

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THAI TEACHERS IN AN  
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM AT A PUBLIC THAI  
UNIVERSITY**



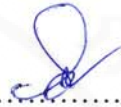
**PROMMIN SONGSIRISAK**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
(APPLIED LINGUISTICS)  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY  
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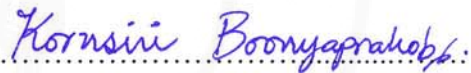
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Thesis  
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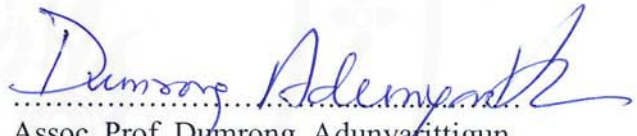
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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THAI TEACHERS IN AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM AT A PUBLIC THAI UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the students' perceptions of Thai teachers in an international program and the extent to which the students' perceptions of Thai teachers influenced their learning behavior. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The data were collected by means of focus group interviews and a set of questionnaires. The transcription of data from the focus group interviews were analyzed by using open and axial coding techniques (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The questionnaire data were analyzed by using the SPSS computer software program for simple descriptive statistics. The participants were 32 second-year and 20 third-year undergraduates from an international program at a public university in Thailand.

The findings showed that the majority of the participants preferred to have native English speaker teachers (NESTs) to teach them in the international program rather than Thai teachers. However, despite their expectation for the international program to have only NESTs, a lot of participants preferred the program to have both NESTs and Thai teachers working cooperatively. They perceived that both Thai teachers and NESTs differently benefitted the program. These teachers should have a role in teaching the subjects in the field of their expertise according to their knowledge, language competence, and abilities. In addition, students' perceptions of Thai teachers were also found to influence their learning behavior in terms of their communication with Thai teachers, motivation to complete and submit their homework, and class attendance.

KEY WORDS: NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKER TEACHERS / NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKER TEACHERS / THAI TEACHERS / STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS / INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

102 pages

ความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาที่มีต่ออาจารย์คนไทยผู้สอนในหลักสูตรนานาชาติ ในมหาวิทยาลัยแห่งหนึ่งของรัฐ  
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THAI TEACHERS IN AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM AT A PUBLIC  
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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งเน้นศึกษาความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาไทยที่มีต่ออาจารย์คนไทยผู้สอนในหลักสูตรนานาชาติและความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับอาจารย์ไทยที่มีผลต่อพฤติกรรมการเรียนของนักศึกษาในหลักสูตรนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐแห่งหนึ่ง งานวิจัยนี้ใช้วิธีวิจัยทั้งเชิงคุณภาพและเชิงปริมาณ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูล ประกอบด้วยแบบสัมภาษณ์กลุ่ม (Focus group interview) และแบบสอบถาม (Questionnaire) ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลจากการสัมภาษณ์ใช้หลักทฤษฎี open and axial coding techniques ของ Strauss and Corbin (1990) และใช้โปรแกรม SPSS วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลจากแบบสอบถามเพื่อหาค่าสถิติพรรณนา ประชากรที่เข้าร่วมวิจัยครั้งนี้คือนักศึกษาจำนวน 52 คน ประกอบด้วยนักศึกษารุ่นปีที่ 2 จำนวน 32 คน และ นักศึกษารุ่นปีที่ 3 จำนวน 20 คน จากหลักสูตรนานาชาติ ณ มหาวิทยาลัยของรัฐแห่งหนึ่ง ในประเทศไทย

ผลจากการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่าผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยส่วนใหญ่ชอบให้อาจารย์ชาวต่างชาติที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษาอังกฤษ (native English speaker teachers) สอนในหลักสูตรนานาชาติมากกว่าอาจารย์คนไทย อย่างไรก็ตามแม้ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยได้คาดหวังว่าหลักสูตรนานาชาติต้องมีอาจารย์ผู้สอนเฉพาะที่เป็นเจ้าของภาษาเท่านั้น แต่นักศึกษาบางส่วนยังต้องการให้มีทั้งอาจารย์คนไทยและอาจารย์ต่างชาติสอนร่วมกันในหลักสูตร เพราะนักศึกษารับรู้ได้ว่าทั้งอาจารย์คนไทยและอาจารย์ชาวต่างชาติเป็นประโยชน์ต่อหลักสูตร ด้วยเหตุนี้อาจารย์ควรมีบทบาทในการสอนรายวิชาที่ตนเองมีความเชี่ยวชาญ ตามความรู้และความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษของตนเองนอกจากนี้ความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาที่มีต่ออาจารย์ยังมีผลต่อพฤติกรรมการเรียนของนักศึกษา ได้แก่พฤติกรรมการพูดคุยสื่อสารกับอาจารย์คนไทย การทำกรบ้านหรืองานที่ได้รับมอบหมายจากอาจารย์ไทยจนสำเร็จและส่งด้วยความตั้งใจ ตลอดจนพฤติกรรมการเข้าเรียนในชั้นเรียนด้วย

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Rationale of the study**

In Thailand, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) from kindergarten to tertiary level. It is a compulsory subject set in school curriculum by Ministry of Education of Thailand. Not only that, recently, many Thai educational institutions have established international programs in which English is used as a medium of instruction and of which instructors are expected to be native English speakers if the institutions could manage to find enough of them. In the year 2008, 884 international programs offered by both public and private universities emerged in Thailand education. Based on the levels of education, there were 215 programs for doctoral degree, 350 programs for master's degree, 296 programs for bachelor's degree, and 23 for other degree programs (Study in Thailand 2008 – 2009, Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education of Thailand). However, the number of international programs offered by Thai public and private universities is still increasing. In 2010, the total numbers of international programs offered were increased to 981 programs consisting of 225 doctoral-degree programs, 389 master's degree programs, 342 bachelor's degree programs, and 25 other degree programs (Study in Thailand 2010, Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education of Thailand). These international programs were established to meet the needs of Thai and foreign students and those who wish to be in an international education.

So far, international programs have considerably gained their popularity among Thai students. With such growth of the international programs, there has been an increase in the demand of teachers. Due to a small number of qualified native English speaking teachers residing in Thailand, many international programs hire both native speakers of English and Thai as instructors.

With the difference in terms of instructors (native and non-native English speaker teachers) in the international program, the effectiveness of international programs has later become important issue. Apparently, students have different perceptions of their native and non-native English speaker teachers. They tend to prefer to be taught by native speakers of English in international programs to being taught by non-native English speaker teachers. One of the major impacts of students' perceptions on learning English with native speakers is that native speakers have naturally more competence of English language. Students can learn native accents and experience real use of authentic English language. Some students also perceive that non-native English speaker teachers are less proficient and speak with poor accents. Lippi-Green (1997 cited in Maum, 2002), for example, noted that poor accent of non-native teachers is considered to be unqualified and unprofessional and less effective when compared to more favorable accent of their native teachers. Braine (2010) summarized the participants' view from Jenkins' (2005) study that native accent would be described as "good", "perfect", "correct", "proficient", "competent", "fluent", "real", and "original English", but non-native accent would be considered as "not good", "wrong", "incorrect", "not real", "fake", "deficient", and "strong" (p. 16 – 17). Generally, students prefer native accent rather than non-native accent. As well, they prefer to learn English language in order to achieve English native-like accent. This makes students view their native English speaker teachers superior to non-native English speaker teachers in the English language teaching profession.

Moreover, native and non-native English speaker teachers not only affect students' perceptions, but also influence students' learning behaviors. For example, Park (2009) noted in his study that the participants perceived the advantages of practicing pronunciation and conversation with native English speaker teachers. The native English speaker teachers in his study were found to motivate the students to speak and listen more in English in the classroom and the students were found to be willing to communicate with their teachers in order to learn more about real life conversations. In addition, Chen (2009) maintained that students had more chance to practice speaking in English language if their teachers were native speaker teachers. This made them speak and think in English language all the time.

However, research evidence shows that students still prefer being taught by the native English speaker teachers in every educational level. Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002), for example, carried out a study on university students' perceptions of native and non-native speaker teachers of English in Spain and the findings indicated that students generally preferred being taught by native speaker teachers in every educational level. Maum (2002) also stated that "some NNESTs [non-native English speaker teachers] have reported that many of their students resented being taught by a non-native speaker until they were able to prove that they could be as effective as a native-English-speaking teacher" (p. 1). Similarly, Punthumasen's study (2007) on the issue of "International Program for Teacher Education" in Thailand and found that Thai teachers faced the problems of the quality of English language teaching as well as the use of English language as a medium of instruction in their teaching practices. These problems brought about the low standard of English achievement of Thai students. Therefore, to develop students English language competence, the quality of English language teachers needs to be improved (Wright et al., 1997).

Based on previous studies by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002), Meadows and Muramatsu (2007), Phothongsunan and Suwanarak (2008), evidence showed that native English speaker teachers were required for English language teaching and for being a model of language teaching for both teachers and students in most areas of language competence. Research participants from these studies showed stronger preference of being taught by native English speaker teachers especially in the context of Asian language classrooms than in European classrooms (Meadows and Muramatsu, 2007). Generally, in Thai context, native English speaker teachers are considered more appropriate than Thai teachers for English language teaching. As a result, more unqualified native English speaker teachers are hired to teach English in the contexts where English is used as a second language (ESL) and as a foreign language (EFL) than the qualified and experienced non-native English speaker teachers of ESL and EFL (Maum, 2002 and Braine, 2010).

In contrast, other researchers remarked that the ideal ESL teachers should be non-native English speaker teachers because they had acquired English as an additional language, had experienced of second language learning and using, and were sensitive to the students' needs of linguistics and cultural knowledge (Phillipson, 1996

cited in Maum, 2002). Non-native English teachers also empathized students and better encouraged students' language learning as they were sensitive to students' difficulties and needs. They even shared the similar linguistic and cultural background and previous experience as language learners. All these aspects of the teachers were advantageous for students learning English language (Árva and Medgyes, 2000; Maum, 2002; Braine, 2010). In addition, Moussu and Llurda (2008) also argued that the ideal teacher of native speaker had been deconstructed because such concept lacks evidence to support.

Péter Medgyes, a professor of Applied Linguistics at the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest who did some studies on native and non-native English speaker teachers, however, did not posit any explicit preference of native or non-native English speaker teachers. Medgyes (1992) noted that an ideal teacher is not reserved for any group of teachers, but both native and non-native English speaker teachers were idealized in different directions. Medgyes then remarked that "the ideal NEST [native English speaker teacher] is the one who has achieved a high degree of proficiency in the learners' mother tongue; and the ideal non-NEST [non-native English speaker teacher] is the one who has achieved near-native proficiency in English (p. 348 – 349). Canagarajah's (1999) comment about differences between native and non-native English speaker teachers, as cited by Moussu and Llurda (2008), is also in line with Medgyes' remark. According to Moussu and Llurda (2008), "Canagarajah (1999) added that "NSs [native speakers] will be better teachers in EFL contexts because of their unique cultural knowledge, whereas NNSs [non-native speakers] will be better teachers in ESL contexts, because of their multicultural experience" (p.322). In fact, Canagarajah (1999) noted that an awareness of more dialects or languages is the source in to facilitate much better process in second language acquisition.

It is clear that the concept of native and non-native English speaker teachers still remains controversial nowadays. Without any conclusion on who is a better language teacher, a native or non-native English speaker, in English language teaching (ELT) profession, one of the workable claims is that both native and non-native teachers are equally good teacher in their own term in English language teaching and both of them also have their own dark sides (Medgyes, 1994). Both

native and non-native teachers need a lot of practices and trainings in order to become more professional in the field of ELT (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002).

As a policy for international programs in Thailand, both native and non-native English speaker teachers are required to use English in classes as a medium of instruction in order to create the atmosphere of internationality as well as real English use in the class. In practice, however, English is not exclusive occupied in an international program. Thai teachers also use Thai language in the classroom. This is contrary to students' expectations. Based on the researcher experience and primary survey as a teacher in an international program for two years, some students doubt about Thai teacher's qualifications and their English language proficiency. They want to study with native English speaker teachers and only well-qualified non-native English speaker teachers in international programs. Others are satisfied with the use of Thai language in the classroom because it makes them understand lessons better. In fact, students have various expectations toward English language teaching and learning in international programs, and some of the students' expectations were mismatched with their teachers' expectations. Theoretically, scholars remarked that "the mismatch between students' and teachers' expectations can negatively affect L2 [second language] students' satisfaction with the language class and can potentially lead to the discontinuation of L2 study" (Brown, 2009: 46). Thus, these discrepancies of students' perceptions concerning on the issue of non-native English speaker teachers in an international program are the focus of this research study.

Considering students' voice, Cook-sather (2006) noted that students' perspectives about school and schooling need to be listened to and taken into account. This was because students' voices were powerful evidence for the development and improvement of teachers' teaching practice in school (Tait and Martin, 2007). For example, Robinson and Taylor (2007) remarked that listening to students' voice could make teachers understand students' experience and this resulted in changes in their teaching practice in schools. In addition, Ferguson et al. (2011) noted that the inclusion of students' voice in school would motivate and engage students in their learning. Therefore, the involvement of students' voices in school not only improves teachers' teaching practice, but also potentially makes students engaged in their learning.

To underscore the importance of students' voice, this study, therefore, aims to investigate students' perceptions of Thai teachers and how their perceptions of Thai teachers have influences on their learning behaviors in an international program.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The study, thus, has two research questions:

- 1) How do students perceive Thai teachers who teach in an international program?
- 2) To what extent do students' perceptions of Thai teachers have influences on their learning behaviors?

## **1.3 Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The present study is guided by Medgyes' notion of native and non-native English speaker teachers (Medgyes, 1994). Under the assumptions that there are differences in native and non-native speakers of English as English teachers and that students have different preferences of native and non-native English speakers as English teachers, this section particularly provides literature concerning the issues of native and non-native English speaker teachers as English teachers.

Medgyes (1994) proposed a basic assumption that native and non-native English speaker teachers are two different "species." (p. 27). To shed light on this assumption, Medgyes maintained that native and non-native English speaker teachers are different in terms of language proficiency, teaching behavior, and the differences in their teaching behavior were most caused by the discrepancy in language proficiency, and, however, they can be equally good teachers in their own terms.

Many research studies have conducted alongside Medgyes' notion and the evidence showed that non-native English speaker teachers were inferior to native English speaker teachers in listening, speaking, pronunciation, culture of English countries, vocabulary, appropriate language use, fluency, and colloquial expressions (Árva and Medgyes, 2000; Chen, 2008; Medgyes, 1994, 2001; Park, 2009;

Phothongsunan and Suwanarak, 2008; Reves and Medgyes, 1994). They are, however, superior to native English speaker teachers in teaching grammar and accuracy and use formal language. In addition, they shared the same language and cultural background with their students, were able to identify students' learning problem, empathize and were sensitive to the students' need (Chen, 2008; Ma, 2012; Maum, 2002; Medgyes, 2001; Park, 2009; Reves and Medgyes, 1994). The evidence suggests that students have different preferences of native and non-native English speaker teachers due to the differences in their language competences and teaching behaviors.

Therefore, the notion of native and non-native English speaker teachers (Medgyes, 1994) is applied to frame this study.

The next section describes scope and limitation of the study.

#### **1.4 Scope and limitations of the study**

This study was carried out based on the assumption that, referring to their personal preferences, Thai students differently perceived native English speaker teachers and Thai teachers who taught in the international program they were studying. This study examined Thai students' perceptions only of their Thai teachers teaching in an international program of a Thai public university in Thailand. The research participants were 52 undergraduates who enrolled to study during the 2012 academic year in the English Studies Program (International Program) at this particular university. Generalization of the results must then be taken with cautions.

In addition, in the context where the study was conducted, there were only three native English speaker teachers working with other 23 Thai teachers. These native English speaker teachers had more than four years of teaching experience in this context. All of them could understand Thai. One of them even understood Thai very well. He could speak, write, listen, and read Thai well because he worked in this context for more than 20 years. The teachers' experience could possibly affect students' perceptions in the program. Therefore, if a similar study were conducted in different contexts, it might yield different results.

## **1.5 Operational definition of terms**

Definitions of some important key terms are described in this section so as to provide background common understanding.

### **1.5.1 Perception**

Definitions of the term could be found in many available sources. In dictionaries including Oxford (2000), Longman (2001), and Collins (2006), the term is similarly defined. According to these sources, the term, perception, has two important aspects: ideas or beliefs of what is seen, regarded or perceived and the understanding or impression about something. In addition, the definition used in the study by Hengsadeekul et al. (2010) is:

the process of attaining or understanding of sensory information. It is concerned with how events are observed and interpreted. What one perceives is a result of interplays between past experiences, including culture, and the interpretation of the perceived. The developing of person's perception will effect to the performing of a person.

(Hengsadeekul et al., 2010: 91)

Therefore, in this study, learners' perception refers to their ideas and beliefs about the teachers, and how they understand about the teachers.

### **1.5.2 Student's voice**

Students' voice in this study refers to the definition proposed by Robinson and Taylor (2007) as words spoken by students with their choice of expressing of feeling or opinions on aspects of their educational experience. Specifically, in this study it was the voice of Thai students on their Thai teachers who teach them in the international program.

