Research Report

The Management of Language Institutes in Thailand:

Manager experiences and perspectives

Asst. Prof. Dr. Harald Kraus

Dhurakij Pundit University

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Abstract

Thailand has made English instruction compulsory at all levels of the education system, including the tertiary level, where all students must complete 12 credits of English as part of their undergraduate degrees. In order to manage the logistics of teaching sometimes tens of thousands of students from a variety of faculties, many Thai universities establish organizations, commonly termed 'language institutes' or 'language centers'. Despite the prevalence and size of these organizations, little research has been done into their management, and their managers. This research thus investigates via face-to-face and online interview the management experiences, styles and opinions of 11 language institute directors throughout Thailand as part of a preliminary study to identify further research areas. The findings indicate that the administrators share similar attitudes and experiences regarding their positions, including acceptance of the temporariness of the job, high levels of administrative work, acknowledgement of co-dependency in their team, and awareness of cultural norms regarding age and status.

Keywords: higher education, management style, language institute

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

It has long been recognized that competence in communicating in English is one of the most important skills for the modern, globalized workforce to have, and non-English speaking nations around the world have subsequently included English language instruction in their education systems to ensure that future employees can, when and if necessary, communicate and conduct business and other international interactions using the current global *lingua franca*.

Thailand is no different. Given its highly developed tourist industry and its strong economic standing in South-East Asia, it is imperative that a high proportion of its labor force develop a reasonable degree of English competence. Like other nations therefore, English instruction has for many years been included in curricula at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Indeed, since 2005 primary and secondary schools have been encouraged to establish so-called bilingual or English programs (EPs), in which English is the language of instruction, rather than a subject to learn, and such programs are becoming increasingly common and sought after by parents.

At the tertiary level, English has been mandated as part of the so-called General Education component of all undergraduate degrees. This mandate requires that all students undertake 12 credits of English – equivalent to 4 courses of approximately 45 hours per course – irrespective of their main focus of study. (These four courses are often further sub-divided into General English and English for Specific Purposes courses.) While many tertiary institutes comply with this requirement by assigning teachers from the 'regular' degree-offering faculties or departments (usually English or linguistics departments) to teach the General English courses,

many other universities and colleges have created separate and independent departments, generally named Language Institutes, to cater to the high number of students, often numbering in the thousands, requiring English instruction per semester.

Despite the effort and attention committed to English language instruction, English remains a major weakness in the Thai population. It is not uncommon for students who have spent up to 12 years of study to enter university as 'false beginners', requiring remedial English – starting with the alphabet and parts of speech. With only four courses of formal instruction ahead of them, it is little wonder that these students graduate with very little improvement. As such, there are frequent media reports (and subsequent blame casting, advice, government promises and discussion) of the latest international and regional English competence rankings which invariably show Thailand at an embarrassingly low position. For example, in 2010 the results of the global internet and paper-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score revealed that Thailand ranked 116th of 163 nations (www.ets.org). Likewise, the 2012 Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index ranked Thailand in 53rd place out of 54 countries compared, and evaluated Thailand as having 'very low proficiency' – the lowest of five proficiency levels (http://www.ef.co.th/epi/).[1]

While it is not within the scope of this research to examine the reasons for the poor level of English in Thailand, particularly given the importance the nation does place on it, the situation does of course impact how English instruction is delivered, organized and managed. It is with

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[1] It is important to add that while the tests themselves have been validity tested, the test administration may not have been reliable, and these results therefore provide at best a general, but nevertheless telling, picture.

this in mind that the focus of this research is the management of language institutes in Thai

tertiary education organizations.

1.2 Rationale

Administrators of language institutes and General English programs at tertiary institutes

clearly face many challenges, pressures and oftentimes frustrations. They are given the task of

trying to meet a nation's expectations regarding English competence among its highest educated

population, but must do so with students who more often than not enter the tertiary system far

from ready, willing or able to meet those expectations. In addition, they must do this with often

undertrained teachers, tight budgets, large classes, and finally, in a context in which, although

English can be accessed in daily life, especially in Bangkok, there is very little need or desire to

use the language outside of class hours.

This study will examine the management of (English) language institutes in universities

with these issues in mind. Thus, it will not investigate the management of primary, secondary or

even tutorial schools, which are also places where English is taught, as these are differently

managed and organized.

As noted above, English language institutes (or programs) in Thai universities are tasked

with improving the English communication skills of students who are studying in other majors.

They do not confer degrees, and are organizations which have been created as service providers

to a university's faculties as part of compulsory English instruction in all degree programs. This

has numerous implications, the first of which is that English is not the main focus of students'

studies, relegating the General English courses to an oftentimes inconvenient obligation on their

part.

This research proposes to identify the nature of managing language institutes in public and private tertiary education organizations in Thailand by exploring the experiences and perspectives of their directors. The research questions will focus on areas related to management, and some of the guiding areas to be examined will include: what experiences have managers had in their tenure as leaders? How do managers identify themselves? What are their general management styles? What, if any, are some issues and problems in managing foreign staff (or in the case of foreign managers, with managing Thai staff)? Because these are quite broad questions, this research is to be considered as a preliminary or pilot investigation, and a secondary research objective will be to identify areas for further targeted research.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to construct a preliminary picture of the management in Language Institutes in Thai tertiary institutions, both private and public, by identifying management styles and issues facing directors and managers of language institutes.

The objectives of this study are to:

1. survey the experiences of language institute (LI) managers in Thai universities;

2. where possible, identify the <u>leadership and management styles</u> of language institute managers in Thai universities and subsequently determine if there are any <u>commonalities of management style</u> in Thai university language institute;

3. identify what LI managers consider to be the <u>key concerns and issues</u> regarding the management of language institutes;

4. gauge how LI managers have <u>adapted and reacted</u> (through compliance or resistance) to recently imposed quality assurance systems and policies;

5. elicit and outline any issues concerning the management of language institutes that are unique to these organizations;

6. elicit <u>the multicultural aspects and issues</u> of managing language institutes;

7. determine <u>trends and visions</u> regarding LI management and the development of these organizations, and;

8. identify areas for further research regarding the management of language institutes in Thailand.

While this research is focused on the big picture of management styles and issues in language institutes in Thailand, some emphasis will be given to the following areas:

-   management and leadership styles and experiences
-   the tension between 'professionalism' and 'managerialism'
-   change adaptability, management and innovation
-   vision and beliefs regarding ELT development in Thailand

As a caveat, it must be noted that although the study focuses on management in language institutes in Thai universities, with the majority of interviewees being Thai, there will be no attempt to surmise or identify a 'Thai' management style, as this is not part of the objective of the study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Despite the nationally acknowledged importance of English in Thailand, and the arguably urgent need to improve English skills across the country there is scant information from the perspective of LI administrators. To the researcher's knowledge no research of this nature and with the research questions has been conducted to date – at least in English.

It is hoped therefore, that in addition to providing valuable insights into the viewpoints and experiences of administrators of English teaching organizations in Thai higher education organizations, this pilot study will serve as a foundation upon which to identify key issues and refinements of key questions, such as how language institutes can be most effectively structured and managed, and how ELT pedagogy can be improved in Thai tertiary institutions[L1].

1.5 Definition of terms

ELT: English language teaching

Language institute: a department or organization within a university in Thailand which is dedicated to instructing English as part of the required General Education component of all undergraduate programs.

General English: instruction in the 'four skills' (speaking, listening, reading and writing) of English for the purposes of improving the communicative competence of students

HE: higher education

Manager/administrator/director: these terms will be used interchangeably in this report to refer to the person in charge of managing the staff, budgeting, curriculum and development of a language institute, General English program.

Chapter 2 Literature review

Although a great deal of literature exists in relation to management, there has been little research done in the field of management in Thailand, and even less with regards to language institute management. The following review reflects this, and has been organized to address the most relevant contexts and themes related to LI management in higher education in Thailand. Thus, this review will consider a) management and management styles in general, b) management in Thailand, c) management in Higher Education in general and in Thailand, and finally, d) the management of language institutes. The discussion will thus start with a more general perspective of management and education management in order to provide a context for the current study and the 'zoom in' on the more specific topic of language institute management in Thailand.

2.1 Management Functions, Roles and Styles

Research interests in management and leadership are broad and diverse, and there is a vast amount of both academic and general literature concerning management. Much of this literature examines, discusses and/or advises the reader (more in the case of literature produced for general the public) on the qualities of good leadership and management. Despite the abundance of such literature however, much of it revolves around a core of accepted models of management functions or qualities and often stem from 'classic' analyses of management. These will be discussed briefly below.

In terms of management functions for example, one of the most well-known discussions is that of Koontz and O'Donnell (1972) who list 5 functions of management: planning, organizing, leading, staffing and controlling.

In developing such functions other texts on management (e.g. Lewis, Garcia & Jobs 1990, Tripathi & Reddy 2008) commonly address a number of other predominant skills, roles, tasks and challenges that managers have to deal with, including:

- Communication

- Decision making

- Delegation

- Conflict management

- Motivation

- Performance appraisal

- Organizational development

Each of these core areas of the manager's work can be handled differently, and while this often depends on the workplace context, it seems greater attention has been given as to how managers behave in relation to these roles. These behaviours are commonly and collectively known as the manger's 'style' (although emphasis is generally placed on the manager's communication, decision-making and delegation).

As one might expect, numerous researchers have aimed to identify and define a range of different styles and therefore the resulting nomenclature varies from author to author. However, some of the canonical categorizations or descriptions of management style include Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973), who delineate 7 discrete actions among a 'continuum of styles', Steinmetz

and Hunt (1974), who also list 7 styles of management, and Dubrin (2007), who describes 5

styles. These authors revolve around a relatively common set of definitions or categorizations of

management style, with individual but slight modifications or additions, but which can be

summarized as the table below shows:

Style	Basic definition
autocratic	taking full control without consultation
authoritarian	making most decisions although some may be made following consultation with senior managers
democratic	arriving at decisions through majority rule
participative	allowing lower level managers to make most of the decisions, and acting more as facilitators
bureaucratic	somewhat like autocratic management, but deriving authority from corporate policies and rules; implementing decisions handed down the hierarchy

Table 1: management styles and their basic definitions

To these categories, Goleman (2000) adds 'coaching', 'pacesetting', and 'affiliative' styles.

