

An Analysis of Identities of Characters and Ideologies in Four Series of English Textbooks for Thai Beginners: From Past to Present

Mingkwan Wongsantativanich^{*}

Saneh Thongrin^{**}

Tom Hoy^{***}

Abstract

This research is a critical analysis of English textbooks designed for Thai students beginning to learn English. The textbooks under examination are from four different series from four different eras: the late nineteenth century, the 1930s, the 1980s, and the 2000s. The objectives of the research are twofold: 1) to examine the identities of the characters represented in the textbooks, and 2) to examine the ideologies embedded in the content of the textbooks and how the ideologies are constructed in the Thai context. The

^{*} Ph.D.'s student, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, e-mail: mingkwansan@gmail.com

^{**} Assistant Professor, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, e-mail: sthongrin@gmail.com

^{***} Independent Researcher, e-mail: tomphoy@hotmail.com

textbooks are analyzed based on the theoretical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis. The findings reveal that each series of textbooks portrays the age, race, class, and gender identities of characters. The first two series prioritize adult characters, Siamese/Thai characters, elite characters, and male characters in the representations. In contrast, child characters, foreign characters, middle-class characters, and female characters become increasingly important in the last two series. It can be quite difficult for textbooks to serve as naturalized discourses, but they seem to function as sites where the power of some groups over others is contested and negotiated. In terms of ideologies, the findings reveal that the dominant ideologies in the first, second, third, and fourth series of textbooks are modernization, nationalism, consumerism, and globalization, respectively. Moreover, the ideology of morality is dominant in all four series. It is argued that these ideologies are discursively constructed. The four series of textbooks were controlled by the state education agencies in terms of production. The textbook production, in turn, is governed by the state policy that is tied to social conditions. Thus, the ideologies serve to justify and maintain the power of the state.

Keywords: textbooks; ideologies; discourse

การวิเคราะห์อัตลักษณ์ตัวละครและอุดมการณ์ ในตำราเรียนภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับผู้เรียนระดับต้นชาวไทย: จากอดีตถึงปัจจุบัน

มิ่งขวัญ ว่องสันตติวานิช*

เสน่ห์ ทองรินทร์**

Tom Hoy***

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิเคราะห์ตำราเรียนภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับผู้เรียนระดับต้นชาวไทย ตำราเรียนที่ใช้วิเคราะห์แบ่งเป็นสี่ชุดจากสี่ยุค ได้แก่ ปลายศตวรรษที่ 19 ช่วงทศวรรษ 1930 ช่วงทศวรรษ 1980 และช่วงทศวรรษ 2000 วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยมีสองข้อ ได้แก่ 1) เพื่อศึกษาอัตลักษณ์ของตัวละครที่ถูกนำเสนอในตำราเรียน และ 2) เพื่อศึกษาอุดมการณ์ที่แฝงอยู่ในตำราเรียนและวิธีที่อุดมการณ์นั้นถูกสร้างขึ้นในบริบทของสังคมไทย การวิเคราะห์นี้ใช้กรอบทฤษฎีวาทกรรมวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์ ผลการวิจัยพบว่าตำราเรียนแต่ละชุดนำเสนอตัวละครที่มีอัตลักษณ์แตกต่าง

* นักศึกษาระดับคุณวุฒิมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ ติดต่อได้ที่: mingkwansan@gmail.com

** ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ประจำคณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ ติดต่อได้ที่: sthongrin@gmail.com

