyzed in cultural and political ideologies as constituted, encoded, or enacted in language. It was mentioned that language ideology envisions and enacts connections between language, group, and personal identity, as well as aesthetics, morality, and epistemology. Language ideologies and education offer a valuable lens for examining bilingualism and language education among minority students, thereby deepening a critical understanding of English language issues within their socio-cultural and historical contexts. The topic of language ideology requires bridging the linguistic and social theories. It has the potential to provide a deeper understanding of the superficial linguistic form and its cultural variability in the context of political and economic studies of discourse.

Besides, language ideology theory can be used as a valuable concept in studying educational phenomena and the English language context. Wortham (2001) focused on how language ideology can enrich educational research. The concept of language ideology can be productively applied to educational research in various ways. For example, people can see how the identity of an 'educated person' might be mediated by language ideologies. People seem to get identified as 'educated' or not based on a significant part of how they speak. The accent, dialect, and the use of particular lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic forms are used to identify how educated a speaker is.

Language ideology can be understood as one of the three components composing the language policy, along with language practice and the concrete actions to transform the practices of educational management and planning (Spolsky, 2004). Language policy is also a linguistic process of legitimizing and reproducing linguistic forms, which is the primary social function of ideology (Van Dijk, 1998). The critical topic of ELT ideological orientations at the policy level was also explored by Pan (2011) in a study on ideologies of English in Chinese language education policies. The notion of language ideology and conception of ideology were explored as 'the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc. Pan studied different levels of the Chinese education system to search for clues indicating the status of English and ELT in education policies. The researcher observed that Chinese foreign language education policies lacked ideological resistance to the promotion of English and a readiness to accept English in Chinese language policies, which pointed to some emerging social problems.

There has been a trend in historical examinations of language ideologies, dominant national ideologies, elite debates, and colonial expressions. In the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, Western Europe. Language was a civil concern as new notions of public discourse and forms of participation were also formulated by new participants in the public. Modern linguistics has generally adhered to linguistic ideologies and prescriptive norms that influence speech forms. Language ideology is significant for understanding the evolution of linguistic structure. Sociolinguistic changes can be established through ideological interpretations of language use, as they often derive from multiple social dialects or language shifts. The speakers conceptualize language as a socially purposive action for their ideas about the meaning, function, and value of language to understand systematicity in empirically occurring linguistic forms. To understand a person's linguistic usage, imperfect and limited awareness of linguistic structures is more available to conscious reflection, leading speakers to generalize and impose on a broader category of phenomena. The standard in sociolinguistic analysis for examining relations of structure, change, and communicative function invokes a notion of native speakers' awareness as an explanatory link (Errington, 1988, cited in Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994).

2. Native speakerism

Native speakerism is the belief that 'native speaker' teachers represent the Western culture that underpins the ideals of the English language and English language teaching methodology (Holliday, 2005). Native speakerism is seen as a divisive force that originates within educational cultures within the English-speaking West. This ideology may manifest or be resisted throughout the ELT world, and the 'native speakerism' ideal plays a widespread and complex iconic role both outside and inside the English-speaking West. Besides, native speakerism is an ideology in ELT, perpetuated through various powerful discourses or regimes of truth that are often presented as normal, rational, and sensible (Selvi, 2014).
However, 'native' and 'non-native speakers' can be negatively affected by the ideology of native speakerism. Native speakerism can refer to an opposing force that maintains the privilege of power (Eagleton, 2007). The prejudice of 'native speaker' is often obscured by the apparent liberalism of a nice field like TESOL (Kubota, 2001, cited in Holliday, 2005). The impact of native speakerism is evident in various aspects of professional life, including employment policies and language presentation. The negative and confining labels impact non-native speakers and cultures as dependent, hierarchical, collectivist, reticent, indirect, passive, docile, lacking in self-esteem, reluctant to challenge authority, easily dominated, undemocratic, or traditional in effect, uncritical, and unthinking (Holliday, 2005).

'Native speaker' was ultimately judged grammatically, omniscient, and infallible, and the goal against every language learner's interlanguage should be compared (Kachru, 1994; Rajagopalan, 2005, cited in Kiczkowic, 2017). In addition, Pennycook (1998) stated that the term 'native speaker' has a moral mission to bring a superior culture of teaching and learning to students and colleagues who are perceived as not being able to succeed on their terms. Holliday (2005) concluded that native speakerism was addressed at the level of the prejudices embedded in everyday practice, and dominant professional discourses must be put aside if the

meanings and realities of students and colleagues from outside the English-speaking West are to be understood.