But in general, 'management style' refers to the manner in which a manager runs an

organization, particularly, as noted above, in terms of how she makes decisions, how she

communicates and how she delegates.

2.1.1 Good leadership and management

A great deal of the literature on management is devoted to answering questions regarding

effective management or good leadership. One might expect that the definition or evaluation of

good management depends on whom one asks: upper, middle or lower management, or indeed

other various stakeholders, including employees and even customers. However, those claiming to

be able to answer the questions concerning good management tend, in most cases, to use

successful leaders as their sources. This approach also tends to be common in formal research,

where case studies and survey research on successful leaders and managers abound. Most

significantly, and yet not unexpectedly, such research has pointed out that no one management style is most effective, and as Goleman (2000) asserts, the effective and successful manager is one who has mastered a variety of styles, and can adopt them appropriately according to the situation in which the organization finds itself.

2.2 Management styles in Thailand

Considerable research has been conducted in the area of 'Asian' management styles – particularly as contrasted with so-called Western styles of management or workplace culture. Perhaps the prominent reference in this area is Hofstede's (1984; 1993) 'Cultural Dimensions'[2] model of cultural values as well as his colleague Waisfisz's analysis of organizational culture, which lists eight dimensions[3] (http://geert-hofstede.com/organisational-culture-dimensions.html)

However, with the exception of books and websites on managing in Thailand, which have been targeted to the general (expatriate) public (e.g. Holmes, Suchada & Tomizawa, 1995), there is relatively little literature in English available concerning management styles and behaviours of Thai managers *per se*, the assumption perhaps being that expatriates come to Thailand as executives and need to know how to manage local staff, rather than what to expect from their

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[2] These focus on cultural orientations toward individualism, masculinity, power distance, uncertainty, and long term orientation.

[3] These focus on means oriented vs goal oriented, internally driven vs externally driven, easy going work discipline vs strict work discipline, local vs professional, open system vs closed system, employee oriented vs work oriented, degree of acceptance of leadership style, and degree of identification with organization.

Thai bosses. And, as with research in the broader Asian context, most academic research concerning Thailand has focused on the cross-cultural dimension of management, that is, the context in which managers and employees have different cultural backgrounds (e.g. Onishi, 2011; Kamoche, 2000) or on workplace values (e.g. Komin, 1990).

In one exception, Runglertkrengkrai and Engkaninan (1987), study managerial behavior in Thailand through the lens of Thai culture and religious beliefs. They note that Thai cultural values have traditionally emphasized genial relationships, a love of fun, leading to an [L2]'abhorrence of hard work' (p. 9), and inner freedom. And while the authors identify numerous Buddhist principles and precepts which can be applied to managerial and leadership behavior, they concur with Nakata (1985), who concludes that Thai executives do 'not understand genuine Buddhist doctrine and could not adapt the tenets of Buddhism to their careers' (Runglertkrengkrai & Engkaninan 1987, p. 12).

At the same time, there has been a divergence in values between urban and rural Thais, with urban Thais increasingly adopting more Western values such as accomplishment, self-reliance, responsibility and, ultimately, self-centeredness. Additionally, Runglertkrengkrai and Engkaninan note that in their study all the executives had tertiary education, with a high percentage having been educated abroad, and moreover that even in Thailand business education uses or adapts Western books. These facts, they argue, have undoubtedly influenced Thai managerial concepts so that there is currently a blending of managerial styles with emphasis given both to interpersonal and task-based orientations[L3].

More recently, in a survey of management styles of executives in stock exchange listed companies in Thailand, Wattanasupachoke (2006) uses three 'skills' sets as benchmarks against

which to evaluate different styles: technical, human and conceptual. Technical skills include those skills which are based on managers (and employees) knowledge and expertise in the field of work, human skills refers to interaction and communication skills, and conceptual skills are those which concern analytical skills, systematic thinking, and creativity and innovation. Wattanasupachoke concludes that human skills are considered most important in Thai companies. The roles managers emphasize most are 'negotiator[L4]' and providing direction to staff. High emphasis is given to maintaining harmony, which reflects Thai cultural values (and embodies conflict avoidance), and unity of direction.

It must be added that Wattanasupachoke's analysis has two weaknesses in that firstly he surveys managers according to what they consider important, from their perspectives. It is therefore an examination of manager's values and not an examination of their actual practices in management. Secondly, the survey does not explore the notion of communication more deeply. The conclusion that human skills are important therefore does not explain the actual style, or form of communication used, such as whether communication from managers to employees is participatory or autocratic. Indeed, a more autocratic, rather than democratic or negotiated form of communication is alluded to in the conclusion that cohesion is ensured through 'giving direction, setting goal[s] and course of operation so that everyone follows the path laid down by top management' (Wattanasupachoke, 2006, p. 8)

In sum, of the little research conducted (in English), evidence points to the manager's emphasis on social harmony, staff happiness and a blend of Eastern and Western managerial practices, behaviors and perspectives.

2.3 Management in Higher Education

One might think that the experiences, practices and styles of management and can be broadly applied to all types of organization, including higher education. But there are also several areas of research interest specific to higher education management, with journals and a considerable number of books devoted to the field (e.g. Bennett, Crawford & Cartwright eds., 2003; Leader, 2004; Fraser, 2005), of which only a fraction can be discussed here. Of particular interest in this research, then, is the manager's identity and the changing nature of higher education management, particularly those changes which have impacted the manager's role in recent years.

In terms of identity then, mid-level higher education managers are in the unique, some might say strange or even conflicting position of often having two roles: teacher and manager. This is because a large portion of middle managers have 'moved through the ranks' from teaching to managing (while continuing to teach, albeit with reduced loads). As a result, there are unique perspectives and dynamics involved in both these positions, and higher education managers must balance them both. Page (2011b) has generated a typology of positions, or identities that education middle managers assume in light of their often conflicted roles as both educators and administrators. He bases these on metaphors of religious faith:

1. Fundamentalists who continue to consider themselves primarily as teachers and thus prioritize students.

2. Priests who still focus on students but also aim to develop their teams and seek to ensure their well-being.

3. Converts who prioritize their administrative responsibilities and the organization's needs.

4. Martyrs who aim to balance all of the positions equally.

2.3.1 The shift to managerialism

One main reason for the interest in higher education management is that, as a result of their dual roles, managers at all levels inevitably deal with distinct often conflicting challenges. Foremost among these is the result of the significant transformation the sector has in many countries undergone in recent decades, primarily as a consequence of government-led policy changes. For example, in the UK, USA and Australia, governments have placed greater pressure on universities by demanding more 'access and participation in higher education, more efficient and effective governance and administration, more accountability, and resource constraints' (Pearson & Trevitt, 2005, p. 88).

All of these demands have resulted in universities adopting the discourses, practices and ideologies of the business world. Central to this shift has been the move towards what is termed 'managerialism' (Randle & Brady, 1997a; 1997b; Trowler, 1998; Holloway, 1999), Randle and Brady (1997b, p.125) characterize as a transformation from the 'professionalism' characterizing the 'old' university to the managerialism of the 'new' university, which they in turn define as a 'generic package of management techniques'. Randle and Brady (1997b, p. 125) list these techniques as including:

- strict financial management and devolved budgetary controls;

- the efficient use of resources and the emphasis on productivity;

- the extensive use of quantitative performance indicators;

- the development of consumerism and the discipline of the market;

- the manifestation of consumer charters as mechanisms for accountability;

- the creation of a disciplined, flexible workforce, using

- flexible/individualized contracts, staff appraisal systems and

- performance related pay;

- the assertion of managerial control and the managers' right to manage.

Managerialism is more than a list of techniques, however: it is a cultural practice with ideological underpinnings. An added dimension to managerialism therefore is that it involves 'a framework of values and beliefs about social arrangements and the distribution and ordering of resources' (Trowler, 1998, p. 93). In other words, managerialism should not be viewed as a set of actions that managers perform, but how those actions inform and are informed by ideologies concerning the organization of a given social domain, including that of education.

Amounting therefore to what is often called a 'paradigm shift' this has led to what various authors consider an identity crisis among higher education managers. Gleeson and Shain (1999; 2003) for example, call the dual pressures between the pedagogical values of the traditional university and the new market-oriented university an ambiguity that has 'driven a wedge' between lecturers who maintain the traditional values and higher education (HE) managers who are now pressured to promote the 'managerial bottom line' (1999, p. 461).

This sense of ambiguity or identity crisis is in fact a common theme in HE management studies (e.g. Elliot, 1996; Briggs, 2001; Hellawell & Hancock, 2003; Pearson & Trevitt, 2005; Kok et al., 2011). In their study, Hellawell and Hancock (2003) explore the nature of being a 'middle manager' (at the level of Dean, Associate Dean, or Head of Department) in a 'new' university in the UK, and highlight the dilemmas and difficulties these managers face, particularly focusing on the complex relationship between managers and academic staff.

Most significant among the complexities is that, while they have been supposedly empowered and indeed required by upper administrations to exert more managerial or hierarchical control, managers actually have to deal with more traditionally democratic and collegial-based politics at the staff level. Managers are faced with academic staff – particularly long term staff – who are subversive, incompliant, resistant to change, difficult, and pursuing their own agendas rather than complying with the university's agenda. They are thus 'squeezed from the top and from underneath', as Gleeson and Shain (2003, p. 233) note. Consequently, tasks such as policy setting and decision making are slow and frustrating experiences for managers, who additionally feel they have 'very few sanctions of any kind available to them when dealing with the full-time academic staff nominally under their control' (Hellawell &Hancock, 2003, p. 259). Ultimately, they conclude that middle managers 'are more vulnerable than the staff they manage' (ibid.) in terms of job security. In sum, the organization and management of faculties and departments has become more complex, which is 'compounded by the constant pressure for change from different and, at times, conflicting sources' (Pearson & Trevitt, 2005, p. 89). Additionally, as Elliot (1996, p. 8) notes, there is a great deal of tension between 'policy and practice [and] between the reality and the rhetoric of policy and its implementation.'