*** นักวิชาการอิสระ ติดต่อได้ที่: tomphoy@hotmail.com

กันในด้านอายุ เชื้อชาติ ชนชั้น และเพศ ตำราเรียนสองชุดแรกให้ความสำคัญกับตัวละครผู้ใหญ่ ตัวละครที่เป็นชาวสยาม/ไทย ตัวละครที่เป็นชนชั้นสูง และตัวละครเพศชาย แต่ในตำราเรียนสองชุดหลัง ตัวละครเด็ก ตัวละครที่เป็นชาวต่างชาติ ตัวละครที่เป็นชนชั้นกลาง และตัวละครเพศหญิงมีความสำคัญมากขึ้น เป็นการยากที่ตำราเรียนจะนำเสนอข้อเท็จจริงที่เป็น แต่ตำราเรียนเป็นพื้นที่ที่มีการแข่งขันและตอรองอำนาจของคนบางกลุ่ม ในแง่ของอุดมการณ์นั้น ผลการวิจัยพบอุดมการณ์หลักในตำราเรียนสืดยุคตามลำดับ ได้แก่ การทำให้ทันสมัย ชาตินิยม บริโภคนิยม และโลกาภิวัตน์ นอกจากนี้ยังพบอุดมการณ์คุณธรรมปรากฏในตำราเรียนทุกยุค อุดมการณ์ถูกสร้างขึ้นจากปฏิบัติการของวาทกรรม ตำราเรียนถูกควบคุมการผลิตโดยหน่วยงานการศึกษาของรัฐซึ่งถูกควบคุมโดยนโยบายรัฐที่สอดคล้องกับเงื่อนไขทางสังคม ดังนั้น อุดมการณ์จึงถูกใช้เพื่อคงอำนาจรัฐ

คำสำคัญ: ตำราเรียน; อุดมการณ์; วาทกรรม

1. Introduction

Textbooks in ELT have been found to be problematic (Ndura, 2004; Scollon & Scollon, 1995; Sheldon, 1988; Tomlinson, 2003; Thongrin, 2018), as textbook writers tend to emphasize more on content, levels of knowledge and language skills, and cultural aspects that seem to be oriented to linguistic uniformity, viewed as perfect competence defined through the lens of native speaker standards (Byram, 1997; Sung, 2012; Thongrin, 2018). Textbooks take multiple decisive roles, especially in language teaching and learning, aiming to provide the learners with information about a specific subject. While textbooks portray their positions as objective, they are actually written from a certain subjective perspective, reflected in their language and content. For example, De Los Heros (2009) examined language ideologies toward language variation and regional varieties of Spanish in Peru's official high school textbooks. It was found that the textbooks did not endorse language diversity but portrayed the superiority of standard Spanish over regional varieties of Spanish. Yasin et al. (2012) analyzed images in an English language textbook in Malaysia. The analysis reveals that the domain relegated to women is the private sphere, while men are predominantly represented in the public sphere. As such, stereotypical gender roles of women as wives and mothers are perpetuated.

Available studies on English textbooks in Thailand examine the textbooks mostly from a pedagogical approach. For example, Chetsurakul (1993) evaluated the communicative activities in secondary school English textbooks. Saisin (2003) and Angsutam (2005) surveyed teachers' and students' attitudes towards the teachability of college English textbooks. They found that these textbooks are generally effective but need to adapt some

activities to suit Thai learners' cultural values and learning. These studies could be helpful in language instruction in general. However, with some views associated with language education in Thai contexts, more attention to the exploration of textbooks in relation to representations and ideologies should benefit a number of related agents - teachers, learners, researchers, educators, to name a few - in the sense that such a critical look on the textbooks to be analyzed could lend more applications for the settings. In fact, the lack of critical analysis of textbooks may give rise to the perpetuation of the discourse that promotes textbooks as "a source which teachers and students come to trust as a language and cultural model given the very nature of textbooks as authoritative, factual, truth-based and obligatory" (Cortez, 2008, p. 14). This could be questionable because every text is culturally coded, and, in fact, bias exists in any text. Thus, this research study is an attempt to provide a critical analysis in order to assess how dominant ideologies are discursively reproduced and naturalized into legitimate knowledge in English textbooks in the Thai context. The purpose of this research study is to explore English textbooks used for Thai beginners with two-fold entities: representations of the textbooks and ideologies inductively drawn from the books.

2. Research questions

This research study addresses the following research questions.

1. What are the identities of the characters represented in the textbooks?
2. What are the ideologies embedded in the textbooks? How are these ideologies constructed in the Thai context?

3. Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) maintains that discourse is a tool of power and the way this tool functions in relation to social structure must be explored. The main thrust of CDA is that it analyzes discourse and social structure in order to reveal the “ways in which social structure relates to discourse patterns (in the form of power relations, ideological effects, and so forth), and in treating these relations as problematic” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25). Thus, as Van Dijk (2001) argues, CDA essentially studies how inequality, dominance, and power abuse are (re)produced by language in the social context. In this regard, the main goal of CDA is to strive for social equity by examining discourse for manifestations of ideology. CDA is useful in this study because this study aims to examine the textbooks produced by the representatives of the Thai state who have authority to manipulate the language and content in the textbooks. This means that the textbooks must have been subject to the state’s construction of ideologies.