### **1.5.3 Non-native English speaker teachers**

In this study, non-native English speaker teachers refer particularly to Thai teachers who provided standard education for the students in the international program where the study was conducted. These teachers employed English language as a medium of instruction. There were twenty – three Thai teachers in the context of this study.

### **1.5.4 Native English speaker teachers**

Native English speaker teachers in this study refer particularly to two American teachers and a British teacher who were teaching in the international program in the context of this study.

### **1.5.5 International program**

Referring to the decree issued by the Ministry of Education in Thailand (1999), an international program is a program open for both foreign and Thai learners. The content of the program must be international-oriented. Instructors must be expert in the subject matters they are teaching as well as very competent in the language they are using as a medium of instruction. In addition, the program must be supported with teaching aids, textbooks, technological media, and other related supports. The curriculum must be updated to maximize students' opportunities to apply their knowledge. The program must include activities that support the internationalization of the program such as collaboration with foreign institutes. Such collaboration includes, for example, academic and cultural exchange among students and teaching staff members.

Based on the description of the program in the context of this study, the program was established with three main objectives. The first one was to develop students' "academic competence: the knowledge of subjective dimensions, including skills for understanding, analyzing, and evaluating English language subject matter". The second objective was to develop students' "strategic competence: students are taught the necessary skills and knowledge of each subject. Students apply all of these aspects to use in real-life contexts". The third objective was to develop students' "affective competence: students maintain a good attitude, associated ethics, morals,

and social responsibility, thus contributing their expertise in English to better service society” (Curriculum of Bachelor of Arts Program in English Studies, International Program, 2009, p. 4 – 5). The program had both native English speaker teachers and Thai teachers working as teaching staff. English was used as a medium of instruction.

The program also provided extra-curricular activities for the students. These included study fieldtrips, workshops, language trainings, and English camps, for example. Some students volunteered to be translators and interpreters to serve society when needed. The program also had some connections with universities in China, so the students were required to participate in the exchange program by studying in a Chinese university they chose for a semester before coming back for an internship in Thailand.

So far, the basic key terms have been described. The last section describes the significance of the study.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

Based on the review of previous studies, research on students’ perception of native and non-native English speaker teachers were conducted elsewhere but not in the context of Thai international program at college level. While previous studies compared native and non-native English speaker teachers, this study examined students’ perception of Thai teachers only. Moreover, the study investigates the extent to which students’ perceptions of the teachers would affect the students’ learning. Regarding research methodology, so far none of the relevant previous study took students’ voices as part of the data. Data of this study were gathered by means of focus group interviews of the participants.

The results of this study could provide insights into better understanding of perceptions of the students and how these perceptions affect the students’ learning behavior in the international program context. The results could be useful for not only the teachers and students, but also teacher educators, and policy makers. In addition, researchers as teachers and educators interested in carrying out studies could take into considerations to include students’ voice as part of the data collection should they

consider it appropriate or to enhance students' involvement in schooling decision-making. Most importantly, results of the study could add an extent of research evidence to the field.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter shows the research literature reviews relevant to the present study. The review is divided into four main parts: the concept of native and non-native speaker teachers, students' perceptions of native and non-native English speaker teachers, the effects of students' perceptions of teachers on their learning behaviors, and the importance of student voice. Details are described and discussed as outlined below.

#### 2.1 The concept of native and non-native speaker teachers

##### 2.1.1 Native and non-native speakers of English

##### 2.1.2 Dichotomies: Native and non-native English speaker teachers

###### 2.1.2.1 Differences in teaching behaviors

###### 2.1.2.2 Difference in language competences

#### 2.2 Students' perceptions of native and non-native English speaker teachers

#### 2.3 Effects of students' perceptions of teachers on their learning behaviors

#### 2.4 The importance of students' voice

### **2.1 The concept of native and non-native speaker teachers**

Based on the literature reviewed, a lot of attempts have been made to define and distinguish the terms of "native" and "non-native" speaker teachers since they become complex, elusive, and controversial especially in the field of applied linguistics (Medgyes, 1994, Samimy and Kurihara, 2006). The distinction between native and non-native speaker teachers is explained in relation to such factors as the use of language as mother tongue or as another language, the learning process of the language, competence and ability to use the language. This section begins with the description of how native and non-native speakers of English are different.

### **2.1.1 Native and non-native speakers of English**

According to scholars, the terms “native” and “non-native” speakers of English are different. Davies (1991 cited in Samimy and Kurihara, 2006) defined the term native speaker as “...he or she who is perceived as NOT being a non-native speaker, whereas the non-native speaker is defined solely as being a non-native speaker” (p. 679). The other scholar defines the terms in relation to how they use English language. Braine (2010) simply explained that “Native speaker of a language is one who speaks that language as his/her first language; accordingly, a non-native speaker is one who speaks that language as a second or foreign language” (p. 9). In addition to the learning of language as the first or mother tongue, Medgyes (1994) explained the terms in more details including the birth place of the speakers, how the speakers acquire the English language, their ability to use the language as well as their language competence. According to Medgyes (1994), native speakers of English are described as one who:

- 1) was born in an English-speaking country; and/or
- 2) acquired English during childhood in an English-speaking family or environment;
- 3) speaks English as his/her first language;
- 4) has a native-like command of English;
- 5) has the capacity to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse in English;
- 6) uses the English language creatively;
- 7) has reliable intuitions to distinguish right and wrong forms in English.

(Medgyes, 1994: 10)

The differences just described between native and non-native speakers of English are used for describing specific characteristics of teachers in dichotomy term. More details of native and non-native English speakers explained in dichotomy term are elaborated in terms of how they are associated with those in teaching profession.

### **2.1.2 Dichotomies: Native and non-native English speaker teachers**

Historically, English was being taught as a second or foreign language in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Braine, 2010). Braine mentioned that English has been recognized as an important language during the 16<sup>th</sup> century alongside French, Italian, and Latin when British Empire expanded its maritime power to other countries. Since then, English became an important language needed to be learnt by those who were non-native speakers of English. In the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, those non-native speakers were the refugees who moved to settle in British and taught English to those who were also refugees. The refugee teachers were referred to as non-native speakers or NNSs of English since that time.

With the history of English as a foreign language, in the field of English language education, native speaker teachers of English were compared to non-native speaker teachers of English. In recent years, the number of non-native speakers of English has grown rapidly over native speakers of English. From the record evidence, half of the total number of English speakers of 1,500 million is the non-native speakers of English (Crystal, 2003). Even though the majority of English speakers are non-native speakers, the native speakers of English are considered superior to non-native speakers of English in many aspects regarding language teaching.

Chomsky (1965) seems to be the first scholar to mention in his book entitled “Aspects of the Theory of Syntax”, that native speakers were the ideal language source of English especially sources of grammar as it was the intrinsic competence of their native. Also, it was embedded in the intuition of native speakers. Later, English language teachers are described as two main dichotomies. According to Kachru (1992), native English speakers are in the inner circle (the use of English as mother tongue language such as American, British, Australia and New Zealand), and non-native English speakers are in the outer circle (the use of English as second language such as Singapore, India, Philippines, and Sri Lanka) and the expanding circle (the use of English as foreign language such as Thailand, Japan, South Korea, China, and Indonesia).

Regardless of the geographical areas, a dichotomy of the terms native and non-native is also described by Medgyes (2001) in relation to the use of English

language in teaching profession. Medgyes described a non-native English speaker teacher as:

- for whom English is a second or foreign language;
- who works in an EFL environment;
- whose students are monolingual groups of learners;
- who speaks the same native language as his or her students.

For the term NEST [native English speaker teacher] may be defined as "... opposite of the non-NEST [non-native English speaker teacher], most characteristically as a teacher who speaks English as a native language".

(Medgyes, 2001: 433)

The sense of inferiority and superiority seems to exist with the perception of the two terms. The term "native" seems to be the key concept of real English language in language teaching profession, and it is a positive term. In contrast, the term "non-native" is much more considered negative counterpart against native in language teaching profession. From a viewpoint, Matsuda (2003) remarked that "Nonnative is unfortunate because native is supposed to be fortunate. Nonnative is marked, whereas native is unmarked. Nonnative is marginal, and native is dominant. Nonnative is negative, and native is positive" (para. 4). In addition, non-native speakers are considered inferior to native speakers in language competence. With the superiority of language competence of the native speakers, many native speakers are employed as teachers in schools as they are believed to be better teachers. As a result, well-qualified and experience local non-native English speaker teachers were replaced by native speakers without teaching qualifications in hiring practices (Maum, 2002). In fact, good language teachers are those who have a lot of language learning experience, teaching skills, know how to teach, and also need proper language training (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002; Mizuno, 2004; Wong, 2009).

Another dichotomy of native and non-native English speaker teachers is language competence and teaching behaviors. People created the terms native and nonnative to distinguish their status in language profession because of the differences in language competence and teaching behavior. Medgyes (2001) maintained that both

the native and non-native English speaker teachers have their own advantages and disadvantages. He then proposed the bright sides of non-native English speaker teacher as they can:

- 1) provide a better learner model;
- 2) teach language-learning strategies more effectively;
- 3) supply more information about the English language;
- 4) better anticipate and prevent language difficulties;
- 5) be more sensitive to their students;
- 6) benefit from their ability to use the students' mother tongue.

(Medgyes, 2001: 436)

In addition, Medgyes (1994) also proposed an assumption that native English speaker teachers or NESTs and non-native English speaker teachers or non-NESTs are two different "species" (p. 27) and they were different in four hypotheses:

- 1) they differ in terms of their language proficiency.
- 2) they differ in terms of their teaching behavior.
- 3) the discrepancy in language proficiency accounts for most of the differences found in their teaching behavior.
- 4) they can be equally good teachers in their own terms.

(Medgyes, 1994: 27)

So far, many aspects of native and non-native English speaker teachers and their differences have been reviewed. The next sections will review differences of teaching behavior and language competence of native and non-native English speaker teachers in detail.

#### **2.1.2.1 Differences in teaching behaviors**

Péter Medgyes appears to be the very first person who conducted the pioneer research concerning the issue of differences between native and non-native English speaker teachers. In his article entitled "When the Teacher Is a Nonnative Speaker", Medgyes (2001) reported the findings of his research on the differences of teaching behavior between native and nonnative English teachers. The

findings indicated the difference in language proficiency among native and non-native English speaker teachers. Nonnative English speaker teachers used formal language and were accurate in grammar. In contrast, many of them lacked fluency, were poor in four language skills, knew less comprehensive colloquial English, and less of insightful to the core meaning of the language and how language could appropriately be used (Medgyes, 2001; Reves and Medgyes, 1994). Nonnative speaker teachers were also found to focus more on formal learning activities, to control learning process and teaching approach, strict more on grammar, and prefer using textbooks.

The differences in teaching behaviors between native and non-native English speaker teachers were also found in terms of the use of English, attitudes in teaching, language proficiency, and culture. The table below, taken from Medgyes (2001), shows perceived differences in teaching behavior between native and non-native English speaker teachers in the Table I.

**Table 2.1** Perceived Differences in Teaching Behavior Between NESTs and Non-NESTs.

<b>Perceived Differences in Teaching Behavior Between NESTs and Non-NESTs</b>	
<b>NESTs</b>	<b>Non-NESTs</b>
<b>Own use of English</b>	
speak better English	speak poorer English
use real language	use “bookish” language
use English more confidently	use English less confidently
<b>General attitude</b>	
adopt a more flexible approach	adopt a more guided approach
are more innovative	are more cautious
are less empathetic	are more empathetic
attend to perceived needs	attend to real needs
have far-fetched expectations	have realistic expectations
are more casual	are stricter
are less committed	are more committed

**Table 2.1** Perceived Differences in Teaching Behavior Between NESTs and Non-NESTs.  
(cont.)

<b>Perceived Differences in Teaching Behavior Between NESTs and Non-NESTs</b>	
<b>NESTs</b>	<b>Non-NESTs</b>
<b>Attitude to teaching the language</b>	
are less insightful	are more insightful
focus on:	focus on:
fluency	accuracy
meaning	form
language in use	grammar rules
oral skills	printed word
colloquial registers	formal registers
teach items in context	teach items in isolation
prefer free activities	prefer controlled activities
favor group work/pair work	favor frontal work
use a variety of materials	use a single textbook
tolerate errors	correct/punish for errors
set fewer tests	set more tests
use no/less L1	use more L1
resort to no/less translation	resort to more translation
assign less homework	assign more homework
<b>Attitude of teaching culture</b>	
supply more cultural information	supply less cultural information

\*(Medgyes, 2001: 435)

By referring to Árvá and Medgyes (2000), Madrid and Cañada (2004) made a conclusion between native and nonnative teachers in terms of their professional performances in many ways. According to Madrid and Cañada (2004),

1) Native teachers obviously spoke English better than their nonnative counterparts and used it as a natural means of communication in class.

2) Nonnative teachers had a far superior metacognitive knowledge of English grammar.

3) Nonnative teachers followed textbooks faithfully, whereas natives employed a vast gamut of activities (newspaper clippings, photocopies, posters, realia) and seldom stuck to what the coursebook dictated.

4) Natives were much more lenient with student mistakes and casual in giving their lessons.

5) Native teachers caused the students to be more highly motivated due to the fact that they were forced to use the L2 as a means of communication since they did not speak Hungarian. In this sense, they acted as true facilitators of the communication process.

6) Nonnatives prepared their lessons meticulously and more professionally.

7) Natives provided the students with more cultural insights and were thus used by the learners as rich sources of cultural information.

(Madrid and Cañada, 2004: 129)

The exploration of these issues cannot absolutely identify who is better than who. Research evidence, however, indicates the existence of differences between native and non-native English speaker teachers in terms of their language competence and teaching behaviors (Árva and Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1994).

#### **2.1.2.2 Difference in language competences**

Native and non-native English speaker teachers differ in language proficiency and teaching behavior. Such differences in language proficiency are accounted for most differences in teaching behavior. Both groups of the teachers, however, are equally good teachers in their own terms (Medgyes, 1994). Unsurprisingly, the results of the research on “native and non-native teachers in the classroom” conducted by Árva and Medgyes (2000) showed that native teachers were superior to non-native teachers in language competence. They could answer questions

spontaneously. In contrast, non-native teachers were found to have lower level of command of English and they struggled in answering questions. In addition, non-native teachers seem to occupy more on teaching the English grammar. They had the in-depth knowledge of the English structure and could explain its grammar to their students clearly. As for native speakers, however, they had difficulties giving explanations on grammar points (Árva and Medgyes, 2000). However, in the article entitled “Insights towards native and non-native ELT educators”, Ulate (2011) revealed findings of his study that most native English speakers liked to teach “grammar, writing, reading, listening and culture while non-native speakers like to teach pronunciation and culture better” (p. 65). This finding contradicted to the previous belief that non-native teachers were suitable for teaching grammar and writing. In fact, teachers preferred to teach these skills in relation to their own learning styles and interests.

Non-native teachers were also found to be superior to native teachers in terms of knowledge of local language and multicultural competence. Non-native teachers shared similar linguistic and cultural background with the students and they were sensitive to the student’s need. They could switch L1 and L2 at the same time to reduce language learning difficulty with their students in the classroom.

Medgyes (2001), in addition, proposed six assumptions of the bright sides of non-native English speaker teachers that they can:

- 1) provide a better learner model;
- 2) teach language-learning strategies more effectively;
- 3) supply more information about the English language
- 4) better anticipate and prevent language difficulties;
- 5) be more sensitive to the students;
- 6) benefit from their ability to use the students’ mother tongue.

(Medgyes, 2001: 436)

Therefore, sharing of the common linguistic, cultural and educational background is the important key to advantage the students’ needs in language learning. Teachers can be aware of and predict the difficulty of the students’

language learning and provide better help and effectiveness teaching for their students to achieve the learning goals in the classroom.

Regarding accent in oral communication, native and non-native's accent create a controversy issue among scholars and students. Native and non-native English speaker teachers have very different accents. In Jenkin's (2005) study, the results revealed that the majority of non-native speakers viewed their accents negatively and admired native speakers' accents. This made non-native speaker teachers feel inferior to native speaker teachers in their language teaching profession. They were considered to have poor accent, and poor accent was considered unprofessional and unqualified in language teaching (Maum, 2002). All these affected the effectiveness of non-native English speaker teacher's language teaching. In the article entitled "NNS English Teachers and Accents," Braine (2010) emphasized that the accent of native speaker was regarded as "good", "perfect", "correct", "proficient", "competent", "fluent", "real", and "original English". In the non-native speaker teachers' view, a non-native speaker accent was graded as "not good", "wrong", "incorrect", "not real", "deficient" and "strong" (p. 16 – 17).

According to Braine (2010) although non-native English speaker teachers were considered weak in their accent when speaking English, they tended to emulate native English speakers' accent to achieve a native-like accent. Both native and non-native speakers speak with a different accent. Even among native English speakers, they also speak with several different accents.

So far, this chapter has included the review on concepts of native and non-native English speaker teachers and the differences between them. The next section reviews related studies on students' perception of native and non-native English speaker teachers.

## **2.2 Students' perceptions of native and non-native English speaker teachers**

As defined in chapter one, based on different information sources, perception generally includes two important aspects: ideas or beliefs of what is seen,

regarded or perceived and the understanding or impression about something (Collins, 2006; Hengsadeeikul et al., 2010; Longman 2001; Oxford, 2000). This section reviews relevant previous research studies.