As a consequence of these changes, the higher education manager is now tasked with a number of additional roles – a situation which is compounded by the fact that the majority of managers are untrained to assume them [L5](Elliot, 1996; Randle & Bradley, 1997). Whereas traditionally deans and directors were principally tasked with academic development (such as introducing new programs) and research, modern managers are now positioned as middle managers who are continually asked to 'strengthen their leadership and management practice'

(Pearson & Trevitt, 2005, p. 90). That is, they must learn to exercise leadership, where

previously there was a more collegial dynamic, and manage a host of organizational areas. Some

of the most important of these added responsibilities now include:

- change management,

- quality assurance,

- organizing staff,

- problem solving,

- performance evaluation

- budgeting, and

- entrepreneurship (e.g. marketing)

In addition to this, as middle managers they must align their leadership and management in

accordance with university 'missions, strategies and environmental factors' (Williams, 2009, p.

134) in an atmosphere of competition, for funds and students, both within and beyond the

organization.

In another study, Trowler (1998) investigates the reception among lecturers in a UK

university to market-led curriculum development, i.e. determining course and curriculum content

based on the demands of the market (students) and concludes that the resulting ideological

division ultimately undermines a university's expectations.

2.3.2 Good education management

The prevailing shift in the educational paradigm has inevitably been met with a variety of

responses. From the lecturers' viewpoint for instance, Elliot (1996) identifies a desire for more

inclusion in strategic planning. Indeed, Elliot's study highlights the fact that while lecturers

understood the need for efficiency and effective management in light of the newly competitive

nature of higher education, they did not have a sense of participation and ownership in the

strategic planning. Lecturers felt that they and their values had been undermined by 'a new

educational management jargon, which reflected the needs of accountancy rather than pedagogy'

(Elliot, 1996, p. 18). For lecturers, understandably, a good model of management therefore is one

that reflects the needs and concerns of lecturers, rather than the market, as well as 'clear decision

making, individual managerial responsibility and effective communication' (Elliot, 1996, p. 19).

Thus an important issue in any study of managers in higher education is one that aims to identify

whether and to what extent strategic planning is done collectively and how decisions are made.

Kerry and Murdoch (1992) claim that the changes in higher education have left managers

demoralized, pessimistic, insecure, tired and lacking in knowledge, all of which have follow-on

affects for the people they manage. To counter this, they argue that managers need training in

what they call 'positive management'. The traits of a positive manager are offered in a checklist

in three categories: attitudes and beliefs, personality, actions and strategies. The list contains 21

items and includes (in addition to characteristics already mentioned above, in section 2.2):

having optimism, keeping a sense of humour, having determined personality, showing charisma,

being prepared to take risks, having interventionist style, consulting widely, tackling the

attainable, and nurturing colleagues through change acting in competition with oneself. They

also note that the single most important factor in the success of a school is the quality of

leadership. This quality is seen through is the 'ability to show interest and empathy with whom

one works…and the ability to establish and maintain appropriate organizational structures and

processes' (Kerry & Murdoch, 1992, p. 7).

Another interesting dimension to higher education management is 'managerial resistance', as explored by Page (2011). Critiquing the common perception that there is an easily identifiable power-resistance dichotomy, whereby managers are seen as enforcers and controllers and employees as challenging the managers' power in various forms of resistance, Page argues that management is not homogenous, and that middle managers are equally prone to exercising various forms of overt and covert resistance against upper management. These forms of resistance range include practices ranging from 'principled dissent' to quietly ignoring requests and instructions, to 'cutting corners' by fabricating data, to cynicism and to 'cognitive escape' in the form of looking for other positions.

2.3.3 Higher Education reform in Thailand

As with many countries, educational reform is considered a priority in Thailand. As part of its efforts to reform the higher education sector, Thailand has introduced a number of measures one of the most notable of which has been the decentralization of administration (World Bank, p. 82) with the expectation that universities make locally relevant decisions and with greater flexibility and effectiveness. Universities thus have the ability to set their own academic programs (in light of industry and employer needs) as well as assess them through quality assurance reviews. Having said this, policies, goals and plans are still governmentally centralized, while universities are 'in charge of deciding methods and strategies to implement them' (World Bank, p. 82).

Thus, private and public universities have in recent years been highly focused on developing qualities assurance systems, and as this has obviously impacted the workload of HE managers, it is a topic of interest and area of questioning for the current research.

2.4 Managing language institutes: challenges and issues

To the researcher's knowledge, little research has been conducted which focuses specifically on the management of tertiary education language institutes as defined in this research, either in international and Thai contexts. Of the few papers concerned with the topic, Borlongan (2010) identifies issues and obstacles that administrators and teachers in the Philippines face when attempting to introduce innovations. These include lack of formal systems to introduce innovations, bureaucratic obstacles and personal politicking.

An additional complexity arises when discussing the administration of language institutes, especially in Thailand, given the fact that they often employ foreign staff, making language departments multi-lingual and multi-cultural workplaces. This can have consequences with regard to communication, manager-staff role and behavior expectations, the dynamics of power and hierarchies, and conflict management. Dunworth (2008) investigates the management issues of transnational ELT programs and finds variation in perceptions among educators from various cultural backgrounds, as well as identifies lack of accountability, improper resources and communication problems as significant issues that need addressing.

In terms of challenges, ELT managers in Thai universities face considerable pressure and indeed scrutiny. The lack of English proficiency among students entering the workforce is a perennial concern, and reports comparing Thai learners with students of other (Asian) nations tend to reflect a comparatively poor success rate (e.g. Wiriyachitra, 2002). It seems almost on a weekly basis that the Thai media report on government (and other stakeholders') decrees, announcements or complaints regarding the low proficiency levels of students and university graduates. Indeed, the 'noise' surrounding English use in Thailand is becoming increasingly

louder and more urgent with the soon-to-be-established ASEAN Economic Community (AEC),

and Thailand's place in it, foremost in many people's minds.

2.5 Conclusion

Universities and university departments, including language institutes present unique

circumstances and contexts for management. This is emphasized by the relatively recent

transformation in higher education to a more accountable and market-oriented outlook. In

today's higher education sector, the discourse no longer concerns only academia and research in

a collegial atmosphere. Rather, in pursuing a managerialist ideology which packages and markets

knowledge while aiming to establish organizations that adhere to principles and practices of

'total quality management', managers must now give greater consideration to – and balance the

needs of – the various 'stakeholders', including 'customers' – students and their families –

governments and university administrations, and of course the lecturers and support staff they

directly manage. University managers must weigh these varying and often opposing interests and

pressures in the course of the management of their organizations and make frequent

compromises in their pursuit of academic as well as organizational quality development.

Chapter 3 Research Design

3.1 Methodology

In establishing a research sample, the researcher first aimed to identify as many formally named Language Institutes in private and public universities in Thailand as possible. Although figures vary among different sources, at the time of writing there were 171 higher education institutes in Thailand, as listed by the Office of the Higher Education Commission (http://www.mua.go.th/). Of these, 79 universities are public (comprised of a combination of government funded and autonomous universities), while there are 40 private universities and institutes. For this research then, there were effectively 129 eligible universities which by virtue of their status are obliged to provide English instruction. However, not all of them had Language Institutes as separate units (i.e. they were embedded within other faculties, such as Arts or Language faculties), and indeed, the exact figure of such organizations was very difficult to establish, as universities are often under organizational transition[4].

Next, the researcher established the identities of the current directors of the ascertained language institutes and approached the majority of them via e-mail as a 'cold-call'. In three cases the researcher and potential interviewee were acquainted. While the researcher aimed to sample only the directors of public universities and private universities, in the end there was one exception with the inclusion of the director of the General English program from a private

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[4] In fact the even the researcher's institution has, since the interviews were conducted, reorganized the faculties such that the language institute was also administratively disbanded and subsumed by another faculty.

college, the interviewer incidentally being the only foreigner interviewed and again an acquaintance of the researcher. Numerous managers did not respond at all, while in other cases the directors were not available during the time frame for interviews.

In sum, the sample size was purposive and convenience based, and as this was non-probabilistic research it was difficult to establish the exact sample size needed. Time constraints did not allow the researcher to continue interviews to be able to make the claim of having reached 'data saturation' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as has become an established practice in qualitative interview-based research. Nonetheless, recent research has also shown that the saturation point is reached after just 12 interviews (Guest, Bunce & Johnson 2006), making the number in this research at least respectable in this light.

The researcher conducted interviews over a period of eight months, the duration resulting from the challenges in arranging interview times (with numerous postponements and some cancellations). Interview times lasted from one to three hours, with longer interviews generally resulting from interruptions such as phone calls and people requiring the director's input/feedback. The interviews were recorded using an MP3 player recording device.

All interviews except two were conducted in office hours in the subjects' offices. This also allowed the interviewer to make observational notes, and, although these do not form a significant source of data, gave the researcher the opportunity to add to the overall discussion.

Following the interviews the researcher transcribed the recordings using Express Scribe software. Very few transcription marks were added to the transcriptions themselves as the researcher was not conducting a linguistic analysis per se. Throughout the transcription process themes were identified and quotations extracted from the transcripts into an Excel file.

3.1.1 Limitations

As noted above, the number of interviewees represents ~~xx% of the~~a relatively small percentage ~~number of the targeted~~directors and managers of language institutes in Thailand ~~universities combined~~. Thus, given the nature of the research and the quantity of interview transcripts, generalizations cannot be made with regard to the experience of management styles of all administrators in Thai organizations. The results therefore are to serve more as a preliminary insight into the directors' experiences.