According to Fairclough (1989/ 2001, p. 18), discourse is “a form of social practice” because it is a part of society, a social process and a socially conditioned process. Discourse is a part of society because the ways in which people use it are determined by social convention and have effects socially. Discourse is also a social process because it involves an interaction between text properties and people’s knowledge of language, values, and attitudes which people draw upon to produce and interpret texts. Additionally, discourse is a socially conditioned process because it is socially generated, and its nature depends on the social relations in which it is generated. Hence, in analyzing discourse, it is essential to consider its three interrelated dimensions: 1) verbal and visual texts, 2) discursive practice, and 3) social practice. The first dimension

involves the analysis of text through linguistic features. The second dimension is the interpretation of the processes by which texts are produced and received by readers. The third dimension is the explanation of the socio-cultural conditions that govern these processes. Fairclough's framework is relevant to this study as it points out that all texts, including textbooks, are not produced in vacuum, but are discursively constructed and influenced by context; this was the main focus of this study.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Data collection

The total number of English textbooks under investigation was seventeen. They were grouped into four series: *Ladder of Knowledge Series (LKS)*, *Direct Method Reader for Thai Students (DMR)*, *English is Fun: A Beginning Course for Thai Students (EIF)*, and *Projects: Play and Learn (Projects)*. These textbooks were produced in four different eras: the late nineteenth century, the 1930s, the 1980s, and the 2000s, respectively. These textbooks were intended for use by Thai beginners of English. The term "beginners" was different from era to era. For *LKS*, it referred to students who had recently started learning English, regardless of age. As *DMR* was first used in secondary schools before being changed to primary schools, it referred to secondary and primary students. As for *EIF* and *Projects*, it referred to primary students. These publications were selected because of the following reasons: 1) being produced by the Thai state, 2) long duration of use, and 3) accessibility to publications. These textbooks were collected from various sources: the library of the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational

Standards, the National Library, university libraries, private libraries, bookshops, and teachers. Studying these textbooks from different eras can help reveal the continuity of representations of identities and ideologies.

4.2 Data analysis

The data was analyzed by content analysis. A close reading of the content was conducted in order to find themes. After categorizing the themes, the messages within the themes were analyzed. At the language level, features such as, vocabulary, pronouns, modality, and intertextuality were examined. Visual images were analyzed in terms of color, gaze, distance, and framing, following Van Leeuwen (2008) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996).

To answer the first research question, the content, language features, and visual images were employed for analysis. Additionally, the representation of social actors theorized by Van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) was employed that was important in revealing the ways in which the characters were represented. The analysis covered the following issues: individualization/collectivization, inclusion/exclusion, nomination, activation/passivation, and functionalization/classification. To answer the second research question, the content, language features, and visual images were employed. The ideologies were determined by looking at how they matched with the features inherent in such ideologies. The reliability of the data was achieved through the interpretation of the two raters, both teaching English, viewed with the texts, where any disparity found was discussed for sound and reasonable understanding.

5. Findings

5.1 Identities of represented characters

This section presents the identities of characters represented in the textbooks (Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of character identities

	<i>LKS</i>	<i>DMR</i>	<i>EIF</i>	<i>Projects</i>
Age	Adult prioritized over child	Adult prioritized over child	Child prioritized over adult	Child prioritized over adult
Race	Siamese prioritized over foreigner	Thai prioritized over foreigner	Thai and foreigner	Multi-racial
Class	Elite prioritized over other classes	Elite prioritized over other classes	Middle-class	Middle-class
Gender	Male prioritized over female	Male prioritized over female	Male and female	Male and female

5.1.1 Age

Despite being textbooks for children, *LKS* and *DMR* not only focus on child characters, but also give importance to adult characters. Both characters are the main social actors. What makes the adults important can be seen from the ways in which they interact with children. The interaction is top-down. For

example, adults usually command and ask questions, while students follow and answer. Furthermore, adults are usually involved in daily actions of child characters.

In *LKS*, relational identification plays a key role in representing the relationship between the child and adult characters (e.g. the boy's father, your son). Both types of characters are mainly classified in terms of sex. At other times, adults are functionalized; they are referred to according to their institutional roles.