The fallacy of 'native speakerism' in language learning indicates that a priori, a better teacher of the language than a 'non-native speaker' (Phillipson, 1992). In SLA research, a fallacy was created about native speakers. Kachru (1992) identified the myths that all students learn English to communicate with and be understood by 'native speakers', but most learners communicate with non-native speakers. Next, students learn English to understand British or American culture, or the culture of native speakers, so a problem arises in defining the meaning of British and American culture and how knowledge contributes to students interacting successfully in English, as well as in international or multicultural contexts. Besides, the native speaker model of language is only ideal to be taught and learnt. Using the language of native speakers leads to greater intelligibility in international settings and is particularly appropriate in teaching and learning contexts. Finally, native speaker teachers are more effective than non-native speakers; however, no difference was found in the improvement of students taught by native speakers or non-native speakers in terms of pronunciation teaching.

Additionally, some learners have been found to idealize native speaker teachers and associate them with superior teaching skills (Hu & Lindemann, 2009, cited in Kiczkowic, 2017). In ELF learning, the view of native speaker models is the only correct norm. Thus, they believed that English is best taught monolingually by native speakers or that L1 accent is stigmatizing and causes problems with intelligibility. This native speakerism ideology has been quite deeply embedded in ELT for many years (Kiczkowic, 2017).

3. Related Research

In Thailand, English is used for international communication, both inside and outside the country. English has always been identified as a foreign language in the Thai education system. English is a foreign language that has been taught in schools and widely studied in class, but English does not play an essential role in national or social life in Thailand. People do not need to use English to live their daily lives or for social and professional advancement (Broughton et al., 2003). The EFL status in Thailand implied conformity to native English standards, so Thai people held an entrenched preference for native English speaker norms, or 'native speakerism' (Trakulkasemsuk, 2018).

The study of sociopolitical considerations and ideological issues in the field of ELT, with a focus on cases of discussion that relate to the concept of ideology. The concept of ideology as fundamental beliefs was intended to problematize the teaching practices of manipulating language forms in the process of meaning creation and expression (Tollefson, 2000). A native-speakerism study in English, the research titled 'Native-speaker' varieties of English: Thai perceptions and attitudes' examined Thai perceptions of and attitudes toward varieties of English. Language attitudes can influence the direction of language policy and institutional

practices. There were 251 Thai English learners. The findings showed that they are strong in attitude and diverse in perception of varieties (Snodin & Young, 2015).

Additionally, Prabjandee (2020) concluded that there was evidence of preference for native norms in Thailand. First, ELT in Thailand has been reported to be favorable to native norms (Phongsirikul, 2017). Next, at the high school level, the native norm was preferred (Jindapitak, 2015; McKenzie, Kitikanan & Boriboon, 2016; Snodin & Young, 2015). Third, there was evidence of native norm preference outside the classroom context. English varieties are not a significant matter (Bennui, 2017; Buripakdi, 2012). Finally, the native norm in Thailand is prescribed at the policy level (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). The native speaker norm in Thailand is deeply embedded in social and educational contexts. It has influenced English learners in all linguistic segments and the ELT language policy. Therefore, this study aims to understand how native speakerism manifests in Thailand's educational discourse across English education periods.

Research Objectives

The two purposes of this study are to explore the native speakerism ideology in English education policy discourses in Thailand and to investigate how this ideology has evolved over time.

Research Design

This paper is part of a larger research project (Nitsaisook et al., 2025), aimed at identifying language ideology across educational eras. This paper draws upon one dominant ideology, native speakerism, which is highly prevalent in policy discourses. The analysis of the document examines the underlying language ideology present in the discourse of English education policy in Thailand, from historical to contemporary perspectives. This research is approached through a diachronic lens, examining the concept of native speakerism in the context of English education in Thailand. According to the historical account of English instruction in Thailand, the initial phase began with the introduction of English-language instruction during the reigns of King Rama III and King Rama VI (1824-1926). Siamese began to learn and use English in Siam to deal with the increasing British colonial power and modernization. The English language was significant in acquiring advanced knowledge to modernize the country and protect the territory from the Western powers. Learning English was for diplomatic, political, and medical purposes (Plainoi, 1995). Thus, in this era, the Thai education system was developed and had the first official national education policy, known as the 'Education Plan,' in 1898, which provided a master plan as a guideline for educational administration (Mulsilp, 2011).