Additionally, there has been no attempt to triangulate data or otherwise conduct a 'thick description'. Therefore, there were no interviews with teachers and other subordinates who could corroborate or contradict the interviewees' comments. There was also no documentary evidence, such as analysis of meeting minutes, or e-mails.

While all directors where highly proficient in English, as one might expect, this doesn't exclude the possibility that, given the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' second language (in all but one case) some questions were misinterpreted or that some answers were not expressed as deeply as might otherwise have been possible.

Finally, given the face-to-face nature of interviews and time constraints, the majority of face-to-face interviews were conducted in Bangkok and its immediate surrounds, while two provincial universities were conducted via Skype. Another interviewee was unable to access a webcam to facilitate an online interview and therefore completed a written response to the questions, which were then sent via e-mail. While the Skype based interviews did not impede the nature of the interview (i.e. the interviewer could ask follow-up and clarification questions) this

was not possible with the written responses. However, the responses provided were still accepted and incorporated into the research data and its analysis.

The details of the interviewees are tabled below.

Gender	Female	8	Male	4
Organization	Public	5	Private	7
Location	Bangkok	6	Provinces	5 (2 in neighbouring provinces)
Nationality	Thai	11	Foreign	1

Table 2: interview details (N = 11)

~~Finally, given the face-to-face nature of interviews and time constraints, the majority of interviews were conducted in Bangkok and its immediate surrounds, with provincial universities admittedly under-represented. Two provincial interviews were conducted via Skype, and although this posed no problem there was one interviewee who agreed to be interviewed but was unable to access any form of online/webcam based format to facilitate and actual interview. That interviewee completed a written response to the questions, which were sent via e-mail.~~

~~Female 8   Male 4~~

~~other 1 Thai 11   Foreign 1~~

~~Female 8   Male 4~~

~~Public university 7   private university 4?   other 1~~

~~Thai 11   Foreign 1~~

~~Bangkok   Provinces~~

Chapter 4 Results

The responses and themes that emerged during the interviews have been organized according to the research questions outlined in chapter 1. The interviewees have been numbered to preserve their anonymity. The quotations are faithfully recorded; however minor grammatical corrections have been made (e.g. subject verb agreement, final /s/ and /ed/ articulation), to compensate for common spoken errors of non-native speakers of English, and where the context makes the intended meaning clear. In cases of possible variations in meaning or to maintain anonymity, square brackets have been used to indicate researcher input.

4.1 Background information

4.1.1   Time in the job

The age range of the interviewees was quite broad—from mid-thirties to mid-sixties—as was their experience in management. The director with the least time in educational management was 2 months while the most experienced administrator had held administrative positions for more than 37 years. Nonetheless, all of the interviewees had been in their present position for a relatively short time, the range being 4 months to 7 years, with an approximate average of 2-3 years

In two instances the directors had held their positions on a temporary basis for up to 2 years before finally being officially installed as the director.

4.1.2   Promotion/Obtaining the position

With regard to the manner in which the administrators had obtained their position, there were two predominant paths or processes, and these conformed to the standard promotion procedures in Thai higher education. In public universities, the directors were voted by the faculty and subsequently approved by senior managers (i.e. president or vice president) or deans, depending on organizational structure of the language institute.

In private universities and organizations however, managers are directly selected by senior management and offered the job. These newly installed managers may have been current (usually long-term) employees or in two cases invited from outside the university, via previous acquaintance.

In public universities directors are rotated more frequently, with terms lasting the average 2-3 years, often with a maximum of only two terms permitted. In all cases but two, the directors were

voted or promoted according to this procedure, with the exception being public university directors having been directly invited by senior management to be interim director upon the establishment of a 'new' language institute or due to other institutional re-organization. One of these directors had initially applied as lecturer and was instead recruited to lead the Language Centre, given that s/he was the only one in possession of a doctoral degree. (With the exception of the vocational college language institute director, all directors possessed doctoral degrees in language or language teaching, as per government mandates.)

None of the directors applied for or seemed to have actively pursued their appointments, and although some 'office politics' may have been involved (discussed in section 4.4 below), none of the directors appeared to be 'ladder-climbing': instead, they viewed their appointment as a matter of duty and loyalty to the organization: directors are invited, in some cases with initial reluctance, they serve their terms, and are then rotated or step down to pursue other interests.

4.1.3   Number of teachers in organization

Again, the range in this category was quite substantial, and understandably in line with the size of the organization, with directors responsible for 10 to 70 full-time instructors, sometimes split across two campuses. The organizations also varied greatly in their staff distribution in terms of full-time to part-time ratios, with a number of organizations employing up to 40 part-time staff (a ratio of 1:4) while others employed only full time lecturers.

4.2 General Experiences of language institute (LI) managers

In this part of the investigation the researcher aimed to identify some general impressions and backgrounds of the interviewees, and asked both subjective questions as well as for some factual details particular with regard to training, self-identity, management in a Thai context and overall job satisfaction.

4.2.1   Prior training

Virtually none of the directors had formal training in management prior to their obtaining

the position, although they had all attended management workshops given by their respective

organizations, following their appointment to management. There was unison in the sentiment

however, that management is best learned on the job. Managers felt that it comes down to

'common sense', or that one can only learn about management through on-the-job experience of

dealing with issues specific to their organization. As such, one director noted that, while on the

surface the faculties would appear to be the same in nature, in practice this wasn't the case:

> It would be nice though if we could provide a formal training for people who run the institute or
> for that matter any faculty at all. But it isn't possible because …on the surface they may look
> rather similar, but when it comes to the actual work, I don't think it's the same. (Interviewee 1)

The managers were also asked if they had pursued any self-studies regarding management.

The majority response was that they had read 'a little', although three had actively sought books

on management (one had read a lot) at the early stages of their (first) managerial appointments.

Only one director had previously taken a formal business course, which had covered Human

Resource management, organizational behavior and management and which s/he felt had been

very helpful, although s/he too noted that most of the time management was about improvising.

Of those asked what kind of training they would like, two answered that training in Human

Resources management would help while others insisted that on-the-job training was sufficient.

4.2.2   Identity and perspective on role(s) and responsibilities

Despite their positions, all of the directors also had teaching responsibilities, some a great

deal. Whereas the officially prescribed number of hours is generally 3 to 6 hours teaching per

week, some directors regularly taught up to 22 hours per week. (The mandated load, even for

teaching positions, ranges from 8-12 hours per week for Thai instructors.) Interestingly

however, this was not a source of any complaints. The directors accepted the additional work and, while admittedly anyone who teaches more than the prescribed number of hours is paid for this as extra load, this did not seem to be a motivation for taking the additional responsibility. Instead, it was simply a matter of duty as a head of an organization with stretched human resources.

Given that the directors had all started their careers as teachers, the researcher asked what role they identified with more: administrator or teacher. Most managers identified themselves as administrators, although they commensurately emphasized that teaching took up a lot of time. Two managers continued to think of themselves as teachers foremost. One director preferred to describe herself/himself as coordinator: 'I'm not the head, not the boss. Every time I act as the boss, someone will hate me' [laughs] (Interviewee 2)

Metaphorical self-descriptions included 'captain of ship', 'conductor' and 'brand ambassador', and in keeping perhaps with a Thai concept of non-familial relations described in familial terms, a number of elder managers described themselves as '(elder) sisters'.

In terms of roles and responsibilities there was understandably quite a strong and common trend in their perceptions. As they are generally short statements they can be conveniently listed:

- to provide goals and directions (Interviewee 1)

- to develop (Interviewee 2)

- to set goals, to prioritize…to put the right person into the right job (Interviewee 3)

- [to meet] the organization's goals and objectives (Interviewee 4)

- as manager, to identify and provide what the teachers require to most effectively do their job … as leader to unify the teachers with a common purpose and as one

team…who understand their role in achieving the [organization's name withheld] vision (Interviewee 5)

- to create new things and … to empower my staff (Interviewee 6)

- I have to.... make [the university's policy and plan] concrete (Interviewee 7)

- [to set] the department goal and [lead] the team to accomplish it (Interviewee 8)

- to create new things for the institute… to maintain the business or whatever projects we have had…and to maintain the good will among the staff members (Interviewee 9)

- to be a leader that is committed to a vision inspiring people, engaging people (Interviewee 10)

- to set up programs that will make students knowledgeable and skillful (Interviewee 11)

In general then, the directors identified three main roles: to pursue (the university's) goals, to initiate new projects and to guide their subordinates to completing both. As can be seen, two of the interviewees (5 and10) made the distinction between the role of manager and that of leader. (Interviewee 10 held a negative view of the managerial role and noted that s/he no longer wanted to be a manager, whose role was 'planning, supervising, controlling budgeting, strategic thinking' and that instead s/he preferred more vision related pursuits).

Another responsibility/goal for at least two of the directors was to increase student numbers, and despite the different sources of income between public and private institutions (government and students, respectively) this was not restricted to the directors employed in private organizations only.

4.2.3   Management in a Thai cultural context

The researcher, as a non-Thai, is aware that it is from an outsider's perspective that the Thai management context is being considered and identified. But it is arguably *because* of this perspective that certain managerial traits can be identified. As such, the researcher was able to

identify comments made by interviewees as somewhat unique, noteworthy or unusual from his

etic[5] perspective. The following comments are therefore offered as observations and should not

be considered as either definitive or even generalizable statements regarding the 'Thai style' of

management, but are nonetheless at the same time compatible with numerous studies and

analyses of Thai culture, as referred to in Chapter 2.