The leading character in *DMR* is a boy. He is named and specifically referred to. His family members are named, except his mother, but they are sometimes identified according to their relationship with him (e.g. his father). Other child characters are passing characters. Kings and queens are important adult characters in this series. They are named and specifically referred to. Other adult characters are functionalized, including teachers, soldiers, and farmers.

EIF and *Projects* prioritize child characters over adult characters. In both series, the child characters, not the adults, are the main social actors. Some child characters are named, while others are classified in terms of age and sex. Parents and teachers are usually identified in relation to the child characters. Other adults are mainly functionalized. In both series, the interaction between child and adult characters is more reciprocal. Children can ask or even negotiate with adults. Also, they perform actions more freely with their own peers and with less supervision from adults.

5.1.2 Race

As far as race is concerned, *LKS* and *DMR* prioritize Siamese/Thai characters over foreign ones. Foreigners are usually referred to as a collective

group such as, the English, the Chinese, the Malays, and the Burmese. We see few interactions between the Siamese/Thai and foreign characters. They are separate characters in separate stories. In stories that represent both Siamese/Thai and foreign characters, the pronouns “we” and “they” tend to be used to differentiate them. The differentiation is also seen from the visual images of foreign characters. That is, in *DMR*, foreigners are portrayed wearing their national costumes. They stand on their country’s map, isolated from other groups of people. They are portrayed in a small frame in a long shot. As a result, they are distanced and otherized from the reader, as seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Foreigner (Jumsai, 1940, p. 86)

In *EIF* and *Projects*, foreign characters are more individualized as they are referred to by name. In *EIF*, foreign characters are likely to be Western as they have English names. As for *Projects*, the racial demarcation is blurred. For instance, some child characters have Thai, English, and Chinese names, which help to identify them as Thai, Western, or Chinese. Nonetheless, others are hard to identify in terms of race because they are anonymous. They have different hair colors such as yellow, brown, blue, violet, and green. Unlike the earlier series, we see more interaction between the Thai and foreign characters in these two series. The interaction usually occurs in the same frame as a unit,

where both characters look at and make gestures at each other (Figure 2). This suggests that they are not distanced from each other like before.



Figure 2. Thai and foreigner (Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 20)

5.1.3 Class

In terms of class, *LKS* and *DMR* seem to prioritize the characters of elite class over those of other classes. Elite characters in *LKS* include kings, princes, and masters. A key representation strategy found is that the elite character, when interacting with lower-class people such as servants, has an active role. On the contrary, the servants are passive and commanded to serve the elite.

DMR revolves around a boy character from a class of elites. This is obvious because his father is nominated with the honorific title of nobleman. Apart from this main character, *DMR* features Thai kings and queens. They are identified individuals who actually exist in Thai history. The characters of other classes such as farmers are merely fictional and usually referred to as a collective group.

Characters in *EIF* and *Projects* are changed from the elite to those with a middle-class background or lower. No more kings and queens are

featured as characters. Instead, both series feature those in the workforce such as the bus driver, the shopkeeper, the fruit seller, the nurse, the doctor, the fisherman, the farmer, the guide, the soldier, the postman, and the policeman. They are activated and accorded roles as actors.

5.1.4 Gender

When it comes to gender, male characters are prioritized in *LKS* and *DMR*. In *LKS*, only boys are portrayed in the classroom. All teachers are males. Elites, especially kings and princes, are portrayed, whereas queens and princesses are not. In *DMR*, the most outstanding character of the series is a boy. Everyone in his family has a name, except his mother who is represented by means of relational identification as the boy's mother. She is also excluded from some of the boy's daily activities. Boys dominate the classroom; in some lessons, only boys are presented in the classroom, while girls are ignored. Both kings and queens are portrayed, but queens are always referred to as wives of certain kings in stories they are portrayed.

In *EIF*, female characters, especially girls, are more activated: being accorded more roles as the actors performing actions. However, the jobs of adult characters in the series remain differentiated between male and female jobs. Additionally, women as mothers are accorded the responsibilities of cooking and child-bearing. *Projects* is different from other series. Both female and male characters seem to have equal roles in doing activities. The domains where they are represented are also similar.

5.2 Ideologies

This section presents the dominant ideologies found in the textbooks (Table 2).