The studies of students' perceptions of non-native English speaker teachers have been discussed in the last two decades. Students were more satisfied with being taught by native English speaker teachers than non-native English speaker teachers. They imparted that they could learn more when they were studying with the native English speaker teachers, and that motivated and gave them chances to speak and listen to English in the class (Chen, 2008; Park, 2009). Research evidence indicated that the students generally preferred to be taught by native English teachers due to their perception that native English speaker teachers had better language competence than non-native English speaker teachers (Chen, 2008; Lasagabaster and sierra, 2002; Meadows and Muramatsu, 2007).

According to Braine, 2010; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002; Ma, 2012; Medgyes 1994; and Park, 2009, teachers' language competence were described either as strengths or weaknesses. On the one hand, native English speaker teachers were generally considered to have strengths in teaching pronunciation, culture, listening, speaking, conversation, vocabulary, and know of the colloquial language. On the other hand, non-native English speaker teachers were considered better to teach reading, writing, and grammar. Non-native English speaker teachers were also considered to be the conscious strategy users and they effectively taught students language learning strategies. They benefited from sharing the same L1 and learning experiences with their students and that made them understand their students' language learning difficulties (Braine, 2010; Chen, 2008; Cheung and Braine, 2007; Medgyes, 1994, 2001). They were sensitive and reacted to their students' needs. If students had spent more time with non-native English speaker teachers, they would have preferred non-native English speaker teachers to their native English speaker teachers even though their native English speaker teachers were superior in language competence. Moreover, Cheung and Braine (2007), in their study on the issue of university students' attitudes toward non-native English speaker teachers in Hong Kong, noted that students' parents and school administrators had a negative attitude toward non-native English speaker teachers. However, this attitude did not appear

among their students. Students simply remarked they liked to study with their non-native English speaker teachers. They maintained that they did not encounter any difficulty in their study with teachers because of their non-nativeness. They also remarked that non-native English speaker teachers could teach as effectively as their native English speaker teachers. Non-native English speaker teachers did not have difficulties to answer students' questions. However, some students were not satisfied with being taught by non-native English speaker teachers unless they had proved that they could teach English language effectively as native English speaker teachers (Maum, 2002).

The key finding of Muam's (2002) study is similar to that of a study conducted in the context of Thailand. Avasadanond (2002) noted that a foreign teacher named "Mac Walenciak" from The Callan Method School of English in the Silom Center Building conducted a survey about the teachers (Filipinos, Indian, or Thais) the students would enroll to study with. The finding found that "majority of the students would strongly prefer only non-Asians instructors" (p. 2). The reasons students preferred to study with native English speaker teachers were that they wanted to improve their English accent and gain new learning experiences from social and cultural differences, which were not available from Thai English teachers (Phothongsunan and Suwanarak, 2008).

Even though the students generally preferred to be taught by native English speaker teachers, they seemed to be positive toward their non-native English speaker teachers to a particular extent. Watson Todd and Pojanapunya (2009), for example, conducted a study to investigate students' attitudes of native English speaker teachers and non-native English speaker teachers in Thailand. The results revealed that students explicitly preferred native English speaker teachers over non-native English speaker teachers, but they were warmly positive toward non-native English speaker teachers.

Previous studies also indicated students' preferences of native and non-native English speaker teachers in different aspects. Madrid and Cañada (2004) made a conclusion on students' preferences of teachers regarding them as native and non-native teachers as follows.

**Natives**

1. They teach the FL greater eases.
2. They are difficult to understand in the early grades.
3. They are not taken seriously.
4. They are preferred to the nonnative teacher in the higher grades.
5. It is important to give the lesson in English and the native teacher can do so more easily.
6. They can obtain better outcomes in oral communication.

**Non-natives**

1. They are better at explaining grammar.
2. They are better understood when they speak the FL.
3. They are preferred at lower levels.
4. They are sometimes to be preferred since they are more acquainted with the FL learning processes as they have first-hand experience in learning and using the foreign language.
5. With proper training, they can be preferable to native teachers.

(Madrid and Cañada, 2004:136)

In terms of accent, to speak English with accent accepted as native-like tends to be the challenge for non-native English speaker teachers. Non-native English speaker teachers with poor accents are considered to be less qualified, incredible and low in language proficiency when compared to favorable native English speaker teachers (Braine, 2010; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002; Muam, 2002). This is because students felt more positive toward the native's accent and they wanted to speak a native-like accent (Braine 2010). A study also emphasized that students learn the English language with native teachers in order to achieve native-like accents of the target language and that made the students view non-native teachers negatively (Meadows and Muramatsu, 2007). They believed that speaking with a native-like accent could make them look more professional and get good jobs. In contrast, research evidence demonstrated that students expressed their positive attitudes that non-native English speaker teachers' pronunciation/accent did not affect students' attitudes and their language learning (Ling, 2002 cited in Braine, 2010).

So far, research evidence has shown that the different between native and non-native English speaker teachers are the factors that affect students' perceptions of the teachers in terms of their teaching as well as their own learning. Such perception

also influences students' language learning behavior. The next section reviews studies concerning how students' perceptions of teachers affect their learning behavior.

### **2.3 Effects of students' perceptions of teachers on their learning behaviors**

Student's perceptions are regarded as the most important factor in language learning and teaching. It affects the ways students learn in the class and their language learning behavior.

A relevant study was conducted in Korea to examine university students' preferences toward native English speaking teachers (Park, 2009). The findings showed that students perceived the pronunciation and authentic conversational English as strengths of native English speaking teachers. Therefore, the students would like to communicate and learn real life conversations with native speaker teachers. This motivated them to participate in speaking and listening more in English language in the language class taught by native English speaking teachers. Native English speaking teachers also were perceived to have more knowledge of culture of their language and they could make the classroom environment enjoyable for the students. In contrast, the study also showed that the students had communication problems with native English speaking teachers. They perceived that if they did not understand the class taught by native English speaking teachers, they could not ask questions even when they had questions. This was because they found themselves having problems communicating in the target language with native English speaking teachers.

In terms of the nonnative English speaking teachers, the findings in the Park's (2009) study illustrated that there were two things that the students felt comfortable with nonnative English speaking teachers. The first one was to ask questions, and the second one was to understand the English lesson. This was because nonnative English speaking teachers explained everything for the students and consequently made the students relaxed in the classroom.

In addition to effects of non-native English speaker teachers on the students' feelings, Chen's (2008) study also revealed that when the students perceived

the advantages of having native English speaker teachers to provide them more chances to practice speaking English language, they tended to speak and think more in English. One of the respondents from Chen's study, for example, stated that "I have to speak English all the time, so I get used to speaking and thinking in English" (Chen, 2008: 79). They also remarked that they could use longer sentences after frequently interacting with native English speaker teachers.

The studies reviewed clearly showed that the way the students perceived their teachers affected the way they studied.

The next section highlights the importance of students' voice. Due to the fact that among research studies that examine native and non-native English speaker teachers hardly took into account students' perspectives as data, this study focuses on students' voice. Therefore, background information on the importance of students' voice is provided.

## **2.4 The importance of students' voice**

According to Cook-sather (2002), many educational systems are built and rebuilt never taking into considering students and their perspectives, and most of the notions for educational system improvement are only elicited from adults including administrators, teachers, parents, but not the students. In fact, students' voices should be made recognizable by those involving in the teaching and schooling process. This is because students' voices have a considerable influence on the learning of the students and are worthwhile to investigate for some reasons.

As defined by Robinson and Taylor (2007), "pupil voice does not simply mean the word spoken by pupils but includes the many ways in which pupils choose to express their feelings or views about any aspect of their school or college experience" (p. 6). Chaplain and Wallace (1996 cited in Tait and Martin, 2007:1) stated that "what pupils say about teaching, learning, and schooling is not only worth listening to but provides an important—perhaps the most important—foundation for thinking about ways of improving schools" (p. 1). Tait and Martin also stated that students' voices become the powerful evidence teachers can review for school development and the

improvement of pedagogical approach. Teachers have to listen to what they are saying and ensure that students can be heard. If teachers listen to students' voices, as maintained by Cook-sather (2003), they can learn how their teaching and policies affect the students. In her study, Cook-sather noted that "teachers, teacher educators, and researchers must find ways to include students' perspectives in conversation about school and schooling" (p. 25). She also remarked that teachers should attend to the value of students' opinions on their teaching approaches. Students' opinions can make teachers rethink about learning and learning differences which create policies and practices that are directly affecting them. This will eventually guide them to make appropriate decisions to support students' learning.

By allowing students' voice to be heard, students were enhanced to take part in decision making in the teaching and schooling process. Cook-sather (2006), in her study entitled "Sound, Presence, and Power: "Student Voice" in Educational Research and Reform", proposed three important dimensions of students' voices. These dimensions were "right", "respect", and "listen". Teachers had to give the right for the students to express their opinion, respect them, and listen to what and how to change on the system to meet the need of their students. Ferguson et al. (2011) also maintained that the involvement of students' voice in the learning environment they were participating would potentially keep students engaged and motivated to learning.

Due to the little evidence of students' voices in previous research studies on native and non-native English speaker teachers, this study involved students' voices focusing on how they perceived their native and non-native English speaker teachers.

This chapter has so far provided background of the study in relation to available related literature on the distinction between native and non-native English speaker teachers, students' perception of the teachers, the influence of the perception on students' behavior, and the importance of students' voice. For contributions to be made for the research in this field, this study examined the students' perception of Thai teachers teaching in the international program. As well, the study explored how such perception of the students influenced their learning behaviors. The next chapter describes how data were collected in order to achieve the aims of the study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study reports the details of research methodology which include the data of research design, research population and participant recruitment procedures, data collection tools and procedures, and data analysis procedures.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The design of this research was based on the theory of mixed-method paradigm. It was the popular approach used in social science research and applied linguistics. It also was the flexible research method used to allow the researcher to choose the best research strategies to fit the research questions in order to find in-depth answers for the study (Heigham and Croker, 2009). This paradigm is a standard term of the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. According to Dörnyei (2007), it has so far been a method that addresses the convergent of research findings and presents the valid of research outcomes. It helps to gather in-depth information from the participants and established well the understanding of complex phenomena.

#### **3.2 Context of the study**

To provide background information of the study, the context where this research was carried out is described here.

The research study was conducted at the Faculty of Humanities in a public university in Thailand. This faculty consisted of seven programs with 18 disciplines. Western Languages Program was one of these seven programs located in the faculty. This program offered two English international degrees: one was a Bachelor of Arts

Program in English Studies and the other was Bachelor of Arts Program in Tourism and Hospitality Management. Both Thai and native English speaker teachers taught in these two programs using English as a medium of instruction. This research study was carried out in the Program of English studies.

The English Studies Program was a four-year degree program which was established with three main objectives. The first objective was to develop students' "academic competence: the knowledge of subjective dimensions, including skills for understanding, analyzing, and evaluation English language subject matter". The second objective was to develop students' "strategic competence: students were taught the necessary skills and knowledge of each subject. Students applied all of these aspects to use in real-life contexts". The third objective was to develop students' "affective competence: students maintain a good attitude, associated ethics, morals, and social responsibility, thus contributing their expertise in English to better service society" (The Curriculum of Bachelor of Arts Program in English Studies, International Program, 2009, p. 4 – 5).

To successfully complete the degree, the students were required to take courses under three different categories. There were general education courses, major compulsory courses and free elective courses. For the general education courses, the subject matters taught were languages (English, Chinese, Japanese, French, and Thai), humanities, social science, mathematics, science, and technology. For the major compulsory courses, the subject matters taught were four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), linguistics (phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, sociolinguistics, general linguistics), ESP (English for business, English in mass communication, English for Hotel), literature, seminar, history of English language, socio-cultural of English speaking countries, prose selection, spontaneous interpretation and etc. For the free elective courses, students could choose to study any of the subject matters available in the curriculum.

Ninety students who were studying in the program had different educational background and different ethnic groups. Some of them were joining the exchange program in China due to the MOU contracts between universities in China and the university where this study took place.

Teachers were graduates of different fields, including linguistics, English language teaching, literature and others. As for Thai teachers, they had different language background and teaching experience. Most of them graduated from the universities in Thailand, but some graduated from abroad. Some of the Thai teachers hold master's degrees, and other had doctoral degrees. Their teaching experience ranged between 3 – 18 years. Their ages were between 25 to 45 years old. These teachers also taught other non-international programs both inside and outside the faculty in the campus. They taught at least 12 periods per week, but not more than 21 periods. They were required to use English language not only as a medium of instruction but also as a means of communication with students. Students were also encouraged to use English with classmates and teachers. As for native English speaker teachers, two of them were Americans and a native British. An American teacher held a bachelor's degree in Geology and Secondary Education, and the other in Business Administration. The British teacher had a bachelor's degree in History. While an American and the British had more than 4 years teaching experience. The another American had more than 20 years teaching experience in the context of this study.

### **3.3 Target population and participant recruitment**

The target population was undergraduates enrolling in an English Studies Program (International Program) during the 2012 academic year. To obtain research participants, the researcher initially sent an official formal letter to the head of Western Languages Program to ask for permission to conduct the study in the department. After the permission was granted from the head of the program, another official letter was sent to the teachers to ask for permission to collect research data from their students. Then, the students were informed about the research and data collection procedures including the completion of questionnaire and participation of focus group interviews, which would be audio recorded. After that, consent forms were administered to the student participants who volunteer to participate in this research study. Fifty two students (32 second year and 20 third year undergraduates) finally volunteered to respond to the questionnaire, and 15 among them volunteered for the

focus group interviews. These participants were insured of data confidentiality. All had signed the consent form before data were collected.

The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 26 years. They graduated from different government high schools in different parts in the North of Thailand and other nearby provinces. Some students graduated from high schools in rural areas, but others graduated from the cities. They enrolled to study the international program with an ambition to develop their English language proficiency and skills, as well as knowledge in the field of humanity. They all hoped to study with English native speaker teachers in order to enhance the use of English language. They chose to study this major with an expectation that the program could advance their English and provide them with a better opportunity for jobs in the future.

Most of the participants (80.77%) in this study were Thai students. The rest of them were Akha (7.69%), Hmong (5.77%), Karean (1.92%), and Lahu (1.92%). They used Thai as the official language and English as a foreign language (EFL). Most of the participants (78.85%) had four or more classes per week with Thai teachers. Most of them had studied English for more than ten years. Still, they had various English language background. Some started formal education from kindergarten to university level. Those who graduated from the schools in cities and private schools tended to have better English language proficiency and skills than those who graduated from the schools in the rural areas. With better language competence, students from the cities tended to have more positive thinking toward English learning and this made them feel more confident to interact with both native and non-native English speaker teachers during classes and outside classes. However, gradually, the language proficiency of all participants became indifferent. They were all capable to learn and to develop their language proficiency and skills according to their learning potentials.

### **3.4 Data Collection Tools**

In this study, the data collection tools were a questionnaire and a focus group interview guideline. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data, and the focus group interview guideline was used to collect qualitative data.

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaire**

According to Dörnyei (2007), questionnaire was the systematic way in research data collection. It also could gather large amount research information quickly. Therefore, questionnaire was used to answer research questions one: how did students perceive Thai teachers who taught in an international program in a public Thai university. The questionnaire employed in this study was adapted from those of Cheung and Braine (2007) and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002). It consists of three parts. The first part was designed to gather demographic data from the participants. The second part was designed to survey students' experience of studying with Thai teachers. The third part was designed to collect students' perceptions of Thai teachers in the international program. The last part consisted of forty-five items which were divided into four sub-categories. These categories asked about students' general preference of their teachers, perceptions of communication between their teachers and themselves, perceptions of learning with their teachers as non-native English speaker teachers, and their perceptions of the teaching of their teachers as non-native English speaker teachers respectively. The scale used in this questionnaire was a five-point Likert Scale which ranged from strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The participants were asked to read each statement in the questionnaire and marked the criteria score on each item. The participants completed the questionnaire by spending approximately 15 – 20 minutes. Prior to the data collection, the questionnaire had been piloted, checked for its reliability and revised.

#### **3.4.2 Focus group interview**

According to Dörnyei (2007), focus group interview was the data collection from the experience of group brainstorming. The participants think, interact and react to the emerging issue and points. Dörnyei also stated that “this within-group interaction can yield high-quality data as it can create a synergistic environment that

results in a deep and insightful discussion” (p. 144). Therefore, focus group interview was used to answer both research questions on how the students perceive their Thai teachers in the international program; and how the perception affected these students’ learning behavior.

Ten questions were developed based on the questions in the questionnaire. These questions were quite broad so that they open opportunities for the participants to provide various types of perceptions about their teachers who taught them in the international program.

### **3.5. Data Collection Procedures**

#### **3.5.1 Procedures for Quantitative Data Collection**

After getting the permission to conduct a research from Mahidol University Ethics Committee, the researcher was doing the following steps for data collection.

Step 1. The researcher wrote a formal official letter to the Head of Western Languages Program asking for permission to collect research data from the program.

Step 2. After getting permission from the Head of Western Languages Program, researcher informed the students from the English Studies Program about the research and asked students for volunteer to participate in this study.