Above and beyond all other aspects that were noted by the researcher as being of a

particularly Thai nature was the awareness and respect to age and age-related status. Indeed,

eight of the ten Thai interviewees made comments in relation to their age in relation to their

subordinates, whether it was comments regarding being 'elder sisters' (see below), or more

specifically and explicitly, comments which revealed culturally-defined rather than workplace-

defined hierarchies (which is arguably a distinction made in many Western cultures). That is,

directors made note of their power to manage and direct subordinates in terms of their age rather

than their position. Almost all of the younger directors (below 40) had experienced difficulties

with older teachers, particularly at the outset of their managerial appointments:

- During the first year we have senior teachers and they (were) quite difficult [for me]…they caused some problems (Interviewee 7)

- For the younger colleagues I can talk to them more frankly but for the senior colleagues I have to talk to them more indirectly. Convince them to do this to do that. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. (Interviewee 9)

- When I was head [of the English department] there were a lot of older teachers who worked for me and so I tried to motivate. And most of the time they did not [co-operate] and I tried to keep calm. (Interviewee 11)

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[5] The emic/etic distinction (crudely defined as inside/outside 'participant' of a culture) may not be entirely appropriate or

valid here, as the researcher has been a long term resident, and therefore 'participant' in Thai culture.

One director also somewhat reluctantly gave priority to seniors, as a matter of protocol:

> When I have to make a decision of something, I would give the priority to the senior first. And I am happy when they say no. But I keep asking them in case they would like to say yes, and they want to show their proficiency. So it would be OK.…to let them know that I don't go over them. I respect them as the senior and I give this chance to them. (Interviewee 6)

Conversely, senior directors made use of their seniority. In discussing an occasion when required documentation was not correctly submitted, one director noted:

> So this year finally after….probably among the deans my friend and I are the olde[st], and so we….refused to do it her way [laughter] (Interviewee 4)

In addition to age, another Thai (or Asian) perspective was evidenced in the way administrators defined themselves in familial terms, as noted above, with recurrent comments (from female interviewees) being that 'I'm like their sister' (Interviewee 1) or that relations between them and their subordinates are 'like brothers and sisters' (Interviewee 2).

Finally, happiness, avoidance of conflict, or an emphasis on social harmony was either explicitly noted or implied by a number of managers:

- And I thought they are the same age as me. I was expecting them to be like me too! I thought they are the same age as me why can't they do this? But you know, Thai culture, you just cannot burst your temper. (Interviewee 2)

- So I always tell my people I want everyone happy working… you cannot squeeze [people] (Interviewee 4)

In reference to taking disciplinary action, one director touched on a number of topics simultaneously:

> And I think this is because we are in Thailand and in Thai society there's always that patron and client, brother-type of relationship, [a] compromising and non-confrontational approach that makes taking any disciplinary action very difficult. (Interviewee 1)

There were numerous other allusions to Thai culture, some of which will be discussed below in relation to other aspects of management.

4.2.4   Job satisfaction

All of the managers except two specifically expressed an enjoyment of their work, and this was predominantly because it gave them a sense of being able to achieve things, to make decisions, and to create. As one manager notes:

> I'm enjoying my management work because...I have a lot of freedom. I want to do this, and I can just do it. I love freedom and to be in this position – oh I can exercise my freedom (Interviewee 2)

At the same time, their enjoyment was qualified by statements regarding stress, lost personal time, tiredness and even boredom. One of the – perhaps surprising – commonalities, was not so much the dedication of the managers, which was evident, but this dedication combined with a relatively complacent outlook toward their future. Almost all the managers made comments to the effect that 'if I were asked to leave tomorrow, I wouldn't mind'. In five cases the lack of fear of losing the position was largely attributable to the financial freedom of being near to retirement (or effectively in retirement) or having a family business. In three cases the managers expressed a desire to return to teaching and research.

4.3 Leadership and management styles

4.3.1   General

Eliciting meaningful data and comments concerning interviewee's management styles proved challenging, primarily perhaps because it involved the interviewee's perception of their own performance. In terms of Dubrin's *participative, consultative, consensus, democratic* and *autocratic* styles, for example, few respondents would be likely to admit to being autocratic,

given the negative connotations of this type of leadership. However, some interviewees were indeed directly and speculatively asked about their styles in these terms and these directors categorized themselves as mixed or democratic in their leadership, but also 'confessed' to resorting to being autocratic in some regards.[6]

The interviewer therefore focused on the types of actions and behaviours that are considered to represent various management styles and noted comments during the interview that related to or were indicative of varying styles and attitudes. As such, four main areas were examined: communication; attitudes to staff and staff motivation/appraisal and work ethic/philosophy.

4.3.2 Communication

In order to further gain insight into management styles, the researcher asked managers about their communication with staff. This was done with two contexts in mind: meetings and day-to-day forms of communication.

Meetings

With regard to meetings, managers were asked about the frequency, perceived purpose and nature of meetings. Most managers tried to hold a general meeting i.e. with all staff attending, at least once a month. One director held a general meeting weekly, while 3 (27%) others held general meetings once per term, or three times per year. Overall the purpose of these meetings

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[6] They were 'speculatively' asked on the informal hypothesis that it would not be a fruitful approach to questioning, and this did turn out to be the case: such categories, while seeming theoretically feasible, simply were not applicable to the complex realities of management, and those who were asked commented to that effect – that one does not always adhere to exclusively to one style of management.

for most managers was to convey information, particularly with regard to university policy.

Other stated reasons were to solve problems, to summarize the past month, to come to agreement

on courses of action, and to follow up on plans or budgeting expenses. One director noted the

importance of meetings as a forum to negotiate a policy before it became enacted:

> I make sure that at least in principle I have allowed everybody involved an opportunity to
> comment, to negotiate or even to argue before I turn my proposal into my dictate. That's why
> meetings are important. (Interviewee 1)

Other meetings, such as with individuals or small teams were made more spontaneously,

as the need arose. One director stressed the importance of the lunch/staff room as a place where

many informal but consequential meetings were held, so much so that s/he made a special

request for such a room to be constructed in a new building that they were about to move to.

Of particular interest to the researcher was the degree of dialogue and discussion present

in meetings, with the researcher asking how much lecturers participated and engaged in

discussion. Although the directors claimed that general meetings did feature discussions and

questions, they also conceded that staff did not often openly disagree, but rather that most of the

time there was agreement. Two directors attributed this agreement to what might be considered

a Thai cultural trait, namely avoidance of conflict. In both of these cases the lecturers would

speak to the director's inner circle confidant, who would then represent these voices of

disagreement. One director notes:

> I used to be like 'why? why don't they talk to me?' because I open the floor you can discuss
> and you don't need to after the meeting you don't need to get into the group and discuss and
> say 'no I don't like it'…I think it's too dramatic. But now I'm ok as long as everybody agrees and
> works further, go ahead. (Interviewee 2)

Age and seniority again seemed to play a role in the nature of meetings, with directors acknowledging that staff might be afraid to comment or disagree publicly with them. Another director noted the distinction between his/her meetings, in which s/he felt lecturers were comfortable engaging in discussion, and the meetings conducted by his/her predecessor, which were marked by silence. This was attributed to the seniority of the predecessor.

Day-to-day communication

In terms of day-to-day communication, managers were asked what their most common and frequent channel of communication was. There was a wide variety of approaches, though these may have been as dependent on the size of the team and the office layout as to the manager's preference. Some directors worked in close proximity with relatively small numbers while other dealt with a large number. Thus, six (54%) of the managers indicated that e-mailing was the most frequent form of communication with the team, especially as a whole.

In terms of the power distance and formality of communication, the managers for the most part appeared to establish relatively informal working environments, as indicated by the comments of a familial nature, and reflected in the importance placed on team work. Clearly, it would be more challenging to create a sense of combined effort and willingness to work for the leader if the manager were to be too formal in their approach.

On the other hand, in terms of power distance, managers still in some ways recognized their status as boss and the effect this has on subordinates. Already mentioned examples include lecturers sending 'delegates' to argue a case of disagreement, or direct acknowledgement of this distance, which included social distance:

> Yes, they seem to be afraid to go to lunch with me (Interviewee 4)

Finally, one director noted that s/he needed to learn to communicate more directly with staff, as some lecturers had been upset at her indirect manner.

4.3.3 Attitudes to staff

While perhaps not a direct manifestation of management style, the director's attitudes to their staff was as a matter of course revealed, and some prevailing commonalities emerged. This was also an area in which two contrasting views were held.

That their language institute required a high degree of team work was perhaps the most enduring theme of the interviews, and the majority of managers were emphatic regarding the importance of their teams' support in succeeding in their work. Stating it simply, one director noted a common refrain among all the managers:

> I'm quite lucky because I have people who help me a lot. Running a school you cannot run it alone. (Interviewee 7)

Another noted:

> We need to build team work a lot. I need to encourage them, support them. I cannot work alone. If they collapse, I collapse too. (Interviewee 2)

Most of the managers then, had respect and empathy for their lecturers, particularly with regard to their workloads. Those they praised the most were staff who they worked most directly with, the inner circle, as well as secretarial staff. In particular, staff members who completed the documentation required for Quality Assurance and other forms of record keeping were given high praise.

At the same time however there were some frustrations, and these had to do primarily with the perception that lecturers had no initiative or motivation to do anything other than teach,

despite mounting pressure from universities (as part of Quality Assurance improvement) that

they engage in other activities. Numerous managers thus commented to the effect that if they did

not keep constant pressure to improve, or to pursue new projects, their institute would stand still:

- If I didn't do anything for the Language Center they are going to be the same thing forever and they are going to be a lecturer for English language class forever. (Interviewee 2)

- I always tell them that I do everything for them. So if they don't respect me it's like they don't respect themselves. In this place, it seems like if I don't do just one thing, it will miss quite a lot of things (Interviewee 11)

Directors also saw their staff as the biggest challenge, if not obstacle, to pursuing the

organization's missions and goals, and complained about their lack of ambition in this regard:

- When it comes to teachers in general I think that, I would say percentage wise, I don't think that…less than half would really abide whatever mission and vision (Interviewee 1)

- I want them to devote their time to …to be happy. To enjoy, to see the common goal. More than this. Right now….it's like sabai…they do their job, but they don't have a common goal. (Interviewee 10)

Finally, lack of research was an important concern. While one director had made numerous

efforts to provide workshops and seminars to encourage teachers to do research, three of the

directors had gone so far as to make offers of financial reward (beyond that offered by the

university in the form of research grants) if teachers pursued research. Despite this, none had

taken the offer.