The subsequent phase encompassed the initial national education reforms that preceded the era of political transformation (1932-1999). Following the shift from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, a significant reform of the educational system occurred in Thailand. The national education policy discourses were instituted to enhance the educational

framework, thereby facilitating the development of the country (1999-2020). The most recent phase of English language teaching in Thailand spans from 2021 to the present.

Table 1

The Most Recent Phase of English Language Teaching in Thailand Spanning from 2021 to the Present

English Teaching Era	National Education Policy
Era 1: Beginning- Early Year English Teaching in Thailand- (King Rama III – King Rama VI Era) (1824-1926)	• The Education Plan 1898, 1902, 1907, 1909, 1913, 1915, 1921 • The Compulsory Primary Education Act 1921
Era 2: The Political System Change (1932-1999)	• The National Education Schemes, 1932, 1936, 1951, 1960, 1977, 1992 • The National Economic and Social Development Plans (1961-1966), (1967-1971), (1972-1976), (1977-1981), (1982-1986), (1987-1991), (1992-1996), (1997-2001) • The Curriculum of Primary level 1960, 1978, 1990 • The Curriculum of Secondary level 1960, 1978, 1990 • The Curriculum of high school level 1960, 1981, 1990 • The English Language Curriculum 1996
Era 3: The National Education Reform (1999-2020)	• The National Education Schemes (2002-2016), (2009-2016), (2017-2036) • The National Economic and Social Development Plans (2002-2006), (2009-2016), (2012-2016), (2017-2021) • The National Education Acts 1999, 2002, 2010, 2019 • The Basic Education Core Curriculum 2001, 2008, 2017 • The Curriculum of Vocational level 2003, 2013, 2019, 2022 • The Curriculum of High Vocational level 2004, 2014, 2020, 2022, 2024 • The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) • The Guideline of the Ministry of Education (Policy for English Teaching Reformation) 2014 • The Education Policy of the Ministry of Education 2010-2011, 2013, 2012-2017, 2015, 2016-2019, 2019, 2020 • The Educational Management Policy, Ministry of Education

Table 1 (Continued)

English Teaching Era	National Education Policy
	• The Education Policy of the Prime Ministers • The Educational Development Plan, Ministry of Education 2012-2016, 2017-2021 • National Strategy 2018-2037
Era 4: The present (2021-2024)	• The Basic Education Core Curriculum 2023 • The Education Policy of the Ministry of Education 2021, 2022, 2021-2022, 2023, 2024 • The National Economic and Social Development Plan 2023-2027 • The Higher Education Standards 2024

Altogether, the English education policy discourses throughout these four periods encompass a total of 57 policy discourses and 18 curricula. All education policy discourses are declared and available on the online websites of the Ministry of Education and other educational and government organizations.

In the first era of English education in Thailand, during the reigns of King Rama III and King Rama VI, the 'Education Plans' were announced in seven issues: Education Plans 1898, 1902, 1907, 1909, 1913, 1915, and 1921, which can be found in the library.

Next, following the political system's transition from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, Thailand's educational reform was initiated, and new education policies were released to reorganize the existing education system of that period. The Ministry of Education announced the implementation of the National Education Schemes from 1932 to 1999. The National Education Schemes were released in six editions, as follows: the National Education Scheme of 1932, 1936, 1951, 1960, 1977, and 1992. Next, the National Economic and Social Development Plans consisted of 13 versions as follows: the National Economic and Social Development Plan (1961-1966), (1967-1971), (1972-1976), (1977-1981), (1982-1986), (1987-1991), (1992-1996), (1997-2001), (2002-2006), (2009-2016), (2012-2016), (2017-2021), and (2023-2027).

To analyze the curriculum for English teaching in class, the Curricula of primary, secondary, and high school levels were investigated for language ideology embedded in English language education in the compulsory education. These curricula have various editions at each level, as follows: the Curriculum of Primary Level (1960, 1978, 1990); the Curriculum of Secondary Level (1960, 1978, 1990); and the Curriculum of High School Level (1960, 1981, 1990). The English Language Curriculum 1996 is also included in the second era.