Step 3. After knowing the number of the participants, the consent forms were administered to those who volunteer to do the questionnaire.

Step 4. The researcher explained each section in the questionnaire to the participants before the participants completed the questionnaire by spending approximately 15 – 20 minutes.

Step 5. To protect their rights, the participants could stop involving in this research study any time they needed. The researcher also informed students the confidentiality of the information they provided. Participating with this research study did not have any impacts on them.

Step 6. To make sure that participants understood the questionnaire, researcher supervised the process of answering the questionnaire, and provided explanation of any choice on the questionnaire when any of the participants needed.

Step 7. After they had completed the questionnaire, the participants returned the questionnaires to researcher.

Step 8. The researcher gathered the questionnaires and later tabulated into the computer by using SPSS Software Program to calculate for descriptive statistics values.

### **3.5.2 Procedures for Qualitative Data Collection**

Step 1. During the process of doing the questionnaire, the researcher informed the participants about the focus group interview. If any of the participants volunteered to participate in the focus group interview, they were invited to sign their names and noted down their phone numbers at the space provided at the bottom of the questionnaire.

Step 2. The researcher later made an appointment with the interviewees and arranged the time for each focus group interview.

Step 3. At the interview, the researcher explained the research purposes and the purposes of the focus group interview to the interviewees. The researcher also informed the participants that focus group interview would be audio-recorded. They could stop participating in the focus group interview any time when they needed and all of the information they provided in the interviews would be kept in confidentiality.

Step 4. The researcher asked the interviewees to form a group of five persons according to their relationship and started the interview. Each focus group interview lasted approximately 40 – 60 minutes in a convenient room with air-condition without any annoying noise from outside.

Step 5. To prevent the problem of language barrier, the focus group interviews were conducted in the Thai language. Also, to ensure the coverage of interview data, the researcher recorded the interviews and took field notes.

## **3.6 Data Analysis**

### **3.6.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

When the questionnaires were returned, the data were input into a computer and SPSS software program was used to calculate the data for descriptive statistic values. The mean scores were used to determine the dispersion of scores and its frequency of each statement responded by the participants. The percentage was used to indicate the proportion of the scores from each statement in the questionnaires.

### **3.6.2 Qualitative Data Analysis**

This study employed open and axial coding techniques for the focus group interview data analysis. These techniques were developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). It was the most pervasive research techniques employed in qualitative research. In the first stage of data analysis, open coding was employed to identify, name, categorize and describe the analysis of the phenomena found in the text (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To accomplish this stage, all of data source from the focus group interviews were transcribed and read by the researcher. The whole of focus group interview transcription was read and analyzed to form similar and different categories of the phenomena found in the texts. In the later stage, axial coding technique was used to relate categories of each phenomenon found in the first stage. They were putting together into their own relationship and dimensions. It was the stage for the researcher to explain the data in relation to how they answer the research questions. The analysis of data was examined for its reliability by the thesis advisor.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of Thai teachers in an international program at a public Thai university, Thailand, and to investigate the extent to which students' perceptions of these teachers influence their learning behaviors. To gather data, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The research tools were a set of questionnaire and focus group interview questions. The questionnaire in the English language was used to gather the information on the participants' preferences of Thai teachers. Later, the data from the questionnaire were calculated by using SPSS Software Program for the descriptive statistical values (mean, percentage, and standard deviation). Three focus group interviews with five students in each group were carried out to gather the in-depth information on the students' perceptions of Thai teachers teaching in the international program. The interviews were conducted in Thai language. Therefore, direct quotations reported in this thesis were the translation of the original Thai version by the researcher with the approval of the thesis advisor and co-advisors. In the translation version, pause fillers and particles which are the characteristics of Thai language were removed. There were 52 participants who responded to the questionnaire and 15 who participated in the focus group interview. They were the students in the English Studies Program (International Program), in which English was employed as a medium of instruction.

This chapter reports the results of the two research questions. The results were focusing on students' perceptions of Thai teachers at a university level in a specific international program in Thailand, as well as the influences of the perception on the students' learning behavior. The chapter begins with the report of the quantitative results followed by that of the qualitative results, which are interwoven to the quantitative results in order to answer the two research questions.

The following section only describes the findings based on simple statistic calculation. Since the numerical findings are later explained and elaborated by

qualitative data, answers for the two research questions are provided in the later section.

## **4.1 Quantitative Results**

Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data concerning the students' perceptions of Thai teachers in the international program. The questionnaires are composed of six major sections. Therefore, results are reported following the sections in the questionnaire: 1) students' preference of teachers; 2) students' preference to communicate with teachers; 3) students' learning with Thai teachers; 4) teaching of English by Thai teachers; 5) motivation from Thai teachers; 6) teaching of language learning strategies to students, and 7) the summary of the quantitative findings.

### **4.1.1 Students' preference of teachers**

Specifically, this section of the questionnaire is related to two important issues: 1) students' preferences of teachers and their attitudes toward the teachers; and 2) the language of instruction used by teachers.

Data in Table 4.1 shows that the majority of the participants preferred native English speaker teachers as their teachers (Items 1 and 2). In general, they have positive attitudes toward their learning of English with native English speaker teachers (Item 11). In addition, if they could choose the teachers, the majority would prefer to have both Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers (Items 3, 4 and 5). Regarding the language use by Thai teachers (Items 7, 8 and 9), while the majority would not make decision, some preferred Thai teachers to use English as a medium of instruction. As for attitudes (Item 10), even though the majority of them had positive attitudes toward Thai teachers, many would be disappointed if their teachers were not native English speaker teachers (Item 6).

**Table 4.1** Students' Preference of Teachers

No.	Statements	Frequency				
		1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
1	I prefer Thai non-native English speaker teachers as my teachers.	3.85	5.77	42.31	<b>34.62</b>	<b>13.46</b>
2	I prefer native English speaker teachers as my teachers.	1.92	1.92	30.77	<b>32.69</b>	<b>32.69</b>
3	If I could choose, I would prefer to have only Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach me.	<b>21.15</b>	<b>42.31</b>	<b>21.15</b>	7.69	7.69
4	If I could choose, I would prefer to have only native English speaker teachers to teach me.	3.85	<b>15.38</b>	32.69	<b>25.00</b>	<b>23.08</b>
5	If I could choose, I would prefer to have both native English speaker teachers and Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach me.	3.85	5.77	21.15	<b>36.54</b>	<b>32.69</b>
6	I would be disappointed if my teachers are not native English speakers.	<b>11.54</b>	<b>34.62</b>	<b>26.92</b>	19.23	7.69
7	I would prefer Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach by using English as a medium of instruction.	7.69	15.38	<b>40.38</b>	<b>30.77</b>	<b>5.77</b>
8	I would prefer Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach by using Thai as a medium of instruction.	<b>17.31</b>	<b>26.92</b>	36.54	15.38	3.85
9	I would prefer Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach by using <b>Thai only with difficult topics.</b>	<b>13.46</b>	<b>34.62</b>	26.92	15.38	9.62
10	In general, I have positive attitudes towards Thai non-native English speaking teachers.	0.00	13.46	<b>40.38</b>	<b>34.62</b>	<b>9.62</b>
11	In general, I have positive attitudes towards the learning of English with native English speaking teachers.	3.85	5.77	23.08	<b>44.23</b>	<b>23.08</b>

\* **1 = strongly disagreed 2 = disagreed 3 = undecided 4 = agreed 5 = strongly agreed**

#### 4.1.2 Students' preference to communicate with teachers

The data on students' preference to communicate with teachers are presented in the Table 4.2. The data indicate relatively similar results between students' hesitations to ask Thai teachers and to ask native English speaker teachers for clarification (Items 12 and 13). The participants neither perceived that Thai teachers had difficulty giving clear explanation in English (Item 14) nor did they have difficulty understanding and answering students' questions (Item 15). The majority agreed and strongly agreed that all Thai teachers usually communicate effectively in the classroom (Item 16).

**Table 4.2** Students' Preference to Communicate with Teachers

No	Statements	Frequency				
		1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
12	If I had trouble understanding <b>Thai non-native English speaker teachers</b> , I would not hesitate to ask them for clarification.	7.69	15.38	<b>40.38</b>	<b>23.08</b>	<b>13.46</b>
13	If I had trouble understanding <b>native English speaker teachers</b> , I would not hesitate to ask them for clarification.	1.92	25.00	<b>34.62</b>	<b>32.69</b>	<b>5.77</b>
14	Many Thai non-native English speaker teachers have difficulties giving clear explanation in English.	1.92	<b>34.62</b>	<b>32.69</b>	26.92	3.85
15	Many Thai non-native English speaker teachers have difficulties understanding and answering students' questions.	3.85	<b>30.77</b>	<b>38.46</b>	26.92	0.00
16	All Thai non-native English speaker teachers usually communicate effectively in the classroom.	0.00	9.62	<b>42.31</b>	<b>42.31</b>	<b>3.85</b>

\* 1 = strongly disagreed 2 = disagreed 3 = undecided 4 = agreed 5 = strongly agreed

### 4.1.3 Students' learning with Thai teachers

Table 4.3 demonstrates the participants' perceptions and attitudes toward learning with Thai teachers. The participants generally showed their positive attitudes toward learning with Thai teachers in the international program.

Data showed that for grammar (Item 17), listening (Item 22), writing (Item 23), and reading (Item 24), the majority of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that, when compared to native English teachers, they could learn and improve these skills from Thai teachers just as well as they learned from native English teachers. As for pronunciation (Item 19), the number spreads out relatively evenly for those who disagreed, could not decide, and agreed if they could learn it just as well from Thai teachers as from native English teachers.

**Table 4.3** Students' Learning with Thai Teachers

No	Statements	Frequency				
		1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
17	I can learn <b>grammar</b> just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.	0.00	13.46	26.92	<b>55.77</b>	<b>3.85</b>
18	I can learn <b>vocabulary</b> just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.	5.77	9.62	<b>42.31</b>	<b>42.31</b>	0.00
19	I can improve my <b>pronunciation</b> just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.	9.62	<b>25.00</b>	<b>32.69</b>	<b>26.92</b>	5.77
20	I can improve my <b>spoken language</b> just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.	3.85	<b>21.15</b>	<b>48.08</b>	<b>25.00</b>	1.92
21	I can improve my <b>speaking skills</b> just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.	1.92	21.15	<b>38.46</b>	<b>36.54</b>	<b>1.92</b>

**Table 4.3** Students' Learning with Thai Teachers (cont.)

No	Statements	Frequency				
		1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
22	I can improve my <b>listening skills</b> just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.	3.85	32.69	21.15	<b>42.31</b>	0.00
23	I can improve my <b>writing skills</b> just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.	3.85	21.15	23.08	<b>46.15</b>	<b>5.77</b>
24	I can improve my <b>reading skills</b> just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.	3.85	19.23	32.69	<b>40.38</b>	<b>3.85</b>
25	In general, I can learn just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English speakers.	3.85	13.46	<b>50.00</b>	<b>30.77</b>	<b>1.92</b>
26	I would learn more about cultures of English speaking countries from Thai non-native English speaking teachers.	5.77	15.38	32.69	<b>36.54</b>	<b>9.62</b>
27	I would have more positive attitudes towards the learning of English if I study with Thai non-native English speaking teachers	1.92	17.31	<b>51.92</b>	25.00	3.85

\* **1 = strongly disagreed 2 = disagreed 3 = undecided 4 = agreed 5 = strongly agreed**

Regarding spoken language (Item 20), the majority could not decide if they could improve spoken language from Thai teachers as they could from native English teachers and equal number of the rest neither agreed nor disagreed with this. In terms of the learning of vocabulary (Item 18) and improvement of speaking skills (Item 21), similar number of the participants could not decide and agreed or strongly agreed if they could do it just as well from Thai teachers as from native English teachers. Considering the knowledge of culture of English speaking countries learned

from Thai teachers (Item 26), almost half of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that they would learn more from Thai teachers.

However, when it comes into the overall picture (Item 25), half of the participants could not decide if they could learn just as well from Thai teachers as from native English teachers. For those who could decide, about twice as much of them agreed and strongly agreed on this item as those who disagreed and strongly disagreed. Similarly, when taking into consideration the participants' attitudes (Item 27), about half of them could not decide if they have more positive attitudes towards the learning of English if they studied with Thai teachers whereas similar number of them could neither agreed and strongly agreed nor disagreed and strongly disagreed with this.

#### **4.1.4 Teaching of English by Thai teachers**

The statistical data in Table 4.4 shows the participants' perceptions on Thai teachers' ability to teach different skills, how well they could explain and give feedback, and what aspects and skills of English language should be taught by Thai teachers. The data are concerned with grammar, pronunciation, speaking skills, listening skills, reading skills, and writing skills.

The results from this study show that the majority of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that Thai teachers had ability to teach pronunciation (Item 31), listening (Item 35), reading (Item 38), and writing (Item 41) skills well. Most of them also agreed and strongly agreed that Thai teachers are good at explaining and giving good feedback for grammar (Items 28 and 30) and giving good feedback to improve writing skills (Item 43). The majority even agreed and strongly agreed that writing should be taught by Thai teachers (Item 42). However, regarding ability to give feedback, the majority of the participants could not decide if Thai teachers could give them good feedback to improve pronunciation (Item 33), speaking skills (Item 34), listening skills (Item 37), and reading skills (Item 40).

**Table 4.4** Teaching of English by Thai Teachers

No	Statements	Frequency				
		1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
28	Thai non-native English speaking teachers are good at explaining <b>grammar</b> .	3.85	7.69	30.77	<b>50.00</b>	<b>7.69</b>
29	<b>Grammar</b> should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers	7.69	<b>25.00</b>	<b>30.77</b>	<b>30.77</b>	5.77
30	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my <b>Grammar</b> .	1.92	11.54	34.62	<b>44.23</b>	<b>7.69</b>
31	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could teach <b>pronunciation</b> well.	5.77	15.38	<b>38.46</b>	<b>34.62</b>	<b>5.77</b>
32	<b>Pronunciation</b> should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers.	<b>15.38</b>	<b>30.77</b>	32.69	17.31	3.85
33	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my <b>pronunciation</b> .	3.85	17.31	<b>48.08</b>	25.00	5.77
34	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my <b>speaking skills</b> .	5.77	15.38	<b>44.23</b>	<b>32.69</b>	1.92
35	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could teach <b>listening</b> well.	0.00	23.08	30.77	<b>36.54</b>	<b>7.69</b>
36	<b>Listening</b> should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers	3.85	30.77	<b>38.46</b>	23.08	3.85
37	Thai non-native English speaking teachers would give good feedback for me to improve my <b>listening skills</b> .	5.77	17.31	<b>46.15</b>	26.92	3.85
38	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could teach <b>reading</b> well.	1.92	23.08	<b>34.62</b>	<b>30.77</b>	<b>9.62</b>
39	<b>Reading</b> should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers	3.85	30.77	<b>48.08</b>	13.46	3.85

**Table 4.4** Teaching of English by Thai Teachers (cont.)

No	Statements	Frequency				
		1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
40	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my <b>reading skills</b> .	1.92	19.23	<b>42.31</b>	25.00	9.62
41	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could teach <b>writing well</b> .	1.92	13.46	26.92	<b>50.00</b>	<b>7.69</b>
42	<b>Writing</b> should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers	3.85	23.08	25.00	<b>42.31</b>	<b>3.85</b>
43	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my <b>writing skills</b> .	0.00	11.54	36.54	<b>44.23</b>	<b>7.69</b>

\* 1 = strongly disagreed 2 = disagreed 3 = undecided 4 = agreed 5 = strongly agreed

When being asked what should be taught by Thai teachers, the majority of the participants disagreed and strong disagreed for the pronunciation to be taught by Thai teachers (Item 32), and the majority could not decide on whether listening (Item 36), and reading (Item 39) should be taught by Thai teachers. Even for grammar, the numbers spread evenly for the expression of disagreement, indecisive, and agreement of the participants concerning if grammar should be taught by Thai teachers (Item 29).

#### 4.1.5 Motivation from Thai teachers

Regarding the participants' perceptions on motivation they got from Thai teachers, Table 4.5 shows that over half of the participants were undecided (51.92%) if Thai teachers could motivate them to learn just as well as native English speaker teachers could. Some of them, however, agreed and strongly agreed (28.85% and 1.92% respectively) that Thai teachers could motivate students to learn just as well as native English speaker teachers. None strongly disagreed with this.

**Table 4.5** Motivation from Thai Teachers

No	Statements	Frequency				
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
44	Thai non-native English speaking teachers motivate students to learn just as well as native English speaker teachers	0.00	17.31	<b>51.92</b>	<b>28.85</b>	<b>1.92</b>

\* **1 = strongly disagreed 2 = disagreed 3 = undecided 4 = agreed 5 = strongly agreed**

#### 4.1.6 Teaching of language learning strategies to students

The Table 4.6 demonstrates that approximately half of the participants agreed and strongly agreed (40.38% and 9.62% respectively) that Thai teachers also teach language learning strategies to help them learn better.