In sum, despite acknowledging the considerable work teachers do, there was some feeling that

more could be done (perhaps a perennial managerial perspective?):

We are busy, [but] we tend to use that as an excuse not to do anything else (interviewer 1)

4.3.4   Performance appraisal

There did not seem to be focused or strong effort made on behalf of the managers to increase staff motivation – perhaps because to some degree this is beyond their control (for example, by offering higher salaries, as this is under university control). But there were different perceptions as to what constituted motivating staff. Two directors felt that assigning work according to lecturers' likes and dislikes improved motivation. Others saw taking staff to lunch or similar gestures as being motivational. Most directors however felt that lecturers were primarily motivated by financial reward and that teaching extra loads was the preferred means to supplement their salary.

As for performance appraisal and evaluation most directors complied with university policy regarding staff evaluation. What stood out is that the majority of administrators did not seem to consider this a significant or troubling part of their work, and held the view that the process was a matter of assigning scores according to the criteria set by the university.

Having said that, one director had made the process more transparent by creating elected peer-based committees to evaluate staff, whose responsibility was to conduct the evaluations for the director to then approve. Another complained that the criteria for evaluating staff was not fair, as those staff who had worked harder on work such as Quality Assurance documentation were not recognized in the evaluation criteria:

> Teaching evaluation… is acceptable, but the weight should not be so much compared to their devotion. I know how much I appreciate them with the SAR and Sor Mor So and other activities to run this faculty, so this should be given quite a weight; but this seems to be quite absent from the evaluation (Interviewee 4)

4.3.5 Management style and philosophy: preliminary summary

As noted above, not all the managers were directly asked about their management style, and those that were asked were not necessarily asked with reference to Dubrin's categorizations. Nonetheless, many offered explicit statements regarding their philosophy or approach to managerial work, and the researcher also subsequently analyzed the transcripts for statements which suggested a belief about how to manage.

Salient and recurrent statements where those regarding delegating and sharing workloads with subordinates. In terms of delegating, two of the directors made efforts to distribute workloads to those who would enjoy the work assigned or who were strong in that area:

- to me administratively speaking I cannot look for people's weaknesses. I always look first at their strengths…and their potentiality (interviewee 4)

- I will let [them] do what they enjoy what they can. For other things I will do. I think at some point they appreciate. (Interviewee 11)

There was also a strong sense that it was important for directors to set an example to lecturers and staff, particularly by sharing the workload:

- I just try to…put the right person into the right job, and then I just do not let them work by themselves. I help with everything as much as I can and I do not just sit and wait for them to finish their work and report to me (Interviewee 3)

- Usually I wouldn't let them do it alone. I don't just assign them to do it but…if we have to write a test [for example] I would be with them. I would do that job too …I think they know that I wouldn't let them do the job alone. (Interviewee 7)

In some senses however, this outlook appeared less motivated by beneficence as by a degree of impatience:

So actually you know my philosophy would be if you want to get anything done you need to do it yourself first. (Interviewee 9)

However, the management philosophy of the majority directors was that of being mindful of participating in the day-to-day work of their respective organizations. This may be because the directors had themselves 'come through the ranks' in the same organizations, and therefore were not only familiar with the work but had also been on (more) familiar and equal terms prior to their managerial appointments.

4.4 Change and change management

With regard to change, two sources were investigated: externally imposed changes, and thus the directors' responses to these changes, and the directors' own change initiatives as part of their strategic vision. Additionally, the research explored any resistance to change as expressed by faculty.

4.4.1   Change from external factors: Quality Assurance

Concerted and standardized quality assurance systems are relatively new in Thai (higher) education, though some might say it has arrived with a vengeance. There are currently two major forms of evaluation (SAR and Sor Mor Sor), each of which require substantial amounts of documentation to serve as evidence of an organization's quality. These forms of evaluation are considerable additions to the workload of a university faculty, and directors and their team must spend considerable time not only preparing the documentation, but actually learning what forms of documentation are required. The researcher therefore hoped to prompt the managers' attitudes concerning this area of change.

Unsurprisingly, some of the managers did have a strongly negative reaction, with three voicing an aversion to it on the grounds that it was 'boring', 'repetitive' and a 'waste of time'. One director had initially refused to comply with certain requirements but had since completed

them. There was certainly skepticism in terms of its relevance, as demonstrated by one director's

response to the requirement to have an action plan:

> Don't ask about the 'plan'. I don't even know if the staff will stay for a whole academic year!
> (Interviewee 4)

Some managers on the other hand seemed to have no objections to the paperwork,

although these directors had delegated the bulk of the work to their secretaries and subordinates.

Other than the additional workload, one concern with Quality Assurance measures was the

potential to affect the mindset of the organization, in the sense that managers would alter their

ambitions and visions in order to 'score SAR points'. Thus, two directors noted this as Quality

Assurance as having a 'wash-back' effect:

> It's exactly like the wash-back effect. We just do what they want. We just do what the QA or
> what the SAR, what they…would expect us to include in our SAR. So now we have increased a
> lot of work so that we fulfill the requirements by the auditors. (Interviewee 9)

Overall however, even those managers who had an initial skepticism to quality assurance

measurements had in time come to appreciate that on some fronts it is useful as a guide to future

improvement and development.

> It's an opportunity for our improvement because you see through all the year we did a lot of
> things, but we don't remember, but SAR helps us get more organized. 'Oh we did this?'…I see
> it as an opportunity to improve. (Interviewee 10)

In sum, while some of the director's had had some frustrations and negative reactions to

Quality Assurance systems, all felt to some degree that there were benefits to trying to

standardize and quantify higher education quality and its assessment and, save one initial refusal

by one director to complete an action plan, none identified themselves as having been overtly or

covertly resistant to complete Quality Assurance requirements.

4.4.2   Change and strategic vision

Directors were also asked about their vision for their language institutes, and while they did articulate certain visions for their organizations, few of the directors offered concrete or 'unique' descriptions, that is to say, statements which in corporate terms would reflect brand building. Nonetheless, the various vision statements could be categorized in two broad ways: visions regarding internal development – particularly in terms of using technology – and those regarding the public's perception of their organization to enhance competiveness, as seen in the following statements:

- I would like the Language Institute to be a collection of good, effective English language teachers, and also a group of practical ELT researchers. (Interviewee 1)

- [to be] capable in IT also …to make our teachers to be smart and [where] whatever we do is to make our students stronger and feel free to speak more English (Interviewee 6)

- I think we should be more IT based. We should make more use of technology to facilitate learning. (Interviewee 9)

- I'd like the program to become (more) international; I'd like if our school is accepted by people (Interviewee 7)

- My vision is to let everyone know we exist (Interviewee 3)

- I want to see the LI to become like a premier language and cultural institute. (Interviewee 10)

Interestingly, although these differing emphases might be thought to be reflective of the nature of the organization, i.e. public vs. private, this was not the case. Rather, the emphasis on public perception had more to do with moves to affiliate language institutes with international colleges, or to make language institutes themselves more international.

4.4.3   Resistance to change

Most of the directors had faced resistance or opposition during their term. Indeed a common thread in the interviews was that many of the younger directors had endured somewhat of a 'baptism of fire' when first promoted, in particular from older faculty members, who did not comply with requests or participate in activities or other work requirements (further discussed in the next chapter). This was thus more of a resistance to a change in the director per se therefore, rather than resistance to any changes the director wished to implement.

There were some forms of resistance to policy or strategic change however:

- I think it's being Thai, I guess almost everything is covert. And also being Thai all this covert resistance is usually done en masse…Take the [name withheld] team, it's done en masse…I guess somehow policies are set and then people would find their own comfortable niche or corner and then they would group together…(Interviewee 1)

- …it took me two years to actually talk to them. In the meetings I say 'we should do this we should do that'. If I force them, they will reject: no! (Interviewee 2)

All in all however, resistance to change did not figure as a central concern of the directors.

4.5 Issues specific to ELT organizations

In this part of the interview the discussion concerned issues specific to language institutes as well as the state of English competency and English language teaching in Thailand. The interviewer raised the topic of the commonly held view – reinforced by oft-publicized results of international standard tests of English – that Thai students are very weak in English.

4.5.1   State of English and ELT in Thailand

The directors were presented with a statement that English is poor in Thailand compared to other Asian nations. The majority of the directors agreed with the statement, although a number questioned the validity of such findings, questioning the manner in which tests were taken, and

by whom (e.g. in some countries only 'good' students take the exams whereas in Thailand there

might be more of a range of competencies). This low level of competence was certainly a source

of frustration among directors.

At the same time, they all sympathized with the 'plight' of Thai students, both in

secondary and tertiary education. The majority of interviewees focused on the lack of

opportunity to speak English in daily life, and indeed were focused on trying to increase the use

of English outside class: one director for example hoped to establish an English only coffee

corner.

Other interviewees identified poor teacher training, while another identified a lack of

standardization of learning materials:

> Like mathematics. We got a series of mathematics books, right? When the students go to this
> course, this course they know what to learn. But in English you can ask the teachers in
> different schools – they don't know. They don't say the same content. They will keep teaching
> what they want to teach. They will keep teaching what they have learned from a long time
> [ago], what they think is useful. But maybe it's not in sequence… (Interviewee 6)

The lack of seriousness accorded to the profession was highlighted by another:

> Take Singapore for example; they have engineers….many people change their jobs to become
> English teachers. Why? Because language teachers make more money! That is what we have
> to be very serious about. Take English instruction more seriously. Now we have been too slow
> already to react in terms of EI [English Instruction]… we do not seem to be following the world
> effectively. English has been taught or taken as a subject in school. We take it to pass the
> exams and then after high school you can hardly say 'hi' in English (Interviewee 4)

4.5.2   Trends in pedagogy and teaching

Directors were then asked if they had noticed any trends in ELT in Thailand in recent years. The

most commonly mentioned trend was the adoption of computer or technology in classrooms,

although the adoption of technology was not really spoken of in terms of its having genuine

pedagogical value or benefit, but simply as part of the general educational trend. Additionally, technology was seen as solving logistical problems and the problem of lack of student motivation to learn English, rather than as a method to significantly improve student learning. At the same time, the adoption of technology had been relatively slow, and the administrators frequently mentioned the resistance of older teachers to adopt computer-based learning as part of their repertoire.