Later, in 1999, Thailand implemented a major educational reform to address several challenges, aiming to improve Thai students' learning performance and achievement, thereby contributing to national development in the economic context, innovative technology, and globalization. The Ministry of Education announced numerous educational policy discourses. The education policies released in the National Education Schemes are as follows: the National Education Scheme (2002-2016), (2009-2016), and (2017-2036). Additionally, four National Education Acts were announced to administer the education system and reorganize the education structure. There are four editions of the National Education Act: 1999, 2002, 2010, and 2019. The Basic Education Core Curriculum is reflected in explicit directions for foreign language education in standards and foreign language policy. The Basic Education Core Curriculum had four editions: 2001, 2008, 2017, and 2023. Moreover, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was introduced as a framework for evaluating English language proficiency in schools, which is also included in this data collection.

The current English education policy discourses are based on the National Education Scheme 2017-2036. Three prime ministers have announced three significant education policies as follows: the Education Policy of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha, the Education Policy of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, and the Education Policy of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. There are also announcements regarding education policy and the minister of education's emphasis, as delivered by the Ministry of Education. The Education Policy of the Ministry of Education, covering the years 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024, as well as the Education Policy and Emphasis of the Minister of Education, are published annually. The Announcement of Higher Education Standards 2024 has also recently been released for the up-to-date Thai education system.

Thus, the total number of English education policy discourses across all four phases of the English education period in Thailand consists of 57 education policy discourses, and 18 curricula are included in the analysis.

Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data employed an iterative approach to analyze the education policy discourse. The iterative framework is designed to engage with the continuous meaning-making and progressive focusing inherent in the analysis. An iterative method is a deeply reflective process that sparks insights and develops meaning. It began with organizing data selected from language policy discourses and categorized chronologically to prepare for analysis. The researcher served as the primary instrument for reading and analyzing the data through the constructed theoretical framework. Then, the data were coded into descriptive first-level codes with an examination. The first-level codes focused on 'what' was presented in the data. Then, the second-level codes were critically examined in the codes already identified in the primary stage and organized, synthesized, and categorized into interpretative concepts. In the secondary cycle, coding went beyond asking 'what' to also consider 'why' and 'how' the data were significant. After the coding process, the synthesizing activities

assisted with the secondary cycle were applied to bridge the analysis to writing. Next, the researcher defined and explained the emerging codes. The coded data analysis was finalized into themes before writing the results, employing a qualitative approach to interpret the meaning of these themes and answer the research questions.

The first-level codes focused on 'what' in English education policy discourses across each educational era, emphasizing only the English-language education policy, such as objectives, strategies, and goals. This was for understanding 'what' the English language education policy impacted English language education in Thailand. Then, the codes were interpreted as 'why' and 'how' processes, and they were defined and merged into the theme of language ideology. Language ideologies were identified by examining how ideological concepts are embedded in English education; as a result, this study explores English language ideologies. Woolard and Schieffelin's (1994) framework encouraged the analysis of language ideology in education policy discourses.

Results

The study revealed the language of ideologies in the evolution of education policy discourses in Thailand, tracing the development from the earliest policies to the present day (1898–2024). The results showed that Westernization ideology and hierarchical language ideology were embedded in the first era (1824-1926). Following the change in the political system (1932-1999), modernization ideology and native-speakerism ideology were employed in the second era. Then, in the third era (1999-2020), Thailand reformed its education system, and ideologies of globalization and regionalization began to appear in English education policy. The ideology of native-speakerism continued to appear in the third era. However, in the present period (2021-2024), the ideology of globalization is the dominant underlying ideology in English education policy.

However, this article focuses on the ideology of native speakerism that was prominent during the second era (1932-1999) and the third era (1999-2020) of English education in Thailand. The figure below shows a timeline of the phenomenon of Native speakerism ideology that has been underlying English education policy discourses in Thailand from the past to the present.