**Table 4.6** Teaching of Language Learning Strategies to Students

No	Statements	Frequency				
		1	2	3	4	5
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
45	Thai non-native English speaking teachers also teach language learning strategies to help students learn better.	1.92	11.54	36.54	<b>40.38</b>	<b>9.62</b>

\* **1 = strongly disagreed 2 = disagreed 3 = undecided 4 = agreed 5 = strongly agreed**

#### 4.1.7 Summary of the quantitative findings

Being asked about the participants' preference of Thai and native English speaker teachers to teach in the program, the participants were found to prefer native English speaker teachers even though they had positive attitudes towards Thai teachers and considered having Thai teachers could benefit to their learning in the program. The findings showed that the participants did not prefer Thai teachers to use Thai language as a medium of instruction, but they preferred Thai teachers to use Thai language only with difficult topics. Only some of them agreed and strongly agreed for

Thai teachers to use English as a medium of instruction in the classroom. Regarding their preference to communicate with the teachers, the participants perceived that Thai teachers did not have difficulties in giving clear explanation in English, understanding and answering students' questions. In fact, Thai teachers could communicate effectively with the participants in the classroom, and the participants did not hesitate to ask their Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers when they had trouble understanding them. In terms of learning, the participants perceived that they could learn grammar, listening skills, writing skills, reading skills, and cultures of English speaking countries well from Thai teachers. However, they were uncertain of learning vocabulary and spoken language from Thai teachers. Moreover, the participants also had various perceptions about the learning of pronunciation and speaking skills with Thai teachers. As for the matter of Thai teachers' teaching, the participants perceived that Thai teachers were good at teaching grammar, writing, and could give good feedback for them to improve their grammar and writing skills. As well, they perceived that Thai teachers were able to teach pronunciation but should not teach it, and they were unsure if Thai teachers could give good feedback for them to improve pronunciation and speaking. The participants also perceived that Thai teacher could teach listening and reading well. However, they were unsure if the teachers should teach these two skills, or had ability to give feedback to help them improve listening and reading. In terms of motivation and language learning strategies, more than half of the participants could not decide if Thai teachers could motivate them to learn just as well as native English speaker teachers even though some agreed with the idea. Moreover, most participants perceived that Thai teachers also taught language learning strategies to help them students learn better.

So far, this section has described findings and presented the summary of the findings from the quantitative data. In the next sections, the answers for the two research questions are provided. Details of qualitative data gathered from focus group interviews are used to explain and elaborate the participants' perceptions of Thai teachers who taught them in the international program.

Since focus group interviews were carried out in native Thai language, direct quotations were the translation of the original statements. Participants were

referred to by code. Student G1, for example, referred to a student who participated in focus group interview no 2.

Quotations from student participants were limited only to some particular students as the researcher found only some participants expressed more than others. As well, those longer expressions were found to well represent the opinions of the group.

### **Findings for research question one: Students' perceptions of Thai teachers teaching in an international program**

By merging both qualitative and quantitative data, the participants' perceptions of Thai teachers teaching in the international program were found to reflect four major themes. The first one is teachers' knowledge. The second theme is Thai teachers' teaching certain English language skills. The third theme is teachers' understanding of their students. The last theme is concerned with the effects of Thai or native English speaker teachers on the students' expectation of English language learning, and the trustworthiness of the program and the institute.

## **4.2 Teachers' knowledge was perceived as an important quality of teachers.**

By knowledge, the participants referred to whether the teachers knew how to teach effectively, knowledge of Thai and English languages, knowledge of Thai language encourage and enhance communication between teachers and students, knowledge of culture of English language, as well as their knowledge and ability of English language.

### ***Thai teachers were perceived to have variety of instructional practice.***

Thai teachers were found to be very well-prepared to teach students. They set the learning objectives and prepared learning materials before carrying out their teaching in an actual context. However, Thai teachers tended to depend very much on their books while teaching. They tended to adhered to the old teaching style by just

sitting in front of the class, opening the book, reading for the students and asking the students read along. The teachers sometimes also wrote on the whiteboard and used Power Point to present the information to their students. Instead of giving a long lecture, the teachers summarized long contents for the students. This made it easy for them to understand the lessons. Evidence from Student G1's statement indicated how the participant perceived Thai teachers' preparation for classes. She stated:

...Thai teachers come to class with prepared objectives and purposes of their teaching. They have prepared how to teach. They have prepared handouts and other teaching materials. If the students can achieve the prepared goals, they are assumed to have achieved in another level of success.

(Student G1)

In addition, a participant (Student F1) also expressed that sometimes Thai teachers might heavily focus their teaching on academic matters, and without using audio-teaching aids. This participant perceived that audio-visual teaching aid such as movies relevant to the topics being taught have a lot of advantages and should be used to teach students because such media might help to make difficult matters become easy for them to understand. She also suggested that Thai teachers should translate captions in the movies so that the students could better understand the lessons than just listening to the lecture. Movies might make students understand the detail better than lectures because watching movies, the students could visualize the content and understand it more. Student F1 mentioned:

Sometimes Thai teachers focus too much on the academic content. They should bring in movies when they are teaching history, social science, or culture. They might even need to translate the movies. This will make it easier for the students to understand the content of the subject than just listening to the lecture. Students could not visualize. By watching movies, the students could picture and imagine more.

(Student F1)

The same student explained more on the use of movies in teaching. She remarked that the students could replay the movies if they are interested in the stories. Listening to teachers' explanation only made them sleep, and they did not comprehend the content. Watching movies while listening to teachers' explanation, students could get better learning results when they have a test. She expressed:

If students want to learn more about the movie, they will watch it again. Certainly, if the teachers explain the materials only, the students will feel sleepy and will not understand the lesson. But if teachers use a movie and explain it at the same time, the students will go back to watch the movie again. It will make students get better learning results.

(Students F1)

In addition, some of the participating students (students F1, G1, and H1) mentioned that watching movies could develop their language skills such as pronunciation, and listening and speaking skills. They could also learn authentic uses of some words in real context, which made them remember the words. They all said, "It [movie] develops pronunciation and listening and speaking skills". As well, Student G1 gave an example of the benefit that she had learnt from watching movies. She stated, "I have learnt some sentences from the movie such the word "turn off" the television, they use "turn off", not the word "close" the television.

The participants also perceived that with too much emphasis on the academic contents, Thai teachers sometimes organized boring lessons. They preferred the teachers to make their instructions fun, motivated, and be able to encourage students to continue their own learning and that would make the students get better learning results. Student S1's statement clearly reflects this perception.

On one hand, if the teaching is boring, the students will also feel bored and do not want to study. That will result in our achievement in that subject. On the other hand, supposing

that the teachers teach in a fun and exciting way, the students will be happy to come to every class. Attending fun and exciting, the students could enjoy studying, and might get better grades.

(Student S1)

Student G1's statement also supports this idea. She noted, "If the students find lessons boring, they will not want to study any longer. However, if they understand a subject, they will feel happy and want to study that subject more".

Even though Thai teachers' teaching was perceived demotivating, the participants revealed that Thai teachers put a lot of attempts to make their students understand the lessons. They particularly provided the students with more resources of information. Students P1's and B1's statements well support this finding. Student P1 remarked, "Thai teachers follow the textbook, but they also have power point that summarizes the contents. This makes the students understand easily". Student B1 maintained:

...Thai teachers try every way to make their students understand the lessons such as searching for more to information to elaborate difficult points, finding teaching media, and creating supplementary materials to make students understand the lesson easier.

(Student B1)

In addition to data on knowledge of Thai teachers' teaching practice in general, the participants also perceived that Thai teachers were capable of making lessons comprehensible to the students because they both shared the same mother tongue.

***Teachers' sharing the same mother tongue with the students was perceived to be beneficial for students' learning.***

The participants perceived the benefits of Thai teachers to know both Thai and English languages especially when the students needed explanation on complex issues. Also, because Thai teachers share the same native language with them, the students perceived that they could better communicate with Thai teachers. Generally, English is used as a medium of instruction in the international program. The data suggested, however, that the participants perceived that since most of them did not totally understand English, Thai teachers could use Thai language to help them better understand the content. Student B1 highlighted that understanding was an important factor to learn more and Thai translation would help with students' understanding of the lesson. Student B1 expressed:

What has been said is true. It [method of teaching in international program] should be different in terms of teaching practice. That is, all handouts might be in English language, and we speak English. And, it is right because we are studying in English Studies Program. Only English language should be used as a means of instruction. Sometimes, however, students might have difficulties understanding. They might need Thai translation. Studying is for understanding and learning. Without understanding of the instruction, the students could have difficulty to learn more.

(Student B1)

Student G1 also supported the use of Thai language to help with students' understanding.

In fact, it is not necessary that English be always used as a means of instruction. Sometimes, Thai students cannot understand English right after they listen to the teachers. Sometimes Thai language is needed especially when the

students did not understand lessons. As long as Thai language is not always predominantly used, it should be used some time.

(Student G1)

With the perception that having Thai teachers in the international program was useful because the teachers could use Thai with them when they had difficulties understanding English, the participants even expected Thai teachers to use Thai language in teaching. Some Thai teachers, however, were perceived as too strict and inflexible in terms of using Thai language as a medium of instruction. The participants revealed that some Thai teachers intentionally and strictly used only English because they were teaching students in an international program. Student P1 complained:

When the instruction is all in English, but the students do not completely understand it and asked Thai teachers, the teachers should help the students. Some words are specific terms whose meaning could not be found from a dictionary. When the teachers do not help, we could become confused. Such confusion affects our understanding. Instead of helping, the teachers mentioned that they were teaching students in the international program, so they should not use Thai language. For me, Thai teachers should be flexible because even for our Thai language, we are still weak at it.

(Student P1)

Student F1 also remarked the benefit of the use of Thai language with their Thai teachers in the international program. She explained that Thai language could be used to ask Thai teachers about the difficult vocabulary she did not understand. She said:

... because sometimes, supposing that native English speaker teachers sometimes teach the students. They might not understand due to difficult words. If I do not know the

vocabulary, some sentences, we will not know. We cannot translate. Therefore, supposing Thai teachers teach, ones with accurate accent, clear accent not Thai local accent, supposing that there are words the students do not understand, they can ask them in Thai.

(Student F1)

In addition to the benefits of using teachers' knowledge of both native Thai and English language in teaching, the participants perceived the benefit of such knowledge to facilitate their communication with Thai teachers.

***Knowledge of Thai language was perceived to encourage and enhance communication between teachers and students.***

The data revealed that most of the participants communicated and approached Thai teachers more often than native English speaker teachers. According to the participants, they perceived that the uses of Thai language to consult with the teachers when they needed, made them communicate and consult with Thai teachers more effectively than the use of English language. Student S2's statement illustrated this perception. Student S2 stated, "As I tell you, I like both Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers. For Thai teachers, I can ask them for in-depth information or ask them for some advice because we are both Thai native speakers".

Data also revealed that the participants perceived that Thai teachers understood and better communicated with their students because of the use of Thai language. For example, student G1 stated "What is good [about Thai teachers] could be that they better understand the students than native English speaker teachers".

Moreover, the participants revealed that they could use Thai language to ask about homework or assignments they did not understand, which could help them understand more in-depth details. They also used Thai language to ask their Thai teachers to provide some explanations about grammar points. In addition, they perceived that Thai teachers could help communicate difficult ideas to them more clearly by providing explanation in Thai.

Despite the finding that the participants perceived Thai teachers better than native English speaker teachers in communication with students because of the use of Thai language, they perceived that Thai teachers' knowledge of culture of English-speaking countries is limited.

***Thai teachers' knowledge of culture of English language was perceived to be appropriate for teaching students how to react with culture of English native speakers.***

Both qualitative and quantitative data revealed that the participants perceived that native English speaker teachers and Thai teachers were appropriate in teaching different aspects of culture of English language. Although Thai teachers were perceived to have less of cultural knowledge of native English-speaking countries compared to native English speaker teachers, they could effectively teach the students to know how to react to these native people. The participants also mentioned that they would like Thai teachers to teach Thai culture and native English speaker teachers to teach their native's culture. Student G1's remark reflects this finding as she said:

If we want to learn culture [of native English speakers] directly, we should learn it from native English speaker teachers, who could teach us the origin of their culture. However, culture could be viewed with different perspectives by those who are from different cultures. How Thais could interpret others' cultures and react to those cultures should preferably be taught by Thai teachers.

(Student G1)

In addition to the limited of knowledge of English-speaking countries of Thai teachers, they were still perceived to have limited of knowledge and the ability of English language.

***Thai teachers' knowledge and ability of English language was perceived as a limitation.***

The data show that the participants considered Thai teachers' accents were the main factor to affect students' language learning in the classroom. Most of the participants perceived that most Thai teachers' English accents were different from those of native English speaker teachers. This resulted in the ineffectiveness of language teaching in the classroom. It made students have difficulties understanding what Thai teachers said and taught them. For example, student F1 described her expectations in studying in the international program. She explained that some Thai teachers had a clear English accent, but other Thai teachers' English accents were unclear and that did not make the students fully acquire the knowledge from the teachers. She, therefore, expected all of the teachers in the program to be native English speaker teachers. She stated:

When I firstly registered for the international program, I expected that all the teachers in the program were native English speaker teachers. It must definitely be native English speaker teachers who teach the students. The language used by the teachers expected to be easy for me to understand. Some of the native English speaker teachers' teaching might be easy, but others' might be difficult. Their teaching varied. Each teacher might have different accent. When I later attended the classes, I found that Thai teachers were teaching, and I felt Okay I could understand because some of Thai teachers use clear language. However, other Thai teachers whose language was unclear accents, made me confused. When I studied some subjects with Thai teachers whose accents were unclear, I was confused with the language and it made it difficult for me to understand the subjects.

(Student F1)

Other participating students also highlighted the issue of Thai teachers' English accents that would affect their improvement of listening and speaking skills. Therefore, they preferred native English speaker teachers to teach them English. Student P1 and G1 emphasized that the teachers' accents affected the students' learning. Student P1 explained, "... different accents. The same words, being pronounced with different accents, could be different and incomprehensible. It is better to study with native English speaker teachers". In addition, Student G1 expressed:

Thai teachers, supposing that they graduated in Thailand but had never been abroad, have different listening and speaking skills from those who had spent their lives abroad. Their accents must be definitely different. This must definitely affect the students' listening and speaking skills.

(Student G1)

What is more, Thai teachers' accents were perceived as the sources of problem of English language learning. Data also revealed that when the participating students studied English with Thai teachers, they did not really use English in real life situations. They explained that their familiarity of Thai teachers' accents of English made them understand English spoken by Thai teachers. When they had to communicate with native English speaker teachers, however, the participants felt like they had to struggle to try to understand them and to communicate with the native English speaker teachers. This finding could be illustrated by what student S1 and student G1 stated. The student S1 said, "Yes, when I encounter with real life situations, I felt struggled. I could not use English language fluently".

Also student G1 explained "I can easily communicate with Thai teachers, but I have problems when I communicate with native English speaker teachers because they have different accents". She then gave an example of her communication problem caused by the differences accent from Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers. She said "When I study with Thai teachers, I had no problem communicating with them. However, when I communicated with native

English speaker teachers, problemsarised because the teachers had absolutely different accents. Studying with native English speaker teachers, I could not translate the same sentence I had learnt before [with Thai teachers]”.

Most of the participants perceived that learning accents from native English speaker teachers or Thai teachers who had native-liked accents would be beneficial. Whether the teachers were Thai or native English speakers, the participants would prefer these teachers to have proficient English accents, which could convey clear information to the students. For example, students S1 expressed:

Mainly, I think whether they are native English speaker or Thai teachers, they must be fluent in English, really fluent. Some Thai teachers are not fluent. While I am listening and trying to understand what these teachers are saying and they hesitated from time to time, I could not completely get it, not a hundred percent.

(Students S1)

The participants also suggested that the teachers in the international program should be well-qualified, understand the students, motivate students to listen, could make them understand the contents well, and could provide them with clear and explicit knowledge. The participants preferred to have the teachers who had good language skills so that they could acquire good language from them. For instance, student S3 said, “If the teachers have poor language skills, the students will not be able to develop good language skills”.

In brief, most of the participants perceived that some Thai teachers could speak English only with a Thai accent, and this made them struggle and have communication problems when they interacted with competent native English speaker teachers. Native English speaker teachers have a different accent from Thai teachers. Moreover, the participants would prefer both Thai and native English speaker teachers to have a clear English accent and could make the students understand the lessons well.

So far, the first theme of the findings, the students' perceptions of Thai teachers' knowledge including the knowledge of instructional practice, Thai language, culture of English language, and English language accent. The following part reports how the participants perceived Thai teachers' knowledge of some English language skills as these teachers were part of the international program.

### **4.3 Thai teachers were perceived appropriate to teach some English language skills.**

Quantitative data show that Thai teachers were perceived to be able to teach pronunciation, listening, reading, and writing skills well. In addition, they were perceived to be good at explaining and giving good feedback for grammar as well as giving good feedback to improve writing skills. The majority even perceived that writing should be taught by Thai teachers. Moreover, they perceived that they could learn and improve grammar, listening, writing, and reading skills from Thai teachers just as well as they learned from native English teachers, but not for pronunciation. When it comes to the matter of what subject should be taught by Thai teachers, the participants expressed that Thai teachers should teach writing and grammar. Qualitative data yield detail explanation of these results.