Table 2

Summary of dominant ideologies

Ideologies	<i>LKS</i>	<i>DMR</i>	<i>EIF</i>	<i>Projects</i>
Modernization	✓			
Nationalism		✓		
Consumerism			✓	
Globalization				✓
Morality	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.2.1 Modernization

The dominant ideology in *LKS* is modernization. Throughout the series, it is repetitively stated that children must receive education. Children must also learn and be able to use English. English is also equated with intelligence; those who can use English well are deemed as being clever. Going abroad to study is another repetitive message. In particular, adult characters repetitively talk about sending their children to Europe. The following excerpts are examples showing that modality is used to convey these messages. “Have to” and “should” in (1)-(3) show that it is an obligation for students to study. “Can” and “be able to” in (4) show that speaking English is an ability one needs to gain. “Will” in (5)-(6) shows the adults’ determination to send their children abroad.

(1) You have to go to school every day.¹ (Morant, 1903, p. 34)

(2) If you still cannot read, you have to go to school every day until you can.² (Morant, 1904, p. 60)

(3) If I were you, I should learn English. (Morant, 1903, p. 74)

(4) Can't you speak English, yet? No. But I hope to be able to speak English in a few years. (Morant, 1903, p. 15)

(5) The prince will send his son to England in three years' time. (Morant, 1891, p. 113)

(6) Next year, I will have enough money to send my son to study in Germany.³ (Morant, 1891, p. 266)

In addition to these messages, we can find terms denoting modernity such as engineer, bank, train and steam ship, tennis, and so on. A few examples are shown in (7)-(8).

(7) Why do you call your servant? He is exchanging money at the bank.⁴ (Vol. 4, 1891, p. 237)

(8) Did you go by train or steamship? I went by steamship for the first time and by train for the second time.⁵ (Vol. 4, 1891, p. 231)

¹ Our translation. The original one is: ท่านต้องไปโรงเรียนทุกวัน

² Our translation. The original one is: ถ้าท่านอ่านยังไม่ได้ ท่านต้องไปโรงเรียนทุกวันกว่า [sic.] ท่านจะอ่านได้

³ Our translation. The original one is: ปีหน้าฉันจะมีเงินพอส่งบุตร [sic.] ไปเรียนที่เมืองเยอรมัน

⁴ Our translation. The original one is: ท่านเรียกบ่าวทำไม เขากำลังไปแลกเงินอยู่ที่แบงก์

⁵ Our translation. The original one is: ท่านไปรถไฟหรือเรือไฟ ครั้งที่หนึ่งฉันไปเรือไฟและครั้งที่สองไปรถไฟ

Also, the series includes exercises, which test knowledge about history and current affairs, scientific discovery and invention, and mathematics and economics. This kind of knowledge is based on the Western model of education. All of the above-mentioned statements in the series match key characteristics of modernization including mass education, rationalism, and secularization (Inglehart, 1997).

5.2.2 Nationalism

What is dominant in *DMR* is the ideology of nationalism, constructed through intertextuality. The series draws on several stories about Thai kings fighting the Burmese, recorded in Thai history, especially the stories of three particular kings: King Ramkhamhaeng, King Naresuan and King Taksin. The stories start with describing Thai people who lived in a peaceful land. One day, the Burmese invaded them. Therefore, all Thais had to unite and fight against the invaders under the leadership of the Thai kings. Finally, the Thais won. All the kings were then glorified as heroes who saved Thailand, portrayed as a victim invaded by evil foreigners. Clearly, not the entire story is told in each instance. They start with the invasion of the Burmese without mentioning the preceding conflicts and tensions that resulted in the wars between Burma and Thailand. As such, parts of the stories are omitted on purpose. The stories end with the excerpt below.