Figure 1

A Timeline of the Phenomenon of Native Speakerism Ideology Embedded in English Education Policy Discourses in the Education Eras of Thailand
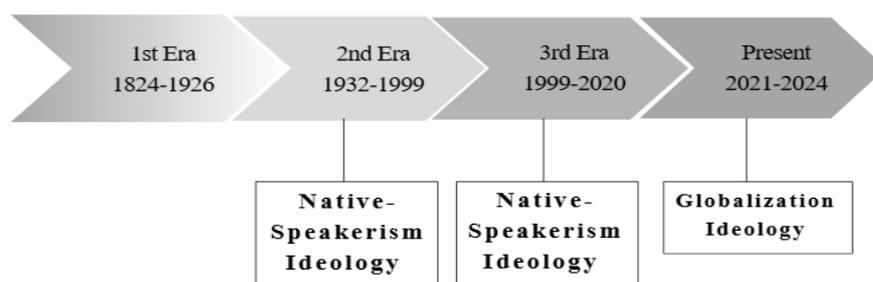
The evidence of native speakerism began to appear in the preference for 'native speaker' norms and focused on native speakers in some English language policies. First, the 1960 primary-level curriculum mandated that the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing be taught together, with grammar integrated throughout all levels. English teaching emphasized 'functional grammar,' which was applied alongside these skills. For grades 5-6, the directive stated, "Practice *reading assigned books, comprehending them, and pronouncing them correctly in accordance with native speaker preferences*." Fifth-grade students were also expected to enhance their reading through practice books, ensuring their pronunciation closely matched that of native speakers.

Next, the 1960 Secondary Level Curriculum for English aimed to enhance students' understanding of the culture of native speakers. The teaching program announced, *"Listening skills were developed through engaging with sentences and stories from native speakers, with a focus on accurate pronunciation."* In the 8th grade, students study culture by exploring the lifestyles and traditions of native speakers, thereby enriching their grasp of the target language. The 9th-grade curriculum involved learning about aspects of native culture such as clothing, dining habits, household arrangements, family dynamics, and leisure activities. By the 10th grade, students were expected to delve into native traditions and customs, examining their associations, values, religions, and significant events. *"The listening and speaking courses should prioritize practicing conversations as spoken by native speakers."* At the high school level in 1960, the English program also aimed to foster an understanding of native speakers' cultures. The writing skill program declared that "*Writing exercises were designed to stress accuracy and align with native preferences."* Grammar instruction was to address all four language skills throughout high school, with an emphasis on comprehension and correct usage. Students were required to learn about the cultural and traditional contexts of native speakers, including family structures, social life, political systems, religions, values, and worldviews.

Subsequently, the 1978 Secondary Level Curriculum reiterated the primary goals of studying English: to acquire fundamental vocabulary and to understand and pronounce the language correctly. Students were expected to develop their writing and speaking abilities while connecting the English language to the cultural backgrounds of its native speakers. The English subjects II and III also focused on imparting knowledge about the native speakers' culture and lifestyle. "*To build effective listening and speaking skills, students practiced using vocabulary and sentences that varied in content, voice, volume, and rhythm to ensure comprehension by native speakers."* The English subject IV concentrated on understanding the language and cultural aspects of native speakers. Students were required to *"practice their listening, speaking, and grammar skills to grasp narratives and sentence structures through conversations with teachers, peers, or native speakers."* English subject V shared the objective of teaching vocabulary related to the culture and lifestyle of native speakers. Meanwhile, English subject VI aimed to enhance students' knowledge of the culture, social life, and lifestyle of native speakers. In elective courses, Speaking and Listening subjects I and II focused on accurate pronunciation of words and sentences, stressing correct volume and rhythm. Students were encouraged "*to practice speaking, reading, and listening with an*

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accent and rhythm that native speakers would easily understand." Furthermore, the 1981 high school curriculum aimed to develop knowledge and skills in using English for effective and appropriate communication. Students needed *"to understand the culture of native speakers to facilitate meaningful communication."* The English subjects I-VI also emphasized the lifestyle and culture of native speakers. Listening and Speaking I-II helped *"learners use vocabulary and expressions appropriately for various situations, aligned with the preferences of native speakers."* Conversations needed to be practiced with classmates in a manner that would be easily understood by native speakers. These curricula adhere to native speaker norms for teaching and practicing the English language in young students during the early second period of education.

The second phase aligned with the Vietnam War years (1965-1973), during which numerous American soldiers were stationed in Thailand. This created a demand for Thai individuals fluent in English to engage in business and communications with Americans. As a result, American culture and new economic prospects reached the lower and middle classes (Sukamolson, 1998). To address this, the Ministry of Education introduced revised curricula mandating that all higher-grade elementary students learn English. The objectives included using English as a tool for international communication and gaining knowledge about global matters. Thai students showed enthusiasm for learning English, as it opened avenues for further education in the language. The curriculum emphasized native speaker models to facilitate effective communication with foreigners and to navigate social contexts effectively. Therefore, the English Language Curriculum 1996 introduced English as the first foreign language in primary education. This curriculum aimed to equip students with the skills *"to communicate effectively across various contexts, adhering to linguistic norms, while also fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity to facilitate their integration into native-speaking societies."* At the secondary level, the English curriculum aimed *"to foster knowledge and understanding of the cultures of English-speaking communities, treating English as the primary language of instruction."* In high school, courses labeled English V-X focused on *"using English appropriately and accurately in line with the customs of native speakers."* Subsequently, English subjects XI-XVI emphasized building a robust understanding of the language's cultural nuances by exploring a broader context that includes vocabulary, grammar, and communication styles. Students were encouraged to use English effectively in various contexts, guided by linguistic principles and cultural appropriateness.