Data from the focus group interviews revealed participants' comments on Thai teachers' teaching focus on writing, grammar, reading, and listening and speaking skills.

#### ***Thai teachers were perceived to focus more on grammar when teaching writing.***

The participants perceived that when Thai teachers taught writing, they made their lessons interesting by using a lot of teaching materials such as worksheets, power points, and colorful cartoons with light and sound. These teaching resources attracted students' interest while they were studying.

In addition, the participants perceived that Thai teachers taught very differently from native English speaker teachers. Thai teachers had students write in

the classroom and tried to look at how much the students could do their own writing and checked for language accuracy. If they found some grammatical mistakes in the students' writings, they would help correct them. They also informed the students of their strengths and weaknesses about their writing. Thai teachers also pointed out mistakes and suggested how the students could revise or improve the writing errors. For example, a participant expressed that Thai teachers focused more on grammar in teaching writing. They hardly emphasized main ideas, and how ideas were supported and organized. Student S1 remarked evidently supports these perceptions.

From my learning experience with both Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers, I could see that Thai teachers focus more on grammar. They rarely look at the main ideas of our writing. Students can write whatever they want to write. If their writing is grammatically wrong, they will lose some scores even when they miss a full stop at the end of a sentence. In contrast, native English speaker teachers will teach us to think and plan before writing. They will teach the students the writing process and listen more to students' opinions, but for the grammar they will revise it later.

(Student S1)

This statement does not reflect students' judgment on which focuses is better: grammar or thinking and organizing ideas. They only described that native and non-native English speakers taught writing differently. The quantitative data, however, reflect the participants' preference of grammar knowledge learned from writing.

In addition, data revealed that most of the participants perceived that Thai teachers could better teach them writing because writing was very difficult and Thai teachers better understood students' language ability and their ability to write. Therefore, they would know how to teach and provided way to improve students' writing skills. The participants also mentioned that there was a case that a native English speaker teacher taught them writing and they honestly said that they did not

understand. This was because the teacher missed the classes often. In addition, in teaching writing, native English speaker teachers talked using continuing sentences without caring whether students understand or not. After the native English speaker teacher departed the university, the students had to come back to study writing in this course again. Therefore, the students suggested that something that was complicated and profound should be taught by Thai teachers.

***Thai teachers were perceived to be able to make students understand difficult grammar points with details explanation teaching grammar.***

Both quantitative and qualitative data clearly underscore Thai teachers' ability to teach grammar. The participating students perceived that Thai teachers have better knowledge of English grammar because they had passed through the process of learning English grammar in the context of Thailand education. Many participants perceived that because their teachers had knowledge of Thai language, they could help the students use Thai language to give more in-depth explanation of difficult grammar points. This made difficult English grammar points become easier for the students to understand. In contrast, if the students studied grammar with native English speaker teachers, it was difficult for them to understand and follow the teachers' explanation. Quantitative data clearly illustrates that the participants perceived that Thai teachers could provide clear explanation and give useful feedback for the participants' improvement of grammar knowledge. Evidences from some students' statements also reflect this finding. Student P1 said, "I would prefer Thai teachers to teach grammar because it needs a lot of explanation. If native English speaker teachers teach me grammar points, I could honestly say that I do not understand the explanation". Similarly, Students G1 commented, "For grammar, I prefer Thai teachers to teach because when I have difficulties understanding it, I can ask Thai teachers in Thai, and they can explain in Thai which will make me understand easier". Student S1 maintained:

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Thai teachers should teach grammar ... because it is difficult and complicated. In contrast, native English speaker teachers should teach listening, linguistics, pronunciation,

phonetics, where to produce different sounds.... Thai teachers are more qualified to teach grammar because when we do not understand it, we can consult them in Thai language.

Student S1

Data also suggest that the participants also considered sharing of native Thai language with the teachers could facilitate their learning of complicated or difficult grammar points.

***Thai teachers were perceived to focus on meaning when they teach reading.***

In terms of teaching reading, the participants perceived that Thai teachers used different sources of knowledge in order to make their students understand the content and improve their reading skills. They taught their students by using textbooks, worksheets, Power Point presentation, information from the Internet, supplementary materials and let the students do homework. They also gave the students extra articles to read and to answer questions at the end of the reading. In addition, in teaching reading, Thai teachers also focused on comprehension, but native English speaker teachers focused on both reading for meaning and reading to improve pronunciation. Student S3's statement reflects this finding. Student S3 said, "In reading, Thai teachers will focus more on reading for meaning, but native English speaker teachers also focus on pronunciation too".

***Thai teachers were perceived to use various media to facilitate and support students learning of listening and speaking skills, but they should not teach these two skills.***

As for listening and speaking lessons, the participants perceived that Thai teachers were helpful to them. According to the participants, Thai teachers used a wide range of materials and media including worksheets, multimedia program, audio recordings as teaching resources in their instruction. They had students listen to the recordings and answered questions. They sometimes let the students watch the videos from the Internet and write out the scripts of the videos. Sometimes students were

assigned to speak and did conversation in the classroom as a part of classroom evaluation. However, during the listening classes, Thai teachers were also very concern about students' understanding of the learning contents from the recordings. They, therefore, summarized and explained students the contents they could not catch up and did not understand and taught the students vocabulary. Student S1's statement revealed this perception.

The good points of Thai teachers are that when the students cannot catch information from the recording, the teachers will summarize the contents of a particular sentence for us. They also teach us the meanings of difficult words that we could not catch from the recording.

(Student S1)

Based on the quantitative data, the findings showed that some participants perceived that Thai teachers could teach as well as give good feedback for students to improve their listening skills. In addition, the teachers could give good feedback for them to improve speaking skills. Qualitative data could well elaborate this perception. The participants mentioned that in the situations in which Thai teachers used audio and video materials, teachers were required to play a role as facilitators and media operators. They were not required to be model of language users because the media generally contains English language used by native speakers of English.

Other participants, however, perceived that Thai teachers should not teach listening and speaking skills. This was due to their English language proficiency and Thai teachers' language fluency was considered by some students as model of language users. The participants perceived that the Thai teachers were not as proficient in English language as native English speaker teachers in terms of their uses of English language in real communication. Studying listening and speaking skills with Thai teacher, the students had fewer opportunities to learn authentic language in use, and to practice listening the language spoken by native speakers of English.

The remarks from students H1, S3, and G1 illustrated this finding. Student H1 highlighted her preference to learn from native English speakers how to use

English in real life. Student H1 mentioned, “I prefer native English speaker teachers to teach oral communication concerning forms of sentences, their uses in real life”. Student G1 mentioned that gradual and continuous listening to and speaking to native English speaker teachers helped her improve listening and speaking skills. Student G1 said, “Listening and speaking skills should definitely be taught by native English speaker teachers because by frequently listening to them, I gradually learn how native English speakers use the language. My listening and speaking skills will also be gradually developing”. Students S3 maintained that Thai teachers could be unqualified to teach speaking and listening due to their language fluency. She remarked:

Supposing that the program had only one native English speaker teacher, and the teacher was assigned to teach subjects, which are not about language skills, and, instead Thai teachers were assigned to teach speaking and listening skills, the students will be adversely affected. This is because Thai teachers, as I have experienced, are not as fluent as native English speaker teachers.

(Student S3)

In addition to the Thai teachers taught some language skills differently from native English speaker teachers, their background experiences were also considered to benefit some students.

***Thai teachers’ knowledge and background practical experience were perceived to be supportive to their teaching of some subject matters.***

Thai teachers were perceived as knowledgeable of the subjects they are teaching. They were perceived to emphasize on theories and details of content before allowing opportunities to practice and apply the knowledge. In addition, Thai teachers shared their past experience as part of their teaching, which effectively motivated the students to learn. Student S3 mentioned:

... but as for the matter of quality, the teachers are different. Some Thai teachers have a lot of experience and they could tell or share their experience in class. That could motivate and inspire the students to study. Native English speaker teachers, however, have quality in terms of their English language use. As well, their foreign experience is different from ours.

Student S3

The participants perceived that Thai teachers in their program had more knowledge and would be better teachers to teach particular subjects such as tourism and hotel management, and history. The reasons underlying their perceptions were concerned with teachers' knowledge and background practical experience relating to the fields. Most of the participants preferred Thai teachers to teach tourism and hotel management because the Thai teachers who were teaching in the program had practical experience working in the hotel before they became teachers. In this case, the participants realized that Thai teachers could teach and provide them good experience and techniques which they could apply in their future job. For example, student S2 stated:

I would like Thai teachers to teach tourism and hotel management because some of the Thai teachers used to be tour guides. Perhaps some were hotel staff. I can learn more techniques which can be applied in my future job. After graduation, most of us expect to work in hotels or as tour guides, or jobs that require us to use English language. Some Thai teachers might have practical experience relating to these jobs. These Thai teachers are expected to teach well, to share their experience which could be well applied in our career.

(Student S2)

In short, some Thai teachers were perceived to be good at teaching tourism and hotel management due to their previous practical experience working in the field before they became teachers.

The next section reports findings on the participants' perceptions of Thai teachers concerning their understanding of and attitudes toward students.

#### **4.4 Thai teachers were perceived to understand their students well in some aspects although they overestimated students' English language proficiency.**

Thai teachers knew how students learned English, when students should started learning English, and the reasons why students were studying English. This knowledge was based on the common experience Thai teachers shared with their students in the same Thai educational system. Therefore, Thai teachers could provide better learning strategies and techniques to help the students learn the language. In their teaching, when the students kept quiet and hesitated to express their opinions or ask questions in the classroom, the teachers could assume that those students did not understand the lessons. Then, Thai teachers would explain and gave them more information about those lessons.

In terms of teachers' attitudes toward students, the participants perceived that Thai teachers overestimated the English language proficiency of the students in the international program. The participants expressed that Thai teachers expected and assumed that the students had a high language ability. These assumptions were based on the fact that students were studying in the international program, so they should have higher language ability than the students from a non-international program. The participants explained that usually they were not as good at English as the Thai teachers had expected due to the fact that they just graduated from a high school and they still needed to adjust their basic knowledge of English. Thai teachers, however, had a high expectation on the students. For example, students P1 explained a case of a Thai teacher that this teacher expected the students to understand what he taught in the

classroom. When the students did not understand his teaching, he got angry and walk out of the class. Students P1 described:

Thai teachers assumed that we were good at English despite the fact that we had just graduated from high schools. That does not mean that we can understand all of the words the teachers explain in English. The teachers should at least think that we need time to adjust ourselves. Once they assumed that the students were good at English but found that the students were confused, they became upset. They even mentioned how possible it was for us to study in the international program but did not understand English. We know that this is an international program but we did not think that Thai teachers had such a high expectation that they must understand. Some teachers even complained loudly, walking out of the class. Teachers had different styles.

(Student P1)

In short, students perceived that Thai teachers could understand their students well. They would provide more explanation to the students if they hesitated to express opinion or ask questions in class. Moreover, students also perceived that Thai teachers had high expectations on their students. They assumed that the students have high language ability, but in reality the students still needed to adjust their basic knowledge of English.

In addition to the findings on the participants' perceptions on teachers' knowledge and their understanding and attitudes towards their students, the participants were also found to perceive that Thai teachers were different from native English speaker teachers.

#### **4.5 The difference in language competence of Thai and native English speaker teachers were perceived to affect students' expectation of the program and creditability of the program and institute.**

Findings suggest that participants differently perceived Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers who taught them in the international program. The differences, as they perceived were concerning mostly with the teachers language competence and pronunciation. They demonstrated their perceptions of the teachers on how the teachers affected their expectation in learning English language in the international program, and the creditability of the program and the institute.

*English language competence of Thai teachers was perceived to have effects on students' expectation in learning English language in the international program.*

Attending the international program, the participants were found to have expectation to study with native English speaker teachers. They wanted to experience the authentic language use and acquired language used by competent native English speaker teachers and simultaneously learned their culture. The participants also explained that if they could not avoid having Thai teachers to teach in the international program, they would prefer to have native English speaker teachers as the majority. For example, student G1 mentioned "If there are six teachers, I would like to have four native English speaker teachers and two Thai teachers". She then elaborated more reasons that if there were more native English speaker teachers in the international program, she could learn more about culture and lifestyle of native speaker teachers. As well, they could acquire language skills more quickly than when they were studying with Thai teachers. Student G1 explained:

Because this is an international program, I would like to study with native English speaker teachers the most so that I can learn about their culture and lifestyle. Also, I can certainly acquire writing skills, speaking skills and listening

skills directly and profoundly from native English speaker teachers rather than from Thai teachers.

(Student G1)

In addition, most of the participants would like to have native English speaker teachers with a variety of accents so that they could learn different native accents. Learning varieties of accents would increase the opportunities for them to practice their listening to different accents as well as increase their language ability in terms of communication skills.

Moreover, the participants also perceived that the difference in language competence of native and non-native English speaker teachers affected the quality of language learning and teaching in the program. They expressed that some of the Thai teachers might not be qualified to teach in the international program due to their background of English language, and their accent was not similar to that of native English speaker teachers. In addition, Thai teachers were perceived not being fluent to use English language and this affected student's listening and speaking skills. However, some of the participants mentioned that being native speakers just had a little or might not affect to the quality of language learning and teaching in the program. This was because both Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers were effective in their teaching and they could teach the students well. It also depended on the students whether they studied hard or not. However, some of the participating students perceived that the difference in language competence of native and non-native English speaker teachers had an impact on the quality of language learning and teaching. For example, student S2 explained that some of the Thai teachers might not be qualified to teach in the program due to their language educational background or accents. Their teaching methodologies might not be the same as those of native English speaker teachers. He expressed:

Having Thai teachers, the international program...Thai teachers might not be qualified to teach in the international program because for some teachers, their language education or accent might not be the same as those of native English speaker

teachers. As we know, this is an international program; the program should have native English speaker teachers. The majority of students expect to study with native English speakers in the international program.

(Student S2)

In addition, Student S1 also added that native English speaker teachers had the ability to use English more proficiently than Thai teachers because they use the language as their mother tongue. Therefore, if there was only a native English speaker teacher, it certainly had an impact on students' language learning. He stated:

Supposing that there was only a native English speaker teacher and most of them were Thai teachers, I think this definitely has effects on students in terms of the use of language. This is because Thai teachers are not as fluent in language use as native English speaker teachers. Native English speaker teachers have used their language since they were born and they use it daily. This makes them have abilities to use English more efficiently than Thai teachers.

(Student S1)

To echo the statement above, Student G1 gave an example of the effect on the quality of language. She explained that students could not improve their listening and speaking skills as much as possible if there was only a native English speaker teacher in the international program. She then clarified that the students sometimes might develop their listening skill slowly. Therefore, the students' listening skills were not good enough as they thought. She then gave an example to compare with the students from other universities. She explained that comparing between an international program in other universities which had three Thai teachers and three native English speaker teachers to the program where she was studying which had five Thai teachers and only a native English speaker teacher, her learning of listening and speaking skills would definitely be different from those students' learning. This was

because the students in that program studied with native English speaker teachers more often than she did.

A participant also mentioned that the difference in language competence of a native English and Thai speaker teacher might have a little effect on the quality of language learning and teaching of the program because, in addition to the teachers, how hard the students tried in their studies also affects the quality of the program. Student B1 stated:

Whether native or non-native English speaker teachers has an impact to the quality of language learning and teaching or not, I would say this has a little effect on the students. Mostly, this depends on students' attention to study the subjects they have chosen.

(Student B1)

Furthermore, some participants mentioned that the difference in language competence of native English speaker teacher and Thai did not affect the quality of learning because each teacher was supposed to be well qualified. Each has different expertise. Student P1 expressed:

There is no impact because both Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers are efficient ... can teach every student ... each teacher are good in different areas of English teaching.

(Student P1)

In short, the participants perceived that Thai and native English speaker teachers were different in terms of their language competence and their cultural background, and these differences made them prefer to study with native English speaker teachers. They perceived that native English speaker teachers enable them to learn differences in culture of native English speakers, life style, as well as acquire language from native speakers, and understand different accents. In addition, the

participants realized that being native or non-native English speaker teachers had an impact on the quality of language learning and teaching in the international program as well as the effectiveness of the program. Particularly, it had an effect on students' listening and speaking skills. While native English speaker teachers could be a good model for students to learn listening and speaking skills, Thai teachers were perceived as not being able to do so. However, regardless of English language ability, both native English speaker teachers and Thai teachers were perceived that they could be equally efficient regarding their knowledge of subject matter. Concerning the effectiveness of the program, the participants perceived that student was another important factor contributing to the effectiveness of the program. In other word, students' achievement also depends on how well they paid attention in the study.

In relation to these differences, the participants also perceived that the teachers, both native and non-native English speakers, affected the creditability of the institute.

***English language competence of Thai teachers in an international program was perceived to have effects on the creditability of the program and the institute.***

The findings showed that native and non-native speaker of English teachers in the international program affected the creditability of the program and the institute. The participating students perceived that if there were more Thai teachers or there was only a native English speaker teacher in the international program, the creditability of the institute would be affected. Some of the students who hoped and wanted to study with native English speaker teachers would be disappointed when they found that they had to study with Thai teachers. The program was regarded as indifferent from a non-international or regular program if more Thai teachers were teaching in the international program. The creditability of the institute would be questionable not only to the students but to the public.