(9) Now look at Thailand today. This is our Thailand. Love her! Defend her! For Thailand will be very unhappy if we do not work hard for her and defend her. Thailand is our home. Our fathers lived in Thailand. Our great grand- fathers also lived in Thailand. Our great- great grandfathers also lived in Thailand. Our children will live in Thailand. Our grandchildren will also live in Thailand. Our great grand-children

will also live in Thailand. Long live Thailand! (Jumsai, 1940, pp. 122-129)

From the above excerpt, we also see the ways in which nationalism is roused. The verb “defend” suggests that the Burmese are the invaders. The inclusive pronouns “we” and “our” are used to establish solidarity with the reader. This helps persuade the reader to believe that Thailand belongs to the reader and thus, it is vital to do something to protect the country. The modal “must” is used to show that defending Thailand is an obligation one cannot deny. The writing style, as clearly seen, is much dramatized so as to intensify the patriotic feelings of the reader. Such a writing style includes using an instructive language together with exclamation marks, while constructing the country as feminine. Kinship terms preceded by the sentence “Thailand is our home” are important too. They show that the country is like a home where family members have lived and hence rouse the feelings of the reader that it is vital to prevent the home from being invaded.

5.2.3 Consumerism

The dominant ideology in *EIF* is consumerism. It is constructed through stories. One story is about a boy bragging about his assets to another boy during their first accidental meeting. The two boys come from contrasting family backgrounds. The boy from a lower-class family tries to befriend the boy from a high-class family, but the latter brags about the assets he has and looks down upon the former. The declarative and interrogative statements by the high-class boy show that a “car” symbolizes the wealth one needs to acquire.

(10) My father and I have a big car and I can drive it. Does your father have a car? (Ministry of Education, 1984, pp. 31-32)

Another story is about a girl consulting a fortune teller on her way back home. She decides to consult the fortune teller after accidentally seeing a woman and a man asking questions to the fortune teller. The question asked by the woman is about the possibility of her getting rich. The question asked by the girl is about the possibility of her getting a desirable gift on her upcoming birthday. The terms “money”, “rich”, and “bicycle” in (11)–(12) are preceded by “a lot of”, “very”, and “new”, respectively. These adjectives show the idea of accumulating wealth.

(11) Am I going to have a lot of money in ten years?...Yes, you are going to be very rich. (Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 29)

(12) I will be twelve years old next week. I want a new bicycle for my birthday. Am I going to get one? (Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 29)

Ultimately, both stories reflect that competitiveness to strive for money and assets is cherished. Also, getting rich and gaining material possessions of one's own choice is an important goal in life.

5.2.4 Globalization

The ideology of globalization is dominant in *Projects*. As mentioned above, the child characters in the series have multi-colored hair and are ethnically and racially unrecognizable in many contexts. Moreover, many contexts cannot be identified in terms of location. In other words, such contexts could be anywhere, not merely in a particular country. For instance, a lesson in the series portrays the image of a party where a lot of children are having fun chatting, eating, and drinking (Figure 3). They are not framed. They mingle freely. The food served during the party includes sandwiches, sausages, fruits, milkshakes, and fruit punch. The party is decontextualized as there is nothing to suggest from the image where exactly is the party held. Who the children

are cannot be discerned because they have different hair colors. They wear normal clothes (like skirts, dresses, and T-shirts) that can be seen anywhere. The food served, as mentioned above, can also be seen at any party around the world. This is an indication that the series emphasizes on being a member of the world community, rather than being part of a particular country.

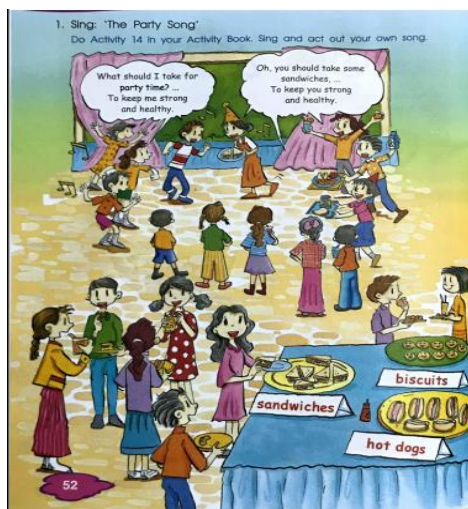


Figure 3. Food party (Phibunchon & Akaramas, 2011a, p. 52)

Additionally, the series features problems, which the global community is encountering, especially environmental degradation. These problems are not portrayed as specific to one particular country; rather they are problems at the global level that affect the living of people in general. For instance, there is a poem about recycling and conserving. The poem says that the earth is home to humans and animals; therefore, it is essential to make it a nice living place. To do so is not difficult for the students as they can do it in daily life such as by saving water and electricity, saving trees, and sorting out rubbish. Part of the poem is shown below.