In terms of pedagogical approach then, none of the directors identified with conviction the use of a particular approach. Some commented that they were familiar with the formal approaches and methods of FLT, such as notional-functional, grammar translation and communicative language teaching (CLT), but interestingly, none of the directors subscribed to them, and instead there was a comfortable reliance on the use of commercial coursebooks without necessarily showing concern or interest in the theoretical principles (or otherwise) informing such publications.

Finally, few of the managers made any explicit and direct efforts to alter the lecturer's teaching approach or methodology. Indeed, at least two of the directors specifically noted that when it came to choosing coursebooks they considered themselves as equals to the faculty and they did not see it as incumbent upon themselves to try to persuade the faculty to adopt any particular materials based on the conviction of their inherent pedagogical value.

In sum, the directors for the most part did not seem to be too concerned or focused on the content or methodology of the courses in their institutes. Understandably, their attention was directed instead on the logistics of the courses (e.g. scheduling, student numbers, etc.) or the

development of new courses, in particular for the community, for the purposes of increasing revenue – and earning more SAR/Quality Assurance credibility.

4.5.3   Language institutes as multi-cultural workplaces

As language institutes are frequently staffed by foreign lecturers, there is naturally a multi-cultural dimension in these environments. In addition, English language teaching is one of the relatively few professions foreigners can enter in Thailand but, in some ways unfortunately, it is also a profession that at this stage does not require high levels of qualifications or experience. This is compounded by a high demand for native speakers in Thailand, while at the same time most educational institutes cannot offer very attractive salaries (although the salaries are often, but not always, much higher than for Thais). Thus, it is safe to say that a high percentage of foreign teachers in Thailand have not made ELT or academia their career choice per se, but rather have taken the opportunity to live in Thailand by making a relatively trouble-free career switch, often in late life (thus often mitigating the need for a high salary), and with the ulterior motive of being able to reside with Thai spouses.   This can and often does result in unqualified and uncommitted foreigners heading university classrooms.

Additionally, while it is a broad generalization, it is accepted that foreigners, particularly Westerners, are more direct and even confrontational than Thais in their communication styles, and this also carries over to relationships between superiors and subordinates.

With this in mind, the interviewer asked the directors about their experiences managing foreign lecturers. While one director noted that 'dealing with international teachers is very difficult; their attitudes and ways of thinking are very different from Thai teachers' (Interviewee 9), and most directors had had difficult incidents and experiences with foreign staff, the

percentage did not appear to be much greater than problems they'd had with Thai staff, and

directors generally acknowledged this. In terms of communication however, it was also

acknowledged that in dealing with foreigners they had to be more direct or open, although some

interviewees did not see this as particularly problematic. One interviewee comments on both of

these aspects:

> If you are Thai or non-Thai you can cause problems; here we used to have a few teachers who always caused problems and they [were] Thai, and we have had native teachers who were also aggressive. So I think it's not about nationality. At [name of institution] most of us [have been] educated abroad and I think we talk frankly about everything. (Interviewee 8)

With the vast majority of expatriate teachers unable to read and write Thai (as a safe

assumption), it is also an added burden to translate documents for them, and limits what

foreigners can be asked do with regard to helping with administrative work. There were therefore

negative sentiments regarding the fair distribution of workload compared to salary, worsened by

the observation that foreign teachers lack commitment. One director summarizes the main

(negative) points regarding foreign teachers:

> They cannot help with the SAR for example, and they are not here long enough to publish anything …. But again we expected them to help with encouraging the students, participating in, let's say Christmas, and things like that; extra-curricular activities. But we didn't seem to get that…'*I'm here to teach so I teach and that's it*' … I mean, you have to want to do the job not just to be here just because you are married to a Thai girl [or] you are spending your pension years here and things like that. (Interviewee 4)

Nonetheless, the directors were unanimous in their opinion that native speaking English

teachers were important or very important to the organization: out of 9 interviewees informally

presented with a scale of 1 to 10 regarding the importance of having natives (1 being 'not

important at all', and 10 being extremely important), the average number was 8. When asked to

provide what they though was an ideal ratio of Thais to foreigners, six interviewees thought a
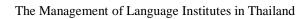
50% ratio would be ideal, with the other directors ranged the ideal number of foreign lecturers at 20% to 40% of the faculty.

4.5 Summary

The findings above highlight some of the shared or contrasting perspectives of the interviewees in light of the main questions as set out in this research. In terms of broadly shared sentiments, experiences or comments, some of the main ones include: absence of formal training in management; initial difficulties when assuming the role of manager; some forms of staff resistance; an emphasis on teamwork; an acceptance and general approval of newly implemented quality assurance measures and a strong commitment to the duties of their position while at the same time accepting and somewhat welcoming its temporality.

As for contrasting perspectives, the most evident was perhaps the range of opinions with regards to a vision for their respective language institute. While some directors were to some extent driven by a particular long term vision, others had none, or stated the achievement of a particular project or task as their vision, as opposed to describing an encompassing view of what their language institute should strive for. There were also differences in their understanding of the state of English in Thailand, as it were, with differing views concerning the level of English in the country, the source of the (assumed) low competence, and possible approaches to tackling the issue.

Some of these similarities and contrasts will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 5 Discussion

The following discussion focuses on some of the most salient findings and themes that were elicited in the interviews. These findings are further discussed in light of the main research questions posed in chapter 1.

5.1 Experiences and perspectives

Among the most evident aspects of the administrators' experience was their high degree of awareness with regard to seniority and age difference. This was more evident among the younger directors (aged in their 30s and 40s) who had all at one stage – primarily at the beginning of their tenure – had to confront some forms of resistance of senior faculty members. Overall, the manner in which these younger directors dealt with this resistance was to formally respect the seniors by inviting them to participate in various projects and strategic decisions, but also to tacitly exclude them and in a sense leave them to their own devices while such projects were being implemented. In time however, these forms of resistance dissipated, either because of the retirement or resignation of the elder members, eventual compliance, or even simply that the fully resistant teachers – generally few in number – could be, in essence, ignored.

Directors of more advanced years on the other hand were naturally less concerned about any older seniors they might have, but were in turn aware of their age-based status in addition to their position-based status, and acknowledged the social distance this may cause.

In addition to resistance as displayed by senior faculty, other forms of resistance were in some ways more expected, namely in the form of resistance to embark on additional work. The

majority of the directors wanted to develop the Language Institute and as this of necessity takes

the form of new or additional projects and faculty members were naturally reluctant. Some of

the directors therefore highlighted their role as being that of convincing the team to follow their

plans. Indeed, the role of convincing if not inspiring staff is one of the pivotal roles of leadership.

In wanting to develop their respective language institutes, the managers could be said to be

ambitious. This appeared to be simultaneously an intrinsic and personality-based ambition as

well as an extrinsically pressured one. That is, for many of the managers their desire to improve

was based on the self-identification that it was in their nature to want to achieve things. Yet at

the same time, the motivation was based on the implicit understanding that organizational

development was an expected part of their role, and this provided the external pressure to

perform.

Perhaps ironically then, an additional 'layer' to their ambition was the interesting

commonality in the 'complacency' regarding their position, with almost all directors noting that

they wouldn't mind stepping away from a managerial role and resuming the status of lecturer.

Indeed a stated desire among a number of the directors was that they would be happy to step

down when required (due to the expiry of their fixed term) so that they could focus on research

and other personal development.

For the researcher then, this was noteworthy – perhaps from a cultural perspective – that

there seemed to be no loss of face associated with being director and then 'descending' or

'demoting' to a non-managerial role (assuming that it was not a face saving strategy to say it

didn't matter!) This may be for numerous factors, although various factors were intimated,

including the age of the director, the stress, the rotation-based structure of the position, meaning

that 'demotion' was a given. Ultimately however, there was strong sense that management and leadership roles are not coveted and pursued. Many directors had in fact been promoted feeling an initial reluctance, but nonetheless had adopted a strong sense of responsibility and duty when assuming the management role.

In sum, the managers had largely been promoted because of their strengths as academics (primarily as being qualified with a doctoral degree), and their recognized work ethic. None of the directors had applied for the position, but were invited to it. Yet, once the administrative position has been taken on, there is little time for personal academic pursuit.

Finally, all the directors had good relations with senior management. There were no complaints about, say, unreasonable demands or workload. There were no (confessed) forms of resistance or criticism. On the contrary, the managers were appreciative of the support given by senior management with, for example, budget requests and projects. The only stated critique was that senior management did not appreciate the nature of foreign language education as contrasted to other fields and did not understand the time it takes to learn a language, the importance of smaller class sizes, and the general lack of motivation of students

5.2 Management style

Although one of the stated aims of the research was to identify commonalities of management style this turned out to be difficult, as expected. Not only was this a result of the individualities of managers themselves however, but also due to the disparate structure of each organization. Managers must obviously adapt to their workplace and, given that each of the organizations was different in terms of scope of responsibility, size and indeed office layout

(influencing, for example, communication styles) there were few benchmarks with which to compare styles. Nonetheless, some clear themes did emerge.

One of these concerned the need for constant vigilance, and there were common comments to the effect that if they did not closely monitor staff or constantly push them there would be little progress. 'Teachers just want to teach' was a frequent refrain both in the context of undertaking additional projects, or conducting research. Commensurately, the directors often stressed that they did not allow staff to do things alone, and that they either set an example by doing something first or participated in the team's work. There was also a slight difference between the Thai directors' views as to the required degree of monitoring and the foreign director's approach, which was delegating work and leaving people alone to 'get on with it' (though obviously this cannot be claimed as a cultural difference per se, given the lack of comparative samples).