The findings showed that the students attending an international program had the purpose of studying with native English speaker teachers, but they were disappointed when they found that most teachers in the program were Thais. Student H1's and Student F1's statement supported this idea.

Someone expected that the international program must have native English speaker teachers, but they finally felt disappointed when they found that they were more Thai teachers than the native English speaker teachers in the program.

(Student H1)

... I attend the international program because I want to be good at English. This is what makes international program different from the regular program. If all teachers in the program are Thai, this program is not different from a Thai program”.

(Student F1)

In addition, the international program with more Thai teachers is doubtful for its creditability. Student P1 mentioned:

For outsiders, if they are told that there is only one native English speaker teacher in the international program, they might question the credibility of the institute.

(Student P1)

In conclusion, the difference in language competence of native or non-native English speaker teachers was found to affect not only the creditability of the program in personally, but also publicly.

So far, these sections have reported results to answer the first research question on students' perceptions of Thai English teachers in the international program. The next describes results for the second research question on the influence of students' perceptions of Thai teachers on their learning behaviors.

**Findings for research question two: The influence of students' perceptions of Thai teachers on their learning behaviors.**

To answer this research question, the data were collected only by means of focus group interviews. Data suggest that the participants' perceptions of Thai teachers influenced the participants' communication with Thai teachers, completion and submission of their homework assignments, and class attendance.

**Teachers' sharing of the same mother tongue with students was found to make students communicate more with Thai teachers.**

The participants perceived that because they shared the same mother tongue language with Thai teachers, they were willing to and felt more comfortable to communicate with them. In doing so, the students used Thai language during the lessons to consult, asked questions about the lessons, asked for suggestions, and talked with Thai teachers. However, the participating students hesitated and felt uncomfortable to communicate with Thai teachers in English due to their language ability and Thai teachers' expectation of the students' language ability. For example, Students S2 explained that because they shared the same language with Thai teachers, they were willing to ask questions and consulted with his teachers about the lessons. He remarked:

When I do not understand the lesson of a teacher, if she or he is a Thai teacher, I will consult, listen to his or her suggestions, and ask questions about what I do not understand. Because we are Thais, we can better communicate with each other. Even though I am not fluent in English, I can receive advice from them.

(Student S2)

Comparing native English speaker teachers to Thai teachers, the same student also elaborated that using his mother tongue language to talk with Thai teachers made him get in-depth information. However, when talking to native English

speaker teachers using English, he could really use English to practice speaking in real situations. He said:

As I tell you, I like both native English speaker teachers and Thai teachers. When I do not understand, I can consult and ask [Thai teachers] questions more in-depth details because we use Thai language. For native English speaker teachers, I like them because I can experience real language use and practice the language with them.

(Student S2)

In addition, student G1 explained that the benefit of sharing the same native Thai language with the teachers help the teachers use Thai language to explain difficult points about subject matter to make the students understand better. She explained:

For example grammar, sometimes I would prefer Thai teachers to teach me because there are some grammar points I do not understand. I can ask in Thai language and Thai teachers can also explain in Thai language to make me understand easily.

(Student G1)

Moreover, the data showed that with the perception of Thai teachers sharing the same mother tongue language with them, the students were willing to communicate with Thai teachers outside the classroom as well. Another participant explained that she felt more confident to talk with her teacher after class because she and her teacher both used Thai language. This made her feel more convenient to approach her teacher. Student P1 expressed:

Outside classroom, we both use Thai language. While the teacher was giving some homework I did not

understand, I could ask the teacher after class about the assignment, and he/she explained in Thai language. Therefore, it is convenient for me to approach the teachers.

(Student P1)

Regarding the use of English language to talk to Thai teachers, one of the participants perceived that using English language to talk to Thai teachers was discouraging because Thai teachers tended to pay attention on grammatical accuracy. He perceived that Thai teachers hardly accepted grammatical mistakes. In addition, some Thai people laughed at one another when they spoke English inaccurately. Instead, using English with native English speaker teachers, he got constructive suggestions. Student S1 explained that students were unconfident to talk with their Thai teachers in English because they were worried about making grammatical mistakes. He said:

Studying with Thai teachers, I am not encouraged to speak English. I am afraid to speak English ungrammatically. If I use wrong English, it is like that Thai teachers will stare at me. Unlike talking with native English speaker teachers, I will get suggestions. I have a perception that if I speak ungrammatical English, Thai people will generally laugh at one another.

(Student S1)

In addition to verbal language for communication, Thai students perceived that Thai teachers were sensitive to and could understand their body language very well. While studying with Thai teachers and the students did not understand the lesson, they kept quiet because they learned that Thai teachers understood silence. With the silence, Thai teachers would provide more explanation. When studying with native English speaker teachers, however, the students perceived that silence was interpreted as understanding. In fact, as the students explained, their silence concealed their discouragement to ask questions for fear that they might ask the wrong questions

or they might not understand the teachers' answers. The evidences were found in a conversation between students P1 and B1.

1P: No one brave to ask questions. I am fear to pose questions.

1B: Yes

1P: Fear to ask ungrammatical questions

...

1S: Every student fear to ask questions

1P: fear to approach

1S: someone does not understand. Keep quiet means does not understand

1P: Fear to express opinions

1S: If she is a Thai teacher, I will ask questions.

1B: If we keep quiet, native English speaker teachers will understand that we know.

1P: In fact, we do not know.

1B: If the teacher is Thai, he will know that we do not understand

...

**Because Thai teachers followed up closely with students' assignments, the students tried hard to complete and submit their homework assignments.**

Regarding students' motivation to submit homework assignments and study, the students perceived that Thai teachers paid attention to follow up closely with their learning. This motivated them to try hard to complete and submit their homework. This would have a good impact on students' learning because it opened opportunity for students to practice themselves in doing the homework. For example, students S1 explained:

As part of their teaching process, Thai teachers always try to catch up with the students. This has a good impact on the students. Thai teachers have many concerns on the students. As part of the Thai culture, Thai people have a habit of care to others. Thai teachers generally tend to take care of

students. If the students still do not hand in their assignments, the teachers will follow up and that makes the students do the work to submit it to them. By doing assignments, the students could learn more.

(Student S1)

**Thai teachers' strictness was found to make students attend class more.**

The participants were found to perceive that Thai teachers were very strict to check for class attendance, so they hardly missed that classes taught by Thai teachers. As well, class attendance was part of the evaluation of students' performance. The students also worried about whether Thai teachers would give them a test or homework to do during the classes they missed. Most importantly, the students were worried about their understanding of the lessons they missed because the contents of one lessons were linked to the previous ones. Therefore, they had to attend class every week.

In conclusion, students' perceptions on some aspects of Thai teachers influence their language learning behaviors. Particularly, they were willing to communicate with Thai teachers when they did not understand the lessons. In addition, they tended to put their efforts to complete and submit assignments because teachers kept on following up with their work. Moreover, teachers checked students' class attendance also made students attend class as it was also part of the evaluation of students' performance.

This chapter reports results for the research question on the students' perceptions of Thai teachers teaching in the international program as well as on how their perceptions affect their learning behavior. The next chapter provides summary of the study, discusses the results and their implications, and provides recommendations for further study.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This study examined students' perceptions of Thai teachers who teach in an international program at a public Thai university in Thailand, as well as to examine how such perceptions influence those students' learning behaviors. This chapter gives a summary of the study, and then discusses the findings in light of relevant literature. Pedagogical implications and recommendations for further study are also presented.

#### **5.1 Summary of study**

Based on literature, native English speaker teachers and non-native English speaker teachers affect students' perceptions of learning English. Previous research showed that most of the students preferred and wanted to study English language with native English speaker teachers (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002). This is because native English speaker teachers were considered to be the model of English language teaching in most areas of language competence for both teachers and students (Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002; Meadows and Muramatsu, 2007; Phothongsunan and Suwanarak, 2008). However, previous researchers also remarked that non-native English speaker teachers could be good teachers. This is because they could provide a better learner model, teach language-learning strategies more effectively, supply more information about the English language, better anticipate and prevent language difficulties, be more sensitive to their students and benefit from their ability to use the students' mother tongue (Medgyes, 2001: 436). In addition, Medgyes (1994) proposed the assumption about native English speaker teachers and non-native English speaker teachers that they were two different "species" (p. 27) and they were different in terms of language proficiency, and teaching behavior. Differences in their language proficiency were most found in their teaching behavior. Moreover, both of them can be equally good teachers in their own terms. Based on the

literature, native English speaker teachers and non- native English speaker teachers could be assumed to be different in many aspects of English language teaching. As it is generally known, teachers are important factors to affect students' learning. To gain insights into how different teachers might affect students, this study investigated Thai students' perceptions of Thai teachers who teach in an international program at a public Thai university.

The research study took into account students' perceptions of teachers because students' voices are important. According to Tait and Martin (2007), in the case study of Red Beach Primary School, students' voices could benefit for the school development and the improvement of teaching approach. According to Cook-Sather (2006) who is an advocate of students' voices, student voices signify the presence, involvement, and commitment of students which are crucial in educational research and reform. Students' voice was worth being listened to as a way to balance the power of adults and young people in education. This was because as young people, students should also have the right to actively get involved in the educational decision making process rather than to let teachers alone make decisions for them. Being listened to, students' feeling of being respected and engaged in class could motivate them to constructively participate. Such constructive participation helped create the relationship between students and teachers as well as the exchange of information between them. Cook-Sather also explained that based on constructivist, critical, multicultural, and antiracist pedagogies, listening carefully to students' voice on their learning could help teachers improve their practices. Moreover, Robinson and Taylor (2007) stated that listening to students' voice made teachers understand students' learning experiences and result in changing teachers' instructional practice.

Due to the assumption that native English speaker teachers and non- native English speaker teachers are different, that the differences are important factors to affect students' learning of English language, and that students' voice is worthwhile being listened to, this study investigated Thai students' perceptions of Thai teachers who teach in an international program at a public Thai university. This study was conducted based on two specific research questions:

- 1) How do students perceive Thai teachers who teach in an international program?

2) To what extent do students' perceptions of Thai teachers have influences on their learning behaviors?

To answer these two research questions, student participants were recruited, and finally 52 undergraduates from English Studies Program (International Program) at a public Thai university in Thailand participated in the study. They were 32 second-year and 20 third-year undergraduates. Their ages ranged from 18 to 26 years. They attended the international program with the purposes to develop their language proficiency and skills, as well as knowledge in the field of humanity.

To obtain data, a mixed-method paradigm was used to conduct this study. Data were collected through a set of questionnaire and focus group interviews. The questionnaire was adapted from Cheung and Braine (2007) and Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002) with the focus on participants' experience of English language learning with Thai teachers, and their opinions on preference of Thai teachers, communication between them and their teachers, and their preferences to study different English language skills with Thai teachers. The items in the questionnaire were responded to by using a five-point Likert Scale. It consisted of five points for respondents to rate on their level of agreement with the statements in the items: strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). In addition to quantitative data, three focus group interviews each of which lasted for 40 – 60 minutes were carried out to elicit details of students' perceptions of the Thai teachers who taught in the international program.

To analyze data, SPSS Software Program was used to analyze responses from questionnaire for simple descriptive statistical values such as mean and percentage. Data obtained from focus group interviews were analyzed by using open and axial coding techniques (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). To report findings, both quantitative and qualitative data were merged.

### **The analysis reveals the following findings.**

Findings for research question one: Students' perceptions of Thai teachers teaching in an international program. To this question, findings firstly suggest participants' preference of native English speaker teachers to teach in the international program rather than Thai teachers. Findings also suggested importance of teachers'

knowledge. In addition, they suggested teachers' knowledge and ability to teach certain English language skills. As well, the participants perceived how Thai teachers understood them. The last theme is concerned with the effects of Thai or native English speaker teachers on the students' expectation of English language learning, and the credibility of the program and the institute.

Regarding the students' perceptions of Thai teachers, most of the participants were found to prefer native English speaker teachers to Thai teachers to teach in the international program. Native English speaker teachers were perceived superior to Thai teachers in most area of language competence. In addition, learning with native English speaker teachers could make participants develop their language competence, experience authentic language use and learn native's accent, learn more about culture and life styles of native English speaker teachers more effectively. Despite these perceptions, the participants were found to have positive attitudes toward Thai teachers. They even expressed their preferences to have Thai teachers as part of the program because they realized that Thai teachers also had different expertise. The majority of the participants perceived that both the native English speaker teachers and Thai teachers benefitted to the international program differently and they both could teach the students well.

The second finding is about teachers' knowledge, which was perceived as an important quality of teachers. By knowledge, the participants referred to knowledge of instructional practices, knowledge of the same mother tongue with students, knowledge of Thai culture and culture of native English speaking countries, as well as knowledge of English language. Thai teachers were perceived to have variety of instructional practices. Teachers' sharing the same mother tongue with the students was perceived to be beneficial for students' learning. The knowledge of Thai language was perceived to encourage and enhance communication between teachers and students. As well, Thai teachers' knowledge of culture of English language was perceived to be appropriate for teachers to teach students how to react to culture of English native speakers. However, Thai teachers' knowledge and ability of English language was perceived as their limitation in teaching. This was because the participating students perceived that Thai teachers' accents were inferior and affected

students' understanding in language learning as well as their development and improvement of listening and speaking skills.

The third finding suggested teachers' knowledge and ability to teach certain English language skills. Thai teachers were perceived to focus more on grammar when teaching writing, and were able to make students understand difficult grammar points with details explanation. As for reading, they were perceived to focus on meaning and reading skills. In addition, they were perceived to use various media to facilitate and support students learning of listening and speaking skills. Moreover, Thai teachers' knowledge and background practical experience were perceived to be supportive to their teaching of some subject matters.

Another finding indicates that Thai teachers were perceived to understand their students well in some aspects although they overestimated students' English language proficiency. Thai teachers were perceived to share the common experience of learning in Thailand educational context, so they understood their students well. Therefore, they taught them learning strategies and provided appropriately help for their students. Despite this, Thai teachers were perceived to have high expectation for their students to achieve. This made students experience the difficulties attempting to attain the expected level of achievement.

Moreover, the difference in language competence of Thai and native English speaker teachers were perceived to affect students' expectation of the program and creditability of the program and institute. Under the title of the program the participants registered for as an "international" program, the participants expected to improve their English language skills directly from the instruction of English native speaker teachers. When they attended the program, they found English language competence of Thai teachers, who were the majority of teachers in the program, different from what they had expected. Therefore, they perceived that this had effects on the creditability of the program and the institute.

Findings for research question two: The influence of students' perceptions of Thai teachers on their learning behaviors. Findings indicated that teachers' sharing of the same mother tongue with students was found to make students communicate more with Thai teachers. What was more was that because Thai teachers followed up closely with students' assignments, the students tried hard to complete and submit

their homework assignments. Finally, the students attended class of Thai teachers due to the teachers' strictness on class attendance.

## 5.2 Discussion

### **How did students perceive Thai teachers who taught in an international program?**

The results clearly indicated that the participants perceived Thai teachers in comparison to native English speaker teachers even though the study did not aim to examine how the teachers were different in their teaching. In addition, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the students were found to be important factors to signify teachers' qualifications.

Considering the native English speaker teachers as being qualified in terms of their English language competence, the participants expressed their preference and expectation to study with native English speaker teachers. Even though this research study did not have aim to compare between Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers, findings demonstrated that the participants' perception reflected their view of comparison between Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers. They expected to have more native English speaker teachers and preferred to be taught by native English speaker teachers to Thai teachers due to the fact that they realized the differences in language competence between Thai and native English speaker teachers. The particular weakness they perceived was Thai teachers' accent. Another reason underlying the students' preferences of native English teachers were that they wanted to improve their English accent, gain new learning experience from social and cultural differences. Thai teachers were perceived to lack comparable qualities and knowledge. This finding on the preference of native English speaker teachers was also found in many previous studies (Avasadanond, 2002; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002; Maum, 2002; Meadows and Muramatsu, 2007; Phothongsunan and Suwanarak, 2008). In addition to their preference of native English speaker teachers, the participants also considered that having less native English speaker teachers than non-native English

speaker teachers affected the credibility of the program. This was because they thought that not only them but the public would expect the program with the title “international” to have only native English speaker teachers.

Despite the preference of native English speaker teachers, the findings also showed that the participants had positive attitudes toward Thai teachers in the international program. This finding corresponded to the results of Watson Todd and Pojanapanya (2009), who found that despite the participants’ explicit expression of preference on native English speaker teachers, the participants had positive perceptions of Thai teachers. In fact, according to Medgyes (2001), in his six assumptions of the bright sides of the non-NESTs, he explained that non-NESTs could be better learner model, more effective to teach learning strategies, provide more information about English language, sensitive to the students’ needs, better in reduce learning difficulties, and benefit from the sharing the same language with the students. In this study, the results showed that Thai teachers knew well about their students’ language background and their learning needs. Therefore, Thai teachers tried every way to make the students understand the lessons. They did not only use traditional teaching style alone in the classroom. In their teaching, Thai teachers provided more sources of information for the students (textbooks, worksheets, create learning resources, searching necessary information for the students, summary long contents in short for the students) and use teaching media (computer, projector, and power points) to support their students’ learning in the classroom. Moreover, alongside with their teaching, Thai teachers were also very concerned about how much students understood the lessons. They tried to observe students learning behavior and help the students came out from their learning difficulties, for example, if the students just kept quiet after the explanation just had been provided by the teachers, or did not express ideas and respond to the questions in the classroom, Thai teaches could assume that their students did not understand, so they provided more explanation to help them understand. Moreover, the participants found Thai teachers in the international to benefit the students since they shared the same native Thai language with their students. This finding is similar to many previous studies (Braine, 2010; Chen, 2008; Cheung and Braine, 2007; Ma, 2012; Medgyes, 1994, 2001; Reves and Medgyes, 1994). These studies noted that the non-NESTs shared the same mother tongue and

culture background with their students and that benefit for their learning. The participants in this study could use Thai language to communicate to Thai teachers to make difficult points or ideas comprehensible for them, to reduce language learning difficulties, to enhance familiarity and build relationship with the teachers, and to fulfill their learning needs.