(13) This blue Earth's our only home,
It is in our hands.
We must learn to keep it safe,
The seas, the skies, the lands. (Phibunchon & Akaramas, 2012, p. 94)

What can be noticed from the poem is the use of the phrase “this blue Earth” and the pronouns “we” and “our”. It suggests that the environmental problem is not country-bound. It is a global problem, which needs the attention of everyone who lives in the world.

5.2.5 Morality

Morality is an important ideology in operation in all four series of textbooks. These textbooks have different ways to construct the ideology. *LKS* and *DMR* mainly use command and declarative sentences with modality expressing obligation. *EIF* uses stories and students need to assume the moral lessons from the stories. *Projects* uses songs, chants, and poems; one of them is shown in the excerpt below. In the excerpt, repetition of phrases “wash our clothes” is a key strategy to make the song easy to remember and hence efficient in teaching students.

(14) This is the way we wash our clothes,
Wash our clothes, wash our clothes,
This is the way we wash our clothes,
Early on Monday morning. (Phibunchon & Akaramas, 2011b, p. 24)

Despite the different strategies, they all talk about the proper roles and duties of children. They emphasize that good children must know their duty and perform it effectively in order to live harmoniously with others; this is a core value to build an ideal community (Mulder, 1997). For example, they

must study hard when at school. When at home, they must do their homework and help their parents with the housework. Moreover, children must behave according to the moral standards set by family and school. For instance, they must obey their parents and teachers and treat them with high level of respect. All kinds of misbehaviors such as being rude, lazy, stubborn, and disobedient, will usually result in not only punishment, but also chaos and conflicts that will lead to instability in the family, school, community, and nation.

6. Discussion and conclusion

Fairclough (2003) argued that texts are the result of semiotic processes emerging from social agents who produce them in line with social practices and orders of discourse. Power relations play the key role in text production, affecting how texts are designed and written; this in turn affects whether power relations are maintained or challenged. Findings reveal that the four series of textbooks bring age, race, class, and gender identities into the classroom. They are sites where some groups are included and others are excluded or backgrounded. Thus, it is a matter of power of some groups over others.

The power of adults over children can be seen in all series. Relational identification between children and adults shows that kinship is important (Van Leeuwen, 1996); this in turn supports the hierarchical relationship between them. Podhisita (1985) stated that Thais view society as being made up of hierarchically related positions. Hence, one needs to recognize the distinction between high and low statuses and behave according to the appropriate behavior of each status. The four series justify the Thai hierarchical system by

showing that children are in an inferior position to adults and hence must obey and respect adults.

We can see that there is racial prejudice in the first two series. Foreigners are portrayed as inferior to Siamese/Thai characters as they have no identity as identified individuals. However, racial prejudice seems to decrease in the last two series. Not only are foreign characters portrayed more frequently, but they are also more individualized. This is partly due to the increasing interconnectedness between Thailand and the world, culturally and economically.

We can also see the politics of class. *LKS* rarely activates the servants. For *DMR*, it individualizes only the elite. This means that both series prioritize the elite as if they were the main beneficiaries of education. Exclusion of the elite is a representation strategy found in the last two series. This suggests that power relations have changed. The power of the elite is resisted by the middle-class, becoming increasingly important in driving the economy. English education is no longer limited to the elite as it was in the past.

The unequal portrayal of male and female characters proves that there is a gender hierarchy. This is especially obvious in the first two series in which female characters are excluded from certain representations. When they are included, they tend to not have an identity in their own right because they are identified in relation to their children or husbands. This demonstrates that the ideology of male domination is in operation in the series. Male domination is resisted in the last two series with the increasing portrayal of female characters as social actors. The resistance is partly due to the economic growth, which requires female laborers and the growth of feminist movements worldwide.

The production of textbooks is controlled by the state authorities. The writers are mandated by the Ministry of Education to write the textbooks (Karnjanasthiti, 2001). Hence, they are checked and approved before use. For example, Sir Robert L. Morant, the writer of *LKS*, wrote in the preface of his series that he was grateful to various princes and nobles for their suggestions and assistance in the translation of his explanations and exercises (Morant, 1891; Morant, 1903). Despite the fact that Morant did not use terms such as “check” or “approve”, it is evident that the series could not have been published without the state authorities reading them.