The Ministry of Education recognizes the need to enhance English education, enabling learners to refine their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, thereby communicating effectively, accessing information, and pursuing further education. This development aimed to empower Thai individuals to engage with speakers of other languages and to leverage global telecommunication networks that connect diverse information resources. In the changing political system and ongoing underdevelopment, the government sought to create a modern economic and social structure in the country. Improvements were made to the education system to reform its structure and management. The government has prioritized educational reform within its policies. English education policies focused on developing learners' language proficiency to adapt to global changes. Consequently, English language

learners gained the ability to understand and explore the culture, customs, family dynamics, society, political system, religion, values, and perspectives of native speakers while adhering to native norms, thereby enhancing their language competence. The English educational policies served as guidelines to help students adhere to established rules and accuracy. Furthermore, in the third era, the significant Educational Reform (1999-2020) was initiated by Mr. Chuan Leekpai's government, which appointed the Education Reform Commission to reorganize the entire Thai education system and its processes. This major reform reaffirmed the earlier notions of educational transformation. Native speakerism continued to play a crucial role in English education policy. The Basic Core Curriculum of 2001 established English learning standards for primary students, requiring those students *"to complete a program encompassing knowledge and understanding of the language, culture, and lifestyle of native speakers."* According to the standards, grade 6 students were expected *"to study and comprehend the culture and lifestyle of native speakers."* At the secondary and high school levels, students were also required *"to acquire knowledge and appreciate the multicultural aspects and lifestyles of native speakers."* At each level, students were expected to understand and use English appropriately while also recognizing the similarities and differences between the language and culture of native speakers.

Next, the 2008 Basic Education Curriculum aimed to cultivate learners who are ethical, intelligent, happy, and prepared for further education and employment. The Language and Culture subject focused on comprehending the connection between a native speaker's language and culture and applying it correctly. Students needed *"to recognize both the similarities and differences within the native speaker's language and culture to use it appropriately."* In grade 3, students were expected *"to grasp social etiquette and cultural nuances of native speakers."* In grade 6, they should *"use language, tone, and gestures in ways that align with native cultural norms."* Learners were required to study and engage with information about festivals, significant days, celebrations, lifestyles, and cultural practices of native speakers. In grade 9, students were expected *"to grasp reading principles and communicate effectively while adhering to the social etiquette and cultural context of native speakers."* Finally, grade 12 students had to improve their listening, reading, and writing skills to interpret diverse information. They also needed to select appropriate gestures and body language based on the person's status, timing, occasion, and environment while respecting the social etiquette and culture of native speakers. They were also expected *"to articulate the lifestyle, beliefs, and origins of the customs and traditions of the native speaker."*

The High Vocational Certificate Curriculum 2014 aimed to equip technical-level students with the competence, quality, ethics, and professionalism, enabling them to pursue careers that fulfill labor market demands. In foreign language subjects, students were required *"to communicate in English with both Thai culture and native speakers."* They had *"to apply language properly, taking into account the social etiquette and culture of native speakers."* Besides, the Education Policy of Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha 2016 announced that students needed *"to improve English language skills to be able to speak and become familiar with native English accents."* The High Vocational Certificate Program 2020 also

adhered to native speaker norms in the 'English for Communication' subject, which required practicing *"conversations in everyday situations according to the social etiquette of native speakers."* The term 'native speakers' remained linked to the English education policy during the era of major educational reform. The basic education curriculum mandated studying native speaker cultures to gain a deeper understanding of the language. Consequently, native speakerism became a language ideology rooted in the second era and persisted into the third era of English education in Thailand.