Surprisingly, however, unlike any of the previous studies, the results of this study revealed that because the student participants perceived that they shared the same native language, Thai, with the teachers, the participants, therefore, avoid using English language to communicate with Thai teachers because the teachers were very strict on grammar accuracy. These participants found themselves to lose confidence to talk to Thai teachers in English for fear that they would make mistakes. In addition, they considered not to have real communicative need for them to talk to Thai teachers in English.

All in all, the participants found both Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers were beneficial to them in different aspects. This corresponds to what Medgyes (1994) proposed. He hypothesized that native English speaker teachers and non-native English speaker teachers were two different “species”, and they were different in terms of language proficiency, teaching behavior, difference in language proficiency were most found in their teaching behavior. Both of these two kinds of teachers, however, could be equally good teachers in their own terms. According to these hypotheses, the results this study showed that Thai teachers and NESTs were different in terms of language competence and language background. These made them suitable in teaching different aspects of language and skills. Similarly, in their study of university students’ perceptions of native and non-native speaker teachers of English, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002) maintained that students viewed native speaker teachers and non-native speaker teachers as they appropriate to different phases in language education. Importantly, the findings of this study were found to indicate that Thai teachers were appropriate to teaching grammar and writing. These finding were corresponded with many previous research studies (Chen, 2008; Grubbs et. al, 2010; Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2002; Phothongsnan and Suwannarak, 2008).

**To what extent did students' perceptions of Thai teachers had influences on their learning behaviors?**

To this question, findings suggest some influences of the students' perceptions of their Thai teachers on their learning. Thai teachers were found to make the participants communicate more with them, trying to create relationship. The students tended to submit homework assignments to Thai teachers, and attended classes in order not to miss attendance scores.

In this particular context of this study, the participants were found to be willing to approach and communicate with Thai teachers because they perceived that their teachers were Thais. In other word, the students approached Thai teachers because they could use Thai language to ask Thai teachers questions, suggestions, consultation, and talk about homework assignments both inside class and outside class. With the perception that Thai teachers were very strict on grammar accuracy, they, however, avoided using English with their Thai teachers to avoid making mistakes. In addition, knowing that Thai teachers shared the same mother tongue with them, and they did not have any actual communicative needs to use English language, they used Thai language to communicate with Thai teachers most of the time. What is more, Thai teachers were perceived to be able to understand the students' body language more accurately than native English speaker teachers. The students found that when the students kept quiet, Thai teachers provided more explanation while native English speaker teachers kept on teaching. This made them keep on being quiet when they were being taught by native speaker teachers with the expectation that the teachers would provide more explanation as Thai teachers did.

Moreover, they perceived that Thai teachers strictly followed up students' progress of doing homework. This made the students tried hard to complete the homework and finally submitted to the teachers. Similarly, the study concerning the students' perceptions of teachers that influenced their learning behavior was found in the study of Hengsadeeikul et al., (2010). In their literature review of English as a medium of instruction in Thai universities, they noted, "students' perceptions are considered an essential component of English-medium education because their perceptions can influence learning behaviors and achievement; and affect increasing interest of English-medium learning" (p. 91).

Furthermore, Thai teachers were perceived to be very strict with university regulations and disciplines. These made Thai teachers strictly keep record of the students' class attendance. Thai teachers were perceived to consider class attendance as part of the class performance.

Regarding these behaviors, unless the program had only native English speaker teachers, the students would need to adjust themselves to communicate to the teachers with appropriate body language, to put more attempts to use English and to communicate with the teachers, to take more responsibility on their own learning trying to complete their homework assignments without much of teachers' support, and to see the importance of class attendance as a way for them to gain more knowledge rather than to gain marks from teachers.

**What did the students tell about their perception of teachers and how did such perceptions influence their learning behavior?**

As the voices of the students are taken into account in this study, students' perceptions were better understood. According to Tait and Martin (2007), students' voice was the powerful evidence to improve teacher's pedagogical approach. Therefore, teachers need to include students' perspective in schooling. Students' voice yielded the results for the improvement of teachers' instructional practice, but it also made students motivated and engaged on their learning (Ferguson et al., 2011). Results of this study showed how and why the participants preferred to have both Thai teachers and native English speaker teachers to teach in the international program. The students perceived that both types of teachers could provide benefits to their learning differently. Like suggestions made by Meadows and Musamatsu (2007), they noted that language program should have diversified teaching staff and provide students with balancing opportunity to experience native and non-native instructors. They also explained more that students want both teachers in order to succeed in their language learning so most of the students would choose the combination between native and non-native speaker teachers.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

One of the common reasons for students to enroll in international programs is to be taught by native English speaker teachers. But in practice, in the context of this study, Thai teachers were hired to teach in the program because there were not many native English speaker teachers in Thailand. Theoretically, scholars remarked that “the mismatch between students’ and teachers’ expectations can negatively affect L2 students’ satisfaction with the language class and can potentially lead to the discontinuation of L2 study” (Brown, (2009: 46). The results of this study showed an extent of mismatch of students’ expectation to the availability of native and non-native English speaker teachers in the program. In fact, in spite of the issue on whether the teachers were native English speakers or Thai, the participants tended to pay more attention on teachers’ knowledge and what they expected to learn from the teachers. They perceived the importance of teachers’ qualifications and quality of teachers. Despite their preference to study with native English speaker teachers, Thai teachers were perceived in need as part of the program. As suggested by McCallum, Hargreaves and Gipps (2000), “student voice is an increasingly important element in understanding teaching and schooling more generally” (McCallum, Hargreaves and Gipps, 2000: 276 cited in Cook-sather, 2006: 363).By looking into the students’ voices, this study provides insights into a better understanding of the participants’ perception of Thai teachers in the international program as well as of their learning behaviors. Their perception was found to influence their behavior in the way that they could maximize their learning.

### **5.4 Recommendations for the further study**

The finding of this study could be useful for teachers, educational administrators, and as well as for the students. Knowing students’ perceptions of their teachers in language learning and teaching, teachers could better understand their students and could benefit for the teachers’ improvement of their instructional practices to suit the needs and requirements of the students. In addition, the findings of

this study also could be used for teacher training, curriculum revision and development, and educational policy developments in the program.

Based on the findings of this present study, some of recommendations were made to guide for the further research studies.

1) This study was conducted to investigate students' perceptions of Thai teachers in an international program and the extent to which students' perceptions of their teachers influenced their learning behaviors in a particular context in Thailand. Therefore, the results of this study were limited and generalization was not appropriate to make to other contexts. To fill this gap, more research concerning students' perceptions of Thai teachers in the international program in different contexts in Thailand could be conducted.

2) This research only focused on students' perceptions of their teachers in the international program. Data on teachers' perceptions of language teaching in the international program could also be explored.

3) This study only employed focus group interviews and a questionnaire to collect data even though it also examined the participants' behaviors. For further research, students' behavior was recommended to be observed.

4) In the focus group interview, some of the participants did not talk much. Therefore, future researchers may need to prepare to encourage participants to speak more in order to get opinions on the issues being discussed.

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## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

A Survey of Student's perception of Thai non-native English speaker teachers in the International Program at a Public Thai University.

#### **Part I: Demography Information of the Participants.**

Age group:  18-20  21-23  24-26  27 and over

Gender:  Male  Female

Academic year:  freshman  sophomore  junior  senior

Your mother tongue language: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years of study English: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years of previous study in international program: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been to English speaking countries? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Purposes \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of studying in English speaking countries: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Part II: Experience with Non-native English Teachers.**

1. When you studied English in high school, were your teacher
  - a. Thai teachers
  - b. English native speakers
  - c. Both Thai and English native speakers
2. How often do you have class with non-native English instructor per week during this semester?
  - a. Never
  - b. Once
  - c. Twice
  - d. Three time
  - e. Four or more
3. Would you like to study with Thai teachers in the international program?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. It depends on if they could teach well or not.

### Part III: Opinions on Thai non-native English speaking teachers in the International Program.

Please mark ✓ in the corresponding column to show your opinions on the following statements about Thai non-native English speaking teachers in the International Program you are studying. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. The scale represents the following:

5	=	strongly agree
4	=	agree
3	=	undecided
2	=	disagree
1	=	strongly disagree

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Students' Preference of Teachers</b>						
1	I prefer Thai non-native English speaker teachers as my teachers.					
2	I prefer native English speaker teachers as my teachers.					
3	If I could choose, I would prefer to have only Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach me.					
4	If I could choose, I would prefer to have only native English speaker teachers to teach me.					
5	If I could choose, I would prefer to have both native English speaker teachers and Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach me.					
6	I would be disappointed if my teachers are not native English speakers.					
7	I would prefer Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach by using English as a medium of instruction.					
8	I would prefer Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach by using Thai as a medium of instruction.					
9	I would prefer Thai non-native English speaker teachers to teach by using Thai only with difficult topics.					

10	In general, I have positive attitudes towards Thai non-native English speaking teachers.				
11	In general, I have positive attitudes towards the learning of English with native English speaking teachers.				
<b>Communication between Teachers and Students</b>					
12	If I had trouble understanding Thai non-native English speaker teachers, I would not hesitate to ask them for clarification.				
13	If I had trouble understanding native English speaker teachers, I would not hesitate to ask them for clarification.				
14	Many Thai non-native English speaker teachers have difficulties giving clear explanation in English.				
15	Many Thai non-native English speaker teachers have difficulties understanding and answering students' questions.				
16	All Thai non-native English speaker teachers usually communicate effectively in the classroom.				
<b>Learning with Thai Non-native English Speaker Teachers</b>					
17	I can learn grammar just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.				
18	I can learn vocabulary just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.				
19	I can improve my pronunciation just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.				
20	I can improve my spoken language just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.				

21	I can improve my speaking skills just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.					
22	I can improve my listening skills just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.					
23	I can improve my writing skills just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.					
24	I can improve my reading skills just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English teachers.					
25	In general, I can learn just as well from Thai non-native English speaker teachers as I can from native English speakers.					
26	I would learn more about cultures of English speaking countries from Thai non-native English speaking teachers.					
27	I would have more positive attitudes towards the learning of English if I study with Thai non-native English speaking teachers					
<b>Teaching of Thai non-native English Speaking Teachers</b>						
28	Thai non-native English speaking teachers are good at explaining grammar.					
29	Grammar should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers					
30	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my Grammar.					
31	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could teach pronunciation well.					
32	Pronunciation should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers.					

33	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my pronunciation.					
34	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my speaking skills.					
35	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could teach listening well.					
36	Listening should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers					
37	Thai non-native English speaking teachers would give good feedback for me to improve my listening skills.					
38	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could teach reading well.					
39	Reading should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers					
40	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my reading skills.					
41	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could teach writing well.					
42	Writing should be taught by Thai non-native English speaking teachers					
43	Thai non-native English speaking teachers could give good feedback for me to improve my writing skills.					
44	Thai non-native English speaking teachers motivate students to learn just as well as native English speaker teachers					
45	Thai non-native English speaking teachers also teach language learning strategies to help students learn better.					

## APPENDIX B

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### แบบสัมภาษณ์

#### วัตถุประสงค์การสัมภาษณ์

การสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อรับทราบความคิดเห็นของนักศึกษาที่มีต่ออาจารย์ชาวไทยผู้สอนในหลักสูตรนานาชาติที่นักศึกษากำลังศึกษาอยู่

#### ข้อปฏิบัติสำหรับการเข้าร่วมสัมภาษณ์กลุ่ม

1. ในขั้นตอนการสัมภาษณ์ ผู้สัมภาษณ์จะเปิดโอกาสให้ผู้เข้าร่วมการสัมภาษณ์ แสดงความคิดเห็นต่อคำถามที่ให้มา โดยผู้สัมภาษณ์จะไม่ระบุสัมภาษณ์เฉพาะบุคคลใดบุคคลหนึ่ง แต่จะให้ผู้เข้าร่วมสัมภาษณ์ช่วยกันตอบคำถาม
2. ผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์สามารถแสดงความคิดเห็นเพิ่มเติม หรือแบ่งปันประสบการณ์เพิ่มเติมในประเด็นที่ผู้ร่วมสัมภาษณ์ท่านอื่นตอบได้
3. แม้ว่าในกระบวนการการตอบคำถามโดยทั่วไป ผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์มักจะเรียงตามลำดับคำถาม แต่หากเมื่อตอบคำถามข้อถัดไปแล้ว และผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์มีข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมสำหรับข้อก่อนหน้าก็สามารถย้อนกลับไปให้ข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมได้
4. หากท่านไม่สบายใจ อึดอัด เครียด หรือไม่ต้องการตอบคำถามข้อใดข้อหนึ่ง ท่านอาจไม่ตอบข้อนั้น ๆ ก็ได้ หรือหากตัดสินใจเข้าร่วมแล้ว แต่รู้สึกอึดอัด ไม่ต้องการร่วมสัมภาษณ์ ท่านสามารถยุติการเข้าร่วมได้
5. ผู้วิจัยอาจถามคำถามเพิ่มเติม เพื่อการอธิบาย ขยายความ ในประเด็นที่ผู้วิจัยไม่เข้าใจ
6. ท่านมีเวลาในการตอบคำถามประมาณ นาที หรือจนกว่าจะหมดประเด็นพูดคุย

### คำถามสัมภาษณ์

ขอให้ท่านแสดงความคิดเห็นในประเด็นต่อไปนี้

1. ความคาดหวังของท่านเกี่ยวกับหลักสูตรนานาชาติในแง่มุมมองที่ว่า หลักสูตรนานาชาติ ควรมีความแตกต่างจากหลักสูตรธรรมดาอย่างไร
2. คุณมีความคาดหวังเป็นการเฉพาะเจาะจงหรือเป็นพิเศษอย่างไรเกี่ยวกับอาจารย์ผู้สอนในหลักสูตรนานาชาติบ้าง
3. การที่ท่านทราบว่าอาจารย์ผู้สอนในหลักสูตรนานาชาติที่ท่านกำลังศึกษาอยู่นี้ ส่วนใหญ่เป็นอาจารย์ชาวไทย และมีอาจารย์ที่พูดภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาแม่เพียงท่านเดียว ท่านคิดว่าอาจารย์ผู้สอนเป็นปัจจัยหนึ่งที่มีผลต่อคุณภาพของหลักสูตรหรือไม่ หากท่านคิดว่ามีผล มีผลอย่างไร หากท่านคิดว่าไม่มีผล เพราะอะไรจึงไม่มีผล
4. ในสถานการณ์การเรียนการสอนใดจำเป็นต้องให้อาจารย์ผู้สอนเป็นชาวไทย และในสถานการณ์การเรียนการสอนใดจำเป็นต้องให้อาจารย์ผู้สอนเป็นเจ้าของภาษาอังกฤษ
5. ในแง่ของเนื้อหาวิชาการ อาจารย์ชาวไทยและอาจารย์ชาวต่างชาติเจ้าของภาษาอังกฤษอาจสอนแตกต่างกันอย่างไร
6. ในแง่ของทักษะทางด้านภาษา อาจารย์ชาวไทยและอาจารย์ชาวต่างชาติเจ้าของภาษาอังกฤษอาจสอนแตกต่างกันอย่างไร
7. นอกเหนือจากความเป็นอาจารย์ชาวต่างชาติเจ้าของภาษาอังกฤษ และความเป็นอาจารย์ชาวไทยที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษา นักศึกษาคิดว่ามีปัจจัยอื่นใดอีกหรือไม่ที่อาจมีผลต่อคุณภาพของการสอน
8. โดยทั่ว ๆ ไป นักศึกษาชอบให้มีอาจารย์แบบไหนในหลักสูตรนานาชาติที่นักศึกษา กำลังศึกษาอยู่มากกว่ากัน อาจารย์ชาวต่างชาติเจ้าของภาษาอังกฤษ หรืออาจารย์ชาวไทย เพราะเหตุใด
9. นักศึกษาคิดว่าการที่มีอาจารย์ชาวไทยที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษาอังกฤษในหลักสูตรนานาชาตินี้ มีผลต่อการเรียนของนักศึกษาหรือไม่ อย่างไร
10. นักศึกษามีความสุขกับหลักสูตรนานาชาติที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่นี้หรือไม่ อย่างไร ทำไมจึงมีความสุข หรือทำไมจึงไม่มีความสุข

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