Tasks were often delegated to an 'inner circle' of team members, comprising deputies or assistants. This may have been due to the organizational structure, but also because the qualities, strengths or interests of these members were known, as was their willingness to complete tasks, i.e. they show relatively little resistance. For the most part, directors tried to find 'the right person for the right job'. As noted above, the team was often highly praised and appreciated for their efforts, and this applied especially to the inner circle.

Although the above section noted the personal ambitiousness of the directors motivating staff was not something that they considered as a personal task, and most comments/answers concerned how the *organization* as a whole provides motivations, such as in the form of additional pay for taking extra loads.

If any conclusion is to be drawn regarding management style, then a preliminary one would be that the managers are democratic by default, in the sense that directors had to ensure compliance by agreement rather than through force. However, the director's age was again an important factor. Simply put, older managers enjoyed more coercive powers – they could more easily make demands of their staff, while younger directors depended more on their persuasive powers and the 'democratic' agreement of their staff.

5.3 Managerialism and adaptation to quality assurance

While in many cases issues such as budgeting were not foremost among the concerns of the directors (largely because language institutes are service departments, and do not have as much pressure to recruit students, although this seems to be changing in some ways also), it does appear that along with faculties across the nation, language institutes are becoming more managerialist in their outlook. In other words, as outlined in chapter 2, this outlook is based on viewing the organization in market terms, with students becoming customers and language institutes needing to focus on supplementing their income by offering additional programs within and beyond the university. Indeed, this seemed to be a primary point of discussion for many of the directors, who drew attention to these kinds of extra-curricular activities.

Yet there was a marked *absence* of commentary with regard to this shift to managerialism (for some younger directors this may be the only paradigm they are familiar with anyway). The managers by necessity follow the edicts of the organization as a whole and seemed to be ideologically compliant with the current educational model.

As for quality assurance, there was some impatience, cynicism and even initial resistance toward the (relatively) new quality assurance mechanisms (notably by male directors!).

Nonetheless, in principle all the directors saw some inherent value in them. At the same time however, there was no complaint as to the lack of dialogue between agencies and committees who devised these quality assurance systems, and the managers who had to adopt and implement them.

5.4 Key concerns and issues

By far the biggest concerns and problems directors had concerned their human resources. Many of these concerns have been mentioned, but in essence getting staff to do more than teach was a major hurdle (although asking them to teach more presented few problems). As such, one of the most shared issues was the lack of research done by teachers (which is a requirement expected of university and government policies).

Another issue included the lack of interest among lecturers in becoming administrators, which is no doubt why directors are so grateful to those who do help. This lack of interest may be due to the amount of additional work (and stress) it involves, combined with the relatively low increment in pay for those who agree to become deputies and assistants. (The pay increase is approximately the same for doing additional teaching, which does not involve learning how to do new work, attending meetings, etc.)

5.5 ELT development: trends and visions

While not exclusive to language institutes, language institute teachers are compelled to teach more hours than their prescribed teaching load. While the normal teaching load for Thai teachers ranges from 9-12 hours per week on average, few teachers actually teach this amount only. It is not unusual for them to teach 15 hours or more (although this is the normal amount for

foreign staff), and in one case even the director taught up to 24 hours per week, in addition to their administrative duties. This is not unwelcome among teachers as it considerably supplements their income (and reflects the 'teachers only want to teach' comment).

Another trend is also for large classes, with 50 or more students per class not uncommon. Indeed, class size is a perennial issue in language teaching, although the directors, while acknowledging the issue, did not highlight it as a major concern.

And yet the combination of many teaching hours and large classes naturally raises the question as to the pedagogical consequences. On the teachers' side, it makes it all the more understandable that research is not done or that other forms of work are not pursued. Perhaps more importantly however, is the effects this may have on students and their potential for success, seeing as teachers have time for little more than 'conveyor belt' teaching, and can spend little time with students individually.

As a result of these conditions, another trend has been to encourage independent learning, and this has become a catchphrase in ELT. The most prevalent expression of this drive toward encouraging students to become independent has been with the introduction of online learning or e-learning, and all directors identified this trend. For some directors e-learning was part of a main thrust for considerable change in their institute (either planned or already being implemented), while for others it was a prominent part of their ambitions for their institute's development.

It must be said however, that independent learning, and the main form it has taken in e-learning, have not necessarily been pursued as solutions to (perceived) learning problems, though they are often *promoted* as such, but rather as solutions to the management and logistics of

institutional education in the current managerialist climate. That is, e-learning is a managerial solution to the above-mentioned large classes and heavy teaching loads. There has been little discussion however, as to the pedagogical value of this approach.

Finally, the relative absence of long term vision perceived in the interviews may be due to a number of reasons: perhaps the context of the interview did not allow the directors sufficient time to reflect on their vision. Alternatively, it may simply be a result of the knowledge that the position of director is not long term. While directors may indeed stay in their position for some time – spanning years – the fact that it is rotation-based may well preempt long term planning and goal setting based on vision statements.

5.6 Final comments

Although not part of the investigation, one possible finding may have been if there are any differences in the demands, conditions or other experiences between public and private universities. Certainly there are differing perceptions of the two types of university, with private universities, in Thailand being considered of lower rank or status compared to their public counterparts. In Thailand a place in a public university is preferred and competitively sought-after, and a common perception is that 'better' students attend them. However, when it comes to the difficulties, concerns and issues encountered in Language Institutes there were few noticeable differences. One stand out difference is the manner in which directors are appointed: in public universities directors are elected by their colleagues, whereas in private universities the directors are appointed by senior management. Beyond this however, the experiences, as noted, are pretty much the same.

5.7 Limitations of the research

This research aimed to identify some of the areas of interest in the management of language institutes in Thailand with a view to further investigations. Given the number of universities and colleges in Thailand, a more thorough investigation would involve a larger sample, as the sample size here was limited to 11 interviewees.

As second limitation was that in investigating management style, as one part of the study, only directors themselves were asked, and therefore this limited the range of perspectives. Future studies would need to involve other perspectives, particularly those of the directors' subordinates to compare and corroborate responses and viewpoints regarding management style.

Further to this limitation was the evident difficulty in trying to elicit certain types of information, such as about communication style. This would be better research using a different method than interview, such as discourse analysis.

5.8 Recommendations for further research

This study was successful in identifying numerous areas for further investigation. For one, each of the topics addressed in this research could be further explored, as the current research was more general in its approach. Thus some research areas that may yield interesting results include research in:

From a linguistic perspective:

- A discourse analysis of intra-faculty written communications (e-mails) to identify how power relations are reinforced/maintained

- An analysis of departmental meetings, from a conversation or critical discourse analysis to identify how power relations are reinforced/maintained

From a management perspective

- Further investigation of managers' attitudes to quality assurance measures
- Identifying specific management training needs
- Identifying areas for collaboration among language institutes with regard to solving given issues such as course management or logistics
- An investigation in differing perceptions of management style between managers and staff

From a pedagogical perspective

- an examination into the efficacy of the adoption of technology in language institutes
- an examination into the selection process for materials for courses
- an examination into the critical perspectives of ELT among managers and if/how these influence program creation and management

From a cross-cultural perspective

- Further investigation into issues concerning foreign staff
- A comparison of expectations between (Thai) management and foreign staff in terms of work roles
- An investigation in differing perceptions

Chapter 6 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to examine a range of aspects concerning (higher educational) management, particularly in the context of language institutes in Thai tertiary organizations. Its primary focus was on the experiences, perspectives and unique challenges of administrators in running them.

From the interviews held with 11 directors of language institutes a number of commonalities were found. Among them were certain experiences regarding resistance, particularly combined with an awareness of age, issues with human resources, a strong sense of duty, an enjoyment of the job despite initial reluctance to the appointment, and a general acceptance of the managerialist ideology inherent in modern tertiary education.

Of note too was the apparently limited attention paid – at the organizational level – to pedagogical questions, such as those regarding teaching methodologies and approaches. It appears that educational management is indeed more about management and less about education. Administrators must be concerned about the running of their organizations, and this involves HR management, efficiency drives and, in recent years, revenue generating pursuits and directors understandably focus on these areas more than on the learning of the students, which arguably is the responsibility of the teacher.

As to the context of English language instruction in language institutes there are some challenges and circumstances which are unique to those organizations. Most critical among them is that, despite the widespread acknowledgement of the importance of English, and the duration

and intensity of study, (up to twelve 12 years prior to entering university) English communicative competence in Thailand remains very low. With the trend being toward online and independent learning, primarily as a means to solve logistical and administrative problems, it may be important therefore to return to properly critical examination.

While another aspect to the research was to explore management style, this was the most challenging aspect to identify. While there may be managerial behaviours and approaches that lend themselves to categorization into management styles, these can really only be identified and attributed to individual managers, and there is no reason to suspect that a particular profession encourages specific management styles. Additionally, the context of each workplace, in terms of its size and physical environment, as well as its institutionalized culture, varies to such a degree that finding commonalities would indeed be a challenge. Finally, the research construct made such identification difficult, as interviews did not allow for objective or quantifiable evaluation of styles as has been previously done in the form of questionnaires.

6.2 Recommendations for the development of LI's and their managers

An unexpected result was that a number of managers enjoyed the interview, stating that it gave them a chance to discuss their work. Managers do seem to work in isolation and there is little collaboration and discussion among management peers. One recommendation then is to establish a forum, working committee or some form of organization where managers can meet and work together to solve problems and discuss other matters relating to language institute management and even language learning from this perspective: it is to be hoped that competition for students does not prevent the sharing of ideas.

As with managers the world over, the managers of Thai language institutes are overworked and underpaid, as the joke goes. Jokes aside however, the managers interviewed provided considerable evidence that in many aspects of management they were 'good' managers, as defined by much of the literature: they recognized the importance of communication and teamwork, the importance of setting an example in terms of work ethic, and the need for constant development and innovation.

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