However, in the present (2021-2024), English education in Thailand serves as a mechanism to drive development in the country, facilitating communication and connection with global society to compete on the international stage. In this era of globalization, the discourse surrounding English education has largely overlooked the ideology of "native speakerism" in Thailand. Native-speaker norms are still deeply embedded in social and educational contexts. Research has concluded that evidence of preference for native norms exists in Thailand. First, English Language Teaching (ELT) in Thailand has been reported as favorable to native norms. Next, at the high school level, native norms are preferred. Additionally, there is evidence of native-norm preference outside the classroom context; English varieties are not a significant matter. Finally, the native norm in Thailand is prescribed at the policy level. Furthermore, recent studies on the preference for native speaker norms highlight their prevalence in teaching and hiring practices. Native-speaker teachers tend to have more employment opportunities in Thailand. This issue may be linked to inequitable and double-standard hiring policies, as well as prejudice and discrimination (Huttayavilaiphan, 2021).

Conclusion

The study critically examines the phenomenon of native speakerism ideologies from 1898 to 2024. The main data consists of the English education policy discourses in Thailand. The data were divided into four English education eras. The first era started from the beginning of English language education in Thailand under King Rama III to King Rama V's reign (1824-1926). The second era began after the political system changed (1932-1999). The third era marked a major education reformation in Thailand (1999-2020). The last era of English education in Thailand included the years from 2020 to the present. The total number of English Education policy discourses across all four eras of the English education period in Thailand is 57, and the total number of curricula is 18.

This study employed an iterative approach to analyze discourses on English language education policy. The iterative framework was devised to engage with the continuous meaning-making and progressive focus inherent in the analysis process. The study found that native speakerism ideology did not appear English education policy discourse in the first era. The evidence of native speakerism began to appear the preference for 'native speaker' norms and focused on native speakers in some English language policies in the second era. The curricula emphasized native-speaker models to facilitate effective communication with foreigners and to navigate social contexts. The curricula also aimed to enhance students' understanding of native-speaker culture and to encourage accurate pronunciation in

accordance with native-speaker preferences. The listening and speaking skills were also supported by prioritizing practice in conversations with native speakers. Furthermore, in the third era, there was a significant Educational Reform. Native speakerism still continued to play a crucial role in English education policy. Students were required to understand the knowledge and realize the multicultural lifestyle of native speakers. They should understand and use English accurately in the culture and lifestyle of native speakers. The use of language, tone, and gestures was studied in the context of native cultural norms. Lastly, in the present (2021-2024), English education serves as a mechanism to drive development in the country. English can facilitate communication and connection with global society, enabling competition on the international stage. The various curricula at different levels have announced that English teaching and learning aims to provide students with knowledge and skills to communicate, and with a positive attitude towards English as an international language. Globalization ideology appeared in this era, the era of globalization.

Recommendations

This study has significant implications for language education policy, particularly regarding English studies in Thailand. It offers insights into understanding native speakers and the language norms that have been a part of Thailand's education system for decades. By analyzing English educational policy discourses from the past to the present, this research reveals the evolution of language ideologies across different periods. It aims to restructure the English education system and address the deeply rooted norm of native speakerism across Thai educational curricula.

Furthermore, English education policy should prioritize respect for multilingualism in English-language instruction. Policymakers should emphasize the importance of honoring diverse cultures and identities in teaching English. The evolving practices surrounding English teacher recruitment necessitate a reevaluation of the native speaker norm, particularly in relation to non-native English-speaking instructors. There should be a shift in the norms surrounding the English language toward embracing diversity, flexibility, and multiple forms of expression. This examination of the ideology of native speakerism in English education policy discourses from 1898 to the present sheds light on why the preference for the native norm persists in Thailand. The findings demonstrate how native speakerism ideologies have evolved in response to various social contexts throughout history. The preference for native speaker norms has remained prominent in English education policy over the decades.

As we enter a globalized era, English education must adapt to acknowledge English's status as a global language. Thailand needs to prepare and play a credible role in the global community to develop human resources and prepare the country's workforce to be consistent with the situation in the globalization era by using the English language. English education aims to understand the diversity of cultures of the world community and accelerate English learners' skills to communicate and keep pace with global changes. While old policies may seem to overlook native norms, evidence still shows a preference for them in Thailand, indicating that the ideology of native speakerism continues to influence English education today.

Finally, further research should be conducted on the language ideology embedded in different kinds of educational materials to understand hidden messages or norms. English language ideologies can be found as language norms transmitted from one generation to the next generation to improve English educational materials. Research on language ideologies in Thailand is still rarely found in the English language teaching and linguistics field. For example, English textbooks produced by the Thai government or publishers have never been analyzed to find out the hidden language ideologies.

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