Publications being controlled by state authorities means that textbooks are influenced by state policies that are tied to social conditions. Thus, it can be said that the ideologies in the textbooks serve to justify and maintain the state’s dominance. *LKS*, produced in the late nineteenth century, prepared students to facilitate King Chulalongkorn’s reforms. The vulnerability of Siam to colonial rule made the king realize the necessity to modernize the country to preserve its sovereignty. Thus, the main concern for the Thai state at that time was modernization. As Lao (2015) put it, modernity was an important motivation for the Thai state to emulate the West, and selective borrowing served as a major strategy of the Thai state to conduct reforms in the quest for modernity.

DMR, written in the 1930s, served the military regime under Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram’s leadership by promoting militaristic nationalism. According to Reynolds (2004), Phibun’s regime was shaped by fascism and promoted militant nationalism to mobilize the Thai people for the purpose of nation-building. For example, many forms of militaristic nationalist propaganda were utilized including films, maps, or the national anthem. Thus, *DMR* reflected and reiterated the propaganda of the time. It attempted to

legitimize the military's role in fighting invaders and communists within the country.

EIF, written in the 1980s, served the state policy in accelerating economic development, during which time Thailand's economy was integrated with foreign investment and capital flows as well as changed to one that was services and labor-intensive and export-led by manufacturers (Phongpaichit & Baker, 1998). Overall, Thailand's rapid economic growth led to the absorption of a consumerist and materialist way of life, where goods' consumption and material possessions became economically desirable. In this sense, the discourse on competitiveness to strive for money and assets helped the state in driving the capitalist economy.

As for *Projects*, it is meant to shape global citizens. Lao (2015) argued that globalization has become the main motivation for policy elites in Thailand since the start of the twenty-first century. In fact, this is not unique to Thailand. From the 1990s, globalization has often been mentioned in Asian government policies as a major driving philosophy for education. English education is then emphasized as a communicative tool to ensure individual success as well as "the nation's edge in the global competition" (Sung, 2012, p. 26). Cha and Ham (2011) contended that English is globally adopted so as to build "collective identities that empower future citizens in global society" (Cha & Ham, 2011, p. 10). Rather than the economic survival in the global competition, the spread of English is more due to the expansion of transnational civil network, which empowers individuals to meet global demands and challenges. In this sense, English has become an important tool the nation-state employs to develop individuals as global citizens (Sung, 2012, p. 26)

In addition, the ideology, which existed throughout all the four series and never changed at all, is morality. These four series moralize and discipline

students to live harmoniously in a hierarchical society. Thus, they serve the state policy of building a unified nation where people recognize the central administration as the preserver of harmony and discipline. In fact, this is not unique to this study. Sukwisith (2011) found that one ideology in Thai language textbooks of different eras is the ideology of “good child” that transmits the idea that children must act as good members of the society. As explained by Mulder (1997), the school serves the purpose of nation-building. Therefore, the mandate of the school is to produce morally good people because such people contribute to a peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous nation. In a similar vein, Eoseewong (2004) argued that the creation of nation and nationalism is sustained by Thai education. He argued that Thai students are taught through textbooks to think of the Thai nation as a peaceful and harmonious village. In the village everyone strives for unity; there is no social segmentation. Everyone knows his/her duty and tries his/her best to contribute to the society. By comparing a nation to a village, Eoseewong concluded that the Thai state is able to present in an idealistic way the means in which the nation should be built.

7. Implications

In terms of pedagogical significance, teachers may be impacted by this research study. They may come to realize that all discourses, including those in ELT textbooks are subject to ideologies and should be understood only within a particular context. Possibly they can detect, scrutinize or dismantle ideologies using the critical reading strategies in this study. By doing so, they may be able to provide their students with stimulating ideas, which prompt

them to learn to think critically. For instance, teachers may be able to engage students in discussing the reading passages in the textbooks beyond the linguistic level. One example is by questioning why such passages have been chosen for them to read and scrutinizing the hidden messages in such passages.

This research may also have implications for textbook writers and publishers in determining what should be included in the textbooks to promote mutual understanding and exclude particular biases. For instance, they may create textbooks' content, exposing readers to a wide variety of events, beliefs, norms and values representing various ideologies instead of imposing a particular ideology.

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